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Erasmus

CONTAGIOUS POPULISM?
The influence of the populist radical right
on mainstream parties in France
(1988 – 2012)

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Abstract

Populist radical right parties are electorally successful in Western democracies since few decades. But does this success influence the mainstream parties? This thesis focuses on the case of France and the growing success of *Front National*. Scholars mention a possible populist *Zeitgeist* and the spread of populism into mainstream politics, but the conceptualization of populism is still ambiguous. Based on analyses of parliamentarian discourses and party programmes, this thesis demonstrates that the *Front National* does not necessarily influence the populist rhetoric but might generate political pessimism towards parties in government. The populist *Zeitgeist* and the FN's success seem to have an influence only on the right of the ideological spectrum.

Introduction

Since a few decades, Western societies face an exponential growth of support for populist radical right parties (PRRP). Mudde (2004) calls this a populist *Zeitgeist.* In France, the populist radical right *Front National* (FN) is supported by a large group of the population, has 3 seats in Parliament and 22 in the European Parliament, and its leader, Marine Le Pen, succeed into the second round of the presidential elections of 2017. The national electoral success of the FN is not new. The FN was created in 1972 by the nationalist far-right movement Ordre Nouveau (New Order) and designated Jean-Marie Le Pen as the leader of the party. The party had its first significant electoral success in the presidential elections of 1988 with a score of 14% in the first round. The success of the FN continued to grow but Jean-Marie Le Pen's authoritarian and polemical nature led to internal conflict in the late 90s (Chronologie du Front National, 2012). This conflict did not stop the success of the FN and Jean-Marie Le Pen was the second most successful candidate in the presidential elections of 2002. In 2011, Marine Le Pen, daughter of the formal leader, became the new leader of the FN and engaged a 'normalization' of the party, adopted a more prudent rhetoric, moving away from her father's polemical statements, which made the *Front National* the third party of France (Mestre, 2013, *Le Monde).* The FN claims to be a party for the people, protecting the country and shows the 'national preference' within its policies and ideology (Lecoeur, 2012).

In the news media, we hear and read about the growing influence of populism, that a certain party or politician is populist or that populism has spread into politics (Mudde, 2016 in *Politico*). Using the argument of a populist *Zeitgeist*, some scholars argue that in response to the growing success of populist radical right parties in European democracies, mainstream parties are increasingly using populist rhetoric (Mudde, 2004). Some scholars also state that there is a right turn in policy making, especially on immigration policies (Rooduijn, De Lange & Van Der Brug, 2014).

But research into the way mainstream parties respond to the success of populist radical right parties comes to different conclusions (Bale, 2003; Mudde, 2013; Rooduijn et al., 2014). Using election manifestos, some scholars do not find that mainstream parties have become more populist in their party programmes when PRRP are successful (Adams, Clark, Ezrow and Glasgow, 2004; Rooduijn et al., 2014). Similarly, analysis of Belgian political party's broadcasts did not show any evidence of a populistic contagion in mainstream parties' political rhetoric (Jagers &Walgrave, 2005). However, increased levels of electoral competition (that might come from the growing success of PRRP) coupled with a politicisation of immigration issues (potentially by PRRP) do influence the policy stances of mainstream political parties (Abou-Chadi, 2016).

To overcome this ambivalence of the influence of PRRP on mainstream parties, this thesis investigates the French political landscape from the late 80s to 2012, and focuses on the mainstream right, mainstream left and populist radical right party. The French *Front National* (FN) has been successful since 1988 with its first significant score in the presidential elections, and scholars unanimously identify it as a populist radical right party (Ivaldi, 2005; Mudde, 2013). Furthermore, France has a majoritarian electoral system and a two-party political system which fosters party competition since a party needs the majority of votes to be in the government. France is therefore a good case to study the influence of PRRP on mainstream parties.

This research assesses the accuracy and legitimacy of the claim that Western democracies are facing a populist *Zeitgeist*, by answering the following question: how has the success of *Front National* influenced mainstream political parties in France in the last decades? The question is answered from two angles. First, the research assesses the FN's influence on the populist rhetoric used by mainstream parties in France. Second, the research determines the influence of FN on the immigration stances of the French mainstream parties.

This thesis aims to understand the influence of populism on French contemporary politics and most specifically the influence of populist radical right parties on mainstream parties' both rhetoric and policy stances. This research finds its scientific relevance in the methods used to measure the changes in the mainstream parties' ideology, mainly by adding a parliamentarian discourse analysis to assess the populism of political rhetoric. The case of France is of importance because scholars argue that the FN inspired other European parties that adopted the 'propaganda' (Mudde, 2010). Thus, understanding the strategy adopted by mainstream parties in France after the success of the FN gives insights on party's behaviours in country where a PRRP is present. Furthermore, the present thesis adds to the popular debate on PRRP's influence and informs voters and political parties in France on party changes and party competition.

The parliamentarian discourse analysis reveals that the concept of populism is still ambiguous when measured in context. The French mainstream parties do not seem to change their rhetoric according to the success of the FN, however, the analysis shows that the mainstream right tends to be more critical and pessimistic towards politics than the mainstream left. The results of the party manifestos analysis indicate that only the mainstream right adopted stricter policy stances between the late 80's until 2012. Thus, the populism of the FN might be contagious only on the right side of ideological spectrum.

Theoretical framework

Defining Populist Radical Right Parties

Because PRRP are the core of this research, this section discusses the three core features of PRRP and the multiple meanings given to populism.

Scholars use various terms to describe far right parties and some definitions even overlap. Defining the borders of PRRP is problematic because they share numerous characteristics with other party families, especially on the right (Mudde, 2007). However, most scholars agree that the core ideology of PRRP encompasses three core features: nativism, authoritarianism, and populism (Mudde, 2007; Mudde, 2010; Rooduijn, 2012).

PRRP take a strong nationalist stance that aims to protect the culture, language, and values of one's country and is also often linked with the negative perception of globalization (Mudde, 2007). Nativism is a narrower ideology in comparison to nationalism, "which holds that states should be inhabited exclusively by members of the native group ('the nation') and that non-native elements (persons and ideas) are fundamentally threatening to the homogenous nation-state" (Mudde 2007: 19). Mudde (2007) explains that bases to define the native group are diverse, but are more often about targeting the 'outsiders' of the group to emphasize who are the 'insiders'. These 'outsiders' are social constructs and *imagined* to take Anderson's term (1983). Targeted groups exist for real but their social identities are constructed upon stereotypes, used to threaten the nativist group (Mudde, 2007). The exclusionary stand of populists, targeting 'outsiders' such as immigrants or ethnic minorities, is a central feature of radical right populism, but it is not part of populism by itself (Mudde, 2007; Taggart, 2000). PRRP extensively focus on immigration issues and internal homogenization of the population. Mudde (2007) refers to the term of '*Ethnocracy*' to explain the goal of many PRRP: the monocultural state. "For nativists, culture is an essentialist and rigid category; it must be preserved and cultivated, while adaptation and relativism are believed to lead to decline" (Mudde, 2007: 144). Consequently, PRRP tend to oppose immigration and integration of cultural minorities.

The second core feature of PRRP is authoritarianism, which is defined here as the preference for collective order above personal freedom, even on morality related issues. Right-wing authoritarian parties perceive criticism of the authority as destructive, aimed at causing trouble, and deviant behaviours must be controlled through punishment (Mudde, 2007). PRRP believe that the society should be structured according to strict rules, which results in a large focus on law and order policies. PRRP call for more independence of the judiciary system, free from political

influence and a strengthening of penalties (Mudde, 2007). Authoritarianism does not refer to a non-democratic regime since PRRP exhort the people to take their power back, hence democratic power (Mudde, 2007). Moreover, Mudde states that PRRP are democratic whereas extreme right parties are undemocratic and often elitist (2007).

The third core feature of PRRP is populism. Many scholars have defined populism, but because it is a complex and chameleonic term, there is no clear-cut definition (Taggart, 2004). While some scholars such as Jagers and Walgrave (2005) define populism as a communication style that refers to the people, others define populism as a claim for the power or a proper ideology (Canovan, 2004; Mudde, 2004; Rooduijn, 2014b). Mudde states that communication is solely a feature that facilitates populism (2004). However, an increasing number of scholars seems to agree that populism refers to two main components: 'people-centrism' and 'anti-elitism' (Rooduijn, 2014a). Mudde defines populism as:

> "a thin-centred ideology that considers the society to be ultimately separated into two homogenous and antagonistic groups, 'the pure people' versus 'the corrupt elite', and which argues that politics should be an expression of the *volonté générale* (general will) of the people" (2004: 543).

These two elements of populism cannot be understood separately because populism concerns the relationship between the two (Rooduijn, 2014a). People-centrism means that populist parties emphasize the idea that people should have the power to democratically take decisions, they represent the 'democratic sovereign' (Canovan, 1999). PRRP believe that the will of the people is the essence of democracy. Mudde (2007) states that one of the most important claims of PRRP is expressed by J.M. Le Pen's (former leader of FN) mantra "*rendre la parole au peuple*" (return the word to the people). Jagers and Walgrave (2005) argue there are three elements of populism: the reference to the people -that constitutes thin populism-, the anti-establishment stance and the exclusion of other groups. All the three elements combined constitute the thick populism. However, some scholars argue that the thick-centred ideology with exclusionism is a characteristic of populist radical right only (Mudde, 2007; Taggart, 2000). The thin-centred ideology of populism is a discursive strategy that can be used to gain support (Rooduijn, 2014b).

Anti-elitism can be directed at the political elite (established parties, the government), but also at the economic elite (bankers, capitalist system) or the cultural elite (media, writers). Populist parties blame the media for being an instrument of the established parties, that reinforces their power and block the opposition of the government (Mudde, 2007; Jagers & Walgrave, 2005

The populist rhetoric

Scholars have different interpretations of the populist rhetoric. According to Jagers and Walgrave (2005), populism is a communication strategy. However, most studies refer to populist rhetoric as a feature of populism, that enables effective communication (Mudde, 2004).

Many scholars already studied the influence of PRRP. Rooduijn et al. (2014) analysed the contagion of populist ideology in the election manifestos of five countries including France. They do not find that mainstream parties have become more populist between the 90s and the 2000s but they do find that PRRP tend to make less populist statements when they are gaining success. In this respect, the present thesis is different because it uses parliamentarian discourse analysis to assess to what extent mainstream parties are using populist rhetoric. Indeed, populist statements are not always included in party manifestos because the appeal of these programmes is not very large and voters are not really aware of their content (Rooduijn et al., 2014). Moreover, Rooduijn et al. (2014) acknowledge that mainstream parties change their manifestos less often than populist parties do because they have a longer history and established ideology. In a similar way, Jagers and Walgrave's (2005) study of media discourses in Belgium does not find that extreme right-wing populism is contagious. However, they define populism as a communication strategy only. Furthermore, France is traditionally a two-party system, which means that political parties do not necessarily seek to form a coalition government. Therefore, parties do not have incentive to tone down their populist rhetoric, in comparison to a multiparty system.

The political rhetoric is a communication tool that serves as priming role and makes specific issues salient (Hopkins, 2011). Therefore, in this research, populist rhetoric is defined as the communication feature of populism, that uses people-centrism and anti-elitism to make certain issues salient. The PRRP openly criticize the media and the established political parties through a populist rhetoric (Canovan, 2004). The populist rhetoric is used to mark the closeness to the people and to mark the distance with established politics through an undiplomatic language (Canovan, 2004). This rhetoric is used by many radical right parties and contributes to some extent to their success. However, radical right parties are not the only ones using populist rhetoric. Canovan (2004) states that populist rhetoric is also used by 'professional politicians' who are looking for effective communication. Moreover, Mudde (2004) argues that Western Europe is facing a populist *Zeitgeist*, and that in response to the growing support for populist parties, mainstream parties are increasingly using a populist rhetoric. The focus of this thesis on populist rhetoric is only content related because the style of the rhetoric depends essentially on the orator, and parties' leaders have changed overtime. Content analysis allows to see changes of the rhetoric over time, testifying of changes (or not) in the party's strategy.

As stated previously, populism refers to the people and is rather normative in its distinction between the people and the elite. This dichotomy can be found in the populist rhetoric. However, the 'people' is a vague term and PRRP designate the insiders of this group by targeting the 'enemies', the outsiders of 'the people' group (Mudde, 2007). "Populist radical rightists are believed to hold a Manichaean worldview: the world is divided into 'good' and 'bad'" (Mudde, 2007: 63). Therefore, even though the designation of the good people is rather vague, PRRP clarify it by a mirror effect and the exclusion of other groups. Mudde also states that a dominant interpretation of populism refers to the emotional and simplistic discourse directed at people's 'gut feelings' (2004). This appeal to the gut feelings is linked with the nativist stance of PRRP. They tend to use a rhetoric appealing the sentiment that only certain people within the nation deserve to benefit from the country's resources, and should rule. So not everyone is part of 'the people'. "Not only should 'our state' be ruled by (people of) 'our nation', 'we' should be its exclusive inhabitants" (Mudde, 2007: 139).

The second component of populist rhetoric is the critic of the elite (Mudde, 2007; Rooduijn & Pauwels, 2011). This anti-elitism can be directed to the political elite, but also the economic elite and the media elite (Jagers & Walgraev, 2005). PRRP want to emphasize the fact that they are not part of the political elite by criticizing it (Canovan, 2004). They blame parties in parliament and the government, especially on the softness and permissiveness of their immigration policies that weaken the country (Bale, Green-Pedersen, Krouwel, Luther & Sitter, 2010). Moreover, media are perceived as corrupt, left-wing, and traitors of the nation (Mudde, 2007). In the parliamentarian discourse analysis, the following combination of two sensitizing concepts is used to investigate the populist rhetoric: 'do the orators of the discourses refer to the (pure/ordinary) people, and do they criticise the elite concurrently?' (Bowen, 2006).

I expect that both the mainstream left (*Parti Socialist*, PS) and the mainstream right (*Union pour un Mouvement Populaire*, UMP) react to the success of the FN by adapting their rhetoric toward more populism, and this is more likely to happen if parties endure electoral losses (Janda, Harmel, Edens, & Goff, 1995). Since populism is neither left nor right, it is expected that the PS and the UMP will not differ in their reaction to the success of FN, that is, adopting a more populist rhetoric.

Parties behaviour and policy stances

Scholars argue that populism is characteristic of PRRP, but it is also contagious (Rooduijn, 2014a). The growing success of populist radical right parties in Europe has been largely discussed in the media and in politics, witnessing the so called 'right-turn' ('verrechtsing') of European politics

(Mudde, 2013). According to the rational choice model of party competition, if the public opinion favours radical right parties, mainstream parties will adapt to the change to not 'lose' their electorate (Adams et al, 2004). Adams et al (2004) also state that the party responsiveness to public opinion is stronger when the public opinion is clearly shifting away in a direction that is disadvantageous to the party.

Both media and politicians argue that populist radical right-wing parties have directly or indirectly influenced European politics, pushing it to the right side of the ideological spectrum and leading to stricter policy stances (Abou-Chadi, 2016; Rooduijn et al., 2014). Many scholars have pointed to the fact that populist radical right used to be marginal but are currently becoming mainstream (Mudde, 2013; Bale et al., 2010). However, "most authors argue that populist radical right parties have only influenced mainstream right-wing parties" (Mudde, 2013: 8). Other scholars have found that both mainstream right and mainstream left have been influenced by populist radical right parties, at least on the increasing salience of the immigration issue (Alonso & Claro da Fonseca, 2012; Bale et al., 2010). Van Spanje (2010) finds that anti-immigration parties are able to influence all parties (right and left) on their immigration policy outputs without entering the government. Similarly, Abou-Chadi (2016) studies how electoral competition affects the liberalisation of immigration policies in 11 western democracies and finds that indeed, political parties facing electoral competition and an increasing salience of immigration issues are less likely to support liberal immigration policies. Yet, he does not include France in his analysis and I expect that French mainstream parties are also influenced by immigration issues mobilized by the *Front National*.

Schain (2006) explains that political parties gain attention through a noticeable electoral success that has an impact on the variation of support within the party system. This electoral breakthrough is possible with the conversion of voters who used to vote for a different party, or with the mobilisation of new voters who used to be abstainers. This transfer of vote is frequently described as a 'protest vote' against the established political elite that has ignored their interests (Schain, 2006). The main concern of mainstream parties is thus to reconquer the voters, or at least prevent a bigger loss of vote share. But the reaction of the mainstream parties after the electoral breakthrough of PRRP is different amongst the ideological spectrum.

Bale (2003) states the mainstream right is more likely to cooperate with PRRP and to form a coalition because they mobilize the same issues. Some scholars also argue that PRRP constitute a radicalisation of the mainstream views, that take shape in times of crisis and constitute a pathological normalcy (Mudde, 2010). In the past, the mainstream right had a greater distance regarding to PRRP's issues, acknowledging immigration problems but not focusing on quick-fix solutions because of office accountabilities and legitimacy (Bale, 2003). But the success of PRRP

in the last decades increased the salience of certain issues, accommodating preferences of a right-wing electorate. Moreover, the anti-elitism stance of PRRP encourages the mainstream right to take distance from the mainstream left and to adopt more restrictive positions (Bale, 2003; Mudde, 2004). Therefore, I expect that the UMP adopts more restrictive immigration and integration stances when the PS is in government, to mark the distance. It is also more likely that UMP adopts more restrictive immigration and integration policies when the FN is successful, to (re)conquer part of the FN's electorate.

The challenge is different for the mainstream left parties, first because PRRP mobilize issues that are traditionally owned by the political right (Bale et al., 2010). Second, PRRP also appeal to the electorate that would have 'naturally' voted for the centre left, namely the low skilled low-income workers or unemployed (Bale et al., 2010). Schain states that "In some cases established parties can recapture these voters by co-opting and reworking the issues that defined the initial protest." (2006: 272). Therefore, the success of PRRP will impact the policy making process of the PS which tries to reduce PRRP influence by adapting its own strategy and policy agenda. Knowing that the core values of PRRP are nativism and authoritarianism, I expect that mainstream parties will turn toward less inclusive immigration policies (Bale, 2003; Bale et al., 2010). Bale et al. (2010) describe three typical strategies that mainstream left parties can possibly adopt. The first one is to hold the initial political position and ideology, and shape voters' preferences through an intensive communication. The second strategy mainstream left parties might adopt when facing the challenge of PRRP success is to decrease the salience of PRRP issues by choosing to focus on other issues, and thus reset the political agenda. The third strategy, more common in a two-party system, is to adopt the position of the competitor. The assumption here is that the primary goal of a party is to maximize votes. Therefore, if voters are turning away from a party's ideology, this very same party is likely to get ideologically closer to his competitors in the logic of 'if you can't beat them join them' (Bale et al., 2010). Moreover, Van Spanje (2010) found that mainstream left parties are as likely as mainstream right parties to be affected by anti-immigration parties and adopt more restrictive policies. Therefore, it is expected that the PS follows the third strategy and also adopts less inclusive immigration and integration stances when the FN is successful.

To sum up, studies show that political parties respond to party competition by adapting their ideology and their political stances to a certain extent (Abou-Chadi, 2016; Adams et al., 2004, Bale, 2003; Bale et al., 2010; Van Spanje, 2010). It can be thus expected that a significant and long lasting electoral success of PRRP affects the mainstream political parties in two ways. First, the populist rhetoric can be used as a communication style to attract a larger electorate (Bale et al., 2010). Therefore, the less support mainstream parties have -due to the success of PRRP-, the more

populist rhetoric they use. Second, I expect that PRRP's success affects the ideology and the policy stances of mainstream parties, namely to support stricter immigration and integration policies.

Data and methods

This section offers a description of the data and methods used to analyse the contagion of populism in the political rhetoric and immigration stance of mainstream parties in France. First, the analysis focuses on the influence of *Front National*'s success on the political rhetoric of mainstream parties. Then the analysis moves to the influence of *Front National*'s success on mainstream parties' immigration policy stance.

For this analysis, the case of France is interesting for three main reasons. First, while it is sometimes a point of discussion whether a political party is PRRP or not, scholars have identified the French *Front National*, as radical right populist without disagreement (Ivaldi, 2005; Mudde, 2013).

Second, the FN has been successful since few decades (entered the Parliament in 1986) and is now considered as an established party. Thus, if there was any change in mainstream parties' political rhetoric to observe, the change would have had time to occur. Harmel and Janda (1994) state that parties are conservative organizations that only change when under pressure, and the long-lasting success of the FN in France is likely to put the PS and UMP under pressure and enhance changes.

Finally, the electoral system and party system in France are of importance. France has a majoritarian system with two rounds, both for the parliamentarian and presidential elections. Thus, the president and the parliament officials are elected with the majority of the votes, but this rarely happens in the first round, so a second one is needed. The majoritarian system fosters party competition and bipolarization. Traditionally, France is a two-party system in the large sense of the term: two parties have regularly and alternately the majority in parliament and in the government. This can be considered as a result of the majoritarian system; voters choose the candidate who is the most likely to have the majority on their side of the ideological spectrum. So, the electoral system in France does not permit many parties to compete. There are two historically established mainstream parties that share the power: the *Parti Socialiste* (Socialist Party, PS) on the left side and the *Union pour un Mouvement Populaire* (Union for a Popular Movement, UMP)

on the right side[1]. The FN challenges the dichotomy of power between the two mainstream parties.

Scholars argue that the party system influences the use of populist rhetoric (Mudde, 2004; Rooduijn, 2014a). On one hand, in a two-party system, populist parties have a smaller target of the elite to criticize, so the anti-elitism stance is directed to the party/ies in government, and not necessarily to the political elite (Eatwell, 2000; Rooduijn et al., 2014). This means that it is not likely that the mainstream parties will use a populist rhetoric in the French two-party system. If French mainstream parties change their political rhetoric towards more populism when a PRRP is successful, it can be expected to be even more likely to happen in other countries where PRRP are successful.

On the other hand, political parties in majoritarian systems might adjust their ideology and rhetoric much quicker to keep their electorate, since even a small loss of vote share could cost them their stand in the second round of the elections, and thus in government. Therefore, the case of France constitutes an intriguing case.

Populist rhetoric? Parliamentarian discourse analysis

To determine the 'level' of populism in the political rhetoric of French political parties, a parliamentarian discourse analysis is suitable. Political manifestos are, in comparison to parliamentarian discourses, carefully prepared, checked by several people, and reveal more about party's policies than political rhetoric. Parliamentarian discourses are also prepared to some extent but the rhetoric is more self-directing and unconstrained, strongly depending on the speaker but also on the *Zeitgeist.* The 'slip of the tongue' of the speaker might also show a certain way to frame some issues. Even though a media discourse analysis would have been insightful, the purpose of this thesis is to assess the level of populism in the political rhetoric of the mainstream parties in France, and not solely in the media. Parliamentarian discourses show changes in the rhetoric as changes in the party's ideology, not as a mere communication style. Moreover, scholars already studied the populist rhetoric in media discourses and did not find an influence of PRRP (Jagers and Walgrave, 2005). Therefore, a parliamentarian discourse analysis is more likely to reveal the populist rhetoric of mainstream parties, and it also contributes to the literature on populism*.*

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[1] Since 2015 the name changed for *Les Républicains (LR)* and it used to be *Rassemblement pour la Republique (RPR, Rally for the Republic)* before 2002. In this thesis, the party is studied under the name UMP since the time frame of the study occurs before the name was changed
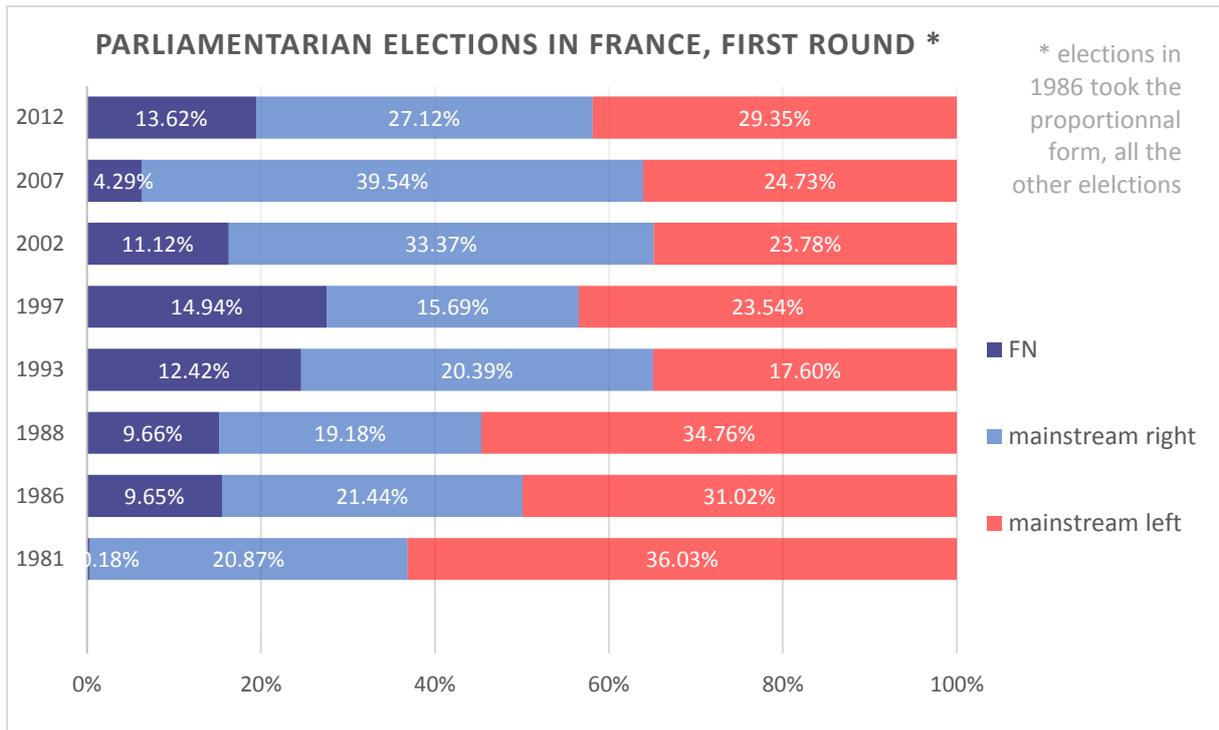
The Parliament in France

France is a bicameral system. The high chamber is the Senate. The low chamber is the national assembly, where 577 deputies are directly elected every 5 years with the majoritarian system. They debate about reforms and law proposals, and vote for them. "Parliaments are institutions which are dedicated to talk, members of parliament debate legislatives proposals and scrutinise the work of governments through questioning" (Bailey, 2004:1). The organisation of such debates is strictly regulated, as well as the time allowed to do so. First, there is a general discussion presenting the text that is going to be debated. Then each article of the text is presented and debated. Finally, the deputies vote for or against the final law proposal. All the debates are transcribed and transmitted on national TV.

The parliamentarian discourses examined in this thesis are the debates that took place in the National Assembly and the transcripts are retrieved from the website of the National Assembly[2]. In the French National Assembly, deputies are not present to every session. It is therefore difficult to select contributions of a singular member of a party, or the leader of the party. However, party families are represented in the Assembly and when an issue is debated, a representative of the party group expresses the position of the party. Because party leaders do not debate in Parliament, I decided to select parliamentarian discourses based on party groups and objects of debates -namely immigration and integration issues.

Parties react to changes in the electorate and public opinion (Adams et al., 2004). I selected 3 parliamentarian discourses for each party (PS and UMP), based on the results of the first round of parliamentarian elections, and on the electoral success of the FN (see graph1). I could not retrieve any polling data of the previous years, so for all the analysis, I assumed that the polls showing the success of the parties in the elections were accurate in the months preceding the parliamentarian elections, and that parties looked at them to prepare their parliamentarian discourses and election manifestos.

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[2] *http://www.assemblee-nationale.fr*

Graph 1

PARLIAMENTARIAN ELECTIONS IN FRANCE, FIRST ROUND *

* elections in 1986 took the proportionnal form, all the other elelctions

Year	FN	mainstream right	mainstream left
2012	13.62%	27.12%	29.35%
2007	4.29%	39.54%	24.73%
2002	11.12%	33.37%	23.78%
1997	14.94%	15.69%	23.54%
1993	12.42%	20.39%	17.60%
1988	9.66%	19.18%	34.76%
1986	9.65%	21.44%	31.02%
1981	0.18%	20.87%	36.03%

Expectations

In June 2007, the FN had a particularly low score in the first round of the parliamentarian elections (4,3%), whereas 39,5% of the voters chose UMP. In the period preceding the elections, I do not expect parties to use populist rhetoric because they did not have to react to the FN's lack of success. To verify this assumption, I analysed parliamentarian discourses made by representatives of the UMP and of the PS on the 3rd of May 2006. The length of time between the parliamentarian elections and the parliamentarian discourses selected might seem wide but in the 'legislative year' 2006-2007, the immigration and integration issues were addressed only in the beginning of May.

In 2002, the FN did not make a particularly high score in the parliamentarian elections (11,12%), but for the first time, the leader of the FN (Jean-Marie Le Pen) was in the second round of the presidential elections that took place a month before the parliamentarian elections. Also for the first time, the mainstream left (PS) was not represented in the second round of the presidential election. The PS lost a meaningful part of the electorate compared to previous parliamentarian elections. It is therefore likely that the PS made more use of populist rhetoric in the months preceding the elections. To verify this assumption, I selected parliamentarian discourses made by representatives of the UMP and of the PS on the 24th of October 2001.

In 1997, the FN realized its best score in the parliamentarian elections. If parties looked at the polls before the elections, it is likely that they felt more exposed to the success of the FN and adopted a populist rhetoric. Furthermore, compared to previous elections, the UMP made a relatively low score, so UMP is more likely to use populist rhetoric in this perdiod. To verify this assumption, I selected parliamentarian discourses made by representatives of the UMP on the 20th of December 1996 and by representatives of the PS on the 19th of December 1996.

Relying on Rooduijn's work (2014; Rooduijn & Pauwels, 2011), people-centrism is operationalized by the following question: 'Do the orators of the discourses refer to the people?' References to the people are words such as 'the people', 'the public', 'the French'. The analysis will especially focus on terms linked to nativism: 'the French', 'our state', 'our nation'. The discourse analysis will also include references to anti-elitism, measured by means of the question: 'Do the orators of the discourses criticize elites and concurrently refer to the (ordinary) people?' The critique has to target elites in general. Criticism directed towards individual parties or individual politicians will not be coded as anti-elitism. "It is the combination of people-centrism and anti-elitism that defines populism. Only if a critique on the (bad) elite coincides with an emphasis on the (good) people, we can speak of populism. So, populist rhetoric is defined as the combination of a focus on the people and anti-elitism." (Rooduijn et al., 2014: 567). The unit of measurement is the paragraph because it marks distinctions between argument, and a paragraph is coded as populist when it contains both people-centrism and anti-elitism. Parliamentarian discourses are actually debates, occasionally disrupted by other deputies. In this case, if I saw the continuity of the argument, I coded the new paragraph as part of the previous one. Additionally, orators sometimes make quotes to illustrate their thoughts or make a point. I chose to take these quotes into account because, even though it is not the orators words, they chose to use them so it is part of their discourses and political rhetoric.

An overview of references to people-centrism and anti-elitism used for the analysis can be found in the appendix. Populism is operationalized as the percentage of populist paragraphs in each discourse (Rooduijn, 2013). According to Van der Dijk, "parliamentary debates are [...] ideologically based", because deputies do not speak as individuals but as party members (2000:99). Therefore, a change in the party's ideology should be visible through parliamentarian discourses.

Programmatic contagion? Party programme analysis

The second step of the analysis is to determine whether there is a right turn in politics by analysing the immigration and integration policies of the two French mainstream parties' political programmes. Party programmes give the best overview of the party's stances at a certain point in time, so political positions are easier to spot than in parliamentarian discourse. Moreover, party programmes are reasonably comparable overtime (Rooduijn & Pauwels, 2011).

Political manifestos are retrieved from the Manifesto Project Database[3] in their original version. The choice of political manifestos is made on the basis of data availability and the electoral success of the FN in the parliamentarian elections. In this analysis of party manifestos, a change in policy stances over time is expected to happen, following the growing success of the FN. As stated in the theoretical section, a right turn in policies stances is likely to happen, and policies stances are more likely to be restrictive when the FN is successful. Therefore, I selected the most recent party manifestos available for both the UMP and the PS. I analysed party manifestos of the years 2012, 2007, 1997, and 1988 for the PS and the party manifestos of the years 2012, 2007, 2002 and 1988 for the UMP.

Expectations

Accordingly, the party manifestos of the year 2007 should contain less restrictive immigration and integration positions since the FN was not successful in the parliamentarian elections. The party manifestos of the years 1997 and 2002 are the more likely to contain more restrictive immigration and integration stances because the FN had the most electoral success in those years (in the parliamentarian elections in 1997 and great success in the presidential elections in 2002).

The aim of the second part of this thesis is to determine whether parties held a liberal position on immigration and integration issues, and if parties' positions were influenced by the success of the FN in the parliamentarian elections to come (manifestos are released few months before the elections). Coding scheme on stances on immigration and integration issues are determined on a tripolar way: liberal, restrictive, and neutral. The unit of analysis is the quasi-sentence. "A quasi sentence is a word string that is either a complete sentence or a part sentence

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[3] *https://manifesto-project.wzb.eu/*

that could have been a complete sentence if the writer had chosen to make it so" (Laver & Garry, 2000: 624). The analysis is partly inductive because the coding is based on what can be found in the manifestos. Generally, quasi-sentences that refer to more solidarity, universalism and inclusiveness are coded as *liberal*, and quasi-sentences that refer to more nativism, deservingness and ethnocentrism are coded as *restrictive*. The nature of the argument does not matter, but the direction: call for liberalisation or call for restriction. Quasi-sentences that state observations and abstract facts or arguments are coded as *neutral.*

Results

Parliamentarian discourse analysis

To verify whether mainstream parties tend to adopt a populist rhetoric, I analysed several parliamentarian discourses made by different representatives of each party at three different points in time. This ensures that the level of populism found is not only inherent to the orator and his/her temperament and that I code approximatively the same amount of discourse for each party and each point in time. The details of the selected discourses can be found in the appendix.

Table 1 presents the percentage of populist paragraphs found in parliamentarian discourses made by representatives of the PS and the UMP prior to parliamentarian elections of 1997, 2002, and 2007. The percentage of populism found in the parliamentarian debates represents the number of paragraphs containing references to both people-centrism and anti-elitism, on the total number of paragraphs analysed for a party and a year. The percentages in brackets are the number of paragraphs containing populism including the doubtful cases. As stated previously, the paragraphs analysed for a party and a year are retrieved from discourses made by different representatives of the party (PS or UMP) to avoid coding populism only on the basis of orator's rhetoric style and temperament.

Table 1	Percentage of populist paragraphs in parliamentarian discourses		
	1997	**2002**	**2007**
UMP	5,4% (9%)	5,4%	5,3% (7,8%)
PS	5,3% (9,3%)	0%	0%

The results of the year 1997 are rather consistent with the expectation that mainstream parties adopt a populist rhetoric when a populist radical right party is successful. Indeed, in 1997 the _Front National_ made its best score in the parliamentarian elections and table 1 shows that the UMP used populist rhetoric. However, only 5,4% of the parliamentarian discourses are found to be populistic, which is not more than the other years studied. Moreover, I noticed that the level of populism depends on the orator. Indeed, one of the parliamentarians (Alain Marsaud) used populist rhetoric in almost every paragraph to implicitly target and discredit the mainstream left and their way of doing. The paragraphs that contained anti-elitism and people-centrism were coded as populist. In the following quote, the orator describes politicians who do politics only for their own interests, when they should serve citizens' interests.

> _'En faisant de la politique d'immigration un enjeu national partagé par tous les Français, et non plus dicté par des intérêts partisans ! Cessons de diviser nos concitoyens, comme vous le faites sur une question fondamentale pour notre société'_
>
> –
>
> 'By making immigration policy a national challenge shared by all French people, and no more imposed by partisan purposes ! Stop dividing our fellow citizens, like you do on this major issue for our society' (UMP, dec.1996).

Other representatives of the UMP in Parliament in 1996 made many references to people-centrism to discuss historical facts about immigration in France or expose why some citizens might oppose immigration. The targets of people-centrism are the French citizens in the broad way and appeal to their gut-feelings:

> _'notre France, notre droit, le respect des Français, nos compatriotes'_
>
> –
>
> 'our France, our right, the respect of the French, our fellow citizens' (UMP, dec.1996)

However, these paragraphs were not coded as populist because they only contained people-centrism, and sometimes criticisms that cannot be considered as anti-elitism. It is not so clear-cut how severe the anti-elite stances have to be to be considered as anti-elitism. Some critiques are not so explicit. Is it a critique or a fact that is stated in the following quote? Moreover, the contextual analysis does not always permit to distinguish anti-government stances from anti-elitism.

'ces yoyos législatifs ou réglementaires, selon les circonstances, les majorités, les
évènements, ne correspondent pas à un bon travail législatif.'
–
'these legislatives movements back and forth, depending on circumstances,
majorities, particular events, do not correspond to a good legislative work.'
(UMP, dec.1996)

If populism were operated as thin-populism including only people-centrism as in Jagers and Walgrave study (2005), then these discourses would have contained up to 9% of populism. Similarly, in 2006, 5,3% of the UMP's parliamentarian discourses are coded as populist, but including doubtful cases, 7,8% of the debate is populist. The representatives of the UMP are very critical but the critiques are narrow to specific facts and people. This shows that the line between anti-elitism and critique toward the opposite party is often thin and might be difficult to identify.

I found that 5,4% of the paragraphs in the UMP's discourses are populistic in 2001. Those discourses were very critical in a broader way and contained anti-establishment stances:

'*Vous mentez au pays'* – 'You lie to the country' (UMP, oct.2001)

'Nous revenons à ces formules financières géniales de l'Ancien régime: Bravo
Messieurs!' –

'We are getting back to these great financial formulas of the Old regime:
Congrats Gentlemen!'. (UMP, oct.2001)

The orators targeted the old system to emphasis the anti-establishment position but besides, they comparatively made less references to the people, which explains why the percentage of populist paragraphs coded is still low. However, the results of the year 2001 for the UMP's discourses are going in the same direction as the expectations. The FN was very successful in the presidential elections of 2002 (7 months after the analysed debate took place). I assume that the polls were showing a rise of the FN's success and the UMP might have reacted to this threat to keep its electorate, noticeably by adapting its rhetoric.

PS parliamentarian discourses

In the December 1996, 5,3% of the discourses made by representatives of the PS are found to be populist. Representatives of the PS used populist rhetoric based on critiques towards the parliament officials on the side of the majority, and the fact that parliamentarians do not address the problems of the citizens and complicate integration processes. Once again, anti-elitism is hard

to distinguish from critiques towards the government. The following quote is not critical per see but describes politicians who do politics without taking people's concerns into account, so it can be marked as anti-elitism.

> *'Tels des architectes, et la comparaison fut souvent faire, les dirigeants des pays d'Europe construisent pierre après pierre une nouvelle maison commune. Tels des architectes, ils maitrisent parfaitement tous les problèmes techniques […] mais les nations, et singulièrement notre nation sont différentes des constructions, car elles ont une âme, elles sont habitées par des peuples qui ont une histoire. Et cela, les architectes l'ont oublié.'*
>
> –
>
> 'Like architects, and this comparison was often made, leaders of European countries build a new shared house. Like architects, they perfectly master every technical problem […] but nations, and specifically our nation, are not only constructions, because they have a soul, they are inhabited by people who have a history. And architects forgot this.' *(PS, dec.1996).*

I did not code several paragraphs as populist because the target of the anti-elitism was too narrow. In the following quote, the critique might seem broad but it is more directed at the mainstream right party UMP.

> *'L'héritage républicain […] ce parti de la résignation qui fuit la rationalité politique'*
>
> –
>
> 'The Republican heritage […] party of resignation abandoning rational politics' (PS, dec.1996).

People-centrism in these discourses is most of the time linked with empathy and the understanding of citizens' frustration. The following quote is an example of people-centrism, necessary feature to code a paragraph as populist but not sufficient.

> *'Je sais les angoisses que cela génère pour nos concitoyens'*
>
> –
>
> 'I know the fears that it generates for our fellow citizens' (PS, dec.1996).

The orator wants to mark closeness to the people and show that he understands citizens' concerns because he is like them. People-centrism in these discourses is emblematic of populist rhetoric because references to the people are always made in a positive context (the good people) and with empathy (they know what is right or not). In 1997, it could be that the PS reacted to the threat of the rise of the FN by using more populist rhetoric.

Concerning the parliamentarian discourses of representatives of the PS in October 2001 and May 2006, I did not find any paragraph containing populist rhetoric. In the selected debate, the PS defended its position on a law proposal and the arguments made are rather technical, letting less room for populistic statements. This is one of the reasons why no populism has been found. I predicted that both parties would react to the success of the FN and adapt their rhetoric but it seems that the PS is not sensitive to the variation of the FN's success, or at least does not react by changing its rhetoric toward more populism.

I noticed that the PS made many references to the people but it was very often used to designate people with immigration background, trying to get integrated in the French society.

'les gens, ces familles, notre société, citoyens nouveaux'

–

'the people, these families, our society, new citizens'.

Whereas identifying people-centrism seems clear in the literature, it is more difficult in qualitative analysis when the context is taken into account. Words selected as references to people-centrism might indeed designate different groups of people, and it is questionable to what extent every group of people must be considered in an analysis on populism. References to the people are often made in the parliamentarian discourses ('the people, the nation, the French') but does not necessarily qualify as people-centrism when analysed in context. This is one of the main difference between this research and previous research on populism that are computer based.

I also analysed a parliamentarian discourse made in April 1986 by Jean-Marie Le Pen, leader of the FN to compare the rhetoric used. The discourse selected might seem outdated but because of the majoritarian system, the FN did not enter the Parliament very often (1986 and 2012) and 2012 is beyond the time frame of this study. The first thing that strikes me is that Jean-Marie Le Pen uses many references to anti-elitism -political elite and the media. 9 paragraphs on 48 are coded as populistic but anti-establishment stances can be found in almost every paragraph, and the target is quite general, he does not necessarily target the actual Government or Minister but also *'all the other ones before'*. Stances made by the leader of the Front National are stronger and more explicit in comparison with those made by representatives of the UMP and PS.

'Mais je crains, hélas ! que cette assemblée -et plus généralement le Parlement- ne se soit laissé progressivement déposséder de prérogatives qui ne lui sont pourtant données que pour servir la nation et le peuple au nom duquel elle parle.'

–

'I am afraid, sadly, that this Assembly -and more generally the Parliament-

deprived itself of prerogatives only given to serve the nation and the people' (FN, 1986)

'Eh bien moi, je crois à l'efficacité de la démocratie directe quand la démocratie indirecte et représentative -celle qui est la nôtre- n'a plus d'efficacité, il faut bien le reconnaître.'
–
'Well I believe in the efficiency of direct democracy when the indirect and representative democracy -our democracy- is no longer efficient, it has to be acknowledged.' (FN, 1986)

Overall, the discourses made by representatives of the PS did not contain populism. In 2002 and 2007, no populism has been found in their parliamentarian debates. 5,4% of the debates are coded as populist in 1997 (9% including doubtful cases), but it seems that the PS was using populist rhetoric to emphasizes disagreements with the majority of the Assembly and the government. Discourses made by representatives of the UMP were different, because they contained much more references to anti-elitism. However, many criticisms were targeted at specific people and were not coded as being anti-elitism (Ministers, members of the Assembly, names were sometimes cited). The results in table 1 show that the mainstream right uses a populist rhetoric regularly over time, whereas the results for the PS are more ambiguous. Populist rhetoric is used in 1997 but not later, so the populist rhetoric might be inherent to the orator only.

According to the expectations, the level of populism found in the debates should have been higher in 1997 and 2002. It is therefore not possible to conclude that the PS and UMP used populist rhetoric as an answer to the FN's success. The low levels of UMP populism do also not point out to a populist Zeitgeist in France. The analysis of parliamentarian discourses revealed that mainstream parties tend to criticize each other a lot but not so much the political elite in general. I noted that the UMP tends to criticize and make negative remarks more and more over the years; which shows a certain political pessimism from the mainstream right. Additionally, references to people-centrism and anti-elitism are not so clear cut and necessitate context analysis, causing some doubtful cases of populist rhetoric and ambiguous results. Critiques are most of the time directed to the government or the opposite party. Anti-elitism necessitates contextual analysis because the critiques have to target the elite in general, whereas the words selected for the analysis as references to anti-elitism (see appendix) can be directed at a specific party or person. In comparison, the discourse of the leader of the FN undeniably contains populism because the critiques are more explicit.

Party programme analysis

According to scholars, we can observe nowadays a right-turn in policy position ensuing the populist Zeitgeist (Mudde, 2004). To verify this assumption, I analysed the party manifestos of parliamentarian elections of the mainstream right and mainstream left parties in France, from 1988 to 2012. Firstly, it is important to note that traditionally, the mainstream right has a more restrictive position on immigration and integration issues, and cultural issues in general.

Second, the manifestos analysed are very different in length, content, and in their configuration. Some of the manifestos are long (about 70 pages) and cover a wide range of topics, while some are very short (4 pages for the shorter one) and specific in their content. Therefore, the salience of immigration and integration issue appears differently in the manifestos (up to 2 pages in the longer one, a few sentences in the very short manifesto).

The following table presents the percentage of restrictive stances found in the immigration related sentences in the different manifestos. Percentages are calculated as follows: number of quasi-sentences containing a restrictive position on immigration and/or integration issues, on the total number of quasi-sentences related to immigration and/or integration issues in the party programme. ND means that there were not data available for the year (no manifesto available). The manifesto of the UMP in the year 1988, provided by the Manifesto project database, is a discourse given by the leader of the UMP, 3 months before the parliamentarian elections, and there is no reference to immigration and/or integration issues. Table 2 shows that over time, from 2002 to 2012, the mainstream right became more restrictive in the manifestos, regarding immigration and integration issues. This can be illustrated well by the case of the UMP which used 0% of quasi-sentence having a restrictive stance in 2002, and 72% of quasi-sentences having restrictive stances in 2012, indicating a right turn in their policy position.

However, contrary to the expectation, the manifestos of the year 2007 do not contain the most liberal stances. Also opposing the expectation, the PS's manifesto which contain the most restrictive stances was released in 2007, while the manifestos of the years 2012, 1997 and 1988 contain none, or a little number of restrictive stances. Indeed, in 1988, only 1% of the quasi-sentences is found to be restrictive. Overall, the manifestos of the Socialist Party do not contain quasi-sentences expressing a restrictive position regarding immigration and integration issues, excepting the manifesto of 2007 that contains 17% of quasi-sentences expressing a restrictive position.

Table 2. Percentage of restrictive stances on immigration and integration issues in party manifestos					
	1988	**1997**	**2002**	**2007**	**2012**
UMP	_	ND	0%	47%	72%
PS	1,0%	0%	ND	17%	0% [4]

As written above, the UMP's manifesto of 1988 is a discourse of the leader of the party, Jacques Chirac and does not refer to immigration and integration issues at all. The particular form of this manifesto does not really allow a conclusion on the absence of immigration reference. The manifesto of the year 1997 was not available for the mainstream right. The UMP's manifesto of 2002 is short (4 pages) and contains 25 paragraphs, but none of them specifically refers to immigration and integration issues. However, references to immigration are made in different parts: one time in a paragraph about security issues and another reference is made in the paragraph about social cohesion, but none of them express a restrictive position toward immigration. The manifesto of 2007 is very long and detailed (70 pages). The first part of the manifesto describes the situation of France in 2006 in the eyes of the UMP, the problems of the society and the engagements to overcome them. The second part of the manifesto is a detailed list of engagements, therefore, I only analysed the second part of the manifestos because it includes policies position mentioned in the first part. In the immigration and integration part, 27 engagements are expressed and I have found that 11 quasi-sentences express a restrictive position toward immigration and integration. Many quasi-sentences favour a strengthening of requirements to access social rights, residence permit and French nationality.

> *'State medical assistance restricted for the most severe and needy cases'*

> *'Reinforce requirements of French and respect of republican values knowledges*
> *for family reunification and obtainment of French nationality'*

> *'Tighter control of living conditions for family reunification, so immigration does*
> *not become a pretext for social and welfare benefits'*

> *'Reinforce European police at the boarders' (UMP, 2007)*

The manifesto of the year 2012 contains even more restrictive stances. I coded 16 quasi-sentences on 22 as expressing restrictive positions, and none as expressing a liberal position. Accordingly, the UMP's position on immigration and integration issues seems to have become more restrictive over time.

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[4] This party manifesto retrieved from the Manifesto Project Database relates to the presidential elections of 2012, and presents the engagement of the candidate of the PS, François Hollande.

Overall, the manifestos of the PS contained very little quasi-sentences that express restrictive positions. The manifesto of 1988 is about 80 pages, and a whole part is dedicated to immigration and integration issues. Nearly half of the quasi-sentences is coded as liberal (25 on 51) and the other half is mainly neutral, describing the actual situation of France regarding the issues. I coded most of the quasi-sentences relative to integration as liberal.

> *'History reminds us of one truth: the only way for immigration is integration, not the negotiation of cultures, but the transformation and combination with our national culture.'*

> *'Immigration is a chance for France.'*

> *'Immigration is a contributor of our demographic and economic recovery.' (PS, 1988)*

The immigration process is positively described. These stances demonstrate that the will of the PS was to consider immigration as a chance and that French citizens should not have a reason to reject the process of integration of immigrants. In the manifesto of 1988, it is also described why the previous immigration policies did not benefit the country and the people, and what is to change.

> *'In this matter, socialists call into question the legislation about territory access'*

> *'and propose to facilitate requirements for the French citizenship obtainment by reducing the period of naturalization procedure.' (PS, 1988)*

The manifesto of 1997 is shorter (10 pages) and also has a part dedicated to immigration. Again, nearly half of quasi-sentences expresses a relatively liberal position, and no restrictive position is found.

> *'Restoration of residence permit for immigrants who live in France for 10 years or more'*

> *'Restoration of family reunification assistance' (PS, 1997)*

The PS's manifesto of the year 2002 is not available. For 2007, the PS released a manifesto of 35 pages, and 9 paragraphs are dedicated to immigration, which contain 17% of restrictive stances. This result may be surprising since the FN was not successful in the parliamentarian elections of 2007 (see graph 1), so the PS did not have an incentive to adopt a more restrictive policy position. However, I observed that the restrictive stances in this PS's manifesto are less restrictive in comparison with some of the UMP's restrictive stances. *'Stricter position on illegal immigration has to be adopted'; 'Our country cannot welcome everyone' (PS, 2007)* are the most restrictive

stances in the manifesto but there is no real legislation proposal. These quasi-sentences were coded as restrictive because the arguments are calling for more restriction and control. However, there is a difference in the degree of restrictiveness in comparison to UMP's stances.

In 2012, the manifesto of the PS is about 23 pages but only few sentences are linked to immigration or integration. The few sentences refer to legislation about access to citizenship, right to vote in local elections and the freedom of religion (without specifying any religion). However, there is no paragraph dedicated to immigration and integration issues, which shows the low salience of these issues for the PS in 2012. There is a difference between the salience of an issue and the position on an issue in political manifestos, but they are strongly related (Laver & Garry, 2000). For example, salience of the tax system issue is often related with the will of decreasing taxes. The low salience of the immigration issue in this manifesto might show the difficulties of the PS to approach the issue without showing a restrictive position. This might also show that the PS adopted a defuse strategy, choosing to focus on other issues to decrease the salience of the immigration issue (Bale et al., 2010).

The analysis of the party manifestos shows mixed results. The PS does not seem to have adopted a more restrictive position over the years, and did not get influenced by the electoral success of the *Front National*. However, the UMP adopted a stricter position on immigration and integration issues. From the year 2002 to 2007, the increase of restrictive stances might also be due to the increase of anti-Islam attitudes. Nonetheless, the increase of restrictive stances from the year 2007 to 2012 (47% to 72%) is meaningful and it shows that the UMP adopted themes of the PRRP. This result consolidates Abou-Chadi's study which states that political parties facing electoral competition and an increasing salience of the immigration issue are less likely to support liberal immigration policies (2016). However, this result can only apply to the mainstream right.

The amount of data to code was diverse in the manifestos, and it was sometimes difficult to decide to code a quasi-sentence as restrictive or neutral. Indeed, the restrictive stances in the PS's manifestos have a lower degree of restrictiveness in comparison with the UMP's manifestos. The mainstream left is most of the time neutral or liberal on immigration and integration issues because inclusiveness and liberalism are the roots of the ideology. On the opposite, the ideology of the right wing, more traditional and authoritarian, is closer to the one of PRRP, so stances on the immigration issue are also closer. The expectation of the right turn in policy position can only be verified for the UMP, which have adopted stricter immigration stances over time.

Conclusion

Several scholars argue that Western democracies face a populist *Zeitgesit* and that mainstream parties increasingly use populist rhetoric and adopt restrictive immigration and integration stances (Mudde, 2004; Mudde, 2007; Rooduijn et al., 2014; Rooduijn, 2014a). This thesis focuses on the case of France and the assumption that the *Front National* (FN), an established populist radical right party, influences the populist rhetoric and the policy stances of the two mainstream parties UMP and PS. Is there a populist Zeitgeist in France, and how has the success of *Front National* influenced mainstream political parties in France in the last decades?

The research question is answered from two angles. First parliamentarian discourse analysis shows that the UMP (mainstream right) always uses, to some extent, populist rhetoric. However, the PS (mainstream left) does not use a populist rhetoric in parliamentarian debates, and if it does, it is more likely to be depending on the orator. The results of the parliamentarian discourse analysis are ambiguous because the references to people-centrism and anti-elitism are not so clear cut and necessitate contextual interpretation. The analysis also shows that the mainstream right tends to be more critical and pessimistic towards politics than the mainstream left. Secondly, the party programme analysis reveals that the populist Zeitgeist might exist in France, but impacts only the mainstream right. Indeed, the UMP has become more restrictive on immigration stances over time, while the PS has not.

Furthermore, the PS does not seem to have adopted a more restrictive position over the years, and did not get influenced by the electoral success of the *Front National*. However, the UMP adopted a stricter position on immigration and integration issues. Also important to note, the party manifestos of the mainstream right and mainstream left differ in the degree of restrictiveness: restrictive stances of the PS were not as restrictive as UMP's stances. Further researches would need a scale to make a difference in the degree of restrictiveness.

This study uses existing literature on populism to define the core features of PRRP. However, if scholars have come to an agreement on the definition of populism (antagonistic relationship between the 'pure people' and the 'corrupt elite'), the analysis cannot validate that there is a populist *Zeitgeist* in France, but more pessimism and negative remarks from the mainstream right toward the government and the mainstream left. The results indicate that the parliamentarian discourses of French mainstream parties have not become more populist from the 80's until 2012 and thus that the populism of the FN is not explicitly contagious.

It turned out difficult to measure populism in the parliamentarian debates because the wording based on the literature did not always fit into the context. People-centrism and anti-

elitism necessitates contextual analysis, because words chosen as references to people-centrism and anti-elitism might have different meanings in context, and critiques might be directed to the government instead of the political elite. In this aspect, the present thesis is different from research on populism with computer based analysis. It seems that populism can take shape differently according to the party and representatives of the party. Further research might prefer to use a 'scale of populism' to enable a better distinction. Moreover, I cannot verify the reliability of the analysis, that is why I added doubtful cases, that one might consider as populism or not. Some paragraphs contained reference to people-centrism and critiques towards politics, but the target of the critiques was too narrow to be defined as anti-elitism.

Another limitation of this thesis concerns the data availability. I could not access manifestos of every year and every party and for the parliamentarian discourses, some debates were selected a long time ahead the elections because I decided to focus on the ones relating to immigration and integration issues. In addition, I did not have the polling data, so I had to assume that the polling data showed the accurate elections results. The use of polling data would be helpful for further research because it could explain some unexpected results.

This thesis demonstrates that the Front National does not necessarily influence the rhetoric of mainstream parties but might generate political pessimism on the right side of the ideological spectrum. The results are opposing Rooduijn's study on populist rhetoric in Western media, but they show that populist rhetoric might be found in the media debates without influencing the political debates taking place in Parliament (2014a). It indicates that politicians might use populist rhetoric as a strategy to gain vote, but not as a way to discourse in parliament. Difficulties I met to measure populism also give insight on the complexity and ambiguity of the definition of populism. Moreover, this thesis shows that the mainstream right, unlike the mainstream left, took a right turn in immigration and integration stances in party manifestos. This phenomenon is also likely to happen in other European democracies as the mainstream right and radical right get closer to each other. Future studies might also focus on the comparison with PRRP's stances and mainstream right's stances. This analysis only compares the mainstream right and mainstream left and shows that the mainstream right tends to be more restrictive over time. It might well be the case that PRRP, or radical right-wing parties, tend to get closer to the centre of the ideological spectrum in order to become more 'acceptable' and gain success. This could also be one of the reasons why the FN gained success in the last decades.

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Appendix

Example of reference to people-centrism (Jagers & Walgrave, 2005; Rooduijn & Pauwels, 2011)

-	(The) citizens	-	(Les) citoyens / (Nos) concitoyens
-	(The) people	-	(Le) peuple
-	(The) French	-	(Les) Français
-	Our state	-	Notre Etat
-	Our nation	-	Notre Nation
-	Our country	-	Notre pays
-	(The) public	-	(Le) public
-	(The) public opinion	-	L'opinion publique
-	(The) voters	-	(Les) voteurs
-	(The) electorate	-	L'éléctorat
-	(The) residents	-	(Les) résidants
-	(The) taxpayers	-	(Les/le) contribuable(s)
-	National	-	National
-	All of us/each of us	-	Nous tous/chacun d'entre nous
-	Everyone	-	Tout le monde/tous
-	....	-	...

Example of reference to anti-elitism (Roduijn, 2014, Rooduijn & Pauwels, 2011)

-	The establishment	-	L'establishment
-	The old parties	-	Les vieux partis
-	The old institutions	-	Les vielles/anciennes institutions
-	The rich	-	Les riches/fortunés
-	European technocrats	-	Technocrates Européens
-	You	-	Vous
-	The elite	-	L'élite
-	Consensus	-	Consensus
-	Undemocratic	-	Antidémocratique
-	Corrupted	-	Corrompu
-	Propaganda	-	Propagande
-	Betray	-	Trahir
-	Deceive	-	Tromper/abuser
-	/	-	Frauder
-	/	-	Duper
-	Shame	-	Honte
-	Scandal	-	Scandale
-	The truth	-	La vérité
-	Dishonest	-	Malhonnête
-	Ruling	-	Au pouvoir
-	Leader	-	Dirigeant

Parliamentarian discourses used in the analysis

➤ Relative to the parliamentarian elections of 1997

For the PS, I selected parliamentarian discourses made by Julien Dray and Jean-Yves Le Déaut, both member of the Socialist party, on the 19th of December 1996. The first discourse contains 50 paragraphs and the second one 25. For the UMP (called RPR at that time), I selected 4 parliamentarian discourses made by Suzanne Sauvagio (14 paragraphs), Léon Bertrand (15 paragraphs), Christian Dupuy (12 paragraphs) and Alain Marsaud (14 paragraphs), all made on the 20th of December 1996.

➤ Relative to the parliamentarian elections of 2002

For the PS, I selected a discourse made by Pascal Terrasse on the 24th of October 2001, which contains 24 paragraphs. For the UMP, I selected a discourse of François Goulard on the 24th of October 2001, which contains 37 paragraphs.

➤ Relative to the parliamentarian elections of 2007

For the PS, I selected discourses made by Julien Dray (22 paragraphs) and Bernard Roman (11 paragraphs) made on the 3rd of May 2006. For the UMP, I also analysed discourses made on the 3rd of May 2006, by Chantal Brunel (18 paragraphs) and Nicolas Sarkozy (20 paragraphs).