

#AuNomDuPeuple

The discursive strategy of populist Eurosceptic parties in the 2014 European elections



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1. Introduction

Weeks after the Paris terrorist attacks in November 2015, Marine Le Pen, leader of the then called *Front National*¹ (FN - National Front) tweeted three pictures depicting ISIS executions. As a caption, Le Pen wrote “Daesh is THIS!”, causing significant turmoil in the French public opinion due to the crudity of the material. Three years later, Le Pen was charged for distributing these violent images, and a French court ordered a psychiatric examination to determine whether she represented a “risk to the public” (Baynes, 2018).

This case is just an example of the role social media plays on politics, especially regarding populist Eurosceptic parties. Even though there might be differences among them, and also an inevitable divergence in their classification (see Brack & Startin, 2015; Halikiopoulou & Vasilopoulou, 2014; De Vries & Edwards, 2009; Usherwood & Startin, 2013; Hobolt, 2015), most of them share two essential elements. Firstly, they utilize populism as a tool to address the public and project their understanding of what ‘the people’ should represent (Mondon, 2015). In this sense, populist parties are allowed to “gain ground and offer their electorate a simplistic answer (...)” (ibid., p. 4). Secondly, all of them share, with nuances, a joint opposition towards the European Union (EU) (Brack & Startin, 2015), coupled with national sovereignty or anti-immigration discourses (Usherwood & Startin, 2013).

These parties have witnessed increasing popularity. In the 2014 European Parliament (EP) elections, the FN in France and the United Kingdom Independence Party (UKIP) in the United Kingdom came out first with 24.86% and 26.77% of the votes (Europarl.europa.eu, 2014, 2014c). In Spain, the newcomer *Podemos* (We Can), officially created only two months before election day, took almost 10 percent of Spanish EP seats (Europarl.europa.eu, 2014b). Although overall turnout fell just below 43%, these elections were different, mainly due to a severe economic context (Hobolt, 2015). In this sense, the rise of populist Eurosceptic alternatives was coupled with a generalized dissatisfaction towards both national and European

¹ This party changed its name in March 2018 to *Rassemblement National* (National Rally). For the purposes of this study, this party will be still referred to as *Front National* (FN).

elites, offering these parties an opportunity to politicize the EU's integration and challenge the establishment's agenda.

The advent of new technologies is continually changing the dynamics of political communication, making social media (especially Twitter) a direct linkage between politicians and the public, different from, for instance, TV interviews². Thus, it is generally believed that parties can take advantage of these new channels to spread their messages, and populist Eurosceptic parties are particularly expected to utilize them as a way to expand their support and visibility within the political field.

Given this, further considerations could be raised on how these parties use social media. While some may argue that social media acts only as a complementary platform to maximize the reach of proposals, many scholars have pointed out that these parties use social media to make their discourse even more colloquial, mobilizing and radical. Therefore, the research question to be addressed is: *what is the discursive strategy of populist Eurosceptic parties on Twitter compared to the one on TV interviews?*

Addressing this question is relevant because of two main reasons. Firstly, as Bossetta (2017, p. 718) suggested, the analysis of discursive strategies can “reveal patterns of communication that help explain populists' success”, therefore contributing to a better understanding of the rise of populist Euroscepticism (Ernst et al., 2019). Secondly, and most relevant when it comes to European elections, it originally contributes to the understanding of the ways used to engage citizens in the politicization of European issues. Hence, this study focused on the discourse of Nigel Farage (UKIP), Marine Le Pen (FN) and Pablo Iglesias (Podemos) during the 2014 EP elections. The analysis of specific cases can enhance studies on Euroscepticism by acknowledging the discursive strategies of parties that dispute the legitimacy of the EU or, even further, that challenge its existence.

² For instance, Le Pen viralized her campaign motto through the hashtag #AuNomDuPeople (meaning “On behalf of the people”) during the 2017 French presidential elections.

2. Literature review

2.1 *The notion of populist Eurosceptic parties*

Scholars have widely assessed certain central aspects of populist parties in Europe. According to Albertazzi & McDonnell (2008, p. 3), these parties intend to portray the *people* on one side, versus the elites on the other side, “who are (...) depicted as depriving (or attempting to deprive) the sovereign people of their rights, values, prosperity, identity and voice”. As Ernst et al. (2019, p. 2) have suggested, the central idea of populism is that the people “have been betrayed by the elites in charge who are abusing their positions of power, and it demands that the sovereignty of the people must be restored”. Following this idea, Engesser et al. (2017), based on Mudde (2004), identify populism as a low-elaborate, flexible ideology, which allows leaders to mold it and enhance it with further substantive ideologies. Nonetheless, Mondon (2015, p. 4) suggests that populism is, in the end, more of a set of tools rather than an ideology, through which the idea of *people* is advocated, regardless “whatever ideology the populist is faithful to”.

This last assertion seems to fit those populist parties that also hold Eurosceptic stances, as they can be placed on both sides of the left-right ideological spectrum. While they all tend to depict a “principled opposition to the EU and European integration” or some “concerns on one (or a number) of policy areas” (Szczerbiak & Taggart, 2003, pp. 2-3), some of them show a strong opposition to immigration and multiculturalism, while others criticize economic liberalization (Bartlett, 2014; Gómez-Reino Cachafeiro & Plaza-Colodro, 2018)³.

The rationale behind the populist Eurosceptic parties has been further developed by Pirro et al. (2018, p. 379), who suggest that while they “mobilize on the basis of real or perceived crises and elite failure, the events in the past decade also lend credence to the various Eurosceptic arguments voiced by populist actors on the socioeconomic left as well as the culturally conservative right”. Similarly, Gómez-Reino Cachafeiro & Plaza-Colodro (2018, p. 345) highlight the following:

³ It must be noticed that it is possible to find parties that equally embody both aspects.

The new political space for right and left-populist Eurosceptic parties is inextricably linked to the erosion of the representative function of mainstream parties. The loss of legitimacy of national governments and European institutions has opened a window of opportunity for parties expressing anti-establishment positions and populist orientations (...).

This reality has made party classification a complex matter. For instance, according to the one proposed by Usherwood & Startin (2013), while UKIP would fall into the *single-issue pro-sovereignty parties* category (as it is opposed to the EU per se), the FN would be considered a *radical right party*, due to its hostility towards the EU in a broader anti-immigration and anti-globalization platform. Podemos is categorized as a *left-wing populist party* since it negatively links the EU with a neoliberal capitalist agenda.

Despite some debatable classification differences, these parties are inherently Eurosceptic, both in their discourse and ideology⁴. Indeed, the discursive dimension is not secondary. As populist parties, their discourse plays a central role in influencing public opinion by mobilizing their priorities and, therefore, actively playing in the politicization of the EU (De Vries & Edwards, 2009; Hernández & Kriesi, 2016; Reungoat, 2015). Hence, their success in the 2014 European elections arouses questions on how these parties project their rhetoric.

2.2 *The nature of populist political communication*

Academics have suggested that populist political communication is twofold, as it combines both *form* and *content* (Ernst et al., 2019, p. 2), therefore *what is being said* is equally important as *how it is being said* (Bracciale & Martella, 2017, p. 1313). With regards to the *content*, Ernst et al. (2019) have identified three main dimensions, each of them composed of several key messages. While the *anti-elitism* dimension comprises those messages which discredit and blame the elites, the *people-centrism* dimension includes a homogeneous idea of ‘the people’ and messages that stress closeness to them. Under the *restoring sovereignty* dimension, it is possible to find messages both denying elite sovereignty and demanding popular sovereignty.

⁴ However, as acknowledged by Verney (2011, p. 4), Euroscepticism is not homogeneous, but instead “covers a broad range of positions in which opposition can concern the whole concept of European integration or be confined variously to its current form, to particular present aspects or policies, and/or to future deepening, either in general or with regard to specific competences”.

Regarding the *style* of populist communication, these authors (ibid., p. 4) have also identified three dimensions. The *negativity* dimension is based on two stylistic devices: negativism (negative tone) and crisis rhetoric (e.g., exaggerations and scandal-related expressions). *Emotionality* comprises an emotional tone (i.e., feelings), absolutism (absence of nuances and a ‘good vs. bad’ logic), and patriotism (comments about a superior fatherland). Lastly, *sociability* covers colloquial devices (simplistic language or vulgarity) and intimization (references to the leader’s personal life). Similarly, some scholars have highlighted that populist discourse is simplistic (Bossetta, 2017), as it employs “slogan-based, tabloid-style language” (Bracciale & Martella, 2017, p. 1313), coupled with bad manners and “colloquial parlance” (Bossetta, 2017, p. 720)⁵.

Both style and content make these parties’ communication distinctive when compared to mainstream non-populist parties. The latter, according to Moffit (2016), will tend to adopt a discourse based on ‘good manners’, that is, expertise, facts, and low confrontation, as well as rhetoric based on stability rather than on crisis. As Jacobs & Spierings (2018) suggested, these differences become especially evident on Twitter. Research focused on Twitter carried out by Waisbord & Amado (2017), Bracciale & Martella (2017) and Ernst et al. (2019) does not only demonstrate that populist Eurosceptic parties are more active on Twitter than mainstream parties, but also that they are “far more likely than non-populists” to employ an antagonistic discourse (Waisbord & Amado, 2017, p. 1338), and that the tone and content of non-populist politicians is “markedly different (...) [with] no biting or ironic comments” (ibid., p. 1339). In other words, “populist parties use more populist key messages and style elements (...) than do members of non-populist parties”, as stated by Ernst et al. (2019b, p. 179).

2.3 The importance of Twitter and the 2014 European elections

Particular academics have focused on traditional national media and its role in populist discourse (see Albertazzi and McDonnell, 2008). While some have argued that media in some countries tends to be more nationalistic and thus support populist discourse (Usherwood and

⁵ Moreover, authors like Krämer (2017), have identified radical and violent elements in populist communication, mainly when it entails the exploitation of fear or confrontation, scandalizing messages, or even an antagonistic discourse that includes messages that harshly “annoy, question, criticize, bully, denounce, threaten or refute any person, media and institution” (Waisbord & Amado, 2017, p. 1334). Similarly, Bossetta (2017) considers *denigration* a common element at the core of these parties’ discourses.

Startin, 2013), others claim that excessive media coverage legitimates and normalizes populist rhetoric (Mondon, 2015). Despite these assumptions, as suggested by Johnson & Goldwasser (2016, p. 66), “the popularity of traditional media outlets such as television and printed press has decreased, causing politicians to turn their attention to social media outlets”.

Among multiple social media platforms, Twitter appears as one of the most suitable *micro-blogging* outlets for political activity (id.). As stated by Trilling (2015), Twitter simultaneously serves two purposes regarding political communication. Firstly, it constitutes a “tool for persuasion and mobilization” (ibid., p. 260) to reach possible voters. Secondly, it is also a discursive tool, where politicians can project their discourse according to their communication strategies.

The importance of Twitter becomes evident when compared to traditional media. Unlike TV interviews or print media, Twitter “allows for unmediated communication” with the absence of “journalists [who] ignore or filter, edit and frame content” (Jacobs & Spierings, 2018, p. 3). As a result, Twitter holds a different agenda where events are not portrayed in an analogous fashion, but rather through multiple interpretations and alternative information (Maireder & Ausserhofer, 2012). Also, the speed and virality of *tweets* imply that messages can circulate faster and even transform traditional media’s agenda⁶ (Bracciale & Martella, 2017; Jacobs & Spierings, 2018; Ott, 2017). According to Lee (2013), Twitter ensures populist politicians the prevalence of ‘personality-driven’ campaigns, something which is hardly achievable on other platforms⁷.

This platform acquired major importance during elections, as debates and discussions are enriched by online activity (Ernst et al., 2019). During the 2014 EP elections, Twitter was a tool of utter importance for two main reasons. Firstly, given the sovereign debt crisis and the unstable political scenario in Europe, Twitter served to reflect widespread concerns and to express political engagement (Gómez-Reino Cachafeiro & Plaza-Colodro, 2018; Kreis, 2017). Secondly, Twitter became a fertile ground for the politicization of European issues that were initially not a priority for mainstream media. Thus, populist leaders used Twitter to match

⁶ A clear example of this dynamic is the reaction of American media over the tweets of Donald Trump.

⁷ Twitter also differentiates from other social media outlets, as it has become “the ‘real-time’ of the digital media landscape” and has created immediate, innovative communication practices (Kreis, 2017, p. 499). While on Facebook messages cannot be viewed by everyone, and interaction is more restricted, Twitter appears as an open platform where political discourse can flow faster (Trilling, 2015).

prevalent concerns during a period of political and economic turmoil, and many scholars have suggested that this logic ultimately led to a diversification of their discursive strategy.

2.4 The Hybrid communication strategy theory

Some have suggested that Twitter is an ideal platform for populist politicians because it offers an alternative to the ‘elite-controlled’ mainstream media (see Bartlett, 2014; Bracciale & Martella, 2017; Ernst et al., 2019; Jacobs & Spierings, 2018; Krämer, 2017). Bartlett (2014) has argued that populists would feel less constrained since these new platforms create the so-called *echo chambers*, like-minded bubbles that confirm existing views and beliefs⁸ (Jungherr, 2014; Engesser et al., 2017). Similarly, Jacobs & Spierings (2018, p. 6) suggested that these bubbles allow messages “‘from ‘real people’ (people-centrism) who are ignored by the ‘traditional media’ (anti-elitism) to be spread and heard’”⁹. Consequently, regarding populist discourse, Engesser et al. (2017, p. 1110) argue that:

While the mass media adhere to professional norms and news values, social media serve as a direct linkage to the people and allow the populists to circumvent the journalistic gatekeepers. In this way, social media provide the populists with the freedom to uncontestedly articulate their ideology and spread their messages.

According to what these authors recognize as a *hybrid communication strategy*, while populists address the general public complying with the logic and codes of mainstream media, they might lean to social media “‘in order to circumvent the media institutions (...) in this way, the populist messages do not have to follow the news and values and are frequently more personal and sensationalistic in nature’” (Engesser et al., 2017, p. 1113).

Multiple scholars have complemented this theory. For instance, Jacobs & Spierings (2018, p. 1) stated that Twitter could “‘allow populists to bypass journalists and spread their ‘raw message’ in an undiluted way among the people’”. This notion would suggest that in order to

⁸ These assumptions are part of a broader theory in the communication field known as *selective exposure*, meaning the tendency of people to “‘expose themselves to information in accordance with opinions already held by them’” (Jungherr, 2014, p. 7).

⁹ According to Nilsson and Carlsson (2013, p. 656), social media turns into an attractive platform for populist politicians as people are “‘no longer ‘passive’ consumers of traditional media’”. Since citizens are increasingly active on Twitter, they turn out to be not just mere spectators but also “‘political subjects’” (id.).

directly appeal to voters, populist discourse on Twitter would be more radical, simplistic, and violent. Similarly, Krämer (2017, p. 1303) has highlighted that this strategy to circumvent the traditional media could ensure the “unfiltered dissemination” of populist messages. Moreover, Ernst et al. (2019b, pp. 170-171) have argued that the absence of journalistic interference on Twitter (unlike TV and printed media, which are considered as “distorted and unfair” by populists) allows an “aggressive, uncivil tone (...) without having to worry about criticism or social control”¹⁰.

Although the hybrid communication strategy theory puts forward its assumptions as a generalizable reality, specific cases must be analyzed in order to demonstrate whether these parties have a different discourse on Twitter. Before doing so, this study will briefly explore previous studies on the populist discourse on social media and TV.

2.5 Previous studies

Although research in this field is still not fully developed since digital technologies are a recent phenomenon, several studies have been carried out. These can be grouped into two categories according to the methodology adopted.

On the one hand, studies on social media based on a quantitative approach were developed for both the 2014 EP elections (Nulty et al., 2016) and the 2016 United States presidential election (Groshek and Koc-Michalska, 2017). Regarding the former, some aspects must be highlighted. This study has contributed to the understanding of Twitter as an essential platform for political debate. In order to analyze its usage during the 2014 EP elections campaign, the authors scrutinized virtually every party and leader competing, and the massive traffic of *tweets* from May 3rd to June 1st, 2014. Furthermore, they included some tools (such as the *Linguistic Inquiry and Word Count* dictionary - LIWC) to analyze different sentiments and tones present in the campaign. Some of the authors’ conclusions could partially confirm assumptions

¹⁰ Despite the broad consensus around this theory, some rival explanations are also present in the field’s literature. As introduced by Krämer (2017), Groshek & Engelbert (2012) have suggested that some populist leaders (especially those on the far-right) use online platforms for a ‘double differentiation’, first from the political elite, but also to avoid being considered ‘extremists’ or ‘racists’. In this way, rather than a discourse oversimplification and radicalization on Twitter, this notion suggests that populists could carefully control and articulate their discourse to become “more socially acceptable” (Krämer, 2017, p. 1300).

previously exposed, such as the fact that Twitter was a differential tool for populist Eurosceptic parties. Despite this, the study's approach might be somewhat problematic regarding the objectives of this thesis. Even when a quantitative methodology based on *big data* and statistical analysis can offer a general trend, it fails to focus on specific cases and contexts. As a result, it does not allow an in-depth analysis of the populist leaders' messages on Twitter since the scope is excessively broad to trace them.

On the other hand, some academics have applied alternative approaches. For instance, Engesser et al. (2017, p. 1110) acknowledged that the quantitative approach "bears inherent problems, such as a potential lack of contextualization or overestimation of accuracy". Hence, these authors developed a qualitative methodology to analyze how populism manifests in social media through what they call a *small data* approach. The study was based on a text analysis of Facebook and Twitter posts from leaders and other relevant figures of four European populist parties (from Austria, Italy, Switzerland, and the UK)¹¹. Despite this advance, this research might be flawed as well. As the authors assume that populist discourse on social media is more personal and sensationalistic, they avoid analyzing this discourse on mainstream media (i.e., on TV) in order to contrast the results and prove to what extent there is a hybrid communication strategy.

Since populist discourse is, by definition, inherently simplistic, radical, and defiant, it would be an error to directly assume that there is a hybrid strategy without studying specific cases. The problem with previous studies is that they tend to only analyze social media discourse, without going further and actually comparing it with the traditional media discourse¹². Therefore, this thesis applied a research design that allowed a contrast between the discourse

¹¹ One of the most remarkable contributions of this research was the development of five key elements of populist discourse as a tool for measurement and analysis: "populist communication manifests itself by emphasizing the sovereignty to the people, advocating for the people, attacking elites, ostracizing others, and invoking the heartland" (Engesser et al., p. 1111).

¹² Recently, a new study developed by Ernst et al. (2019b) (released in April 2019) analyzed style and content of statements of populist and non-populist politicians on Facebook, Twitter, political talk shows and newspapers. Even though some of the conclusions of this study might be of significant relevance, its design and approach are still problematic regarding this thesis' purposes. Firstly, the authors include politicians from the United States and Switzerland, which is relevant for the study of Western politics but incorporates different political cultures and conceptions of politics, therefore not focusing on the politicization of European integration and populist Euroscepticism. Secondly, this study adopts a quantitative approach, which does not allow further in-depth discourse analysis. Thirdly, while this research measures statements said in political talk shows, it does not consider TV interviews as the ultimate mainstream 'elite-controlled' scenario where journalists determine questions and rules. Lastly, it does not analyze these statements during a specific election period.

of populist Eurosceptic party leaders (Le Pen, Farage, and Iglesias) on Twitter and TV interviews¹³, in order to understand to what extent this theory applies for specific cases.

¹³ TV interviews are often considered as one of the scenarios with the highest level of journalistic intervention since 'journalistic gatekeepers' determine norms, rules, and questions.

3. Research Design and Methodology

3.1 Political discourse analysis

This study conducted a qualitative political discourse analysis to test the hybrid communication strategy theory for the cases of Marine Le Pen (FN), Nigel Farage (UKIP) and Pablo Iglesias (Podemos). According to Chilton (2004, p. 14), discourse can be understood as the use of language, suggesting that “political actors recognize the role of language because its use has effects (...)”. Therefore, the main goal of discourse analysis is to understand “how the story is told, what identities, activities, relationships and shared meaning are created through language” (Starks and Brown Trinidad, 2007, p. 1373).

This research followed ten steps proposed by Schneider (2013), as they contribute to conducting a discourse analysis in an organized fashion. Specific steps need to be highlighted. Firstly, the need to identify *coding categories*, based on the key themes or strands of the discourse that will be analyzed. Here, Schneider (id.) suggests outlining these categories theoretically based on previous literature review. This thesis opted to define the three content dimensions of populist communication as its coding categories (anti-elitism, people-centrism, and restoring sovereignty) (Ernst et al., 2019).

Secondly, Schneider highlights the importance of identifying linguistic mechanisms by exploring *grammar features* and *word groups*, *rhetorical and literary figures* (such as metaphors), *modalities* (e.g., a sentiment of urgency), and *evidentialities* (expressions such as “of course” or “obviously”). These elements certainly helped to determine the tone of the discourse of these leaders, complementing the negativity, emotionality, and sociability stylistic dimensions exposed by Ernst et al. (2019). As a complementary tool, this study utilized the Linguistic Inquiry and Word Count (LIWC) suggested by Nulty et al. (2016), which gives inputs regarding emotional tone and language styles (liwc.wpengine.com, 2018).

Comparing political discourse on Twitter and TV interviews might present certain limitations, as some could argue that since Twitter is not based on spoken language, its format conditions its messages (Bracciale & Martella, 2017). However, as noted by Kreis (2017, p. 503), even though voice quality and intonation are missing in the Twitter universe, these “paralinguistic

features may be represented typographically via letter repetition, capitalization, or emoticons/emojis”, and even pictures or cartoons.

3.2 Case selection

Case selection usually depends on the research objectives. As Starks and Brown Trinidad (2007, p. 1375) suggested, “it is possible to use a single person’s narrative and compare it with written documents; alternatively, larger sample sizes might be required to understand variations in language-in-use across persons and settings”. This research has selected the leaders of FN, UKIP, and Podemos due to three main reasons. First, as previously mentioned, these parties have diverse priorities and ideologies. This diversity could enrich the analysis and the search for cross-national patterns regarding the political discourse logic, even among countries with different political cultures and systems such as France (semi-presidential system), Spain and the UK (parliamentary system) (Ernst et al., 2019b). Secondly, these cases represent surprising victories and successful electoral outcomes in the 2014 EP elections. This fact makes discourse analysis a compelling endeavor, as it gives the chance to frame it under the EU politicization process. Lastly, having three cases constitutes a consistent sample selection which enables both an in-depth analysis and the identification of some generalizable patterns relevant to the field. Both benefits are not achievable when adopting a single-case design or a large-n quantitative approach.

Although this study could have also included leaders from, for instance, *Fidesz* (Hungary), the *Patriotic Front* (Bulgaria) and *National Alliance* (Latvia) as compelling examples of populist Eurosceptic discourse, by 2014 these parties were governing parties or part of governing coalitions. This aspect is not secondary, as Twitter mainly serves as an empowerment tool for “those who are not in power” (Trilling, 2015). In this sense, while the FN, UKIP, and Podemos were opposition parties that challenged the elites and held a ‘protest attitude’ (Ernst. et al., 2019b), government parties usually attempt to be much more moderate in their discourse (Verney, 2011). As populist Eurosceptic parties are “likely to modify their stance when mutating into parties on power” (ibíd., p. 6), for this thesis opposition parties remained more suitable¹⁴.

¹⁴ The researcher’s language proficiency is a determinant factor when it comes to discourse analysis, as already acknowledged by Kreis (2017). This factor turned Le Pen, Farage and Iglesias into viable cases for this study, and

3.3 Selection of tweets and TV interviews

This study selected tweets from Le Pen, Farage, and Iglesias from the last four weeks of the election campaign and the week following the voting (from April 24th to July 1st, 2014).^{15 16}

This study collected tweets that include statements from these politicians¹⁷, excluding those thematically not relevant, as suggested by Kreis (2017). It is important to note that this research collected tweets only from party leaders' Twitter accounts, and not from the parties' institutional accounts. This choice is mainly based on the assumption that, since populist parties tend to perform under a highly personalistic logic (Reungoat, 2015; Johnson & Goldwasser, 2016), the views and speeches of its leaders represent the interests of their parties.

Regarding TV interviews, some relevant extracts of exclusive interviews of these party leaders during the same period were collected. This research attempted to include a balanced selection of interviews to avoid ideological biases. However, this was conditioned by the availability of online material. As previously exposed, TV interviews were selected as a source since most authors identify them as the most typical scenarios of the “elite-controlled” mainstream media.^{18 19}

3.4 Procedure

The discourse analysis proceeded as follows. Firstly, for each leader, both tweets and TV interview fragments were categorized into the three coding categories defined by the theory. Secondly, those tweets and fragments which addressed the same specific issues were analyzed

excluded other compelling cases such as Beppe Grillo (Five Star Movement - Italy), Alexis Tsipras (Syriza - Greece) and Geert Wilders (PVV - the Netherlands).

¹⁵ These tweets were selected via Twitter's *Advanced Search* option.

¹⁶ This period is similar to the one suggested by Nulty et al. (2016) since it was the most active period on Twitter during the elections.

¹⁷ It is important to note that this study did not take into account candidates' *retweets* of other accounts, as the main purpose is to compare their discourse on Twitter and TV interviews. Despite this, *response tweets* from the leaders to other accounts could have been considered if they did provide useful information under the aims of this research.

¹⁸ This study excluded both TV political talk shows and election debates, as it considered that the involvement of several political commentators and politicians from different political parties might change the dynamics of the discourse of these leaders, whereas exclusive TV interviews provide time and space for the expression of political stances without real-time competition or discussion.

¹⁹ Both the tweets and TV fragments were translated into English. The original language versions are available in the Annex and also on request.

regarding the language employed, the style and linguistic mechanisms adopted, and other tools used by these leaders. Lastly, both discourses were contrasted to reveal the applicability of the hybrid communication strategy theory for each of the three politicians analyzed.

Although this research only focused on TV interviews and analyzed the frequency of appearances as an indicator of the leader's exposure to traditional media, this thesis also included a brief analysis of the number of mentions of each politician in national newspapers. By using the *Factiva International Newspapers* tool provided by Leiden University, this research attempted to provide a richer analysis regarding the relationship between these leaders and traditional media during the EP elections campaign. The data that came out of this analysis actively contributed to the overall goals of this research.

Finally, as a way to fully comprehend the communication strategy of these leaders, this research attempted to contact the press secretaries of Podemos, UKIP and the Front National in order to understand the strategies carried out in the run-up to the EP elections. However, by the time this thesis was written, the inquiries made were not replied²⁰.

After having clarified these methodological considerations, it is essential to note that this study aims to contribute to the field of political communication and that its purpose is to shed some light on the use of social media by populist Eurosceptic parties. If the hybrid communication strategy theory turns to be applicable for these specific cases, this would mean not only a sign of the complexity of the political discourse per se but also evidence of a multi-layered discourse strategy used by these leaders.

²⁰ This information was hardly attainable since the Front National changed its name and part of its structure in 2018 to become the *Rassemblement National* (National Rally), while Farage abandoned UKIP and created the Brexit Party in early 2019 to run in the EP elections held the same year.

4. Chapter I: Nigel Farage

Nigel Farage is considered to be a “populist challenger”, often portrayed as a “politically incorrect politician” (Bossetta, 2017, p. 720). From its beginnings in the mid-90s, UKIP turned into a significant player with the help of a populist Eurosceptic narrative “framing national political parties, multinational corporations, and EU politicians as corrupt elites stripping the national sovereignty from the British people” (ibid., p. 722). During the 2014 EP elections, Farage (@Nigel_Farage) used both tweets and TV interviews to project this rhetoric.

Interestingly, Farage received a considerable amount of attention from the traditional media. Although his party was depicted as opposed to the elite-run media, during the period analyzed, Farage had several interviews on a variety of TV channels, both private and public-owned. Among the eight interviews scrutinized, apart from those on *Channel 4*, *Channel 5* and *Euronews* (UK), one can find at least four performed on the nationwide public-owned *BBC One*. Besides, Farage was mentioned 850 times on headlines and lead-paragraphs of printed media articles in the UK, mainly on *The Telegraph*, *The Times* and *The Guardian*²¹. Hence, regardless of Farage’s communication strategy, it is possible to confirm that he enjoyed generous coverage by traditional media.

According to the quantitative data provided by the LIWC, Farage depicted a stronger hierarchical leadership on TV (76.3 percent) than on Twitter (59.4 percent)²², which suggests that on the latter he portrayed himself closer to the public. Moreover, this tool suggested that Farage showed himself in a more ‘personal and authentic manner’ on his tweets (32.7 percent) than on TV (18 percent)²³. However, given that this data remains insufficient to determine the applicability of the hybrid communication strategy, qualitative discourse analysis was carried out to reveal the particularities of Farage’s discourse.

²¹ According to the Factiva International Newspapers tool.

²² On the LIWC *Clout* scale, which goes from 0 to 100 percent, the highest the score, the strongest the leadership exhibited in the discourse.

²³ In the LIWC's *Authenticity* scale, which goes from 0 to 100 percent, the higher the score, the more personal and authentic the discourse is portrayed.

4.1 Anti-elitism

I. Twitter

Farage's anti-elitist discourse was based on blaming the then Prime Minister David Cameron and the mainstream parties as responsible for adverse developments in the UK. Regarding Cameron, on 24 April 2014, Farage tweeted the following:



There are two things in life I can't bear. David Cameron and unpolished shoes.

This message has two main underpinnings. Firstly, the use of humor as a way of socialization with the public is an indicator of a colloquial discourse (Ernst et al., 2019). Thus, the fact that there is a direct link between a political opponent (David Cameron) and ordinary objects (i.e., unpolished shoes) makes Farage's discourse less focused on a policy-level debate and more based on antagonism and criticism of Cameron as a person and not a politician²⁴. Secondly, this 'spontaneous' picture (where Farage is laughing and holding a shoe polish can) strengthens the informal character of his message, moving away from the political debate.

²⁴ This also fits the concept of *denigration* developed by Bossetta (2017), as there is an attack on a political opponent based on his or her character.

Throughout this period, Farage has also employed defiant rhetoric. On 2 May 2014, he tweeted the following:

If Cameron thinks I'm a chicken then **no doubt** he will challenge me to a TV debate and **see if I refuse**.

The combination of absolutism (*no doubt*) and defiance (*see if I refuse*) strengthens the colloquial parlance of Farage's discourse, making it more similar to the one of a regular citizen rather than one of a politician. Similarly, on 8 May 2014, he tweeted:

Another **major slap in the face** for the Prime Minister - Cameron's renegotiation is **clearly futile**
<http://uki.pt/7g8BfK>.

Besides informal expressions such as a *major slap in the face*, using *futile* as a way to suggest that Cameron's efforts were fruitless, bolsters the negativity dimension of this leader's discourse (Ernst et al., 2019). The fact that Farage considers them to be *clearly futile* suggests that these aspects of Cameron's performance were easy to see by the rest²⁵.

This leader also added an emotional tone to his tweets by employing emotive language. One of the best examples is a tweet from 11 May 2014:

Going on Sunday Politics with Andrew Neil to expose **how Cameron has let Britain down** and Miliband has nothing to say.

Instead of arguing a failure of Cameron's policies regarding specific areas of his administration, the leader of UKIP used an emotional expression to suggest that the whole country was disappointed with the Prime Minister. It is also interesting to note how Farage refers to the UK as *Britain*, a more colloquial concept that moves away from official government language²⁶.

Blaming the government and the political establishment over immigration management was a central aspect of Farage's Twitter activity. As stated on 14 May 2014:

²⁵ According to the Cambridge Dictionary, the adverb *clearly* alludes to something "easy to see, hear, read, or understand" or used to "show that you think something is obvious or certain".

²⁶ According to the Style Guide issued by the UK Government, *UK* and *United Kingdom* must be used in preference to *Britain* and *British* (Gov.uk, 2019).

Huge increase of 292,000 foreign workers in past year demonstrates that the Coalition immigration policy has been an **abject failure**.

168,000 more EU workers in past year. 115,000 of the increase came from “A8 countries”, including Poland <http://uki.pt/zYYKAf>.

Identifying the government’s immigration policy as an *abject failure*, and linking said failure with a *huge* increase in the number of foreign workers, reveals his crisis rhetoric. Both *abject* and *huge* adjectives serve here as elements for exaggeration, portraying a situation of emergency and scandal (Ernst et al., 2019; Krämer, 2017). As a sign of his message oversimplification, Farage did not evaluate the immigration policy per se nor did consider its potential implications, but merely argued that an increase in the number of foreign workers was a government’s failure.

One of the most controversial moments of his campaign was when this leader tweeted about Romanian immigrants coming to the UK:

Read why I stand by my assertion that **people have a right to be concerned if a group of Romanians move in next door** <http://uki.pt/ytuiLC> (17 May 2014)

Two elements must be highlighted here. Firstly, the fact that Farage referred to *the people* as a homogeneous group, who had *a right to be concerned* about Romanian migrants²⁷. Here, the word *right* is not coincidental, but it is an attempt to legitimize a potential feeling of unease from the public towards Romanian nationals. Secondly, he also expressed those concerns in a colloquial and pejorative manner: instead of using terms such as ‘Romanian citizens’ or ‘Romanian workers’, he referred to them as *a group of Romanians*. Furthermore, by saying *next door*, Farage suggested to the public that those migrants could be anyone’s neighbors, in order to make the uneasiness and crisis sentiments prevail in his discourse.

²⁷ This tweet indeed links to what Engesser et al. (2017) recognize as the ‘ostracizing the dangerous others’ aspect of populist communication.

II. TV interviews

On TV, Farage focused his criticism on specific policies instead of employing emotional rhetoric or personal attacks. During an interview on Channel 4, for instance, regarding the promise of a referendum on the UK's EU membership, Farage declared the following:

Mr. Cameron's conversion to a more **Eurosceptic agenda** would not have happened had it not been with the strength of UKIP (1 June 2014).

Here, Farage abandoned the emotional and colloquial tones of his tweets and referred to the Prime Minister as *Mr. Cameron*. Also, the *Eurosceptic agenda* concept denotes a more professional language pertinent from the world of political journalism. Similarly, in an interview with BBC One, Farage focused his criticism of the Conservative party on budget policy:

We are borrowing a **hundred billion pounds more** a year than we are earning, so, I don't think criticism from them is particularly good (1 June 2014)

Again, this leader lost his satirical tone and adopted a more moderate and policy-based criticism. Instead of merely describing Cameron's policies as *futile*, Farage attempted to discredit the attacks from the Conservative party using facts (i.e., the budget deficit) and a less confrontational style.

Regarding the issue of Romanian migrants, Farage changed three main aspects of his discourse. First, by emphasizing that his party was the only one bringing these issues to the political debate. As stated on Channel 4:

The **political establishment** do not even want these issues discussed (...) even discussing sensible immigration controls was said to be particularly, by New Labour, **racist**, and we have not been frightened to talk about these issues, but **to do it in a way where we are not against anybody, we're not prejudiced against anybody** (23 April 2014).

Interestingly, Farage softened his discourse by affirming that UKIP was *not against anybody* nor *prejudiced against anybody*. While on Twitter, he explicitly referred to his concerns

towards Romanians; during interviews, he reinforced the idea of UKIP as a non-racist, non-radical party²⁸.

Second, Farage made further efforts to normalize UKIP's image by illustrating flaws in the mainstream parties. As stated on BBC One (4 May 2014), when asked about racist sayings by UKIP party members:

Despite the membership form that we have, that makes it **absolutely clear that we are non-racist, non-sectarian party**, (...) some people have got through (...). **We've made mistakes**, but these people are not representative of UKIP at all (...) **Not only am I adamant that we are a non-racist party**, this week I'm gonna fight it back.

If you look to the other parties (...) there was a **Liberal Democrat** the other week, serving councilor, convicted of racially aggravated assault (...) **Nine Labour councillors** left the Labour group (...) over accusations of racism, with a **Conservative** last year (...) forced to resign over Islamophobic comments.

Hence, not only did Farage portray a more moderate and humble message acknowledging mistakes in the past, but he also seemed active in making clear that UKIP was not a sectarian party. What is more, he illustrated similar situations in the mainstream parties, as a way to show that UKIP did not monopolize this kind of accusations. None of these attempts of normalization were present in Farage's discourse on Twitter, which suggests how the latter was less moderate and cautious²⁹.

Third, unlike on Twitter, when explicitly asked about the Romanian migrants, Farage relativized his comments:

The question was, you know, **if, if**, a whole load of Romanian men moved in next door to you, would you be concerned about it?... **perhaps you would, yes** (BBC One, 4 May 2014).

²⁸ Similarly, on BBC One, after accusations of racism, Farage declared that "no other party is taking on the establishment (...) I'm taking on the establishment and they're fighting back" (4 May 2014). On Channel 5 News, Farage said that "Because, actually, the establishment rounding me and accusing me of being racist, the British public know I am not that, I've never have been and I never will be and in some ways, what the people see, is virtually a witch-hunt that's been going on against me and against UKIP" (21 May 2014).

²⁹ Further attempts on normalization on TV can be seen when Farage said that "you will see a lot of black, ethnic minority candidates who are proudly standing for UKIP" (BBC One, 4 May 2014), and "here is a party that represents the Commonwealth and believes in the Commonwealth and, you know, we have got more black ethnic minority voters now that the Conservative party". As expected, this rhetoric is not present on Farage's tweets.

Apart from being dubitative in his statement, the leader of UKIP softened his discourse and shifted from using the concept of *a right to be concerned* on Twitter, to *perhaps* someone *would be concerned* on TV. He further explained this issue by stating the following:

Because, **you know**, (...) **we've opened up the doors to countries that haven't recovered from communism** and I'm afraid it's become a gateway for **organized crime**, and **everybody knows that** (BBC One, 4 May 2014).

There is a **criminal gang problem** in Romania (...) I've seen how three million people, the Roma population, are discriminated against in a way that I think **if the British people really knew, they'd be horrified by, and they certainly wouldn't want us to be in a political union. I've got no problem with Romanians**, but I have a problem with the state of Romania and the way it treats its own people (Channel 5 News, 21 May 2014).

These fragments reveal two main patterns of Farage's discourse on TV when compared to his tweets. First, on TV he addressed the migratory issue in a more sophisticated manner, framing it as a shared security issue rather than as a party concern over a particular group. Thus, he assumed that the security concerns regarding *organized crime* and *criminal gangs* were shared by everyone (by using expressions such as *you know* and *everybody knows that*). Furthermore, he insisted that the problem was not with Romanians but with the Romanian state. As a result, when interviewed, this leader had more moderate, policy-based rhetoric, which attempted to normalize the party and its leadership.

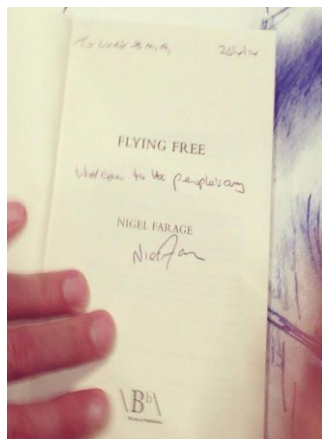
4.2 People-centrism

I. Twitter

Regarding the people-centrism dimension, Farage referred to the people by using several times the concept of *the People's Army* on his tweets:



On the way to Sheffield for the launch of UKIP's European Election Campaign and the **People's Army tour**. (22 April 2014)



This is the message now being asked for by **people** in signings. "Welcome to the **people's army**". (28 April 2014)

Indeed, Farage used this concept to characterize UKIP as the ultimate people's party. What is interesting to note is that the term *army* emphasizes war rhetoric (Ernst et al., 2019), and alludes to a battle between the people on the one side, and the political establishment on the other³⁰. While it was usually present on Twitter, the *People's Army* rhetoric was not used by Farage on TV interviews.

³⁰ Similarly, on 2 May 2014, Farage tweeted “**The People's Army** is growing and the political earthquake is on its way. **We** are not going to be deflected by flying insults or flying eggs”.

This leader also used Twitter as a way to demonstrate closeness to the public, by showing himself performing everyday actions with the people (Ernst et al., 2019), as shown in the following tweet:



The **Farage 'selfie'** is becoming a **mega thing**. It must be thousands by now. (28 April 2014)

As a result, when addressing the people on Twitter, Farage's discourse was de-politicized and simple, coupled with colloquial parlance, and not focused on policy matters but instead based on a feeling of partnership. Therefore, both the content and the language was straightforward and conversational, as seen in these tweets:



Every night there is such a positive reaction. **This is what politics is about. Actually meeting the people who vote.** (28 April 2014).



Book signing in Wales - fastest growing part of the party. 50% non members but **the queue for my scrawl is immense**. (30 April 2014)

II. TV interviews

Contrarily, Farage's discourse on TV lacked from those elements of closeness and, even though he continued advocating for the people, he did so addressing more complex, policy-based claims. Regarding the EU's free movement of labor, for instance, Farage stated the following:

Community, **cohesion of community** matter more [than money], (...) it should be the job of the British government to put the interests of **British people** first (...) we now have an **open door to 485 million people from Europe** (...) we've got **British people** being discriminated against in the **job market** in their own country. (Euronews - 7 May 2014).

Here, it is possible to see how Farage introduced concepts such as *cohesion of community* and *job market* to denounce an 'open door' policy. In this sense, not only the content and style of his discourse was different, but also his positioning regarding the public diverged. While on Twitter he approached the audience in a friendly and close manner utilizing colloquial parlance; he utilized a more elevated language on TV to express disapproval for EU-wide policies. In the end, this discursive difference reveals a Farage who acted as a formal *representative* of the people on TV interviews (concerned about policies) and a friendly Farage who portrayed himself as *part* of the people on Twitter.

4.3 Restoring sovereignty

I. Twitter

The sovereignty dimension is the clearest example of Farage's simplistic discourse on Twitter. Regarding migration, this leader summarized his position by tweeting the following picture:



This is in my view **the most powerful image** of the entire European election campaign. (2 May 2014)

By using what Bracciale & Martella (2017) identify as a slogan-based, tabloid-styled language (*No border. No Control*), Farage depicted a supposed easiness to enter UK territory through the port of Dover. In the picture, it can also be read: *Take back control of our country*. This does not only reveal his simplistic discourse on Twitter (which lacked specific policy proposals) but also depicts his absolutist style: according to Farage, British citizens had lost total control over their country because of the EU.

Similarly, regarding political sovereignty, Farage suggested with this picture that Brussels ran the UK Parliament:



What's the time? **Time for change**, vote UKIP on Thursday (19 May 2014)

As a complement, this leader tweeted the following:

The **only way to save our country's money and our democracy** is to **exit the EU**. Vote UKIP today. <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/europe/eu/10847979/10000-European-Union-officials-better-paid-than-David-Cameron.html>. (22 May 2014)

Again, the fact that Farage presented the EU withdrawal as the *only way to save* the UK's democracy and money tells more his absolutism on Twitter - as he presented his ideas "as the only conceivable option" (Ernst et al., 2019, p. 4). Furthermore, the notion that both the UK's money and democracy had to be *saved* reinforced his crisis rhetoric (Ernst et al., 2019; Krämer, 2017).

II. TV Interviews

However, when asked about border control on TV, Farage abandoned his slogan-based rhetoric. Here, it is possible to see how Farage moderated his discourse by calling for *some degree of control over our borders*, instead of asking to *take back control of our country*:

We're talking about the fact that the number one issue in British politics (...) we need to get back **some degree of control over our borders**. (Channel 4 - 23 April 2014)

Moreover, he also showed a more complex policy-based language. As stated on BBC One and Euronews:

I see a lot of people who've suffered **wage compression** (...) and that has certainly provoked a feeling that we've got a very **distorted labor market**. (BBC One - 4 May 2014)

Milton Friedman (...) said, you cannot have the **free movement of labour between rich and poor countries especially with the existence of a social security system**. (...) What we have done is that we've flooded the **unskilled labour market** and the **semi-skilled market** in Britain with migrant labour. (Euronews - 7 May 2014)

Thus, Farage offered a theoretical explanation to back his stances, using terms such as *wage compression* and *distorted labor market*. Unlike on Twitter, UKIP's leader was more concerned about making his discourse coherent and logic and attempted to show theory-based proposals³¹.

Indeed, Farage's discourse on TV interviews was not only more proficient but also more moderate:

We believe that the United Kingdom should (...) [not be] part of a political union (...). **That doesn't mean we are anti-European (...)** we actually rather like Europe, but we want the whole of Europe to be Europe of States that trade together and cooperate together, and this supranational project (...) to build the United States of Europe, will not work (Euronews - 7 May 2014)

Although Farage maintained his rejection of the EU, he did so in a more nuanced way: he rejected a political union but favored the advantages of European cooperation. It is interesting to note how he phrased this duality: he opposed a *United States of Europe* but praised a *Europe of States*.

One last example of Farage's discourse moderation came in an interview on Euronews (UK):

We are not an anti-globalization party. Le Pen is against globalization, we are not. We want to embrace globalization. (7 May 2014)

³¹ In fact, on BBC One he stated that "we are not against immigration, we want good positive immigration, but let's do it the way the Australians do it, let's have a point system, let's have people who come here that have got skills" (4 May 2014). None of these proposals appear on his tweets.

On TV, Farage attempted to differentiate his party from Le Pen's FN and to depict UKIP as less radical when compared to other populist Eurosceptic parties. None of these remarks appeared on Twitter.

This comparison reveals the existence of a hybrid communication strategy for the case of Farage, since his discourse was not only more simplistic on Twitter, but also less moderate and more colloquial than on TV. Furthermore, while this leader used Twitter to portray himself as part of the people, he acted more like a mainstream politician during interviews, following a style pertinent to the traditional media.

5. Chapter II: Pablo Iglesias

In the run-up to the elections, Podemos came as a party with a “distinctive and new populist Euroscepticism” (Gómez-Reino Cachafeiro & Plaza-Colodro, 2018, p. 349). Its leader, the academic Pablo Iglesias, took advantage of the economic and political crisis and constructed an anti-establishment discourse, condemning both local and European elites (Sanders et al., 2016). Iglesias’ campaign was marked by intensive use of Twitter (@Pablo_Iglesias_), and he reached as much as 500 thousand followers by 2014³².

This intense activity on Twitter came partly as a response to lower exposure to traditional media. As a fresh newcomer, Podemos did not receive the attention given to other mainstream parties on TV. Contrary to Farage, Iglesias only attended a few interviews, all of them on private-owned TV channels³³ and none on nationwide media such as *Televisión Española*³⁴. Regarding Spanish printed media, Iglesias was only mentioned 73 times on headlines and lead-paragraphs, which represents approximately ten times less the mentions received by Farage³⁵. In principle, this reveals how Iglesias might have had a stronger need to use Twitter to bypass traditional media.

According to the LIWC, Iglesias’ discourse on Twitter had a much more negative tone (25.8 percent) than the one on TV (58.5 percent)³⁶. In principle, this would confirm the hybrid communication strategy theory, as negativity is one of the main aspects of populist communication. However, discourse analysis was carried out to understand to what extent this occurred for this case.

³² This is an impressive figure if compared to the only 20 thousands of Miguel Arias Cañete, the candidate of the mainstream Popular Party (*Partido Popular*).

³³ This research registered four interviews on the following channels: *V Televisión Galicia*, *Canal 10 Asturias*, *Cuatro*, and *laSexta*.

³⁴ The equivalent of the BBC in Spain.

³⁵ The only moment in which Iglesias reached a more substantial exposure to traditional media was after the surprisingly good results of his party in the EP elections.

³⁶ On the LIWC's *Emotional tone* scale, which goes from 0 to 100 percent, the higher the score, the more positive emotions included in a discourse. Conversely, a low score suggests that a discourse entails a negative tone.

5. 1 Anti-elitism

I. Twitter

The anti-elitism dimension was the most critical aspect of Iglesias' discourse. Instead of using the word *elites*, this leader introduced the concept of *the caste* (*la casta*). This word choice refers to a "ruling class", who leads a permanent, inflexible social system in which the people are misrepresented (Sanders et al., 2016). On 7 May 2014, Iglesias tweeted the following:

They see their privileges in danger and they get defensive. If the caste comes for us it means that we are doing it right <http://www.politicalocal.es/2494-el-alcalde-de-alcorcon-llama-a-pablo-iglesias-podemos-el-chico-de-la-coleta-y-le-acusa-de-crear-tension/#>

Iglesias used this concept to draw a line between the political class on the one side, and his party and the people on the other side. Thus, Iglesias was not only suggesting that his party was opposed to the political class but also that it was part of the people (i.e. *if the caste comes for us*). Moreover, Iglesias resorted to colloquial, informal expressions (i.e., *we are doing it right*), coupled with written abbreviations in Spanish (*q* instead of *que*).

When referring to the two mainstream parties (PP and PSOE³⁷) and its political referents, Iglesias tweeted messages such as the following:

Cañete and González suggest a PP-PSOE pact because they would be capable of **doing anything to defend the interests of the caste that governs us**. (13 May 2014).

Again, Iglesias positioned himself as part of the people by denouncing *the caste that governs us*. According to Kries (2017, p. 502), pronouns such as *us* and *them* are deictic, meaning that "they point to the context and the center of the speaker". Therefore, this *us vs. them* rhetoric constructs a positive self-representation (*the people*) and a negative other-representation (*the caste*) (id.).

³⁷ PP stands for *Partido Popular* (Popular Party). PSOE refers to *Partido Socialista Obrero Español* (Spanish Socialist Workers' Party).

Regarding his criticism of the economic policies of the Spanish government, Iglesias adopted an absolutist style (Ernst et al., 2019):

We have a government that is tough with the weak and weak with the tough. **All** the ease for **banks** and **none** for **families** (27 April 2014)

Instead of criticizing government policies regarding their effectiveness, Iglesias suggested without nuances that the government was issuing *all* its policies for banks and *none* for families. Moreover, the use of the word *families* instead of *citizens* also strengthened the emotional tone of his discourse, mainly because a family typically represents a humane, emotional ties-based institution distinct to financial entities (i.e., banks).

Another aspect of Iglesias' activity on Twitter was reaching the voter through satirical and humorous cartoons:



They promote a model that **allows you to have a job and still not make ends meet.**³⁸ (29 April 2014)

³⁸ Cartoon description: Woman says to the man: *-Behind the figures, there are people.* The man replies: *-Well they must move away!*



Pensions will rise only 0.25% until 2017. **You have it clear: they will not have problems** with their retirement.³⁹ (4 May 2014).

As in the previous example, this leader used Twitter to position the voter against the elites, this time using cartoons and informal expressions such as *making ends meet*. This style reveals how Iglesias' discourse was not only highly colloquial but also profoundly personal, giving the impression that he was directly speaking to the voter in an individualized manner (*you have it clear*).

Iglesias was also characterized for using a vulgar language to describe the similarities between when the PP and the PSOE:

Rubalcaba⁴⁰ rejects a **marriage** with the PP but **they will continue sleeping together**. They only care about appearances) (12 May 2014)

Thus, he portrayed both parties as a potential *marriage* and included a sexual allusion to refer to their close relationship (*they will continue sleeping together*). These kinds of references, which are distant from political correctness, are paramount when it comes to the *sociability* dimension, which includes vulgarity as a tool used by populists to create a message that is easily assimilated by the public (Bossetta, 2017).

³⁹ Cartoon description: *Pensions. Neoliberal Calculation* (broken cane).

⁴⁰ Alfredo Rubalcaba was the then leader of the Socialist Party.

Regarding big enterprises and financial entities, Iglesias included an emotional tone to denounce unfair practices, including terms such as *shame*:

It is a **shame** that the government continues to allow the oligopoly of energy companies to **hold the whole citizenry in check** (25 April 2014).

Nonetheless, a sharper criticism was found in those tweets where Iglesias referred to the IMF (International Monetary Fund):

Lagarde, IMF director, **calls for dismissals with 12 days of compensation while earning €300,000 annually** and taking a life-long pension (28 May 2014)



If the IMF wants us to raise the VAT and continue with the cuts, **let it run in the elections to see what happens.** (29 May 2014)

Here, Iglesias criticized Christine Lagarde (by contrasting her personal “benefits” with the IMF requirements to Spain) and used a cartoon that depicted a wolf whose teeth formed the acronym *FMI* (IMF in Spanish). In this way, he did not only portray this organization as a sort of beast willing to attack, but he also challenged the organization to run in the elections, showing an evident defiant tone.

II. TV interviews

Although the *caste* concept also appeared when this leader was interviewed, it did so differently. While on Twitter Iglesias mingled among the people, on TV he took distance and spoke as a third party:

The problem is the **caste**, the privileged minorities (...) against the **citizens** who are willing to do politics. (laSexta Noticias - 25 May 2014).

The **caste** sees their privileges threatened (...) they are aware that their business of stealing from the **citizens** could end. (Cuatro - 27 May 2014)

The absence of the pronoun *us* shows how while Iglesias opted to have closer rhetoric on Twitter, he played more of a representative role on TV, who advocated for the citizens against the elite but stepped out of the *us vs. them* confrontative dynamic.

Similarly, regarding the government's economic policies, Iglesias discourse became more academic on TV, filled with policy-based proposals. When referring to unemployment, poverty, and pensions, he stated the following:

It cannot be that in Spain senior financial executives earn more than anywhere in Europe, **while salaries have depreciated by 10%** and (...) while 27% of the population is poor (Canal 4 - 27 May 2014).

The only way out of this is with **expansive fiscal policies, with policies that ultimately stimulate demand, that favor aggregate demand** (Canal 10 Asturias - 16 May 2014).

Instead of using the *making ends meet* expression, Iglesias affirmed that salaries had depreciated by 10 percent and proposed *expansive fiscal policies* as a solution to stimulate *aggregate demand*. This shift also depicts a less confrontational style on TV.

Although Iglesias continued to criticize both parties on TV, he did not employ vulgarity or humor. Instead, he used a much more conciliatory approach, even suggesting a potential rapprochement with the PSOE. As stated on laSexta Noticias:

If the PSOE agrees on performing a tax reform to make the rich pay, **no problem**. If they agree to carry out an audit of the public debt, **no problem** (...) **There is no sectarianism**. (1 June 2014).

Hence, Iglesias moved from a *us vs. them* logic, to a much more conciliatory, policy-based approach where there was *no sectarianism* nor an automatic rejection to the caste, unlike what he had previously suggested on Twitter.

Regarding Iglesias' criticism of big companies, one can note how this leader again shifted to a professorial language:

Article 128 of the Spanish constitution gives the government the faculty to intervene in strategic companies when they are carrying out **oligopolistic practices against the interest of the citizens**. (Canal 10 Asturias - 16 May 2014).

This constitutional reference makes Iglesias' discourse more informed, not based on emotions but underpinned by legal facts. Instead of employing his Twitter rhetoric (which portrayed the citizens as being held in check by big businesses), on TV, this leader merely suggested that these practices were *against the interest* of Spanish *citizens*. Days later, in an effort to normalize and legitimize his proposals and avoid potential accusations of radicalism, he emphasized that:

(...) there is **nothing radical** [about our program], we are **defending human rights and common sense and decency** (Canal 4).

Finally, regarding the IMF, Iglesias stated the following:

Mrs. Christine Lagarde, the president of the IMF (...) **earns 230 thousand euros a year; I believe things could be done differently, simply ruling in favor of the people and not ruling in favor of financial entities** (Canal 4 Asturias - 16 May 2014).

Interestingly, this leader affirmed that Lagarde earned 230 thousand euros a year, which could lead one to think that on Twitter he inflated the figure, resorting to exaggeration (Ernst et al., 2019). Furthermore, instead of portraying the IMF as a dangerous beast, he merely identified it as a financial entity opposed to the people, lacking the combative style seen on his tweets.

5.2 People-centrism

I. Twitter

Similar to Farage, Iglesias used Twitter to show closeness to the public. The following tweets show how this leader employed both pictures and language to strengthen the sociability and emotionality dimensions:



In Toledo with **bus drivers** of Castilla la Mancha, [a service] Cospedal wants to privatize. **Stay strong comrades.** (26 April 2014).



I leave Catalunya very grateful after two days **feeling like among family.** Thanks #ClarQuePodem⁴¹(12 May 2014).

These pictures with supporters bolster the idea of Iglesias being just one more among the public. Furthermore, the use of the word *comrades* (*compañeros*) intensified the notion of belonging to the same group and positioned Iglesias as part of those workers “combating”

⁴¹ This hashtag was written in the Catalan language. It can be translated as *Of Course We Can*.

the government. Similarly, the use of the word *family* contributed to a higher emotional tone and the idea of a personal relationship between Iglesias and his supporters⁴².

In addition, Iglesias portrayed his people's advocacy as a way to denounce the caste over the effects of the economic crisis:

Today I was in Paris, **with young people the caste expelled from the country** so [people like Carronero⁴³] can continue governing (1 May 2014).

As seen in this tweet, Iglesias showed a close link with the public and simultaneously drew a clear line between the caste on the one side, and the people and himself on the other side.

II. TV interviews

Conversely, Iglesias appeared on TV as a people's *representative*, rather than *part* of them. His discourse, therefore, was more distant and sounded more like the one of a mainstream politician, calling for reforms in healthcare, education policy, and salaries:

We do not say more than what ordinary people say; **they have the right to decent healthcare, a decent education, decent salaries** (...) (Canal Cuatro - 27 May 2014).

Similarly, this leader used professorial parlance to explain his people's advocacy (concerning the etymology of the word democracy). Like Farage, on TV he excluded himself from this concept of *the people*, lacking from the deictic pronoun *us*:

The key is the **power of the people**; since **the Greeks invented the word democracy, we know that democracy means that the power**, that the government, **is in the hands of the people** (Canal Cuatro - 27 May 2014).

⁴² Similarly, on 25 May 2014, Iglesias tweeted: *The people united will never be defeated! Of course we can! #Podemos25M*. This further strengthened the image of his party as part of a united and homogeneous people:

⁴³ Carronero is a controversial conservative politician member of the Popular Party.

Moreover, while on Twitter Iglesias claimed having met young Spanish expatriates in Paris, on Canal 10 he expressed the following about the same issue:

What cannot be tolerated in Spain is the fact that **400,000 people leave every year (...)** and that **the active population is being reduced, because that is the basis of the sustainability of the pension system** (27 May 2014).

Iglesias did not only address the issue in a more impersonal manner, but he did so by explaining its economic consequences and its impact on the *sustainability of the pension system*. Overall, this illustrates how Iglesias changed his discursive style from Twitter to TV, passing from messages and pictures charged with a closeness sentiment and a stronger emotional tone, to formal and technical parlance during interviews.

5.3 Restoring sovereignty

I. Twitter

One of the most radical messages Iglesias shared on Twitter regarding sovereignty issues included sharp criticism to the German chancellor Angela Merkel:



Great rally in Berlin. Symbol of **our intention to restore our sovereignty, we have a lot to say to Merkel** (8 May 2014).

Besides the clear message calling for sovereignty to be restored, one must note the picture shared by Iglesias, where he is looking at the camera holding an upside-down picture of Merkel, as a way to show his profound rejection towards this leader. Beside the picture, it can be read: “*We don’t want to be a **colony** where the **rich from the North** come here to be served small*”

beers (cañitas) and snacks (tapitas) by us’. The use of the word *colony* has a strong connotation and suggests the idea of heavy economic dependence on Northern Europe. Moreover, the expression *cañitas y tapitas* came as an informal and sarcastic way to suggest that Spaniards were mostly performing low-rank jobs. As a result, both the picture and the quote result in violent and unfiltered discursive style.

When Iglesias addressed the European Central Bank’s monetary policy and the single currency, he once again resorted to a cartoon:



We won’t allow Europe to continue forcing us to impoverish labor rights and to carry on with spending cuts (14 May 2014).

Not only did Iglesias suggest an imposition from Europe over labor rights and fiscal policy, but he also portrayed the Euro as lethal for the Spanish working class. As seen in the cartoon, a worker is being stabbed by two knives, forming a euro symbol which is covered in blood (suggesting, figuratively, that the Euro was “killing” workers). As in previous examples, cartoons were usually the main contributor to Iglesias’ radical and scandalizing Twitter style.

Finally, as a way to accuse the government of being controlled by the EU, Iglesias tweeted the following:



“Your kiss”, “our exile”. Great banner by @PodemosBerlin) (9 May 2014)

This picture shows Merkel and the former Spanish Prime Minister Mariano Rajoy kissing, in a direct allusion to the famous kiss between the East Germany leader, Erich Honecker, and the soviet ruler Leonid Brezhnev. With a satirical style, Iglesias depicted a reputed Spain’s submission to German interests. Besides, the choice of the word *exile* (to refer to those Spaniards leaving the country) bolstered the emergency rhetoric of his discourse.

II. TV interviews

Regarding the issue of economic dependency on Germany, Iglesias declared the following:

The problem is not those 6 million who are unemployed; the problem is a **model of economic development** that condemns us to be a **colony of Northern Europe** because **what is basically offered is a cheap workforce**. (Canal 10 Asturias - 16 May 2014).

While Iglesias insisted on the concept of *colony*, his discourse on TV employed a more elevated language: instead of referring to *cañitas y tapitas*, Iglesias identified a *model of economic development* based on a *cheap workforce*. Although the idea of dependence is present on both Twitter and TV, on the former, it is framed informally and colloquially coupled an explicit rejection to Merkel, while on the latter there is an appeal to expertise and a more technocratic wording.

Similarly, when this leader was asked about the role of the European Central Bank, his discourse had a formal and filtered style:

The European monetary policy **cannot be a policy designed (...) only to please German banks; it has to be a monetary policy that ensures the dignity of Europeans (...)** our leaders **gave all sovereignty on something as important as monetary policy**, to an institution that does not respond to any parliament (16 May 2014).

Hence, unlike on Twitter, Iglesias' message focused on the lack of sovereignty over monetary issues, rather than on the "lethal" effects of the Euro (represented by the mobilizing cartoon tweeted days before).

Finally, the idea of dependence from the EU and Germany further appeared in Iglesias discourse during an interview on V Televisión Galicia:

Here we are seeing how (...) **decisions are not taken by the [Spanish] Council of Ministers but come from Brussels, from Berlin, or the European troika.** Here it seems (...) **it is more important to obey the financial system than to obey citizens.** (1 July 2014)

Although this issue was raised on both TV and Twitter, on the former Iglesias' discourse moved away from crisis rhetoric and focused on criticism over institutions (i.e., Council of Ministers, the European troika) rather than on attacks to specific politicians. In this sense, it is interesting to note how Twitter gives leeway to leaders like Iglesias to share simplistic messages coupled with scandalizing cartoons and pictures, something not possible during TV interviews.

Similar to Farage, these discursive differences reveal the presence of a hybrid communication strategy for the case of Iglesias, as his style was more radical and less sophisticated on Twitter than on TV. This results in an Iglesias who sounded more like an academic and an ordinary politician who followed the rules on TV, against an Iglesias who resembled a radical grassroots activist on Twitter.

6. Chapter III: Marine Le Pen

Unlike Podemos and UKIP, Le Pen's FN is an old player in French politics. Created in 1972 by Jean-Marie Le Pen, this party has ever since resorted to a radical political discourse “which ensures the recruitment and the loyalty of activists and executives” (Reungoat, 2015, p. 306). According to Reungoat (2015), FN's discourse plays a central role in ensuring party cohesion, as its hierarchical structure needs a single voice to both discipline partisans and attract voters. While the negative rhetoric about the EU has been a constant in this party's agenda, by 2014, the radicalization of said discourse was a way to differentiate from mainstream parties (id.). Therefore, in the run-up to the EP elections, Marine Le Pen launched an ambitious communication campaign.

Among the three cases analyzed, however, Le Pen (@MLP_officiel) was the leader with the poorest Twitter activity, and her account mostly reproduced quotes of rally speeches giving less space for exclusive content⁴⁴. Nonetheless, unlike Iglesias, Le Pen was invited almost daily to interviews on multiple French TV channels, both private and public-owned⁴⁵. Moreover, this leader received considerable attention from the French printed media, with more than 280 headlines and lead-paragraph mentions, quadrupling those of the Spanish leader⁴⁶. This suggests that Le Pen might have resorted to the “elite-controlled” media more than initially expected.

According to the LIWC tool, Le Pen's discourse during TV interviews was considerably less analytical, formal and logical than on Twitter (according to the *Analytical thinking* variable, 99 percent on Twitter vs. 69.9 percent on TV⁴⁷). In principle, these figures go against the assumptions of the theory, and they suggest that instead of adopting a raw discursive style on social media, Le Pen opted to use traditional media for the projection of said discourse.

⁴⁴ Le Pen's Twitter account was managed by her communications team. Tweets written by this leader were signed with the *MLP* acronym.

⁴⁵ Of the nine interviews analyzed by this thesis, two of them were performed on the renowned *France 3* and *France 2* channels, but also *iTélé*, *BFMTV*, *TF1*, and the televised signal of *RF1*.

⁴⁶ Data provided by the Factiva International Newspapers tool.

⁴⁷ On a scale from 0 to 100, the higher the score, the more logical and formal the discourse is.

6.1 Anti-elitism

I. Twitter

Le Pen's anti-elitist discourse focused on what she identified as the "self-proclaimed" elites (*les elites autoproclamées*⁴⁸). Thus, this leader mainly targeted the socialist government of François Hollande and Nicolas Sarkozy's conservative UMP⁴⁹. For instance, Le Pen tweeted the following:

Hollande: **sub-prefect of the Republic** <http://www.frontnational.com/2014/05/hollande-sous-prefet-de-la-republique/#.U2ixlj0qO9Q.twitter> (6 May 2014).

By referencing Hollande as the *sub-prefect of the Republic* (meaning someone holding a low-ranking administrative position⁵⁰), Le Pen resorted to satire to suggest that this leader was not exercising his presidential faculties but instead following orders. However, Le Pen only wrote this short message to share a link to her press release (posted on the FN's official website). In this sense, although this tweet presents a humorous message, Le Pen used it mainly as a link to other platforms with further content.

A similar logic was noted when this leader called for the dismissal of the then minister Christiane Taubira after she refused to sing the national anthem during an official ceremony:

Taubira's slip-up, comparing the Marseillaise to a "stage karaoke", [she] refused to sing it: **Valls must announce tonight her dismissal MLP** (11 May 2014).

Marine Le Pen's Press Release: Manuel #Valls must announce tonight the dismissal of Madame #Taubira <https://rassemblementnational.fr/communiqués/manuel-valls-doit-annoncer-ce-soir-le-limogeage-de-madame-taubira/#.U2-6IXTsBV8.twitter> (11 May 2014).

While on the first tweet Le Pen urged the then prime minister Manuel Valls to dismiss Taubira; the second message only comprised the title of Le Pen's press release and a link to access it, serving a mere diffusion purpose.

⁴⁸ BFM TV interview (May 12th 2014).

⁴⁹ *Union pour un mouvement populaire* (Union for a Popular Movement).

⁵⁰ In French territorial organization, the state is represented in each region by a prefect or *préfet*. At the same time, each region is divided into departments, and each department has a department prefect or *préfet de département*. Below each department prefect, there is a sub-prefect or *sous-préfet*.

Similarly, Le Pen condemned the government due to the potential privatization of Alstom, a French public-owned rail transport company. As stated on 28 April 2014:

Alstom abandoned by the French government in favor of an American or German partition!
<http://www.frontnational.com/2014/04/alstom-abandonne-par-le-gouvernement-francais-au-profit-dun-depechage-americaain-ou-allemand/#.U15QRjBzVt0.twitter>

As in previous examples, Le Pen used Twitter to share a link, while the only message included was the title of her press release. Hence, there was no exclusive content over this issue on Twitter. Instead, this leader also used tweets as a way to promote her TV interviews or to share videos of her TV participations:

Marine Le Pen on France 3 #Alstom #Austerity #European2014 #Kerviel
<https://rassemblementnational.fr/videos/marine-le-pen-sur-france-3-10/#.U3oGbVBz0qw.twitter> (19 May 2014)⁵¹.

Contrary to Farage and Iglesias, only a few times Le Pen used Twitter to refer to mainstream parties, and always did so through promoting her additional content in other platforms, as seen in the following tweets:

Watch “The novel of the euro” or the history of **the responsibility of UMPS in the suffering imposed on the people** http://pluzz.francetv.fr/videos/le_roman_de_1_euro_,101971757.html ... MLP (16 May 2014)

Voting rights of foreigners: **The #PS persists in wanting to deprive the French of their exclusive right** <https://rassemblementnational.fr/communiqués/droit-de-vote-des-etranagers-le-ps-persiste-a-vouloir-depouiller-les-francais-de-leur-droit-exclusif/#.U2kSYihYfJM.twitter> (6 May 2014)

While the second tweet only replicated Le Pen’s press release about foreigners’ voting rights, the first message shared a documentary about the Euro. What is interesting to note is how Le Pen employed the acronym *UMPS* as a combination of UMP and PS, in order to suggest that both parties were virtually the same. However, besides this mention, this leader did not share any other tweets regarding the French political class.

⁵¹ Similarly, although Le Pen did not tweet about the government austerity plans, she promoted her interviews on France 3 (18 May 2014) and BFMTV (29 April 2014) where she spoke about these issues.

Paradoxically, the only case in which Le Pen had an active and mobilizing discourse on Twitter was when she criticized certain media outlets for publishing ‘misleading’ information:

Alliances in the European Parliament: **#Reuters makes me say exactly the opposite of what I said.** MLP **#manip** (27 May 2014).

Here, this leader used Twitter to denounce Reuters for giving wrong information about the FN’s potential alliances. Interestingly, she employed the hashtag **#manip** (an informal abbreviation of the French word *manipulation*) suggesting that this outlet was deliberately manipulating information. Similarly, Le Pen tweeted to attack a newspaper owned by the businessman Serge Dassault:

A **bunch** [*ramassis*] of **slandereous insinuations**, delivered by Dassault’s newspaper against the FN **will not remain unanswered.** **#PravdaTheReturn** (3 May 2014)

Not only did Le Pen employ the strongly pejorative term *ramassis* (a bunch of), but she also depicted a combative and defiant style in saying that the *slandereous insinuations* would *not remain unanswered*. Moreover, Le Pen used the satirical hashtag **#PravdaTheReturn**, as a way to link this newspaper to the Soviet propaganda-based tabloid *Pravda*. This last aspect of Le Pen’s activity on Twitter is acknowledged by authors like Krämer (2017), who suggested that populists actors use social media as a way to “boycott” or expose traditional media. Nonetheless, this author highlights that despite the said boycott, some of these leaders cannot dispense from traditional media, leading to an interesting paradox: “populists denounce the ‘lying press’ while using the media as a source when the coverage fits the populists’ worldview” (ibid., p. 1303).

II. TV interviews

As on Twitter, during TV interviews, Le Pen used the *sub-prefect* term to refer to Hollande:

The disappearance of the departments is also a requirement posed by the European Union, and again the **President of the Republic, as a sort of little European sub-prefect**, submits himself to the will of the European Union against the interest of our territorial organization (France 3 - 18 May 2014)

However, one can see how on TV she also added the adjective *little* to emphasize the supposed unimportance of Hollande's job, and the adjective *European* to sarcastically denounce a submission to the *will of the European Union*. As a result, while on Twitter her message was rather plain and served to share a press statement, on TV Le Pen complemented her discourse with adjectives that were absent on her tweets.

Similarly, regarding Taubira's issue, Le Pen commented the following on BFMTV:

I think that Mr. Valls must dismiss her (...) **[what happened] is not possible, it is not possible for the French, it is not possible regarding the history of France, regarding all those who died singing this national anthem.** (12 May 2014).

Hence, when interviewed, Le Pen also charged her discourse with emotionality, including both an emotive tone and patriotism by appealing to an idealized Fatherland (Ernst et al., 2019). Rather than a hybrid communication strategy, here Le Pen applied an opposite logic: Twitter acted more as a complementary tool for diffusion, while TV interviews were charged with emotionality and sarcasm. This would depict how, in principle, Le Pen was not looking to circumvent the traditional media and share unfiltered messages on Twitter.

Another example of this logic came when Le Pen commented about the government plans regarding Alstom:

And? What are these beautiful words going to bring? They will bring nothing at all, obviously because (...) the socialist government does not discuss how to ensure that Alstom remains French, **they discuss: Is it better to sell us to the Americans? Or is it better to sell us to the Germans?** (BFM TV - 29 April 2014).

Patriotism, as its name indicates, look, **is the Fatherland. The Fatherland is France** (France 3 - 18 May 2014).

Three discursive elements must be noted in these interview fragments. First, the usage of rhetorical questions and sarcasm as a way of colloquialism (Ernst et al., 2019). By asking *what are these beautiful words going to bring?*, Le Pen attempted to discredit the government informally. Second, in saying that the government was *selling us*, this leader applied not only emergency rhetoric but also a *us vs. them* logic. The image alluded to, therefore, was that of an elite (*they*) selling the French people (*us*) to a foreign country. Third, as shown previously, the

rhetorical figure of patriotism and the Fatherland helped to build an emotional discourse. None of these stylistic devices was present on Twitter.

Similarly, unlike on Twitter, when the socialist government admitted that the Euro was not convenient for France's competitiveness, Le Pen affirmed:

I say to the French: all those who have changed their minds in the three months before the election are **arrant liars** [*fièffés menteurs*] (...) they saw **companies dying** one after another (BFM TV - 29 April 2014).

The use of the term *fièffés*, an extremely colloquial and pejorative adjective⁵² to emphasize the word *menteurs* (translated to *arrant liars*), denotes the nature of Le Pen's discourse on TV interviews. Unlike Iglesias and Farage, who were more moderate on TV than on Twitter, Le Pen did not filter her discourse when interviewed. Quite the opposite, she used these interviews to spread a single raw discourse, confirming Reangoat's views (2015). This reality does not only reveal how Twitter was a secondary platform for Le Pen, but most importantly shows how she opted to use TV as her primary discursive tool⁵³. By 2014, since Le Pen's party was already a central player in French politics, this leader could resort to daily TV interviews as a way to personally address the public, something that Iglesias was not able to do. As a result, although Twitter served to attack specific media outlets, it was mainly used by Le Pen as a tool to promote press releases and TV interviews.

⁵² According to the Larousse Dictionary.

⁵³ A large number of examples during the period analyzed confirm this logic. For instance, on TV, Le Pen declared that "*the goal of the UMP and the PS is the dilution of our nation, the dilution of its identity, its culture, the disappearance of its borders and especially the disappearance of the sovereignty of the people, be it legal, political, legislative, territorial, budgetary, monetary, etcetera, etcetera*" (iTélé - 24 April 2014). While this crisis rhetoric and absolutist style alluding to the virtual disappearance of the country was often present during her interviews, it was completely absent on her tweets. Similarly, on France 3 (18 May 2014) Le Pen called the EU "*the European Union nightmare*" and identified government plans as a *jeu de bonneteau* (Three-card Monte game), *une stupidité total* (total stupidity) and *saignant* (bloody) (BFMTV - 29 April 2014). None of these stylistic devices appeared on her tweets.

6. 2 People-centrism

I. Twitter

Interestingly, Le Pen did not use Twitter to portray herself as *part* of the people. What is more, there were no explicit mentions of *the people* on her tweets. Instead, as previously shown, this leader mainly used Twitter to promote external content, leaving virtually no place for a differentiated people-centrist discourse.

Unlike the other leaders, the kind of pictures Le Pen shared depicted herself as a distant and hierarchical politician, rather than a leader who was close to the ordinary public (e.g., talking with voters or walking among campaign volunteers):



Tomorrow at 11 am, **follow my speech**, in the presence of our heads of the list, live on <http://www.fn-europeennes.fr> #EP2014) (30 April 2014).



I will be at #Marseille tonight to host a meeting with @lepenjm. **Follow us** live: <http://www.dailymotion.com/MarineLePen> (20 May 2014).

Find here **my address to the French** tonight, in less than 48 hours away from the poll: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a-WTGz4ufCQ ...](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a-WTGz4ufCQ...) #DirectMLP # EP2014) (23 May 2014).

One must highlight three elements of these examples. Firstly, that the only pictures shared depict herself and other party candidates, but not her supporters, as Iglesias or Farage did. Even in the first picture, where Le Pen seems to be embracing a crowd, she is the only one who appears. Secondly, the language employed denotes how hierarchical and vertically organized this party is: the *follow my speech* and *follow us* wording alluded to an active role of the leader and a passive position of the audience. This sharply contrasts with more participative rhetorics held by both Iglesias and Farage. Lastly, highly formal expressions such as *my address to the French* did nothing but reinforcing the image of Le Pen as a distant, solemn leader. All these elements can lead one to think that contrarily to other politicians, Le Pen's poor people-centrism on Twitter lacked the colloquialism and intimization stylistic devices developed by Ernst et al. (2017).

II. TV interviews

On the other hand, Le Pen has shown a strong people-centrism in her discourse on TV interviews. For instance, as stated on *France 3* and later on *BFMTV*:

I want to tell you, I want to tell you, **French people know well that I am where I must be to defend them in all circumstances** (18 May 2014).

I am an autonomous force, that is my pride, and **I defend the people, and it is the people who carry me, and it is them, it is with them, for them that I want us to govern tomorrow** (27 May 2014).

What these fragments illustrate is highly emotional rhetoric which resorted to the image of Le Pen as a protective leader (*I defend the people*). Unlike on Twitter, one can note a considerable degree of closeness on TV (*with them and for them*) as she appeared to be a more charismatic representative and an active people's advocate. None of these mobilizing references was present in her tweets.

Apart from this closeness, her TV interventions also included an intense patriotism regarding the French people. As stated on BFMTV:

Listen, excuse me, **I care about us, here I care about France and the French, here I do not care about others**, it can be selfish, but for now my highest interest is the situation of my own country (29 April 2014).

This kind of rhetoric fits with the patriotism style described by Ernst et al. (2017), as Le Pen emphasized a supposed superiority of her own country and its people. Here, not only did Le Pen perform a patriotic discourse but also one that was highly colloquial (by merely stating that she did not *care about others*). Moreover, instead of portraying her people-centrism through policy-based proposals, on TV Le Pen opted to address the public in simplistically, affirming that she only cared *about France and the French*.

Finally, this leader has also portrayed herself as the only actor willing to restore the power to the people. As declared on BFMTV on 27 May 2014:

It is now necessary (...) to **put the power back in the hands of the people** and therefore the only way to make the people speak is to **dissolve the National Assembly and set up proportional representation**.

I want to return the power to the French people, **I want them to decide for themselves, by themselves**, in a whole series of areas and that's what I will do at the European Parliament.

While on TV Le Pen called for a Parliament dissolution and the establishment of proportional representation, these intentions were not mentioned on Twitter. Furthermore, this leader employed emergency rhetoric by suggesting that French people were not able to decide for

themselves. Thus, one can note how TV interviews were the place where this leader chose to advocate for the people through an informal and patriotic tone.

6.3 Restoring sovereignty

I. Twitter

Similar to the people-centrism dimension, Le Pen's Twitter account was destined to promote external content, such as online newspaper articles. For instance, as tweeted on 4 May 2014:

Marine Le Pen wants to **"block" the advance of the EU** via **@Le_Figaro**
<http://www.lefigaro.fr/flash-actu/2014/05/04/97001-20140504FILWWW00013-marine-le-pen-veut-bloquer-l-europe.php>.

This kind of example shows how often Le Pen resorted to traditional media, in this case, to show her reluctance over new EU competences. Instead of using Twitter to address her followers without intermediation, this leader opted to share the link of Le Figaro's article - thus not circumventing traditional media but instead using it as an active source for communication. In the end, Le Pen's sovereignty discourse on Twitter was descriptive and unadorned (generally including the title of press releases or articles), and often solely serving to promote her TV interventions.

Also regarding sovereignty issues, Le Pen used her tweets to share campaign videos from her website and quotes of her rally speeches⁵⁴. Although these two formats fall outside the scope of this research, this kind of usage further depicts how Twitter was a tool for the diffusion of a single discourse that was personally performed by Le Pen on TV interviews, video streaming or live rallies. Hence, unlike Iglesias or Farage, her tweets did not include a differentiated raw sovereignty discourse.

⁵⁴ On April 23rd, 2014, for instance, Le Pen shared a link of a video in which she condemned the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) and its potential economic consequences on the French economy. On May 21st, 2014, Le Pen used Twitter to share quotes of her speech during a rally in Havre.

II. TV interviews

Conversely, Le Pen performed a highly simplistic, radical, and colloquial discourse on TV. When consulted about her agenda in the EP, this leader stated:

Well, it's obvious, **blocking the European Union**. I say it, I assume it, **I don't move forward masked**, I don't move forward behind hollow slogans or slogans empty of meaning, **I move forward behind a clear slogan 'No to Brussels, Yes to France'** (iTélé - 5 May 2014).

Here one can note how on TV, instead of introducing a policy-based agenda as the other leaders did, Le Pen resorted to a straightforward, low-complexity message: *No to Brussels, Yes to France*. Moreover, apart from ensuring that she was the only one who had a project to “restore the sovereignty and democracy for France”⁵⁵, Le Pen described the EU in the following way:

The European Union is a people grinding machine, it is a monster that failed in all the fields it has dealt with, so I do not want this forced political construction, I do not want [the EU] to abduct the **sovereignty of the French**, their freedom, the control of their destiny, and transmit it to **unelected technocrats** (iTélé - 5 May 2014).

This one is perhaps the most radical example of Le Pen's TV discourse, referring to the EU as both a *monster* and a *people grinding machine*. This kind of wording falls into the exaggeration and scandal rhetoric developed by Ernst et al. (2017), as it portrayed the EU as a lethal machine that threatens people's existence. A possible equivalent to this kind of rhetoric is the one of Iglesias with the Euro cartoon. However, while the Spanish leader reserved this discourse for Twitter and was more moderate on TV, Le Pen implemented the opposite logic: her most radical and simplistic discourse regarding the EU was on TV interviews and not on Twitter.

Similarly, but this time resorting to an extreme colloquialism, Le Pen criticized the French political class regarding their position towards the EU:

I have been listening earlier on TV **the soup they have been serving us for weeks now, a soup that is indigestible and made of hackneyed arguments: Europe is peace, gnagnagna**, France is too small, etc. etc. **It is the catechism of the European Union; it is the catechism according to Saint Schultz and the apocalypse according to Saint Juncker** or the other way around (18 May 2014).

⁵⁵ Interview on BFMTV - 27 May 2014.

Here, Le Pen referred to her adversaries' arguments as a *soup that is indigestible* (figuratively, something hard to process or understand). This informal style not only served to make her discourse more straightforward but also to downplay political views different than the ones of her party. As a complement, the interjection *gnagnagna* (used as a mocking onomatopoeia) helped strengthen Le Pen's colloquial manners. Furthermore, the use of the term *catechism* and the employment of nicknames to address political targets (*Saint Schultz* and *Saint Juncker*⁵⁶) bolstered the satirical style of this leader's rhetoric, who resorted to humor to reject the European elites.

Le Pen also had a TV scandalous discourse regarding the EU as an economic actor (by literally affirming that it was the "black hole of global growth that killed the French economy"⁵⁷), and with regards to migration (when she accused the French government of having "sanctuarized" the migratory flows⁵⁸). None of these issues were addressed on Twitter during the period analyzed.

Overall, this reveals how the hybrid communication strategy theory might not apply for this case. While this leader opted to project a single discourse on TV interviews, which was, as shown, highly emotional, radical, and colloquial, she used Twitter as a diffusion tool rather than a discursive tool, resulting in an inverse discourse logic when compared to Iglesias and Farage.

⁵⁶ In reference to the then EP President Martin Schulz and the former European Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker.

⁵⁷ Interview on BFMTV - 29 April 2014.

⁵⁸ Interview on France 3 - 18 May 2014.

7. Conclusion

The advent of social media has changed political communication, opening multiple contact channels between politicians and the public. This has also altered the campaign communication dynamics, where Twitter became of paramount importance due to its virality and access to the political debate. Traditional media, therefore, have seen the rise of a robust competitor, especially when it comes to parties that are aiming to by-pass them and use Twitter as a differential discursive tool.

The hybrid communication strategy theory is meant as a tool to understand this duality, and predicted that these parties would follow the stylistic rules of traditional media but then project more radical, informal and personal rhetoric on Twitter. This thesis analyzed specific cases of leaders of populist Eurosceptic parties during the 2014 EP elections to prove the applicability of the assumptions put forward by this theory.

For the case of Farage, but especially for Iglesias, this theory fitted adequately. Iglesias was the most radical and combative leader on Twitter, and while he shared mobilizing pictures and violent cartoons on this platform, he had a moderate discourse during TV interviews, which included a professorial language and policy-based proposals. Furthermore, this leader had close and friendly rhetoric on Twitter, which portrayed him as part of the people - differently than on TV, where he seemed more a representative of them. Similarly, Farage pursued this hybrid strategy by employing a simplistic and colloquial language in his tweets coupled with humor, while he presented formal and informative proposals on TV, depicting UKIP as a non-racist, non-radical party. Like Iglesias, Farage also had participative rhetoric on Twitter.

Conversely, this theory did not reflect Le Pen's strategy. This leader used Twitter as a tool for the diffusion of a single discourse performed on TV or during campaign rallies, but not as a discursive tool itself. Therefore, while on TV Le Pen projected violent, simplistic, and colloquial rhetoric, on Twitter, her messages were rather descriptive. Moreover, this leader did not share pictures with her supporters nor mobilizing cartoons during her campaign. The only occasion on which this leader actively used Twitter was to denounce traditional media, falling into the paradox presented by Krämer (2017): while Le Pen condemned 'elite-run' media, she strongly resorted to them during the whole campaign. In other words, instead of a hybrid

communication strategy, Le Pen had more of a single communication logic, where traditional media were the primary discursive tool, and Twitter represented a secondary, complementary platform. This case reveals how traditional media continues to have a central role in political communication, following what Usherwood & Startin (2013) and Mondon (2015) suggested.

Overall, what these three cases showed is that while this theory can predict communication patterns in some cases, it might not do so for others; therefore, its assumptions are not generalizable. Nonetheless, the results of this research brought some interesting aspects of political communication that could enrich the field. First, these cases depicted how the history of the party matters when it comes to communication strategies: while newcomers such as Podemos tend to use social media massively as a way to counterbalance less attention given by traditional media, historic and well-established parties such as the FN can easily resort to TV and printed media. This will definitely affect the communicational strategies of populist Eurosceptic parties, depending on the time they have been active players on their respective political landscapes.

Second, these results illustrated how the nature of the party also conditions its communication strategies. Thus, parties with highly hierarchical structures, such as the FN, can better project their discourse on TV and other traditional platforms, where the leader takes the active role of the *speaker* and the audience has a passive position of the *listener*. Conversely, parties with more participative structures and close-to-the-people rhetoric like Podemos (and to a lesser extent, UKIP) find in Twitter a suitable discursive tool to portray themselves as part of the people.

Last, this research also shows how traditional media continues to be an essential factor that is not necessarily by-passed by populist Eurosceptic parties but instead used by its leaders according to particular communicational needs. Thus, the amount of traditional media coverage per se is not a determinant factor for the absence or presence of a hybrid communication strategy since, for instance, Farage performed a similar number of TV interviews than Le Pen and received three times more mentions on printed media. However, while Farage opted to have a differentiated discourse on Twitter, Le Pen used traditional media as her discursive tool. In other words, even though all of them resorted to traditional media to a greater or lesser extent (i.e., TV interviews and newspaper articles), Farage and Iglesias reserved an exclusive and

differentiated discursive content on Twitter, while Le Pen used it exclusively as a diffusion tool.

Some questions might arise about why Le Pen did not emulate other leaders in adopting a hybrid strategy. Among other possible reasons⁵⁹, given that a single and disciplined discourse is at the heart of FN's communication logic, a viral and fast-paced platform like Twitter represents a risk during elections. Contrary to TV interviews, where Le Pen can control her discourse by herself, on social media the ability to control the debate and the information virality is somewhat limited. Indeed, this was personally experienced by Le Pen in 2015, after being accused by the media and charged by Justice for distributing violent images. Twitter, therefore, cannot only influence the public debate but also draw the attention of traditional media and change its agenda.

Furthermore, these cases also show how Twitter opens the door for multiple forms of political discourse, which ends up exceeding the mere "use of language" stated by Chilton (2004) and includes innovative elements such as pictures and cartoons. These elements extend the limits of discourse analysis and add new ingredients to the politicization of the EU integration, where populist Eurosceptic parties are approaching the voters differently than the mainstream players.

Finally, some methodological considerations must be noted. Even though the LIWC quantitative tool was useful as a complement of this research, it proved to be insufficient to determine by itself the existence of a hybrid communication strategy. These flaws do nothing but strengthening the role of qualitative methods and discourse analysis as tools to effectively analyze these leaders' discourse. Since LIWC served only to analyze language, both images and cartoons would not have been taken into consideration without a qualitative research methodology. For future research, it would be interesting to analyze the discourse of these leaders during a non-election period or national elections, to find out whether the same strategies apply or if they are exclusive to the politicization of European issues. The inclusion of compelling cases, such as the Italian 5 Star Movement and the Greek Syriza, would also bring further representativeness to the research.

⁵⁹ Some could argue that Le Pen used Twitter less than Farage and Iglesias because perhaps this platform was not as popular in France as it was in the UK or Spain. However, this was not the case as, according to data presented by Lipman (2014), in 2014, both the UK and France appeared in the Top 10 of the countries with the highest number of Twitter users.

Although the implementation of a hybrid communication strategy was not shared by all the leaders analyzed, this study attempted to shed some light on how these parties chose to approach the voter, and how their discourses played a central role in the EU politicization. In this way, both Twitter and TV were channels where these leaders actively projected their rhetoric, and although traditional media continued to be an essential platform for some parties, Twitter appeared as an innovative tool which allowed the combination of radical and simplistic discourses with other visual elements, opening a new era of populist communication in Europe.

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Annex

Tweets and TV interview fragments in their original language

Pablo Iglesias

Tweets

Ven peligrar sus privilegios y se ponen a la defensiva. Si la casta viene a por nosotros es q lo estamos haciendo bien <http://www.politicalocal.es/2494-el-alcalde-de-alcorcon-llama-a-pablo-iglesias-podemos-el-chico-de-la-coleta-y-le-acusa-de-crear-tension/#> (7 May 2014).

Cañete y González plantean el pacto PP-PSOE porque serían capaces de cualquier cosa para defender los intereses de la casta q nos gobierna (13 May 2014).

Tenemos un gobierno fuerte con los débiles y débil con los fuertes. Toda la facilidad para los bancos y ninguna para las familias. (27 April 2014).

Fomentan un modelo que permite que puedas tener trabajo y aún así no llegar a fin de mes. (29 April 2014).

Las pensiones subirán solo el 0,25% hasta 2017. Tener claro que ellos no tendrán problemas con su jubilación. (4 May 2014).

Es una vergüenza q el gobierno siga permitiendo q el oligopolio de las eléctricas ponga en jaque a toda la ciudadanía (25 April 2014).

Rubalcaba rechaza el matrimonio con el PP pero seguirán durmiendo juntos. Sólo les importa las apariencias. (12 May 2014).

Lagarde, directora del FMI, pide despidos con 12 días de indemnización mientras cobra 300.000€ anuales y se llevará una pensión vitalicia (28 May 2014).

Si el FMI quiere que subamos el IVA y continuemos con los recortes que se presente a las elecciones a ver qué pasa. (29 May 2014).

En Toledo con los conductores de Castilla la Mancha, que quiere privatizar Cospedal. Mucha fuerza compañeros. (26 April 2014).

Me marchó de Catalunya muy agradecido tras dos días en los que me he sentido como en familia. Gracias #ClarQuePodem! (12 May 2014).

No vamos a permitir que desde Europa se nos siga forzando a esquilmar derechos laborales y a seguir con los recortes (14 May 2014).

"Vuestro beso", "nuestro exilio". Magnífica pancarta de @PodemosBerlin (9 May 2014).

TV interview fragments

Es un problema de casta, de minorías de privilegiados (...) frente a los ciudadanos dispuestos a hacer política. (laSexta Noticias - 25 May 2014).

La casta ve amenazados sus privilegios (...) son conscientes que se les puede acabar el negocio de robar a los ciudadanos. (Cuatro - 27 May 2014).

No puede ser que en España los ejecutivos de la banca cobren mejor que en ningún lugar de Europa, al tiempo que los sueldos se han depreciado un 10% y que, como señalaba, el 27% de la población es pobre (Cuatro - 27 May 2014).

La única manera de salir de esto es con políticas fiscales expansivas, con políticas que en última instancia estimulen la demanda, que favorezcan la demanda agregada (Canal 10 Asturias - 16 May 2014).

El artículo 128 de la Constitución Española faculta a un gobierno para intervenir empresas estratégicas cuando estén llevando prácticas oligopólicas en contra del interés de los ciudadanos. (Canal 10 Asturias - 16 May 2014).

Nada de radicalidad [en nuestro programa], estamos defendiendo los Derechos Humanos y el sentido común y la decencia. (Cuatro - 27 May 2014).

Si el PSOE está de acuerdo en realizar una reforma fiscal para que paguen los ricos, ningún problema. Si están de acuerdo con hacer una auditoría de la deuda, ningún problema (...) No hay ningún sectarismo. (V Televisión Galicia - 1 July 2014).

La señora Christine Lagarde, la presidenta del Fondo Monetario Internacional (...) cobra 230 mil euros al año, yo creo que las cosas se podrían hacer de otra manera, simplemente gobernando en favor de la gente y no gobernando en favor de las entidades financieras (Canal 10 Asturias - 16 May 2014).

Nosotros no decimos más de lo que dice la gente normal, tiene derecho a tener una sanidad decente, una educación decente, tiene que haber salarios decentes (Cuatro - 27 May 2014).

La clave es el poder de la gente, desde que los griegos inventaron la palabra democracia, sabemos que democracia quiere decir que el poder, que el gobierno, está en manos de la gente (Cuatro - 27 May 2014).

Lo que no se puede permitir en España es que salgan 400.000 personas al año (...) y que se reduzca la población activa porque eso es la base de sostenibilidad del sistema de pensiones. (Cuatro - 27 May 2014).

El problema no son los 6 millones de parados que hay, el problema es un modelo de desarrollo económico que nos condena a ser una colonia del norte de Europa, porque lo que se ofrece básicamente es mano de obra barata. (Canal 10 Asturias - 16 May 2014).

La política monetaria europea no puede ser una política diseñada (...) para que le guste solamente a los bancos alemanes, tiene que ser una política monetaria para asegurar la dignidad de los europeos (...) entregaron toda la soberanía en algo tan importante como la política monetaria a una institución que no responde a ningún parlamento. (Canal 10 Asturias - 16 May 2014).

Aquí estamos viendo cómo parece que las decisiones no las toma el Consejo de Ministros sino que vienen de Bruselas, de Berlín, o de la troika Europea. Aquí parece que es más importante para

algunos obedecer al sistema financiero que obedecer a los ciudadanos. (V Televisión Galicia - 1 July 2014).

Marine Le Pen

Tweets

Hollande: sous-préfet de la République <http://www.frontnational.com/2014/05/hollande-sous-prefet-de-la-republique/#.U2ixlj0qO9Q.twitter> (6 May 2014).

Dérapiage de Taubira comparant la Marseillaise à un "karaoké d'estrade", refusant de la chanter: Valls doit annoncer ce soir son limogeage MLP (11 May 2014).

Communiqué de Presse de Marine Le Pen: Manuel #Valls doit annoncer ce soir le limogeage de Madame #Taubira <https://rassemblementnational.fr/communiqués/manuel-valls-doit-annoncer-ce-soir-le-limogeage-de-madame-taubira/#.U2-6IXTsBV8.twitter> (11 May 2014).

Alstom abandonné par le gouvernement français au profit d'un dépeçage américain ou allemand! <http://www.frontnational.com/2014/04/alstom-abandonne-par-le-gouvernement-francais-au-profit-dun-depeçage-americain-ou-allemand/#.U15QRjBzVt0.twitter> (28 April 2014).

Marine Le Pen sur France 3 #Alstom #austérité #Européennes2014 #Kerviel <https://rassemblementnational.fr/videos/marine-le-pen-sur-france-3-10/#.U3oGbVBz0qw.twitter> (19 May 2014).

Regardez "Le roman de l'euro" ou l'histoire de la responsabilité de l'UMPS dans la souffrance imposée aux peuples http://pluzz.francetv.fr/videos/le_roman_de_l_euro_101971757.html ... MLP (16 May 2014).

Droit de vote des étrangers: le #PS persiste à vouloir dépouiller les Français de leur droit exclusif <https://rassemblementnational.fr/communiqués/droit-de-vote-des-etrangers-le-ps-persiste-a-vouloir-depouiller-les-francais-de-leur-droit-exclusif/#.U2kSYIhYfJM.twitter> (6 May 2014)

Alliances au parlement européen: #Reuters me fait dire exactement le contraire de ce que j'ai déclaré. MLP #manip 27 May 2014)

Le ramassis de sous-entendus calomnieux, livré par le journal de Dassault contre le FN ne restera pas sans réponse. #PravdaLeRetour (3 May 2014)

Demain dès 11h, suivez mon discours, en présence de nos têtes de liste, en direct sur <http://www.fn-europeennes.fr> #EP2014 (30 April 2014).

Je serai ce soir à #Marseille pour animer un meeting avec @lepenjm. Suivez-nous en direct : <http://www.dailymotion.com/MarineLePen> (20 May 2014).

Retrouvez mon appel aux Français ce soir, à moins de 48h du scrutin : <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a-WTGz4ufCQ> ... #DirectMLP #EP2014 (23 May 2014).

Marine Le Pen veut "bloquer" l'avancée de l'UE via @Le_Figaro <http://www.lefigaro.fr/flash-actu/2014/05/04/97001-20140504FILWWW00013-marine-le-pen-veut-bloquer-l-europe.php> (4 May 2014).

TV interview fragments

La disparition des départements, c'est une exigence là aussi qui a été posée par l'Union européenne, et là encore le Président de la République comme une sorte de petit sous-préfet européen se soumet aux volontés de l'Union européenne contre l'intérêt de notre organisation territoriale (18 May 2014).

Je pense que M. Valls doit la congédier (...) ça n'est pas possible, ça n'est pas possible pour les français, ça n'est pas possible au regard de l'histoire de la France, au regard de tous ces qui sont morts en chantant cet hymne national (12 May 2014).

Et? ça va donner quoi ces belles paroles? Ça va donner rien du tout, car bien évidemment (...) le gouvernement socialiste ne discute pas de comment faire en sorte que Alstom reste français, ils discutent est-ce qu'il vaut mieux nous vendre aux américains? ou est ce qu'il vaut mieux nous vendre aux allemands? (29 April 2014)

Le patriotisme, comme son nom l'indique, voyez, c'est la patrie. La patrie c'est la France (18 May 2014)

L'objectif de l'UMP et du PS est la dilution de notre nation, la dilution de son identité, de sa culture, la disparition de ses frontières et surtout la disparition de la souveraineté du peuple, qu'elle soit juridique, politique, législative, territoriale, budgétaire, monétaire, et cetera, et cetera (24 April 2014).

Moi je dis aux français: tous ceux qui ont changé d'avis dans les trois mois qui précède l'élection sont des fieffés menteurs, voyez-vous (...) ils ont vu mourir les entreprises les unes après les autres (29 April 2014).

Je veux vous dire, je veux vous dire, les français savent pertinemment que je suis là où je dois être pour les défendre en toutes circonstances (18 May 2014).

Moi je suis une force autonome, c'est ma fierté, et je défends le peuple et c'est le peuple qui me porte et c'est lui, c'est avec lui, pour lui que je veux que nous gouvernions demain (27 May 2014).

Écoutez, permettez-moi, moi je pense à nous, voilà moi je pense à la France et je pense aux français, voilà je ne pense pas aux autres, ça peut être égoïste mais pour l'instant ce qui m'intéresse au plus haut point c'est la situation de mon propre pays (29 April 2014).

Il faut aujourd'hui remettre en cause, à mon sens, remettre le pouvoir entre les mains du peuple et donc la seul moyen de faire parler le peuple c'est de dissoudre l'Assemblée Nationale et de mettre en place la proportionnelle (27 May 2014).

Je veux rendre le pouvoir au peuple français, je veux qu'ils puissent décider pour lui même, par lui même dans toute une série de domaines et c'est ça que je ferai au Parlement européen (27 May 2014).

Mais très clair, bloquer l'Union européenne. Je le dis, je l'assume, moi je n'avance pas masqué, je n'avance pas derrière des slogans creux ou vides de sens, j'avance derrière un slogan clair 'Non à Bruxelles, Oui à la France' (5 May 2014).

L'Union européenne est une machine à broyer les peuples, c'est un monstre qui est en échec dans tous les domaines dont elle s'est occupée, donc je ne veux pas de cette construction politique forcée, je ne veux pas que l'on aspire la souveraineté des français, leur liberté, leur maîtrise de leur destin pour les transmettre à des technocrates non élus (5 May 2014).

Moi j'entends depuis tout à l'heure sur le plateau la soupe qu'on nous sert depuis maintenant des semaines, une soupe indigeste et des arguments éculés: l'Europe c'est la paix gnagnagna, la France est trop petite, etc, etc. C'est le catéchisme de l'Union européenne, c'est le catéchisme selon Saint Schultz et l'apocalypse selon Saint Juncker ou à l'inverse (18 May 2014).