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## **Part IV**

# **Populist Political Communication in Southern Europe**

# 14 France

## The Reluctance to Use the Word *Populism* as a Concept

*Nicolas Hubé and Naomi Truan*

### Introduction

The French debate on populism is somehow paradoxical. On the one hand, the French political landscape has been characterized by the presence of a strong far-right populist and xenophobic party—the Front National (FN)—since the mid-1980s. Some well-known authors have contributed to the international mainstream analysis of the phenomenon (Mény & Surel, 2000; Taguieff, 1984, 1997, 2002, 2004, 2007). On the other hand, French academia is reluctant to use populism to explain and analyze the FN. Some of the major findings presented here from a review of the literature since 1995 include the relatively infrequent use of the word, its quasi-systematic association with right-wing parties, and the critical tone adopted by French authors when referring to populism as a concept.

### Research on Populism in France

If there is one point of consensus in the research on populism in France and internationally, it is about the impossibility of finding a common definition of populism in a cross-border perspective. The topic creates interest in many disciplines (political science, sociology, philosophy, history, linguistics) but also leads to various definitions and theoretical approaches. Most authors begin by pointing out the problem of definition: Dezé speaks about a “cacophonous field research” (2004, p. 179), Rioux of a “pseudo-concept” (2007, p. 14), and Dorna of a “polysemous overuse” (2005, para. 2). Many authors, moreover, underline the varying connotations of the term (Agulhon et al., 1997; Dezé, 2004; Taguieff, 1997), which used to be seen as positive (in 1930s literature, for example [Paveau, 1998]), but is nowadays mainly used in a negative way. Populism works as a “tool of illegitimacy” (Taguieff, 2002, p. 21). Bouvet (2011, p. 138) has underlined the contrast to the United States, where populism does not have such negative overtones. Recognizing that populism is a phenomenon with various time and space expressions, Dezé wondered, “Is there one populism or many forms of it?” (2004, p. 179). Collective books dealing with this question do not resolve the problem, even when focusing on comparative case studies (Ihl, Chêne, & Vial, 2003). Comparative studies including non-European countries are less frequent (see Mondon, 2013, for a comparison of France and Australia). Some authors have claimed that the use of labels such as “populism” may serve an indirect, and unintended, form of democratic legitimization for parties like the FN or their equivalents in Britain and Italy—those parties that “still manifest neo-fascist, xenophobic and undemocratic tendencies” (Mammone, 2009, p. 171; see also Birenbaum & Villa, 2003; Copsey, 1997; Ellinas, 2010).

French scholars are aware of the difficulty of separating the concept of populism from other terms like *demagoguery*, *Poujadism*, *racism*, and *fascism* (Charaudeau, 2011). Taking these difficulties into account, Badie defines populism on a negative basis: “the notion cannot be used in a discriminating way to describe an ideology, a historical moment or a political regime” (Badie, quoted in Agulhon et al., 1997, p. 226). One strategy often used in the French literature is hyphenation: “national-populism,” “liberal-populism,” “social-populism,” and so on. Lecœur (2003) speaks of a “neo-populism *à la française*” in regard to the FN, but scholars put more emphasis on the extreme-right ideology of the FN than on its populist stance. Yet others argue that populist wording is only a strategy to make its ideology acceptable (Fieschi, 2004, p. 120; see also Copsey, 1997; Ellinas, 2010).

The second problem about populism is that researchers do not agree on the object: Is it a strategy, which would mean rhetoric without content, or is it an ideology, which would allow comparisons with fascism or rightextremism? For Badie (1997, p. 227), populism cannot be defined only as an ideology. He defines populism as “a technique and a function,” arguing that it is often tricky, even arbitrary, to distinguish a populist movement from its ideology, since “the populist orientation seems latent in most of mass ideologies.” Hermet explains it by underlining the differences with other ideologies (marxism, liberalism, fascism, anarchism, etc.): “Unlike other political families, [populism] has neither large-bodied politicians, nor elaborated doctrines” (2003, p. 28). Taguieff (2002, p. 84) goes further, saying that populism can adapt to any kind of ideology. This is why, according to him, populism is based on an “ensemble of rhetoric devices implemented by the symbolic using of some social representations” (2002, p. 80; for another example, see Périès and Taguieff’s special edition in the journal *MOTS*, 1998). Touraine says that populism represents neither a political theory nor an economic program (cited in Agulhon et al., 1997, p. 242). It is a “style” (Bouvet, 2011, p. 138; see also Mondon, 2013, p. 107).

Surel (2003, p. 114) disagrees, maintaining that populism is not only a rhetorical tool, but has a normative, coherent and stable hard core. Mény and Surel (2000) are wary of this approach but do not deny that some populist parties might have, secondarily, a political origin. They point out, however, that none of these forces criticizes the democratic system from an external point of view; on the contrary, they present themselves as internal critics of effective democracies. Bergounioux is one of the few claiming that populism does not define the content of a policy (cited in Agulhon et al., 1997, pp. 228–230) but is mainly used by right-wing parties, because it is one way of protesting against the representative system.

The disputed correlation between populism and democracy gives rise to two opposing research strands in France. One tendency clearly separates both concepts, asserting that populism is, “in essence, anti-democratic” (Peiser, cited in Ihl et al., 2003, p. 42) and can “put into danger democratic institutions” (2003, p. 50). The other tendency narrowly associates populism and democracy, because populism constitutes the “essential tension of democracy, balancing with another dynamic, the one of constitutionalism” (Surel, 2003, p. 115). For these authors, populism is part of the essence of democracy itself and can be understood as a common reference to many political actors in traditional representative democracies. Jean-Marie Le Pen (FN), for instance, always claimed a close relationship with the democratic system (Julliard, 2010). Bouvet asserts that populism is, in this sense, “totally legitimate” (2011, p. 138). Revealing the ambiguities of democracy itself, it is “a healthy questioning [of] our democratic system” (Bouvet, 2011, p. 138).

Populism is often perceived as linked with extreme right-wing parties. Dezé (2004) underlines that many authors call the same political formations by numerous names: “extreme right-wing parties,” “new right-wing populists,” “right-wing populists,” “new extreme right-wing parties,” and “new right-wing parties.” There is almost a consensus on the necessity of calling the FN “populist” (with the noticeable exceptions of Collovald, 2004, and Stora in Agulhon et al., 1997), but other actors from all political circles of influence are also quite often described in the same way: Chirac, during the electoral campaign of 1995 (Mény & Surel, 2000); Tapie, in the 1990s, (Agulhon et al., 1997; Riutort, 2007); and Sarkozy, between 2007 and 2012 (Charaudeau, 2011; Haegel, 2012; Mayaffre, 2013). But the French academia does not pay much attention to these actors in terms of populism. The leader of the Left Front, Mélenchon, has not been examined through this lens in any academic paper, even if he is consistently presented as a populist in the media.

Populism and right-wing parties tend to be bracketed together, particularly when it comes to the FN. Quoting Jean-Marie Le Pen’s “national preference,” Charaudeau considers that the FN relies on “a discriminatory ideology” (2011, pp. 108–109). Nicolas (2005, para. 11) maintains that “xenophobic and anti-Semitic statements are the almost exclusive prerogative of populist formations,” while Julliard (2010, pp. 253–254) asserts that the “aspiration to national unity” goes along with the rejection of what seems to threaten this unity.

In this sense, the FN is a *complete* populist party, in accordance with Jagers and Walgrave’s criteria (2007): reference and appeal to the people, anti-elitism, and the exclusion of out-groups. The French extreme-right landscape could be defined by four core concepts: “the cautious denunciation of parliamentary democracy, a strong symbolic leadership, ethno-exclusivism or neo-racism, and a right-wing populist style and discourse” (Mondon, 2013, pp. 21–22). That said, populism plays only a secondary role in manifestos; during general elections, the *people* index shows that on average 16% of manifestos consist of appeals to the people (between 1997 and 2002), and *anti-elite discourse* represents only 18% (Reungoat, 2010).

In contrast to these previous studies, Collovald (2004) and Stora (cited in Agulhon et al., 1997) harshly criticize the common view of the FN as populist. They condemn the binary opposition between, on the one hand, rough, uneducated people, ready to vote for authoritarian demagogues, and, on the other hand, a republican state with clever print media and researchers. To Collovald (2004), it is even a “misinterpretation” to call the FN populist. Her thesis is the following: The elites consider the FN a populist party and try to discredit it, redefining political legitimacy in a selective way (“The poor cannot vote properly, so leave it to the elite”). Interestingly enough, the “new Front National” under Marine Le Pen (Jean-Marie Le Pen’s daughter) is considered to be, and presents itself as, a “normalized” party. For example, Marine Le Pen uses a softer strategy of personalization (less “charismatic”), a more mainstream and softer racism, giving the impression of not criticizing Islam *per se*, but rather “only” criticizing its perceived disrespect for the principle of *laïcité* (secularism)—a crucial concept in the French constitution. This new self-image of the FN (commonly accepted by the public) raises certain questions: Is the FN still populist? Can it still be considered an extreme-right party (Béja & Padis, 2014)? These changes in the FN’s image are closely related to changes in strategy by the *Républicains* (formerly the Union for a Popular Movement [UMP]), the conservative party of former president Sarkozy. The *Républicains*’ policy of *droitisation* (“turning to the right”) is intended to open the way for its leaders to adopt a more populist campaign style. Some scholars who have studied Sarkozy consider him to be a populist or a wishful populist (Charaudeau, 2011; Mayaffre, 2013), including Haegel (2012). In her study, however, she did not settle the debate over the use of the term “populist.” Haegel was reluctant to use the word “populism,” even though she was discussing words spoken by Sarkozy that would have been described by other authors as populist. She preferred to use a relational analysis of the party (see also Ellinas, 2010). Based on the categorizations of Jagers and Walgrave (2007), Haegel proposed that the former UMP (now the *Républicains*) could be considered as a example of *excluding populism*, based on its appeals to the people and its exclusion of out-groups (although it has expressed no systematic anti-elitism).

More generally, with regard to Jagers and Walgrave’s (2007) sole systematic analysis and categories, populism (and especially the *empty* type) is a broad tool in French politics. Even if the FN is the party using the populist style the most, in reality all parties largely use what could be called a populist style, at least during European elections. While 24% of speeches by FN politicians between 1999 and 2004 were labeled as “appeals to the people,” the speeches by politicians of other parties also frequently took the form of “appeals,” including those of the two right-sovereigntist parties, *Mouvement pour la France* and *Rassemblement pour la France*. The speeches by members of these parties took the form of an appeal to the people 21% of the time, compared to 14% for the conservative parties and 14% for the Communist Party.

The same observation applies to the *anti-elite* index (Reungoat, 2010). The exception is the Socialist Party; less than six percent of its texts refer to the people, and only two percent include anti-elitist discourse. Interestingly enough, the “intensity” of a party’s populism does not correlate directly either with its election score or the type of election. During the European elections, the score of the FN varied from approximately six percent of votes in 2009 to 25% in 2014, without the FN’s discourse changing substantially in that time. The populism effect has to be examined at a meso-level—that is, by examining the way the FN re-orders the French political landscape (Rydgren, 2003, p. 60).

## **Populist Actors as Communicators**

Given the difficulty of finding a common approach to populism, many scholars prefer to make a list of common characteristics rather than to define the issue. Julliard (2010, p. 251) recognizes that “the addition of empirically identifiable criteria” helps grasp the phenomenon. This trend might be why Nicolas (2005, para. 1) questions “the forms taken by ‘populist parties’ in the partisan and political system rather than a populist essence or ideology.” Three criteria of populism appear to be consensual among various scholars in France: (a) the “charisma” of the populist leader, (b) an attempt to define oneself as an outsider, and (b) the “call to people.”

The linguist Charaudeau (2011, p. 104) states that the “presence of a charismatic leader” can be observed “in every case” (see also Dorna, 2005, para. 13; Nicolas, 2005, para. 16). Peiser (cited in Ihl et al., 2003,

p. 40) makes a connection between the leader’s charisma and the crowd’s excitement, which creates the direct link between the leader and the people. Charismatic leadership is also seen as “a pagan version of the Bible” (Charaudeau, 2011, p. 112). But another definition problem remains: what is charisma? Charaudeau shrugs off this issue: “This irrational thing that we call charisma” (2011, p. 110). Without arguing that charisma is a valid criterion for any type of populism, Winock (1997, p. 88) nonetheless claims that the FN is defined through “the personality of its inventor and leader” (Jean-Marie Le Pen).

For others, this criterion is not a constant of populism. According to Hermet (cited in Ihl et al., 2003, p. 29), “populism cannot necessarily be defined as a kind of incarnated democracy relying on the personal charisma of a leader” and quotes the examples of Mexico and Peru, where this kind of charisma has not played as big a role. The presence of a unique leader in many populist parties illustrates a more general trend in politics: Democratic parties in general are more and more concentrated on personal actors, which means, in a way, that non-populist parties have become rare in Europe (Bouillaud, 2003, p. 139). Julliard (2010, p. 254) follows this path in linking a “charismatic position” with the “development of media.” Collovald (2003, p. 26) goes further, putting the term “charisma” in quotes. To her, this criterion reflects the naïve fondness of working-class groups, who vote for the FN as a result of their limited education. She describes “populism” as “an ordinary political practice among others” and recalls that the “appeal to people” is not an “anomaly” and should not be seen as something “extraordinary” or as a “threat to democracy” (2003, p. 33). Her critique is to be found in Nicolas’ article (2005, parag. 16), where he wonders if populist parties are “specific organizations because ‘submitted’ to charismatic leaders.” Although the author puts the word “submitted” in quotes, he actually tends to describe this phenomenon in exactly the same way as Collovald.

Regarding the second criteria (populist parties as outsiders), Hermet (1997), Charaudeau (2011), and Taguieff (1997, 2002) characterize populism by its high propensity to dream and to deny the fact that politics is a longterm issue. Inherent to populism are utopian projects that are irreconcilable with the exertion of power. Nicolas (2005, para. 7) mentions the “refusal to be a government party,” which enables the French populist movements to “position themselves outside the political system (to denounce it better)” and, therefore, to call themselves “outsiders” (para. 5). This is the way numerous French parties, including mainstream parties, present themselves: the Gaullist party in the 1960s (later led by Chirac), the Left Front in the 2000s, the Poujade movement in the 1950s and the FN (from 1972 until now), the Trotskyist parties, the Greens, and—more surprisingly—the party of President Sarkozy himself during the 2012 election campaign. Some of the parties mentioned above were founded by former ministers (e.g., Jean-Pierre Chevènement’s Mouvement des Citoyens in 1994), and some entered the government (the Communist Party in 1981 and 1993, the Greens in 1993) and still laid claim to their unique status (for a summary, see Hubé 2014).

According to Jagers and Walgrave (2007), the third criterion (reference to the people and anti-elite discourse) is a minimal criterion for any definition of populism and corresponds to the typical empty populism. Even though this characteristic appears frequently in the French literature (“populism is the appeal of a leader to people against politicians and intellectuals who betray them” [Touraine, cited in Agulhon et al., 1997, p. 239]; a “call to people without any mediation” [Badie, cited in Agulhon et al., 1997, p. 227]; the “rejection of any mediation, being judged as useless or unnecessary, limiting or harmful” [Taguieff, 2002, p. 84]), it is nonetheless as controversial as the two previous criteria.

This common base of any type of populism refers to a mythical population: the “illusion of a whole solid population, looking for its mythical roots” (Stora, cited in Agulhon et al., 1997, p.236; see also Taggart, 2004). This draws a line between the (corrupted) elite and the (authentic) people. To Mény and Surel (2000, p. 249), populist parties recall the primacy of the people against the established elite by proclaiming that they are the only “genuinely” representative organizations. For many scholars, populism is often based on black-and-white rhetoric, which opposes “the good, simple people” and “the bad, incompetent elite.” In a convincing corpus-based analysis, Mayaffre (2013) studies the language style of Sarkozy’s (UMP) populist discourse. According to him, the use of the pronouns *on* (one) and *ça* (it) are representative of the populist distinction between an indefinite, vague threat and a vigorous “I,” which creates the ethos of a powerful politician. But this question is more intricate than it seems, because it actually casts doubt on representative democracy. Mény and Surel (2000, p. 305) describe populism as “deeply anti-liberal” because it refuses and rails against any kind of representation. Taguieff (1997, 2002) stands at a midpoint, admitting that this “call to people” is a component of populism but also asserting that this criterion is too broad; it could be an element of every modern party referring to popular sovereignty.



But is this willingness to communicate with people not a sign of democracy, which is supposed to be run for, and with, the citizens (Julliard, 2010)? Should the new forms of participatory democracy be seen as a form of populism? In his review of Mény and Surel's book, Bouillaud (2001, p. 300) asked: "Do not we run a risk seeing populism in every rallying that is not restricted to an elite?" This is actually why Hermet (2001, p. 46) refused to describe populism using this criterion, because "this symbolic appeal to popular sovereignty characterises also democracy."

## **The Media and Populism**

Research in France on the links between media and populism is limited. Two papers were found in the literature, but neither deals with this topic in any depth. Contrary to the situation in some other countries, French media is not considered as being populist or having populist strategies. Media is considered to reflect French political actors' strategies, which have to be analyzed by a systematic discourse analysis (see Charaudeau, 2011; Mayaffre, 2013). Becker asks whether the fondness for opinion polls in the public sphere is a form of populism, "a mix of demagoguery and utopia" (1997, p. 92). The "dictatorship of opinion polls" would lead to a "perversion of the public opinion through populism, through the sanctification of the public opinion" (1997, p. 98). The article contributes to the debate in France on the use of opinion polls in the public sphere. This debate is a never-ending one in France, at least since Pierre Bourdieu's paper, "Public Opinion Does Not Exist" (1979). Scholars as well as politicians and journalists argue about whether polls contribute to democracy or to the mediatization of politics. In this case, the author only adds the word "populism" in a normative sense, without really defining it.

Journalists themselves are providing another perspective on the media but in a non-systematic way. In his analysis of the framings used by the French quality press to describe the FN and its electoral success, Cohen highlighted a tendency to create new concepts, such as a “peri-urban France, at the heart of a new semantic ecosystem: gentrification of the city centers, urban exodus, cultural insecurity, moral panics, working classes, social invisibility, etc. All these concepts refer to what is called ‘populism,’” (2014, p. 42). In this article, Cohen reviewed the concepts of “cultural insecurity” and “moral panics,” which are used by socialist researchers in France (see Bouvet, 2011, 2012) in order to show that the “uprising of populist forces in Europe is disconnected from the increase of the crisis and unemployment” (Cohen, 2014, p. 46). Three additional studies (Birenbaum & Villa, 2003; Ellinas, 2010; Rydgren, 2003) have suggested that the media coverage of Jean-Marie Le Pen as someone newsworthy in a context of both media commercialization and immigration—a new, relevant issue for French politics—helped to popularize the party (Birenbaum & Villa, 2003, p. 55) and, more generally, to put these issues on the political agenda (Ellinas, 2010; Rydgren, 2003).

While there has been little systematic research on the media as populist actors and the media and populism, systematic research on journalists and the FN has been ongoing for a few years, without focusing on the populist strategy (Dezé, 2011, 2012; Le Bohec, 2004a, 2004b 2005; Sourp-Taillardas, 2010a, 2010b). These studies have looked into journalists’ strategies of obtaining sources. Using ethnographical and qualitative interviews, the authors have shown how difficult it is for a journalist to work with a party systematically opposed to journalists (Le Bohec, 2004a, 2004b, 2005) and to respect what Tuchman (1972) called the “rhetoric of objectivity” (Sourp-Taillardas, 2010a). Sourp-Taillardas (2010b) focused in particular on one of the most critical newspapers of the FN, the leftist *Libération*, and its struggle to maintain a foothold among well-established newspapers. These empirical works showed that the FN is under the same game-rule constraints. The strategy of “normalization” implies that the party must be in touch with journalists—an aspect that the party has to work on (Le Bohec, 2004a, 2004b; Dézé, 2012).

## **Citizens and Populism**

Our knowledge of populism is not systematic, and there are only a few studies on the media and campaigning effects in a broad sense (Gerstlé & Piar, 2008; Piar, 2012, 2013). The only recent French text (Lecœur, 2013) on citizens and populism is an essayist’s paper on the manner in which different movements in France since Hollande have reacted to, and engaged in, “populist” arguments (taxation, family, and anti-gay marriage) and racist and homophobic arguments. This article does not help increase the systematic knowledge of our topic of interest (citizens and populism) because a conceptualization of populism is missing.

But for 20 years, the social sciences have been studying the FN (see Mayer & Perrineau, 1996) and have seen it as a far-right, authoritarian, xenophobic, and racist party, based on a strong ideology; the FN is certainly not viewed as populist. So the puzzle is, who are these French people voting for the FN? (Mayer, 2002). The social sciences have produced two kinds of publications. The first type, from a working group of scholars (mainly affiliated with the Center for Political Research at Sciences Po, Paris) is based on a systematic, annual, quantitative database on racism and xenophobia among French citizens. Each year, this research group publishes new studies that are widely used by scholars studying racism (for the more recent studies, see Mayer, Michelat, Tiberj, & Tommaso, 2014; Mayer & Tiberj, 2014). A second group of researchers focuses on the sociology of FN voters and, more generally, of all French voters. Scholars are working along the leftright scale, wondering whether there is any continuity between the conservative and the FN voters. For a long time, FN voters have been considered an independent third group of voters, standing apart from the traditional left and right voters. But the recent elections unsurprisingly showed that FN voters are actually more conservative than voters of the mainstream conservative party (for the recent debates, see Gougou & Labouret, 2013). Other researchers are studying working-class voters and class/religion variables (for a classical work of French political science, written in 1977 and re-analyzed in 2004, see Michelat and Simon). Some articles insist on social and racial issues as explanations for populist party votes, focusing on the FN—not because it is populist per se, but because of the issues it deals with (Agamaliyev, Boya, & Malizard, 2008; Mondon, 2013; Rydgren, 2003), thereby endorsing some of Betz, Brzustowski, and Perrineau's (2004) hypotheses. More recent research is less interested in ideology and class variables; rather, it insists on a socio-geographical variable—for example, voters living in semi-rural suburbs (Gombin, 2013; Lambert, 2013). Interestingly enough, although these studies are systematic and quantitative, they have little to say about populism. In other words, the question of any correlation between FN voters and the influence of populist messages is not answered by these investigations.

## Summary and Recent Developments

In a nutshell, one must underline the difficulty of systematizing the concept of populism and its varieties (Jagers & Walgrave, 2007) in a French context. Even though many researchers might designate the right-wing FN party and, more recently, the conservative party UMP, with the qualifying adjective of *populist*, they tend to make a very clear distinction between the parties' excluding *ideology* (clearly xenophobic and anti-Semitic in the FN's case) and the parties' populist *rhetoric strategy* that they develop in this ideological frame. Research assessing the media generally insists on its role of legitimizing the FN's discourse. When citizens are examined, the emphasis is less on the populist effect on votes than on social reasons for voting for the far right. There are at least two major explanations for these French peculiarities: the debate within the French academia and the history of the French political landscape.

First, contrary to mainstream research conducted on political parties in Europe (Taggart & Szczerbiak, 2008), French research does not separate political parties between radical and mainstream, and between populist and mainstream—in particular, because such distinctions do not reflect the political reality since World War II. For instance, the French Communist Party (PC) cannot be seen as radical over time if we consider its post-WWII prominence and political presence during elections (up to 30%) and in different governments, even though it has become less important since then. For this reason, French political science insists mostly on parties’ “tribune function” (Lavau, 1969, 1981). Parties are expected to represent and pacify the lowest social classes by endorsing their protests and bringing them into the public sphere in their own words, which does not mean that parties immediately will be regarded as “populist”. More generally, going back to Bourdieu’s field theory (1991), French political science mainly considers the way parties are positioning themselves in the national competition from a relational angle (Hubé, 2014; Hubé & Rambour, 2010); parties are collections of individuals, groups, and coalitions with divergent views and interests. Political competition is seen as a symbolic struggle around a set of issues, so that ideology and strategy, which are closely related, cannot be considered as totally independent factors, even to explain the FN’s electoral success (Birenbaum & Villa, 2003; Ellinas, 2010; Mammone, 2009). Therefore, political parties cannot be fully summed up by a simple division between mainstream and radical, or mainstream and populist.

Second—perhaps one of the major French peculiarities—populism is not only linked to right-wing parties but is also mixed up with other similar words or concepts: boulangism, cesarism, poujadism, bonapartism, and every combination of these words (e.g., cesaro-bonapartism) (Julliard, 2010; Mayaffre, 2013; Nicolas, 2005; Taguieff, 1997; Winock, 1997). This intermingling is due to France’s history and the existence of at least three major populist movements: *boulangism* (Garrigues, 1992), *cesaro-bonapartism*, and *poujadism* (Fonvieuille-Alquier, 1984). The first example comes from the end of the nineteenth century (1889–1891), when General Boulanger succeeded in rallying nationalist voters seeking revenge (*revanche*) against Germany and against socialist voters (i.e., the “people” vs. the established parties). Then, more substantially, post-WWII academic discourse on French parties identifies a “bonapartist” or “cesaro-bonapartist” rightwing tradition. This tradition extends from Napoleon to Boulanger to Chirac or Sarkozy and mixes conservatism and direct appeal to the people (e.g., via referendum). The category of “bonapartism,” created by Rémond (2005) has become convenient for journalists and editorialists analyzing right-wing parties, who argue that populism is part of the strategy of right-wing parties. This interpretation might explain the very few studies on “left-wing populist parties.” The third movement was created by Pierre Poujade and is the Union des commerçants et artisans (UDCA). The movement, which is characterized by its opposition to every type of tax, its positions against parliamentary governmental practices, its anti-intellectualism, its xenophobia, and its anti-Semitism, had members elected to the French parliament between 1954 and 1956. At that time, Jean-Marie Le Pen, a leading light of the FN since the 1980s, was a young member of parliament of the Poujade movement (Bouclier, 2006). Thus, in the French public sphere, both journalists and scientists often qualify far-right movements as “poujadist” rather than “populist.”

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