

blaisdell: Could you explain the difference between French secularism, known as laïcité, and the secularism that exists in the United States?

de charentenay: There's a big difference. The U.S. have a culture which is still religious in general. For example, the U.S. President swears on the Bible. This does not exist in France. The culture in France is more and more secularized, without any religion background.

Both countries have their own system of separation of church and state, which are different. In France the state can give money to private schools and Catholic schools, which is not possible here. In the past in France, the priests would do their military service (now there's no required military service), which here they wouldn't do. There are many such differences, but the main difference is

blaisdell:

It doesn't give work to the youth. Young people, even the well-educated, have a hard time getting jobs. It's worse for those who are in the suburbs. Hollande said he would be a candidate only if the unemployment goes down, but it's just going up all the time. The conclusion is that he should not be a candidate again.

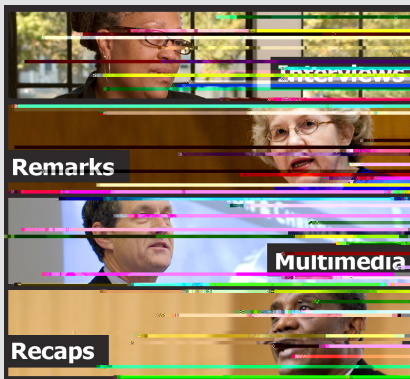
blaisdell: Do you think the Front National has a shot in the upcoming elections, that is unless the republicans and the socialists align against them?

de charentenay: Yes. But this is an old story, in the sense that Marine Le Pen has been going up in a number of votes, local, regional, and national. But in the ultimate ballot, the elector votes for another candidate. That's why there are two runoff elections in the French system.

Some people vote for her in the first runoff, but would never vote for her in the second one. I don't think there is any danger of having Marine Le Pen as president. On the local level, some people

from Front National have been elected as mayors and some at the regional level. However, they have never won the presidency of a single region. If the government doesn't open its eyes to the reality of the social ailments in France, the Front National will get stronger and stronger through opposition and anger, similar to what's happening with Donald Trump in the U.S.

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