

**Right-Wing Extremism and Immigration Policy in France,  
1995-2011: A Case Study of Front National**

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**Date:**

**DECLARATION**

I declare that the dissertation entitled “**Right-Wing Extremism and Immigration Policy in France, 1995-2011: A Case Study of Front National**” submitted by me in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the Degree of **Master of Philosophy**, of Jawaharlal Nehru University, is my own work. This dissertation has not been previously submitted for the award of the any degree of this University or any other university.

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**CERTIFICATE**

We recommend that this dissertation be placed before the examiners for evaluation.

**Prof. R.K.Jain**

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**Prof. Ummu Salma Bava**

**(Supervisor)**

To,

*My Parents, Sister and hrishabh*

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## *Preface*

The success of the Front National (FN) in the 2002 presidential election in France has triggered a debate among scholars. This was a historic moment in the history of France that for the first time a leader from the far right managed to reach this level. This was also for the first time in the history of the Fifth Republic that no leader from the left inclination managed to reach the second round-off. This was followed by number of demonstrations against Le Pen, the leader of FN, on the streets of France.

The Front National was founded in 1972 with a motive to unite all the fringes of the extreme right wing. This was the initiative taken by the Ordre Nouveau (New Order). So far, the FN has led the torch of right wing extremism in a very impressive manner.

Differentiating it from the fascist as well as the neo-fascist ideologies, the FN has managed to evolve a different kind of ideology which has some similarities with fascism but at the same time it is quite different from it. Even if it talks about the fascist themes the execution is totally different. This is where it distinguishes itself from fascism.

During 1980s, there is a wave of such kind of parties emerging in various countries of Europe. Very soon it becomes a pan-European phenomenon. There are some similarities among these parties. At the same time they have their own identity and issues. This is why the study of the right wing extremist parties has been country specific. There is no overall study on these parties.

In France, Anti-immigration propaganda has become the specialty of the FN. It has capitalized a lot on this issue. Right from the beginning, it has stressed upon the effects of immigration in French society. It linked the problems of unemployment and law and order with the issue of immigration. This approach of FN has received a huge acceptance among the electorate of France. Since 1984, it has received a remarkable success in the elections from local to the supranational level.

The success of the party gave legitimacy to the issues raised by it. It compelled the mainstream parties to participate in the debate on immigration and the problems related to it.

This research tries to examine various aspects of the extreme right-wing parties as well as the immigration policy in France. The entire research is presented in five chapters. Chapter one deals with the introductory part of the research. It deals with the concepts of 'Political Party' and 'Right and Left in Politics'. It further explains the situation of the 'Extreme Right Wing in Post-World War Era'.

Chapter two gives an account of the various definitions of the extreme right wing given by scholars. It also deals with the ideologies of such parties. This chapter analyses the ideological differences between right wing extremism in the 1980s and fascism. It also explains the various kinds of parties which come under this family.

Chapter three concentrates on the formation and the development of the Front National (FN) in the political sphere of France. It tries to find out its ideology also. The chapter gives an explicit account of the electoral performances of FN in the time period of 1995 to 2011. It looks into the conditions which favoured the rise of FN and its leader Jean Marie Le Pen. It also analyse the success of FN on local, regional, national and European level.

Chapter four analyses the Immigration Policy in France from 1995 to 2011. It also examines the level of success achieved by the Front National in engaging the mainstream parties in policy-making vis-à-vis immigration.

Chapter five, the concluding chapter gives an account of FN in the French political system. This chapter highlights the engagement of FN in the policy making as far as the Immigration Policy of France is concerned.

## List of Acronyms

A	<i>Action Française</i>
AN	National Alliances
CESEDA	Code for the Entry and Residence of Foreigners and the Right of Asylum
CPI	Communist Party of India
FFI	French Forces of the Interior
FN	Front National
FNUF	<i>Front National pour l'Unité Française</i> (National Front for French Unity)
GRECE	<i>Groupment de Recherches et d'Etudes pour la Civilisation Européenne</i> (Research and Study Group for the European Civilisation)
IFN	<i>Institut de Formation Nationale</i> (Institute of National Training)
MNR	<i>Mouvement National Républicain</i> (National Republican Movement)
MSI	Italian Social Movement
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
PCF	<i>Parti Communiste Français</i> (French Communist Party)
PPF	<i>Parti Populaire Français</i> (French Popular Party)
PS	<i>Parti Socialiste</i> (Socialist Party)
RMI	<i>Revenu minimum d'insertion</i>
RPN	<i>Rassemblement Populaire National</i> (National French Rally)
RPR	<i>Rassemblement pour la République</i> (Rally for the Republic)
SFIO	<i>Section Française de l'Internationale Ouvrière</i> (French Section of the Workers' International)

SMIC	<i>Salaire minimum interprofessionnel de croissance</i>
UDCA	<i>Union de Défense des Commerçants et Artisans</i> (Union for the Defense of Shopkeepers and Craftsmen)
UFD	Union French Democracy
UK	United Kingdom
UMP (June 2002)	<i>Union pour la Majorité Présidentielle</i> (Union for the Presidential Majority)
UMP (Nov 2002)	<i>Union pour un Mouvement Populaire</i> (Union for a Popular Movement)  National Union of Students
USA	United States of America



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# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

“In the beginning of societies the chiefs of the republic form the institution, and after that, this is the institution which forms the republic”,

« Dans la naissance des sociétés ce sont les chefs des républiques qui font l’institution ; et c’est ensuite l’institution qui forme les chefs des républiques, » said Montesquieu (quoted in Huntington 1965: 421).

Today, in the absence of political institutions (such as monarchies and feudal parliaments), the political party is the only modern organization which can be both source of authority and effectively institutionalized. The importance of the political party in providing legitimacy and stability is the most in modern political system whereas; it is the least in the system close to traditional society. In fact, traditional societies do not have any political party. Unlike bureaucracy, the political party is the modern form of political organization. The political party plays a great role in legitimizing the modern political institutions as well as in decision making (Huntington 1965: 424). As Huntington says:

“Parties typically originate within the society and then gradually extend themselves into legislatures after contesting elections. They adapt themselves to the existing framework of the political system and typically reflect in their own operations the organizational and procedural principles embodied in that system. They can broaden participation in the traditional institutions, thus adapting those institutions to the requirements of the modern polity. They help make the traditional institutions legitimate in terms of popular sovereignty, but they are not themselves a source of legitimacy. Their own legitimacy derives from the contributions they make to the political system” (Huntington 1965: 424).

Huntington further says that the role of political party is very important in a society where traditional political institutions have collapsed. A strong party organization in such society provides it legitimacy and stability. He says:

“In the absence of traditional sources of legitimacy, legitimacy is sought in ideology, charisma, popular sovereignty. To be lasting, each of these principles of legitimacy must be embodied in a party. Instead of the party reflecting the state, the state becomes the creation of the party and the instrument of the party. The actions of government are legitimate to the extent that they reflect the will of the

party. The party is the source of legitimacy because it is the institutional embodiment of national sovereignty, the popular will, or the dictatorship of the proletariat” (Huntington 1965: 424-25).

## **Political Parties**

As Huntington emphasizes on the institutionalization in politics and political parties in modern political institutions, it is required to discuss about the nature and the formation of a political party. Deschouwer explains the formation of political parties and party system as a result of boundary closure, formation of national states and at the same time regionalization and democratization of politics. He argues that major societal conflicts are domesticated and are amalgamated in the political party competition on national level (Deschouwer 2003: 213).

Defining a political party has always been a difficult task for academicians and thinkers. There is no consensus among them on what is a political party. As Eldersveld says that a party is a lot of different things or different “images” (Eldersveld 1964). To define a party needs a consensus about what is meant by it. The inability of scholars to reach upon such consensus shows how difficult the process is. The problem arises in the methodology whether to choose functional or rational approaches. Moreover, the normative problem also comes while defining a party. Another problem comes when a universal definition is tried to formulate in order to cover all the different kinds of political organizations around the globe which call themselves parties<sup>1</sup>. In this regard Downs has given a definition in his theory of competition: a party is “a team seeking to control the governing apparatus by gaining office in a duly constituted election” (Downs 1957: 25).

This definition of political party implies that politics is goal-oriented and the political parties perform their work to achieve their goals i.e. to gain office. But this definition

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<sup>1</sup> Alternative perceptions of party are explored by William E. Wright (1971). Kay Lawson (1976, p. 3) defines party broadly to encompass governing groups that seek authorization from the public, regardless of whether they face competitive elections. A similarly wide net is cast by Kenneth Janda in his major survey (1980).

fails to address the concern for the source of those goals or wants nor does it refer to the functions that parties perform for the political system. However, the theory neither denies that parties may perform broad political functions rather it asserts implicitly that if parties do such things they do them as by-products of the pursuit of their goals as stated in the definition which emphasizes on the goal (control of the governing apparatus) and the means of achieving it (winning office in a duly constituted election) (Schlesinger 1984: 374). Schlesinger says, “As far as the goal is concerned, it is not defined by the individual rather it is defined by the institutions. Similarly, neither the individual nor the party defines the basic means to attain the goals; rather it is the political structure through its “duly constituted elections”” (Schlesinger 1984: 375).

For example, in India, CPI (Maoist) functions in some states. Could it be called a political party? Going through their definition we find that CPI (Maoist) does not seek office through democratic election. Moreover, its goals and the means of attaining them are also not specified in a democratic space. This cannot be labelled as a political party. In contrast, CPI (ML) is a political party in India as it contests elections with hope of winning office. They may have other goals also but one underlying goal is to get “control of government apparatus by winning office in a duly constituted election”.

This definition does not explain anything about the structure of the party. It simply says that it is a team. To be a team implies some degree of focused cooperation among two or more individuals to achieve some purpose. Since this is one classic definition of an organisation, Bernard (1938) concludes that the political party is some kind of organisation (Bernard 1938: 4). Yet this definition does not say anything about how it is structured, what is the arrangement within the party, how the decisions are taken, how it functions. But these oversights are important because they provide opportunities for changes in the forms of organisation. This definition of political party does not explain who is included in the party. We can include the candidates and those who actively work for their election as well as all officials who join forces in government. But on the issue of voters there are again two distinct views. The proponents of the participatory role see voters as integral to any party formation whereas others such as E. E. Schattschneider

(1942), who views democracy as based on competition among parties, consider voters as choosers, and thus as a component necessarily outside the parties. “Even the person who votes for all of a party’s candidates all of the time cannot be a party voter if that decision is based primarily on the voter’s judgement of the candidates or of their stands on issues” (Schlesinger 1984: 377). In the book *The Changing American Voter* (Nie, Verba, and Petrocik 1976), the concept of party is reduced to a non-rational sentiment residing in the minds of voters. The authors say that a decline in party voting and party identification has come. This decline has ultimately affected the voting decision of the voters. Thus, it has changed the way a party behaves in real world (Quoted in Schlesinger 1984: 377).

Thus, voters are not a component of a party rather they are choosers among the parties. Therefore, it is necessary to understand the reasons on which basis the choices of voters are made to understand the party behaviour in political system. A party enjoys an advantage if it has a large number of voters inclined in its favour. In a competitive electoral context, the capacity of a party is calculated on the basis of its ability to win elections, not by its identification among the electorate. In a competitive party system, the level of competition raises when partisan identification of voters weakens. It can simply be said that in such system what one party loses others must gain (Schlesinger 1984: 377).

Thus, Schlesinger defines the political party as “a ‘Downsian team’<sup>2</sup> which seeks to control government by winning elective office. On this team are those who seek and those who hold office in the party’s name. Excluded are those who see their role as essentially that of choosers among parties, the voters” (Schlesinger 1984: 378). Though political parties give collective benefits and reward their participants indirectly, yet it is based on the rules of market (Schlesinger 1984: 389). For political parties elections are a type of political market where parties offer their candidates and their policies to win votes in order to gain office. Parties win votes and the control of office. These are private benefits which only the party and its candidates enjoy. But the voters are offered

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<sup>2</sup> Schlesinger (1984) refers to the definition of party given by Anthony Downs (1957) in *An Economic Theory of Democracy*, New York: Harper and Brothers.

candidates and policies by the parties, a kind of benefits which go to everyone regardless of the votes cast. Thus parties offer collective benefits. This is in sharp contrast to the economic market in which both sides to a transaction give and receive private or selective goods. Thus we see a unique combination of properties and a strange character of the party and its ability to adapt to a changing situation around it. Undoubtedly, the parties have to change their policies or candidates due to the political pressure around. Thus Schlesinger (1984) very well describes the parties as “forms of organized trial and error. Thousands of individuals and interests seek to control the party's decisions. They push candidates, frame issues, recruit workers, make alliances, and devise campaigns. Among these competing forces choices are made, choices whose correctness is ultimately determined not by the party but by the electorate. Nevertheless, it is the party organization which assures that the right choices, i.e., those which win elections, are retained and the wrong ones are rejected” (Schlesinger 1984: 390).

### **Right and Left in Politics**

‘Left- Right’ is a well-known polarity on the basis of which the parties are placed in the spectrum of political parties all over the world. The politicians as well as the general public are able to locate such parties along this ‘left-right’ spectrum. They can also differentiate various ideas on issues on the basis of left and right. But on the contrary, the political scientists are unable to find a clear and consistent definition. The well-known historical explanation of the political left/right polarity is based on the seating arrangement of the first French General Assembly, in which the advocates of the political ideas inspired by the Enlightenment were seated on the left, whereas those who supported the *ancient régime* were seated at the right-hand of the president of the Assembly (Bienfait and Beek 2001: 169).

Thus, ‘oriented to the new and the modern’ are generally associated with the left, and ‘conservative’ with the right. However, political scientists realized that this association is insufficient. For example, the supporters of nuclear energy, which is a modern solution of the energy problem, are considered to be ‘on the right,’ while those who want to conserve nature are positioned on the left. They are supposed to be progressive and not



conservative (Bienfait and Beek 2001: 170). Bienfait and Beek quote Mounier. In his classical paper (1951), he presented a comprehensive review of proposals for the basis of the left-right polarity in politics: ‘revolution versus the existing order’; ‘the disenfranchised versus the ruling class’; ‘labour and intellectuals versus money’; ‘freedom versus tyranny’; ‘science and progress versus obscurantism and conservatism’, showing the shortcomings of them all, he concluded: “On n’en sortira pas” (there is no solution) (Bienfait and Beek 2001: 170).

The founding fathers of French social science, Emile Durkheim and Marcel Mauss see the left-right polarity as an instrument in the systems of classification of parties. This has lost the meaning in itself but simply provides a handy tool for classification of the external world. Two angles are important in their writing:

- (1) Symbolic systems are internally coherent and logical;
- (2) Polarity in thinking reflects the distinction between the profane and the sacred: the world of everyday experience versus the world of symbols, such as the Church, God and totem, or whatever it may be (Durkheim and Mauss 1963).

Inspired from these points, Laponce explains the left-right polarity based primarily on the structure of human classification, and secondarily in the historical incident of the first ‘*Assemblée*’ (Assembly) (Bienfait and Beek 2001: 170). He introduces his book *Left and Right* with the disclaimer that, “At no point...do I impose my own definition, my own perception, my own ‘vision’ of what is left and of what is right” (Laponce 1981: 9). On the basis of his ‘interrogation’ of cultures and individuals, he concludes that, “The essence of the left/right contrast (rests) in the contrast between the sacred and the profane on the one hand, between the powerful and the weak on the other” (Laponce 1981: 9).

In 1789, when the French king Louis XVI was in severe financial crisis, he called the ‘*Etats Généraux*’ (General Estates) together on 5<sup>th</sup> May in Versailles. For this occasion ‘*Salle des Menus Plaisirs*,’ some 50 x 25 meters large hall served as a meeting place. The hall was renovated and new benches and seating arrangement were done. The seat of the

king was under a huge canopy. The arrangement was done on the basis of the proceeding session in 1614: the king and his courtier sat at the head of the longitudinal hall. The ‘first estate’ (the clergy) sat at his right hand side facing him. The ‘second estate’ the aristocracy sat on the left of the king. The ‘third estate’ (the bourgeois) sat behind all of them. But the bad acoustics made this hall not suitable as a place of deliberation (Bienfait and Beek 2001: 170). But, shortly after the famous oath in the ‘Jeu de Paumes’ (the Five Court) on June 20 - which is considered to be the psychological start of the Revolution (Schama 1989: 345) - it was decided to restructure the ‘Salle des Menus Plaisirs.’ A complete renovation was done in a hurry and on 23<sup>rd</sup> July, at the start of the first meeting in the new arrangement changed the situation significantly. As the representation per estate had been abandoned, the hall was furnished in a modern way; making two semicircles in theatre fashion. This helped in increasing the acoustics quality of the hall. The seat of the presiding authority was put on one of the long side, between two semicircles. Moreover, there was no canopy (Bienfait and Beek 2001: 170).

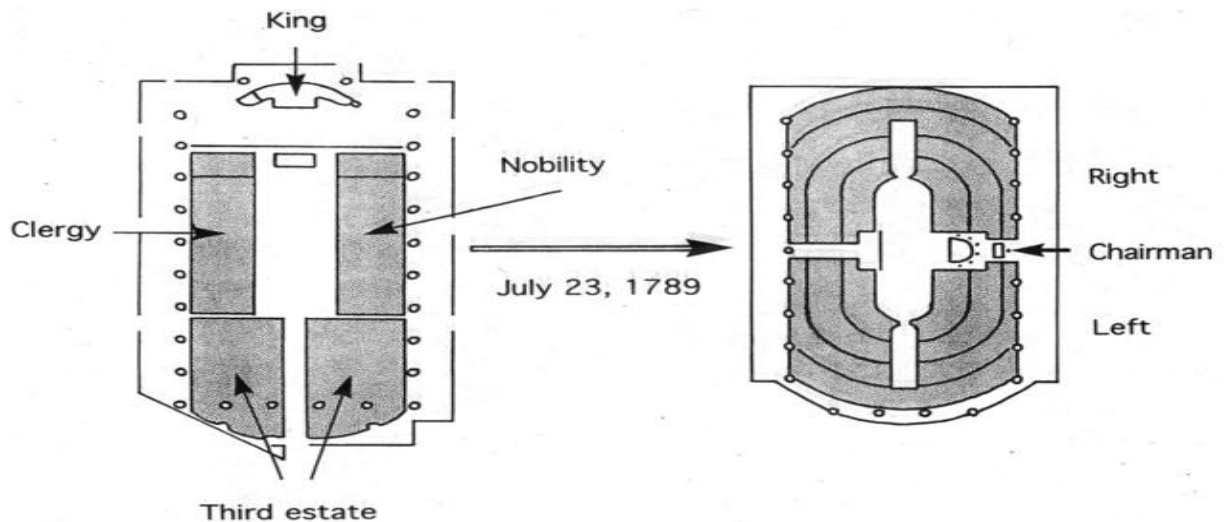


Fig. 1: Seating arrangement in the “Salle des Menus Plaisirs,” before and after refurbishing. Redrawn after Brette 1902

Fig. 1 shows the situation before and after the renovation. Thus, on July 23, at the opening of the session, the high aristocracy and the senior clergy suddenly found themselves at the far right of the chairman. The third estate which used to be far from the king's chair, were now on the left- hand side of the chairman. This simple event, which

took place unintentionally due to the work of the carpenters, must have been the birth of left-right in parliamentary politics. The first real manifestation of this seating arrangement was seen during the famous vote of 11 September 1789 on the judicial power of the king where the delegates sitting on the left of the chair voted for a significant reduction in power and the delegates at right voted to retain the ancient royal regime (Bienfait and Beek 2001: 171).

But it was just the one aspect of the bigger picture. In December 1791, the Assembly was moved to the 'Salle du Manège' in Paris. Now the hall was again refurnished to accommodate 760 Assembly members. After the refurnishing the seating arrangement was drastically changed and the 'right' benches became 'left' and the 'left' benches became 'right'. On this change, the delegate Dulaure writes: "In the legislative meeting the patriots used to sit at the right-hand side of the chairman; on the extreme right is now the so-called Montagne. That place used to be called the left-hand side; but as the seat of the chairman had been replaced, the place is now at his right-hand side. The opposite side, where the Aristocrats attending the meeting used to sit, was the right-hand side. Now it is on the left-hand." The Aristocrats remained in those places at the end of the Legislative Assembly, when it was transformed into the Convention. Dulaure: "I do not want to indicate that the Montagne and its environment only consists of members of that party; I know some who do sit there but have no true allegiance to whatever party; they just are guided by general interest, but the power of habit makes that they stay there" (Dulaure 1793).

Here again the question arises that who are left and who are right. In addition to this we face difficulties in categorizing the views on any political issue. Today, it is not solely related to what happened in the Assemblée of France, it is something more which needs more description. In the modern political landscape, the left and right are the dominant political polarity irrespective of history and irrespective of seating arrangement. For example in England, the governing party sits on the right-hand side of the hall irrespective of its political ideology. In that condition, even if Labour sitting on the right, is a leftist party. In the Israeli Knesset, the parties are arranged mainly on the basis of

size, but the Jerusalem Post uses left and right the same way as in France, England, Germany, or the Netherland (Bienfait and Beek 2001: 173). Adding to the difficulty to differentiate between left and right issues Franzmann and Kaiser (2006) present the idea that parties determine the Left–Right dimension themselves: “The one axiom we start with is that left issues will generally be emphasized by left-wing parties and vice versa” (Franzmann and Kaiser 2006: 166).

Referring to left ideology, Klingemann et al. (2006: 5-6) state that there is no logical or inherent reason why support for peace should be associated with government interventionism. This is only justified because these statements are emphasised by such political parties: in this condition the ideology of party plays a great role. For instance, that ‘Left’ in Sweden and Italy oppose European integration. It is possible that the left parties are sceptical of European integration; nevertheless, this does not imply that this attitude is constitutive of a Left ideology (Klingemann et al. 2006: 5-6). Front National (FN) in France, once supported the European integration is now opposing it and are more sceptical towards it nowadays.

Norberto Bobbio (1996) in his book *Left and Right: The Significance of a Political Distinction* traces the history of the political thought of both Left and Right. He correctly points out that “‘left’ and ‘right’ are two antithetical terms which for more than two centuries have been used habitually to signify the contrast between the ideologies and movements which divide the world of political thought and action” (Bobbio 1996: 1). He analyses this distinction and argues, “Left and Right are ultimately divided by different attitudes to equality.” He points out that the “Left struggle for greater equality and that the Right legitimizes inequality. The policy of the Left aims at making those who are unequal more equal. In order to achieve this goal, the Left favours the welfare state and the right general education” (Bobbio 1996: 71). Thus the welfare state and the right to higher education are means towards the abolishment of inequality (the ends).

Bobbio (1996) says that defining the Right is more difficult. He points out two ways of legitimizing inequality. As far as the Rousseau’s model is concerned, it says that that men are born equal but are made unequal by civil society and on the other hand Nietzsche says

that men are born unequal by nature and that this, in turn, is good for the structure of society. Bobbio (1996) points out:

“Just as Rousseau saw inequality as artificial, and therefore to be condemned and abolished for contradicting the fundamental equality of nature, so Nietzsche saw equality as artificial, and therefore to be abhorred for contradicting the beneficent inequality which nature desired for humanity. The contrast could not be starker: the egalitarian condemns social inequality in the name of natural equality, and the anti-egalitarian condemns social equality in the name of natural inequality” (Bobbio 1996: 68-9).

In view of the above distinction between the different ways of legitimizing inequality refers that the Right is divided on the concept of inequality and equality. This difference in the concepts of equality and inequality can be very well seen in the three great classical ideologies of the 19th and 20th centuries: Conservatism, Liberalism and Socialism (Bobbio 1996: 49).

Socialism (Left) is concerned with equality, whereas, Conservatism and Liberalism (Right) justify inequality in the above described manner. Conservatives follow Nietzsche's conviction and consider inequality as given by nature. Jahn says that Conservatives think that “the traditions and a natural social order place men and women in the hierarchical order necessary for an organic society and help members of society to live in social and physical harmony with each other” (Jahn, 2011: 751). In contrast, Liberalism follows the idea that “human activities determine men's and women's own destiny in the ranks of the social order. The unable and lazy are poor, while the able and industrial are rich”. This allows individuals to fulfil their own potential by advocating the protection of individual freedom, which implies liberation from state involvement. Thus, freedom becomes the key category for Liberalism. Free market economy, free enterprises and minimal state regulation are its basic claims (Jahn, 2011: 751).

Contrary to the right, the radical left claims for the nationalisation of enterprises and a control of government on economy. It also advocate for economic planning and market regulation. These ideas get leftness from the fact of regularizing free market which is a property of the Liberal Right. Jahn says that other statements like the expansion of the welfare state and education are not clearly left agenda. These statements give preference

for more equality but they are not associated with the left ideology. In fact, the formation of welfare state represents a compromise between free market capitalism and Socialism and therefore, should not be considered as a core Left or Right statement (Jahn 2011: 752).

As far as the Right is concerned, identifying the Liberal and Conservative statement is a very difficult task. From a leftist point of view, the most radical liberal statement could be the rejection of welfare state. This statement rejects the compromise between capital and labour and it is completely opposite of the Left ideology. The liberal right is more associated with the claim of 'Free Enterprise' and 'Economic Orthodoxy'. As Jahn say that these statements are clearly related to Liberalism, the most difficult part of this ideology is to assign the statement about freedom to the Liberal cluster<sup>3</sup> (Jahn, 2011: 752).

Conservatism is mostly related to tradition and natural social order. Its statements emphasize more on 'Traditional Morality'. It advocates the concept of natural social order to bring 'Social Harmony'. It also refers to social solidarity and social justice which increase the closeness to the left. Other ideas of the conservatives are related to the support of the 'National Way of Life', 'Law and Order' and 'Political Authority'. But it should be made clear that authoritarianism is not the core ideology of Conservatives. As Bobbio (1996) convincingly demonstrates, "authoritarian standpoints better describe the distinction between extremists and moderates for both the Right and Left positions" (Bobbio 1996: 78-79). Thus, it is also interesting to point out the similarities between the radical Left and the radical Right:

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<sup>3</sup> Freedom is certainly a core concept of liberal ideology. However, the coding instruction of the statement 'Freedom and Human Rights: positive' (per201) is ambiguous, since it includes elements of the concept of individual freedom, which belongs to the Liberal discourse, but it also encompasses human rights, which make it to a great degree also a statement and claim of the Left. The coding instruction shows the ambiguity of this issue which refers to economic and civil freedom: 'Favourable mention of importance of personal freedom and civil right; freedom from bureaucratic control; freedom of speech; freedom from coercion in the political and economic spheres; individualism in the manifesto country and other countries' (Klingemann et al., 2006: 187).

“a left-wing extremist and a right-wing extremist share a rejection of democracy...Their rejection of democracy brings them together, not because of their position on the political spectrum, but because they occupy the two extreme points of that spectrum. The extremes meet” (Bobbio 1996: 21).

Jonathan White (2011) expresses the same difficulty of differentiating left and right. He states in his work *Left and Right as Political Resources* that the representations of the political world can never be definitive. He says that the description given on the basis of Left-Right framework will also be challenged. This is because there cannot be a perfect symmetry of understanding across all actors in political field. Thus, White points out that people differ on at least one of the following points:

- (1) The foremost thing where people may disagree is the conception of ‘Left’ and ‘Right’. What does these terms mean? Given the ambiguity of these terms, it is debatable what they want to explain-whether it refers to conceptions of equality or the relation between equality and other values (e.g. liberty). In addition to this, whether it refers to ‘the level of commitment to rectifying inequality’ or ‘to conceptions of human nature’. It is also not clear whether it differentiates between stability and progress.
- (2) Even if people agree on the conception of the Left and the Right, they may disagree on where to locate a political party. There can be a non-agreement on who is left and who is right. And if it is considered as poles of a continuum, is there a Centre in the political spectrum?
- (3) On a most radical note, people can even question the basic concept of Left and Right to express the distribution of political views.

The political world is ineradicably complex, and no representation of it is likely to overcome this. There is no ‘political grammar’ (Eatwell, 1989) by which one can regulate definitively the correct and incorrect application of the Left–Right scheme (White 2011: 126). White (2011) says that to describe a party as ‘far Left’ one have to describe two things: the ideology which is related to the Left as well as the features of being ‘extreme’ of such party (i.e. unusual, non-mainstream). Depending on the characteristics of such

parties, they are placed on the political spectrum. Thus, Left and Right becomes a resource for political actors (White 2011: 127).

¶¶¶ Sartori (1976) says that these days the Left are generally associated with innocence and the Right are associated with heartlessness (Sartori 1976: 298). Moreover, White says that the use of these terms can also express the view that the opponents view regarding an issue is merely one aspect among many. If some statement is labelled as ‘right-wing viewpoint’ it means that there are still many more valid viewpoints (White 2011: 133).

To explain the axis of the Left and Right Beinfait and Beek argue:

“The form in which the fundamental polarity has manifested itself in Europe, from time immemorial, lives on in our words, our expressions, our uses, that is, in our heads. It has given us the framework for the classification of political wishes, impulses, and viewpoints. For some of these, their place in the polarity is evident: the wish to preserve the generally accepted order is clearly on the right while ambitions to overthrow this order are just as clearly on the left. But other issues can be located along the left/right axis as well” (Bienfait and Beek 2001: 176).

The parties that are located near to the left are the social-democratic, communist and left-socialist parties. They label themselves as leftist and are accepted by the mass media and experts. The key programmes of these parties are generally in favour of economic regulation, a strong welfare state and economic equality (Knutsen 1998: 73). Knutsen (1998) further says that it is the economic stance of the leftist parties which define them as leftist. However, the historical aspect of this division has also contributed in this regard. He quotes Herbert Kitschelt to describe the New Right. He quotes:

“The New Right constitutes the mirror image and opposite pole of a New Left that began to mobilize in the 1960s... On the one hand, the New Left stands for ‘leftist’ income redistribution by way of encompassing social policies in the economic sphere, and ‘libertarian’ democratic participation and maximum individual autonomy in politics and the culture sphere. The New Radical Right..., on the other hand, advocates rightist free market economics and ‘authoritarian’ hierarchical arrangements in politics, together with a limitation of diversity and individual autonomy in culture expression” (Herbert Kitschelt quoted in Knutsen, 1998: 73-74).



Environmental politics, mentioned above, is a good example to examine left- right orientation in support for issues. The wish to conserve nature should be on the right, at first sight. But it appears to be an issue which is embraced by the left, as is evident by the names of strongly left-wing parties in the Netherlands (“GroenLinks”-GreenLeft) and Germany (“Grünen”-Greens). Bienfait and Beek suggest that the association of ‘nature’ with ‘left’ may have followed another route: “conservation of nature is a struggle against the forces of industry and the existing economic powers, together a formidable fortress of the right. Nature by contrast, is seen as weak (a characteristic of ‘left’ in itself), and in her desperate struggle against the threats from the right she finds her allies, logically, at the left” (Bienfait and Beek, 2001: 177).

In the contemporary world the changes are occurring with a fast speed and this lead to the augmentation of the problems arose to define the political system on the basis of ‘Left’ and ‘Right’. It has gone through large variations limiting the efforts to define this polarity. Today, this polarity can be understood only in a specific time and in specific place. The current context helps us to classify the political feelings in the ancient polarity. Though, it is ancient yet, it is fully alive (Bienfait and Beek, 2001: 177). One can conclude with the proposition that Left-Right classification is a theoretical concept with a never ending empirical analysis. This is very much time and country bound. It has different meaning in different society or country. Different statements may have different meanings on a Left-Right scale in different country.

### **Extreme Right Wing in Post-World War Era**

Defeat of fascism in World War II was a turning point in the history of extreme right-wing parties. In Eatwell’s words, “Waves of extreme and radical right-wing activity have been washing up over European shores during the half-century since the total military defeat of fascism” (Eatwell 1998: 3). After World War II, the extreme right in Western Europe was associated with the atrocities of the Nazis and their puppet regimes (Rydgren 2005: 413-37) and was therefore politically isolated and insignificant in most countries of the region. But from the early 1980s, an unexpected third wave of right-wing extremist party activity has covered all over the continent. All of a sudden, parties that were dubbed

as 'extreme,' 'radical,' 'populist,' or 'new' right proved highly successful at the elections in countries such as Austria, Belgium, Denmark, France, Italy, Norway, Sweden, and Switzerland (Arzheimer 2009: 259).

Hainsworth describes the situation of extreme right more explicitly. He argues that the World War II had a great impact on the fortunes of the extreme right in Western Europe. The defeat of fascism and Nazism and 'victory of liberal democracy' and 'emergence of stable political structures' with new electoral systems kept the extreme right at the verge of extinction. In the emerging post-war order, the extreme right was severely marginalized. The economic growth, lower unemployment rates and discrediting of pseudo-scientific racism gave no room to the extreme party to reemerge in the early post-war era. Nevertheless, by the end of the twentieth century, new political movements started getting victories and achieved the mainstream status in political milieu. It was mainly because of the distance from the memory of the Second World War and the problems prevailing in the society at that time which was manipulated by these parties (Hainsworth 2008: 1-2).

As Hainsworth puts it in a wider context, "accelerated globalisation, European integration, migratory flows and multi-culturalism have emerged as noteworthy developments that have resulted in a critical and watchful response from parties on the extreme right. In addition, some observers have placed emphasis on the growth in Western society of a certain post-materialism that has shifted the perspectives through which individuals approach politics and values in a post- industrial world" (Hainsworth 2008: 2).

The extreme right has emerged as an important force in the Western Europe in the 1980s. In some countries this movement has performed really well in elections. Some has won a significant amount of votes as some has even entered in the process to form government. In addition to this, these parties have managed to maintain the momentum once gained in the 1980s. This has proved the scholars wrong that associated extreme right-wing as 'flash-in-the-pan phenomenon'. The continuity of the percentage of votes attracted by these parties has also proved that they are not banking merely on the 'protest vote' as was

said for them during the 1980s. In some countries, the extreme right-wing parties have won a range of local, regional, national and supranational elections (Hainsworth 2008: 24).

The extreme right in Western Europe has performed repeatedly well in recent years in Austria, Belgium, France and Italy. In Austria and in Italy, the extreme right-wing parties have participated in the formation of coalition governments. In Belgium and in France, the extreme right-wing parties have not succeeded in this aspect. But, in France, the Front National (FN) has attracted a good section of voters in its favour. In other countries, notably Denmark, Norway and Switzerland, the extreme right-wing parties have played a significant role in their country' politics (Hainsworth 2008: 25).

Hainsworth (2008) says that each party is a product of its own circumstances, opportunities, political culture and party system and it always get influenced by these variables. In addition to it, for the study of extreme right-wing parties the developments like globalization, deindustrialization, migration and European Integration need to be taken into account. These developments showed their impact on different countries in different manner. However, these parties were very much facilitated by the socio-economic, political, cultural and structural change occurred in the society in the 1980s. These parties have presented themselves as a solution to the problems arose in the society due to these developments (Hainsworth 2008: 25).

Since the 1960s a new trend has arrived which attracted the voters from the traditional Left-wing parties. These movements were; environmentalism, feminism, left-wing libertarianism, anti-globalisation, participation, multiculturalism and anti-war sentiment. In the same manner, there were movements like right-wing authoritarianism, ethnocentrism, anti-immigrant sentiment, insecurity and Euroscepticism drew voters from the mainstream right-wing parties to the extreme right-wing parties. On the other hand, these parties have attracted voters that were supposedly the stronghold of the Left. Thus, these parties have harmed parties on both the sides of the political spectrum. This success is culminated in the form of victories of these parties in elections on various levels. However, this success should not be much exaggerated as the mainstream parties are still

in a strong position and are in power. They have been resilient and inventive to counter the impact done by the extreme right-wing parties (Hainsworth 2008: 26-27).

Describing the origin of the extreme right-wing parties in Western Europe, Ignazi (1992) argues:

“It could be said that the Greens and the extreme-right parties are, respectively, the legitimate and the unwanted children of the New Politics: as the Greens came out of the silent revolution, the extreme-right parties derive from a reaction to it, a sort of “silent counter-revolution”” (Ignazi 1992: 6).

Ignazi (2002) explains the scenario for the development of the extreme right in Western Europe as:

“The postwar economic and cultural transformations have blurred class identification and loosened the traditional loyalties linked to precise social groups. The development of the tertiary sector, the decline of the capability of labor relations to determine social relations, and the process of atomization and secularization have all nurtured different cleavages and aggregations. The conflict over the distribution of resources is replaced by conflict over the allocation of values” (Ignazi 2002: 27-28).

Givens (2005) explains the rise of these parties in respect to the post-materialist theory. He states:

“In the climate of change (incorporating elements such as precariousness, insecurity, skills shortage and labour mobility), extreme right parties have become attractive options for so-called ‘modernisation losers’. The latter have been defined as ‘those who have lost out in the transition from a manufacturing-based economy to a services-based economy’” (Givens 2005: 7)

In the above context, Hainsworth argues that the space has been opened for new political parties such as “the extreme right, the Greens, Euro-sceptic movements, regionalist and micro/minority nationalist movements.” In the same way new theme came into the political debate such as “the environment, immigration, European integration, territoriality and the constitutional nature of the state”. In such circumstances, the extreme right wing parties has grown in a remarkable manner and they influenced the political system in their respective countries in a significant manner (Hainsworth, 2008: 27)

In France too, the right and the extreme right had a tough time in the immediate post-war years. Pierre Laval, who had lead the government during the Vichy regime had been tried for treason by the new French government in 1945 and shot, Marshal Pétain, who was the president during the Vichy regime was imprisoned for life. In the first few decades, the extreme right was totally marginalized but was not extinguished. In the 1950s, movements such as the *Poujadism* and the *Algérie Française* (French Algeria) kept the fire burning. From the 1980s, the Front National has been dominated the political system (Davies, 2002: 122).

In the early years of the post-world War period, some efforts to revive the extreme right were done under the leadership of Maurice Bardèche, a professor and proponent of the Vichy regime. The real ‘comeback’ of the extreme right-wing began with the Algerian War. The movement was carried out by *Algérie Française* (French Algeria). This was a group of people who wanted Algeria as a part of France. This movement started in 1954 and it ended with the grant of autonomy to Algeria by Evian Accords in 1962 (Davies 2002: 122)

In the meantime, in mainland France, ‘a violent and anarchic protest movement’ was conducted under the supervision of Pierre Poujade, a leader of small shopkeepers. This movement was formally known as the UDCA (*Union de Défense des Commerçants et Artisans*) (Union for the Defense of Shopkeepers and Craftsmen). It was born in the early 1950s and won 13 per cent of the national votes and fifty-two seats in the 1956 parliamentary elections (Davies 2002: 129). Shields defines Poujadism as “an anti-parliamentary movement, a symptom of the need for reform in France, gaining a national audience for a protest that had moved beyond tax reform to challenge the political regime itself. The anti-Semitic tenor of the movement was also signaled” (Shields 2007: 67). This movement was basically benefitted by the post-war agricultural crisis but it lost its political force by the end of the 1950s (Davies 2002: 129).

In 1972, the Front National (FN) was founded and Jean-Marie Le Pen became the president of the party. Davies argues that in the following years, the FN emerged as the

most influential neo-fascist movement in Western Europe (Davies 2002: 133). Hainsworth (1994) claims, “the emergence of the FN has posed all kinds of problems for political rivals, unsure of how to interpret and respond to the newcomer to the fore of French politics” (Hainsworth 1994: 53). Similarly, Simmons (1996) argues that the ambiguity of the FN is the key to understand this phenomenon. He says, “The essential problem is... to determine what side of the amorphous boundary that separates the extreme right from fascism the Front falls. Is it, as some would argue, a neo-fascist party in disguise?” (Simmons 1996: 2). Marcus (1995) is well aware of the vagueness of the FN but he tries to explain it in broader context. He relates the rise of the Front National with the result of developments taking place in contemporary Western Europe (Marcus 1995: 164).

In 1974, Le Pen won only 0.75 per cent or support of fewer than 200,000 voters in the French presidential election and his party achieved only 0.33 per cent in the 1981 parliamentary elections (Shields 2007: 171). In 1981 presidential elections, he could not even contest and had to become a spectator because he failed to secure support of 500 elected officials drawn from 30 departments to show the eligibility to become a candidate as directed in legislative (Shields 2007: 171). As the party was not doing well at elections, it was close to meltdown in the early 1980s and was not even the largest party on the extreme right in France (Hainsworth 2008: 28). The turning-point came in 1983 when the movement scored an astonishing success in a local election in Dreux. Within a year, it achieved national recognition when it won 11 per cent of the vote winning ten of eighty-one seats in the European elections (Davies 2002: 133).

The emergence and re-emergence of extreme right parties in Europe and elsewhere in the world raise the question of collective memory and its role in history, its meaning in current society and its possible manipulation in politics. Why and how are people today seduced by extreme right ideologies, movements and/or parties? (Orfali 2006: 715). There are so many questions raised by the emergence and the success of the FN in France. What is the ideology of this party? Which party family does it belong to? How does it re-emerge? What were the reasons for the success of this party in France? And,

what were the effects of the rise of the FN in the political party system in France? Moreover, what effects the FN caused in policy making, especially in the field of Immigration Policy of France? These are some questions which need to be answered. This study will try to explore the answers to these questions. In this regard, the next chapter will analyse the ideology of the extreme right-wing parties. It will also explore the differences between right-wing extremism and fascism.

## CHAPTER 2

### **Extreme Right Wing Parties: definition and ideology**

Political parties can be differentiated on various bases. One of the most prominent bases of classification is based on their ideology. It holds both theoretical and practical merits if such distinction is done on the basis of ideology (Mudde, 2000: 2). Mudde (2000) in his book *the ideology of the extreme right* quotes Von Beyme for constructing several typologies to classify political parties. These typologies are based on several criteria but the most important criterion is of ideology: ‘that of the familles spirituelles (spiritual families)’. Based on ideology, Beyme suggests nine ‘spiritual families’: (i) liberal and radical parties; (ii) conservative parties; (iii) socialist and social democratic parties; (iv) christian democratic parties; (v) communist parties; (vi) agrarian parties; (vii) regional and ethnic parties; (viii) right-wing extremist parties; and (ix) the ecology movement (Mudde, 2000: 2).

On the method of classification of political parties on above mentioned criteria, Beyme says: “The classification of individual parties into these nine party families is done on the basis of two ‘ideological’ criteria: the name of the party, and, when this is not (or no longer) satisfactory, the voters’ perception of party programmes and ideological position” (Von Beyme 1985: 3). “Although party ideology is said to be the most important criterion for classification, it is used only in an indirect way, i.e. through the eyes of the party itself (party name) or of the voters. Thus it is not the researcher who assesses the ideology of the different parties” (Mudde, 2000: 3). This study will focus on right-wing extremist parties and this chapter will examine the definition, ideology, nature and kinds of right-wing extremist parties.

#### **Right-wing Extremism**

The growing debate in European politics and a range of books and articles which are available portray different aspects of extreme right-wing parties in Western Europe and France in particular. However, the idea of extreme right-wing is not a new phenomenon



in European politics although there are some differences in the neo-populist parties and the earlier ones in France and Western Europe. They themselves have redefined the ideology of the extreme right. Today, the very definition of the extreme right-wing is under question due to the works and programs undertaken and the kind of issues raised by these parties. There are various issues in the last quarter of the twentieth century like; immigration, European Integration, globalization which helped the extreme right-wing politics to flourish in the new environment in Europe.

The extreme right-wing politics has been defined by various academicians as well as scholars in different ways. As Mudde (1995) says, “the term right-wing extremism is today quite current in the social and political jargon, there is no equivocal definition” (Mudde 1995: 205). He says, “almost every scholar in the field points to the lack of a generally accepted definition. Even though the term right-wing extremism itself is accepted by a majority of the scholars, there is no consensus on the exact definition of the term” (Mudde, 2000: 10). Other observers too have pointed to extreme right-wing as “non-parliamentary forces and, at times, violent movements as constituting a specific case of extreme rightism. When there is an overlap on the far right between electoral-focused organizations and violent, non-parliamentary movements, again there is a scope for confusion and interpretation” (Paul Hainsworth 2008: 7). Davies quotes Billing in his book ‘*The Extreme right in France, 1789 to the present*’ explaining the scale of the problem of defining extreme right-wing as,

“The term ‘extreme right’ is a particularly troubling one to use in political analysis. In ordinary speech and in journalistic writing one could use the term without being misunderstood, and intuitively there seems to be a set of political parties, movements and tendencies which ‘go together’, for example all outwardly Nazi parties. However, in an academic context this is not sufficient: one would have to justify why such parties are being called both extreme and right-wing. And it is here that the problems start” (Davies, 2002: 10).

In context of France, Hainsworth (1994) in his book ‘*the Extreme Right in Europe and the USA*’ says,

“The concept of the right... is elusive and, by extension, so is that of the extreme right. Of course, it would be wonderfully convenient - though academic wishful thinking - if leaders, parties and movements labeled themselves extreme right to

make easier the task of comparison and analysis. Instead, organisations studiously avoid and reject extreme right labelling” (Hainsworth, 1994: 3).

He further says that extreme right in France is almost indefinable (Hainsworth, 1994: 30). Discussing the difficulties to define extreme right parties, Winock (1994) in his book *‘Histoire d’Extrême Droite en France’* suggests that one should “not get hung up on the precise definition of the term.” According to him, it is a “problematic” term but “it is still used by everybody and as such is an aid to understanding” (Winock, 1994: 7)

J. G. Shields (2007) in the introduction of his book *‘The Extreme Right in France’* explains the difficulty faced by him in defining the phenomenon. He says,

“Defining political movements on the extreme right is notoriously difficult, the more so when such movements exhibit, as they often do, characteristics that can be ascribed to quite different political traditions. A relatively recent review of the literature on right-wing extremism found 26 distinct definitions combining 58 defining features. As such definitions have proliferated, so too have the terms employed to encapsulate them. A brief list of terms applied by commentators to the FN alone - ‘extreme-right’, ‘far-right’, ‘radical-right’, ‘new radical-right’, ‘nationalist’, ‘populist’, ‘national-populist’, ‘neo-populist’, ‘radical right-wing populist’, ‘fascist’, ‘neo-fascist’, ‘third wave right-wing extremist’ - highlights the problem of affixing labels that are not themselves tightly sealed to movements that can respond to some or all of these descriptors in varying degrees” (Shields, 2007: 10).

Thus we see that there is no consensus on defining the extreme right since it is an ambiguous phenomenon. It contains various aspects, some from history and some are developed during 1980s. It has distanced itself from the negative aspects of ‘Fascism’ or ‘Nazism’ during World War II. Though, a number of scholars still connect it from ‘Fascism’ and ‘Nazism’.

### **Definition of Extreme Right-Wing Parties**

Until 1960s, extreme right-wing parties were usually associated with terms like ‘fascism’ and ‘Nazism’ and then ‘neo-fascism’ and ‘neo-Nazism’ (Hainsworth, 2008: 8). Hainsworth further says,

“The term ‘right-wing radicalism’ was utilized as a collective term to explain emergent political phenomena and thereafter the label ‘right-wing extremism’ has been fashionably since the mid-1970s. Earlier both the terms were used together,

but ‘right-wing extremism’ replaced the latter in the course of time. Though, it remained the synonymous of neo-fascism until the 1980s” (Hainsworth, 2008: 8).

Though defining extreme right has been a difficult task for scholars, a number of definitions were given. Here also there is a no consensus among the scholars to define it. Winock defines extreme right in French context mentioning five main features in it namely: the rejection of parliament, the attachment to strong government, the hatred of socialism and communism, the belief in the closure of frontiers, and a consistent desire to ‘rebuild la maison française’ (Winock, 1994: 11-15). Davies adds three more features in it: “the ability to exploit crisis conditions, the belief in direct action, the use of violence (sometimes), a constant trust in ‘charismatic’ cult leaders, a tendency to communicate in both populist and intellectual terms (occasionally at the same time) and, more often than not, failure” (Davies, 2002: 12).

Backer defines the extreme right in the German context as “movements that reject ‘democratic political pluralism in favor of a totalitarian or authoritarian form of government’. Right-wing radicalism is seen to be anti-democratic in orientation and to share the nationalism and racism of the extreme right, without being totally hostile to liberal democracy” (Backer 2000: 88).

Piero Ignazi (2006) in the introduction of his book ‘*Extreme Right Parties in Western Europe*’ explains right-wing extremist parties as:

“no longer neo-fascist parties. On the other hand, they are perceived as right-extremist because they unquestionably occupy the right-most position of the political spectrum. However, as these new extreme right parties do not share any commitment to neo-fascism they are a different type of extreme right. Basically, these parties are anti-system as they undermine the (democratic) system’s legitimacy through their discourse and actions. They are fiercely opposed to the idea of parliamentary representation and partisan conflicts, and hence they argue for corporatist or, mainly, direct and personalistic mechanisms of representation; they are against the idea of pluralism because it endangers (the ideal of ) societal harmony; they are against the universal idea of equality as rights should be allotted on the basis of ascriptive elements (race, language, ethnicity); and finally they are somewhat authoritarian because they conceive supra-individual and collective authority (State, nation, community) as more important than the individual one” (Ignazi, 2006: 2).

He further states that these parties are the by-product of post-materialism. They provide an answer to the demands which are generated by post-industrial society. The traditional or main-stream parties often fail to address such demands. Due to industrialization, there is an influx of immigrants in society which is further promoted by globalization on economic level and supra-nationalism at the political level. Racism and Xenophobia have come as a response to these developments. Besides, characteristics like ‘charismatic’ leader, more law and order, authoritarianism, rigid moral standards are also associated with extreme right-wing which is seen as an answer to the demand generated by post-materialism. Thus, the parties in extreme right family exhibit different set of properties which differentiate them from neo-fascist tradition (Ignazi, 2006: 2).

Carter (2005) explains the quality of the Extreme right-wing parties in accordance to Ignazi. Carter says, “The right-wing extremism comprises two key anti-constitutional and anti-democratic elements. These are ‘a rejection of the fundamental values, procedures and institutions of the democratic constitutional state (a feature that makes right-wing extremism extremist)’ and ‘a rejection of the principle of fundamental human equality (a feature that makes right-wing extremism right-wing)” (Carter 2005: 17). Today, several labels like fascist, neo-fascist, neo-populist, new populist, radical right, radical right-wing populist, far right, populist, right-wing populist, anti-immigrant and new right are used to portray extreme right (Hainsworth 2008: 9).

### **Nature/Ideology of Extreme Right-Wing Parties**

There are different opinions among the scholars when it comes to explaining the nature of extreme right-wing. Many authoritative commentators explain the nature of the extreme right-wing by associating it with fascism during World War II. Hainsworth argues,

“This is not surprising since there are continuities, as well as novelties, in the make-up of the post-war and contemporary extreme right. On the one hand, the contemporary extreme right is careful not to be too linked with pre-war extremist parties and their methods. On the other hand, there are similarities with the latter. Indeed, some of the extreme right parties have varying degree of connection with the high period of fascism and its exponents. Similarly, they pursue a discourse that marks them out as parties and movements that are not bound by the usual conventions of liberal-democratic politics” (Hainsworth 2008: 13).

Davies says that starting from De Maistre till Poujadism and Front National (FN) all such individuals as well as movements share the label of ‘extreme right’ for over the last 200 years (Davies, 2002: 11). On the one hand where scholars accept the continuity of the tradition of extreme right way back from the French Revolution, there are some scholars who differ from it<sup>1</sup>.

Davies states that these parties bring some newness in them still they bestow an element of heritage (Davies, 2002: 12). He gives the example of FN as a right-wing extremist party. He says,

“Today’s FN is a good example of a far-right movement that is both ‘new’ and ‘old’. It has developed distinctive positions on modern issues such as Europe and immigration, embraced twenty-first century technology in the shape of the internet, and adapted seamlessly to the world of 24-hour news. The ultimate in mediatic politicians, Le Pen is in many ways the personification of modernity. That said, it is also true that the FN situates itself in line with tradition. Whether knowingly or unknowingly - and for most of the time it is the former - the movement still honours the memory of *Algérie Française*, still makes use of Poujadist vocabulary, still emphasizes Vichyite themes, still talks a rabble-rousing language reminiscent of the inter-war leagues, still imitates the populism of Boulanger, still apes the ‘rooted’ nationalism of Barrès, and still associates itself with anti-revolutionary and counter-revolutionary politics” (davies, 2002: 13).

Explaining the nature of the extreme right-wing party in Italy, the Italian Social Movement (MSI), which came into existence in the immediate post-war years (in 1946) Hainsworth (2008) says, “it was founded out of admiration for Benito Mussolini and in sympathy with the late war-time wave of radical anti-capitalist, anti-liberal-democratic and anti-communist fascism” (Hainsworth 2008: 13). For a longer period of time, the MSI showed its fascist nostalgia and was thus considered as a neo-fascist party. In the mid-1990s, the party went through a makeover as National Alliance (AN). At this time there were a great doubt about the reliability shift in ideology of the party. The doubts

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<sup>1</sup> Michael Minkenberg (2000: 170-71) suggests that any attempt to understand the contemporary radical right requires sensitivity to few basic realities. First, contemporary right-wing radicalism is a transnational phenomenon and can therefore only be fully understood from a comparative perspective; second, it is a modern phenomenon, which has to be understood in the context of contemporary socioeconomic and sociocultural trends and developments; and third, it is a complex and variegated phenomenon, which eschews simple taxonomy and typology.

were quite obvious because most of the people at the core of the party remained the same having affinity towards fascism. Though the party acquired liberal-democratic principal, the nostalgic affinity towards 'fascism' was always there in the heart of the cadres of the party (Hainsworth 2008: 13).

On the nature of the extreme right-wing parties in Western Europe Eatwell (2006) argues "the most dangerous forms of contemporary fascism are those who have adopted more conservative forms of synthesis and which no longer preach forms of radical rebirth for the masses" (Eatwell, 2006: 107). Again Eatwell says, "These operate both within and around important groupings, such as the French National Front and the British National Party" (Eatwell, 2006: 107). Ignazi says,

"Although fascist and neo-fascist parties are located on the extreme right, not all right-wing extremist parties or movements are fascist or neo-fascist. Other parties with a political culture radically opposed to the liberal-democratic system can be located in the extreme right political family. Thus, even though fascism has served as a very significant ideological reference point for some political parties and movements to attribute 'the intellectual-ideological tradition of the extreme right only to fascism' is too narrow" (Ignazi, 2002: 24-25).

Hainsworth (1994) says about the contemporary extreme right-wing politics,

"Central to the extreme right's discourse is the question of identity, national identity drawing upon language, religion, culture, history and other aspects. Nation, national identity, ethnocentrism: these are at the core of the extreme right's value system. The rhetoric of the extreme right is based upon a vision of the nation supreme, heroic, pure and unsullied by alien forces such as Third World immigration and communist ideology... National-populism, although not simply a preserve of the extreme right, helps largely to differentiate the extreme right from the moderate or traditional right, with the former often able to attract a significant number of voters – working-class, ex-left wing, unemployed, disaffected youth, former abstentionists and first-time voters – temporarily (or otherwise) denied to the latter" (Hainsworth, 1994: 9-10).

Hainsworth (2008) again says "the more successful extreme right parties have struck the chord with many voters because their spokespersons purport to understand and to be on the same wavelength as the people, to come from them and to be rooted in the same historical-cultural traditions. In this sense, the contemporary extreme right is a populist, neo-populist, new populist or national-populist movement" (Hainsworth, 2008: 19).

Betz (1994) suggested that the radical right-wing parties of the late 1980s and early 1990s were deliberately “distancing themselves from the backward-looking, reactionary politics of the traditional extremist (i.e. neo-fascist and neo-Nazi) right.” Betz labels them populist based on their “unscrupulous use and instrumentalization of diffuse public sentiments of anxiety and disenchantment and their appeal to the common man and his allegedly superior common sense” (Betz, 1994: 3-4). Betz used the term “reactionary” above to emphasize the oppositional character of contemporary radical right-wing parties (Williams, 2010: 115).

### **Extreme Right and Fascism**

For more than three decades, Fascism was directly linked to the post-war extreme right-wing. It was mainly due to the dominance of Movimento Sociale Italiano (MSI), an Italian neo-fascist party, over the extreme right party family in Europe. This was the situation until 1980s. As earlier said, MSI was founded in an attempt to cherish the war time history. Indeed it demonstrated nothing but nostalgia to fascism until 1980s before the coming of various contemporary extreme right-wing parties.

As far as fascism is concerned, before going further, we need to explain this phenomenon. As Kevin Passmore (2002) describes the history of the term in his book *‘Fascism: A very short introduction’* “The term ‘fascist’ was first applied to a political movement combining ultranationalism with hostility both to the left and to established conservatism by Mussolini in 1919. Three years later Mussolini came to power as the head of a coalition backed by conservatives, and in 1926 he began to establish a full-scale dictatorship. By this time Fascism was widely admired by a plethora of distinguished political and literary figures outside Italy, not all of them on the right” (Passmore, 2002: 10). He explains Fascism from a Marxist point of view as: “Fascism in power is the open, terroristic dictatorship of the most reactionary, the most chauvinistic, the most imperialistic elements of finance capitalism” (Passmore, 2002: 14-15). There is always a problem of consensus among scholars when it comes to define a concept. Here also Passmore disagrees with the definition of fascism given by Roger Griffin where he describes fascism with the characteristics of having a leader cult, paramilitarism, mass

rallies, and corporatist economics. He says that these characteristics were basically due to war. He defines fascism as “a form of ultranationalist ideology and practice. It condemns socialism, feminism, capitalism, and any other ‘ism’ on the grounds that these ideologies place some other criteria (class, gender, economic interest, and so on) above the nation” (Passmore, 2002: 25-26).

Ignazi (2006) quotes Emilio Gentile (1996) for describing fascism as,

“a clear and brutal opposition to freedom, equality, happiness and peace as life ideals; ... it exalted irrationality, the drive of power by the selected minorities, the obedience of the masses, and the sacrifice of the individual to the community, conceived as the state and the nation... . The fascists never intended to defend freedom and rationality; ...fascism never promised emancipation and liberation; sacrifice, austerity, contempt for hedonism and happiness, discipline and unconditioned loyalty are the necessary and enforced virtues for the power of the state and the nation (Ignazi, 2006: 20).

Fascism, until 1980s, was the ideological source of extreme right wing. There were some fringes in other European countries which follow the legacy of war time (Ignazi, 2002: 21). In 1980s, when a new wave of extreme right came into existence there was a tendency of maintaining the distance from these war time legacy. One of the striking differences between them was the acceptance of parliamentary system by these parties. There was no hostility towards the parliamentary and democratic institutions among these parties. Adding to that, they took a radical nativist position on cultural protectionism. Their argument was based on the notion that “cultures and ethnicities are incompatible with each other and that cultural mixing should therefore be resisted” (Betz, 2005: 73).

### **Extreme Right-wing Party Family**

Eatwell identifies five type of right: ‘reactionary’, ‘radical’, ‘moderate’, ‘extreme’ and ‘new’ (Eatwell, 1992: 3). Whereas, Rémond points out three ‘families’ within the main stream of French extreme right-wing: Orleanism, Nationalism/Bonapartism and Ultracism. Some scholars identify fascism as one of the traditions of extreme right (Davies, 2002: 13). Adding to the difficulty, Winock identifies three main sub-traditions



of extreme right: counter-revolution, populism/national-populism and from 1920s onwards fascism (Winock, 1994: 8-10). Ignazi on the other hand classifies extreme right parties in two categories: Traditional and Post-industrial (Ignazi, 2006: 33). Betz (1993) distinguishes two 'faces of radical right-wing populism': 'neo-liberal' or 'libertarian' populism, on the one hand, and 'authoritarian' or 'national' populism, on the other (1993: 678-80). One finds that many labels are being used to explain right-wing extremism. Labels like new right, populist right, far-right and so on are in fashion. There are some similarities among these terms yet they are different and hence require an explanation in this study.

### **The counter-revolutionary right**

This tradition of the extreme right is the most ancient tradition of right. It helps us to understand the essence of the right-wing extremism. The main characteristic of this tradition of the extreme right is its hostility towards the French Revolution and the values which emerged from this revolution (Davies, 2002: 15). These were basically the people who wanted to restore the powers of the king and consequently the monarchy. On the ideological level the torch was lit by Joseph de Maistre in the very beginning of the counter-revolution as:

“There is a satanic element in the French Revolution which distinguishes it from any other revolution known or perhaps that will be known. Remember the great occasions – Robespierre’s speech against the priesthood, the solemn apostasy of the priests, the desecration of objects of worship, the inauguration of the goddess of Reason, and the many outrageous acts by which the provinces tried to surpass Paris: these all leave the ordinary sphere of crimes and seem to belong to a different world” (Maistre, 1965: 71).

It is because of such kind of passages that de Maistre is generally viewed as the founding father not only of the counter-revolutionary right, but of the right and the far right in France (Davies, 2002: 15).

As far as the action part of the counter-revolutionaries is concerned it was propelled by Vendée rebels, the émigrés and members of the Court (primarily, the King and Queen) with great vigour and sentiments. It was not just a spontaneous phenomenon of the

decade 1789-99, rather it was an idea which still is a point of inspiration for the extreme right-wing parties. In the early nineteenth century the torch was passed on to the Ultras (the 'pure' émigrés of the 1790s). They are the believers of the restoration of monarchy. Following the anti-Ultra revolution in 1830, it reinvented itself as 'Legitimism'. The impact of this political force can be seen throughout the French history. Even in twentieth century, the extreme right parties show its affiliation with the counter-revolutionaries and a strong dislike for the French Revolution. During the regime of Vichy the 1789 *Déclaration* was banned (Davies, 2002: 15) and the 'universalist principles' *Liberté, Égalité, Fraternité* (Liberty, Equality, Fraternity) was replaced by the slogan *Travail, Famille, Patrie* (Work, Family, Motherland) (Shields, 2007: 16). In 2002, in a pre-election rally, Jean Marie Le Pen invoked the Vichy trilogy *Travail, Famille, Patrie* (Work, Family, Motherland) (Shields, 2007: 2).

The most important characteristics of this tradition are its stand against the left and the hostility towards the basic concepts like democracy. The left has always been criticized by them. As Davies says, "Those on the far right have viewed nineteenth- and twentieth-century socialists and communists as the chief benefactors of the Revolution's inheritance and, as such, they have demonised ideas and movements of the left. This has been consistent, and in different eras different organisations have suffered: the Jacobins in the 1790s, the liberals and constitutionalists during the Restoration, Dreyfusards in the 1890s, the Cartel des Gauches and the Front Populaire in the inter-war period, Resistance forces during the Second World War, and the Parti Socialiste (PS) and Parti Communiste Français (PCF) in the contemporary period" (Davies, 2002: 15-16). The hatred for the communist can be seen in the speech of Le Pen which he made at the height of the Cold War. He says, "Today the USSR and communism constitute the main threat to our liberties and our lives... Communism is an economic system of stupidity and imbecility and this has been demonstrated to good effect by the material results of almost 70 years of slavery and brutality" (Le Pen, 1984: 173-4).

The hostility of extreme right towards democracy can be explained by the banning of elections during the Vichy Regime. But this is not the sole picture of the situation. There

are few individuals on the extreme right who engaged themselves with the democratic process. Boulanger and Barrès in the 1880s and 1890s, Poujade in the 1950s and Le Pen since 1970s took part in the democratic process but their main instinct has always been to oppose the contemporary democratic structure and they campaigned instead for some kind of ‘Utopian’ alternative (Davies, 2002; 16). Barrès, campaigning as a Boulangist in 1898, demanded: “Revision of the Constitution with the aim of giving universal suffrage its full and complete sovereignty, particularly by means of the municipal referendum” (Barrès, 1968: 273). Davies gives an account of the hatred of democracy by extreme right. He states:

“the Poujadists and Algérie Française activists of the 1950s campaigned against the Fourth Republic on account of: (a) its ‘insensitivity’ to small businesses; and (b) its weakness in the face of Arab nationalists. Likewise, the Third Republic was dogged from birth by protest and agitation on the radical right. The League des Patriotes condemned the regime’s lack of interest in claiming back the ‘lost territories’ of Alsace and Lorraine, while Boulanger criticised the corruption and selfishness of parliamentary députés and Barrès condemned the ‘anti-national’ policies of successive governments. The anti-Dreyfusards of the 1890s synthesised these ideas and were close to bringing the regime to its knees. Their coup d’état failed, but their assault on the hated Republic was a milestone and left a significant legacy” (Davies, 2002: 16).

Charles Maurras was an important personality in the history of extreme right. He and his party Action Française (AF) has been an inspiration for the extremists. His hatred towards democracy is well known. In the 1920s and the 1930s the leagues was very much inspired by the literature of Maurras. They shared the dislike of democracy but they were more in favour of a firm executive government rather than the return of the monarchy. During the first half of the twentieth century, the general belief among the extreme right parties was “that France, somehow, had to go backward to go forward.” Here it is essential to mention that during this period the far-right fringes of France started explaining themselves as ‘radicals’ rather than ‘conservatives’ or ‘reactionaries’. Boulanger as well as Le Pen defines themselves as ‘revolutionaries’ and they have even placed themselves within the tradition of French Revolution (Davies, 2002: 17).

## **Nationalism/National-populism/Populism**

“National-populism is a younger tradition than the counter-revolutionary tradition” (Davies, 2002: 18). There are several scholars who believe that the term ‘extreme right’ is not a suitable one for these parties. They do not reject liberal democracy openly and indulge in violence instead they advocate about the problems of ‘common people’ (Hainsworth, 2008: 19). The spokespersons of these parties claim to understand and to be on the same wavelength as the people. They propagate that they come from them and share the same historico-cultural traditions. In this manner, the contemporary extreme right is a populist, neo-populist or national-populist phenomenon. Their plain-speaking, popular discourse and a commonsense language augment the affinity between people and the party. They represent themselves as the foremost and trustworthy representatives of their nation and people, as a better alternatives to ‘corrupt’, ‘power-clinging’, ‘elitist’, ‘out-of-touch’, mainstream political parties. Moreover, they say that they will never sell out their people to ‘alien’, ‘anti-national’ and ‘anti-popular force’ (Hainsworth, 2008: 19-20).

The politics of these populist parties revolves around ‘nation’ and ‘people’. According to Mudde, “the people in the populist propaganda are neither real nor all-inclusive, but are in fact a mythical and constructed sub-set of the whole population. It is an ‘imaginary community’, much like the nation of the nationalists” (Mudde, 2004: 546). Ignazi explains the use of ‘the people’ on three levels by these parties; sociologically, culturally and as the ultimate and legitimate source of representation and decision-making. From sociological point of view ‘the people’ is interpreted as a ‘class’, culturally it is interpreted as an ‘ethno-culturally homogeneous volkisch community’ and from a decision making point of view it is interpreted as a sovereign entity (Ignazi, 2006: 29-30). To the populist parties, it is the other parties and their ideologies which try to divide the people and betray the nation for their own interests. Hence they advocate for more direct power for the citizen through mechanisms such as referendum. They often criticize the working of liberal democracy and its weaknesses. To explain the contemporary extreme right phenomenon, Taggart (2000: 73) uses the term ‘new-populism’. He defines it as:

“The new populism is a contemporary form of populism that emerged, primarily though not exclusively in Western Europe, in the last part of the twentieth century. It is a populism that has been advocated by a number of parties on the far right of the political spectrum as a reaction against the political dominance and the agenda of certain key parties of government in their party systems, and which is usually associated with particular political leaders” (Taggart, 2000: 73).

The rhetoric of populist movement in order to confer all the benefits of the democracy to its ‘citizens’ goes exclusionary in nature. As Betz (2006) points out that even the notion of ‘citizenship’ is very restrictive. For them a true democracy is based on a homogeneous community, where only long-standing citizens are full members of civil society and only they are entitled to receive all the benefits of the society. In order to promote this idea, they demand for the “expulsion of unemployed foreigners and foreigners charged with having committed crime; an immediate stop to all transfer payments to refugees and asylum-seekers; and the ‘repatriation’ of asylum-seekers whose application has been denied” (Betz, 2006: 74). Betz further says that in “academic discourse, populism often comes across as nothing more than a pseudo-democratic, manipulative and opportunistic if not demagogic strategy designed to market politics to a thoroughly cynical electorate” (Betz, 2006: 74). On the success of these parties Betz says,

“Radical right-wing parties have been most successful when they have managed to combine a strong appeal to anti-establishment resentments with an equally strong claim to democratic reform or renewal. The most prominent case in point is the FPÖ, which has consistently promoted itself as ‘the driving force behind the political renewal of Austria’, seeking to bring about an ‘Austrian cultural revolution with democratic means’ which would lead to the overthrow of ‘the ruling class and the intellectual caste’” (Betz, 2006: 76).

In the French context, national-populism enjoys a long history. It started in the last quarter of the nineteenth century when a ‘modern’ and ‘radical’ right emerged with new icons like Barrès, Boulanger and Déroulède. They adapted themselves to the circumstances of the moment and they engaged themselves with democratic politics. This was the era of third republic. They understood the authority and the legitimacy of ‘the people’. Even in the twentieth century all the extreme right movements adopted the same feature. In 1980s, an FN poster stated simply: LE PEN, LE PEUPLE (LE PEN, THE PEOPLE) (Davies, 2002: 18). Winock explains the phenomenon of national-populism as

a product of three core attitudes: ‘we are in decadence’; ‘the guilty are known’; ‘the savior has arrived’ (Winock, 1990: 43-6). Hainsworth seconds Winock and he tries to bring several generations of national-populists under one umbrella. He says,

“The political rationale of Barrès, Boulanger, Paul Déroulède’s Ligue des Patriotes and Le Pen is premised upon the perceived decadence and moral decline of France, attributable to political mismanagement and retreat from traditional values. Furthermore, Barrès evoked the will of a great country to rediscover its destiny, a theme echoed by Le Pen in his major speeches and writings” (Hainsworth, 1994: 30-1)

National-populism associated nationalism with the extreme right so much that it became one of the defining factors of these parties. In addition to that, this tradition has other characteristics also. One of the most important of them is the tendency of blaming a section or a group in the society for the ‘decadence’. Over last century, the failure of French society was often associated with Jews, Freemasons, foreigners, communists and other alien influences. This can be understood by the example of the similarity found in the speeches of Barrès and Le Pen. Barrès’ view that foreign workers were ‘parasites’ can be equated with Le Pen’s belief that France is suffering an ‘invasion’ of North African immigrants (Davies, 2002: 20). Other characteristics of the national-populist comprises with the anti-semitic feature of these parties. Staring from the 1880s until the present days, the leaders of the extreme right have exhibited a strong anti-semitic stand. Davies argues that the anti-semitism was an important instrument which led to the emergence of a ‘new intellectual climate’ which consequently created a favourable situation for the rise of fascism. In the 1880s and the 1890s it was strongly advocated by Maurras, Boulanger and Barrès. The Dreyfus affair triggered the anti-semitic sentiment in the extreme right wing. Through the ages, this sentiment is always present in the various movements and their leaders of extreme right. During this period the anti-semitism can be identified as: a ‘cynical’ (as advanced by the anti-Dreyfusards and Laval), a ‘xenophobic’ (Barrès, Maurras), a ‘sensationalist’ (Drumont, Le Pen) and an ‘opportunistic’ (Boulanger, Poujade) (Davies, 2002: 21)

Interestingly, there are some scholars who do not see ‘populism’ as an ideology or a distinct feature of the contemporary ‘extreme parliamentary right.’ On one hand Rydgrén

(2005: 12) explains populism as a characteristics of extreme right rather than a distinct feature of it, on the other hand Hainsworth (2008: 21) sees it as a 'style' than an 'ideology'. To answer the question whether it is an ideology, a syndrome, apolitical movement or a style, Mudde (2004) defines it as a "thin-centred ideology", easily combined with other fuller ideologies such as socialism, communism, nationalism or extreme rightism" (Mudde 2004: 543–544). Moreover, as Hainsworth points out that populism is not the 'exclusive preserve' of the extreme right. In past, it has been associated with the Peoples Party in the USA and with Russian Narodniki in late nineteenth century. Recently, a number of leaders from different political parties have used these characteristics to achieve the success. These leaders include Tony Blair (UK), Hugo Chavez (Venezuela), Juan Perón (Argentina), Georges Papandreou (Greece), Silvio Berlusconi (Italy), Lech Walesa (Poland), Pierre Poujade (France) and Ross Perot, Ralph Nader, Pat Buchanan and George Wallace (all United States) (Hainsworth, 2008: 21).

## **Fascism**

Fascism, undoubtedly, is the most controversial phenomenon in France (Davies, 2002: 21). Here we witness varying thoughts of scholars. Rémond and almost all French historians think that apart from "Doriot's short-lived Parti Populaire Français (PPF) (French Popular Party) and Deat's Rassemblement Populaire National (RPN) (National French Rally), fascism never took hold nor attained a sizeable organizational dimension. The various Leagues that emerged in the 1930s had the choreographic symbolic elements of fascism, but not the spirit. They have been defined 'caesarist, authoritarian, plebiscitarian and nationalist" (Rémond 1982: 208) and "while they opposed parliamentarism, they did not invoke a fascist regime; instead, they aimed at a 'parliamentary dictatorship' or a strong presidential regime. In sum, 'while it was conservative, the French right was not fascist'" (Rémond 1982: 222). But, Roger Eatwell (1996) sees fascism in France as an intellectual phenomenon rather than a practical political proposition (Eatwell, 1996: 165).

In France, the phenomenon of fascism emerged in three successive waves. Action Française and its offspring represent the first wave, the second one was represented by

the Leagues of the 1930s and the third was represented by two 'unequivocal' fascist movements, Parti Populaire Français (PPF) (French Popular Party) and Rassemblement Populaire National (RPN) (National French Rally) (Ignazi, 2006: 84).

Action Française was established in 1905 and was the most influential at the early stages of the century. It was linked to the magazine founded by Charles Maurras at the end of nineteenth century. Action Française had the characteristics of Catholic integralism, nationalism based on xenophobia and anti-Semitism, anti-parliamentarism and hate toward the Republic (to be demolished in favour of a 'national' monarchy). All these things were stimulated by the 'cult of violence' on streets by the 'young activists' militarily organised into the 'Camelots du Roi' (Ignazi, 2006: 84). Nevertheless, the importance of the Action Française was not due to the 'militant mobilisation' it was due to "its intellectually sharp destructive criticism of democratic principles" (Ignazi, 2006: 85).

The second wave of the fascist movement came during the first post-war period when a number of organizations were formed. Among them were some non-political organizations like Federation Nationale des Combattants (National Federation of Veterans) and the Union Nationale des Combattants (National Union of Veterans) who recruited hundreds of thousands of members. There were other fascist-like and violent organizations also who were called as 'Leagues'. Among them were the Jeunesses Patriotes (Patriotic Youth), the Croix-de-Feu (The Fire-Cross), the Faisceau, the Solidarité Française (French Solidarity), and the Francisme (Ignazi, 2006: 85).

Jeunesses Patriotes was formed in 1924 to oppose the threat caused by the success of the left in elections. It followed the path of legitimist nationalism. The Croix-de-Feu (Fire-Cross) was founded in 1928 under the leadership of Colonel La Rocque. It took the nationalist and anti-parliamentary approach. In 1935, the Croix-de-Feu had to face a defection. Due to its pro-fascist approach some of the moderate members abandoned the party which was symbolically expressed by the dissociation of La Rocque from the street demonstration of 6 February 1934. Still, it maintained a membership of approx one



million in 1937. Finally, it was merged in the PPF (Ignazi, 2006: 85). The Solidarité Française and the Francisme were founded in 1933. All these parties were the forerunners of fascism during the first post-war period (Ignazi, 2006: 86).

The third wave of the fascist movement was represented by Jacques Doriot's Parti Populaire Français (PPF) (French Popular Party) and Marcel Déat's Rassemblement Populaire National (RPN) (National French Rally). For the first time such parties were not founded with a nationalist point of view rather they were founded to answer the social problems and were inspired by the idea of a new corporatist social fabric. Both the parties received large support primarily from the working class. It was because the leaders of these parties came from communist background. Parti Populaire Français (PPF) (French Popular Party) was founded by Jacques Doriot in 1936, a former general secretary of the Communist Youth, MP, and candidate to the PCF secretariat, following his expulsion from the party in 1934 for his revisionist and corporatist ideas. Similarly, Marcel Déat was also a leader of the left faction of the SFIO (*Section Française de l'Internationale Ouvrière*) (French Section of the Workers' International). He founded his own party when he was marginalized within SFIO (Ignazi, 2006: 86-7). Throughout the first half of the twentieth century, fascism never received the success in France that it found in its neighbouring countries; Germany and Italy. It got some intellectuals like Maurras and Déat who contributed a lot in order to propagate fascism in France. Their writings were a fact of inspiration for the early contemporary extreme right wing in France (Shields, 2007: 16).

### **Other Right-Wing Parties in France**

Other than the parties mentioned above, there is a long tradition of small right-wing parties throughout the French history. Bonapartism, Orléanisme, Gaullism and Nouvelle Droite (New Right) are some of them need explanation here.

Bonapartism tradition was started by Napoleon I and Napoleon II. Historians have different views whether it was an ideology or not. This is mainly because they were mostly involved in grabbing power and in jingoism. But Winock (1990) points out the

influence of Bonapartism on leaders like Boulanger and Déroulède and on movements like anti-Dreyfusardism and the inter-war Leagues. He also points out the anti-parliamentary approach in such movements (Winock, 1990: 246).

Orléanisme is considered as a liberal right. It contains both liberal and conservative visions (Ignazi, 2006: 14). It has an importance in the study of the extreme right for establishing the continuum of this tradition over the last two hundred years (Davies, 2002: 23).

Gaullism was born with General Charles De Gaulle. One can argue its position in the extreme right but it contains some of the characteristics of extreme right as: “‘cult’ authoritarian leadership, nationalism and an intense belief in the grandeur of France” (Davies, 2002: 23)

Nouvelle Droite (New Right) was established in 1968 in France to revive the ideological aspect of the right-wing with the help of dedicated intellectuals. Alain de Benoist, a graduate from Sorbonne was at the core of the founding of this organization. They rejected the Maurrassian precept ‘politique d’abord’ (‘politics first’) and replaced it with their own concept of ‘metapolitique d’abord’ (‘metapolitics first’) (Shields, 2007:143-44). Thus, it aimed at distancing itself from the neo-fascist tradition and starting a new ‘thinking’ of the right (Ignazi, 2006: 22). This organization received its intellectual inputs from the Groupment de Recherches et d’Etudes pour la Civilisation Européenne (GRECE) (Research and Study Group for the European Civilisation). GRECE was established in January 1968 in Nice prior to the events of May 1968. The party had its own journal ‘Nouvelle Ecole’ (‘New School’) which was founded by Alain de Benoist in 1968 (Shields, 2007:144). The Nouvelle Droite gained the limelight in the late 1970s when Alain de Benoist became editor of the ‘Figaro magazine’. This was a conservative magazine with a large readership (Ignazi, 2006: 22). Ignazi points out the characteristic of the Nouvelle Droite as refusal of liberalism, hostility to the westernization of the world and the American political-cultural hegemony and the rejection of egalitarianism (Ignazi, 2006: 23).

Ignazi classifies the extreme right-wing parties in two types; traditional and post-industrial, notwithstanding their association with the fascist ideology. Traditional extreme right parties are “the guardians of nostalgia. They are the heirs of the conflicts derived by the development of the industrial society when, in the 1920s and 1930s, the divergent social groups clashed violently on the question of resource allocation” (Ignazi, 2006: 33). According to him, the traditional extreme right parties are very closely linked to the fascist tradition (Ignazi, 2006: 200). He reiterates that the fascist parties, like the communist ones, are by-products of the industrial revolution (Ignazi, 2006: 34).

The post-industrial extreme right-wing parties emerged from the post-industrial conflicts in the society. It “denies any overt reference to fascism, displaying instead a set of beliefs, values, and attitudes nurtured by novel issues and the needs of a post-industrial society” (Ignazi, 2006: 200). The post-industrial ‘economic and cultural transformations’, ‘development of the service sector’, ‘the decline of the capability of labour relations to determine social relations’ and ‘the process of atomization and secularization’ nurtured the development of various extreme right-wing parties in France in the 1980s (Ignazi, 2006: 34).

The Front National (FN) was one such party that was founded in 1972 in the wake of social, economic and cultural developments which took place in the post-industrial period. A comprehensive analysis of its formation, rise and development will be done in the next chapter.

## CHAPTER 3

### The Front National in France

“The Front National will be our opportunity to emerge from the ghetto.”

- Ordre Nouveau (Algazy, 1989: 117)

In France, Front National was founded formally in Paris on 5 October 1972 with the official name ‘*Front National pour l’Unité Française* (National Front for French Unity, FNUF) (Shields 2007: 169). It was an initiative taken by the Ordre Nouveau to bring all the fringes of extreme right together for the formation of the Front National (FN) (Ignazi 2006: 90). These extreme right wing parties included Ordre Nouveau, Le Pen’s nationalist coterie, Roger Holeindre’s *Parti de l’Unité Française* (Party for French Unity), people grouped around the periodical *Militant* under Pierre Bousquet and Pierre Pauty, some monarchists, Georges Bidault’s *Justice et Liberté* movement (Justice and Liberty Movement), and others. But Bidault withdrew his movement from FN within a week time. The FN adopted the symbol of tricolour flame with blue, white and red imitating the tricolour flag of France. It was very much inspired by its Italian counterpart MSI (Italian Social Movement) whose symbol has green colour instead of blue corresponding the colour of their flag. Initially, the FN was run by a political bureau of six who were elected by a committee of 30 people. The ex-Poujadist MP, Jean-Marie Le Pen became the President of the party. Other bureau members were; François Brigneau (vice-president), Alain Robert (secretary-general), Roger Holeindre (deputy secretary-general), Pierre Bousquet (treasurer), and Pierre Durand (deputy treasurer). Though it was a small group yet it represented all the tendencies of the extreme right at that time (Shields 2007: 169).

The Front National was formed with an ambition to reach a wider audience. For this, they needed a respectable public figure with a new orientation and a modern approach (Shields 2007: 169). In this regard, Le Pen fitted well. He was “a former parliamentary deputy, a veteran of Indo-China and Algeria, a well-known militant nationalist and an able speaker. He was also, within the personnel of the extreme right, a relative moderate

who could aspire to some degree of political respectability. The factor playing most strongly in Le Pen's favour, however, was a negative one: he was not associated closely enough with any single faction to preclude the unifying leadership which the new movement required" (Shields 2007: 170). In the beginning of the 1970s, it was very urgent to merge or to bring together all the extreme right parties given the May 1968 event and the signing of the Common Programme between the French Socialist and Communist Parties. That is why the Front National put anti-communism, nationalism, immigration, a strong state and the defence of traditional values as the main themes of the party (Ignazi 2006; 90).

The FN showed its presence in the political arena in its very first public meeting on 7 November 1972. The slogan given from the stage were, "Let's stop the Popular Front in its tracks" and "Let's drive the thieves from power". It was argued that the Gaullist government was implementing the politics of the left using the votes of the right. At that time the incumbent government was facing serious corruption charges and the FN urged the people "With us, before it's too late!" The politics of the FN was quite clear from the beginning. In the first meeting the main concerns were the influence of the Marxism in media and education, the lost esteem for 'family', 'army', 'flag' and 'country' (Shields 2007: 170). Hainsworth (2004) says that in the initial years of its existence, the main policy of FN was anti-communism (Hainsworth 2004: 105). The sense of makeover was so strong that the Ordre Nouveau which was a neo-fascist organisation changed its strategy to gain support in favour of the FN. It can be seen in the definition of 'a revolutionary political force' by the Ordre Nouveau as: "To be revolutionary is certainly not to live with helmet and boots on, ready to take up arms against our adversaries. [. . .] No, to be revolutionary is to wish to see our ideas come to fruition by whatever means, provided they ultimately bring about the new social and political order that is the purpose of our fight" (Algazy 1989: 117). Moreover, during the first meeting in November 1972, the members were not wearing the helmets, weapons and Celtic cross which have become the hallmark of the party. A journalist from *Le Monde* pointed out, "the meeting was marked by a discreet security service, an older audience too, and more accomplished

speakers. The new party was clearly being careful to dissociate itself from an image that might disconcert the voting public” (Le Monde 9 November, 1972). This commitment to the strategy to alienate the party from the fascist belongingness was further emphasised by Le Pen in an interview on national radio. He accepted the presence of the *Ordre Nouveau* as a component of the FN. At the same time he also stressed upon the party’s rejection of violence and the use of methods which he condemned (Le Monde 22 December, 1972).

### **Early Breakthrough**

The early years of the Front National were not very impressive. It witnessed disastrous loss in the March 1973 legislative elections. Out of 490 seats, the party aimed to contest on 400 seats but reduced to register only 104 candidates. It won 108,616 votes, less than 0.5 per cent of the national vote and 1.32 percent in the constituencies where it contested. Only Le Pen won 5 per cent vote from 14<sup>th</sup> arrondissement of Paris (Shields 2007: 171). The failure in the elections provoked the *Ordre Nouveau* component of the FN to react in stringent manner. But it was soon banned following the clashes with *Ligue Communiste* (Communist League) (Ignazi 2006: 91). This allowed Le Pen to replace two leaders from the *Ordre Nouveau* component; Robert and Brigneau were replaced, as secretary-general and vice-president, by Victor Barthélemy and the Le Pen loyalist Dominique Chaboche. Finally, the split was completed when Le Pen won in the court to retain the rights of the party’s assets and name. Robert and Brigneau, who had formed a new organisation *Faire Front* (Making Front) sought to use the name of the Front National (Shields 2007: 175). This victory left Le Pen as the uncontested leader of the FN (Ignazi 2006: 91).

Until 1983, the FN did not get any success. In the 1974 Presidential elections, Le Pen managed to collect fewer than 200,000 votes or around 0.75 per cent of national votes. He stood seventh out of 12 candidates (Shields 2007: 177). In the beginning of the 1980s the FN reached its low point when Le Pen could not contest in the Presidential elections in 1981. He failed to collect 500 signatures of elected officials as required for presenting the candidature in the elections (Shields 2007: 182). The FN started getting breakthrough

from 1982 cantonal elections, where it gained more than 10 per cent in five cantons and more than 5 per cent in another five. In the municipal elections held in following year when it won 11.3 per cent in the twentieth arrondissement of Paris and 9.6 per cent in the first electoral district of Marseilles. The FN received the attention of the national media and the public in the by-election held in Dreux, the native town of the then FN's secretary, Jean Pierre Stirbois. The election was held due to the irregularities in March elections. In the first round of the election, the FN won 16.72 per cent votes against almost 43 per cent votes of the centre-right. The FN forced the centre-right to make a coalition under the list of Jean Pierre Stirbios to keep the left away. This success of the FN gave it immense valour to play an enhanced role in the French politics.

Moreover, the successively better performances in further municipal elections in Paris suburb of Aulnay-sous-bios and in Le Pen's native Marbihan where the FN won 9.32 per cent and 12 per cent respectively gave it immense coverage in the national media. As a result of this development Le Pen was invited to appear for the first time on the television channel Antenne 2's prime-time interview programme, *L'Heure de vérité* (The Hour of Truth) in February 1984. The importance of the interview is expressed by J. G. Shields as:

“This gave the FN leader an opportunity to present himself as a reasonable, measured politician, promoting himself as a ‘Churchillian democrat’ and adeptly turning his interviewers’ hostility to his own advantage. So important did Le Pen consider this breakthrough into the mainstream media that he included a transcript of the entire programme in his book *Les Français d’abord* (*French First*), deeming it ‘the hour that changed everything’” (Shields 2007: 196)

The importance and the effect of this one hour can be understood with the help of the result of European Parliament elections of June 1984. Le Pen's list collected 11.1 percent of the votes (2.2 million) winning 10 of the 81 French seats in European Parliament at Strasbourg (Table 1). The event received huge criticism from media. *Libération* (*Liberation*) a left leaning daily came with a headline “*Le Choc*” (“The Shock”) with a picture of Le Pen (Shields 2007: 192). This success of the Front National gave it an unprecedented profile and respectability as Ignazi says in his words as: “no ‘new’ party

had attained such a score in a nationwide election since the establishment of the V Republic” (Ignazi 2006: 94).

**Table 1: The 1984 European elections**

Candidate	Vote cast	Percentage (%)	Seats
PCF list (Marchais)	2,261,312	11.20	10
Socialist Party (PS) list (Jospin)	4,188,875	20.75	20
UDF-RPR list (Veil)	8,683,596	43.00	41
FN list (Le Pen)	2,210,334	10.95	10

Source: *Journal Officiel* (cited in Shields 2007: 193).

This momentum of the success further received a high when the FN won 35 seats in the French Parliament with 9.7 per cent of the votes. This became possible due to the proportional representation system was implemented for the National Assembly. This success put the FN marginally ahead of the PCF (Table 2).

**Table 2: The 1986 legislative elections (metropolitan France)**

Party	Votes cast	Percentage (%)
PCF	2,662,244	9.7
PS	8,642,661	31.5
RPR	3,059,124	11.1
UDF	2,316,719	8.4
RPR/UDF (joint list)	5,859,922	21.4
Various right	1,018,240	3.7
FN	2,699,307	9.8 (35 of 577 seats)

Source: *Interior Ministry* (cited in Shields 2007: 210).

Again, in the 1988 presidential elections Le Pen continued his performance with winning 14.4 per cent of the votes gaining the support of 4,376,742 voters. It was an



‘inconceivable result’ for a far- right candidate. He was just 6 per cent behind the outgoing Prime Minister, Jacques Chirac (RPR), and 2 per cent behind the former Prime Minister, Raymond Barre (UDF) (Shields 2007: 224). But in the 1988 legislative elections due to the new electoral rule restricted the FN to only one seat in the French Parliament, though it received a total of 9.8 per cent of the votes gaining support from 2.35 million voters (Davies 2002: 134). The same success story of the FN can be seen in the future elections from 1995 to 2011 which is explained separately in the chapter latter.

### **Jean-Marie Le Pen**

The story of the success of the FN cannot be completed without its leader Jean-Marie Le Pen. He is often described as ‘*Le diable de la république*’ (the devil of the Republic). Shields call him ‘danger to democracy’. From the founding day of the Front National he served it as the president of the party before giving the command to his daughter Marine Le Pen as his successor in January 2011. He was born on 20 June 1928 in La Trinité-sur-Mer, a small seaside village in Brittany. He was raised in a modest, conservative Breton family. His father was a small farmer and fisherman. After his demise in 1942, Le Pen became a *Pupille de la Nation* (war orphan). He was further raised as a Roman Catholic and he did his studies from the Jesuit at the college of Saint-François-Xavier in Vannes and then at the *lycée* of Lorient. At the age of 16, he was turned down when he attempted to join the French Forces of the Interior (FFI) in 1944 due to age factor. Then he enrolled himself to study law in Paris on a state grant. There he came in the contact of student politics and became the president of the *Corporation de Droit* (Law Students’ Union) in 1949 and re-elected in 1950. This union was a right-leaning component of the National Union of Students (UNEF). Though, in his student life he was not involved in politics beyond his Union, yet he was very much inspired by the Maurrassian *Action Française*. He was even arrested for hawking *Aspects de la France* (French Aspect) a Maurrassian, pro-Pétain weekly. Then after he was charged several times for public disorder and fight (Shields 2007: 61-3).

After his diploma in law, he entered the Foreign Legion of the French Army in 1953. He was sent to the Indochina during war but he reached there after the battle of Dien Bien Phu which France had already been lost. On 21 July 1954, the peace was formalized after signing of Geneva Agreement by then Prime Minister Pierre Mendès-France. The defeat in Indochina and the first wound in the Algerian War put a grave effect on Le Pen. He was then sent to Suez in 1956, but again arrived after the cease-fire. During the Algerian War he was sent to Algeria as an intelligence officer where he met several people who wanted to keep Algeria with France. They became his companion who continued with him in the Front National. During his stay in Algeria, he was accused of being indulged in torture which he always denied (Shields 2007: 109).

His active political carrier started when he contested parliamentary elections in January 1956 from the party UDCA of Poujade. At the age of 27, he became the youngest deputy in the legislature (Shields 2007: 75). But due to rift regarding hard-line ideology of Le Pen and moderate Poujade, Le Pen was excluded from the UDCA at its congress in May 1957. In 1965, he directed the presidential campaign of the extreme right candidate Jean-Louis Tixier-Vignancour who obtained 5.20 per cent of the votes which remained the threshold limit for the extreme right-wing candidates for long. Since 1972, after the formation of the Front National, he served the party as the president until January 2011. During his political carrier he always attracted the debate around him. He was indulged in several controversies created by his comments. One of the very famous comments which caused him great embarrassment in the political milieu was regarding the gas chambers during the World War II. He explained it as a 'point of detail' in the history of the World War II (Shields 2007: 221). Moreover, a sinister pun on the name of the minister Durafour - *Dura/four-crématoire* (Dura/oven-crematory) raised criticism in his party also. He was indulged into an ugly confrontation with a Socialist candidate Annette Peulvast-Bergeal in Mantes-la-Jolie near Paris. As a result of this, he was served a ban from holding public office for two years (reduced to one on appeal). In 2007, he faced a trial due to his comment made in 2005 regarding the Nazi occupation. He argued that the Nazi occupation was not particularly inhumane (Fieschi 2004: 149-150).

## **Ideology of Front National**

Minkenberg and Schain say that the core of the ideology of the extreme right is based on a “myth of a homogenous nation, a romantic and populist ultra-nationalism which is directed against the concept of liberal and pluralistic democracy and its underlying principles of individualism and universalism. The nationalistic myth is characterized by the effort to construct an idea of nation and national belonging by radicalizing ethnic, religious, cultural and political criteria of inclusion/exclusion and to condense the idea of nation into an image of extreme collective homogeneity” (Minkenberg and Schain 2005: 156). The emergence and the success of the extreme right-wing parties in an industrial society are explained by German sociologists Erwin Scheuch and Hans-Dieter Klingemann. They say, “In all fast-growing modernizing countries there are people who cannot cope with economic and cultural dislocation, and who react to the pressures of readjustment with rigidity and closed-mindedness. These reactions can be mobilized by right-wing movements or parties offering political philosophies that promise an elimination of pressures and a simpler, better society. These philosophies do not contain just any utopia but a romanticized version of the nation before the first large wave of modernization. The core of the problem consists of a specifically a-synchronous dealing with the past, especially a dissent about the evaluation of modernity in the respective societies” (cite in Minkenberg and Schain 2005: 157).

Following the same path, Le Pen took the advantage of the economic crisis to interpret as crisis to French nation and culture. He started advocating for the French national identity and he attacked the notion of egalitarianism. He blamed the left and immigrants for the economic and social crisis in France. He supported the idea of private property, individual freedom and law and order. On economic front, the FN came up with a ‘third way’ between capitalism and communism. It supported the withdrawal of the state from the economy and at the same time, a defense for small business adopting the idea from Poujadism. On international issues, Le Pen started his political carrier as an advocate of a united Europe and with a pro-American approach. However, he shifted his argument to

Euroscepticism and anti-Americanism in following years (Minkenberg and Schain 2005: 160).

The specialty of the FN always remained in its ambiguity. Before the parliamentary elections of 1978, Le Pen took an ideological turn and supported neo-liberalism, Catholic traditionalism and Americanism (Ignazi 2006: 92). With gaining success in the 1980s Le Pen moved towards the Reagan/Thatcher model of market liberalism and anti-statism. Thus, by the presidential and legislative elections of 1988, the FN was an advocate of liberal economy together with a pro-European and pro-American approach. This idea can be seen in the programme of the elections of the FN:

“To reassert the formula of M.Reagan, ‘...I want the state off my back and out of my pocket...’ Today the alliance with the United States remains necessary for France and will remain so for Europe as long as (Europe) remains a military dwarf confronting a Soviet giant. This requires that Atlantic solidarity to prevail wherever possible against the menace of Soviet imperialism and Muslim extremism” (FN 1988: 56-7).

The shift in the American and European approach came in the 1990s during Gulf War and the Maastricht Referendum. Le Pen supported Saddam Hussain and condemned the United Nations intervention in the Gulf War. This shift on the ideological level was further explained by Le Pen in the party magazine *Identité* as:

“It is by considering this construction of the New World Order that our change in attitude about the policies of the United States must be understood. When the Cold War was at its worst, and the Red Army was threatening, NATO had its *raison d’être*. The American presence contributed to contain Soviet expansionism, and to assure our liberty. Now, things have changed. NATO is being reconverted into the mailed fist of the New World Order. Far from being ‘Europeanized’...it imposes on the nations of Europe an Americanization of their diplomatic and military concepts... In truth, the problem for today... (must be seen) in terms of cleavage between the pruning shears of the New World Order and defenders of identities, that is defenders of nations...This is the sense of my rallying-cry: ‘Nationalists of all countries unite!’... The White House has become the Trojan Horse of globalization...” (*Identité* 1996: 3)

By the 1997 parliamentary elections, the FN became a strong opponent of Americanism. Same kind of shift was seen in the case of Europeanism. The party strongly opposed the

Maastricht Agreement and advocated for ‘a renegotiation of the European treaties and denunciation of the Schengen and Maastricht accords’. This was seen as an attempt to Americanise the Europe. In the manifesto for the 1997 legislative elections Bruno Mégret says:

“The Europe of Brussels and of Maastricht is a machine to crush the nations and the peoples (of Europe); it manufactures unemployment, taxation, bureaucracy and recession. Power is in the hands of a handful of anonymous and irresponsible high civil servants who impose a uniformity of legislation, a leveling by the lowest common denominator of our social systems, the opening of our frontiers to low-priced imports and to immigration from the whole world, the insertion into a new world economic and political order entirely dominated by the United States” (Mégret, 1997).

Undoubtedly, immigration remains one of the most prominent issues raised by the FN. As Marcus (1995) points out that immigration for the FN worked as a matrix to link so many problems with it, such as problems related to education, law and order, welfare matters, housing, public expenditure, culture, economy and unemployment. In particular, the immigrants from the third world were seen as threats to the job, social benefits, security, culture, health and lifestyle of French people (Marcus, 1995: 100). The issue of immigration came more prominently in the agenda of the FN in late 1970s when the immigrants were advised to go back to their huts across the Mediterranean (Hainsworth 2008: 71). In 1991, Bruno Mégret prepared a pamphlet *Immigration: 50 Mesures Concrètes* (*Immigration: 50 Concrete Measures*) proposing an alternate immigration policy including measures such as “curtailing family reunification, enforcing the concept of national preference, introducing Aids tests at the frontiers for foreigners and bringing in tougher procedures for asylum seekers and refugees” (Hainsworth 2000a: 59). Besides, as Durham explains that there is a sexual aspect regarding the threat from the immigrants. He says that the FN considers white women under threat from the intruder (Durham 1998: 93).

The core issues of the FN can be understood with the help of the example of the party manifesto for the 1995 presidential elections. The manifesto ‘*Le Contrat pour la France avec les Français*’ (the contract for France with the French) was having five photographs

of Le Pen, a blonde mother and her three blond children, a law-court crest, a piece of classical sculpture, and a *tricolore* flying above the Elysée Palace. These photographs were very intelligently chosen. These photos represented a strong leadership, reproduction and the future, security and strength, tradition and heritage, and patriotism the main principle of the FN. There are some more core issues like nation, family religion and hierarchy (Davies 2002: 136) Nation has always remained at the core of the ideology of the FN. As Hainswoth says that it is more related to the loyalty for the nation as imagined by the FN (Hainsworth 2000b: 23). In the quest of nationality, the FN was very much aware about the 'identity'. In 1989 the whole lectures in the *Institut de Formation Nationale* (IFN) (Institute of National Training) were on *Droit et identité* (right and identity), *L'Identité en question* (identity in question), *Identité Européenne* (European identity), and *Declin et crise d'identité* (Decline and crisis of identity) (Davies 2002: 137)

In 1993 again, the FN came with *300 mesures pour la renaissance de la France* (300 measures for the rebirth of France). This underlined the identity at stake in five areas namely; *Immigration - Renverser le courant* (Immigration - Reverse the flow), *Famille - Pour la préférence familiale* (Family - In favour of family preference), *Enseignement - Transmettre le savoir* (Education - Transmit knowledge), *Culture - Défendre nos racines* (Culture - Defend our roots), *Environnement - Sauvegarder notre patrimoine* (Environment - Safeguard our heritage) (FN 1993: 22-123). The ideology of the FN revolves around these issues. Moreover, these issues are propagated as a result of threat to the indigenous people and subsequently to the nation by immigrants. At the bottom of the ideology remains a threat to become a 'second class' citizen in their own country.

### **The 1995 Presidential Election**

The 1995 presidential election was historic for the Front National. Jean-Marie Le Pen won a total of 15 per cent of the votes for the first time setting a record for an extreme right candidate. He received the support of 4,570,838 voters (Table 3). In doing so, he surpassed his 1988 performance (14.4 per cent, 4.38 million Votes).

**Table 3: the 1995 presidential election: first round (metropolitan and overseas France)**

<b>Candidate</b>	<b>Votes cast</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
Jospin	7,097,786	23.30
Chirac	6,348,375	20.84
Balladur	5,658,796	18.58
Le Pen	4,570,838	15.00
Hue	2,632,460	8.64
Laguiller	1,615,552	4.74
Voynet	1,010,681	3.32
Cheminade	84,959	0.28

Source: Constitutional Council (cited in Shields 2007: 252).

This election was highly dominated by unemployment (at 12.2 per cent, 3.26 million) and the issues related to social deprivation and exclusion. Le Pen in his programme *Le Contrat pour la France avec les Français* (The Contract for France with the French) promised “to create four million jobs over the seven-year presidential tenure, to send back three million immigrants, to ensure priority for French nationals over foreigners in employment, housing, social welfare and education, and to protect French jobs and products against international competition. Extending his concerns notably to the poor, the homeless and low-income families, he pledged an increase in the national minimum wage (SMIC), the introduction of a monthly ‘maternal or parental income’ (6,000 francs), a house-building programme, a review of family allowances and of the guaranteed minimum income (RMI)” (Shields 2007: 251). He also repeated his wish to replace the fifth republic with the sixth one based on the principle of ‘national preference’. Other programmes in the manifesto were to disengage France from the Schengen Convention and Maastricht Treaty, and restore full French border controls (Shields 2007: 252).

Le Pen won a high vote in the north and north-east, in parts of Ile-de-France and the Rhône valley and along the Mediterranean coastal belt where the density of the African immigrants is high. He led in five of the France’s 22 metropolitan regions (Alsace,

Lorraine, Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur, Languedoc-Roussillon and Nord-Pas-de-Calais). His most remarkable achievement of the election was to receive the largest portion of the votes from workers and unemployed voters, traditionally regarded as the constituencies of the left. The advantage of Le Pen made him the leader of disadvantaged. He also bettered his vote share in blue-collar employees from 16 per cent in 1988 presidential election to 27 per cent. His support in white-collar workers also increased from 14 to 19 per cent. One of the most remarkable features of the FN success was its appeal across different age groups. It received a good support among the younger voters. He received a 21 per cent votes among the first timers. A good thing about its voting pattern was that it attracted votes from every section. Among his voters were sympathizers of right, centre and the left. One more thing which attracted the scholars was the loyalty of the voters towards the FN. According to a survey 81 per cent of those who had voted FN in the 1993 legislative elections returned a vote for Le Pen in 1995 (Shields 2007: 253-5).

The success story continued when in the municipal elections of 11 and 18 June 1995, the FN managed to win three cities - Marignane, Orange and Toulon in the second round-off. The left-wing daily *Libération* came with a headline as "Three Stains of France". The *Natioanal Hebdo* made the headline as "Three Devils Elected" whereas; Bruno Mégret called these cities as "Liberated Towns" (Shields 2007: 260)

### **The 1997 Legislative Elections**

To maintain the success of the 1995 presidential elections in the legislative elections on 25 May 1997 was a great challenge for the FN. And it stood firm with a record 15.24 per cent of votes in metropolitan France (Table 4). Though, due to the electoral process it managed to win just one seat in the parliament (constituency of Toulon-South). Shields says that these elections confirmed a growing electoral base for the FN in France. It won 625,000 more votes than in 1993 and 1.4 million more votes than in 1988. Moreover, this result confirmed the third largest position of the political party in France. It became the second strongest party on the right. The result of the 1997 legislative elections also showed that the FN was the only major party to increase its electoral base over the decade



**Table 4: The 1997 legislative elections: first round (metropolitan France)**

<b>Political Parties</b>	<b>Votes cast</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>	<b>Seats won (over two rounds)</b>
Extreme left	550,106	2.22	-
PCF	2,441,375	9.86	37
PS+ Left Radicals	6,357,206	25.66	259
Greens	1,583,440	6.39	8
Citizens Movt	266,167	1.07	7
Various Left	490,124	1.98	9
RPR	4,084,506	16.49	139
UDF	3,685,015	14.88	109
Various right	1,094,901	4.42	8
FN	3,775,382	15.24	1

Sources: Interior Ministry (cited in Shields 2007: 265).

since 1986 from 2.7 million to almost 3.8 million (Shields 2007: 264). In 1998, in regional elections, the FN repeated the same success story winning 15 per cent votes and 275 councilors in all. But the success of the FN got a scare when it went through a split. The split became evident when Le Pen proposed the name of his wife Jany for the leadership list of the FN for forthcoming European elections in June 1999. It was due to the ban imposed on him after the incident of Mantes-la-Jolie during the 1997 legislative election campaign. In January 1999, Mégret left the party with his supporters to form the Mouvement National Républicain (MNR) in October 1999. In the wake of the split, the result of the 1999 European election was not surprising as the FN managed to get the threshold vote of 5.7 per cent winning just 5 MEPs. Nevertheless, Le Pen was very much determined to rebuild the Front National. But it did not see any progress in the municipal elections held in March 2001, one year before the historic presidential election of 2002. In this election the FN managed just 4 per cent of the votes.

## The 2002 Presidential Election

The presidential election of the 2002 was the historic one. This was for the first time ever that a leader from extreme right went through the second run-off. This achievement was also remarkable in the background of the split and weak performances of the FN since 1999. After the ‘cohabitation’ of five years between the President Chirac and the Prime Minister Lionel Jospin everyone was anticipating for a duel between these two leaders. In the shocking event of 21 April, Le Pen overtook Jospin to qualify for the second run-off. He won 16.86 per cent (4,804,713 votes) of the votes, 0.68 per cent (194,600 votes) more than the outgoing Prime Minister (Table 5). This resulted in depriving the left for the first time since 1968 from a candidate in the presidential run-off (Shields 2007: 281).

Shields-explains the reason of the success of the FN. According to him, both the candidates; Chirac and Jospin who faced each other in the ‘cohabitation’ for five years have nothing different between them on any issue. Both the candidates had more or less the same opinion on issues like taxation, pension or law and order. Moreover, there were 16 candidates contesting for the post. Moreover the left at that time was divided and there were 3 Trotskyist candidates having left background, contesting for the post (Shields, 2007: 282-284). In wake of this event the 10 per cent votes won by them were very much responsible for the defeat of Jospin. He was also hit by a large number of the left sympathizers abstaining from the first run-off as if it was just a formality. Thus, it can be said that the success achieved by Le Pen in the first run-off depended a lot on the poor campaign from Jospin (Shields 2007: 285).

Le Pen started his campaign with the proposals on the issues like national identity, immigration, law and order, tax, family values and others. With his manifesto *Pour un avenir français* (For a French Future) Le Pen entered the election advocating a

“French national sovereignty within a Europe of nation states; ‘zero tolerance’ in law and order, with a referendum on the death penalty, harsher sentencing and increased prison capacity; tighter restrictions on immigration, asylum and nationality; a sharp reduction in taxes and public expenditure; full employment for the French, to be achieved partly through the policy of ‘national preference’; an extensive programme of family support, based on ‘national preference’ in welfare benefits, housing and the provision of a ‘parental income’; and measures

to protect the countryside, infused with an appeal to rural anxieties over wider and deeper European integration” (Le Pen 2002).

**Table 5: The 2002 preidential election: first round (metropolitan and overseas France)**

<b>Candidate</b>	<b>Votes cast</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
Chirac	5,665,855	19.88
Le Pen	4,804,713	16.86
Jospin	4,610,113	16.18
Bayrou	1,949,170	6.84
Laguiller	1,630,045	5.72
Chevènement	1,518,528	5.33
Mamère	1,495,724	5.25
Besancenot	1,210,562	4.25
Saint-Josse	1,204,689	4.23
Madelin	1,113,484	3.91
Hue	960,480	3.37
Mégret	667,026	2.34
Taubira	660,447	2.32
Lepage	535,837	1.88
Boutin	339,112	1.19
Gluckstein	132,686	0.47

Source: Constitutional Council (cited in Shields 2007: 286)

This election was again marked by the anti-Europeanist remarks by Le Pen. During his campaign he pledged to pull France out of the EU and restore the franc as national currency. He also advocated for the denunciations of the treaties of Schengen, Maastricht and Amsterdam. He gave the argument that the foundation of a ‘supranational entity will transform in the ‘end of France’. This election saw Le Pen being presented in different manner. He even apologized for his remarks about the gas chambers during the World

War II being called as a ‘detail’ of the history. He said that his reference to *Durafour-crématoire* was an ‘unfortunate expression’ and he accepted that in both the cases he was not perfect (Shields 2007: 282-3). On social issues, there were some evolutions seen in the campaign of the FN. Le Pen sought for equality of opportunity and support for the unemployed, pensioners, the poor, the homeless, the disabled, and others threatened with social or economic exclusion (FN 2001: 345-64).

In the first run-off, Le Pen topped in 35 of 96 departments of the metropolitan France. He maintained the top position in 9 of the 22 regions of France. These regions were: Alsace (23.44 per cent), Provence-Alpes-Côte d’Azur (23.35 per cent), Languedoc-Roussillon (22.33 per cent), Lorraine (21.24 per cent), Champagne-Ardenne (21.12 per cent), Picardie (20.26 per cent), Franche-Comté (19.98 per cent), Rhône-Alpes (19.83 per cent) and Nord-Pas-de-Calais (19.03 per cent) (Shields 2007: 285). In this election, the support base of the FN was dominated by male, working-class, poorly educated and farmers. The FN leader grabbed the support of 20 per cent or more among men, blue-collar workers, white-collar workers, the unemployed, shopkeepers, artisans and small entrepreneurs, farmers and agricultural workers (Shields 2007: 287). Moreover, support for Le Pen was the most in the age group of 50-64 year-old with 21.8 per cent. But the young voters were skeptical towards him. Le Pen received just 12 per cent from this age-group (Bell and Criddle 2002: 654). The effect of votes and support from these sections was acknowledged by Le Pen in his speech on 21 April. He urged,

“you the small people, the foot soldiers, the excluded [. . .], the miners, the steelworkers, the women and men who labour in all of those industries that have been ruined by the Euro-globalism of Maastricht. You who work the land in return for a miserable pension and are driven to the brink of ruin and inexistence. You who suffer most from the breakdown of law and order in our suburbs, towns and villages. [. . .] Be assured that, as a man of the people, I can always be relied upon to support those who suffer, since I know what it is to be cold, hungry and poor” (Shields 2007: 287)

This election again showed the high fidelity rate among the voters for the FN. 83 per cent of people who voted for him in 1995, voted him again in 2002. This rate is comparably low for Chirac (51 per cent) and Jospin (53 per cent). This election established that the

law and order, immigration and unemployment were the most prominent issues responsible for the support of Le Pen (Shields 2007: 288).

Now, as Shields says that it was a 'crucial test' for France towards its commitment to Republican values (Shields 2007: 288). In response to this situation, the French people came on streets demonstrating against the 'devil of the republic'. On May Day a coordinated anti-Le Pen demonstration was attended by at least 1.5 million people across the country. This was an unprecedented demonstration against any political personality in the French history. These campaigns relaxed Chirac a lot. Adding to the difficulties for Le Pen, Chirac refused to participate in the traditional televised debate with Le Pen. Facing such kind of opposition across the country, Le Pen did not perform well in the second run-off. This was not a surprising result. Chirac won the election with 82.21 per cent of votes against 17.79 per cent of votes of Le Pen. Chirac gained the votes of the left-wing voters too. They chose the lesser of two evils, *l'escroc* (the crook) rather than *le facho* (the fascist). Polling results found that 71 per cent of the electorate who voted for Chirac, did so 'to block Le Pen', whereas, just 29 per cent people cast him the vote as a 'good candidate'. Though Le Pen increased his votes from the first run-off, he failed to achieve the 30 per cent target set by him (Shields 2007: 289-90).

### **The 2002 Legislative Elections**

From the 2002 presidential elections, the term of the President was reduced from seven years to five years following a referendum in September 2000. This was done to lessen the chances of 'cohabitation'. Before the legislative elections in June 2002, Chirac succeeded to bring almost all centre-right parties under one organization; *Union pour la Majorité Présidentielle* (Union for the Presidential Majority, UMP), to become in November 2002 the *Union pour un Mouvement Populaire* (Union for a Popular Movement, UMP) under Chirac's neo-Gaullist lieutenant, Alain Juppé (Shields 2007: 291).

In the legislative elections, the FN could gain 11.34 per cent of the votes (2,862,960 votes) (Table 6). It even fell short of Le Pen's presidential score. With this score the party qualified to retain only 37 (including 9 three-way run-offs) of his 566 candidates for the

second ballot. In 1999, this figure was 132 for second ballot and 76 for three-way run-offs. The FN was hit by massive abstention also. This time, it was higher than 35 per cent (Shields 2007: 291-92).

**Table 6: The 2002 legislative elections: first round (metropolitan France)**

Political Parties	Votes cast	Percentage (%)
Far left	622,451	2.47
PCF	1,216,178	4.82
PS	6,086,599	24.11
Various left	964,341	3.82
Greens	1,434,121	5.68
UMP	8,408,023	33..30
UDF	1,226,462	4.85
Various right	1,323,793	5.23
FN	2,862,960	11.34
MNR	276,376	1.09

Source: Interior Ministry (cited in Shields 2007: 293).

In this election again the main electoral blocks for the FN were men (13 per cent), white-collar workers (20 per cent), shopkeepers and artisans (12 per cent), those with the most basic education (15 per cent), and the unemployed (30 per cent). The voting pattern again showed the strongholds of the FN in the entire Mediterranean littoral, in the industrial north and north-east, and in the greater Paris and Lyon conurbations (Shields 2007: 293).

The next election which was held after the break of two years was the regional elections. While the regional elections were used to happen in one round on a proportional basis, this time, in March 2004, the regional elections employed a new two-round system combining majority and proportional elements. In the first round, the FN attracted a strong support in a regional poll. With 15.11 per cent votes it managed to pass to the second round in 17 of 22 metropolitan regions. In Nord-Pas-de-Calais, FN stood second

in the second round. It came third in almost 4 other mainland regions confirming its position in national politics behind Socialist and UMP (Shields 2007: 297).

In the 2004 European parliamentary elections, again the system was changed due to new enlargement. In this system the total seats for France was reduced to 78 which would be drawn pro rata from the eight constituencies in which France was divided under new system. On 13 June, the FN won 9.81 per cent (1,684,792 votes) and seven seats – two in the south-east (Jean-Marie Le Pen, Lydia Schenardi) and in the north-west (Carl Lang, Chantal Simonot), one in the east (Bruno Gollnisch), in the south-west (Jean-Claude Martinez) and in Ile-de-France (Marine Le Pen). Thus, in following years of 2002, the results were not so promising for the Front National.

### **The 2007 Presidential Election**

The 2007 presidential election was different from the previous one. At this time the

**Table 7: The 2007 presidential elections: first round (metropolitan France)**

<b>Candidate</b>	<b>Votes cast</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
Nicolas Sarkozy	11,448,663	31.2
Ségolène Royal	9,500,112	25.9
François Bayrou	6,820,119	18.6
Le Pen	3,834,530	10.4
Besancenot	1,498,581	4.1
De Villiers	818,407	2.2
Buffet	707,268	1.9
Voynet	576,666	1.6
Laguiller	487,857	1.3
Bové	483,008	1.3
Nihous	420,645	1.1
Schivardi	123,540	0.3

Source: <http://electionresources.org/fr/president.php?election=2007>

situation of the FN was not so promising. The FN could not perform better in last few elections and the situation prevailed in this election also. This was also due to the fact that the candidate of UMP Nicolas Sarkozy has tried hard to regain its electorate from the FN who had left it on the issue of immigration and law and order. He formulated hard policies to curb immigration. These aspects are discussed in detail in next chapter. On 21 April 2007, Jean-Marie Le Pen won 10.44 per cent of the votes (3,834,530). UMP candidate Nicolas Sarkozy won the first place with 31.18 per cent of the votes. Socialist candidate Ségolène Royal became the second with 25.87 per cent of the votes and UDF candidate François Bayrou became third with 18.57 per cent of the votes (Table 7).

### **The 2007 Legislative Elections**

This election came with the worst result for the Front National after its breakthrough in

**Table 8: The 2007 legislative elections: first round**

<b>Political Parties</b>	<b>Votes cast</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
UMP	10,289,737	39.5
PS	6,436,521	24.7
Presidential Majority	616,440	2.4
PCF	1,115,663	4.3
Left radicals	343,565	1.3
The Greens	845,977	3.3
UDF-Democratic Movement	1,981,107	7.6
Movement for France (MPF)	312,581	1.2
FN	1,116,136	4.3
Other right-wing parties	641,842	2.5
Other left-wing parties	513,407	2.0

Source: <http://electionresources.org/fr/deputies.php?election=2007>



1984. With merely 4.3 per cent of the votes (1,116,136 votes) it could manage to reach in the second ballot in few constituencies (Table 8). In this election UMP emerged as the largest party winning 313 seats in the Assembly. Second largest party was the Socialist party winning 186 seats. The Front National remained the fourth party in terms of winning support from the voters.

In 2009, in the elections for the European Parliament the same story of low percentage of votes continued. The FN gained the support of 6.3 per cent of the votes winning just 3 MEPs in the European Parliament. At this stage people have started to claim that the FN has become a phenomenon of the past. The continuous defeats in elections were the reasons behind these arguments. The FN thus came with a bang in the regional elections in following year. The Telegraph reported the incident on 15 March as: “France’s far-right National Front (FN) has re-emerged on the French political scene after enjoying a surprisingly strong showing in regional elections on Sunday” (The Telegraph 2010). The FN who was facing defeat after defeat after the 2007 presidential election succeeded to collect almost 12 per cent of the votes. The UMP scored 26.18 per cent of the votes coming second after the Socialist which scored 29.48 per cent of the votes. This result for the FN was more important in the wake of the fact that UMP advocated for the identity and immigration after a year-long recession in France. During the campaign, a Socialist leader accused Sarkozy of opening the door for the FN by introducing the issue of immigration and identity. However, the FN managed to keep the issues with them which were the biggest attractions of its ideology. The biggest achievement of this election for the FN was that Marine Le Pen scored 18.3 per cent of the votes in the region Nord-Pas-de-Calais. Doing so, she increased her odds to succeed her father as the President of the party (The Telegraph 2010). Eventually, she became the President of the party in January 2011.

## **Overview**

Throughout its presence in France, the Front National has remained a point of attraction for the scholars. In the first decade of its foundation, it hardly received any remarkable share of vote. It started with the by-election of the Paris suburb Dreux in 1983 when it

won the election with the help of RPR and UDF. Since then it never looked back. Le Pen even overtook Jospin, the Socialist candidate, in the first round of the 2002 presidential election. He competed with Jacques Chirac in the second run-off which he lost with a huge margin. In the Period of 1995 to 2011, the Front National has seen several ups and downs. In the 1995 presidential election, Le Pen scored a record 15 per cent of the votes gaining support from 4,570,838 voters. In the subsequent legislative elections in 1997, the FN maintained the same story of success with winning 15.24 per cent of the votes with support from 3,775,382 voters. After such success, the FN witnessed a low day when the number two of the party Bruno Mégret left the party with his supporters to form a new party called *Mouvement National Républicain* (MNR) (National Republican Movement). After this split the FN received a great loss in the votes. However, in the 2002 presidential election, Le Pen reached the second run-off, becoming the lone extreme right leader to do so. Following the criticism and opposition from all sections of the society, Le Pen lost the contest with Chirac with a huge margin. In the regional elections held in March 2004, the FN collected a total of 15.11 per cent of the votes contesting on 17 of 22 regions in second round. In the European election in June 2004, the FN won 7 seats with 9.81 per cent of the votes. In the presidential election of 2007, Le Pen scored 10.4 per cent of the votes. In the legislative election in June in the same year the votes of the FN went down to 4.3 per cent with the support of 1,116,136 voters. In following elections, the FN could not perform better but it came back in style in the regional elections of 2010 winning almost 12 per cent of the national votes.

The issues raised by the FN during this period were mostly immigration, anti-globalisation, anti-Americanisation and anti-Europeanisation. These phenomena were connected by the notion of nation and insecurity. In 1995 elections, Le Pen promised to cultivate four million jobs in his seven year term. However, he also advocated for the returning of three million immigrants in France to their native country. The slogan like “France for the French” explains the ideology of the party. This party considers the immigrants as the root of all the kinds of problems in France.

The electorates of the party during this period were evenly spread across regions, classes and partisan background. This distinguishes the FN from other extreme right-wing parties. In fact, the party attracted votes from middle-class and working-class. In the 1990s the vote share in the working-class for the FN was higher than any other party. The ambiguity of the party served it with the votes of different sections. It even attracted votes from the left sympathizers on several issues (Minkenberg and Schain 2006: 163). Hainsworth (2004) points out that the party has performed well among younger voters except the 2002 presidential election. Historically, young, first-time voters, abstainers, middle class, small shopkeepers, working-class and male remained the strong hold of the FN (Hainsworth 2004: 104).

One more characteristic that differentiates the FN from other political parties is the fidelity of the voters towards it. The FN has shown that it has the capacity to retain its electorate more than any other party. The FN received 64 per cent of the votes in 1995 presidential election from its electorate of the 1988 presidential election. In 2002, this fidelity of the voters reached 83 per cent (Shields 2007: 255,288). Thus, Hainsworth argues that in the view of such results, it can be said that the FN vote are not merely a 'protest vote' rather, it has been able to appeal the voters by its policy and agenda (Hainsworth 2004:104)

Ignazi (2006) explains the success of the FN by dividing it in two factors. The first one is the electoral-institution and the second one is the socio-political factor. The FN started to perform first on local level and then at the national level. The first success FN got was in the European elections, which does not have more importance than the presidential or legislative elections. Moreover, the electoral system of the European elections was proportional rather double ballot system prevailing in the presidential and legislative elections. This simplified the success of the FN on the European level. The second factor of the success includes the politicization of new themes. The FN succeeded in politicizing issues like immigration and insecurity. These issues were never touched by the traditional parties. The FN politicized these issues and linked them with security and law and order. Moreover, the FN exploited the resentment in general public towards the party politics

and the democratic institutions. It was due the alienation of the political leaders from the public. The leaders of the FN presented themselves as the one from their milieu (Ignazi 2006: 95).

Hainsworth (2004) says that the issues like security, immigration, unemployment and defense of certain values were no doubt the most attracting agenda yet the charismatic personality of Le Pen has also contributed a lot in developing the electorate share of the FN. Being out of the government his criticism to government's policies and corruption charges appealed the dissatisfied and disillusioned voters. The acceptance of the issues like insecurity and immigration by the mainstream right wing parties in their election campaign increased the electorate base for the FN. Moreover, the incidences of violence, urban disturbance and terrorism have also helped the FN to spread its support (Hainsworth 2004: 108).

### **Challenges before the Front National (FN)**

The FN is still fighting for securing a remarkable place in the National Assembly, so that it can directly play the role in policy making. The main hurdle in this aspect is the lack of credibility of the FN among its voters. Most of its voters do not consider it as a 'party of government'. In the 1997 legislative election only 10-14 per cent electorate thought in such manner, while only the one third of the FN's voters expressed its desire in same manner. Again, in 2002, 74 per cent voters of the FN were not in support of Le Pen becoming the president. While, the voters of other candidates were very much in support of their candidates to become the president (Hainsworth 2004: 108).

Though, Le Pen received a huge support in various elections, there were a lot of demonstrations against him. In 2002, between the two rounds, there were numerous demonstrations against him. He is often named as 'a danger to democracy' (Shields 2007). In this regard, the FN has been isolated by other parties (Hainsworth 2004: 109).

The FN is also facing a problem in the two-ballot majority system of elections in France. This system makes it virtually impossible for the FN to win seats in National Assembly even though it has a support from a huge section of the society. The effect can be

understood with the example of the 1986 legislative election when proportional representation was introduced and the FN managed to win 35 seats in the National Assembly. Today, in current election system, the FN has not been able to translate its votes into seats. Even though it takes a lead in the first round, voters of all the other parties vote for the candidate to defeat the FN.

### **Impact of the Front National on French Political System**

This emergence of the FN in France has affected the French political system in two ways. It has altered the political dynamics of the Fifth Republic and it has changed the issues of debate among the parties. Until 1980, the French political party system was mainly divided between the Left (Communists and Socialists) and the Right (Gaullist and non-Gaullist moderate Right). The rise of the FN in the 1980s broke the unity of the Right. Now, the Right has had to fight on two fronts at the same time; the Socialists who were targeting its centrist electorate and the FN who had started drawing its voters from the far right. In some incidences the moderate Right joined the hand with the FN on local and regional level, but with the risk of losing its centrist votes to the Left. The Left government used the FN to target the Right wing parties. It introduced the proportional representation in the legislative election in 1986 (Veugelers 2000: 22).

Explaining the effect of the rise of the FN in the French party system, Ingelhart and Rabier (1986) say:

“The emergence of the National Front reflects a broader phenomenon that already has given rise to Ecologist and New Left parties, on the one hand, but can also encourage the emergence of Nationalist and Extreme Right parties on the other hand. For the polarization between post-materialist and traditional values is incongruent with the axis along which the major established political parties have been aligned for many decades. The tension between these two axes of political polarization tends to destabilize political party alignments”. (Inglehart and Rabier 1986: 468)

Again Abramson and Inglehart (1995) argue:

“Changing value priorities may be reshaping the nature of political cleavages and the meaning of “left” and “right,” giving rise to a New Politics axis. This new axis cuts across the traditional left-right dimension. Radical reform parties are at one

pole of this new axis and Right authoritarian parties and movements like the Christian Coalition, the National Front, and the Republikaner Party are at the other pole” (Abramson and Inglehart 1995: 1).

Thus, the FN has exploited the cleavages existing in the well developed industrial society of France and has affected the party system in France to reshape it in several aspects (Veugelers 2000: 23).

As far as the ideological effect is concerned, the FN has been able to change the issues of debate among the political parties. The acceptance of the issues like immigration and security by the mainstream parties has increased the legitimacy of the FN in the French political system. This effect on the mainstream parties in the area of immigration will be discussed thoroughly in the next chapter.

## CHAPTER 4

### **The Front National and Immigration Policy in France**

This chapter examines the immigration policy in France. Further it analyses the changes that occurred in the policy in the course of time. This chapter also tries to find out the direct or indirect effects of the rise of the extreme right wing parties in the 1980s on immigration issues. It also looks at the changes that occurred in the discourse of the centre-right parties vis-a-vis the issue of immigration. French demographers define immigrants as people born abroad without the nationality of the country in which they live now (Tribalat 1991: 6). According to this definition the number of immigrants residing in France in 2006 census (Insee 2006) was 4.9 million representing 8.1 per cent of the mainland population. This figure does not include those of immigrant origin who were born in France and having a French nationality. This is because in France the census is not taken at the ethnic level. Thus it is difficult to estimate the ethnic minority community in France (Geddes and Guiraudon 2004: 339). Moreover, according to an estimate the number of illegal immigrants (*sans-papiers*) varies between 200,000 and 500,000. Today, the share of immigrants of non-European origin is 60 per cent, compared with 51 per cent in 1999 and 43 per cent in 1975. Since 1974, when the ‘suspension’ of the labour immigrants of non-European Community came into existence, family reunification has been the main source of immigration in France (Marthaler 2008: 383). In 2005, percentage of immigrants entering France for this purpose was 70, whereas; only 7 per cent of immigrants entered for work. Most of the French immigrants (nearly 70 per cent) come from its former colonies in North and West Africa among which the share of Algerians and Moroccans is the largest. These people including a number of Turkish immigrants form a significant Muslim community in France with a population over 4 million comprising around 7 per cent of the population of France. This is the highest percentage of Muslim community in any European Union member state (Wihtol de Wenden 2005: 153).

## **Historical Background of Immigration and Immigration Policy in France**

Immigration in France is not a new phenomenon. It received four overlapping waves of immigration in the last century (Schain 2004: 5). In the early years of the century, the immigration of the workers was mainly from Belgium and Italy. There was a high migration to the North and the eastern part of France where mining, steel and textile industries were being developed. The migrants from these countries joined Frenchmen in these areas as well as they worked in the agriculture sector where the workforce was weakened by the migration of the native workers from the countryside. During World War I there was an increased requirement of migrants to fulfil the additional want of manpower because the European workers had left for the battlefield. This requirement was executed by inviting the workers from its colonies; mainly from Algeria and Indochina. In the post-World War reconstruction, France continued with recruiting immigrant workers to meet the requirements generated by it. French government even signed agreements with Belgium, Poland, Czechoslovakia and Italy to send workers to France. It constituted a General Company for Immigration (Société Générale d'Immigration) to control immigration in France. French employers were named as the members of this company (DeLey 1983: 197-8). During this period the number of Polish workers in the mining industry was half of the foreign workers. They were the second largest foreign community in France after Italians (Hargreaves 2003: 9). The third wave of the immigration came from Portugal in the post-World War II period. Under the dictatorship of Antonio de Oliveira Salazar a great number of young Portuguese fled the country and headed to France. French authorities made some relaxations in their regulations to accommodate these young people (Weil 1991: 68). The fourth wave started in the mid-1960s when immigrants from former French colonies started coming to France (Schain 2004: 5).

The French policy towards these immigrants has always been based on the assimilationist model of French republicanism. The First French laws limiting immigration came in 1932. It was because the number of the migrants reached 2,700,000 (6.59 per cent of the population) in 1932. Moreover, the number of increasing unemployment resulted in



reactions against foreign workers. This law established the quota system in certain occupations for foreign workers. This law also made the provision of issuing work identification card valid for a specific region and a specific occupation. The immigration was further restricted by two subsequent set of laws issued in 1938 and 1940 (DeLey 1983: 198).

The immigration law which was the basic framework of the immigration policy of France for the longest time came in 1945 in wake of the reconstruction of the nation after war. In the post-World War II period, France needed a huge workforce to reconstruct the country. For this, France made some modifications in its immigration law. The new law was introduced on 2 November 1945 with provisions of recruitment of foreign labour. It also made provisions for a system of control for foreigners entering, residing and working in the country. The law came with a provision of three kinds of residence permits: a “temporary” permit (valid for one year), an “ordinary” permit (valid for three years) and a “privileged” permit (valid for ten years). Moreover, foreigners could have been expelled if found as a “threat to public order” or “to the public credit” (DeLey 1983: 199).

An *Office National d'Immigration* (National Immigration Office) was created under this law to regulate the coming of foreign workers to France. It had branches in labour-sending countries and it recruited workers to work in construction, public works, mining, steel and in automobile and chemical industries. Thus, all the migrants had to pass through ONI to come to work in France. This office worked adequately till the end of 1950s, but after that the employers as well as the workers started to bypass ONI. The employers started hiring workers clandestinely and then they “regularized” them using loop-holes in the system. Thus the role of the ONI was completely undermined and by 1960 the government had lost its control over immigration. According to an estimate, in 1968, the number of illegal workers reached a high of 82 percent. Instead of taking measures to control the immigration flux, the government accepted the necessity of the manpower and hence issued a circular in 1968 to make the “regularization” procedure official (DeLey 1983: 199). This provided provisions to regularize the foreigner workers

status and stay in France. They were provided with residence and work permit and were assumed to help to ease labour shortage by taking up jobs in France (Hargreaves 2003: 7).

1973 is a very important year as far as the economics and the policymaking of a European country is concerned. This is the year of the oil shock which caused the economic crisis in Europe. Prior to this phenomenon, the foreign workers were seen as the assets of the country and introducing them into national labour market was considered as the best way to boost the economy. But, this event caused a lot of unemployment. The assets were now seen as liabilities and the government was bound to take strict decisions against illegal immigrants to curb the problems caused by the economic crisis (Hollifield 1986: 114). In this regard the French government under the presidency of Valéry Giscard d'Estaing came with a law on 5 July 1974 'suspending' immigration and was never lifted since. A strict attitude was taken against illegal immigrants and a number of illegal immigrants were detained and expelled afterwards. The immigrants were encouraged to return to their country of origin. For this the incentives to return home were instituted up to an amount of \$2000 (Delay 1983: 200). The Bonnet Law in January 1980 expanded the criteria of expulsion and hence increasing the number of expulsion of foreign workers. Problem arose when undocumented workers went on strike and held demonstrations several times. Consequently, the government had to announce a case-by-case regularization of heads of household who had entered prior to March 1, 1980 (DeLey 1983: 200-1).

Hollifield explains the situation of the immigrants as shock absorbers for industrial economies. He says, "With the suspension of immigration and with the attempts to encourage immigrants to return to their countries of origin, foreign labour came to be viewed as a kind of shock absorber for industrial economies. According to this argument, "foreigners could be hired when times were good and fired when times were bad" (Hollifield 1986: 115-6). He further explains that the immigration policy of France after the oil shock aimed at three main points:

- (1) stopping the coming of immigrants and foreign workers by suspending immigration;
- 2) encouraging immigrants to return to their country of origin;
- (3) attempting to integrate those workers and their families into the host society where they had been living and working for a specific period of time (Hollifield 1986: 117-8).

Still the number of immigrants in France increased thanks to family reunion and flow of seasonal labour. There were other reasons too. Firstly, the birth rate among the immigrants was high and mortality rate was low. It led to the natural growth of the population of immigrants. Secondly, the ratification of the Rome Treaties gave the workers from the European Economic Community freedom to move freely in other member states. Thirdly, immigrants who came legally to France after 1973 were political refugees who came from Southeast Asia, Latin America and Middle East. At least 20,000 such refugees entered France every year since 1973. Finally, the illegal immigration was not totally stopped during this period (Hollifield 1986: 126).

On 6 July 1981, the Socialist government came with a circular suspending the expulsions of all the children born in France or who came in France before the age of ten. The circular said that a person posing “a serious threat to public order” could be expelled. This threat was further defined as crimes such as: drug trafficking, a serious crime involving procuring or assault and battery, rape and serious theft. This circular also provided to consider each case in an individualistic manner (DeLey 1983: 202). In October in the same year, the Socialist government came with three new laws modifying some provisions of the November 1945 law. First law was related to entry and residence of foreigners in France. This law provided them exemption from expulsion of certain categories of people under certain condition. Minors, less than 18 years of age, were unconditionally exempted. The detained person was also given the right to present his/her case. The second law was related to strict action could be taken against the employer of illegal immigrant workers. This was done to curb the number of clandestine illegal

workers. The employers used to hire clandestine workers to save money and to make more profit. The third law provided the foreigner workers right of free association. These laws were basically made to reduce the number of clandestine workers and to regularize them (DeLey 1983: 202-6). In addition to this the border control was tightened. At the same time provisions for housing, education and social integration were done for legal immigrants (DeLey 1983: 209).

In the following decade the issues of immigration was highly politicized due to the political structure of France. Subsequently, France today has a record of the highest number of legislative change in the field of immigration. The debate on immigration has evolved from mere economic issue to issues like national identity, migrant incorporation, security and terrorism. People from both pro- and anti-migrant community have mobilized in this period. On one hand, France has witnessed number of large scale migrant social movements. In the 1970s there was a migrant workers rent strike, in the 1980s there was a “second generation” movement and in the 1990s France witnessed the *sans papiers* (illegal migrants/those without documents) movement. On the other hand, extreme right wing parties like Front National has mobilized people against the migrants community (Guiraudon 2002: 3).

In 1993, when right-wing coalition government came into power, it came with a new immigration law. The “Pasqua law” named after the French interior minister who proposed it. He sought to “immigration zéro” (zero immigration). This law was focused on tightening the flow of legal immigration. These laws made the provision to forbid foreign graduates to accept job offers by French employers and were denied a stable residence permit. The waiting-time for family reunification was raised from one year to two years. Another provision denied residence permit to foreign spouses who had been living in the country illegally prior to marrying. These repressive measures of the Pasqua law forced the legal immigration to illegal. Still a large number of *inexpulsables-irrégularisables* (undeportable-inregularizable) immigrants were living in France (Guiraudon 2002: 3).

## **Immigration Policy in France from 1995 to 2011**

French immigration policy during this period of time is marked by several amendments to the laws under several governments. On the one hand where right-wing party took stringent actions to curb legal as well as illegal immigration, on the other hand the Socialist government took some moderate steps towards immigration. The first law in this period was proposed by the interior minister Jean-Louis Debre of right-wing party RPR (Rally for the Republic *Rassemblement pour la République*).

The “Debre bill” named after the interior minister who presented it in the French Parliament was passed on 26 March, 1997. He argued that this bill was designed to close “loopholes” in already existing immigration laws of 1993. Paradoxically, the authors of the original 1993 laws slammed the law stating defective and not needed. The bill comprised with several strict measures to curb immigration. It had the provision to create a national registry of French citizens and their foreign guests. It also gave power to the police to take the fingerprints of anyone from outside the European Union applying for a residence permit. A person coming from developing country not having enough money to stay long in France was denied visas unless he produced a certificate that someone would provide him with lodging. It also allowed the police to search all the commercial vehicles within twenty miles of the border and to seize the passports or travel documents of illegal immigrants. This bill gave the police comprehensive power to control immigration in France (Emmons 1997: 358).

This bill attracted major opposition from various sections of the society. Actors, directors, artists, cartoonists, writers, musicians, scientists, lawyers, mayors and judges declared to disobey the law and threatened to go to jail if the bill was passed. This bill even attracted criticism from the European Union and it called for the withdrawal of the bill asserting that it “would require denunciations like those made against Jews during World War II” (Emmons 1997: 359). Facing such kind of opposition, the bill was

amended by removing its most controversial “reporting” clauses<sup>1</sup>. But, this was not the whole picture. Around 69 per cent people approved the bill even when it contained the “reporting” clause (Ibid).

As soon as the right-wing government was succeeded by the Socialist government headed by Lionel Jospin, the immigration laws were changed in 1998. These laws were based on the report submitted by the prominent political scientist Patrick Weil; ‘*L’immigration et nationalité*’ (The immigration and nationality). This was the age of the waves of globalization and all the developed countries were in a competition to get the sharp minds and skilled immigrants. Weil suggested in his report to make provisions to attract those brightest brains. He was very much inspired by the US model of visa provisions. He argued that the 1993 Pasqua law prohibits foreign students and professionals from settling in France. Taking his concerns into account, the 1998 law on immigration gave special status to scientists and scholars. There are provisions made for the entry of highly skilled professionals in the IT and other sectors (Guiraudon 2002: 3).

At the beginning of the century, the French immigration policy was affected by the success of the Front National in the presidential election. The success of the extreme right-wing party in the 2002 presidential election revealed that centre-right and centre-left parties had failed to address the issue of immigration and the problems caused by it. After winning the election, this became the major concern for Chirac. He appointed Nicolas Sarkozy as Minister of Interior and he took a firm stand to deal with such issues. He started getting quick popularity due to his actions. During his two tenures as Minister of Interior (May 2002 to March 2004 and May 2005 to March 2007), he proposed two bills covering immigration control, nationality and integration. The First Sarkozy law adopted

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<sup>1</sup> The most controversial item in the Debre bill was removed before its passage. It would have forced French hosts to notify the local authorities when foreign guests left their homes, a provision likened to policies decreed by the World War II Vichy regime that required French citizens to report the movements of Jewish residents. This change in the law would have permitted the government to compile computer records on foreigners from certain countries who are considered the most likely to remain in France. Some foreigners would have been exempt, including those from the United States and Japan, but visitors from a long list of countries in Africa and the Middle East were designated targets of the provision.

on 26 November 2003 was the first of them. This law took two approaches; 1) setting more restrictive measures on immigration control and 2) making provisions to improve integration. This law set two main objectives; first, to set a target of 25,000 deportations in 2006 to restrict illegal immigration compared with 10,000 in 2002 and, second, to reduce the number of asylum-seekers in France. In the justification of these repressive laws the minister argued that these laws would facilitate the integration of immigrants already living in France (Marthaler 2008: 387).

The second Sarkozy law was adopted on 24 July 2006 on immigration and integration. This law came in the wake of the October 2005 riots in the suburbs of French cities. On the situation of immigration he argued, “In France, immigration retains negative connotations because it is not adequately regulated and not sufficiently linked to our economic needs, and because it is not accompanied by an ambitious integration policy” (quoted in Marthaler 2008: 390). The focus of the debate had now shifted from ‘imposed’ immigration to ‘selective’ immigration. ‘Imposed’ immigration included family reunification and asylum-seekers that was the major portion of immigrants in France. The ‘selective’ immigration focused on highly skilled professionals and scholars. They were thought to be helpful in strengthening the French economy. A provision of a renewable three-year residence permit called a ‘skills and talents’ permit (*carte de compétences et talents*) was made for highly qualified non-EU workers. At the same time strict measures were taken to curb the number of illegal immigrants in country. The law abolished the *de facto* regularization of illegal immigrants after ten years’ residence on France territory. Now, each immigrant had to make an individual case to stay in France. Moreover, the law allowed the foreigners to enter the country only if they could prove that they have sufficient amount to support family members. The eligibility of foreigners to avail welfare benefits were also reduced to a great extent and new workers were now required to sign a ‘Reception and Integration Contract’ (*Contrat d’accueil et d’intégration*) accepting to learn French and to respect French values (Marthaler 2008: 391).

After the 2007 presidential election, Nicolas Sarkozy became the President of France. He now, formed a new Ministry under him called Ministry of Immigration Integration,

National Identity and Co-Development. This ministry was one of the key manifesto promises of Sarkozy. However, the xenophobic attitude of the ministry was criticized to a great extent not only by the opposition Socialists but by the Christian democratic Union for French Democracy (UDF) and the Catholic Church. The new ministry had mainly four aims as Marthaler explains:

“First, it sets out the background to recent developments in immigration policy-making in France. Second, it explores the way in which Sarkozy has repositioned the UMP, the dominant centre-right party of which he has been president since 2004, on immigration and examines how recent discourse and action diverge from earlier centre-right handling of the issue. Third, it seeks to explain why this evolution has taken place by identifying the forces shaping and constraining the conduct and stance of Sarkozy and his party. In particular, it analyses the extent to which changes in immigration policy are a function of political competition or a response to public opinion. Finally, it evaluates the effectiveness of the centre-right’s handling of the immigration issue, both in political and social terms” (Marthaler 2008: 383).

### **Right-wing Extremism and Immigration Policy in France**

Immigration remained the main attraction for the extreme right parties. The first incidence in the history of French extreme right-wing regarding immigration appeared when the Vichy regime sought to rediscover ‘Frenchness’ during Second World War. As Shields points out in his book *The Extreme Right in France* that:

“The assimilationist model of French republicanism was inverted. Legislation was introduced as early as July 1940 to exclude naturalised French citizens from public office and prominent professions. With strictly defined exceptions (notably for those who had fought in the French army and their immediate offspring), naturalised citizens were progressively disqualified from serving as government officials, civil servants, teachers, doctors, dentists, pharmacists, lawyers, vets, and even architects” (Shields 2007: 20).

After the Second World War, the situation changed. New foreigner workers were required for the reconstruction of France. A huge number of immigrants were invited by the government and the immigration policy was very promising at that time. In this period, when the extreme right was at the verge of marginalization, it had very less power to address any issue. Moreover, the number of unemployment was also very low. As



early as by 1973 when the oil shock affected badly the economic conditions in Western Europe, the unemployment found a sharp growth. This is where the extreme right-wing parties capitalized with their rhetoric of anti-immigration. By this time Front National had been formed in France. Though it did not get success and recognition until the local election of Dreux, it continuously warned people from the dangerous consequences of immigration. Le Pen warned that the Western civilization and Western people will be submerged by the demographic tidal wave from Asia and Africa (Shields 2007: 188). He gave several anti-immigration slogans like: '*La France aux Français*' (France for the French), '*Les Français d'abord*' (the French first), 'A million unemployed is a million immigrants too many!' The Front National always advocated for the 'national preference'. In 1980s it came with idea of 'a strictly selective immigration policy' based on 'ethnic criteria'. It distinguishes between European and non-European immigrants. Le Pen was strictly against the immigration from Third World countries. He thought that they cannot assimilate with French people (Shields 2007: 213).

By the passing of decades, his rhetoric against immigration became more and more vocal and explicit. The issue of immigration was now related to unemployment and law and order; issues that affected the common people in everyday life. During this period, the Front National had gained a great acceptability among the French electoral. It had won several elections and had the experience of administration in various regions of France. Le Pen had attracted 14.4 per cent votes and 15.1 per cent votes in 1988 and 1995 presidential elections respectively. It had also won in some regions elections. The performance of the FN was impressive in local elections. Moreover, the loyalty of voters towards the FN was the most among all the parties (Schain 2007: 74-6). These successes in electoral process gave the Front National the legitimacy in French political system. This event also attracted the mainstream parties to address these issues.

Such parties gain attention not when they are formed but when they get a breakthrough in the established party system. These parties get such breakthroughs either by attracting voters from other parties or by mobilizing new class of votes who had previously been abstainers (Martin, 1998: 153-60). Schain suggests two ways of nullifying the effect of

such parties; first, by co-opting the issues that attracted the voters to shift their vote to such parties, and, second, by isolating and more or less ignoring the challengers (Schain 2007: 72). The Front National has attracted a good portion of centre-right votes as well as centre-left votes on various issues. The voters of the FN can be found in various sections of the society. It has attracted a remarkable share of the workers vote as well. Initially, the mainstream parties tried to isolate the FN, but with very less success. Co-opting of the issues also did not work in the 1990s (Ibid).

Co-opting of the issue of immigration can be seen in 1990s by the centre-right party. Being in the government it came with various laws regarding immigration to curb it in very stringent manner. The centre-right government introduced the Pasqua law and Debre law in 1990s. These laws had firm provisions to control immigration. Emmons says that in a rich historical background of immigration and the recent decline in immigration, the fact that feeling against foreigners are continuing to rise indicates that there are other forces which are influencing French sentiments. Emmons blames the FN for advancing such sentiment in France. According to her the real problem is not the influx of immigrants rather it is due to internal economic and social problems aggravated by the political rise of the Front National. At the end of 1997 the unemployment rose to 12.7 per cent of the population. This was exploited by the FN. It spread the propaganda that everyone will get job if the immigrants were deported to their countries (Emmons 1997: 359).

Earlier the mainstream parties used to ignore the FN considering it as a party from Extreme right-wing. But the success of the FN in the regional by-election in Vitrolles on 9 February 1997 started a debate in the mainstream parties. At this time four of the main cities (Vitrolles, Marignane, Orange and Toulon) were run by the mayor of the Front National. These cities were marked by an industrial economic base, high unemployment, rising crime and large immigration populations. The FN capitalized on these issues and succeeded to persuade the voters that mainstream parties are not interested in addressing these issues and immigration is the cause of all the problems of people. This result was important because of the fact that mainstream parties have always describes the FN as a

racist party. This success put the Front National at the third largest party status in France. In this regard, the introduction of Debre law can be seen as an effort made by the center-right government to address the issue of immigration which has always been associated with the extreme right-wing parties. They argued that ignoring the widespread concerns of immigration is going to serve nothing but a popularity gain to the FN. While the critics said that by doing so, the RPR-UDF government has put the issue of the FN in the mainstream of the politics, hence, has legitimized the agenda of the FN (Emmons 1997: 360-4).

It is always argued that the FN has politicized the issue of immigration. But this is not the full picture. In fact, the Pasqua law and Debre law are not the initial stages where the issue of immigration was addressed by the mainstream parties. In the years of 1980s the Communist Party was against the immigrant workers claiming them as a threat to the French Working class. In 1983 the RPR and UDF candidates from Paris Alain Juppé sought for the illegal immigration and crime. He claimed that “This invasion must be stopped!” In summer 1983, even Jacques Chirac, then Mayor of Paris and RPR leader declared, “France no longer has the means to support a host of foreigners who abuse her hospitality and that in Paris the threshold of tolerance has been exceeded” (Shields 2007: 208). In Chirac’s government from 1983-88, several efforts were done to control immigration. Random checks of identity card were restored and even a plane was chartered to deport 101 Malian refugees. Chirac also made some controversial comments regarding immigrants like association of ‘noise and smell’ with them. In the same way, Balladur’s 1993-95 government abolished the ‘droit du sol’, i.e. French citizenship for those born in France of non-French parents. He also tightened the naturalization process and family reunion laws. He gave additional powers to the police including stop-and-search power. Though, the Socialist governments has been kept a moderate stand regarding immigration, the statement of the Socialist Prime Minister Edith Cresson in the early 1990s to charter a plane to deport illegal immigrants show the approach of the Socialists towards immigration. By setting up detention centres for asylum seekers her government had even endorsed a policy of Front National (Hansworth and Mitchell 2000: 453).

As earlier told, the FN became the third largest party in the French political party system by 1997. Though, it faced a split in 1999 it bounced back during the presidential election in 2002. Le Pen reached the second run-off defeating Lionel Jospin of the Socialist party. Le Pen was defeated badly in the second run-off, but he strongly propagated the issues like immigration, law and order and unemployment (Shields 2007: 288). The average percentage of the voters of the FN considering immigration and law and order as the most prominent issue in the election remains in 60s to 70s (Shields 2007).

Marthaler points out that the programme and discourse of the FN comprises with “xenophobic and discriminatory rhetoric portraying non-European immigrants as a threat to French national identity, living off state handouts, fuelling crime and creating a climate of insecurity and even subversion. The party is vehemently opposed to multiculturalism and its policy of ‘national preference’ would give priority to French nationals in housing, social security benefits and employment. Its other proposals include zero immigration, the expulsion of illegal immigrants, French control of national borders and the reform of French nationality laws to replace *jus soli* with *jus sanguinis*” (Marthaler 2008: 384). In the same way Van der Valk characterizes the discourse and programmes of the center-right by ‘significant exclusionary features’ (Van der Valk 2003: 310). “Like the far-right it has linked migrants with rising crime levels, fraud and abuse of the welfare state as well as cultural decline, generating a climate of suspicion towards immigrants which ‘clearly has a function to justify harsh measures to restrict immigration without risking being accused of repressive policies’ (van der Valk 2003: 339).

But the result of the 2002 presidential election made the center-right realize the threat of the Front National. The then interior minister Nicolas Sarkozy came with repressive provisions in his law of 2003. This was an effort to regain its electoral that has shifted towards the extreme right due to such issues. But as Marthaler says that this idea involved two principal risks: “potentially alienating the more centrist section of the centre-right electorate and helping to legitimate the far-right programme” (Marthaler 2008: 388). However, these steps gave Sarkozy benefits in election. The eagerness to regain its voters from the extreme right wing is very much evident in one interview of Nicolas Sarkozy in

which he admitted his preparation to put all the immigrants out of France ‘one by one’. He said, “If the FN has made headway, it’s because we haven’t done our job. By refusing to talk about some of the subjects which Le Pen has taken ownership of, we have driven part of our electorate to despair” (Ibid). This can be understood with the fact that in an opinion poll in 2006, 24 per cent public supported the position of Le Pen on immigration. The acceptance of Le Pen’s ideas had also increased in the last decade from 52 per cent in 1997 to 66 per cent in 2006. Similarly, more than 33 per cent respondent felt that the extreme right was near to the basic anxieties of the common public. They accepted that the FN had enhanced the political debate on immigration and law and order (Marthaler 2008: 388).

One more event which augmented the debate on the immigration in last decade was the October riots in the suburbs of French cities. This started with the news of the death of two teenagers of Arab origin in a suburb of Paris. The situation was so aggravated that the observers started claiming that the immigration policy of France has failed. The great model of republicanism and integration of the immigrants had loopholes which were demonstrated during the riots. The riots were mostly done by socially alienated teenagers of Arab origin. The Prime Minister Dominique de Villepin accepted that the effectiveness of the integration model of France had come under question. He also accepted that this riot was not due to religion, rather it was due to social problems (Haddad and Balz 2006: 24). For French government and for social scientists, this riot was not a surprise as they knew about the situation in the suburbs. One week before the riots, interior minister Nicolas Sarkozy told *Le Monde*, “Violence in French suburbs is a daily fact of life. Since the beginning of the year stones were thrown at 9,000 police cars and each night 20 to 40 cars are torched” (Haddad and Balz 2006: 25). Earlier, in June, on a visit to one of the Parisian suburbs, flooded with immigrants, he expressed his desire to clean up the area with an industrial hose (*nettoyer au Kärcher*) (Marthaler 2008: 390).

These events rather gave him the opportunity to take on hard lines. That is why, soon after the adoption of the 2003 law, he started the new reform of the Code for the Entry and Residence of Foreigners and the Right of Asylum (CESEDA) (Masquet 2006: 45)

which resulted in the second Sarkozy law. This law was aiming on facilitating the entry of skilled professionals to address the economic need of the country. The hard stand taken by Sarkozy paid off and he was able to win a part of the electorate from the FN. But how did the public respond? To answer this question Mayer (2007) says that in 2007, 90 per cent of the voters of Le Pen thought that there were too many immigrants in France. Although, a good section of the voters rejected the principle of ‘national preference’ which is the base of the FN discourse. The proportion of people thinking that the preference should be given to Frenchman over an illegal immigrant came to 20 per cent in 2006 from 40 per cent in 1991 (Mayer 2007: 432).

**Table 9: Percentage of Le Pen voters agreeing that there are too many immigrants in France, 1988-2007**

	<b>1988</b>	<b>1995</b>	<b>2002</b>	<b>2007</b>
FN voters	95	97	97	90
All voters	65	74	65	56

Source: Mayer (2007: 432)

In an opinion poll in 2007, a majority of voters from center right as well as the extreme right liked the provision of quota for immigrants in working sector. There was a very little difference in the percentage of these communities welcoming the application of quota. Likewise, the voters from both the sections (right and extreme right) agreed on the effectiveness of such measures in order to control immigration. Thus, in other words, Sarkozy was appealing to both centre-right wing electorate as well as the extreme right voters (Marthaler 2008: 393-4).

Thus, immigration policy in France is today going through a process of trial and error. France has a long history of immigration throughout the last century. But the problem of immigrants was never as severe as it is today. The earlier model of the republicanism which seeks or integrates immigrants in society has loosened its grip on the society. In this regard, the rise of extreme right wing in the 1980s can be seen as the catalyst to

change the mindset of the society. Formed in 1972, the Front National has very effectively raised the problem of immigration and linked it with law and order and unemployment. It always demand for the removal of all the immigrants from France for, they are accused of depriving the French people from getting job. In the course of time, the FN has emerged as a prominent party in the French party system. People started associating themselves with the ideas of the FN. The FN attracted the voters from all the sections due to its appealing discourse on issues directly linked to common people. It attracted votes from right wing parties as well as left wing parties. One of the largest sections of the voters of the FN is blue-collar workers. The electoral successes in various elections put the issue of immigration in the mainstream politics. As Wieviorka (1991) points out that the emergence of the FN in French political system put immigration into the centre of public debate. The leaders across the political spectrum have also endorsed its xenophobic attitude by associating themselves with the problem of immigration in order to regain its voters. In sum, the FN today, is responsible for the growing racism in contemporary France (Wieviorka 1991: 82).

Earlier, parties avoided to talk explicitly about immigration. Now, due to the success of the FN, they had to address this issue. Several laws and amendments in laws were done so far. Most of the reforms were done due to the situation of the time. In 1974, the immigration was 'suspended' due to the economic crisis caused by the oil shock. Further some exemptions from expulsion were given to immigrants in the Socialist regime of François Mitterrand. By the 1990s, the right wing also started accepting the problems of immigration. Pasqual law and Debre law are some examples of the efforts made by the right wing governments in order to control immigration. In the beginning of the century, France witnessed an exceptional event when Le Pen on the issues of immigration, law and order and unemployment reached the second run-off of the presidential election. From this point we can see that the discourse of immigration was explicitly taken by the centre-right party in order to regain its electorate from the FN. By the end of the decade, the right-wing party had come with some repressive measures to tackle the problem of immigration and the problems caused by it. It can be said that the right wing party has tried to deprive the FN from its most appealing discourse. The results of the 2007

presidential and legislative elections have clearly shown that this shift in the discourse of the right wing party has resulted in its success.



## Conclusion

This study of right wing extremism and immigration policy in France has revealed several aspects. Right wing extremism has a long history having its origin in the French Revolution of 1789. In fact, the origin of the classification of the parties on the basis of Left and Right has the seeds in the French Revolution. The classification started from the seating arrangement of the first French General Assembly. In this Assembly, people inspired by the thought of Enlightenment were seated on the left and those who supported the powers of the king were seated on the right of the president of the Assembly. This event established some elements in both the poles of the party system. This event had played a vital role in formulating the ideology of these parties. On the one hand, where, affinity towards the traditional establishment became one of the prominent virtues of the right wing parties, on the other hand, affinity towards the modern and progressive approach became the virtue of the left. The first incidence of the extreme right was seen in the rise of counter-revolutionaries. These people were very much in support for the restoration of monarchy. The right-wing extremism has a continuous history since then through movements or individuals like Bonaprtism, Boulangism, Ligue des Patriotes (League of Patriots), anti-Drefusard movement, Action Française, Vichy, Algérie Française (French Algeria), Poujadism, the FN (Front National).

During the study it was found that the scholars have different opinions even on the nomenclature of this phenomenon. So many terms like fascist, neo-fascist, neo-populist, radical right and right-wing populist etc are used to explain such parties. Nowadays, the term right wing extremism has found broad consensus among scholars. In addition to nomenclature, the study also found that the definition of this phenomenon has different opinions among scholars. As Mudde says that the phenomenon, though, much talked in the political field, lacks an equivocal definition (Mudde 1995: 205). Some scholars even advise not to be too hung up in the quest of the proper definition as it is a very ambiguous phenomenon often shows different shades every time so that there cannot be a proper consensus among scholars.

It is found that the phenomenon that emerged during the 1980s exhibits different approaches from that of the Second World War period. Generally, these parties are related to fascism and Nazism. This is very easy to link them with such ideologies because the issues raised by them are generally those which were the reasons for the rise of fascism and Nazism. These parties categorically differentiated themselves from fascism and Nazism and also they tried their best to avoid to be linked with such ideologies. They changed their appearance and the way for the propaganda of their ideology. Even though they raise such issues, the way of propaganda and execution are totally different from those of fascist and Nazi parties. Fieschi acknowledges this difference in Front National (FN). He says that though the FN owes a historical and ideological debt to fascism, it is now distinct from it. The party can be seen as hybrid which contains some elements present in fascism. Characters like cult leadership and hostility towards the political class are some elements of fascism, very deeply rooted in the discourse of the FN, whereas; the characteristics of violence and philosophy of rebirth are absent from its discourse (Fieschi 2004: 136). But there are some parties which admired its affiliation with fascism. MSI (Italian Social Movement) was established in early post-World War II era and it enjoyed its affiliation with fascist ideology as well as fascist leaders. Rejection of the parliamentary establishment, affinity towards a strong government, hatred for socialism and communism, a following of cult leadership are some of the characteristics associated with the extreme right wing movement which flourished in the 1980s in several countries of Europe.

The foundation of the Front National in 1972 began in an era in the political party system in France shortly after the turbulent ant-establishment movement that swept western Europe. Though, in the first decade of its formation it did not get any significant success, it started gaining success in the early 1980s. The first breakthrough was achieved in 1983 by-election in one of the suburbs of Paris; Dreux. Since then the FN has achieved a remarkable status in the French political system. It has performed well in almost all kind of elections in France. Starting from the local level where it has won some regional elections electing Mayors in some cities, it has also got its candidates elected for the European Parliament, thus, spreading its presentation from local level to supranational

level. At the national level elections- presidential as well as legislative elections, it has done well so far. In the presidential elections, the FN has attracted votes between 10.4 per cent and 17.79 per cent from 1988 to 2007. In legislative elections the FN has received votes between 4.3 to 15.24 per cent in the time period of 1995-2007. The FN reached its peak of success when Le Pen reached the second run-off for the presidential election of 2002. He came ahead of the socialist leader Lionel Jospin. But the protest all over France after the result of 21 April 2002 showed the sentiments of French people against Le Pen. It was a kind of test of the republican ethos enshrined in the heart of French people who passed the test by standing firm against the sectarian and authoritarian ideology of Le Pen who is often called as 'danger to democracy' (Shields 2007) or 'devil of the republic'. The party reached its low first time after its success in the European elections 1984, in 2007 legislative elections where it managed to collect just 4.3 per cent of total votes.

In the success story of the FN the role of its leader is quite impressive. The former member of the Foreign Legion of French army took the charge of the FN with great vigour. He had a long experience of politics under Poujade. An excellent orator with an authoritative approach, he gave the FN a good direction throughout his life. His ability to exploit the crisis conditions and tendency to communicate in both populist and intellectual terms gave the FN an edge over other likeminded parties. He exploited the economic crisis and its effect on employment during the 1970s by relating it with the issue of immigration in the country. He directly linked immigrants with the reason of unemployment. He gave the slogan, '*A million unemployed is a million immigrants too many!*'. Moreover, he linked the immigrants with almost all the problems of French people. He added the aspect of insecurity and law and order as a problem caused by immigrants. He was in favour of sending all the immigrants to their countries and enforcing strict rules for the entry of them in France. Also he differentiated on ethnic basis and thus was not against the immigrants from other European countries as he saw them not distinct from him and they could easily assimilate in the French society. Whereas, he was strictly against the immigrations from African and Asian countries because he thought that they could not be assimilated in the French society. His ideology

was based on the concept of 'national preference'. He gave the slogans of '*La France aux Français*' (France for the French), '*Les Français d'abord*' (the French first) etc.

Few themes are very prominent in the ideology of FN. The first and the foremost theme of the party is its anti-immigration stance. This is further associated with insecurity, law and order and unemployment. The rhetoric of the party gives a xenophobic aspect to such issues. The second prominent theme is its authoritarian approach. It has a tendency of cult leader who is authoritarian in nature. Le Pen fulfils the criteria very well. FN sees the authoritarian approach in its leader as well as in the model of its stronger government. The third theme of FN is its economic discourse. It talks about a liberal economy together with a protectionist approach. It says that the industries should be free from the government's regulations. At the same time it says that the benefits of the small level businessmen should be taken care of by the government. The fourth theme of the ideology of FN is its anti-establishment discourse. Even during the campaign for the presidential election in 2002, Le Pen advocated that the Fifth Republic should give way to the formation of the Sixth Republic which will have stronger government.

The repeated success of the FN in elections gave legitimacy to the issues raised by it. Several surveys show that the voters who vote for the FN in any election think immigration as one of the major problems of France. Similarly, a great section of such group thinks that there are a lot of immigrants in France. These results and the success of the FN forced the centre-right parties to rethink on such issues. In an effort to attract the voters of FN towards Chirac in the presidential election of 1988, the then interior minister Pasqua expressed his shared concerns on immigration with FN. This shows the efforts made by the centre-right party to attract voters from FN. In the following decade this effort became very clear when two consecutive centre-right governments came with two laws to control immigration in France. Pasqua Law and Debre Law show the commitment of the mainstream right wing parties to address the issue which has been a matter of great concern for a sizable population of France. Pasqua sought for zero immigration and in this way he tried to attract votes from FN.

In the first decade of the century, this commitment was shown by the right wing parties in more explicit manner. The success of Le Pen in the 2002 presidential election augmented the concern of the mainstream right wing to address the issues which had the patronage of FN. Two laws introduced by the then interior minister Nicolas Sarkozy made some repressive provisions for immigration. Now the focus was shifted from 'imposed' immigration to 'selective' immigration. Moreover, in 2007, after becoming the President of France, Nicolas Sarkozy formed a new Ministry of Immigration, Integration, National Identity and Co-Development which was one of the major promises of the election manifesto of Nicolas Sarkozy. Though this decision attracted criticism from various sections, it had support from a majority of the public.

As far as the electoral success and the share of votes are concerned, it can be said that in recent time the mainstream centre-right parties have lessened the strength of FN. Success of Sarkozy and defeat of FN in the 2007 legislative elections proved that a majority of the FN electorate has shifted towards centre-right. This can be possible due to the reason that the mainstream party has started addressing the issues of FN in the same manner. In addition to that, they can play a great and direct role in the policy-making of the country, whereas; due to the electoral system in France FN could not do. Thus, it can be said that the mainstream right wing party has deprived the FN from its most admired issue. But at the same time, it managed to keep its electorate intact.

Looking at the broader picture in Europe, extreme right wing parties in Austria and Italy have done much better. FPÖ (Freedom Party of Austria) in Austria and AN (National Alliance) in Italy have entered into the government formation, coalition politics and power sharing. Thus they are participating more directly in the policy-making process. As far as the Vlaams Belang (VB) of Belgium is concerned, it could not be able to make any impression in the country. It is still a very small group in Belgium.

The unexpected success in the regional elections in 2010 and the presidential election in 2012 have put a new energy in the activists of the FN. The FN could manage to collect almost 12 per cent of the votes in the regional elections in 2010. In the 2012 presidential

election, the presidential candidate of the party, Marine Le Pen, daughter of Jean-Marie Le Pen received an unprecedented 18 per cent of the votes in the first round. Besides, the defeat of Sarkozy has also raised various questions regarding his approach towards FN. Now France has got a Socialist President after 1995. These results promise a vibrant and eventful future for FN as well as France.

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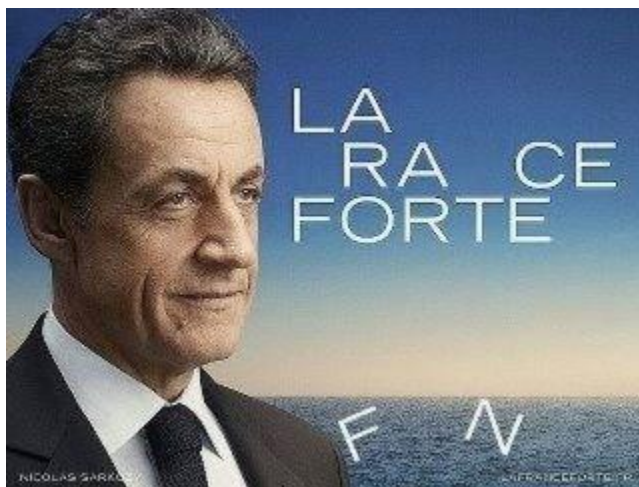
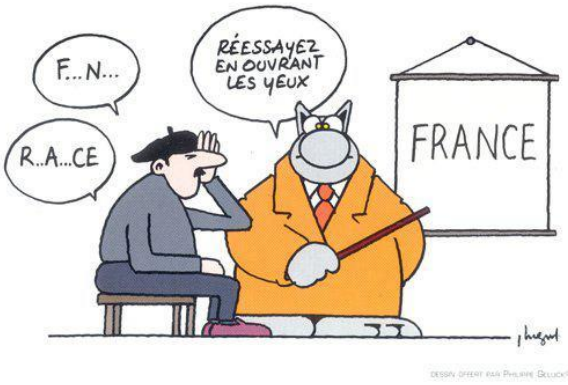
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## Appendix 1



Above are the logos and the posters of Front National with slogans against immigration.



These cartoons and pictures were circulated during the presidential election in 2012. The first cartoon depicts the racial ideology of an FN supporter. One of the pictures of Sarkozy was the poster of his official campaign, whereas; the second picture explains the shift of the FN vote towards Sarkozy in the second round of presidential election 2012.