

The Sirens' Song

When right-wing populism deals with “democracy”

The case of the RN in France and FPÖ in Austria

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Right-wing populism

In the literature

- **Anti-democratic**
 - Backes (2004); Carter (2005) ; Khosravini & Mral (2013); Shekhovtsov (2013); Passmore (2016)...
- Not necessarily opposed to democratic institutions but to **values**
 - Betz (2004); Kallis (2013); Camus & Lebourg (2015); Gauthier (2015);

In the political discourses

- presents itself as **defender** of democracy
- Right-wing populism is no longer opposed to democracy in its speeches. On the contrary, it wishes to defend it against the European Union, immigration and Muslim culture
 - Taguieff (2012) ; Mayer (2016); Bowler (2017)...

How and why does right-wing populism mobilize the notion of democracy?

- Study the discourse of the RN in France and the FPÖ in Austria
 - 2 parties traditionally classified as “right-wing populist” (“extreme-right”, “far-right”, “radical-right”, “xenophobic and nationalist right”,...)
 - 2 parties that have “modernized” their speeches (Morreau 2012 ; Pelinka 2013; Perrineau 2015)
 - FPÖ: Heinz-Christian Strache – 2005
 - RN: Marine Le Pen – 2011
 - 2 parties with private and professional ties
 - Europe of Nations and Freedom

How and why does right-wing populism mobilize the notion of democracy?

- Study the discourse of the RN in France and the FPÖ in Austria
 - all ideological productions (press releases, speeches, editorials, press conferences, interventions, proposed legislation,...) of the RN and the FPÖ from their websites between 1 January 2015 and 31 December 2018
 - Approved by party members and publicly validated (Mudde 2000);
 - Study similarities or differences (Pauwels 2011).
 - Website as: essential media (Greffet 2011) / central authority (Cardon 2011) / open window (Dezé 2011)
 - three-step analysis
 - Does the right-wing populism right mobilize the notion of democracy? (lexicometric analysis)
 - How does the right-wing populism define the notion of democracy? (semantic analysis)
 - Why does the right-wing populism mobilize the notion of democracy? (socio-ideological analysis)

RN: lexicometric analysis

- 3,460 documents published on the RN website
- The lemma "Democracy" appears 682 times in 350 documents
 - variation over time: (more used during elections)
 - variation according to the type of document: (more used in documents intended for a wide audience)

	Occ.	Demo. Doc.	Total Doc.	Ratio
Announcement	17	3	36	0,08
Press release	415	260	2622	0,10
Press conf.	18	3	7	0,43
Speech	129	26	42	0,62
Intervention	31	17	425	0,04
Free	69	39	226	0,17

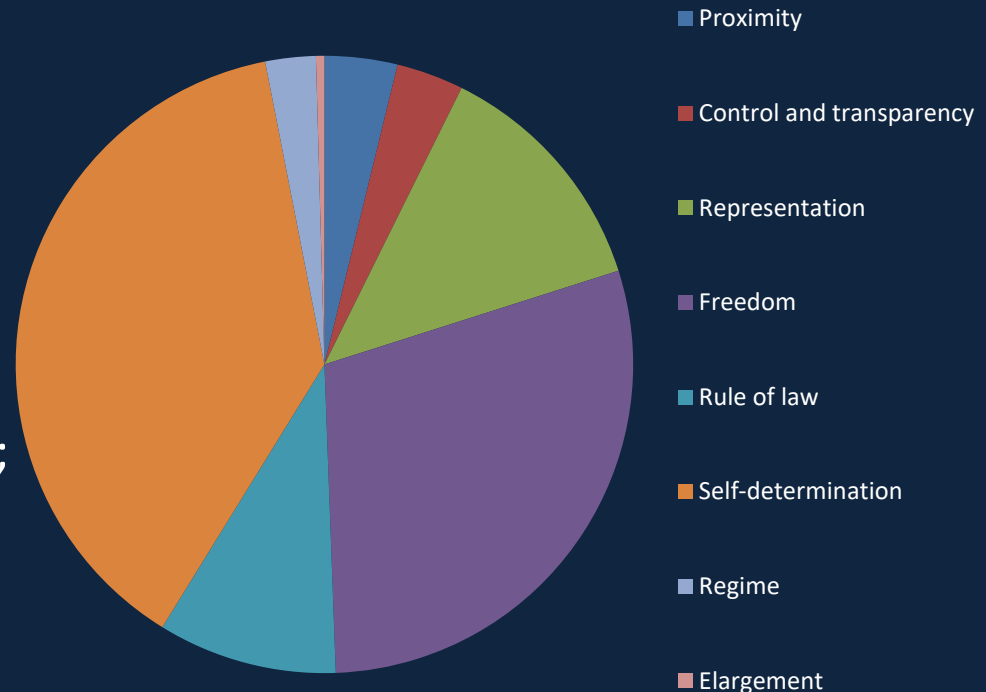
FPÖ: lexicometric analysis

- 2,583 documents published on the FPÖ website
- The lemma "Democracy" appears 569 times in 311 documents
 - variation over time: (more used during elections)
 - Different political communication.

2018											
J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
0,0	0,1	0,1	0,0	0,0	0,1	0,0	0,0	0,0	0,1	0,1	0,1
2	1	0	5	8	2	9	5	7	3	0	1
2017											
0,2	0,1	0,0	0,1	0,1	0,0	0,1	0,1	0,1	0,1	0,1	0,1
1	0	8	2	6	5	3	1	3	0	1	4
2016											
0,1	0,0	0,0	0,1	0,2	0,2	0,2	0,1	0,1	0,0	0,2	0,1
5	4	8	9	6	6	2	1	9	6	2	7
2015											
0,1	0,1	0,0	0,0	0,0	0,1	0,1	0,2	0,1	0,1	0,0	0,0
0	0	6	5	5	4	3	4	3	0	5	8

RN: semantic analysis

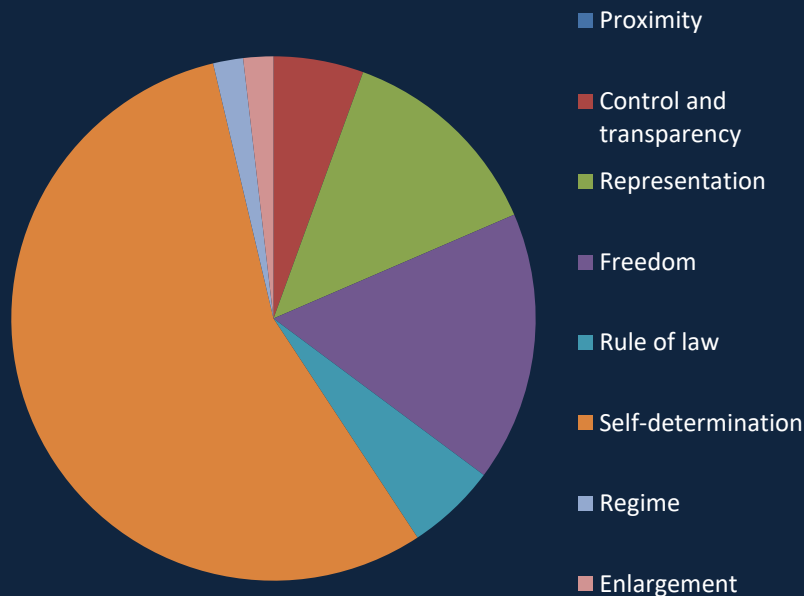
- identified by induction
- 8 frames
 - Proximity (26);
 - Control and transparency (24);
 - Representation and general interest (87);
 - Freedom of expression (200);
 - Rule of law (64);
 - Self-determination and elections (260);
 - Regime (18);
 - Enlargement to large numbers (3).



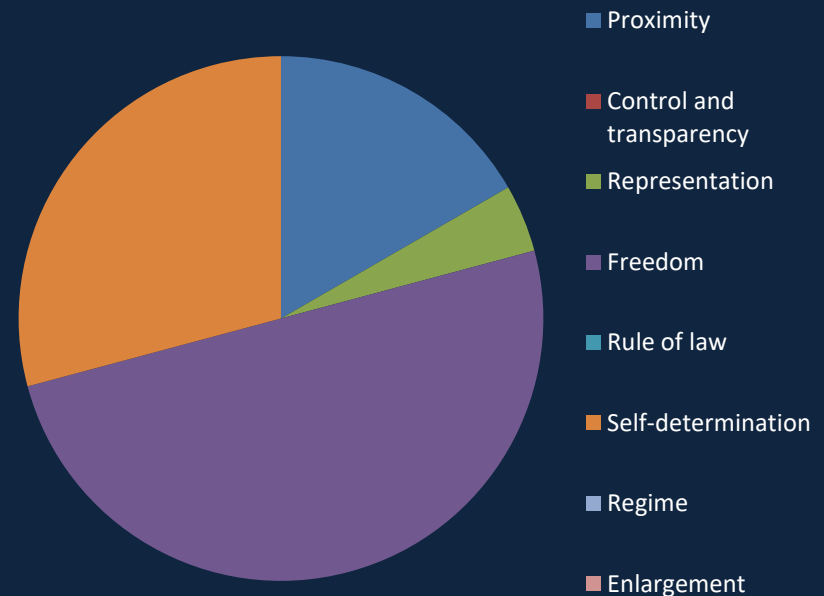
- Quantitative point of view: democracy as
- Representation and general interest
 - Self-determination
 - Freedom of expression

RN: semantic analysis

- Variation by politician



Nicolas Bay (European deputy)



Wallerand de Saint Just (regional deputy)

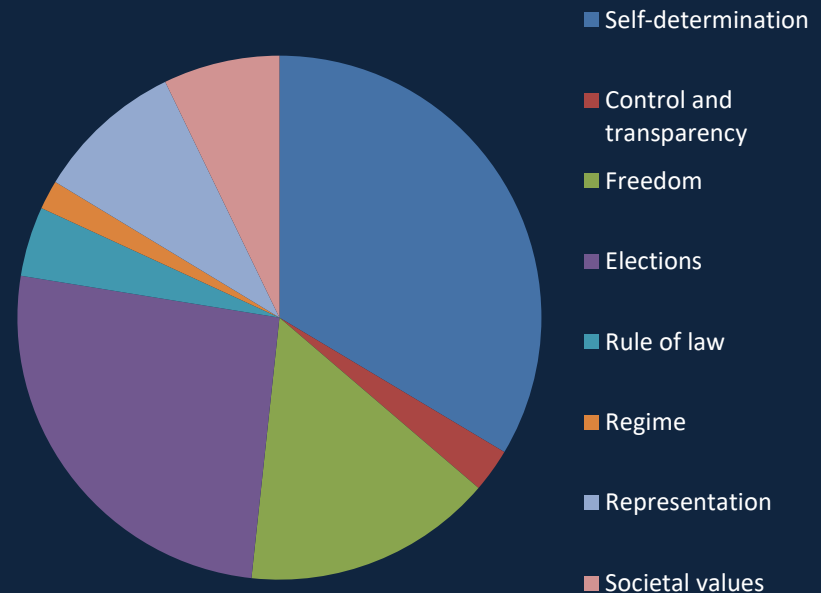
RN: semantic analysis

- Variation by type of document

	Announce ment	Press release	Press conference	Speech	Interventi on	Free
Proximity		19		6		1
C. & transp.		17		4	2	1
Represent.		48		19	7	13
Freedom	7	138	10	23	5	16
Rule of law		46	8	3	4	3
Self- determ.	9	140		68	11	31
Regime		5		7	2	4
Enlarg.	1	2				

FPÖ: semantic analysis

- identified by induction
- 8 frames
 - Self-determination (187);
 - Control and transparency (15);
 - Freedom of expression (86);
 - Elections (144);
 - Rule of law (24);
 - Regime (21);
 - Representation and general interest (51);
 - Societal values (40).

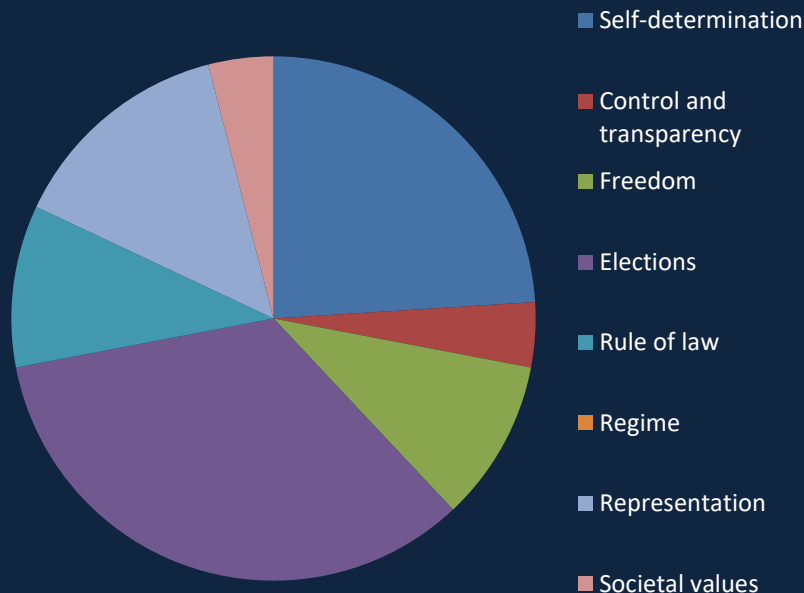


Quantitative point of view: democracy as

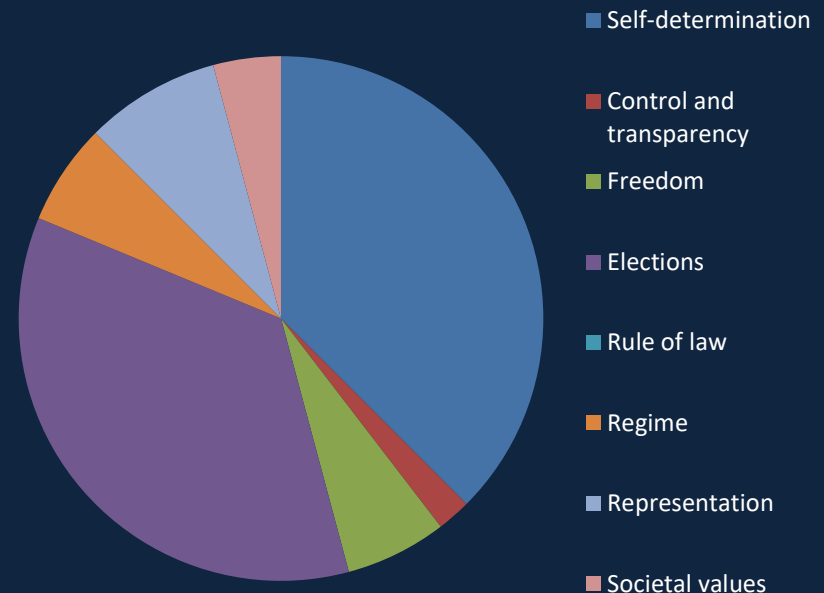
- Self-determination (//direct democracy)
- Freedom of expression
- Elections

FPÖ: semantic analysis

- Variation by politician



Heinz-Christian Strache (party president)



Norbert Hofer (presidential candidate)

RN: socio-ideological analysis

- “Democracy” is systematically mobilized as a tool or as an argument. The objective is to denounce what is not democratic or not democratic enough
- The “democratic argument” aims to identify political opponents, to criticize their agenda and practices.
 - The pathetic political combinations of the former UMP and the PS in an attempt to move our movement away from the regional executives. This reinforces the gap between these so-called elites and the people we defend. It's against democracy (Bay 2015)
 - There will be referendums on a regular basis, and unlike what Mr Fillon did with the European Constitution, their results will be respected, even if they are unpleasant. That's democracy! (...) We must return to democracy; citizens must be the masters of what is happening in their country (Le Pen 2017)
 - You call for a vote against me in two pages of your newspaper. And this without giving me the right of reply. This says a lot about your ethics and your conception of democracy (Le Pen 2015).

RN: socio-ideological analysis

- Tensions between different frames
 - The RN delegation would first of all like to congratulate Ms. May for the consistency of her position and her determination to respect the sovereign decision of the British people. Faced with multiple national and European pressures, the British Prime Minister gave a great lesson of democracy for those who did not want to respect popular sovereignty (Rassemblement national 2017)
 - Independence sentiment is clearly a minority in Catalonia. Democratic forces that respect the Constitution of the Spanish State and its unity are opposed to these separatist and extremist tendencies (...) The Spanish State is a sovereign nation (Aliot 2016).

FPÖ: socio-ideological analysis

- “Democracy” as an argument to denounce the practices of other Austrian political parties but also of the European institutions
- Discourse marked by cleavages
 - A more direct democracy is important so that you can decide for yourself. Whenever politicians take bad decisions, you can speak for yourself. We give you back the voice you give us (Hofer 2017)
 - Anyone who puts the interests of the EU and those of migrants before the interests of his own people is absolutely not appropriate as the supreme organ of the Republic (...) Anyone who does not recognise the will of the people is a danger to democracy (Kickl 2016)
 - No one produces more fake news than the federal government itself and does not want to mislead the population while silencing critical voices by law. A Western democracy cannot and must not function in this way (Strache 2016)

FPÖ: socio-ideological analysis

- FPÖ also mobilises democracy as a societal value that unites the community.
- Enemies: immigrants, Islam
 - We will ensure that asylum seekers return to their countries of origin. Repatriation must also take place if there is no active integration on the part of the migrant. Those who, for religious reasons, do not profess our democratic and social values, have nothing to do in Austria (Rosenkranz 2017)
 - It has been proven that immigrants of Islamic origin are not willing to integrate: the use of violence, forced marriages, honour killings, oppression of women and misunderstanding of democracy. These values are clearly not compatible with our Christian and European values(FPÖ 2017)

Conclusion

- Lexicometric analysis:
 - variations in intensity according to periods and audiences
 - controlled use of the notion of democracy
- Semantic analysis: similar definition of democracy (RN and FPÖ)
 - self-determination, elections, representation and freedom of expression
 - democracy is used strategically according to the contexts of enunciation in order to link the issuer to its audience
 - the RN and the FPÖ adopt a "technical" vision of democracy covering more tools and procedures than values

Conclusion

- Socio-ideological analysis
 - democracy as a three-step argument (democracy is not a project)

Definition	Opposition	Distinction
Representation of democracy through one or more elements (frame)	Opposition between the target and previously mobilized elements	Differentiation between the target and the RN/FPÖ Attachment of the RN/FPÖ to previously mobilized elements

- democracy is not neutral but ideologically charged
 - Populism: the rhetoric is dichotomous. Democracy is the voice of the people and it's opposed to "elites";
 - Identity: the people are define by values (language, traditions, history,...) and against diversity and otherness (immigration, Islam);
 - Nationalism: democracy can only exist within the national framework. It is impossible at European level;
 - Chauvinism / nativism: rights and the redistribution of socio-economic resources are reserved for nationals.
- democracy is mainly imagined in its representative form (direct democracy refers only to the referendum)

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