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How the National Rally broadened its electoral appeal in France.

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Abstract

The rise of right-wing populism has become evident in Western European democracies. In national elections, radical-right wing parties (RRWPs) seem to obtain increased electoral support. During the 2022-presidential election in France, Marine Le Pen and Rassemblement National (RN), were able to win over 41 percent of the French votes. In this case, the RN´s popularity has clearly increased the past few years. With regards to this, I wish to explore the following research questions: *How has the National Rally (NR) broadened its electoral appeal in France? What can explain the increased voter share experienced by NR in the 2022-presidential election?*

I have chosen to conduct a historical within-case study analysis of NR´s historical development from the 1970s up until now. Furthermore, I have supplemented my analysis with a document study of political campaign posters. Throughout my case study, I have compared different decades in order to account for continuity and change within political rhetoric, communication and policies. Central to the historical discussion is the party´s rhetoric and policy towards migration, and European integration. Over time, however, NR´s rhetoric, has transitioned to focusing more on the economy, welfare and social justice.

My analysis shows that NR has both experienced continuity and change. We do see continuity, where the NR fulfils the vast majority of RRWP characteristics: *Nationalism, opposition to immigration, self-determination, anti-globalisation, populism, direct democracy and charismatic leadership*. On the other hand, changes within the party has also occurred. With Marine Le Pen´s (MLP) takeover as party leader, the NR has undergone a *de-toxifying process* by "softening" the image of the party. MLP has intensified her politics towards issues that are central to the French electorate. Accordingly, she has toned down the intensity towards issues that used to be extreme: immigration and EU-policies. Overall, the NR has abled itself to become a more respectable and moderate party. It has proved itself to become a potential governing-party, and hence it is more legitimate and acceptable to the broader part of the French electorate. MLP´s renewal of the party, may be considered a contributing factor to explaining *how* the NR has achieved increased voter share in recent years.

Sammendrag

Fremveksten av høyrepopulismen har blitt mer og mer tydelig i Vestlige demokratier. Det ser ut til at flere høyreradikale partier har fått økt velgeroppslutning i nasjonale valg. Under 2022-presidentvalget i Frankrike, fikk Marine Le Pen (MLP) og Nasjonal Samling (NS) over 41 prosent av de franske stemmene. Populariteten til NS, har økt drastisk de siste årene. I samråd med dette, ønsker jeg å utforske de følgende problemstillingene: *Hvordan har NS utvidet sin velgerappell i Frankrike? Hva kan forklare den økte velgeroppslutningen til NS ved 2022-presidentvalget?*

Jeg har valgt å gjennomføre en historisk innvendig-casestudie analyse av den historiske utvikling til NS fra 1970-tallet og frem til i dag. I tillegg, utfører jeg en dokumentstudie av politiske valgplakater. Gjennom casestudien har jeg sammenlignet ulike tiår for å redegjøre for kontinuitet og endring i politisk retorikk, kommunikasjon og politikk. Sentralt i denne historiske diskusjonen står partiets retorikk og politikk i forhold til spørsmål rundt migrasjon og Europeisk integrasjon. Over tid, har retorikken til NS gått over til å fokusere mer på økonomi, velferd og sosial rettferdighet.

Analysen min viser at NS både har erfart kontinuitet og endring. Vi ser kontinuitet der NS oppfyller de fleste RRWP-karakteristikkene: *nasjonalisme, motstand mot innvandring, selvbestemmelse, antiglobalisering, populisme, direkte demokrati og karismatisk lederskap.* Endringer har også funnet sted i partiet. Etter MLP tok over som partileder, har NS gjennomgått en *avgiftningsprosess* der MLP har myknet opp partiets image. MLP har økt intensiteten i politikken i retning av saker som står nært de franske velgerne. Samtidig, har hun tonet ned intensiteten i forhold til saker som tidligere har vært ekstreme: innvandring og EU-politikk. Alt i alt, har NS klart å bli et mer respektabelt og moderat parti. NS har vist seg å være i stand til å bli et potensielt regjeringsparti. Dette gjør NS mer legitim og akseptabel for den bredere delen av den franske velgermassen. MLPs fornyelse av partiet kan betraktes som en medvirkende årsak til å forklare *hvordan*, NS har oppnådd økt velgeroppslutning de siste årene.

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List of Abbreviations

EM	Emmanuel Macron
EZ	Éric Zemmour
EU	European Union
JMP	Jean-Marie Le Pen
MLP	Marine Le Pen
NF	National Front
NR	National Rally
ON	Ordre Nouveau
RN	Rassemblement National
RRWP	Radical-right-wing party
RRWPs	Radical-right-wing parties

1. Introduction

In contemporary Europe, we are witnessing a trend of increased support towards radical-right-wing-populist parties in Western liberal democracies. Migration and financial-crises and ongoing globalization have led to uncertainty towards current governments and political elites among European citizens (Rydgren, 2017, p. 485). This uncertainty has caused a change in voting behavior stemming from the urge to vote for alternative parties representing the real people and true democracy. Since the 1980s, parties such as the FPÖ (Austria), the Danish People´s Party (Denmark), Lijst Pim Fortuyn (Netherlands) have, among many others, received progressively electoral support (Rydgren, 2017, p. 485). In the past year, Giorgia Meloni with *Fratteli d´Italia,* was able to win the 2022-elections in Italy. In Sweden the populist Sweden democrats Party, led by Jimmie Åkesson, gained 20 percent of the votes in the national election.

In France, similar trends have taken place. The 24th of April 2022, *Emmanuel Macron (EM)* with *En Marche!* was reelected for a second term as president with 58,55 percent of the votes. His counterpart, *Marine Le Pen (MLP)* with *National Rally (NR)*, followed closely with 41,45 percent of the votes. Macron did win, but the polls made it clear that NR has developed an increased electoral support during the past years. A couple of months later, NR won 89 seats in the National Assembly during the parliamentary election of June 2022. NR was hereby the second biggest party in the National Assembly (Startin, 2022, p. 431).

The goal with this paper is to shed light on some of the underlying elements that may explain increased support towards radical-right-wing parties (RRWP) by closely examining the NR over time. Examining political rhetoric and policies throughout time can help us better understand why MLP and NR have achieved increased voter share in recent elections. My thesis is motivated by the following questions: *How has the National Rally (NR) broadened its electoral appeal in France? What can explain the increased voter share experienced by NR in the 2022 Presidential election?*

I argue that NR´s party image and political rhetoric have changed over time, and thus may explain the increased electoral appeal towards NR. My main argument is that the party has moderated its rhetoric and transformed its policies from a traditional RRWP towards the political objective of becoming a mainstream party. This transformation, can be connected with MLP´s de-toxification-process. The success of NR, is evident given the results of 2022-presidential election. NR seems to have broadened its electoral appeal by reaching beyond the classical NR-voter. My thesis seeks to give some explanation on *how* this change came about.

First of all, I will define the term **radical-right-wing party.** This is necessary as NR is often depicted as a RRWP. Here, I will present seven main characteristics of RRWPs: *Nationalism, anti-immigration, self-determination, anti-globalization, populism, direct democracy and charismatic leadership*. Secondly, I will explain the use of **election campaigns** and how they affect voting behavior. Here, I will divide between three communication strategies: *positive and negative campaigning, populist rhetoric and emotional campaigning.* Thirdly, I will present the **directional theory of issue voting**. At last, I will define **mainstreaming and de-toxification** of party images.

Then, I will present my chosen methods: *within-case study and document studies of political campaign-advertisement*. I will carry out a historical timeline-summary from the 1970s until present time of the NR. That is, a general in-depth description of the evolvement of the party´s policies and political rhetoric. Simultaneously, I will examine former NR political campaigning advertisement from previous political campaigns found on French databases: *Open data: Haut-de-seine* and *Franceinfo*. Moreover, I will examine up-to-date political campaigning advertisement found on the NR´s official websites.

My BA, shows both continuity and change in NR´s political rhetoric and policies over time from the 1970s until now. As my thesis statement declares, NR has become more mainstream by undergoing a de-toxification process. NR has moderated certain policies that used to be extreme, while promoting policies according to the interests of the French people. Contrary to my expectations, NR does not fully break with the past. NR still share various characteristics of RRWPs. It seems that MLP has tactically reshaped NR into a more moderate and trustworthy party, which again may explain how the party has been able to broaden its electoral appeal in France.

2. Theory

2.1 Radical-right-wing parties

RRWPs[1] became popular during the 1980s and 1990s in Western European party systems and emerged as critics towards immigration from Middle East and Africa and growing globalization (Rydgren, 2007a, p. 242). They challenged traditional parties, as new anti-establishment parties and strong opponents of neo-liberalism, European integration (Euroscepticism) and immigration (Zaslove, 2008, p. 169). As a further guidance for my within-case-study, I have elaborated seven RRWP characteristics: *Nationalism, anti-immigration, self-determination, anti-globalization, populism, direct democracy and charismatic leadership.*

2.1.1 Nationalism and anti-immigration

The core of a RRWP is to preserve the nation by maintaining its characteristics, culture and values. RRWPs look towards ancient history to seek myths about the distant past (Rydgren, 2007a, p 243). The goal is to restore ancient traditions of the past and transform society into an idealized version of the past (Rydgren, 2007a, p. 243). That is a society constructed on Christianity as core religion, traditional strict law and order and family values (Rydgren, 2007a, p. 243).

Additionally, RRWP find ethnicity closely linked to the nation (*ethno-nationalism).* For RRWPs, the aim is to *"strengthen the nation by making it more ethnically homogenous"* (Rydgren, 2007a, p. 242). The nation is supposed to represent the true people who founded the nation. Others who differ from "the true people" cannot be a part of the

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[1] For instance, the National Front (NF), the Belgian Vlaams Blok, the Austrian Freedom Party, the Italian LegaNord and the Danish People´s party.

nation. RRWPs are *nonegalitarian* as they deny social equality in order to preserve interests and values of native people (Betz, 1994, p. 4). It is a national preference to prioritize natives and their daily life; Jobs, housing and healthcare should mainly be given to natives and denied to other ethnic groups (Rydgren, 2007a, p. 245).

Accordingly, immigration is the main threat towards preserving national identity, security, traditional values and a homogenic society. RRWPs wish to restrict immigration to their country while secure national boarders (Rydgren, 2017, p. 486). Immigration will increase criminality and create instability in society. RRWPs reject social integration of immigrants in society as their presence will only make things worse (Betz, 1994, p. 4). This is also necessary in order to preserve unique national characteristics. Mixing different ethnicities, will lead to a cultural extinction (Rydgren, 2007a, p. 244). Ethnicities and cultures are too different, incompatible and incommensurable (Rydgren, 2007a, p. 244). There is a clear division between the in-group, natives, and the out-group, ethnic groups. Some RRWP are more extreme and pursue racist, xenophobic and antisemitic rhetoric.

2.1.2 Self-determination and anti-globalization

RRWPs value self-determination while condemn globalization, multinational corporations as well as cosmopolitan elites (Rydgren, 2007a, p. 244). The main goal is to preserve national sovereignty in order to secure the nation´s interests. Accordingly, RRWP does not advocate for deeper European integration in the case of giving up more national sovereignty to supranational entities such as European Union (EU) (Vasilopoulou, 2011, p. 226).

RRWP may differ when it comes to their level of extremeness towards EU. Some RRWP wish for an EU-exit. They do not support the EU as an institution and wish to restore complete national sovereignty (anti-EU) (Risse, 2015, p. 102). Other RRWP are more moderate in their EU politics. They wish for a reformed EU based on intergovernmental cooperation between member states (Risse, 2015, p. 102). Mostly, RRWP are anti and not pro-EU. EU will always be looked upon as a tool for securing the nation and its values. That is, the nation always comes before internationalism (Rydgren, 2007a, p. 242).

2.1.3 Populism and direct democracy

Another characteristic is: *populism*. Cas Mudde (2004, p. 544) defines populism as a *thin-centered ideology*, that may be combined with other ideologies such as communism, ecologism, nationalism or socialism. Both radical right and left-wing parties use populist rhetoric. In France, National Rally can be interpreted as a right-wing populist party while La France Insoumise is a left-wing populist party. Both seem to use populist rhetoric in their communication and politics. It is important to mention that not all RRWPs or radical-left-wing parties have populist traits, however, it is common.

Populist parties define a clear division between *the elite* and *the people*. They denounce the current political elite for not fully representing the people and their interests. In other words, populism "*considers 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" (Mudde, 2004). Populist-parties often depict themselves as representatives of "the people". The goal is to give the people more power in political systems (Mudde, 2004, p. 546). Populism has a moral characteristic. The distinction between the elite and the people is normative rather than programmatic (Mudde. 2004, p. 544). It is rooted in something that *should* be: people *should* have more say in politics that affect them than what they originally do.

The people seem to symbolize *the oppressed people* (Mudde, 2004, p. 546). These are specific groups of people in society who feel socially marginal and alienated from mainstream politics and their own society (Gidron & Hall, 2019, p. 1). They feel overseen as an "out-group" in that sense that their interests are taken for granted. The people can also represent the general public. However, "the people" commonly refers to "a certain group". *The elite* symbolizes established parties who do not represent the people (Mudde, 2004, p. 546).

Hence, RRWPs criticize the established parties for being anti-democratic. They neglect "the people" and their interests. RRWP argue that the good and common people should be given more power by having a direct impact towards politics that affect them within political systems (Bedock, 2022, p. 5). According to Bedock et al. (2022, p. 1), RRWPs find this necessary in order to diminish influence from established elites towards political decision-making (Bedock, et al., 2022, p. 5). A change in current political systems towards a direct democracy is crucial.

Direct democracy can be defined as *"a variety of processes and institutions, guaranteeing people´s direct involvement in political decision-making"* (Maduz, 2010, p. 1). The electorate is to create policies and initiatives without any elected representatives (Altman, 2017, p. 1208). This may be through: positive popular initiatives, veto initiatives and referendums (Bedock et al., 2022, p. 5). RRWP argue that they represent true democracy by diminishing the worries while rooting for the interests of the common man (Rydgren, 2007a, p. 246). This can be defined as *effective pragmatism.*

2.1.4 Charismatic leadership

RRWPs are often led by strong leaders. Max Weber (1958) distinguished between three types of leadership: *traditional, judicial-rational and charismatic leadership.* Charismatic leadership is rooted in special characteristics given by God (Weber, 1958, p. 7). It is where a leader is evaluated on his/her´s personality and capabilities. A leader with strong charisma and radiance, will be considered as more efficient and trustworthy.

Charismatic leaders, are heroic figures, promising salvation and liberation from distress (Tucker, 1968, p. 742). According to Tucker (1968, p. 742), Weber found that people who experience *"psychic, physical, economic, ethical, religious and political distress",* will automatically seek a leader to save people from suffering. A charismatic leader offers himself/herself to lead a group of people out of predicament (Tucker, 1968, p. 742). Leaders who also demonstrate charismatic qualities in a process of summoning people to join a movement for change during unstable periods, will automatically experience

devotion and enthusiasm from followers (Tucker, 1968, p. 737). Leaders who are charismatic, will be considered as true problem solvers during times of agony.
Anyone may accept the supreme authorities of a leader without agreeing with him/her on all ideological values (Tucker, 1968, p. 738). It all comes down to the level of charisma and enthusiasm of the leader and his/her abilities to act in the interest of people. That is, especially during crises. A charismatic leader may appeal glorious and divine to a broader part of society.

2.2 Election campaigning

Election campaigning has a central impact on voting behavior (Hillygus, 2010, p. 2). Election campaign is the period pre-election day where political parties promote their positions on various issues (Bowler & Farrel, 1992, p. 2). The goal is to influence the decision-making process of voters and win over as many as possible. This is done through campaign advertisement: promoting political campaign posters "physically" or on social media platforms. Campaigning may also take place on public events where candidates meet voters while promoting their politics. According to Gerstlé & Nai (2019), there are three central communication strategies of election campaigns: *negative/positive campaigning, populist rhetoric and emotional campaigning.*

First of all, negative campaigning is where a candidate directly *"attacks the other candidate personally, the issues for which the other candidate, or the party of the other candidate stands for"* (Hansen & Pedersen, 2008, p. 410). *Person-based attacks* seek to expose personal flaws of the opponent's characteristics, personality, values or behavior while *policy-based attacks* are where one attacks the rival's performance or program towards specific policies as bad or harmful (Nai, 2021, p. 224). The aim is to influence the opinion of potential voters, in hope that they will adapt this negative view of "the other" candidate. Negative campaigning may be effective in attracting indecisive voters or to diminish positive feelings for opposing candidates (Nai, 2021, p. 224).

Positive campaigning is where a candidate warmly promotes "*about one´s own accomplishments, qualifications and programs"* (Reiter & Matthes, 2022, p. 656). The aim is to strengthen self-image as a candidate by appealing to positive emotions: *enthusiasm, pride or hope.* According to Reiter & Matthes (2022, p. 656), positive emotions have a central impact on voting behavior (*the affective intelligence theory).* When individuals are exposed to positive campaigning messages, positive emotions are activated (Reiter & Matthes, 2022, p. 656). Politicians who are positive seem more appealing and trustworthy to voters.

Secondly, populist rhetoric is often used by parties who *"deliberately wish to demobilize voters for mainstream parties by amplifying negativity in politics and trigger popular distrust"* (Dai & Kustov, 2022, p. 385). Here, a party seeks to speak in the name of the people while condemn established parties (Gerstlé & Nai, 2019, p. 412). In general, populist rhetoric is effective in appealing to politically dissatisfied citizens who share extreme views (Gerstlé & Nai, 2019, p. 412). Populist rhetoric may also appeal to non-populist-citizens (Immerzeel & Pickup, 2014, p. 351). It depends on the level of economic and political content towards mainstream parties and how satisfied people are with their daily life (Immerzeel & Pickup, 2014, p. 352). Populist communication is based

on simple and informal language. Technical and complicated language is avoided to create nearness between communicator and audience (Immerzeel & Pickup, 2014, p. 352).

Thirdly, appealing to emotions is a typical strategy during election campaigns. Emotional campaigning is *"the use of appeals intended to stir an emotional response in the audience"* (Gerstlé & Nai, 2019, p. 413). The aim is to change certain attitudes among voters or enhance already existing emotions by using rhetorical messages appealing to emotions such as anxiety, fear or enthusiasm (Gerstlé & Nai, 2019, p. 413). The main goal is to promote a feeling of content or fear among voters in hope that this will lead to increased voting support. However, some scholars find that appealing to negative emotions may have a negative effect.

2.2.1 Directional theory of issue voting

The use of negative emotions such as fear or anxiety in electoral advertisement may have a negative effect. McDonald (1991, p. 1110), suggests that voters evaluate various parties based on their level of intensity towards different political issues (directional theory of voting). Voters vote for the party with a clear direction towards issues that the voter cares about. The voter relates to affective or emotional intensity of political messages (McDonald, 1991, p. 1108). The stronger intensity, the stronger the preference to choose a particular party[2]. If a voter and a party share equal intensity towards a specific policy, the voter will most likely advocate for this party.

If a party is too intense towards certain political issues, it may have a backfiring effect. The party might experience punishment from voters (*the region of acceptability)* (McDonald, 1991, p. 10108)*.* Here, the party has crossed a so-called "critical threshold" by creating an image that seems too dangerous and irresponsible to voters (McDonald, 1991, p. 1110). A party who is too intense, will be looked upon as less favorable than a party who seems responsible and able to govern (McDonald, 1991, p. 1110). Too much negative emotions may not always be strategic. Accordingly, some parties "change" or moderate their political image.

2.2.2 Mainstreaming and de-toxification

Mainstreaming is a *"process where parties, discourses or attitudes move from marginal positions on the political spectrum or public sphere to more central ones, shifting what is deemed to be acceptable or legitimate in political media and public circles and contexts"* (Brown et al., 2021, p. 9). Policies that previously have been rejected by general public, become accepted in a process of mainstreaming. These ideas are understood as fundamentally "good"[3].

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[2] Providing high intensity on issues may be effective as the party in question can be rewarded with support from voters who are directly compatible with the parties' ideological values (McDonald, 1991, p. 1110).
[3] Mainstream policies are not always good. Citizens of Western democracies often align "mainstream" with values of reason and moderation (Brown et al., 2021, p. 5). What is considered as mainstream may in fact be extreme in nature (Brown, et al., 2021, p. 5).

Mainstreaming is sometimes used as an internal party strategy: *dédiabolisation*, "de-demonization" or "de-toxification"- process. It is a normalization process where a political party seek to detoxify its image while demonstrate its capability of positioning itself as a party of government (Startin, 2022, p. 432). The goal is to achieve increased support in the general electorate by becoming more legitimate to a broader specter of voters. Hence, parties pursue a *softening* or *reconstruction* of political agendas and core values. As specified by Brown et al. (2021, p. 6), a party is softening its image by *"tapping into new registers, adapting, discarding or concealing old ideological beliefs no longer viable in the current post-racial context and providing a veneer of moderation to the same, or similar, exclusionary ideals"*.

Accordingly, certain ideological beliefs are not removed from the political agenda, but rather preserved or modified. These are remodeled to appeal more acceptable and moderate. These may be looked upon as "good" by a greater part of the general public despite their level of extremeness (Brown et al., 2021, p. 6). In this case, the party will "appeal" to a broader part of the electorate. Before diving into my main part, I wish to briefly present by choice of methods.

3. Methods

In this BA, I wish to conduct a within-case study analysis by executing an in-depth exploration of one single case as a stand-alone entity (Mills et al., 2009, p. 971). The goal is to achieve a deeper knowledge and reveal hidden patterns within my main case (Mills et al., 2009, p. 971). A within-case-study analysis is performed through a rich description of data (Mills et al., 2009, p. 971). In my within-case study, I will give a narrative summary, historical timeline and a general overview of the central attributes of the case (Mills et al., 2009, p. 971). That is, I will analyze how the political campaigning and policies of NR has changed or remained consistent from the 1970s until present day.

At the same time, I wish to research how the political rhetoric of NR has developed throughout the years. And so, I will conduct a document analysis of political advertisement from the 1970s until today parallelly with my within-case study. A document analysis is a qualitative method that can be defined as *"a systematic procedure for reviewing or evaluating documents, both printed and electronic material"* (Bowen, 2009, p. 27). Documents contain text or images that have been created without intervention from the researcher (Bowen, 2009, p. 27). In this paper, I will analyze NR-political campaign posters. I find that analyzing campaign posters may compliment my within-case analysis. I will analyze, compare and comment the posters throughout my within-case study analysis. By using political campaign posters, it is possible to visualize how the NR has changed its political rhetoric throughout time.

Following, I wish to conduct my within-case study and document analysis of political campaign posters.

4. The National Rally

4.1 The primary years of National Rally

4.1.1 the 1970s

Le Rassemblement National, can be traced back to the Ordre Nouveau (ON) movement which was established in 1969 (Kauffmann, 2016, p. 1). The ON-movement had roots in extreme revolutionary nationalism and was led by young-neo-fascist activists[4] (Kauffmann, 2016, p. 3). The ON struggled to gain political support and seeked to create a legal party which could actively compete within the electoral political game (Kauffmann, 2016, p. 5). As a result, the National Front (NF), *Front National pour l´unité francaise,* was established with Jean-Marie Le Pen (JMP) as the first political leader in 1972.

The NF, continued promoting extreme far-right values of ON[5]. However, according to Kaufmann (2016, p. 1), NF´s election campaigns were moderate compared to other far-right parties. The political agenda was based on defending the West, finding a "third way" between communism and capitalism, while protecting the French from crisis connected to May 68 riots and Union de la Gauche (Kaufmann, 2016, p. 1, Shields, 2011, p. 80). NF rooted for protecting the French nation, restoring traditional French values while condemning the French Communist Party (PCD) (Shields, 2011, p. 80).

During most of the 70s, NF found itself politically and electorally marginalized. NF struggled to gain political support and it took time before the party became recognized (Shields, 2011, p. 82). NF wished to become a *"respectable parliamentary party with broad popular appeal, showing the required deference for the norms of electoral competition in a liberal democracy"* (Shields, 2011, p. 82). Accordingly, NF seemed to tactically pursue a moderate policy during 1970s. For instance, NF did not communicate *extreme* dissatisfaction with immigration. Immigration policies were absent from JMP´s manifesto and political agenda of the 1974-election campaign (Shields, 2011, p. 82).

Furthermore, NF pursued a positive stance towards deeper European integration. NF seemed passionately in favor of European unity and looked for *"limited ways of abandoning sovereignty"* and that *"Europe was part of the "west" and thus that France was part of the same geo-political entity"* (Davies, 2001, p. 22, Kauffmann, 2016, p. 9). On one hand, the NF had no choice than to respect the necessity of a closer European cooperation after World War 2. Indicating a negative view towards deeper European integration was not an option for any party. Especially not for an up-and-coming party like NF.

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[4] Former supporters mainly of the Armée Secrète (OAS), the Proujadist movement and Action Francaise (Kauffmann, 2016, p. 3).
[5] That is, a party rooted in extreme-right values based on anti-Gaullism, antisemitism, xenophobia and anti-migration-sentiments, the reestablishment of the Vichy Regime and the search for a long-lost French identity originating from medievalism and the heroism of Jeanne d´Arc (Rouban, 2022, p. 47).

On the other hand, NF may have looked upon European cooperation as a tactical advantage. A European Community bloc could counter external threat while protect French identity and values (Chirinos, 2018, p. 12). NF neither seemed pro-EU or anti-EU, but acknowledged the process of deeper European integration. All in all, it seems NF pursued far-right ideological values. However, as a newly established party, it was important for NF to create a soft and non-extreme party image with the hope of achieving increased popularity in a broader part of the French public.

Figure 1. Un president jeune. (1974). Opendata: Hauts-de-seine. https://opendata.hauts-de-seine.fr/explore/dataset/fr-229200506-affiches-electorales/images/?disjunctive.theme

The image above illustrates a 1974-political campaign poster. The headline says "a young president" which refers to JMP. First of all, the poster promotes maintaining *"a free and fraternal France",* the need of securing France´s national sovereignty and its traditional values. JMP promotes a *"fair and strong state".* That is, the need for a strict state based on law and order. The last bullet point, can be translated as "*the right to popular, national and social rights"*. While encouraging National and social rights, JMP also advocates for direct democracy. JMP uses positive campaigning to warmly promote his main policies. Immigration is not mentioned.

Figure 2*. On veut bâilloner La France. (*1978). Opendata: Hauts-de-seine.
https://opendata.hauts-de-seine.fr/explore/dataset/fr-229200506-affiches-
electorales/images/?disjunctive.theme

Figure 3. *Votez Francois Gosselin. (*1978). Opendata: Hauts-de-seine.
https://opendata.hauts-de-seine.fr/explore/dataset/fr-229200506-affiches-
electorales/images/?disjunctive.theme

In the 1978-legislative election campaigns, NF began to express more anti-immigrant
sentiments as a response to the worsening of economic recession, a sharp rise in
unemployment, and a more susceptible public opinion (Shields, 2011, p. 82). NF argued

that it was necessary to decrease immigration to France in order to secure national interests, especially employment for French citizens (Shields, 2011, p. 82). In this case, the party began to pursue an ethno-nationalistic-approach. Employment was favored for French citizens, and not any other ethnical groups. Immigrants were not valuable enough to be given the same rights as the French public.

Summarized, the NF seemed moderate during the 1970s. In the early 1970s, the NF did not mention immigration. Towards late 1970s, immigration is brought up for the first time. We see a change in rhetoric towards ethno-nationalistic-statements. European integration was defined as necessary to promote French interests. The political advertisement was simple and modest. Overall, the main goal of the 70s was becoming an established party, condemning communism, promoting direct democracy and defending the nation, France.

4.1.2 the 1980s

Immigration became a central NF-policy during the 1980s. In the aftermath of winning the 1981-presidential election, Francois Mitterrand and his socialistic government proposed several pro-immigration initiatives[6] (Shields, 2011, p. 84). However, public polls showed hostility towards such policies (Shields, 2011, p. 84). NF denounced the pro-immigration policies of the socialist party and announced itself as opposed to the established elites (Stockemer, 2017, p. 17).

As an alternative, NF underlined the importance of not exceeding the *seuil de tolerance, threshold of tolerance*. That is, maintaining a balance between French interests such as schools, employment, housing and stability of social life and foreign presence (Shields, 2011, p. 86). Giving a great amount of immigrants legal residence in France would lead to insecurity and criminality. This shows a continuity of using ethno-nationalistic rhetoric where French natives are prioritized before others. National interests can only be given to *the people* of the country.

Furthermore, NF´s rhetoric towards immigrants seemed to become more extreme. NF argued that it was simply not possible to integrate immigrants into French society. Immigrants bring their own cultures and religious aspects which cannot be aligned with French secular values (Shields, 2011, p. 86). In order to preserve the threshold of tolerance, the NF promoted repatriation of 3 million immigrants as the only solution. Immigrants were no longer just a threat towards employment, but overall French national interests.

Moreover, deeper European integration became less popular in the 1980s. The NF began to have pessimistic sentiments towards the European Community. During the Cold War, The US had a strong presence and influence in Western Europe as a way to deter the Soviet Union. As a response, NF was alarmed of a deeper European integration due to a fear of losing control over national sovereignty (Davis, 2001, p. 20). Increased pessimism towards socialist government, unemployment and anti-immigration

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[6] These initiatives were: shifting repatriation to integration of immigrants by abolishing the repatriation scheme, amnesty to certain immigrants and voting rights for immigrants in municipal elections among many others (Shields, 2011, p. 84).

sentiments led to increased electoral support towards NF in national and European elections[7]. The 1980s showed an overall breakthrough in electoral support towards the NF and hence was able to cut ties with "its political ghetto" of the 1970s (Hainsworth, 2004, p. 107).
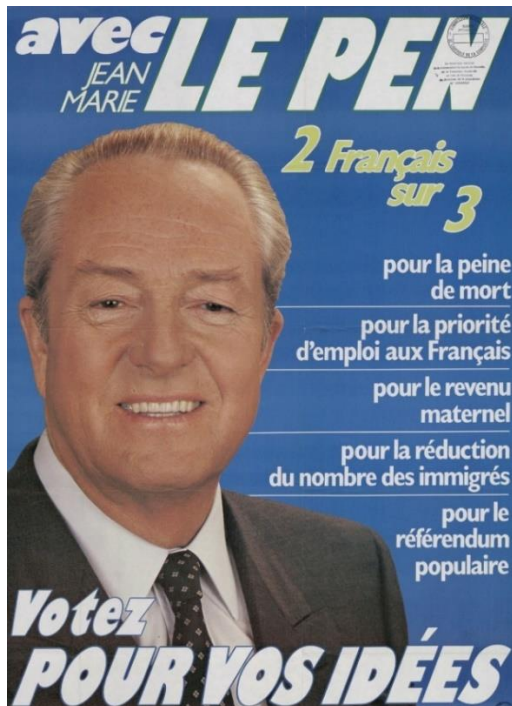

Figure 4. *Avec Jean Marie Le Pen: Votez pour vos idées.*(1988). Opendata: Hauts-de-seine. *https://opendata.hauts-de-seine.fr/explore/dataset/fr-229200506-affiches-electorales/images/?disjunctive.theme*

The campaign poster, *"With Jean-Marie Le Pen: vote for your ideas",* is from the 1988-presidential election. The layout is similar to 1970s political campaign posters. First of all, JMP introduces death penalty. Promoting a stricter law and order in French society have been central since the 1970s. Just as in the late 1970s, prioritizing employment mainly to French citizens (ethno-nationalism) and reducing the numbers of immigrants, are again mentioned as core issues. JMP continues to promote the need of a popular referendum (direct democracy). This is populist rhetoric in which JMP wishes for more power to *the people* and less to the established government.

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[7] NF received a total of 16,7 percent of the votes in a local election in Dreux in 1983 and the party further gained 11,2 percent of the votes in 1984-European Parliament election (Rydgren, 2007b, s. 166). The achievement of 10 seats in the European Parliament led to an increased acknowledgement of the NF in France (Rydgren, 2007b, s. 166).

Figure 5. *Maintenant: La force d´avenir, c´est le Front National de Jean Marie-Le Pen.* (1980s). Opendata: Hauts-de-seine. *https://opendata.hauts-de-seine.fr/explore/dataset/fr-229200506-affiches-electorales/images/?disjunctive.theme*

Figure 6. *Francais, Libérons La France!.* (1980s). Franceinfo. *https://blog.francetvinfo.fr/derriere-le-front/2017/05/21/1986-le-fn-entre-a-lassemblee-nationale.html*
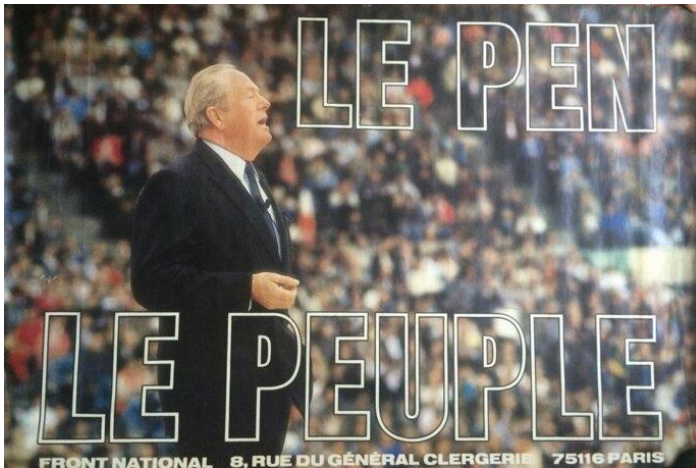
Figure 7. *Le Pen, le peuple.* (1980s). Franceinfo. *https://blog.francetvinfo.fr/derriere-le-front/*

The posters above, show continuity of the 1980s simple political campaign advertisement. Throughout the 1970s and 80s, we mostly see posters depicting JMP. One may argue that he is pursuing a personification of his political advertisement where he portrays himself as a charismatic and heroic leader of the French people. Furthermore, short and pitchy slogans are actively used during the 80s. These seem to mostly be nationalistic in nature. However, one may argue, that JMP also uses populist rhetoric. For instance: *"The French will liberate France".* This may be understood as "the people" need to save France. *"Le Pen, the People"* is another populist slogan where JMP is mirroring himself with the people. He is the true representative and charismatic leader of the French people.

4.1.3 the 1990s

In the 1990s, rising violence in Algeria, terrorist attacks and the threat of radical Islamism, made it possible for the NF to capitalize on the issue of immigration. In a survey created pre-1995-elections, 38 percent of the French agreed on NF´s politics towards immigration while JMP was considered the most effective candidate in dealing with immigration (Shields, 2011, p. 89-90). The French electorate seemed more acceptable towards NF´s anti-immigration policies and nationalistic views.

Accordingly, JMP´s electoral campaigns continued promoting immigration as a core issue and a key threat towards French national interests (Shields, 2011, p. 89). Pre-1995 presidential election, JMP promoted the creation of four million jobs in his seven-year presidential term while guaranteeing a prioritization of French nationals over foreign citizens in regards to employment, social welfare and education (Shields, 2011, p. 89). In order to create these jobs, JMP continued motivating the repatriation of three million immigrants. The poster bellow *we produce French with the French",* reflects that only hardworking-*French citizens* are good enough to produce French.
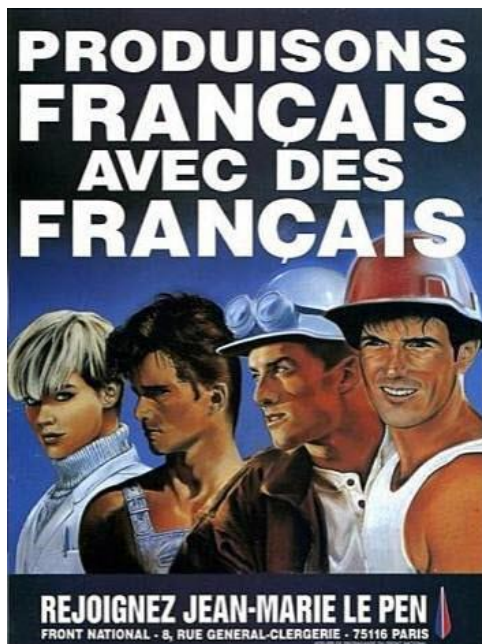
Figure 8. *Produisons Francais avec des Francais.* (1992). Franceinfo.
https://blog.francetvinfo.fr/derriere-le-front/

The second poster, *"Immigration...open your eyes! National Front, to never be fooled
again",* is directed towards immigration. Immigrants are taking advantage of national
interests. In this case, NF claims that French natives need to "open their eyes" before it's
too late. NF argue that the only solution is to vote NF in order to prevent immigrants
from exploiting French interests.
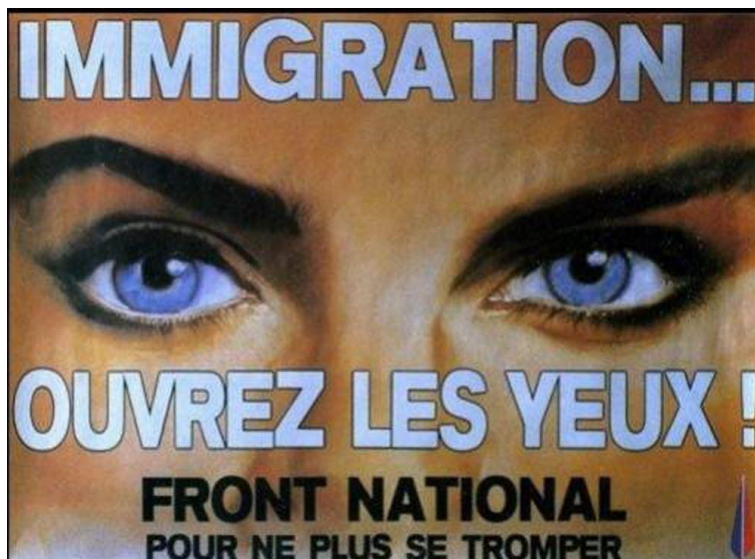
Figure 9. *Immigration….ouvrez les yeux! Front National pour ne plus se tromper .*
(1990s). Franceinfo. *https://blog.francetvinfo.fr/derriere-le-front/*

The signing of the Maastricht Treaty in 1992 became a turning point in NF´s politics
towards deeper European integration[8]. JMP promoted French withdrawal from the
Schengen Convention and Maastricht treaty in order to restore French border control and

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[8] The reformed name of the institution: from European Economic Community (EEC) to European Union (EU) in
1993, may have created fear of a more federalist EU.

national sovereignty[9] (Shields, 2011, p. 89). The poster bellow, *"Let´s get out of our sanctuary",* symbolizes this. The NF is drawing a parallel with the European invasion of Indian North America and EU and its member states. NF cries out for France to break out of the EU-sanctuary. JMP is the chief, ready to lead the French out of distress.

Figure 10. *Sortons de notre reserve.* (1990s). Franceinfo.
https://blog.francetvinfo.fr/derriere-le-front/

During the 1990s, the political campaign advertisement was more vivid, robust and cartoonish. It was a clear break with the simple and clean poster-layout of the 1970s and 80s. The tactics of personification and charismatic leadership was less present. Moreover, the 90s continued presenting direct and pitchy slogans from the 1980s. However, these slogans seemed to be borderline extreme. One may wonder, if extreme slogans were used to create a sense of anxiety, fear or rage within the electorate. Appealing to negative emotions, may have been used by NF to create dislike towards immigration. In this case, it seemed to be a tactical approach in order to gain more voters and electoral support.

Despite ongoing electoral popularity, the NF struggled to gain enough support to ever win a presidential election or become a within-government-party. It became crucial for NF to tactically change and reform its image and politics in the following decade.

4.2 The 2000s

The 2002-presidential election indicated electoral success for NF (16,86 percent). Here, we see the first signs of the de-toxification-process. Pre-2002 elections, JMP tactically "softened" NF´s party image by toning down extreme rhetoric towards immigration by eliminating the pledge of repatriating three million immigrants[10] (Shields, 2011, p. 91). JMP continued using this technique during 2007-presidential campaign. NF rarely mentioned immigration in its 2007-political program; only two pages out of 68 were dedicated to immigration (Shields, 2011, p. 93). Immigration was still a central issue in

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[9] As a solution, NF proposed the creation of a loosely confederal Europe where cooperation should remain at intergovernmental level between EU-member-states (Davies, 2001, p. 23).

[10] Repatriating a great number of immigrants had been a central part of NF´s politics since the 1980s.

NF´s politics, but it was more moderate in nature[11]. The main focus was preserving French identity and national sovereignty.

Figure 11. *Préservons notre identité..votez front ! . (2007).* Franceinfo. *https://blog.francetvinfo.fr/derriere-le-front/*

NF only gained 10,4 percent of the votes in the 2007-presidential election. NF´s moderation of immigration policy did not seem to have a radical effect on voting behavior. Looking at political advertisement, NF continued using 1990s extreme rhetoric. The poster below, *"immigrants will vote…but you choose to abstain?",* visualizes this. In order to preserve the interests of French natives, it is crucial that French natives vote. If not, there is a risk for immigrants to vote for their interests, which are dissimilar to French values. The poster appeals to negative emotions, senses of fear or anxiousness. Despite JMP´s attempt on moderating NF´s immigration policy, the use of the 1990s extreme rhetoric was still present. One may wonder, *if this among other things may explain why the party struggled getting increased electoral support?*

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[11] It was necessary to modify NF´s immigration policy due to lack of public support for such an extreme policy (Shields, 2011, p. 91).

Figure 12. *Les immigrés vont voter….et vous vous abstenez.* (2005). Franceinfo*.
https://blog.francetvinfo.fr/derriere-le-front/*

In 2011, Marine Le Pen (MLP), became NF´s new leader. After the 2007-electoral
downfall, MLP intensively attempted to de-toxify NF´s party image. The main goal was to
remove antisemitic and xenophobic values of JMP and the old NF[12] (Stockemer &
Barisione, 2017, p. 104). MLP switched the party´s political messaging towards an active
use of populist and moderate rhetoric.

The use of populist rhetoric and charismatic leadership, are clearly present in MLP´s
2012-presidential program: *"my project, for France and for the French People"* and
"Marine Le Pen, the voice of the people, the spirit of France" (Stockemer & Barisione,
2017, p. 104). MLP presents herself as a "Jeanne-d´Arc", a savior and heroic figure,
ready to lead the French people out of suffering. During the 1980s, JMP also portrayed
himself as a charismatic leader while using populist slogans: *"Le Pen, the people".*
However, MLP undoubtedly broke away from the 1990s extreme rhetoric where JMP was
known for radical messaging rooted in extreme antisemitic and xenophobic statements
(Mayer, 2013, p. 175).

The poster bellow, *"Yes, France. Marine Le Pen",* indicates that MLP *chooses* France. MLP
represents France and will lead French people out of despair.

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[12] JMP defined Holocaust as a mere detail in history. MLP condemned antisemitism in her 2012-political
program, and argued that Holocaust symbolized human barbarism (Mayer, 2013, p. 175).
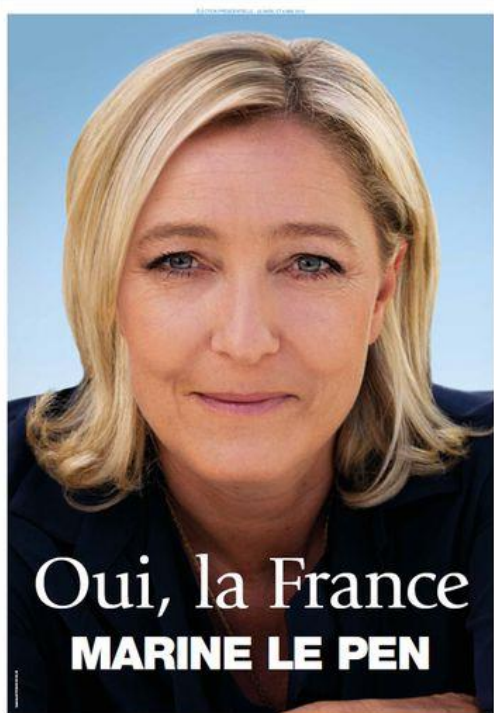
Figure 13. *Oui, La France. Marine Le Pen.* (2012). Franceinfo.
https://www.francetvinfo.fr/politique/marine-le-pen-modifie-son-affiche-de-campagne_265083.html

Moreover, MLP has moderated some of NF´s policies. For instance, MLP has avoided using aggressive and extreme language towards the issue of immigration. MLP argues that she is not opposed to immigration or integration of legal immigrants. However, accepting Christianity and *laïcité* (secularism) is a necessity (Bastow, 2018, p. 23, Betz, 1994, p. 321). In this case, MLP claim not to be anti-immigrant but against "islamisation" of France (Bastow, 2017, p. 23).

MLP still seem extreme in areas such as globalization. In 2012, MLP continued promoting anti-EU sentiments. In 2012, she argued for French "exit" from the EU while reintroducing the French franc (Mayer, 2013, p. 175). The wish for a reformed EU was not mentioned. Securing national independence was crucial.

The results of 2017-presidential election showed increased support towards NF. NF gained 33,90 percent of the votes. In the 2017-presidential election campaign, *globalization and Islamic fundamentalism*, were central themes (Bastow, 2017, p. 23). Similar to the 1990s, MLP proposed an EU-reformation. That is, a reorganization of EU from a supranational into a loose intergovernmental entity among other reforms[13] (Henley, 2017). If these reforms were neglected by the EU, an EU-referendum and *Frexit* would be necessary (Henley, 2017). Anti-EU sentiments in the need of protecting national independence, seemed to continue from the 1990s.

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[13] MLP sought restoring the Franc, removing the border-free area and reform EU budget rules and EU law (Reuters, 2017).

Fighting Islamic fundamentalism and terrorism[14] was central in NF´s political agenda. MLP promoted stricter immigration policy by making it difficult for illegal immigrants to legalize their stay in France (Henley, 2017). Achieving French citizenship would almost be impossible. As a response to recent terrorist attacks, MLP introduced the statement *"French first".* Again, national interests: social housing and employment, are prioritized to French citizens (ethno-nationalism) (Henley, 2017). This is similar to NF´s immigration politics of late 1970s, 1980s and 1990s. The issue of immigration and employment, has been one of the main policies since the late 1970s.

MLP continued to proclaim integration of legal immigrants into French society by respecting and adapting to French secular rules (Bastow, 2017, p. 25). The political campaign poster bellow, *"Choose your neighborhood…Votez Front!",* appeals to the latter. We see a girl representing an "immigrant". On the right-hand side, she is wearing a vail. On the left-hand side, she wears a beanie and has the French flag painted on her face. She seems to be portrayed as a French native. The main message seems to be: you need to choose a side, if you wish to stay in France, you need to adapt to the French secular state. MLP also argued that Islamism prevents women rights (Bastow, 2017, p. 22). One may wonder, if she is trying to appeal to Muslim women.

Figure 14. *Choisissez votre banlieu...votez Front !* (2015). Franceinfo. *https://blog.francetvinfo.fr/derriere-le-front/2015/11/11/ces-visages-de-la-dediabolisation-frontiste-des-banlieues.html*

In 2018, MLP does a drastic name-change from Front National (National Front) to Rassemblement National (National Rally). This symbolized a clear break from the historical past, and the negative connotations associated with the name Front National and JMP (Startin, 2022, p. 433).

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[14] NF´s need to "fight" Islamism may be an answer to the various terror attacks within France. For instance, the terrorist attacks of Charlie Hebdo in Paris 2015 and Promenade Anglais in Nice 2016.

4.3 National Rally today

In the 2022-presidential election, NR won 41,45 percent of the votes. MLP significantly improved her second-round score with 33,9 percent in the 2017-presidential election to 41,45 percent of the votes in 2022-presidential election (Startin, 2022, p. 428). The core NR-policies were based on economic and social issues. The NR also reflected some RRWP traits: preserving national sovereignty, while subtly questioning immigration and the EU.

The 2022-political campaign, continues using populist rhetoric. MLP criticizes Emmanuel Macron of not truly representing "the people". She blames EM and current government of being the corrupt elite, giving promises they cannot keep (effective pragmatism). She condemns EM of neglecting social issues such as: cost-of-living crisis, economic insecurity, high gas-prices and social injustice (Startin, 2022, p. 428). According to Startin (2022, p. 433), this is a sort of social populism. MLP responds directly to the interests of "the people" with social relieves[15].

In order for the people to be truly heard, there is a need to *"take back control to the people"* (direct democracy) (Startin, 2022, p. 433). During the 2022-presidential campaign, MLP argued that she would govern by referendum, bypassing parliament and the constitutional government (Trippenbach & Johannès, 2022). For instance, she wishes that "the people" decides on the French pension-age. If the people desire for a low pension-age, then it is the duty of the president to adhere to this wish. In 2023, EM increased the pension-age further from 62 to 64 without consulting the people or even Parliament. Summarized, MLP represents the people´s interests, while she advocates for a direct democracy. In the poster bellow, MLP call out for the need to *"give back the country to the French".*

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[15] MLP promises income tax for under 30s, increasing wages by 10 percent and creating new employments for nurses while lowering the retirement age to 60 (Startin, 2022, p. 433). In this way, it can be argued that NR meets the demands of the *Gilets Jaunes* protest movement (Rouban, 2022, p. 145).

Figure 15. *Rendre aux Francais leur pays. Marine Présidente.* (2022). Twitter. *https://twitter.com/RNational_off*

The poster, *"Pour tous les Francais",* was released for the second round of the 2022-presidential election. MLP´s humble gestor makes her look like a headstrong, kind and charismatic leader. The slogan: *"For all the French",* conveys the message that MLP puts *"herself at the service of the French people in the name of the National Union France"* (Rassemblement National, 2022). In other words, she presents herself as a patroness and savior, ready to lead the oppressed French people out of misery.

Figure 16*. Pour tous les Francais.* (2022). Rassemblement National, Twitter. *https://twitter.com/RNational_off*

Anti-globalization sentiments seem to become more moderate in the 2022-political agenda. Just as in 2017, MLP continue to advocate for an intergovernmental EU. However, she seems to have mainstreamed NF´s EU-policies. MLP no longer favored leaving the Euro or the EU (Startin, 2022, p. 433). The previous years, it has been crucial for NF to restore the Franc while promote a complete Frexit from the EU. Summarized, NF has tried to make its EU-policy more mainstream and acceptable for a broader part of the general public.

In contrast with the 1970s, 1980s and 1990s, the issue of immigration was not at heart of the 2022-election (Bernard, 2022). MLP continues to deny radical Islamism while promoting integration of legal immigrants into the French secular society. For instance, MLP wished to ban Muslim headscarves from all public places (Chrisafis, 2022). MLP defines the headscarf as a uniform of totalitarian ideology and a source of suppressing women rights (Chrisafis, 2022). To widen her electoral support, she also tries to appeal to gay voters by drawing on the homophobia of Islam (Chrisafis, 2022). MLP continues underlining the insecurity with Islam, and its incompatibility with secularism.

The far-right candidate, Éric Zemmour (Reconquête) further helped to create a moderate image of NF. During the 2022-campaign, EZ actively pursued an anti-immigration,

xenophobic and anti-Islam program (Startin, 2022, p. 436). This only helped MLP and NR to reposition themselves as more moderate and mainstream in contrast to the extreme Reconquête (Startin, 2022, p. 437). In this case, this may have helped MLP to address and reach out to a broader part of the French opinion.

5. Conclusion

Marine Le Pen failed to capture the Élycée Palace in 2022-presidential election, but with 41 percent of the votes in the second round and 1,5 million new RN votes compared with the 2017-presidential election, it is clear that the result itself may be regarded as a victory for MLP and NR. From being a marginalized and ultra-rightist party, the NR has transformed into the largest opposition party in the National Assembly (Hainsworth, 2004). I find NR´s electoral popularity and increased voter share intriguing. Hence, the goal with my BA, has been to better understand: *how has the National Rally broadened its electoral appeal in France? What can explain the increased voter share experienced by NR in the 2022-presidential election?*

By conducting a historical within-case study analysis of political rhetoric and document studies of political campaign-advertisement throughout the party´s history from Front National to Rassemblement National, I have found both continuity and change in the party´s political message, policies and political rhetoric from the 1970s up until now. The party´s historical development, mainly shows that NR has broadened its electoral appeal by becoming more acceptable and legitimate to a wider part of the French public.

The National Rally is no longer the National Front that it once was, formed by Jean-Marie Le Pen and the Ordre Nouveau-movement. The main change lies in the act of de-toxification. MLP has removed the antisemitic, anti-Islam and xenophobic principles from the old NF. After MLP took over the NR-leadership, MLP has actively tried to de-demonize the party´s core values and policies in order to come across as moderate and mainstream to the overall French electorate.

On one hand, MLP has pursued a less *intense* policy towards political areas where the NF used to express extreme sentiments (directional theory). During the 2000s, she pursued a more "respectable" immigration and globalization-rhetoric without appearing too extreme, dangerous or irresponsible to overall French voters. In this case, we can say that MLP has tried to adjust NR´s intensity to the level of intensity of the overall French electorate towards certain policies.

On the other hand, MLP has increased NR´s intensity towards policies according to the needs, expectations and interests of the French people (efficient pragmatism). NF has shifted focus from extreme immigration politics towards policies in relation to social welfare and economy (Rouban, 2022, p. 39). By leveling out the intensity and increasing the intensity towards various political issues, the NR has become more appealing to the broader part of the French electorate. In this case, it is even more likely for the NR to be considered a potential governing-party.

We also see changes within political advertisement. NR today clearly disrupts with the 1990s, where extreme slogans and illustrations were used. Appealing to negative emotions was key. In the 2000s, MLP shifted NR´s extreme rhetoric towards a softer, positive and more trustworthy rhetoric. Accordingly, MLP actively uses populist rhetoric. She appeals to the people, and depicts herself as a charismatic leader. MLP has understood the effectiveness in appealing to the French electorate through promoting moderate policies, while using positively charged and populist rhetoric.

However, NR today does not represent a complete break with the past. My analysis does show that NR share a majority of the criteria for RRWP: *nationalism, anti-immigration, self-determination, anti-globalization, populism, direct democracy and charismatic leadership.* MLP´s appeal to "La France", the French people, and direct democracy, is still prominent. The urge to preserve national sovereignty and self-determination while questioning globalization, have continuously been present. This is also the case of ethno-nationalism. Since the 1970s, NR promoted national interests (employment, housing, public services) in favor of French citizens over other ethnical groups.

Is it rightful to say, as Bastow (2018, p. 20) argues, that the NR belongs to the political mainstream, and thus should no longer be considered a party of the extreme radical-right? Clearly the NR has moved in the direction of becoming a mainstream party. On the other hand, as my discussion demonstrates, the NR still meets with most of the RRWP characteristics.

To summarize, we can argue that the NR has been able to broaden its appeal by de-toxifying its party image, softening its political rhetoric while adapting to policies in the interest of the French people. From being an extreme party with marginal support, the NR has been able to establish itself as a potential governing party and hence a real alternative along the French left-right political axis. In other words, the party has tactically transformed itself into a more moderate and respectable party in order to appeal to a broader French electorate.

MLP will run in the 2027-presidential election with the aim of becoming France´s first female president. What remains to be seen, is whether the results of 2022 will represent a bracket or a historical turning point in French politics.

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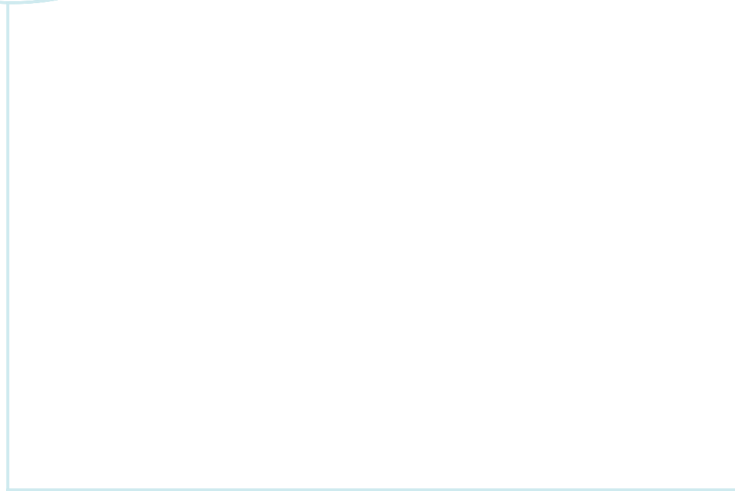
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