

# EPS { European Politics and Society

## Hope, Joy and Trust: A Study of Positive Emotional Rhetorics in the 2022 French Presidential Campaign

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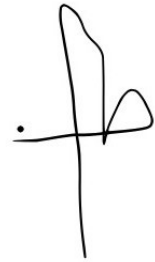
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## Declaration

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## Acknowledgements

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## Abstract

Despite most studies emphasizing negative emotional appeals as a key characteristic of populism, a growing body of research indicates that populist parties are shifting towards significantly more positive appeals. This paper analyzes the construction of positive emotional rhetoric by populist candidates in the 2022 French presidential campaign. Focusing on the far-left candidate Jean-Luc Mélenchon and the far-right candidate Marine Le Pen, this study aims to decipher how these actors evoke three positive discrete emotions, namely joy, hope and trust, in their official propaganda materials. To proceed, the official propaganda materials for the 2022 presidential election (including candidacy announcements, professions of faith, and short or long broadcasts) were analyzed in an explanatory sequential mixed methods design. The initial quantitative phase employed the National Research Council (NRC) Lexicon to assign the three positive emotion categories to the dataset. Subsequently, qualitative content analysis produced eight campaign themes which were further delineated into twenty-four codes. These codes were then attributed to the sentences that scored for the three positive discrete emotions. To proceed with the analysis of distinctions between the far-left and the far-right populist strategic use of positive emotions, three hypotheses were formulated. These hypotheses guided the categorization of prominent emotion types and focal codes invoked by the two candidates. The findings of this study have implications for future research on positive emotional appeals and suggest that the candidates strategically invoke positive emotions in alignment with populist-left and right-wing ideology.

*Keywords:* populism; French elections; political campaign; positive emotions; NRC Lexicon.

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### **Abbreviations**

**ARCOM:** Autorité de Régulation de la Communication Audiovisuelle et Numérique

**CA:** Candidacy Announcement

**CEVIPOF:** Centre for Political Research at Sciences Po

**CNCCEP:** Commission Nationale de Contrôle de la Campagne électorale en vue de l'Élection Présidentielle

**CNCL:** Commission Nationale de la Communication et des Libertés

**NRC Lexicon:** The National Research Council lexicon

## I. Introduction

*'Let's get the happy days started!'*

This quote, selected from the official presidential debate of the 2017 French presidential elections by the far-left populist candidate Jean-Luc Mélenchon, opens the discussion on the importance of using positive emotions in the political sphere. Specifically, this thesis will aim to bring to light the construction of positive emotional rhetoric by populist actors in the French 2022 presidential election.

In the present study, positive emotions will be understood under the guise of 'emotional rhetorics' developed by Marion Ballet (2012). As this thesis focuses on the use of positive emotions in populist presidential campaigning, the three positive emotions theorized by Robert Plutchik (1980), namely joy, hope and trust, will be studied. First, research has shown that populist leaders invoke positive emotions such as joy, hope, and trust for strategic purposes (Sander and Scherer, 2014). Secondly, these three emotions are highly relevant to the methodology of the research, as the emotional model of Plutchik model launched the only emotion-lexicon that includes positive emotions (Mohammad and Turney, 2010; 2013). Moreover, the role of emotions is particularly relevant when studying political behaviour. Specifically, studies discussing populism often emphasize (positive) emotional appeals as a key characteristic of populism to attract voters (Kriesi, 2014; Clarke et al., 2006; Demertzis, 2006; Maldonado, 2017; Mudde and Kaltwasser 2017; Demertzis 2014). Therefore, the theoretical framework of this thesis understood the definition of populism as a thin-centred ideology developed by Mudde, through the prism of left and right-wing political communication (Jansen, 2011; Weyland, 2001, Gidengil et al., 2022).

Additionally, this paper bridges a gap in the academic literature where the field of positive emotions invoked by populist actors is largely unexplored. The overwhelming majority of studies on populist emotional appeals dealt solely with emotions perceived as negative, such as fear, anger, or hatred. However, positive emotions deserve more attention as they assume a relevant role for populist actors (Widmann, 2021:163), especially the positive emotional component in campaign discourses (Insero, 2022). In addition, multiple studies have shown that, in the last decade, populist parties were shifting towards significantly more appeals to positive emotions to mobilize support and convince the electorate (Gerstlé and Nai, 2019; Freistein et al., 2022; Leser and Spissinger, 2020). However, up to this date, research has focused mainly on the effectiveness rather than the strategy and framing tactics adopted by party candidates.

Moreover, France is a particularly useful case study for the study of populism, as it is one of the few examples in Europe where two successful but philosophically opposed populist movements coexist (Ivaldi, 2018a, 2018b; Shields, 2013). On the one hand, left-wing and inclusionary populism is now well recognized in the literature as being associated with Jean-Luc Mélenchon and his party La France Insoumise (Cautrès, 2017; Chiocchetti, 2020; Marlière, 2019). On the other hand, radical right populism and exclusion are commonly

associated with Marine Le Pen and her Rassemblement National, formerly the Front National (Ivaldi 2018a). Subsequently, multiple studies have focused on populist discourses during the French presidential elections, but studies focusing on positive populist emotional appeals have not received the most attention. As an exception, Marion Ballet (2020) highlighted that the 2017 campaign had been particularly positive, given the considerably higher use of hope compared to previous elections. These findings were pioneering in the development of this thesis given that most studies link French populists to more negative rhetoric, by relying on appeals of fear and anger of voters on topics such as the economic system, globalization, immigration or Islam (Ivaldi, 2018; Khoudary, 2021; Gerstlé and Nai, 2019; Nai, 2021, etc...).

Furthermore, although edifying work has been published, this thesis aims to act on the fact that studies on the evocation of emotions by far-left populist parties are not at all as numerous as the ones used in the case of the far-right populist (Häberlen and Smith, 2014). Therefore, this thesis endeavours to build upon numerous studies that have mentioned the importance of future research focusing on the deeper roots of the appeal of populist parties (Gidengil, 2022: 448) and on how these politicians make use of positive emotions thematically (Brader and Corrigan 2005, Ridout and Searles 2011, Weber et al., 2011). Particularly, this thesis aims to delve into what seems to be missing in the scholarship, namely, the construction of positive emotional rhetorics by far-right and far-left populist actors in the French 2022 presidential election. The concepts developed and the crucial linkage between them delineate a solid theoretical gap that gave rise to the ensuing research question.

‘How do French populist left and populist right parties evoke positive emotions in the campaign propaganda materials of the 2022 French Presidential election?’

In this research question, the evocation of positive emotions encompasses not only the number of positive emotions evoked but also delves into the rationale underpinning the speeches when these emotions arise. Therefore, this research question aims to identify the social and political logic and topics that encourage populist candidates to mobilize joy, trust, and hope to influence the vote.

The research question will be answered through an explanatory sequential mixed methods design in which the official propaganda speeches were assigned to positive emotion categories (joy, hope and trust) through a quantitative phase with the National Research Council (NRC) Lexicon developed by Mohammad & Turney (2010). Subsequently, qualitative content analysis produced campaign themes which were further developed into codes. These codes were then attributed to the three positive discrete emotions. Here, the data set will consist of the so-called official propaganda materials, including candidacy announcements, professions of faith, and official long or short campaign broadcasts, set by the *Autorité de Régulation de la Communication Audiovisuelle et Numérique* (ARCOM).

To achieve that, this paper will follow a thorough structure. First, a theoretical framework focusing on positive emotional rhetorics and populism will be outlined. Secondly, a review of the literature examining the state-of-the-art of the two concepts will be presented to justify the gaps filled by this thesis. Correspondingly, three hypotheses will be delineated. Further, the research design and the methodology will be explained, leading to the analysis and discussion of the explanatory sequential mixed methods design. Lastly, the conclusion will summarise the findings, and suggest potential directions for further study.

## **I. Theoretical Framework**

*'No consensus prevails on the definition of emotions'* (Gadarian et al., 2023: 193).

*'The very many different traits of populism complicate its definition'* (Collier, 2001: 1814)

These quotes highlight the difficulty of defining the two key concepts of this research, namely, (positive) emotions and populism. The literature reveals that both the definition of emotions and populism depend on the perspective one takes. These two concepts are central to the present study as it aims to analyze the use of positive emotions in populist official propaganda materials for the 2022 French Presidential election. Therefore, this theoretical framework will intend to provide a thorough definition introducing the concepts that will be used during the analysis. To do that, the framework will follow a top-down approach to introduce the theory of emotional rhetorics (Ballet, 2012) and the positive emotions studied in the practical part, as well as populism seen through the prism of political communication.

### **A. Defining Emotions as 'emotional rhetorics'**

Before proceeding with the theoretical framework, preliminary remarks need to be enacted for clarity matters. This thesis focuses on the use of positive emotions, which are considered a specific register of the broad conceptualization of emotions (Roseman, 2011). For this reason, the theoretical framework follows a top-down approach, first encompassing the concept of emotional rhetorics and ending with the definition of positive emotions.

To define emotions, this thesis adopted the concept of emotional rhetorics, also known as affective rhetorics, theorized by Marion Ballet (2012). Following the logic that emotions and affects are interchangeable (Gross, 2015), as affects are 'generic term for a whole range of preferences evaluations, moods, and emotions' (Fiske and Taylor, 1991), Ballet refers simultaneously to emotional and affective rhetorics. For clarity matters, this thesis will refer solely to emotional rhetorics. There are two reasons explaining this theoretical choice. Not only are emotional rhetorics tailored for the study of emotions constructed in discourses (Ballet, 2012, 2014, 2016, and 2020), but they also gather the main theoretical considerations present in the existing literature as well. Indeed, emotional rhetorics consists of three defining characteristics without which an emotion would not be considered as such. These three categories include imaginary or real *stimuli* and their evaluation, the purpose of the emotion, and classification through emotional registers (Ballet, 2011).

#### **1. Stimuli, evaluation and purposes**

An emotion could not exist without a *stimulus*. Here, a *stimulus* is understood as any object or event that elicits a sensory or behavioural response in an organism and launches emotional processes (Marcus et al., 2000; Brader, 2005; Barbalet, 2002; Damasio, 2000, etc). When the emotive causes are isolated, one can explain emotional appeals with political consequences (Valentino et al., 1991; Erhardt et al., 2021; Heiss, 2021; Roseman et al.,

1986). Correspondingly, research has shown that the second step of emotional processes implies an evaluation of these stimuli (Braud, 1991). These evaluations are guided by another key component of emotions, namely, emotional purposes.

By essence, the Latin etymology of emotions retraces back to *movere*, translated to move, affect, or provoke. Therefore, emotions can be considered as motors of action (Ballet, 2011). Emotions influence political behaviour and judgments by providing these with sense. In the case of this thesis, the focus is set on the use of positive emotions and not on the purpose of these emotions. Therefore, this study uses the theory stating that populist politicians invoke positive emotions to gather the electorate and votes during the election (Gerstlé and Nai, 2019; Freistein et al., 2022; Leser and Spissinger, 2020). This link will be further developed in Chapter III.

Furthermore, the purpose of the emotion can lay in different timeframes. There are three times when thinking about emotions: the emotions that happen at the moment, the ones that are oriented on the past (retrospective), and the emotions focusing on the future (prospective) (Gadarian et al., 2023). In addition, the purposes of emotions vary according to multiple emotional registers. These registers will be described in the following sub-chapter.

## **2. Emotional registers**

There are multiple registers of emotions, which are usually classified by specific categories in the scholarship (Gadarian et al., 2023). Here, the concept of emotional rhetorics is based upon the discrete model of emotion, a predominant theory in use for empirical research in political psychology and political communication (Nabi, 2003). Discrete models define emotions as distinct and innate categories (Fontaine et al., 2013). Out of the multiple models theorized, Ekman's model of six discrete emotions (1971) is considered the most renowned one. Here, the author theorized anger, disgust, fear, joy, sadness, and surprise. Following his work, multiple scholars including Plutchik (1980), Frijda (1986), Scherer (2005), and Roseman (2011) proposed different amounts of discrete emotions.

Before introducing the model used in this thesis, it is important to note that there is considerably less literature on positive emotions compared to negative emotions. First, positive emotions are harder to distinguish from negative ones, because of the numerous relationships that exist between them (Averill, 1980b). Furthermore, as to Barrett et al. (2001), people are more likely to have several good feelings concurrently than several negative emotions at the same time. However, although positive emotions are under-researched compared to negative emotions, some scholars have tried to differentiate positive emotions (Cavanaugh et al., 2016; Goetz et al., 2010; Hu et al., 2019; Shiota et al., 2014; Tong 2015). For instance, some research mentions four positive emotions, including pride, excitement, gratitude, and contentment (Cavanaugh et al., 2016), while others theorized up to 13 different positive emotions (Tong, 2015).



To ease the analysis of emotions that are already underresearched in this thesis, Plutchik's wheel (1980) will constitute the theoretical framework of this study (see Figure 1). This theoretical choice is driven by multiple factors. First, the emotions presented by the wheel are known enough to be shared by candidates, the audience they target, and the researcher who conducts this study (Ballet, 2011). Secondly, the three positive emotions of Plutchik's wheel, which are joy, anticipation and trust are highly relevant when studying populist rhetoric. Indeed, populist leaders invoke positive emotions such as joy, hope, and trust for strategic purposes (Sander and Scherer, 2014). These links will be further established in the literature review. Secondly, the model of Plutchik is truly intriguing as it is the only one that delineates eight primary emotions that oppose each other directly: joy/sadness, anger/fear, trust/disgust, and surprise/anticipation (see Figure 1). Finally, Plutchik's model is highly relevant to the method of this research, as his conceptualization of discrete emotions launched the only emotion-lexicon that includes positive emotions (Mohammad and Turney, 2010; 2013). Therefore, a recognized automated tool, the NRC Lexicon, enables the detection of these three emotions. This statement explains why this thesis is focusing on anticipation, joy and trust and not on other positive emotions. Enthusiasm and pride are known to be other prominent positive emotions in populist rhetoric. However, the validity of emotional detection is known to be increased when using an automated lexicon (Mohammad and Turney, 2013). Therefore, the study of joy, trust and anticipation, which are classified in lexicons as well as highly relevant in the populist rhetoric, offers a potentially less biased analytical framework within the academic inquiry. This will be further detailed and explained in the methodology chapter (Chapter V). Because this work focuses on the use of positive emotions in populist presidential campaigning, a short analysis of joy, trust and anticipation will constitute the next sub-section. Moreover, the link between emotions and populism will be briefly mentioned as it will be extensively discussed in the literature review.

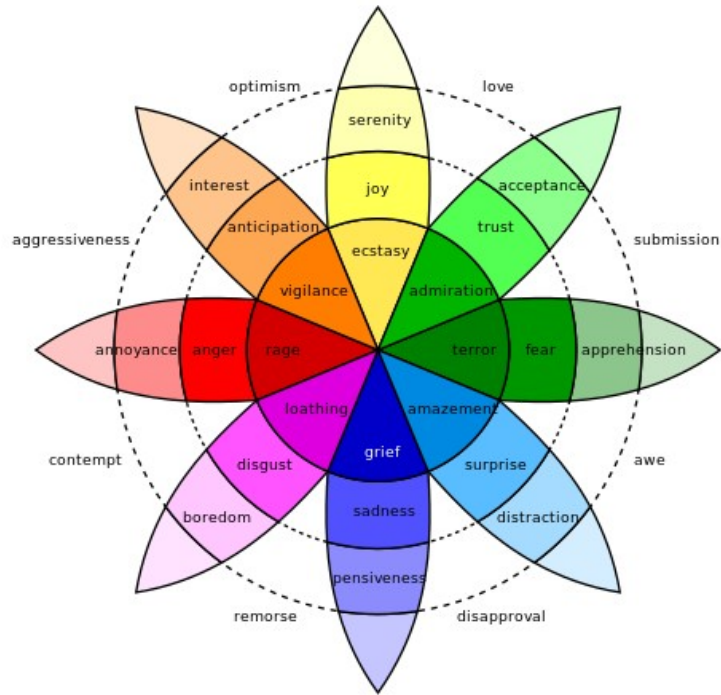


Figure 1: The Wheel of Emotions, Robert Plutchik, 1980

Joy is an emotion generally linked to a sense of satisfaction with life, and it tends to make people more flexible and more creative in problem-solving (Fredrickson, 2003; Ward, 2020). Joy is considered a retrospective emotion, since ‘satisfaction and happiness stem from developments in the (recent) past were congruent with one’s own goals’ (Lazarus, 2001: 67). Therefore, the notion of making progress in one goal is central to this emotion (Sander and Scherer, 2014). In the realm of political leadership, joy serves as a linchpin in the complex interplay of governance and resilience (Lecheler et al., 2013). In particular, the scholarship has focused on the link displayed between joy and populists, who would use this positive emotion to bolster the relatability of the leader and amplify persuasive influence (Gerstlé and Nai, 2019)

Trust is understood as an emotion influencing both social and economic life. Being able to fairly rely on other people’s word saves a lot of time, which is why trust has evolved to be valuable (Roseman, 2018). Trust is an essential element contributing to long-term political stability, as the emotion underpins the legitimacy of government, fosters social cohesion, and garners public support (Widmann, 2021). Moreover, populists are also shown to exponentially make use of positive emotions including joy and trust (Widmann, 2021).

Within the literature on positive emotions, anticipation gathers the least research. According to Van Boven and Ashworth (2007), anticipation involves the evaluation of an unpredictable future, leading to positive or negative outcomes. Many studies use anticipation and hope interchangeably (Lazarus, 2001). Because works qualifying this positive emotion as ‘hope’ rather than as ‘anticipation’ are considerably more numerous, this study will be

referring to ‘hope’ when dealing with the emotion classified as ‘anticipation’ by Plutchik. Hope is a prospective emotion that characterizes the anticipation of pleasant future events (Roseman, 2011). Because hope focuses on future rewards, the emotion permits individuals to face the future with calmness and composure, especially in a difficult situation. As will be discussed in the literature review, by promising transformative change and facilitating the narrative of a collective identity, hope is the favoured positive emotion of populists (Nabi, 2003; Lecheler and de Vreese, 2019).

## **B. Defining Populism and Theoretical Considerations**

As briefly mentioned in the theoretical framework of emotions, populism is linked to the strategic cultivation of positive emotions. As this thesis investigates the populist evocation of positive emotions in the campaign speeches of the 2022 French Presidential election, a thorough definition of populism needs to be enacted. Here and similarly to the definition of emotions, the theoretical framework of populism will follow a top-down approach. First, the general considerations including the definition of Mudde will be enacted. Second, this universal definition will be questioned through the prism of political communication. A comprehensive understanding of the goals and *modi operandi* of populists is crucial for the subsequent analysis of the French populist emotional rhetorics in the practical section of the thesis.

Starting from the statement that societies are experiencing a ‘populist Zeitgeist’ (Mudde, 2004), in which populist parties predominate in public debates, it is natural to question the interest surrounding the concept. Indeed, populism has been widely studied within the scholarship of social sciences. For instance, in September 2023, more than 602,000 entries on Google Scholar focused on populism. In addition, the concept is particularly popular in the public sphere, as has been seen with it being elected the ‘Word of the Year’ in 2017 by the Cambridge Dictionary. This growing interest in populism is no coincidence. Due to economic crises and austerity measures that addressed socio-economic inequality (Berman, 2017), populist parties have been on the rise in terms of vote share (Meyer, 2021). Although the concept is a widespread phenomenon, populism has been subjected to multiple disagreements within the scholarship, mainly because the concept triggers many different interpretations and constructs. Therefore, to encourage comparisons and further empirical research, a consensual definition of populism will be presented.

### **1. Universal Considerations**

Among all perspectives on populism, the research of Cas Mudde (2004; 2007) on the success of populist radical parties is considered a pioneering work, mainly for its analytical framework relying on a comprehensive definition.

‘Populism is a thin-centred ideology that considers society to be ultimately separated into two homogeneous and antagonistic groups, ‘the pure people’ versus ‘the corrupt elite’,

and which argues that politics should be an expression of the *volonté générale* (general will) of the people'. (Mudde, 2004: 543)

According to this definition, multiple cleavages construct populism. Specifically, the in-group-out-group cleavages are key. Regarding the distinction between the two antagonist groups, Mudde himself defines 'the people' as a particular national group made of naturally sovereign individuals while simultaneously marginalized or misunderstood (Mudde and Kaltwasser, 2013). Considered 'pure' as opposed to a 'corrupt' entity, the distinction between the two groups is heavily charged with moralism, as the elites would be out of touch and would 'live in ivory towers and only pursue their interests' (Jagers and Walgrave, 2007: 324) compared to populists who represent the whole people (Müller, 2016). This anti-establishment sentiment is usually directed at current or former power-holders. Therefore, the themes of people-centrism and anti-elitism are central to the populist rhetoric (Rooduijn et al., 2011).

Furthermore, a distinction has been traced between right-wing populism (Mudde, 2007) and left-wing populism (March, 2007; Mouffe, 2018). The differentiation applies to French right-wing and left-wing populists, which are the actors of the present study. This distinction focuses on the groups who would, unrightfully, get the most benefits and who, thus, are to blame for societal and economic woes. On the one hand, for right-wing populists, the population that does not fall under 'the people' and receives aid from 'the elites' is responsible for the decreasing condition of society. On the other hand, for left-wing or socio-economic populists, the focus is set on the power of banks, international financial institutions, and to some degree America and the Westernisation of societies (Gidengil et al., 2022: 444).

The above-mentioned distinction directly highlights the fact that populism is divided between the right and the left, which is highly relevant as this thesis explores the speeches in official propaganda documents of both poles of the political spectrum. Here, the political goals of both the left and the right (Hawkins et al., 2018a, Mudde, 2017) are key. The radical left-wing populist agenda envisions a society grounded in principles of equality and inclusiveness, prioritizing attention to social and economic issues while challenging the prevailing *status quo* (Katsambekis, 2017). In contrast, right-wing populism frames anything beyond the national realm as a menace to the unity of the sovereign people and emphasises ethnic and territorial bonds (Mudde, 2007). Consequently, their aim is the assimilation of various groups, such as immigrants, foreigners, and those with different religious beliefs. Existing literature generally portrays left-wing populist parties as more socially inclusive, diverging from the predominantly exclusive stance attributed to their right-wing counterparts (Katsambekis, 2017; Mudde and Kaltwasser, 2013).

Finally, another difference between what characterizes populists is to be found in their discourses depending on the space they occupy (Gidengil et al., 2023). Mansbridge and Maceo (2019) have focused on populist beliefs and speeches when the party or leader stands in opposition to the current government. They theorized that in this case, the discursive *modus operandi* is to enhance the importance of the people who constitute the majority of the

population yet are unfairly sidelined and ignored when their interests should be vital to democracy. In contrast, when in power, populist discourses focus on destroying checks and balances to undermine democratic norms and increase their executive authority (Pappas, 2019).

## 2. Populism in Political Communication

Although the definition by Mudde is considered as the agreement on a minimal definition of the concept, this thesis analyses populist emotional rhetorics in official propaganda documents. It thus aims to explore populist considerations through the lens of political communication. Political communication ‘encompasses the construction, sending, receiving, and processing of messages that potentially have a significant direct or indirect aspect on politics’ (Graber and Smith, 2005: 479). In the present study, the materials analyzed are central to the field of political communication, as these are official propaganda materials regulated by the *Autorité de Régulation de la Communication Audiovisuelle et Numérique* (ARCOM) and the *Commission Nationale de Contrôle de la Campagne électorale en vue de l'Élection Présidentielle* (CNCCEP).

As has been developed above, the approach of Mudde understands populism solely as an ideology independent of the communication strategies of populists. Questioning this definition, some appreciate this thin ideology as one that simultaneously shapes and defines the views of citizens, as well as the mobilization strategies (Jansen, 2011; Weyland, 2001), and the discourse of political parties and movements (Gidengil et al., 2022: 443). Furthermore, another approach primarily understands populism as a particular communication style (Stanyer et al., 2017: 353; Jagers and Walgrave, 2007; Aalberg et al., 2017). With this understanding that populism would also be a way to communicate, some work focused on the rhetoric style of populists. In this study, the upcoming considerations are highly valuable for the emotional analysis of populist communication strategies. First, studies indicate that populist figures across various regions exhibit similarities in their populist approach, emotional appeal, and negative messaging, mirroring patterns observed in mainstream politicians as well (Gerstlé and Nai, 2019). Correlatively, while it is important to acknowledge and value the inherent distinctions between right-wing and left-wing populist ideologies, there is no major difference in the communication strategies of populists from both ideological poles (Aalberg and De Vreese, 2017). Furthermore, populists would make use of informal language, devoid of overly technical terms, in an attempt to establish a personal rapport with the audience (Gerstlé and Nai, 2019). Although populists generally use history and symbols as a way to consolidate popular support (Couperus and Tortola, 2019: 106), the populist rhetorical approach is frequently associated with a subtle kind of anti-intellectualism, a ‘denial of expert knowledge,’ and the ‘advocacy of common sense’ (Moffitt and Tormey, 2014: 391). Therefore, with this ‘conspicuous exhibition of closeness to (ordinary) citizens’, such populists would easily appeal to and speak in the name of the people (Jagers and Walgrave, 2007: 322). However, most populist strategies choose to enhance the figure of the leader rather than his organization and his ideas (Nai, 2021). Furthermore, it appears that populists base their political strategy on provocations, derogatory

language, aggression, and negative emotionality (Heinisch, 2003; Oliver and Rahn, 2016, Immerzeel and Pickup, 2015, etc...).

Because this thesis analyzes the French presidential elections of 2022, it is important to highlight studies that have focused on rhetoric and themes attached to populists during their 2017 campaigns. For instance, Gerstlé and Nai (2019) analyzed the campaign speeches of Marine Le Pen, which showed that the candidate would focus on topics ‘owned’ by her party, such as terrorism, security, asylum, immigration, and religious extremism. Moreover, Inero (2022) focused on the key notion of ‘resurgency’ in the speeches of Marine Le Pen. Generally, research has shown that the Rassemblement National sought to portray France as a nation that had experienced past greatness but was presently undergoing a period of decline. Correspondingly, the RN would crucially affirm that France's greatness stems from its strong republican principles and Christian religious foundations (Rueda, 2022). When analyzing the speeches of Mélenchon, the authors found that the candidate used the most informal language and anti-elitism rhetoric (Gerstlé and Nai, 2019).

By thoroughly defining populism and positive emotions, this theoretical framework provided a preliminary glimpse into the intricate interplay and gaps between the concepts. These clear concepts paved the way and were essential for a focused literature review, the establishment of hypotheses and effective data analysis.

## **II. Literature review**

Now that both positive emotions, populism and their intrinsic linkage have been defined, this literature review will present the state-of-the-art of the two concepts, to justify the gaps filled by this thesis. As a reminder, this thesis focuses on the use of positive emotions by French populist candidates during the 2022 presidential elections. Firstly, this review will investigate the role of emotions in political behaviour generally, by enhancing the fact that emotional appeals (Brader, 2005) are particularly strong during election periods. Secondly, the specific use of positive emotional appeals amongst populist candidates will be enacted. Finally, this literature review will focus on the scholarship dedicated to the production of emotional appeals for populist candidates in the case of the French elections.

### **A. Emotional politics**

#### **1. An emerging field**

The role of emotions in political behaviour is a well-studied subject and can take a multitude of shapes. However, for decades, the literature on emotions within democracies limited the legitimacy of emotions, by emphasizing the rationality of both politicians and voters, who detached themselves from passions interfering with decision-making processes (Rosanvallon, 1992). Indeed, the democratic doxa was built on the theory of rational

decision-makers and citizens, i.e. free of all sentiment (Descartes, 1649). Although the study of passions had its place in political thought before the 20th century through Aristotle, Plato, Machiavelli, Spinoza, Hume, Adam Smith or Tocqueville (Ansart, 1997), the 1980s relaunched research on the impact of emotions in political decisionism (Woodward, 1996). Some exceptions are to be found in rare studies devoted to the social role of certain emotions. For instance, Erving Goffman focused on interaction rites (1967), Norbert Élias on the transformation of the affective habitus to centuries (1969) and Marcel Mauss on the place of feelings in funeral rituals (1921). Since then, the ideology of Descartes separating reasoning from emotions has been long invalidated (Braud, 1996; Damasio, 1995; Nussbaum, 2001). From the 1990s, many studies in sociology or psychology confirmed the role and impact of emotional politics (Edelman, 1988; Sears, 1993; Marcus et al., 1993). This period of research in the scholarship has been theorized by some as Affective or Emotional Turn (Clough and Halley, 2007; Thompson and Hoggett, 2012). In addition, the cognitive revolution that was taking place in the 1990s enabled the incorporation of political psychology into the examination of political communication (Young et al., 2023). Furthermore, the 2010s have witnessed ‘the bursting of political emotions’ (Maldonado, 2019: 15), also known as ‘emotional relaxation’ (Le Bart, 2005: 3). This relates to the fact that, in the last years, the phenomenon of emotional release for politicians has become more prevalent with the advent of proximity in politics, which prompted candidates to reveal their emotions (Le Bart et al., 2005). Here, the ability of politicians to present themselves as emotionally close, and inhabited by the same emotions as ordinary voters has become key to attracting voters (Ballet, 2017). These findings on an increased political display of emotions hold particular significance, especially as this present study aims to delve into the positive emotional dynamics of populists in an era marked by the emotional release phenomenon.

## **2. Election campaigns or the proliferation of emotional rhetorics**

To understand this dynamic, emotions have been studied during multiple political processes. However, election campaigns are the most usual timeframes to study, as these are fundamentally a ‘sharing of the sensible’ (Rancière, 2000), and thus particularly conducive times to activate emotions (Ballet, 2016; Crabtree et al., 2018; Ridout and Searles, 2011, etc...). From confidence displayed by politicians during debates, to trust placed in the elected candidate, joy on election day, and the potential rejection of the result, displays of emotions are strong (Valentino et al., 2011). Because campaign messages can stir this wide range of emotions, and emotions hold the power of political persuasion (Demertzis, 2013; Faure, 2015; Blondiaux and Traïni, 2018; Le Bart, 2018; Heaney, 2019; Hutchison and Bleiker, 2017), political candidates are strongly motivated to employ emotional campaigns (Ridout and Searles, 2011). Here, politicians make use of what has been theorized as emotional appeals, which can be understood as ‘emotional communications intended to elicit an emotional response from some or all who receive them’ (Brader, 2005). Emotional appeals are highly encouraged and justified by two events occurring during the campaigns. First, candidates can potentially access the highest office of the State, and second, the relationship of domination between citizens and political professionals is at its highest (Valentino et al., 2011). Moreover, research has found that populist candidates heavily rely on these appeals

(Gidengil et al., 2022, Canovan, 1999), much more than mainstream parties (Widmann, 2021; Ballet, 2014). Research on populism frequently underscores the significance of emotional appeals as a prominent characteristic, employed to attract voters (Demertzis, 2006; Maldonado, 2017; Kriesi, 2014; Clarke et al., 2006; Mudde and Kaltwasser 2017; Demertzis 2014). Therefore, analyzing the use of populist positive emotional appeals during the French presidential elections of 2022 appears sound and justified within the scholarly framework.

## **B. Emotional appeals and populist candidates**

### **1. The dominance of negative emotions**

Although this thesis focuses on three positive emotions, it holds significance to highlight that the overwhelming majority of studies on populist emotional appeals dealt solely with emotions perceived as negative, such as fear, anger, or hatred. Besides references to love and compassion, most left the field of positive emotions largely unexplored (Le Bart, 2021; Redlawsk et al., 2022). Furthermore, studies have demonstrated an inherent connection between populist communication and negative emotions, as they often depict the current political landscape in unfavourable terms. Thus, populist actors tend to employ negative emotions more frequently than positive emotions. (Widmann, 2021; Salmela and von Scheve, 2017; Rico et al., 2017; Wodak, 2015). Indeed, populist actors portray themselves as political outsiders, who use negative emotions to criticize and blame the elites and other groups for the grievances of society (Ernst et al., 2017, Hameleers et al., 2016). Consequently, a collection of empirical studies underscores the significance of employing negative emotional appeals in garnering support for populist movements. Most of the research has focused on negative ads' impact on voter turnout (Brader, 2006; Geer, 2006; Kahn and Kenney, 1999; Valentino et al., 2011). Within this strand, most have investigated which between fear and anger drove the support of populists (Vasilopoulos et al., 2018; Nai, 2021; Valentino et al., 2011). These studies on negative campaigning are highly relevant as they have paved the way to question the role of emotions in populist persuasion generally (Gadarian, 2023). Although negative emotions have undergone extensive investigation in the field of political psychology, positive emotions assume a relevant role for populist actors.

### **2. The effects of positive populist emotional rhetorics**

In recent years, the gap regarding research on positive emotional appeals for populist actors has started to fill. Among these studies dealing with populist election campaigns and positive emotional appeals, two main types of research approaches prevail. The first focuses on the effects of positive emotional appeals on voters, who are seen as 'sentimental citizens' (Marcus, 2002). The latter analyzes the production of these positive emotional appeals to understand how candidates use 'emotional persuasion' (Ansart, 1983: 197). The current study focuses on the second strand of research. Nonetheless, an emphasis will be firstly placed on the effects of positive emotions displayed by populists on voting behaviour, as politicians readjust their communication strategies to increase their results in elections. Furthermore, and



as had been mentioned in the theoretical framework, the intricate interplay between populism and joy, hope and trust will be developed in greater detail in the upcoming sub-section.

Firstly, concerning the effects of positive emotional appeals on voters, multiple studies have shown that populist parties were shifting towards appeals to positive emotions to mobilize support and convince the electorate (Gerstlé and Nai, 2019; Freistein et al., 2022; Leser and Spissinger, 2020). Among these studies, the role of joy and hope especially has proven to be a strong determinant for populist rhetoric. Joy would increase media attention (Gerstlé and Nai, 2019; Berger and Milkman, 2012; Maier and Nai, 2020), which contradicts the notion that negativity sells (Godes et al., 2005), but can be understood in light of joy's ability to mobilize people and spur engagement (Marcus and Mackuen, 1993; Brader, 2006; Valentino et al., 2011). Moreover, by tapping into hope, populist figures concentrate on the most optimistic emotion, linking the potential for a brighter future to their candidacy (Hameleers et al., 2016). This strategy involves generating expectations and instilling the belief that overall, more favourable outcomes are achievable in the future (Chadwick, 2015; Just et al., 2007; Lazarus, 2001). In addition, research has shown that when populists appeal to hope, citizens believe that the future is in their control rather than in the hands of the elites (Curato, 2016). Therefore, as hope is a powerful persuasive tool that displays a crucial role in attracting voters, this positive emotion and populism are inexorably linked (Just et al., 2007; Engesser et al., 2017; Chadwick, 2015; Wirz, 2018; Jenkins, 2023). Many other works have focused on the kind of positive emotions felt by the audience once mobilized.

Therefore, research has proved that emotional appeals during campaigns affect voting behaviour and have an impact on the emotions felt by the audience. However, up to this date, research has been focusing mainly on the effectiveness rather than the strategy and framing tactics adopted by party candidates. Therefore, this thesis endeavours to build upon numerous studies that have mentioned the importance of future research focusing on the deeper roots of the appeal of populist parties (Gidengil, 2022: 448) and on how these politicians make use of positive emotions (Brader and Corrigan 2005, Ridout and Searles 2011, Weber et al., 2011).

### **3. The 'production' of positive populist emotional rhetorics**

As has been stated, studies that focus on candidates, let alone on the mechanisms of positive emotional 'production' for populist candidates, are scarce (Ballet, 2014: 3). Here, most studies focus on populist discursive production rather than emotional appeals, and that mainly by examining the ability of political elites to frame issues or campaign messages to social groups or moral values (Clifford, 2019; Gross and Wronski, 2021; Kam et al, 2013; Lipsitz 2018). Coming closer to the research strand this thesis aims to investigate, some researchers linked European populist discourses of citizenship to social, positive 'passions' (Origgi, 2019) to understand how the use of pride in themes of citizenship can explain some major political transformations of our times. Furthermore, some scholars focused on the production of positive emotions generally, without differentiating positive discrete emotions. These studies theorized that populist communication would make strategic use of positive emotions to reinforce ingroup identity (Wirz, 2018; Bonansinga, 2022; Widmann, 2021), or

to underline the good qualities of both the party leader and its potential voters (Bracciale and Martella, 2017; Ernst et al., 2019). Correspondingly, a study tested these findings on distinct positive discrete emotions (Martella and Bracciale, 2022). Indeed, Martella and Bracciale (2022) examined the discourses of Italy's main political leaders during the 2018 general election campaign. Here in particular, the use of hope was the strongest when populist actors would refer to the virtues of the people, or when they would defend their rights (Martella and Bracciale, 2022). Another particularly pioneering research in positive emotional appeal production for populists is the study of Tobias Widmann (2021), who compares how emotional populists are in comparison to mainstream parties as well as how political actors adapt the usage of emotional appeals to different purposes. Here, Widmann expected populist actors to use mainly prospective positive emotions such as hope and enthusiasm, as they are highly mobilizing. However, the findings of his study showed that populists significantly increased appeals to joy and trust, which are retrospective positive emotions generally attributed to mainstream parties. Because mainstream parties are usually the main beneficiaries of the current political system, they tend to shine a positive light on their past track record and thus use retrospective emotions (Widmann, 2021: 4). In the context of this thesis, the research will consist of attributing themes to sentences where the French populist candidates evoked to joy, hope or trust. Therefore, these findings will notably contribute to the formulation of hypotheses and the correlative interpretation of results.

### **C. Positive emotional appeal production in French campaigns**

This thesis aims to bring to light the construction of positive emotional rhetoric by populist actors in the French 2022 presidential election. Accordingly, a thorough examination of the existing literature on analogous research, particularly within the French context, proves exceptionally valuable. The use of emotional rhetoric (Ballet, 2012) has been on the rise in French presidential campaigning. Indeed, in her pioneering work analyzing the production of some emotional registers (fear, indignation, hope, and compassion) in the French presidential campaigns from 1981 to 2017 on more than 700 discourses, Marion Ballet showed that there would be a growing use of emotional rhetorics for French candidates generally (Ballet, 2020). Interestingly, her research showed that the case of France would align with the theory that in the last decade, populist candidates have made significantly greater use of positive emotions to mobilize voters (Gerstlé and Nai, 2019; Freistein et al., 2022; Lesser and Spissinger, 2020). Marion Ballet (2020) highlighted that the 2017 campaign has been particularly positive, given the considerably higher use of hope compared to previous elections. This is visible in the fact that for Jean-Luc Mélenchon et Marine Le Pen, the populist candidates, hope appeals grew the most between 2012 and 2017 with an increase of 50,3 % (Ballet, 2020). These findings are particularly interesting, given that the overwhelming majority of studies indicate a correlation between French populists and a higher prevalence of negative rhetoric, encompassing both the tone and direction of emotional expression, by relying on appeals of fear and anger of voters on topics such as the economic system, globalization, immigration or Islam (Ivaldi, 2018; Khoudary, 2021; Gerstlé and Nai, 2019; Nai, 2021, etc...).

These findings illuminate a previously obscure field and open the discussion on this positive trend in the case of French populists. Ballet explains that this expansion of positive appeals would be due to a specific strategy. Firstly, due to the growing popularity of Marine Le Pen and Jean-Luc Mélenchon over the last decade and a chance to attain office, the two populist candidates became ‘frontrunners’ (Schnur, 2007). Consequently, they had to display more mobilizing, positive emotions. Secondly, populist parties would have heavily relied on hope appeals in 2017 when projecting voters in a future and better alternative society built upon the ‘glorious’ past of France (Ballet, 2020: 69). Thirdly, the strategy is to be found in the specificities of the 2017 campaign, namely, financial insecurity and the rise of terrorism. Therefore, populists would have almost constantly appealed to hope when reassuring voters about their standard of living and their physical security. This would explain why populist appeals to hope were particularly strong in discourses presenting presidential programs with immediate benefits with precise dates. Finally, the analysis of the corpus also confirmed that hope is stronger among those who can claim a place in the second round (M. Le Pen, J.-L. Mélenchon). These findings were further challenged by Bonansinga (2022), who focused on the theme of insecurity in the case of the 2017 French presidential elections. Here, the author showed that when dealing with terrorist insecurity, both positive and negative emotions were appealed to by Marine Le Pen and Jean-Luc Mélenchon. Therefore, in the case of France, the experience of insecurity could be associated with positive emotionality, as insecurity narratives have proven to simultaneously channel a positive sense of solidarity to confront the threat, as well as to the appeal to rage or terror against enemies and dangers (Bonansinga, 2019).

This literature review first presented emotional politics as an emerging field, particularly focusing on its manifestation in election campaigns and the proliferation of emotional rhetorics (Ballet, 2020). Secondly, the review mentioned that, within the realm of emotional appeals and populist candidates, studies investigating the use of negative emotions prevail. However, the review highlighted the relevance of positive emotions and presented the existing literature on the effects and the 'production' of positive emotional rhetorics by populist figures. Notably, the discussion focused on the production of positive emotional rhetorics within the specific context of French campaigns. Therefore, this review provides a foundation for the subsequent analysis of results and discussion (Chapters VI and VII).

Moreover, through this literature review, this thesis showed that what seems to be missing is research focusing on the use of specific discrete positive emotional rhetorics in the case of the French Presidential 2022 elections. First, this review showed the link between populism and positive emotional appeals deserves more interest (Widmann, 2021:163), especially the positive emotional component in campaign discourses (Insero, 2022). Moreover, although edifying work has been published, this thesis aims to act on the fact that studies on the evocation of emotions by far-left populist parties are not at all as numerous as the ones used in the case of the far-right populist (Häberlen and Smith, 2014). Particularly, some pointed out the possibility for future research to focus on how populist-right and populist-left parties differ in terms of positive emotional appeals (Wildmann, 2021: 15). Additionally, although multiple studies have focused on populist discourses during the

French presidential elections, studies focusing on positive populist emotional appeals have not received the most attention. Additionally, no literature on the production of emotional appeals in the 2022 French campaigning has yet been published. In her conclusive chapter, Ballet suggested that her methodology could be used on different emotional registers while focusing on only a few candidates (Ballet, 2012). Therefore, this topic delineates a solid theoretical gap that gave rise to the ensuing research question developed below.

### **III. Research Question and Hypotheses**

Having described the importance of positive emotional rhetorics in populist election campaigning and recognized the existing research opportunities in this field, the current study seeks to contribute to filling this gap. Therefore, following the concepts developed and the crucial linkage between them established, this thesis developed the following research question:

‘How do French populist left and populist right parties evoke positive emotions in the campaign propaganda materials of the 2022 French Presidential election?’

In this research question, the evocation of positive emotions encompasses not only the number of positive emotions evoked but also delves into the rationale underpinning the speeches when these emotions arise. Therefore, this research question aims to identify the social and political logic and topics that encourage populist candidates to mobilize joy, trust, and hope to influence the vote. These emotional registers selected are not foreign to the reader, as they have been introduced in the theoretical framework and literature review given their relevance in the populist rhetoric. In addition, joy, trust and hope represent the positive emotions developed by Plutchik (1980) in his conceptualization of discrete emotions, which will serve as foundational elements in the upcoming Methodology chapter (Chapter V). This research question represents the culmination of all the preceding work that led to an identified gap. Subsequently, the next intuitive step stemming from this research question is the formulation of hypotheses. By creating these, the present study aims to provide propositions that will guide the investigation and analysis of materials, thereby enhancing the scientific rigour of the thesis.

As has been mentioned in the literature review, research has shown that hope is the favoured positive emotion of populists (Nabi, 2003; Lecheler and de Vreese, 2019). In fact, in the 2017 French election, populist candidates evoked hope more than centrist candidates (Ballet, 2020). However, a nuanced emphasis on the overgeneralization of hope needs to be highlighted to ensure that the hypothesis will reflect this emotional appeal in the broader political landscape. Although hope has been theorized as a dominant emotion for populists, it is a positive emotion extensively employed by emerging political figures as well. Indeed, newcomers and non-mainstream politicians, exemplified by Barack Obama, have frequently used positive emotion despite not aligning with the populist archetype (Ferrara, 2013;

Kloppenber, 2010). That being said, the literature offers additional information and precision regarding the circumstances employed by populists when utilizing hope the most. In a presidential campaign setting, it has been proved that populist candidates tend to appeal more to hope when they know they can access the second round of the elections and potentially win (Schnur, 2007; Ballet, 2020; Widmann, 2021). In early February 2022, Marine Le Pen was almost certain to be one of the two selected candidates in the second round of the presidential election (CEVIPOF polls, 2022) and Jean-Luc Melenchon had been emerging as the favourite candidate of the left since 2017, both populist candidates were aware that they could access the second round of the 2022 presidential campaign. Correspondingly, during the same time, the candidate who posed a challenge to their goal of gathering votes and potentially winning the election was the centrist candidate, Emmanuel Macron. Therefore, it seems appropriate to hypothesize that:

*H1: In comparison to the centrist candidate, hope is the emotion that is relatively evoked the most often by populist candidates.*

Moreover, there is a positive correlation between positive populist emotional appeals, especially of hope, and rising insecurity (Ballet, 2020; Bonansinga, 2022). This has been validated in the case of France. Indeed, the 2017 election campaign was more positive than the previous years, yet, it took place during a year when the economic, social, and security climate was more negative (Ballet, 2020). Not only did many negative events linked to the campaign take place, such as the Penelope Gate that took place in January 2017 and a terrorist attack on the Champs Elysees two days before the campaign, but those were the first elections since terrorism intensified in France. Because the 2022 campaign started a couple of weeks after the start of the war in Ukraine, which launched a heightened climate of both financial and warfare insecurity in France, such a scenario could be expected in this campaign as well. Therefore, it emerges that:

*H2.a: Populist candidates evoke positive emotions the most when dealing with national and international security.*

*H2.b: Hope is the most used emotional appeal for this topic.*

In addition, populists are also shown to make use of retrospective positive emotions generally attributed to mainstream parties, such as joy and trust (Widmann, 2021). When coupled with subjects such as the greatness of a nation or the figure of strong populist leaders, populist candidates can employ these emotions to create a positive ingroup identity (Salmela and von Scheve, 2017). In a different context, hope also appears to be employed by populist politicians. During the 2018 Italian elections, populist candidates have been shown to employ hope to create a positive in-group identity when linking it to the virtues of ‘the people’ (Martela and Bracciale, 2022). In other words, similar to mainstream parties, populist leaders could invoke positive emotions such as joy, hope, and trust for strategic purposes (Sander and Scherer, 2014). The extent to which populist leaders differentially invoke positive emotions depending on the context has not been studied as of yet. However, combining these earlier findings, the following hypothesis can be formulated:

*H3: Patriotism and the figure of the populist leader are subjects that invoke joy or trust, while hope is often invoked in the context of ‘the people’.*

After formulating these three hypotheses on the evocation of joy, hope and trust in the 2022 populist presidential campaign speeches, the subsequent step will consist of evaluating them in the results chapter. Accordingly, the discussion will offer a critical analysis of these results. However, before that, a thorough explanation of the methodology employed to derive these results will be enacted.

## **IV. Research Design and Methodology**

This study addresses the use of positive emotions in populist speeches of the 2022 French Presidential elections through a mixed methods design. More specifically, the present study used an explanatory sequential mixed methods design in which the official propaganda speeches were assigned to positive emotion categories (joy, hope and trust) through a quantitative phase. Subsequently, qualitative content analysis produced campaign themes which were further developed into codes. These codes were then attributed to the three positive discrete emotions. This methodology proved especially useful for the current study by enabling the contextualization of positive emotion categories identified through quantitative analysis. The upcoming chapter will explore the research design, present a summary of the data material, and delve into discussions on both quantitative and qualitative research methodologies. Finally, the limitations of the methodological analysis and the attempts to alleviate them to turn them into strengths will be discussed.

### **A. Research Design**

Before delving into the explanatory sequential mixed methods design, a comprehensive overview of the case study and the dataset of the present study will be provided. Correspondingly, the French presidential campaign and the so-called official propaganda materials will be examined.

#### **1. Case selection**

The election campaign in France stands as an intriguing case for emotional research, as it is unique both in terms of laws and political culture. Firstly, the laws regulating the French presidential campaigns greatly moderate the intensity of emotionality, especially when it comes to negative emotions. For instance, unlike in the United States, negative advertising is banned. Moreover, since the decision no. 88-73 of 10 March 1988 of the Commission Nationale de la Communication et des Libertés (CNCL), candidates may no longer ‘make fun of other candidates’ and ‘attacking the honour of others’ has been strictly forbidden. The prohibition on candidates ‘endangering public order or the safety of persons and property’ also hinders the mobilization of anger (Ballet, 2021). Additionally, it is

important to highlight that the French presidential figure has been constructed from relatively rigorous ideals of self-control (Garrigou, 2003). French republicans have been used to moderating emotions by displaying them through institutions (the Constitution, the Law, the Nation, etc) or fictional characters (Marianne), but not directly the governing authority (Delporte, 2007). Although emotional relaxation took effect in France and trends confirm that individuals increasingly fail to recognize themselves in the major structuring identities, a long-rooted tradition prevails (Ballet, 2020). Indeed, while political leaders have internalized the need for political emotions, the fear of desacralizing national representation and trivializing French democratic campaigns is present (Le Bart, 2021).

Moreover, France is a particularly useful case study for the study of populism, as it is one of the few examples in Europe where two successful but philosophically opposed populist movements coexist (Ivaldi, 2018a, 2018b; Shields, 2013). On the one hand, left-wing and inclusionary populism is now well recognized in the literature as being associated with Jean-Luc Mélenchon and his party *La France Insoumise* (Cautrès, 2017; Chiochetti, 2020; Marlière, 2019). On the other hand, radical right populism and exclusion are commonly associated with Marine Le Pen and her *Rassemblement National*, formerly the *Front National* (Ivaldi 2018a).

This thesis analyzes how populist left and populist right parties evoke positive emotions in the campaign speeches of the 2022 French Presidential election. Therefore, as the two above-mentioned populist candidates represent the ideological poles of French populism and are comparable in terms of support, they were chosen for the analysis of this thesis. The 2022 first-round results placed Marine Le Pen second with 23,13% of the votes, followed by Jean-Luc Mélenchon with 21,95 %. Additionally, because the first hypothesis (H1) of this work examines the prominent use of hope appeals common to the populist far-right (or left) candidates, the comparison can not be enacted between the two candidates. Therefore, a reference point in the centre of the political spectrum would strengthen the validity of the research and discussion on H1. Here, Emmanuel Macron, the candidate of the mainstream party *En Marche!* (Watmough et al., 2017) will be included in the analysis. Having established the relevance of the French presidential campaign in emotional research, the subsequent sub-section will examine the chosen materials, elucidating their significance in constituting the dataset.

## **2. Official campaign propaganda materials**

Before presenting the materials constituting the data set, a timeframe has to be established. Correspondingly, the chosen materials will examine the period starting from November 9, 2020, marking the launch of the first candidacy announcement spots, to April 10, 2022, the first round election day. This choice stems from two considerations. Firstly, research has shown that emotional appeals are stronger during the first round than during the second as more candidates are competing, and competition triggers emotions to mobilize the electorate (Ballet, 2020: 123). Secondly, as Jean-Luc Mélenchon was not elected for the

second round, studying campaign materials excluding him would create an imbalance in the study of the emotional populist rhetoric.

The selection of materials posed challenges, as the 2022 French elections present a large choice of campaign materials for analysis. Out of these, the chosen materials of the present study consist of so-called official propaganda documents, including candidacy announcements, professions of faith, and official long or short campaign broadcasts (see Table 1). Unlike other singular or heterogeneous speeches, the propaganda documents selected remain formal and legal invariants. Therefore, the selected materials present one major advantage, that is being a common denominator to all candidates and thus constituting homogeneous fields of investigation, enabling a comparison between candidates. As all official propaganda documents are in French, all translations from French to English were conducted by the writer. The chosen propaganda materials are primarily differentiated by one main factor. On the one hand, candidacy announcements are not subject to any formal rules and are therefore left to the discretion of the candidates. On the other hand, the professions of faith and official campaign broadcasts are subject to precise rules ensuring strict equality of treatment between the candidates. The following paragraphs will delve into the definition of each material.

Regarding candidacy announcements in the case of the 2022 presidential elections, all three Marine Le Pen, Jean-Luc Mélenchon, and Emmanuel Macron chose to announce their candidacy differently. The far-right populist announced her candidacy on September 12, 2021, during the *Rassemblement National* meeting in Fréjus. Jean-Luc Mélenchon chose to announce his candidacy for the 2022 presidential elections on November 9, 2020, through an interview given to the TV network *Télévision Française 1* during the evening news. Finally, the mainstream party candidate Emmanuel Macron announced his candidacy both in a vocal and written form. First, in the regional press through a letter addressed to the French people on March 3, 2022, less than 24 hours before the closing date for sponsorships by the Constitutional Council. In addition to his letter to announce his candidacy, Emmanuel Macron posted a video titled ‘*Emmanuel Macron. Le Candidat*’ on his official YouTube channel on March 4, 2022. In the case of the leader of *En Marche!*, this work chose to analyze his vocal candidacy announcement. This choice is rooted in clarity matters, as the two populist announcements are vocal speeches as well. Hence, choosing a letter renders a comparison with vocal speeches impractical.

Moreover, professions of faith represent the last documents sent to voters before the election and thus usually gather all electoral proposals of candidates. According to Article R.39 of the Electoral Code, the candidates may use a double sheet of paper measuring 210 x 297 mm on which they may not use the national emblems, the juxtaposition of the three colours blue, white, and red, or a photograph of themselves in an official capacity. In addition to the version sent by post, a sound version and a PDF version of the professions of faith are uploaded on the website of the *Commission Nationale de Contrôle de la Campagne électorale en vue de l'Élection Présidentielle* (CNCCEP). Therefore, the desire for clarity and



efficiency encourages the candidates to draw up relatively succinct lists of measures classified by theme

Finally, official campaign broadcasts are highly regulated as well. Indeed, each candidate could make use of an equal amount of time to broadcast election campaign programs on the channels edited by national program companies. For the first round, the *Autorité de Régulation de la Communication Audiovisuelle et Numérique* (ARCOM) set the duration of radio and television campaign broadcasts on public service channels for each candidate in the decision of March 18, 2022. This decision enabled each candidate to speak for 48 minutes on the following channels: *France Télévisions channels, France Inter, France 24, and Radio France Internationale*. This 48-minute speaking time was further divided into eleven small broadcasts lasting one and a half minutes and nine long broadcasts lasting three and a half minutes. Furthermore, the ARCOM selected the dates and times of these broadcasts, as well as the running order of the candidates. Within 24 hours of their broadcast, the broadcasts were uploaded to the websites of the national program companies, which highly facilitated the retrieval of these materials for this study. Interestingly, candidates had the autonomy on the number of short and long campaign broadcasts they wished to produce. Based on this fact, Jean-Luc Melenchon delivered nine unique short broadcasts and one unique long broadcast, Marine Le Pen one unique short broadcast and two unique long broadcasts, and Emmanuel Macron one unique short broadcast and one unique long broadcast (see Appendix A). This fact did not disrupt the data analysis since all short and long broadcasts were mandated to be aired eleven and nine times, whether it involved airing a unique broadcast or replaying the unique broadcasts to reach the total broadcast time set by ARCOM. Therefore, the total broadcast time remained constant at 48 minutes, irrespective of the number of unique broadcasts. These considerations will be further developed when ensuring the equal representation of candidates in the sub-section on the selection of units of analysis.

The table below summarizes the selected data set for the three candidates. Detailed materials are to be found in Appendix A.

*Table 1: Summary of selected materials*

<b>Campaign announcements</b>	<b>Professions of faith</b>	<b>Short campaign broadcasts</b>	<b>Long campaign broadcasts</b>	<b>Total</b>
3	3	11	4	21

Having outlined the research design, the following sections will elucidate the operationalization of this design through the execution of the explanatory sequential mixed methods. First, the quantitative phase utilizing an automated lexicon will be presented, followed by the qualitative phase involving content analysis).

## **B. Quantitative Phase: Detection of Discrete Emotions**

To answer the research question on the evocation of positive emotions by populist candidates in the 2022 campaign propaganda materials, this study chose to operate with an explanatory sequential mixed-method design. Such a design entails a two-phase approach, both quantitative and qualitative. Initially, quantitative data is gathered and analysed, followed by the collection and analysis of qualitative data in light of the quantitative findings. Therefore, both phases are present in the interpretation as the qualitative data is used to explain the quantitative information (Creswell and Clark, 2018, Kroll and Neri, 2009). During the quantitative phase of the present thesis, three positive emotions (hope, trust and joy) will be detected in each sentence of the selected official propaganda materials for the 2022 Presidential election through the National Research Council (NRC) Lexicon. Furthermore, the qualitative analysis will contextualize these results by attributing campaign themes to the detected positive sentences.

Before proceeding with the protocol used during the quantitative phase, a preliminary remark needs to be enacted. In the course of this thesis, the writer drew upon the work of Agniete Pocyte, whose thesis was instrumental in shaping the methodology (Pocyte, 2019). Her Master's thesis published in 2019, delves deeply into the presence of emotion in Russian disinformation tweets. Although the author focused on a different topic, materials and all of Plutchik's emotions, the author laid the groundwork for understanding the basis of operationalization in this study. Due to her contribution, the lexicon could be successfully implemented and thus enabled this study to gain valuable perspectives on positive emotions in French populist discourses. The following sub-chapters will firstly present the NRC Lexicon and justify its choice for the present study, while secondly explaining its operationalization processes. Finally, the step of standardizing the processed data will be thoroughly analyzed.

### **1. Emotion analysis with the NRC Lexicon**

In recent decades, a great development in textual data analysis through automated coding methods has emerged. These methods have gained exponential popularity as they are much less time-consuming than manual coding. Particularly, when studying emotions and politics, dictionary-based methods have become prominent in assessing the valence of emotion (Hobolt et al., 2021; Roberts et al., 2014; Widmann, 2021) as well as in the analysis of political texts charged with discrete emotions (Soroka and Mc Adams, 2015). Out of the many options of automated coding methods, this study uses a variant of sentiment analysis, known as emotion analysis to detect the three positive discrete emotions in the campaign speeches of the 2022 Presidential elections. Therefore, an emotion lexicon was used to detect positive emotions in the official propaganda materials of the French 2022 Presidential campaign. The National Research Council (NRC) Lexicon developed by Mohammad & Turney (2010), also known as EmoLex was meticulously chosen for this study. Because choosing a lexicon that aligns with the aims of this research is crucial, the multiple reasons explaining the choice of the NRC Lexicon will be developed.

First, the NRC Lexicon is known to provide a useful database for researchers and practitioners working on applications requiring the recognition and analysis of emotions in written language. In addition, due to its straightforward operationalization processes, the lexicon is perfectly suited for newly initiated coders. Thirdly, the NRC Lexicon is the only emotion-analysis automated code that features three positive emotions, which aligns with the aim of this thesis to examine positive emotions in campaign materials. Finally, in this thesis, the analysis of positive emotions excludes the emotions personally felt by the candidates as well as the emotional response of voters. Therefore, the focus of the study was not set on the intimate and authentic emotion of the political actor (what he or she truly felt), but on the emotional rhetorics capturing emotions made visible by the speeches, which thus display a direct role in political leadership. Accordingly, using an automated code allowed for a more nuanced understanding of emotions and a consistent baseline for emotion analysis across different political texts.

Additionally, the outcome and aim of the lexicon are rather straightforward. The lexicon assigns emotional intensity scores to data based on Plutchik’s eight basic emotions, namely, joy, sadness, anger, fear, surprise, disgust, confidence and anticipation (see Theoretical Framework). As justified in the theoretical framework, this study refers to anticipation as hope. To perform that, the lexicon-based the emotional scores on 14,182 words, each linked to specific emotional categories (Mohammad and Turney, 2013). In turn, these words were associated with discrete emotions by participants, whom researchers paid through the Amazon Mechanical Turk (Mohammad and Turney, 2013). In the evaluation of speeches, if a word within a sentence aligned with an emotion categorised in the NRC, a score of 1 was assigned to the matched emotion. Subsequently, sentences were assigned to the respective emotions based on the cumulative score. Table 2 depicts an example of the NRC Lexicon labelling procedure described above. Within the sentence presented in Table 2, three words were attributed positive emotions by the NRC Lexicon (‘freedom’, ‘law’ and ‘peace’). Particularly, one word (‘peace’) was associated with hope, two words (‘freedom’ and ‘peace’) with joy and three words (‘freedom’, ‘law’, and ‘peace’) with trust. Therefore, the sentence was labelled under the emotions of hope, joy and trust, with their different scores.

Table 2: Example of the NRC Lexicon labelling procedure

Sentence	Hope	Joy	Trust
‘The first condition of freedom is a peace judge called the state, called the law’	1	2	3

Furthermore, the sentences followed the classification developed by Mohammad and Turney (2010). Consequently, sentences attributed with a sentiment score of 1 for either positive or negative were classified as such. Given the subjective responsibility associated with determining the correctness of one sentiment over another, sentences which scored the same number for both positive and negative were deemed sentimentally neutral. Moreover, in the NRC Lexicon, words can evoke multiple emotions. For instance, in the lexicon, the word ‘cheering’ is exclusively associated with ‘joy’, while ‘loving’ is linked to ‘joy’ and ‘trust’. In such instances, because it is not in the hands of the writer of this thesis to choose solely one ‘correct’ emotion, this study attributed a score to each emotion attributed to the word.

Finally, it is valuable to underscore that in the lexicon, the words allocated to the positive discrete emotions are not equal, which is visualised in Figure 3. Figure 3 depicts that 1,234 words were allocated to the emotion of trust, 842 words were linked to hope, and 691 to joy (Mohammad and Turney, 2010; 2013). Given the uneven distribution of numbers, this aspect will be duly considered in the subsequent analysis of results and discussion chapters.

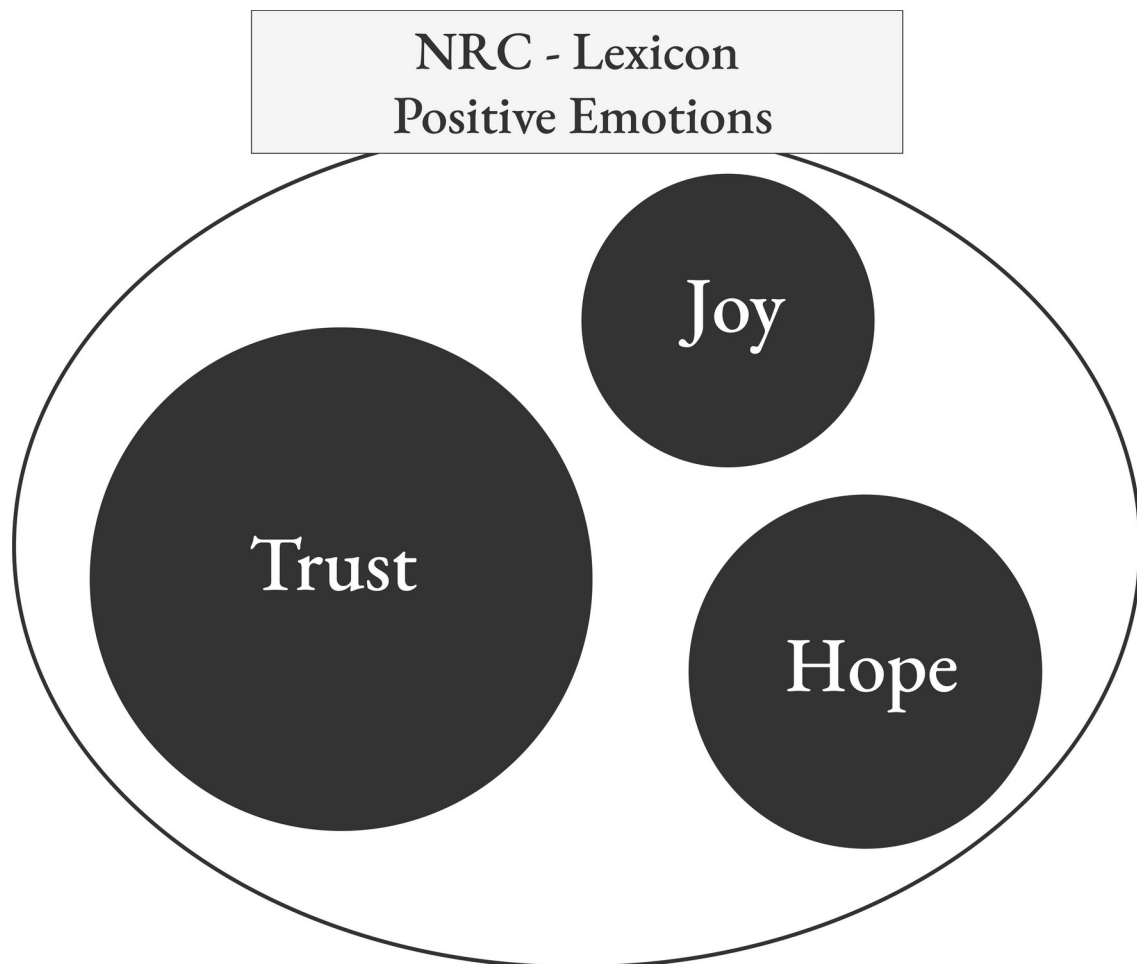


Figure 2: NRC Lexicon -- Positive emotions

Correspondingly, processes were launched to counter the imbalance of word-to-emotion as well as the word-to-sentiment attribution in the lexicon. Here, the aim was to measure the concentration or prevalence of each emotion in the speech relative to the lexicon size. Therefore, the following formula calculating emotional density was used:

$$\text{Density of Emotion } X \text{ per minute} = \left( \frac{\text{Number of Emotion } X \text{ words} \in \text{speech per minute}}{\text{Total number of Emotion } X \text{ words} \in \text{NRC - Lexicon}} \right) \times 1000$$

By correcting the density of each emotional and sentimental category, this step facilitated an equitable representation of NRC words associated with emotions and sentiments when analyzing the 2022 official propaganda materials.

## 2. Technical considerations

Having introduced the NRC Lexicon and its challenges, the ensuing sub-section will be devoted to its operationalization, a pivotal aspect influencing the outcomes of this thesis. Implementing the NRC Lexicon follows a strict protocol. Before making use of the lexicon, data is required to be pre-processed to match the format of the lexicon. Considering that the candidacy announcements and the short and long broadcasts were vocal speeches, these were first transcribed with the help of the YouTube Transcript web page. Once transcribed, all official propaganda materials were translated from French to English by the writer. Because the analyzed corpus consists of official propaganda materials for a presidential campaign, the pre-processing of the data was rather short. Indeed, candidates' speeches are spoken in unambiguous language, without shortened forms of words, or slang language. Therefore, the data pre-processing mainly consisted of formatting each sentence per line, as well as adding quotation marks followed by a comma for each sentence.

Here, the emotion analysis was carried out on the R extension of Visual Studio Code for macOS. The reason for coding on Visual Studio Code and not directly in RStudio is that the first studio detects errors in codes, which is highly valuable for newly initiated coders. First, the required packages of ready-made solutions (syuzhet, tidytext, textdata, and writextl) to use the lexicon were downloaded and loaded in the R session. Then, the NRC Lexicon was added to the coding session. These steps created a basic code which resulted in a list of emotional scores for each sentence processed. Because the materials analyzed were rather long, additional extensions were added to the code for optimization matters. A loop, which, according to the Hackterms Dictionary, is a programming construct that repeats an action for more than one item in a collection, was added to the code. This enabled whole materials to be processed at once rather than treating a sentence at a time. These steps were highly beneficial regarding efficiency and reliability, as processing whole texts prevents the researcher from making copy-pasting mistakes. Moreover, an extension to efficiently store the results of the lexicon was created. For that, a function creating a data frame to convert the list of results was added to the initial code. This was needed to transfer the results to an Excel file. Thus, each document was processed through the lexicon and then independently transferred to separate Excels. The running order of coded materials both between candidates and types of

materials was randomly chosen. Therefore, the materials of Marine Le Pen were coded first, followed by those of Jean-Luc Mélenchon and Emmanuel Macron. Within the materials of each candidate, the candidacy announcement was processed first followed by the short broadcast, and long broadcast, ending with the profession of faith. Please refer to Appendix B for the full code. After processing all the data, the independent Excels were gathered and combined into one file (see Appendix C). Following the successful processing of the data through the NRC Lexicon, the subsequent methodological step entailed the choice of analytical units to examine the processed dataset.

### **3. Vocal and written materials: unit of analysis selection**

After processing the data, initiatives to choose units of analysis that would make the results as comparable as possible were launched. These procedures were crucial and rather complex due to the variability in the type of speeches, the number of unique broadcasts, and differing lengths of candidacy announcements. Each of these challenges will be presented individually, as enumerated above.

Firstly, as indicated in the research design, the selected official propaganda materials combined vocal speeches and a written speech, namely, the profession of faith. Given their differing natures, employing the same unit of analysis in these materials would be impractical. A vocal speech inherently induces a temporal dimension, while a written speech is inherently written in sentences. Consequently, it was intuitive to establish separate units of analysis for these different speeches, allowing for a reliable treatment of the data in the results section. Subsequently, the following paragraphs will separate the vocal speeches from the written speech.

Regarding vocal materials, the choice of a unit of analysis took into account the variability in the number of broadcasts. Despite stringent regulations governing the broadcast time of official propaganda materials, the number of produced short and long broadcasts could be determined by the candidates. In addition, as per ARCOM guidelines, short broadcasts spanned one and a half minutes, while long broadcasts extended to three and a half minutes, each broadcasted eleven and nine times, respectively, resulting in a preset total broadcasting time of forty-eight minutes. Therefore, as Marine Le Pen produced solely one short broadcast, during the campaign, her short official broadcast was replayed ten times to reach the total broadcast time determined by ARCOM. However, as Jean-Luc Mélenchon had produced nine short broadcasts, solely the first and the second short broadcasts of the populist left-wing candidate needed to be replayed. Consequently, by looking at the total broadcast time, the number of broadcasts produced would not imbalance the results, as replays would fulfil the requisite official short broadcast airtime. Hence, given that the total broadcast time served as the standardized parameter across all candidates, the intuitive selection of a time unit (per minute) for calculating the proportion of positive emotions in the analyzed data was deemed appropriate. The selection of this unit ensured equitable representation, accounting for non-unique speeches that required replay, thus providing an unbiased depiction of emotional frequencies. Moreover, another crucial dimension to the selection of a unit of

analysis for the vocal speeches lay in the fact that the candidacy announcement had different lengths for every candidate. Indeed, the candidacy announcement of Marine Le Pen was 31:50 minutes long, whereas Emmanuel Macron announced his candidacy in 4:34 minutes and Jean-Luc Mélenchon in 6:22 minutes. Therefore, similarly to the short and long broadcasts, a time unit of emotion per minute was selected. This choice ensures a uniform analysis of the data across the three types of vocal speeches. Finally, the choice of a unit of analysis for the written speech accounted for the consistent length of sentences of the professions of faith. In this context, the logical selection for the analytical unit was emotion per sentence, reinforcing a meticulous and contextually relevant analytical framework.

This category presented the main characteristics, operationalization and analytical processes of the quantitative phase of the explanatory sequential mixed-method design. Subsequently, the following category will be dedicated to the qualitative phase of the design, with a thorough explanation of the content analysis applied to the official propaganda materials of the 2022 French presidential election.

### **C. Qualitative phase: Content analysis**

Once the speeches were attributed to positive discrete emotions through the first quantitative and automated phase, this thesis conducted a qualitative content analysis on the processed data to answer the following research question:

‘How do French populist left and populist right parties evoke positive emotions in the campaign propaganda materials of the 2022 French Presidential election?’

According to Reinharz and Davidman, content analysis is a study of ‘a set of objects or events systematically by counting them or interpreting the themes contained in them’ (Reinharz and Davidman, 1992: 146). The main focus of content analysis lies in the characteristics of language as well as the context surrounding the communication analyzed (Budd et al., 1967; Lindkvist, 1981; McTavish and Pirro, 1990; Tesch, 1990). This method was deemed highly suitable for the qualitative stage of this thesis. Given that this work interacted with long textual data, content analysis provided a systematic and structured way to examine recurring patterns, concepts and themes in the dataset.

There are multiple ways to approach content analysis (Weber, 1990). Here the qualitative phase of the explanatory sequential mixed methods design will be conducted through a mix of directed content analysis and conventional content analysis. Although this method is less structured than the one used in the quantitative phase, a protocol has been enacted to summarize the operationalization phases. Before proceeding with a description of each step, the methodical process is summarized in the table below (see Table 3).

Table 3: Summary of the qualitative ph

Steps	Characteristics
<b><u>First step: Directed Content Analysis</u></b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Use of pre-determined categories of Marion Ballet (2020)</li> <li>● Scanning through the text to attribute pre-determined categories to positive sentences.</li> <li>● Attribution of codes specific to the data analyzed in this thesis.</li> </ul>
<b><u>Second step: Conventional Content Analysis</u></b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Scanning through the passages that did not match pre-determined categories.</li> <li>● Attribution of new codes to these unclassified sentences, codes that are then sorted into new categories.</li> <li>● Development of definitions for each category and code and labelling.</li> </ul>
<b><u>Third step: Researcher-based coding</u></b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Coding each positive sentence from one to twenty-four in Excel.</li> <li>● Extraction of examples.</li> </ul>

### 1. Directed content analysis

The first step of the qualitative analysis of this thesis consisted of a directed approach to content analysis. In this view, the researcher used theory or research that already developed categories and an initial coding scheme to analyze the data (Potter and Levine-Donnerstein, 1999). Therefore, this use of content analysis is qualified as deductive (Mayring, 2000). In this thesis, the directed approach used the categories determined by Marion Ballet in her work *De si Hautes Espérances: la Campagne Présidentielle de 2017 Vue par ses Emotions* (2020) as a base. Indeed, in her method applied to the 2017 presidential elections, Marion Ballet (2020) created predetermined categories of campaign themes in speeches. The categories developed by the author existed independently of the ways candidates interpret them and of their importance in electoral strategy. Namely, her categories for the 2017 presidential election were the economy, social welfare, institutions and political life, security, the environment, and education and research. Although these categories constituted a solid base, the codes within these categories had to be developed by the writer of this thesis as they did not match the themes of the 2022 campaign. Hence, the speeches were analyzed sentence per sentence and marked when matching pre-determined categories. The tool used in this researcher-based approach was the same Excel used in the quantitative phase with all speeches already broken into smaller samples. During the next step, codes specific to the data analyzed in this study were attributed to each of these categories. The process consisted especially of analyzing the sentences to derive the meanings and concepts attached to the pre-



determined categories (Miles and Huberman, 1994; Morse and Field, 1995). It is important to note that the coding scheme reflects the interpretation of the writer. It is relevant to acknowledge that the coding scheme reflected the interpretation of the writer. Thus, the writer perceived that, despite the effectiveness of the directed approach in coding most of the data, certain passages could not be categorized adequately with the initial category scheme.

## **2. Conventional content analysis**

Therefore, the second part of this qualitative phase focused on the passages that did not match pre-determined categories and codes enacted in the directed approach. To proceed, a conventional content analysis was used to conceive categories and codes from the data (Kondracki and Wellman, 2002). Here, the data was used to enact different categories, which is described as inductive category development (Mayring, 2000). Correspondingly, all the passages that were not attributed to pre-conceived categories were repeatedly read to obtain a sense of the whole (Tesch, 1990). On the contrary to the directed approach, the codes were deducted before the categories in this phase. Here, the coding approach was the same as the one mentioned in the directed approach. These codes were then sorted into categories according to their similarities and differences (Coffey and Atkinson, 1996; Patton, 2002). Steps one and two were repeated multiple times and two additional categories eventually flowed from the data. Namely, foreign relations and national identity were added to the list of pre-determined campaign themes. These categories were attributed a letter from A to H and eventually resulted in multiple codes labelled with numbers ranging from one to twenty-four (see Figure 3). This choice of attributing numbers to codes was due to the length of the materials analyzed. These numbers not only saved a considerable amount of time but also avoided typos and other confusion in Excel.

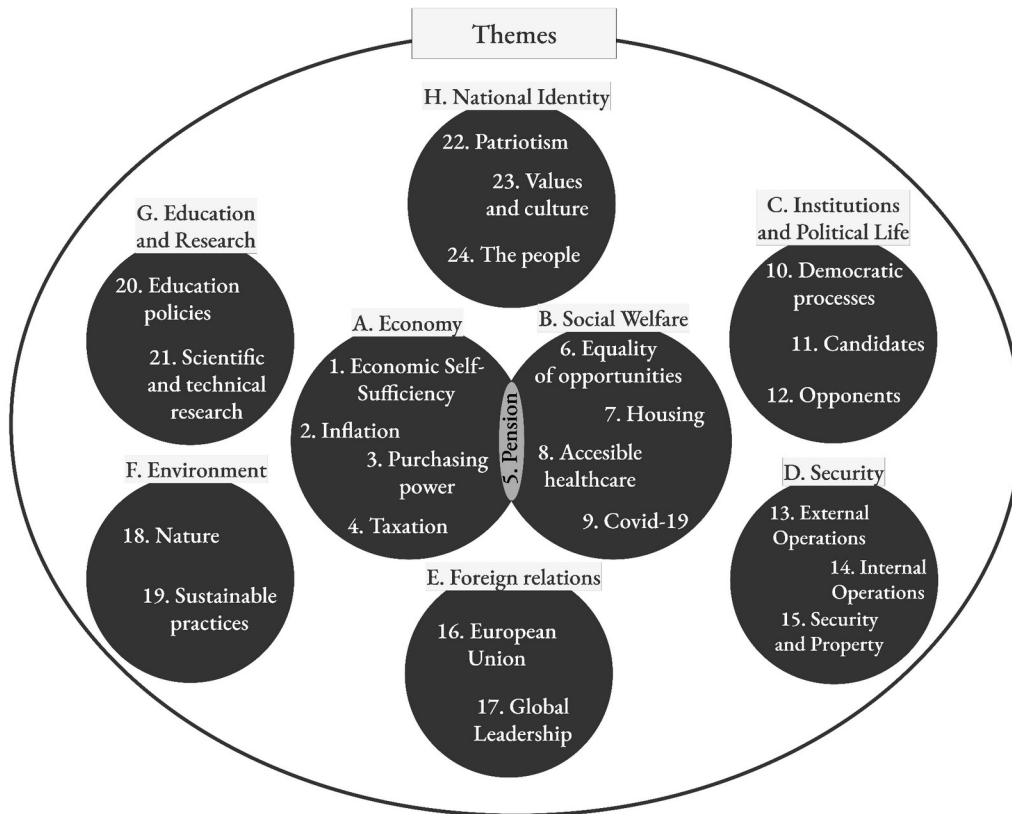


Figure 3: Campaign themes, categories and codes

Respectively, the detected categories of campaign themes of this present study emerged as the economy, social welfare, institutions and political life, security, foreign relations, the environment, education and research and national identity. Here, all the themes and the majority of codes are universal and could be present in any presidential campaign. However, some codes illustrated in Figure 3 depict the specificities of the events that influenced the environment prevailing during the 2022 presidential campaign. From a social point of view, the French elections of 2022 were marked with ‘COVID-2022’ (9) and the ‘pension reforms’ (5). From a security and economic point of view, the war in Ukraine (13) had just started, correspondingly impacting ‘inflation’ (2).

Although the understanding of the majority of the codes and themes appears straightforward, some codes and themes require further explanation. Amongst the codes necessitating definition, the code of pensions appears as the sole instance intersecting between two themes, namely economic and social welfare. This is explained by the fact that discussions on pension reform equally encompassed both economic and social aspects. On the one hand, discussions on a reform of the pension system had major considerations for economic implications linked to pension financing and its repercussions on public finances and the French social security system. On the other hand, the social implications of a reformed pension scheme were central to discourses, as workers of all generations and pensioners would be the ones influencing the quality of life of the elderly. Moreover, the

theme of national identity entails multiple facets that share many similarities while being distinct. In the present study, ‘patriotism’ (22) was attributed to sentences referring to emotional attachment to the French nation, and the code of ‘values and culture’ (23) was labelled to sentences emphasising shared French historical beliefs and traditions. Finally, the ‘people’ (24) alluded to sentences representing the individuals who collectively contribute to the identity of the French nation. In summary, these codes together contribute to the complex and multifaceted concept of national identity. When examining the theme of the environment, ‘sustainable practices’ (19) gathered both renewable energies and green agriculture. Security-wise, the war in Ukraine was classified under ‘external operations’ (13) as some statements did not directly mention the war, yet presented financing of the national army alluding to it. Ultimately, the code of ‘democratic processes’ (10) embodies all ‘processes of expressing primary political or inalienable rights through decision-making’ (Dahl, 1989: 107). Hence, this code is associated with voting in the election, referendums, laws, and the restructuring of the state that would transpire if the candidates were to be elected.

The third step of content analysis consisted of manually attributing the twenty-four codes represented above to the dataset processed during the quantitative phase. In sum, positive sentences were manually coded in the R-generated Excel file (See Appendix C). Following the coding of materials, examples of each code were selected to enlighten the results and discussion chapters (VI and VII). Before elucidating the relationships displayed between positive emotions and the campaign themes in the following chapters, the subsequent sub-section will analyze the limitations of the research. Furthermore, it will address criticisms, aiming to transform shortcomings into advantages rather than inconveniences.

#### **D. Limitations**

Chapter IV was dedicated to the methods used in the present thesis to research how populist candidates evoked positive emotions during the French presidential campaign of 2022. Throughout the chapter, the rationale for selecting an explanatory sequential mixed methods design was explained and justified, emphasizing its pertinence for the specific context of this study. Nevertheless, the two phases of explanatory sequential mixed method design and the materials encompass certain limitations that will be developed in this sub-section.

Regarding the first quantitative phase, one limitation is to be found in operationalization processes. Although the NRC Lexicon attributed more than 14,000 words to emotions, some words in the speeches were not covered, indicating a neutral score of 0. In addition, reliance on automated techniques such as the NRC Lexicon might lack a ‘nuanced understanding of language and cultural symbols’ (Gadarian et al., 2023). Particularly, the contextual elements such as sarcasm, satire or irony are unintelligible through an automated code. This thesis accepted this fact as a limitation and tried to decrease its impact on the results by using a mixed design with a qualitative methodology. Indeed, content analysis with a researcher-coding approach can facilitate the extraction of insights into the intangible (Hsieh and Shannon, 2005). Conversely, the choice of a mixed design aimed to decrease the

limitations surrounding the application of content analysis, as the second qualitative phase has been criticised and qualified as a subjective and biased tool. In this context, the initial quantitative phase of the mixed method serves as an option to enhance the validity of content analysis and to mitigate the bias associated with it (Coffey and Atkinson, 1996; Patton, 2002). Literature has shown that, when data is processed through reliable automatised means, its validity is known to increase. Therefore, although this work is aware of the criticism, choosing a mixed-method design aimed to decrease as much as possible the potential limitations inherent to qualitative and quantitative research designs.

Furthermore, another constraint lies in the subjectivity inherent to emotions, mainly given that they can be expressed through multiple lenses. For example, previous studies have identified alternative forms of emotional expression beyond written language, including images (Iyer et al., 2014), as well as facial and body expressions (D’Errico et al., 2012; Ekman, 1993). Because this study focuses solely on textual emotional appeals, a valid criticism stands in that an analysis of emotions focusing on plural expressions would have strengthened the validity of the results. This work acknowledges this criticism while being aware that these studies require advanced research tools (such as neuroimaging techniques) or coding skills that the writer did not have access to. In addition, this study tried to provide a wider picture of the use of positive emotions in populist rhetoric by deliberately selecting empirical data sources that are as diverse as possible. Indeed, the dataset of this research includes a selection of political meeting speeches, interviews, official broadcasts, and professions of faith. However, some limitations regarding the materials of this study could be found in the fact that professions of faith and official broadcasts are regulated strictly. Therefore, this material choice could limit the narrative aspect of the political speeches, which remains essential to arouse emotions. This present work answers this consideration in three ways. Primarily, the official and regulated propaganda materials were identified as a common and comparable denominator for each candidate, thus deemed the most valid option for this research. Secondly, no official rules regulated other materials such as the candidacy announcements, which opened further analytical narratives. Finally, and as has been stated in the methodology, this thesis focuses on emotional rhetorics, which are emotions constructed in the speeches regardless of the support, not on emotions truly felt by the candidates. Therefore, the selection of regulated material did exert a significant impact on emotions which were already constructed by the political communication team of the candidates. The analysis of the findings stemming from methodological processes and their discussion will be presented in the following chapters.

## VI. RESULTS

After proceeding with the explanatory mixed-sequential method, the investigation yielded multiple results. In the present study, the overarching research question is: ‘How do French populist left and populist right parties evoke positive emotions in the campaign speeches of the 2022 French Presidential election?’. Therefore, this chapter will be dedicated to a thorough presentation of the results derived from the investigation of the research question. To proceed, this chapter will analyze the statistical data from a descriptive and factual standpoint. This approach will be further nuanced by interpreting and constructively criticizing the results in the Discussion chapter. Firstly, the results of the first quantitative phase, namely, of the emotion analysis, will be enacted. This section will be followed by the content analysis results, linking the themes to the different emotions. Finally, this chapter will be dedicated to the factual analysis of the three hypotheses (see Chapter IV). Here, the focus will be set on the extent to which the empirical evidence aligns with or diverges from the initially posited expectations.

### A. Emotion Analysis Results

Through the application of the NRC Lexicon to official propaganda materials, sentences of speeches were assigned to positive emotion categories. Correspondingly, various results concerning the presence of positive emotions could be identified. The result section of the quantitative phase will adopt a top-down approach, progressing from the most general sentiments to the most specific emotions. First, the analysis will examine the overall sentiment distribution across all examined materials, which will classify sentences into positive, negative or neutral sentiment categories. Subsequently, the focus will be directed towards the prevalence for candidates of the three positive emotions studied, namely, joy, hope and trust.

#### 1. Sentiments and Positive Emotions in the Overall Dataset

Figure 2 illustrates the proportional distribution of sentiments within the overall dataset, which includes the official propaganda materials of Marine Le Pen and Jean-Luc Mélenchon. It is noteworthy to reiterate that the sentences followed the classification developed by Mohammad and Turney (2010). Consequently, sentences attributed with a sentiment score of 1 for either positive or negative were classified as such. Given the subjective responsibility associated with determining the correctness of one sentiment over another, sentences which scored the same number for both positive and negative were deemed sentimentally neutral. According to the outcomes derived from the NRC lexicon out of the vocal materials, Figure 4 depicts that 18,7% were categorized as sentimentally neutral, 28,8% of the examined materials scored negatively and 52,4% were characterized by positive sentiment.

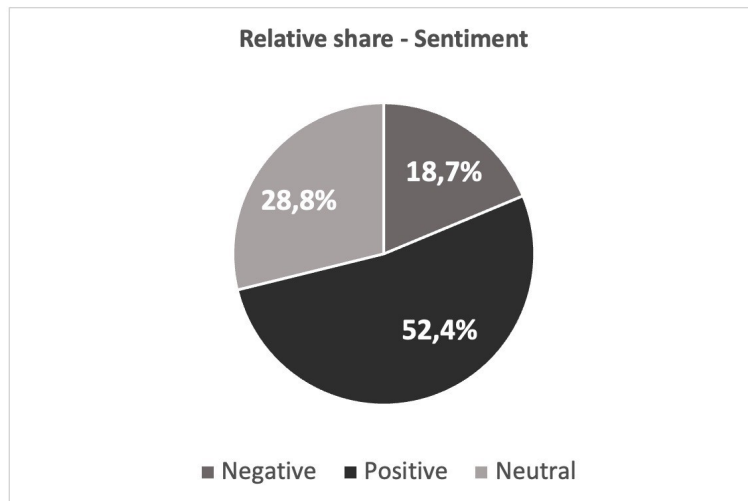


Figure 4: Relative Share of Sentiment

Furthermore, within the sub-set of official propaganda materials scoring positive, constituting 52,4% of the dataset, this study found evidence of the three positive emotions, namely hope, joy and trust. Figure 5 illustrates the share of each of these emotions across the entirety of the dataset. Here, out of the positive sentences, 32,5 % evoked the emotion of joy, 33,4 % evoked hope and 34 % conveyed trust.

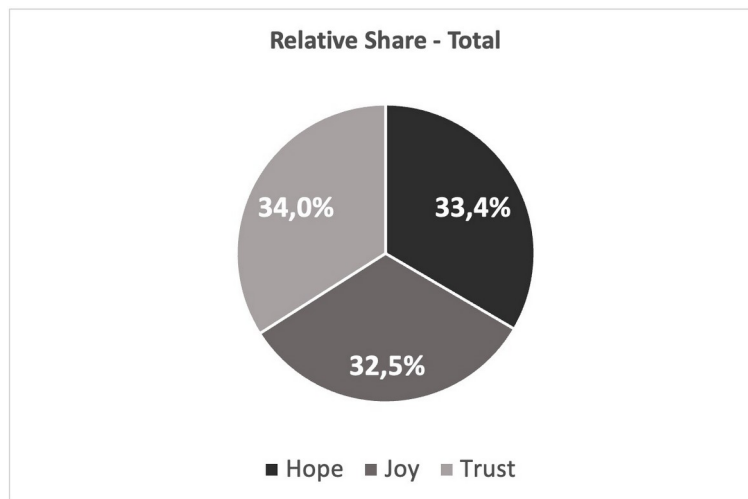


Figure 5: Relative Share of Positive Emotions

## 2. Jean-Luc Mélenchon

The ensuing results will concentrate on delineating the distribution of joy, hope and trust individually for each candidate, namely for Jean-Luc Mélenchon and Marine Le Pen. The upcoming presentation of results will delineate a definite distinction between vocal speeches (comprising candidacy announcements, and short or long official broadcasts) and written speeches (specifically, professions of faith). This distinction is necessary due to the unit of analysis employed. As has been developed in the methodological chapter, on the one hand, emotions are quantified per minute for vocal speeches and on the other hand, emotions are quantified per sentence for professions of faith. Thereby, the result chapter aims to acknowledge the methodological disparities inherent in these two distinct communicative modalities.

Therefore, Figures 6 and 7 are dedicated to the proportional distribution of the three positive emotions for vocal speeches and the written speech of Jean-Luc Mélenchon. According to Figure 6, the breakdown of positive emotions in Jean-Luc Mélenchon's vocal speeches reveals that joy constituted 27,9% of the evoked emotions, trust represented 31,1%, and hope was invoked at a rate of 41%.

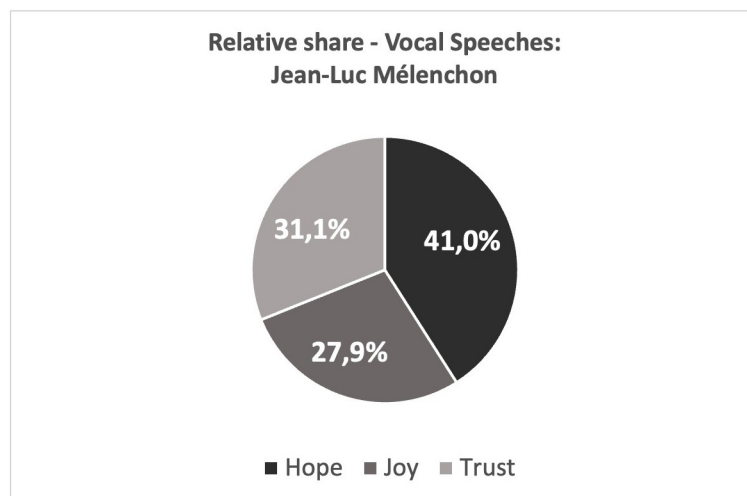


Figure 6: Relative Share of Positive Emotions – The Vocal Speeches of Jean-Luc Mélenchon

Figure 7 discloses the emotional distribution within the profession of faith of Jean-Luc Mélenchon, categorized as a written campaign official propaganda speech. In this context, the breakdown indicates that joy accounted for 31,8%, trust was represented by 33,8%, and hope was invoked at a rate of 34,4%.

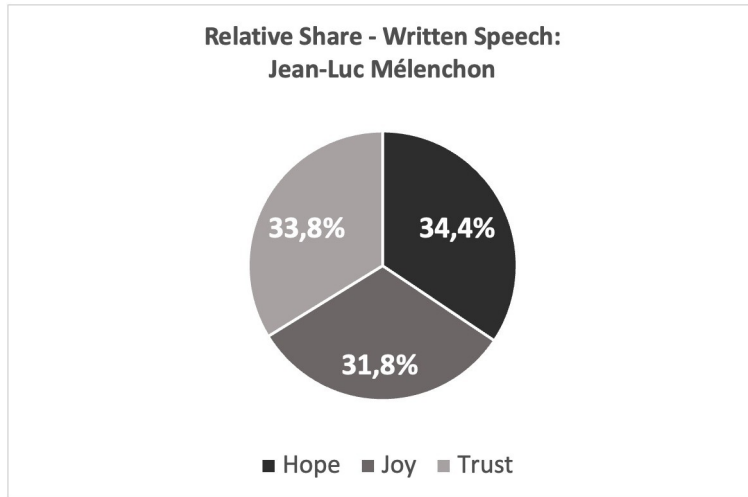


Figure 7: Relative Share of Positive Emotions – The Written Speech of Jean-Luc Mélenchon

### 3. Marine Le Pen

When analyzing the proportional distribution of joy, hope and trust within both the vocal and written discourses of Marine Le Pen, distinct results emerged. Figure 8 highlights that in her vocal speeches, the representative of the Rassemblement National evoked hope at a rate of 28,3%, joy at 35,7%, and trust at 36%.

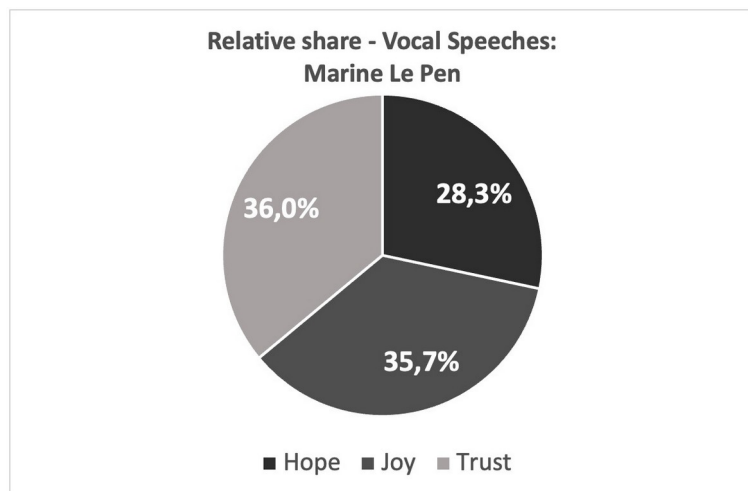


Figure 8: Relative Share of Positive Emotions – The Vocal Speeches of Marine Le Pen

Figure 9 discloses the emotional distribution within the 2022 official written speech to the presidential campaign (the profession of faith) of Marine Le Pen. In this context, the breakdown indicates that joy accounted for 28,5%, trust was represented by 34,5%, and hope was invoked at a rate of 37%.



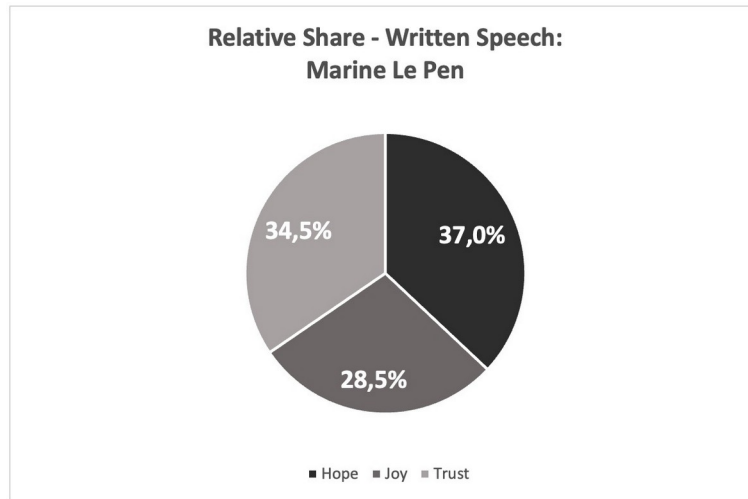


Figure 9: Relative Share of Positive Emotions – The Written Speech of Marine Le Pen

## B. Content Analysis Results

The qualitative phase of the research sought to contextualize the emotion categories determined in the initial quantitative phase. To achieve this, twenty-four codes, organized into eight speech themes, were assigned to sentences with positive scores in distinct discrete positive emotions. The outcomes of this phase will be presented herein. In the subsequent section, the emotional content of the vocal and written speeches will be examined focusing on the two populist candidates. The examination will delve into joy, trust and hope. Moreover, the numerical values on the bars of the ensuing figures depict the cumulative scores assigned to each positive emotion by the NRC Lexicon. The chosen codes encompass the top three codes that scored the highest, excluding those below the threshold of 4, as a score lower than this was considered insufficient for representativeness. In cases where multiple codes attain the same highest score, all of them will be presented in the primary codes. Furthermore, examples of sentences in the three emotional categories and their corresponding codes will be presented for Marine Le Pen and Jean Luc Mélenchon. The last sub-chapter will present the total results of the content analysis, combining both candidates. This step is particularly important for the empirical analysis of the hypotheses, which refer to populists globally.

### 1. Jean-Luc Mélenchon

#### a. Hope

When analyzing the codes of campaign themes associated with the evocation of hope by the left-wing populist candidate, specific codes emerged prominently in both vocal and written speeches, as depicted in Figures 10 and 11. Figure 10 represents the codes linked to the evocation of hope in the context of vocal speeches delivered by Jean-Luc Mélenchon during the 2022 Presidential elections. Notably, when appealing to hope, the candidate predominantly associates it with ‘accessible healthcare’, attaining a score of 10 for the code.

Moreover, other significant codes include ‘nature’, scoring 8, followed by the ‘equality of opportunities’ and the figure of the ‘candidate’, both scoring a 7.

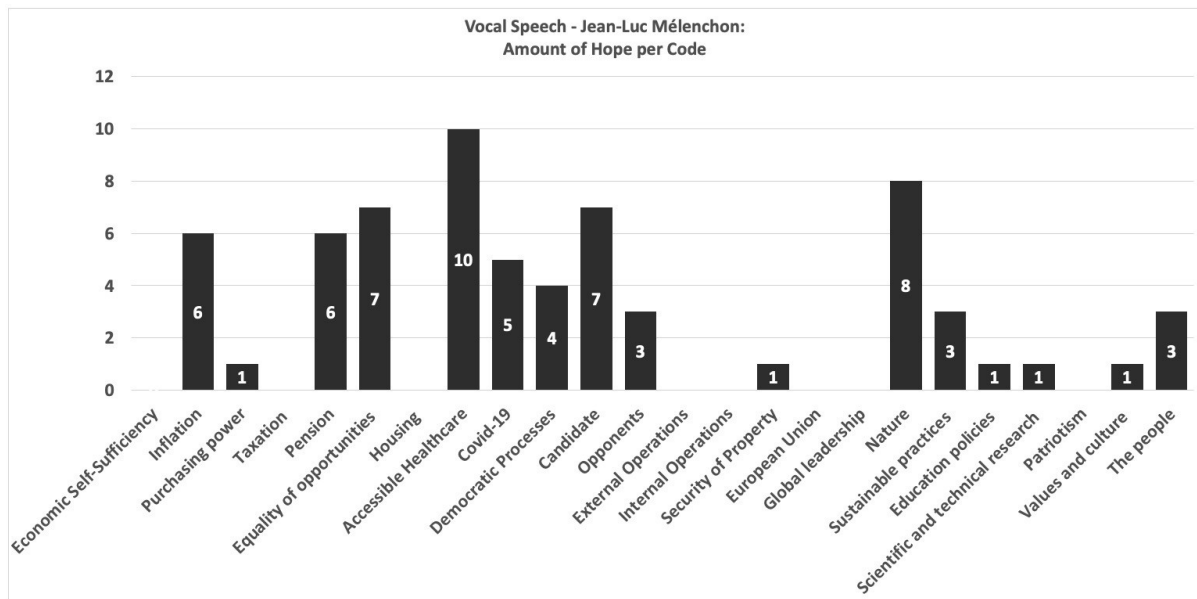


Figure 10: Vocal Speeches – Jean-Luc Mélenchon: Amount of Hope per Code

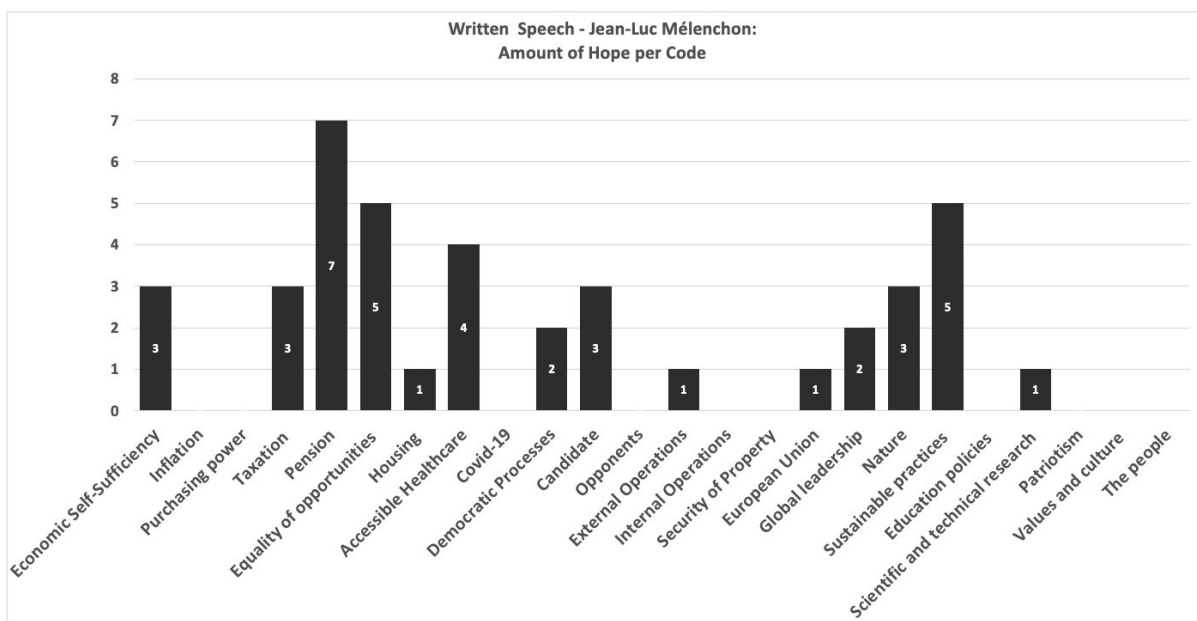


Figure 11: Written Speech – Jean-Luc Mélenchon: Amount of Hope per Code

Furthermore, illustrates the codes referenced when invoking hope in the written speeches of the left-wing populist candidate. Here, the code associated with ‘pension’ was most frequently referenced when evoking hope, achieving a score of 7. Following closely, the codes related to ‘equality of opportunities’ and ‘sustainable practices’ both scored a 5.

These results can be contextualized through Table 4, which presents samples of sentences in the hope category for Jean-Luc Melenchon alongside their corresponding codes.

Table 4: Samples of sentences in hope and corresponding codes – Jean-Luc Mélenchon

Sentences	Codes
‘Hire 100,000 caregivers for public hospitals and 240,000 for nursing homes.’	‘Accessible healthcare’
‘I want to build a France less subject to money and more eager for nature.’	‘Nature’
‘With one billion euros against femicides, equal pay bonus, an end to job precariousness and shift work, we will tackle the heart of inequality: that between women and men.’	‘Equality of opportunities’
‘My presence in the second round depends only on you.’	‘Candidate’
‘Reinstating retirement at 60 at full rate with 40 years of contributions is my project.’	‘Pension’
‘Ecological planning is our method to regain control of the long term and shift our modes of production, consumption, and exchange.’	‘Sustainable practices’

## b. Joy

The following sub-chapter aims to represent the use of joy by Jean-Luc Mélenchon in the official campaign materials of the 2022 French Presidential elections. Correspondingly, Figures 12 and 13 depict the specific codes which emerged prominently in both vocal and written speeches when joy was invoked. According to Figure 12, when appealing to joy, the candidate predominantly associates it with ‘accessible healthcare’, attaining a score of 7 for the code. Moreover, other significant codes include the ‘pension’, scoring 6, followed by the figure of the ‘candidate’, scoring a 5.

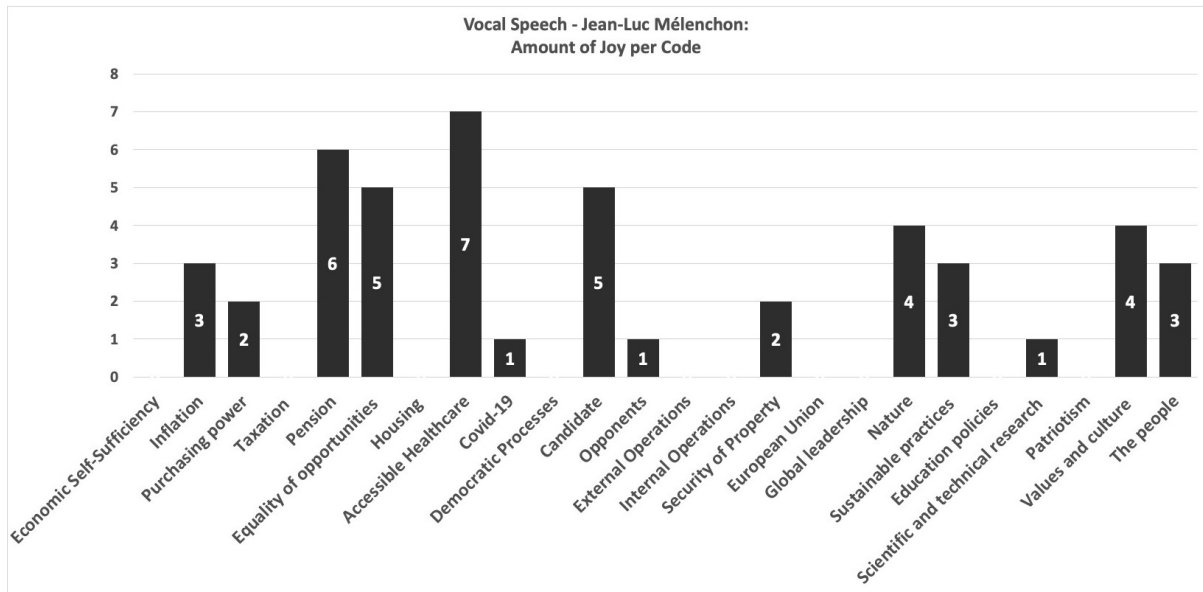


Figure 12: Vocal Speeches – Jean-Luc Mélenchon: Amount of Joy per Code

Furthermore, Figure 13 illustrates the codes referenced when invoking joy in the written speeches of the left-wing populist candidate. Here, the codes associated with ‘pension’ and ‘taxation’ were most frequently referenced when evoking joy, achieving a score of 6. Following closely, the code related to ‘nature’ scored a 5.

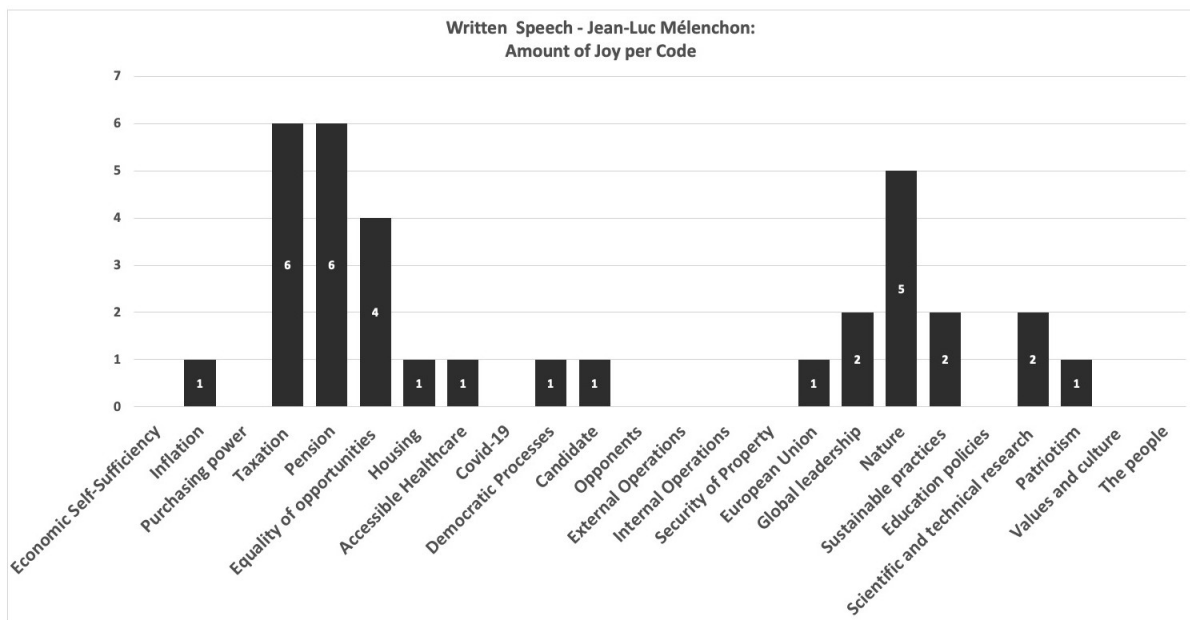


Figure 13: Written Speech – Jean-Luc Mélenchon: Amount of Joy per Code

These results can be contextualized through Table 5, which presents samples of sentences in the joy category for Jean-Luc Melenchon alongside their corresponding codes.

Table 5: Samples of sentences in joy and corresponding codes – Jean-Luc Mélenchon

Sentences	Codes
‘We will have to increase salaries and improve working conditions to end fee-for-service that prevents healthcare professionals from working well.’	‘Accessible healthcare’
‘This presidential election involves a decisive choice for our future: the retirement age.’	‘Pensions’
‘Vote for JL, vote popular, vote for me, but above all for you.’	‘Candidate’
‘The reinstatement of a wealth solidarity tax, the implementation of universal tax for multinational companies making profits in France, and the maximum inheritance at 12 million euros will restore tax justice.’	‘Taxation’
‘The entire political philosophy of my life can be summed up in one goal: to build harmony among human beings and with nature.’	‘Nature’

### **a. Trust**

Ultimately, this sub-chapter depicts the utilization of trust by Jean-Luc Mélenchon in the official campaign materials of the 2022 French Presidential elections. In concordance, Figures 14 and 15 illustrate the specific codes that prominently surfaced in both vocal and written speeches when trust was invoked. As per Figure 14, when appealing to trust, the candidate predominantly associated it with ‘accessible healthcare’, ‘democratic processes’, and ‘nature’, with all three codes attaining a score of 11.

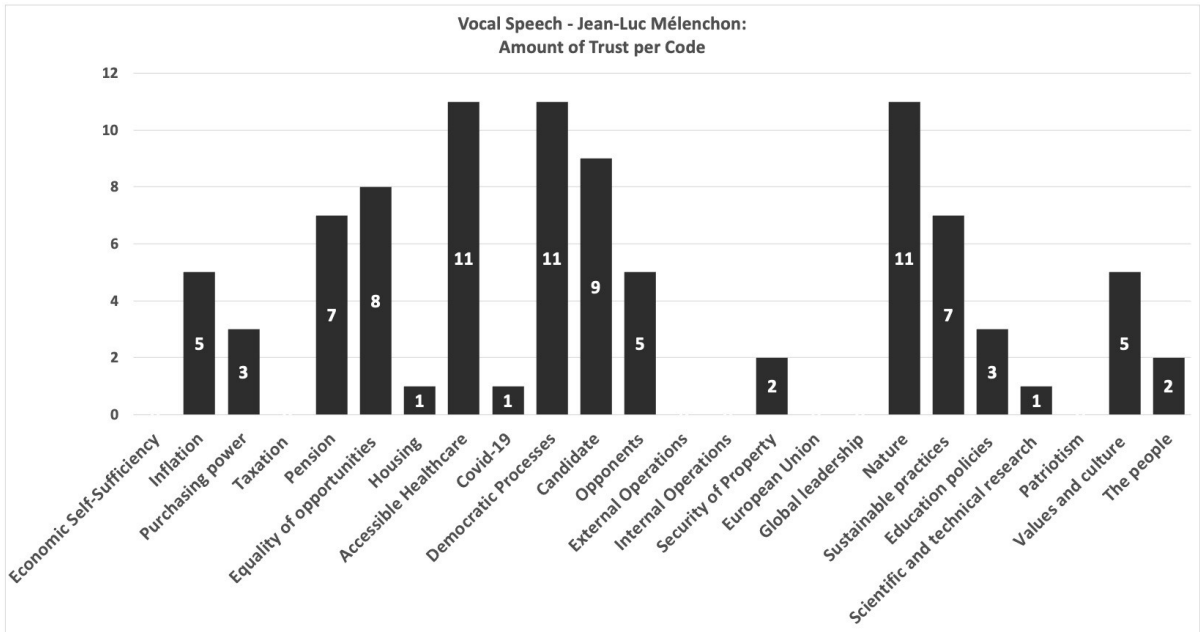


Figure 14: Vocal Speeches – Jean-Luc Mélenchon: Amount of Trust per Code

Finally, Figure 15 illustrates the codes referenced when invoking trust in the written speeches of the left-wing populist candidate. Here, the code associated with ‘taxation’ was most frequently referenced when evoking trust, achieving a score of 9. Following closely, the codes related to ‘pension’ and ‘democratic processes’ both scored 8. These results can be contextualized through Table 6, which presents samples of sentences in the trust category for Jean-Luc Melenchon alongside their corresponding codes.

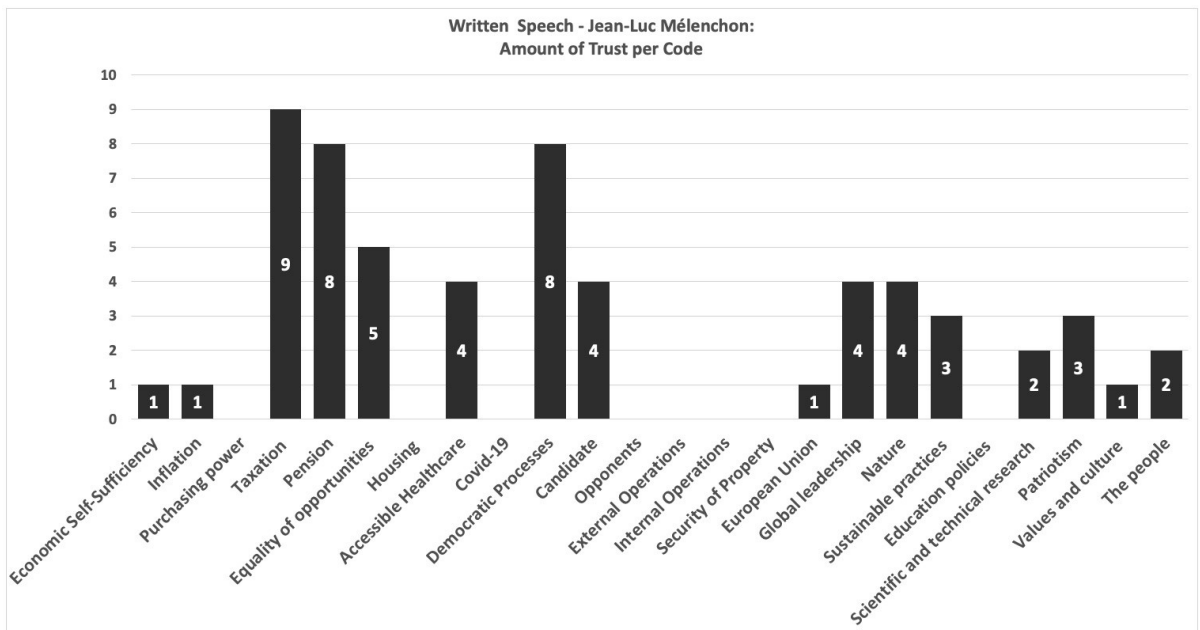


Figure 15: Written Speech – Jean-Luc Mélenchon: Amount of Trust per Code

Table 6: Samples of sentences in trust and corresponding codes – Jean-Luc Mélenchon

Sentences	Codes
‘We will create a public drug center to ensure that we can produce what we need all the time without depending on anyone.’	‘Accessible healthcare’
‘Trust me to move to the 6th Republic for true democracy (RIC, revocation of elected officials) and new rights (right to control one’s body, right to die with dignity)!’	‘Democratic processes’
‘My project is to build a society of mutual aid aimed at the harmony of human beings with each other and with nature.’	‘Nature’
‘And up to 4,000 euros in monthly income, you will pay less in taxes!’	‘Taxation’
‘I want retirement at 60, at full rate, and not a retirement below the revalued minimum wage of 1,400€ for a full career.’	‘Pension’

## 2. Marine Le Pen

### a. Hope

In a similar structure, the following sub-selections will now be dedicated to the use of hope, joy and trust in the vocal and written official propaganda materials of the right-wing populist candidate to the 2022 French presidential candidates. In the analysis of codes related to the evocation of hope by Marine Le Pen, specific codes emerged prominently, as illustrated in Figures 16 and 17. According to Figure 16, when appealing to hope in the vocal materials, the candidate predominantly associated it with ‘democratic processes’, achieving a score of 15. Following closely, the code related to the ‘people’ scored a 14, and ‘pension’ scored an 8.

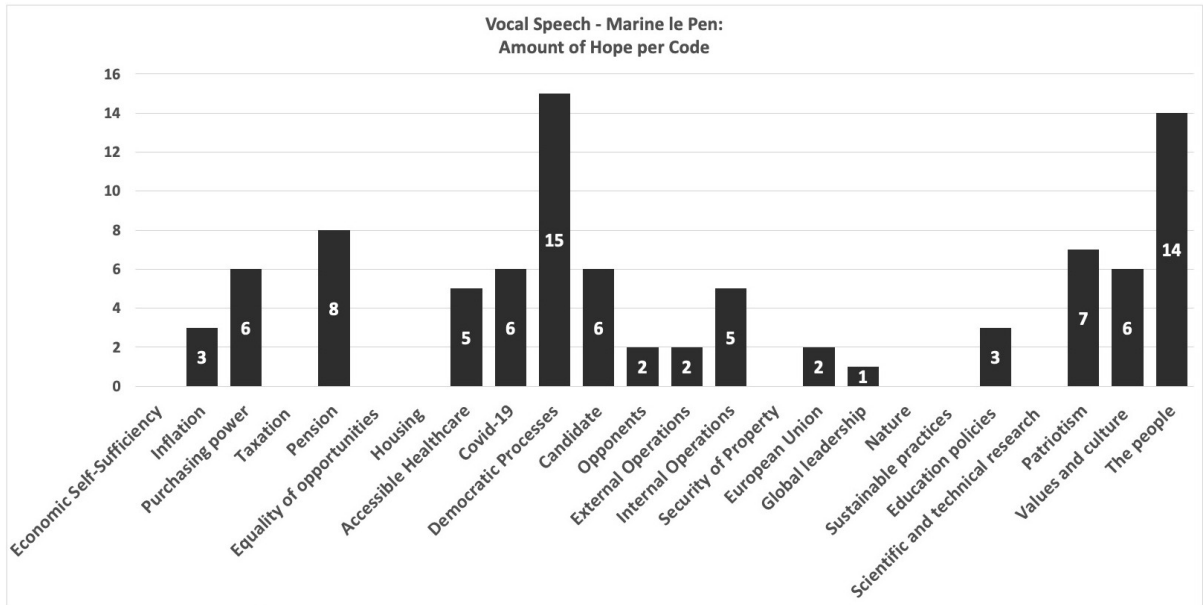


Figure 16: Vocal Speeches – Marine Le Pen: Amount of Hope per Code

Furthermore, Figure 17 illustrates the codes referenced when invoking hope in the written speeches of the right-wing populist candidate. Here, the code associated with ‘global leadership’ was most frequently referenced when evoking hope, achieving a score of 5. Following closely, the code related to ‘purchasing power’ scored a 4. These results can be contextualized through Table 7, which presents samples of sentences in the hope category for Marine Le Pen alongside their corresponding codes.

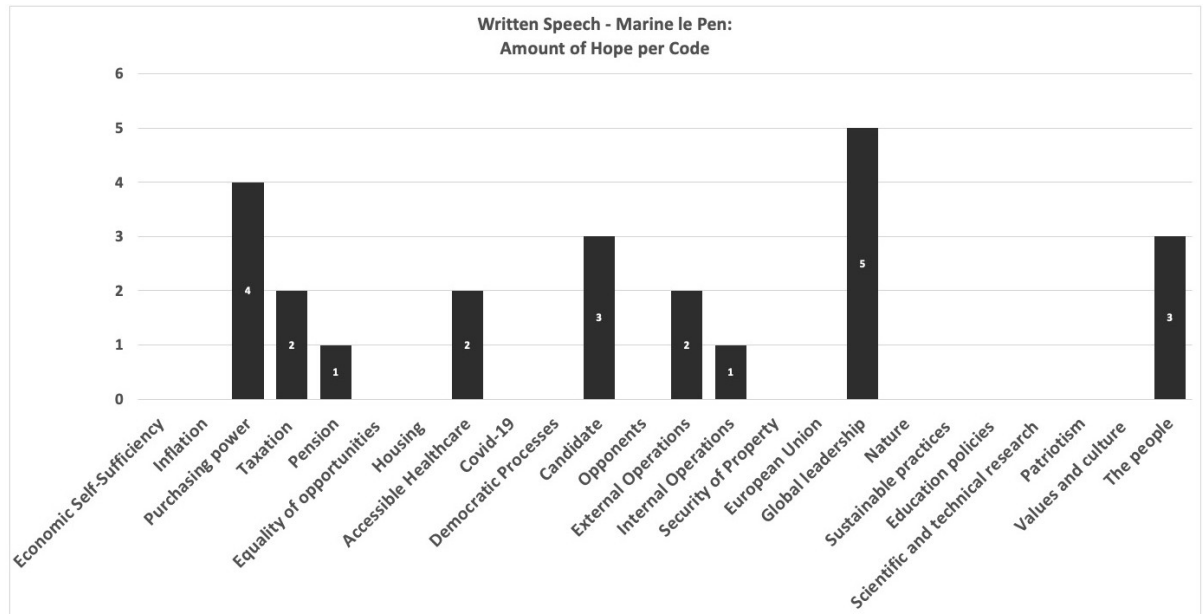


Figure 17: Written Speech – Marine Le Pen: Amount of Hope per Code



Table 7: Samples of sentences in hope and corresponding codes – Marine Le Pen

Sentences	Codes
‘Two dates, April 10 and 24, will seal the fate of our country, or should I say, the fate, the destiny of this magnificent and powerful human adventure called France.’	‘Democratic processes’
‘No one better than you, present here, supporters of the national cause, dear elected officials and activists of the National Rally, and more broadly, all French patriots listening to me.’	‘People’
‘I will guarantee a fair and dignified retirement for everyone from the age of 60 with a progressive system of 40 to 42 annuities.’	‘Pensions’
‘In the service of peace, I will make France a balancing power between the major blocs.’	‘Global leadership’
‘These crucial topics, so important to you, I have made them one of the priorities of my presidential project, which is to give you back your money.’	‘Purchasing power’

### b. Joy

The following sub-chapter aims to represent the use of joy by Marine Le Pen in the official campaign materials of the 2022 French Presidential elections. Correspondingly, Figures 18 and 19 depict the specific codes which emerged prominently in both vocal and written speeches when joy was invoked. According to Figure 18, when appealing to joy, the candidate predominantly associates it with the ‘people’, attaining a score of 19 for the code. Moreover, other significant codes include ‘patriotism’, ‘values and culture’ and ‘democratic processes’, all scoring 15.

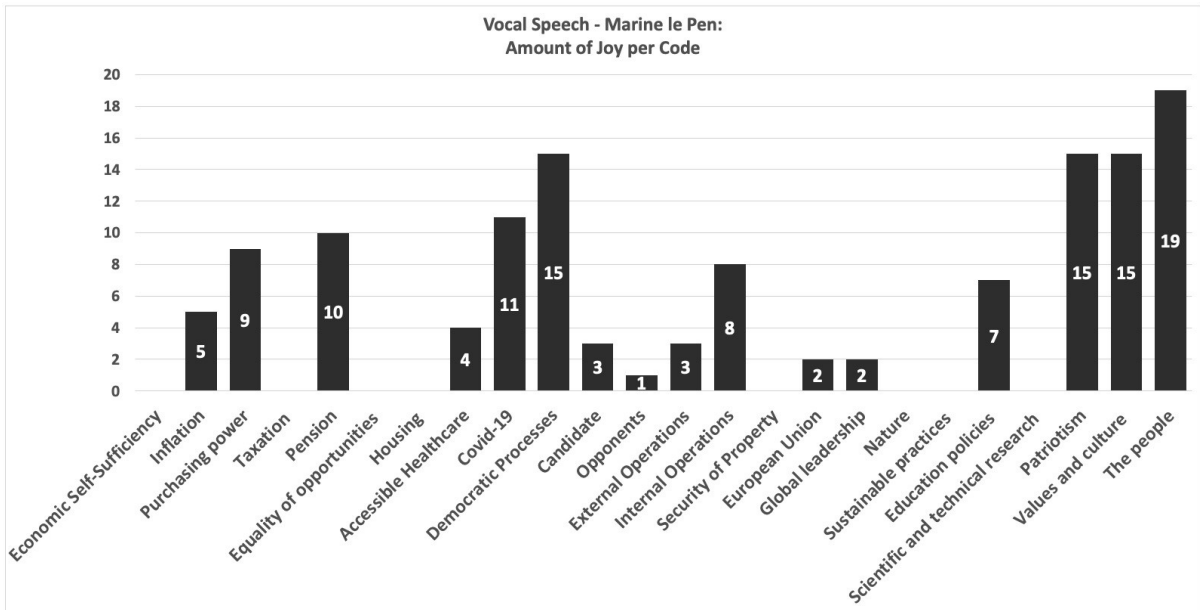


Figure 18: Vocal Speeches – Marine Le Pen: Amount of Joy per Code

Furthermore, Figure 19 illustrates the codes referenced when invoking joy in the written speeches of the Marine Le Pen. Here, appeals to joy were particularly low. Hence, the sole code that did not fall below a score of 4 was the figure of the candidate, making it the code of focus when scrutinizing the utilization of joy in the written speeches of Marine Le Pen for the 2022 elections. Hence, the sole code that did not fall below a score of 4 was the figure of the ‘candidate’, making it the code of focus when scrutinizing the use of joy in the written speech of Marine Le Pen for the 2022 elections.

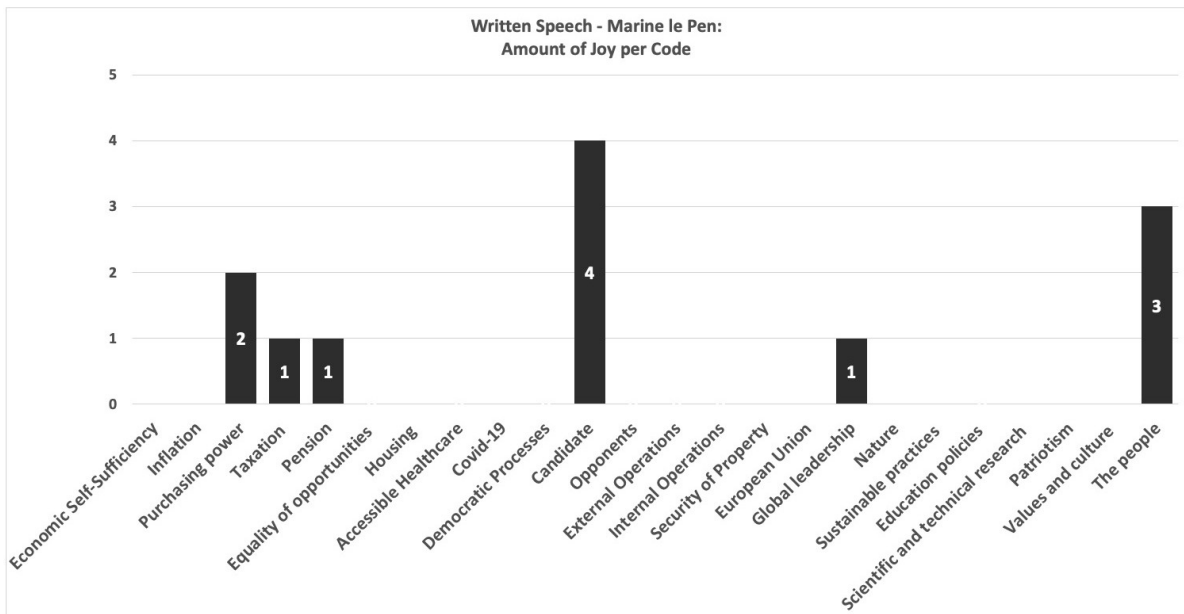


Figure 19: Written Speech – Marine Le Pen: Amount of Joy per Code

These results can be contextualized through Table 8, which presents samples of sentences in the joy category for Marine Le Pen alongside their corresponding codes.

Table 8: Samples of sentences in joy and corresponding codes – Marine Le Pen

Sentences	Codes
'The joyful sovereignty of the people is not only their freedom to decide but to implement their decisions.'	'People'
'A united and determined nation, a nation that protects its children, a nation that knows it has so much to offer to the world.'	'Patriotism'
'From the soldiers of Year II to those of 1914, from Lafayette to the hero of Bir-Hakeim, from Delacroix's Liberty guiding the people to the imposing statue proudly standing at the entrance of the port of New York.'	'Values and culture'
'This is the purpose of my immigration bill, a turnkey bill, a firm but humane bill.'	'Democratic processes'
'By temperament and commitment, I will be the president who cares about your quality of life and the future of your loved ones.'	'Candidate'

### c. Trust

Ultimately, this sub-chapter depicts the utilization of trust by Marine Le Pen in the official campaign materials of the 2022 French Presidential elections. In concordance, Figures 20 and 21 illustrate the specific codes that prominently surfaced in both vocal and written speeches when trust was invoked. As per Figure 20, when appealing to trust, the candidate predominantly associated it with the 'people', attaining a score of 32. Moreover, other significant codes included 'democratic processes', scoring 31 values, as well as the code of 'culture and patriotism', reaching a score of 27.

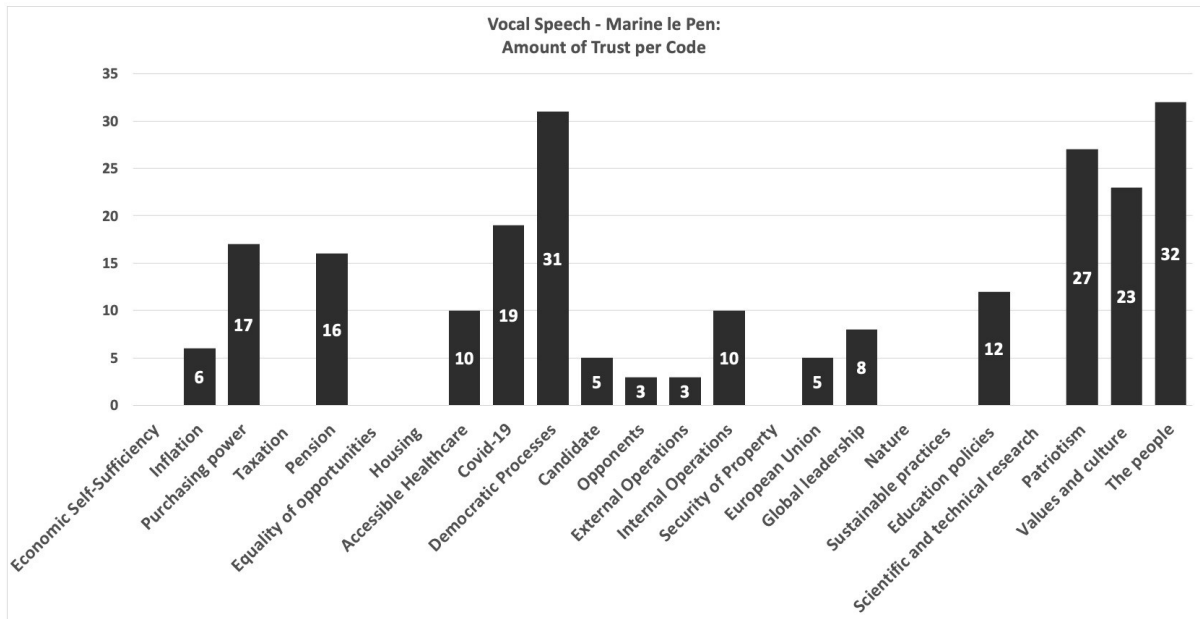


Figure 20: Vocal Speeches – Marine Le Pen: Amount of Trust per Code

Finally, Figure 21 illustrates the codes referenced when invoking trust in the written speeches of the right-wing populist candidate. Here, the code associated with ‘people’ was most frequently referenced when evoking trust, achieving a score of 7. Following closely, the code related to the ‘candidate’ scored 5 and ‘global leadership’ scored 4.

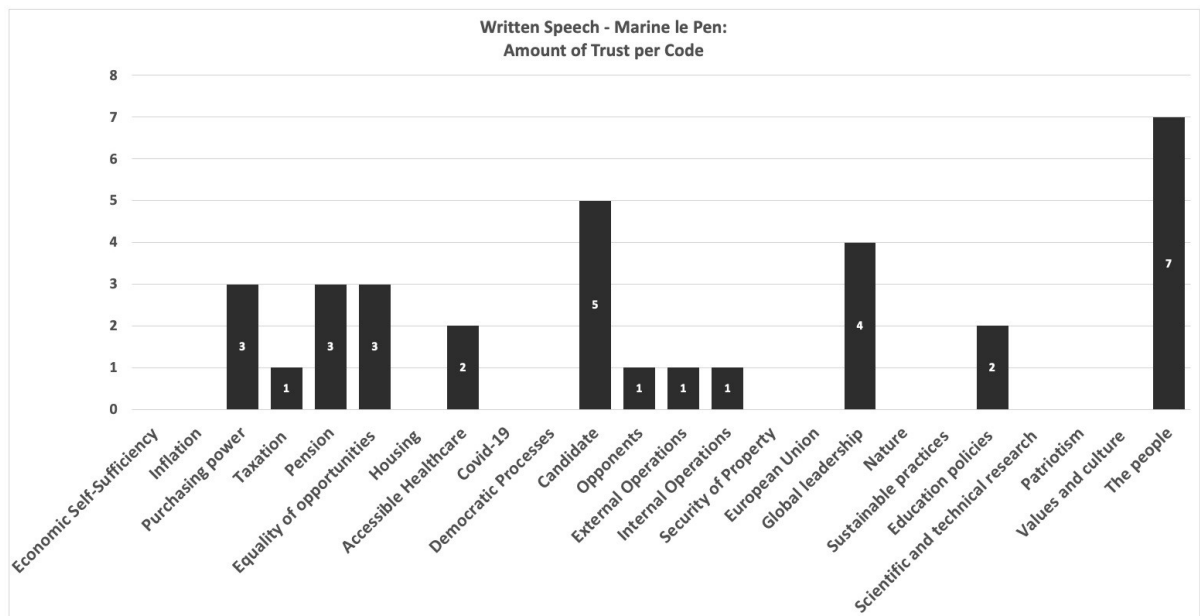


Figure 21: Written Speech – Marine Le Pen: Amount of Trust per Code

These results can be contextualized through Table 9, which presents samples of sentences in the joy category for Marine Le Pen alongside their corresponding codes.

Table 9: Samples of sentences in trust and corresponding codes – Marine Le Pen

Sentences	Codes
'I want to restore fraternity among the French to enable them to face the challenges of the 21st century, united and strong.'	'People'
'This election is a choice of civilization, a choice of life and future for our children, a choice of security and power for our country, a choice of freedom and independence.'	'Democratic processes'
'This freedom that guides our steps, to echo the patriotic song attributed to the poet Chénier's brothers —freedom is only an empty principle without its plural form, freedoms.'	'Values and culture'
'The nation is an act of love that allows the French to consider themselves as brothers.'	'Patriotism'
'In this election, I am the candidate who stands by your side, for improving life, the candidate for your purchasing power, the one who believes that work should pay, that incomes should be dignified, and that society should pay special attention to the most vulnerable.'	'Candidate'
'In the name of freedom, in the name of respect for peoples, in the name of efficiency, which dictates that one is never better defended than by oneself, we demand, for the French people, the inalienable right to self-determination.'	'Global leadership'

### 3. Populists

#### a. Hope

Here, the prominent codes that emerged in both vocal and written speeches by the populist candidates combined will be depicted in Figures 22 and 23. As per Figure 23, when appealing to hope, populists predominantly associate it with 'democratic processes', attaining a score of 19 for the code. Moreover, other significant codes include 'people', scoring 17, followed by 'accessible healthcare' scoring 15. Furthermore, Figure 23 illustrates the codes referenced when invoking hope in the populist written speeches. Here, the code associated with 'pension' was most frequently referenced when evoking hope, achieving a score of 8.

Following closely, the codes related to ‘global leadership’ scored a 7, and the ‘candidate’ and ‘accessible healthcare’ both scored a 6.

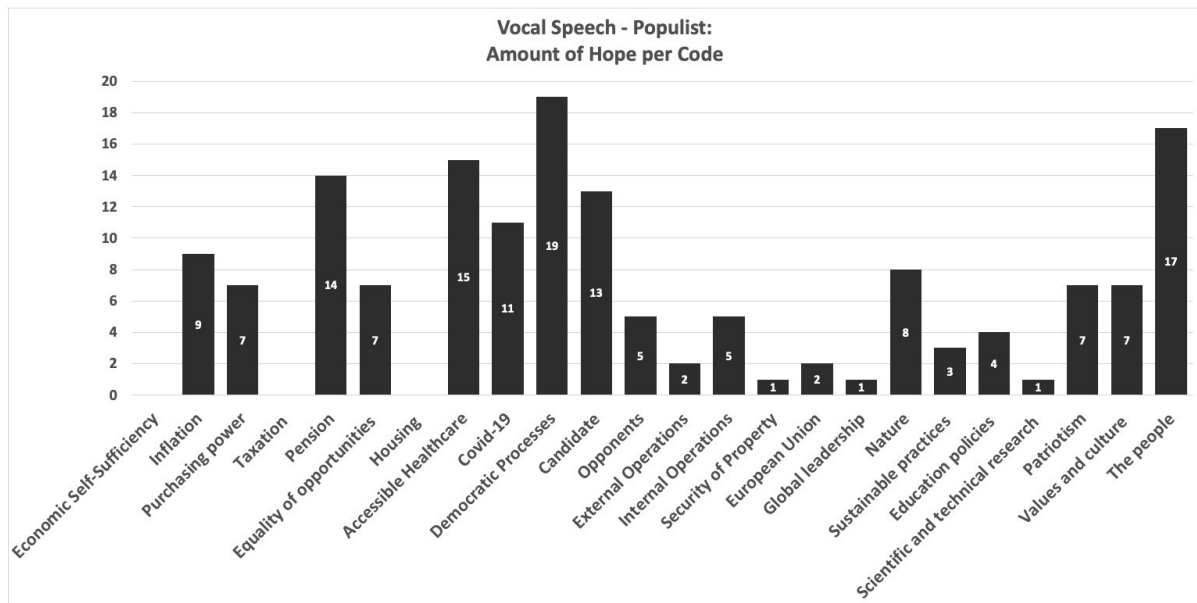


Figure 22: Vocal Speeches – Populists: Amount of Hope per Code

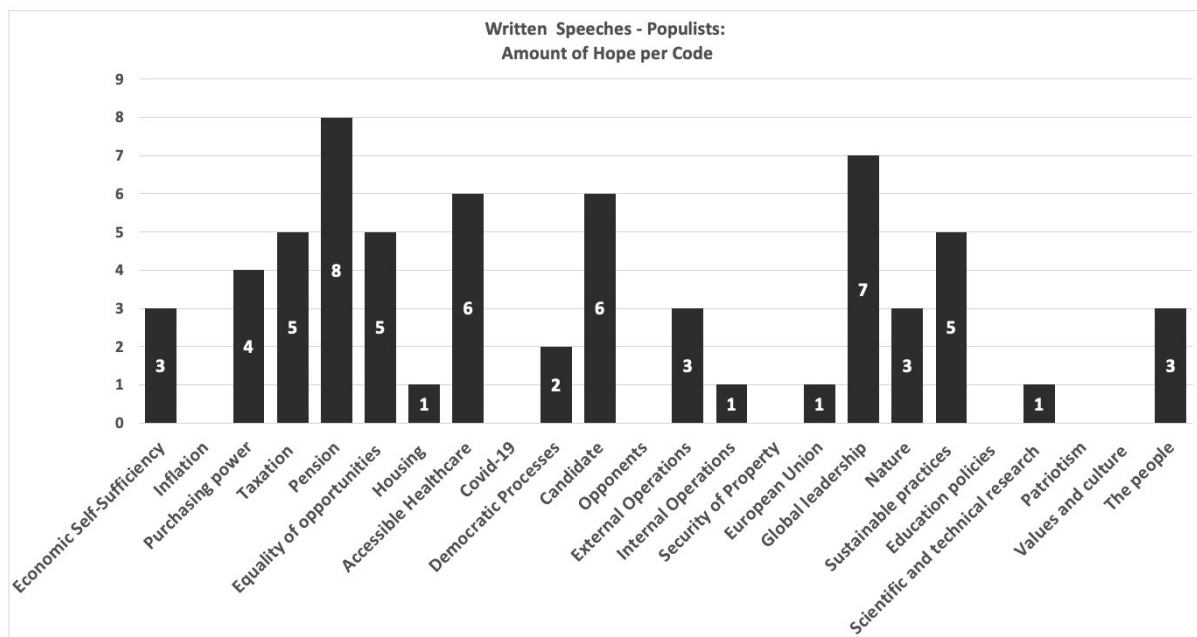


Figure 23: Written Speech – Populists: Amount of Hope per Code

## b. Joy

The following sub-chapter aims to represent the use of joy by the populist candidates in the official campaign materials of the 2022 French Presidential elections. Correspondingly, Figures 24 and 25 depict the specific codes which emerged prominently in both vocal and written speeches when joy was invoked. According to Figure 24, when appealing to joy, populists predominantly associated it with the ‘people’, attaining a score of 22 for the code. Moreover, other significant codes include ‘values and culture’ and ‘pension’, scoring respectively 19 and 16.

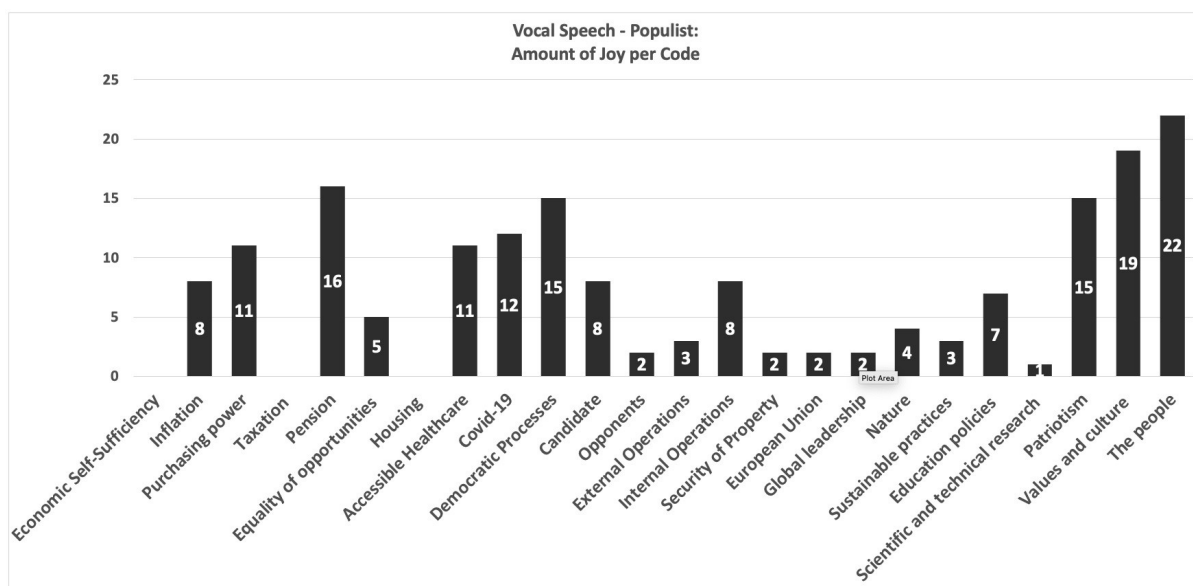


Figure 24: Vocal Speeches – Populists: Amount of Joy per Code

Subsequently, Figure 25 illustrates the codes referenced when invoking joy in the written speeches of the populists. Here, the codes associated with ‘pension’ and ‘taxation’ were most frequently referenced when evoking joy, achieving a score of 7. Following closely, the codes related to ‘nature’ and the candidate both scored a 5.

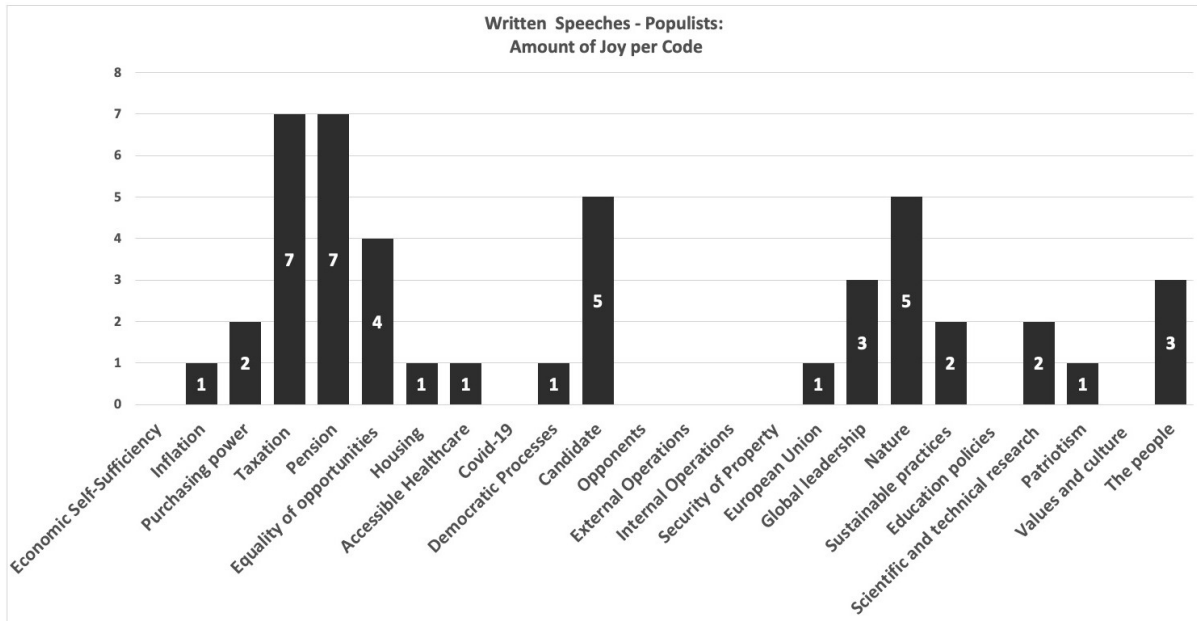


Figure 25: Written Speech – Populists: Amount of Joy per Code

### c. Trust

Ultimately, this sub-chapter depicts the utilization of trust by the populist candidates in the official campaign materials of the 2022 French Presidential elections. In concordance, Figures 26 and 27 illustrate the specific codes that prominently surfaced in both vocal and written speeches when the trust was invoked. As per Figure 26, when appealing to trust, populists predominantly associated it with ‘democratic processes’, attaining a score of 42. Moreover, other significant codes include ‘people’, scoring 34 and ‘values and culture’ and ‘patriotism’, reaching a score of 28.

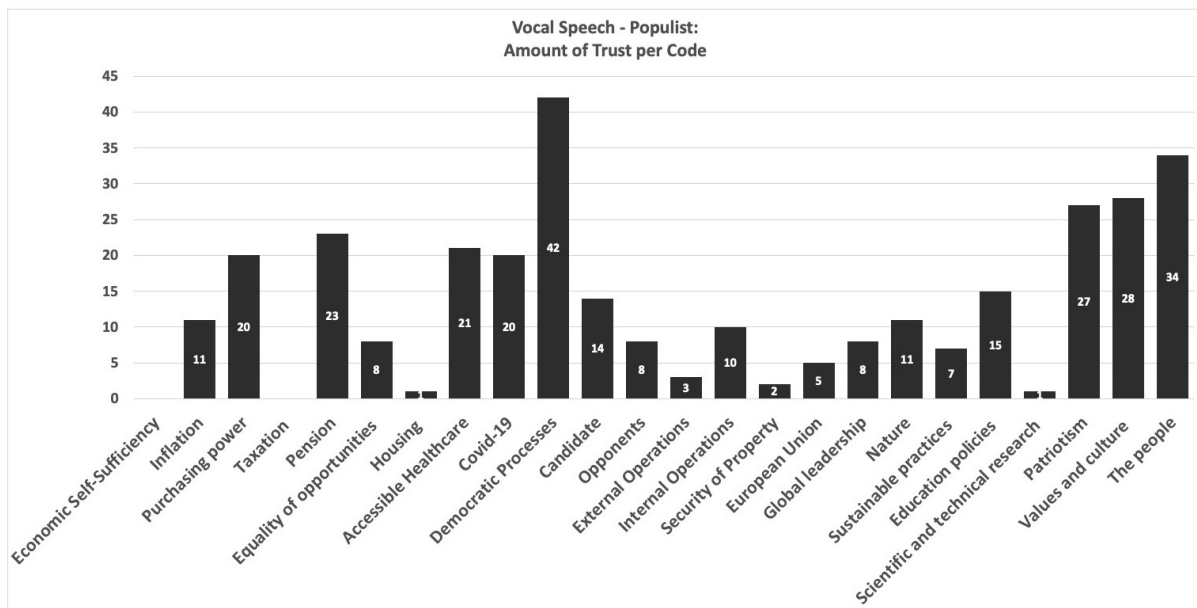


Figure 26: Vocal Speeches – Populists: Amount of Trust per Code



Finally, Figure 27 illustrates the codes referenced when invoking trust in the populist written speeches. Here, the code associated with ‘pension’ was most frequently referenced when evoking trust, achieving a score of 11. Following closely, the code related to ‘taxation’ scored 10 and the ‘people’ and ‘global leadership’ scored 9.

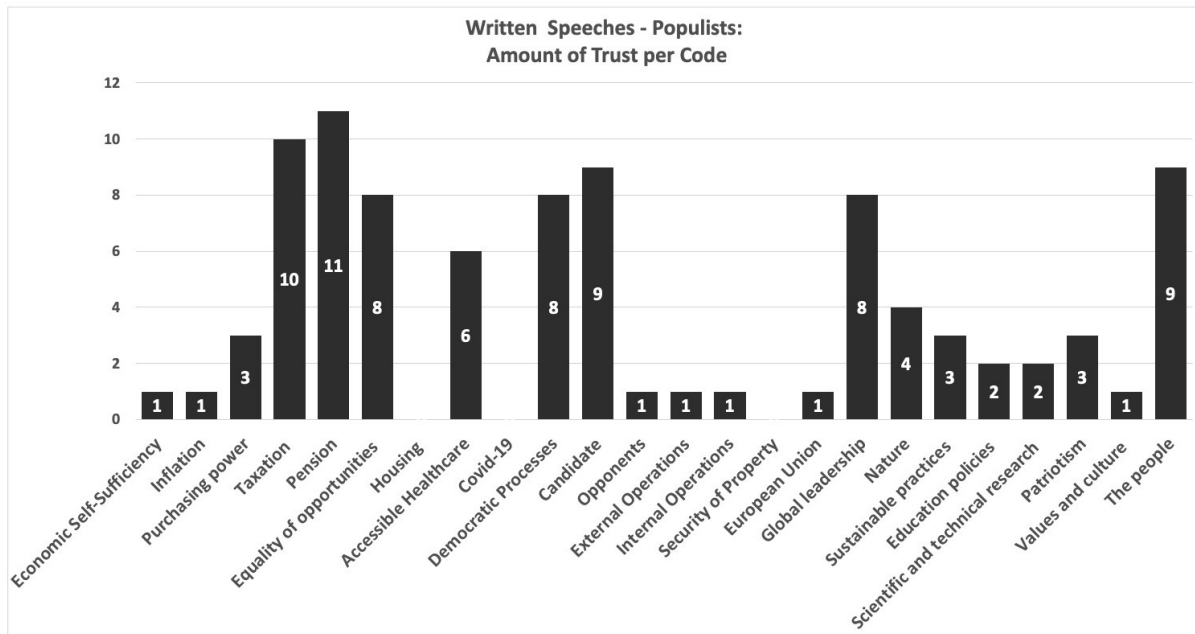


Figure 27: Written Speech – Populists: Amount of Trust per Code

Having presented the emotional content of the vocal and written speeches of both Jean-Luc Mélenchon and Marine Le Pen combined, the results chapter will delve further into the empirical examination of hypotheses set in Chapter IV.

### C. Empirical Examination of Hypotheses

To facilitate empirical testing and contribute to the advancement of knowledge in the field of political psychology, several hypotheses were formulated. As the sub-chapter unfolds, each of the three hypotheses will be examined and scrutinized based on the empirical evidence presented. These hypotheses were formulated in response to the overarching research question:

‘How do French populist left and populist right parties evoke positive emotions in the campaign propaganda materials of the 2022 French Presidential election?’

#### 1. Hypothesis (H1)

The first hypothesis (H1) posited that in comparison to the centrist candidate, hope is the emotion that is relatively evoked the most often by populist candidates. Figures 28 and 29

provide the relevant data to address this hypothesis for vocal speeches (including candidacy announcements, and short or long broadcasts). Specifically, Figure 28 illustrates that in the vocal speeches, Jean-Luc Mélenchon and Marine Le Pen evoke hope at a rate of 33,4%, while Figure 29 indicates that in the vocal speeches, the mainstream candidate Emmanuel Macron evokes hope at a rate of 48,3%.

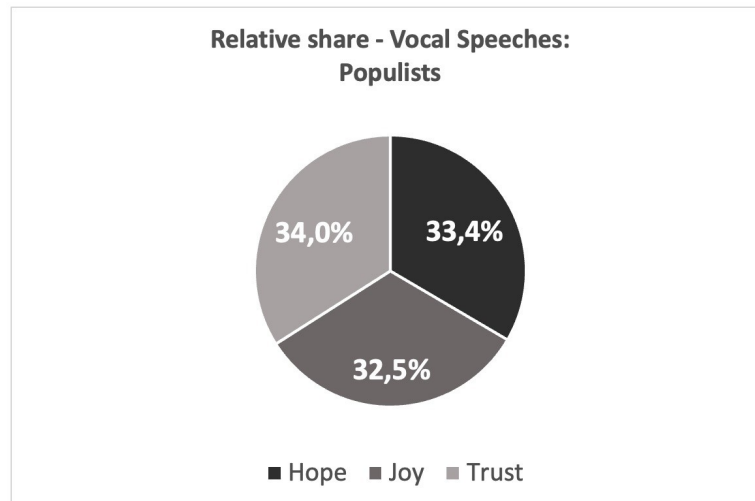


Figure 28: Relative Share of Positive Emotions – Populist Vocal Speeches

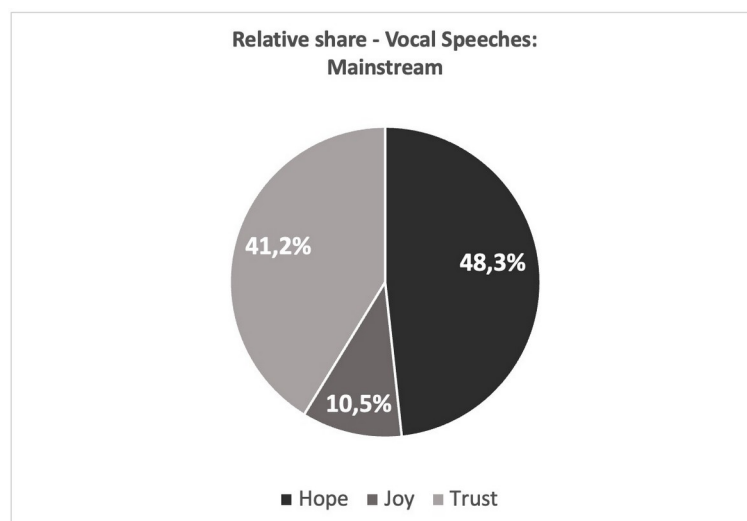


Figure 29: Relative Share of Positive Emotions – Mainstream Vocal Speeches

Figures 30 and 31 address the first hypothesis for the written speeches of the populists and mainstream candidates. Specifically, Figure 24 illustrates that in the written speeches, Jean-Luc Mélenchon and Marine Le Pen evoke hope at a rate of 35,8% while Figure 25 indicates that in the written speeches, the mainstream candidate Emmanuel Macron evokes hope at a rate of 37,6%.

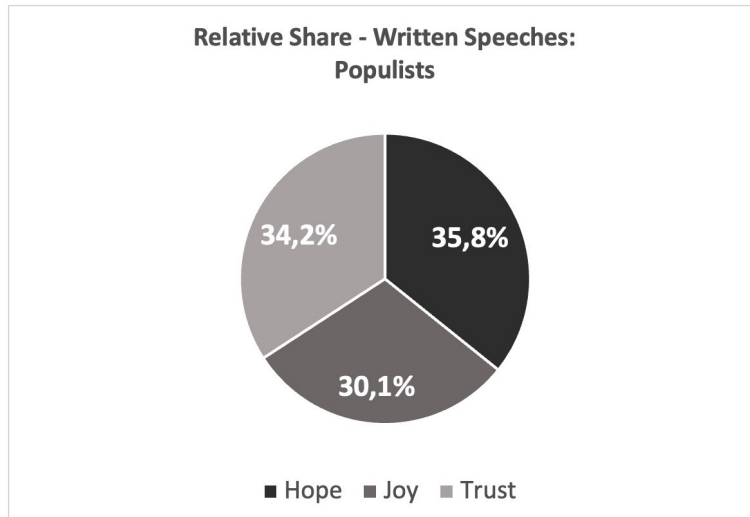


Figure 30: Relative Share of Positive Emotions – Populist Written Speeches

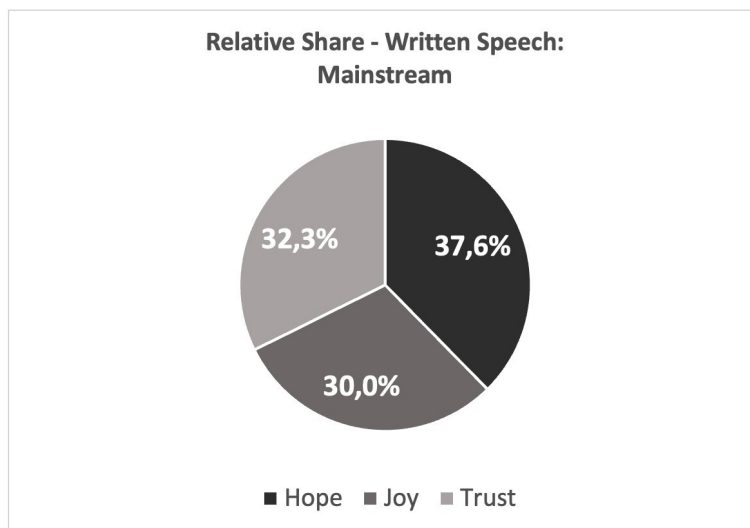


Figure 31: Relative Share of Positive Emotions – Mainstream Written Speeches

Figures 28 to 31, addressing the first hypothesis, reveal that contrary to expectations, hope is not the emotion relatively evoked the most often by populist candidates in comparison to the mainstream candidates. Whether in written or vocal speeches, hope is more evoked by the mainstream candidate than by the populist candidates. Consequently, in the case of the official propaganda materials for the 2022 French presidential elections, H1 is rejected, capturing the nuanced interplay of emotions in political communication. This interplay will be further developed in the Discussion chapter.

## 2. Hypothesis (H2.a and H2.b)

The second hypothesis was divided into two parts. The first part (H2.a) posited that populist candidates evoke positive emotions the most when dealing with national and international security. Correspondingly, the other part of the hypothesis (H2.b) suggested that

hope is the most used emotional appeal for this topic. Figures 26 to 31 serve as references in addressing the second hypothesis. The first part of hypothesis two is found to be invalid upon observation of the figures. As can be observed in figures 26 to 31, the codes of ‘external operations’ and ‘internal operations’, representative of the campaign theme of security, do not emerge as prominent codes when analyzing the positive emotions evoked by populists. Furthermore, the second part of the hypothesis is further invalidated, as Figure 30 explicitly illustrates that external and internal operations attained the highest score when the trust was invoked by populists. Therefore, in the context of the official campaign materials for the 2022 French presidential election, the hypothesis lacks relevance for the two populist candidates.

### **3. Hypothesis (H3)**

The third hypothesis posited that patriotism and the figure of the populist leader are subjects that invoke joy or trust, while hope is often invoked in the context of ‘the people’. The third hypothesis demonstrates nuanced validity within the official propaganda materials of the 2022 French presidential elections. The empirical analysis of H3 will consist of elucidating its two components.

Firstly, patriotism emerges as one of the top three codes associated with the evocation of trust in the vocal speeches of populists, aligning with the first part of the hypothesis (refer to Figure 30). In addition, its prominence diminishes when populists evoke hope (refer to Figures 26 and 27). Moreover, the code of the candidate, denoting the figure of the populist leader, stands out as a top code in written speeches when joy is evoked by populists. Interestingly, in the 2022 Presidential elections, the code of the candidate also surfaces as a top code when populists appeal to hope. Consequently, while evidence supports that patriotism and the figure of the populist leader are subjects that invoke joy or trust, the complete validity of the hypothesis is questioned, given their association with hope as well.

Secondly, in the context of this thesis, the code focusing on ‘people’ is prominent in the top three of the populist’s vocal speeches but not in the written speeches (refer to Figures 26 and 27). Notably, ‘the people’ emerge as a top code for populists across all positive emotions, exclusively in vocal speeches. This observation needs to be contextualized by the fact that written speeches are considerably shorter than vocal speeches. Therefore, hope is indeed invoked when referring to the ‘people,’ but it appears to be a prevalent theme across all three positive emotions, emphasizing its relevance in populist positive emotional appeals. It is crucial to highlight that upon closer examination of the individual scores of Marine Le Pen and Jean-Luc Mélenchon, Marine Le Pen significantly influences the attribution of hope to the people, as Jean Luc Mélenchon did not score high for that code in any of the emotions (refer to Figures 16 and 17). Consequently, based on these results, it becomes evident that, in this study, the theme of ‘the people’ serves as an element fostering appeals to hope, joy, and trust in populist rhetorics.

Having presented the results of the explanatory mixed-sequential method, Chapter VII will critically discuss and interpret the results in light of the theory developed in the literature review.

## **VII. Discussion of Results**

The present research aimed to answer the following research question:

‘How do French populist left and populist right parties evoke positive emotions in the campaign speeches of the 2022 French Presidential election?’

By interpreting the results from both a critical and a theoretical perspective, this chapter will consist of a bridge between the empirical findings and the research question. Indeed, this discussion aims to understand the positive emotions of populists embedded in their communication strategies in a top-down approach. Therefore, the chapter will first critically examine the positive emotional strategies of Marine Le Pen and Jean-Luc Mélenchon, by interpreting the overall emotion-analysis results and the hypotheses that were invalidated by the results (H1 and H2). Secondly, a theoretical examination of the primary codes that emerged for hope, joy and trust in the far-right and far-left campaign materials will be delivered. Ultimately, a conclusion will be drawn, linking this research to the general debate in the field, while addressing the implications for existing gaps in the literature.

### **A. Theoretical Examination of Results: Positive Emotional Strategies**

In this sub-chapter, this discussion will aim to understand the prominence of codes attributed to discrete positive emotions for Jean-Luc Mélenchon and Marine Le Pen as well as the surprising results of the first and second hypotheses.

#### **1. Overall Positive Emotions Analysis and Hypotheses**

First, a remark on the share of sentiment that emerged from the analysis of the official campaign materials for the 2022 presidential elections needs to be enacted. Here, 52% of the content of the dataset was positive. Although this finding is aligned with the theory that, in the last decade, populist candidates have made significantly greater use of positive emotions to mobilize voters (Gerstlé and Nai, 2019; Freistein et al., 2022; Lesser and Spissinger, 2020), it surpassed the initially anticipated expectations. The author of this thesis anticipated negative sentiment to exceed the proportion of positive sentiment, as populist actors tend to employ negative emotions more frequently than positive emotions. (Widmann, 2021; Salmela and von Scheve, 2017; Rico et al., 2017; Wodak, 2015). However, this finding needs to be nuanced by the fact that 29% of the corpus was sentimentally neutral. Despite the reliable qualities of the quantitative phase, the NRC Lexicon encompasses only 14,182 words. Therefore, the neutral sentiment might have leaned towards negativity if the Lexicon had a more extensive vocabulary. Nevertheless, with positive attributions constituting more than

half of the sentiment in the 2022 presidential campaign, this acknowledgement does not undermine the fact that the two French populist candidates were notably positive in the case of the 2022 presidential campaign.

Second, among the positive sentiment, the results presented a proportion of hope, joy, and trust in the dataset for populist candidates. This step was crucial for the research gap given that the overwhelming majority of studies link French populists to more negative rhetoric by relying on appeals of fear and anger. Here, while the distribution between joy, hope, and trust was relatively balanced for populists together, it was observed that Jean-Luc Mélenchon predominantly appealed to hope, whereas Marine Le Pen primarily emphasized trust. Here, the finding that Jean-Luc Mélenchon appealed to hope predominantly aligns with the theory that in a presidential campaign setting, populist candidates tend to appeal more to hope when they know they can access the second round of the elections and potentially win (Schnur, 2007; Ballet, 2020; Widmann, 2021). Moreover, the finding that Marine Le Pen extensively appealed to trust, along with positive emotions in general, corresponds with her long-term engagement in a de-demonization strategy since the 2000s (Mercier, 2019). Indeed, for almost ten years, Marine Le Pen had embodied the French far right, inheriting the role from her father, Jean-Marie Le Pen. However, the anti-Semitic, racist and Holocaust-denying polemics of her father Jean-Marie Le Pen created an image of the party deemed as 'too extreme,' dissuading potential voters (Mercier, 2019). Consequently, a crucial aspect of the de-demonization strategy of Marine Le Pen involved softening her political stance and infusing a more positive tone to attract voters (Albertini and Doucet, 2014). Therefore, a growing emphasis on appeals to trust aligns with a strategic approach stronger in each successive presidential campaign, aimed at building further support while attracting mistrusting voters.

Correspondingly, these results were valuable in answering the first hypothesis (H1) that posited that, in comparison to the centrist candidate, hope is the emotion that is relatively evoked the most often by populist candidates. Here, when looking at the share of populist positive emotions, H1 was invalidated in favour of trust in the case of the official propaganda materials for the 2022 French presidential elections. In this discussion, additional scrutiny will be provided to understand the rejection of H1. Despite the efforts of this work to standardize materials and rectify the imbalanced Lexicon, it is relevant to restate that the speeches were replayed to align with the total broadcast time. Furthermore, Emmanuel Macron, known for his controlled communication (Wharton, 2018), delivered only one instance of each material category analyzed. Consequently, as Macron served as the reference for mainstream candidates, and extensively invoked hope in his replayed singular speech, his proportion of the emotion is inflated. Therefore, his minimal communication approach in the 2022 Presidential campaign holds significance and nuances the outcomes of a hypothesis questioning the emotional elements embedded in the communication strategies of populist candidates.

Moreover, the second hypothesis that posited that populist candidates evoke positive emotions the most when dealing with national and international security was contradicted by

the findings of the 2022 Presidential campaign. This outcome was particularly surprising, considering the earlier prediction by Marion Ballet (2020), who focused on the 2017 elections, and anticipated that the more precarious the security situation, the more positive French populists would be about it to reassure the electorate. With the onset of the War in Ukraine before the campaign, the writer of this thesis expected highly positive appeals on codes of ‘external’ and ‘internal’ security. However, when processing the text, most sentences about security for Jean-Luc Mélenchon were deemed negative by the Lexicon, and Marine Le Pen practically made no mention of it. This silence can be explained, as the far-right populist candidate had previously maintained strong ties with Vladimir Putin. Indeed, Le Pen planned to feature a photo with him on her campaign leaflet before the war had started (Cuthbertson, 2022). Therefore, as the invasion was condemned by all major political parties in France, including the *Rassemblement National*, the findings of this study highlight that Le Pen chose to remain silent so as not to adversely impact public opinion. The next subsections will focus on the specificities of each candidate in the way they invoke positive emotions during the 2022 campaign.

## **2. Jean-Luc Mélenchon**

The analysis of the official campaign materials of the far-left populist candidate provided valuable insights into his strategic use of positive emotions. This significantly contributed to the aim of this thesis to address the scarcity of studies focusing on the evocation of emotions by far-left populist parties compared to those focusing on the far-right populist (Häberlen and Smith, 2014). The results of the left-wing populist highlighted several patterns that warrant critical assessment in light of the existing literature.

From the results chapter, it is clear that Jean-Luc Mélenchon strategically invoked positive emotions in alignment with populist-left wing ideology and communication strategies. The dominant codes of ‘accessible healthcare’, ‘pension’ and ‘nature’ persisted across the three discrete positive emotions. These results underscored the commitment of the radical left-wing populist to build a society on egalitarian and inclusionary values. Thus, these outcomes aligned with the theory that the communication strategies of left-wing populist parties are socially inclusive (Katsambekis 2017; Mudde & Kaltwasser 2013). Moreover, the prominence of the ‘pension’ code in the three positive emotions aligns with the active opposition of Jean-Luc Mélenchon against pension reforms. Indeed, the commitment to the social and economic issues of the candidate pertained despite the decision by the French Constitutional Council to extend the statutory retirement age to 64. Finally, the emphasis on ‘nature’ in positive emotion categories is unsurprising, given the recurrent claim of the populist leader to be the only environmental activist with a chance of being elected. In the campaign, this strategic use of positive emotional appeals serves to shed a favourable light on the environmental stance, effectively differentiating the candidate and attracting voters sympathetic to climate change.

In addition, the fact that the ‘candidate’ code was prominent in both joy and hope appeals aligns with considerations that positive populist appeals tend to underline the good

qualities of the party leader (Ernst et al., 2019). To proceed, Mélenchon adopted a personal approach, sharing details about his life, as exemplified in the long official broadcast with the concepts of travel and internationalism. For instance, the candidate expressed his identity by positively sharing his past in North Africa, fostering a personal connection with viewers and instilling trust in his role as a candidate (Balme et al., 2003).

Moreover, in the case of the far-left candidate, the prominence of the ‘democratic processes’ code was expected, given that the code embodies the fundamental reason for delivering campaign speeches—the Presidential election. However, this prominence of the code was notable solely in trust appeals, which could be attributed to the inherent governmental distrust associated with presidential elections in France (Martin, 2022). Here, the abundance of trust appeals when mentioning electoral democratic accountability can be comprehended in two ways. Firstly, historically, the centralization of power in France has evolved through the gradual construction of the state employing a ‘divide and rule’ political approach, fostering elitism and thus symbolically placing politicians in a significantly higher position than the rest of the citizens. Secondly, in the last presidential mandate, the ‘technocratic’ approach of Macron and his use of power-centralization during instances such as the Yellow Vest protest and the COVID-19 crisis have contributed to popular resentment and disappointment in the government (Martin, 2022). Therefore, the prevailing socio-political climate of mistrust in France could explain the exclusive use of trust by Jean-Luc Mélenchon when evoking democratic processes.

Finally, contrary to expectations based on theories stating that populist communication would make strategic use of positive emotions to reinforce ingroup identity (Wirz, 2018; Bonansinga, 2022; Widmann, 2021), the code of ‘people’ did not emerge prominently in the positive sentences of Jean-Luc Mélenchon. This finding suggests that left-wing populism, at least within the scope of the official campaign materials of the 2022 French Presidential elections, may not place as high an emphasis on praising and fomenting the identity of the ‘people’ as previously thought. This thought will be nuanced by the analysis of the positive emotional strategies of Marine Le Pen.

### **3. Marine Le Pen**

In the case of Marine Le Pen, two codes were prominent regardless of the positive emotion invoked. Namely, ‘democratic processes’ and the ‘people’ were present in all appeals related to hope, joy and trust. Firstly, the prominence of the ‘people’ code across all three positive emotions is aligned with the theory that far-right populist communication is highly grounded in ‘nativism’ and common ethnic ties (Mudde 2007). In addition, studies theorized that populist communication would make strategic use of positive emotions to reinforce ingroup identity among potential voters (Wirz, 2018; Bonansinga, 2022; Widmann, 2021; Bracciale and Martella, 2017; Ernst et al., 2019). Secondly, similar to Jean-Luc Mélenchon, the presence of the ‘democratic processes’ code in all positive emotions invoked was expected, considering the context of the presidential elections. However, for Marine Le Pen, the code of democratic processes is nuanced. Although this code involves reassurance



regarding upcoming electoral processes, a referendum to limit immigration was highly emphasized within ‘democratic processes’ as well. Notably, a specific code for ‘immigration’ was not created, as the populist candidate addressed this topic through other campaign themes. Specifically, this step enabled the candidate to use topics that could encompass her negative stance on immigration policies in France while appealing to positive emotions. Therefore, in her positive strategy, Marine Le Pen navigated around topics that would negatively contribute to the extremist image associated with her movement. The same strategy could be observed in the prominence of the ‘global leadership’ code in hope and trust appeals. Repetitively, the far-right populist candidate did not directly express her opinion on immigration, but positively highlighted the right of self-determination for the French people and the assertiveness of France in the world instead. This observation aligns with the aforementioned de-demonization strategy, suggesting that the figure of the populist right in France had to adopt a more nuanced stance on issues such as the European Union or immigration (Mercier, 2019).

Moreover, the candidate aligned perfectly with the far-right use of positive emotions, as traditional ‘values and culture’ and the figure of the ‘candidate’ displayed a key role in joy and trust appeals. By expressing to her viewers that her presidency would prioritize French traditions, Marine Le Pen aimed to cater to a patriarchal and traditional perspective. This strategical choice could be particularly reassuring to baby boomers, who may be concerned about shifts in social values, such as those related to family constructs or the conceptualization of marriage (Bonvalet et al., 2011). Correspondingly, in the official campaign materials for the 2022 presidential election, the codes of ‘patriotism’ and ‘culture and values’ emphasized the history of France through symbols, as theorized to consolidate popular support (Couperus and Tortola, 2019: 106). These findings, where joy and trust are the positive appeals for ‘values and culture’, challenged previous theories. Indeed, in the 2017 French elections, populist parties were thought to heavily rely on hope appeals when envisioning voters within a prospective societal framework rooted in the historical narrative of France (Ballet, 2020: 69). However, in the case of Marine Le Pen, joy and trust were more prominent when evoking French ‘values and culture’, questioning the prospective aspect of the previous theory. Moreover, the association between the ‘candidate’ code and trust and joy appeals for the populist-right candidate is not surprising. In the official propaganda materials, the present study interpreted that Marine Le Pen aimed to cast herself as a saviour. While describing her project, the leader emphasized that by being elected president, the French would regain their passion for the future. Moreover, the candidate used truly positive vocabulary to speak about herself, promising that she would be worthy of her responsibilities in her candidacy announcement.

Ultimately, upon meticulous examination of the official campaign materials of Marine Le Pen for the 2022 Presidential elections, a social-economic finding arose. Indeed, codes associated with socio-economic progress such as ‘pension’ or ‘purchasing power’ were prevalent solely when the populist right candidate invoked hope. Here, the prevalence of ‘purchasing power’ was linked to restoring financial means to French people, which became a recurrent topic expressed by Marine Le Pen during the 2022 campaign. However, this code

was exclusively associated with hope appeals. This could be elucidated by the fact that among campaign themes, economic recovery is a long-term process that requires an emotion instilling the belief in better future outcomes. In this context, hope aims to foster the beliefs of citizens that the future is in their control rather than in the hands of the elites (Curato, 2016). Therefore, these theories help to contextualize the fact that, in the case of the 2022 French presidential elections, hope emerged as the emotion conveying socio-economic codes for the far-right populist candidate.

## **B. Conclusion and Implications**

To conclude, using an explanatory sequential mixed methods design, the research question ‘How do French populist left and populist right parties evoke positive emotions in the campaign propaganda materials of the 2022 French Presidential election?’ was answered. Specifically, the present study analyzed how Marine Le Pen and Jean-Luc Mélenchon appealed to joy, hope and trust. The significance of this research lies in its contribution to the broader debate, as existing research has focused mainly on the effectiveness rather than the strategy and framing tactics adopted by party candidates (Clifford, 2019; Gross and Wronski, 2021; Kam et al, 2013; Lipsitz 2018; Ballet, 2020). Additionally, this thesis was built upon numerous studies calling for future research focusing on the largely unexplored field of positive emotions for populist appeals. Most studies on populist emotional appeals dealt solely with emotions perceived as negative, such as fear, anger, or hatred. However, in the last decade, populist candidates have made significantly greater use of positive emotions to mobilize voters (Gerstlé and Nai, 2019; Freistein et al., 2022; Lesser and Spissinger, 2020).

To proceed, the official propaganda materials for the 2022 presidential election were analyzed in an explanatory sequential mixed methods design. The first quantitative phase assigned the official propaganda speeches to the three positive emotion categories with the National Research Council (NRC) Lexicon developed by Mohammad & Turney (2010). Subsequently, qualitative content analysis produced eight campaign themes which were further delineated into twenty-four codes. These codes were then attributed to the sentences that scored for the three positive discrete emotions. This method proved particularly valuable for the present study as it facilitated the contextualization of positive emotion categories determined through quantitative analysis. In addition, the implementation of these steps aligned with the recommendation made by Marion Ballet, who, after focusing on the 2017 French elections, proposed that researchers should apply her methodology to various emotional registers and candidates (Ballet, 2012).

Several conclusions answering the research question emerged from the results. Firstly, with 52% of the content of the dataset scoring positively, populist left and populist right parties extensively evoked positive emotions in the campaign speeches of the 2022 French Presidential election. This finding aligns with the evolving trend observed in the last decade, where populist candidates have made significantly greater use of positive emotions to mobilize voters (Gerstlé and Nai, 2019; Freistein et al., 2022; Lesser and Spissinger, 2020).

Secondly, this study contributes to the exploration of how populist-right and populist-left parties differ in terms of positive emotional appeals (Wildmann, 2021: 15). Heere, the findings reveal notable distinctions in how populist left and populist right parties evoke positive emotions in the case of the 2022 election.

Subsequently, the distinctions can be categorized between the types of prominent emotions and the focal codes invoked by the two candidates. First, Jean-Luc Mélenchon predominantly appealed to hope, whereas Marine Le Pen primarily emphasized trust. Secondly, Jean-Luc Mélenchon and Marine Le Pen strategically invoked positive emotions in alignment with populist-left and right-wing ideology and communication strategies. Indeed, the findings of Jean-Luc Mélenchon suggested that socially inclusive codes such as ‘accessible healthcare’, ‘pension’ and ‘nature’ were prominent in positive emotional appeals. These results underscored the commitment of the radical left-wing populist to build a society on egalitarian and inclusionary values (Katsambekis 2017; Mudde & Kaltwasser 2013). Moreover, the way Marine Le Pen evoked positive emotions was aligned with her de-demonization strategy and with the far-right use of positive emotions, as traditional ‘values and culture’ and the figure of the ‘candidate’ displayed a key role in joy and trust appeals. Additionally, in her positive strategy, Marine Le Pen navigated topics that would negatively contribute to the extremist image associated with her movement. For instance, the candidate addressed topics that could encompass her negative stance on immigration policies in France while appealing to positive emotions. This strategic use aligned with the aforementioned de-demonization strategy, suggesting that the figure of the populist right in France had to adopt a more nuanced stance on issues such as the European Union or immigration (Mercier, 2019)

Furthermore, several findings have implications for future research. First, two out of three hypotheses were invalidated by the results. The discussion showed that these were linked to the particularities of the 2022 campaign, including a particular situation displayed between Marine Le Pen and Vladimir Putin, and the minimal communication of Emmanuel Macron, the mainstream referent. Therefore, future studies in this field may benefit from reformulating hypotheses to derive more conclusive results. Secondly, regarding Jean-Luc Mélenchon, the findings of this study suggested that left-wing populism, at least within the scope of the official campaign materials of the 2022 French Presidential elections, may not place as high an emphasis on praising and fomenting the identity of the ‘people’ as previously thought. Additionally, in the 2022 French presidential campaign, hope emerged as the emotion conveying solely socio-economic codes for the far-right populist candidate. These unexpected results provide avenues for the refinement of theories in the study of populist positive emotional appeals.

Besides the gaps filled by this thesis, several recommendations for future research have been identified. This thesis focused on official propaganda materials, which provide insight into precise and purposeful political strategies. Therefore, future research could explore new communication channels, such as political interviews with YouTuber Hugo Décrypte, and Magalie Berdah, or Twitch broadcasts featuring the candidates along with influencer Samuel Etienne. Examining these could offer a more nuanced understanding of

how positive emotions are invoked in more interactive settings. Furthermore, future studies could combine both the analysis of the production of positive emotions and its effects. Considering this dual perspective, studies could delve into whether the aspirations of populists to evoke positive emotions influence decisions regarding target selection and timing. Furthermore, exploring the extent to which populists adjust their emotional strategies based on those employed by their adversaries would contribute to broadening the research scope in the field.

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## Appendix A: Official campaign broadcasts

The links are put in the table only if a different broadcast was launched per candidate.

Broadcast date	Short campaign broadcasts (1:30min) by running order	Long campaign broadcasts (3:30min) by running order
March 28, 2022.	Jean-Luc MÉLENCHON <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Lx3S3jb0m8s">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Lx3S3jb0m8s</a> Marine LE PEN <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KiFuvG10bdQ">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KiFuvG10bdQ</a> Emmanuel MACRON <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=euzlLbiuL3c&amp;list=PLOitQA7zrTQXa1d0nyRoOPkTy-BoyMXId">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=euzlLbiuL3c&amp;list=PLOitQA7zrTQXa1d0nyRoOPkTy-BoyMXId</a>	Jean-Luc MÉLENCHON <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kLvEVQYSmhg">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kLvEVQYSmhg</a> Marine LE PEN <a href="https://www.france24.com/fr/vid%C3%A9o/20220328-fr-wb-clip-de-campagne-long-28m">https://www.france24.com/fr/vid%C3%A9o/20220328-fr-wb-clip-de-campagne-long-28m</a> Emmanuel MACRON <a href="https://www.france24.com/fr/vid%C3%A9o/20220328-fr-wb-clip-de-campagne-long-28m">https://www.france24.com/fr/vid%C3%A9o/20220328-fr-wb-clip-de-campagne-long-28m</a>
March 29, 2022	Marine LE PEN Jean-Luc MÉLENCHON <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X-yAvTVaMIE">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X-yAvTVaMIE</a> Emmanuel MACRON	Marine LE PEN Emmanuel MACRON
March 30, 2022	Marine LE PEN Jean-Luc MÉLENCHON <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XIOGiyqPubI">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XIOGiyqPubI</a> Emmanuel MACRON	Emmanuel MACRON Marine LE PEN
March 31, 2022	Jean-Luc MÉLENCHON <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-QeZSk8yRqg">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-QeZSk8yRqg</a> Marine LE PEN Emmanuel MACRON	Emmanuel MACRON Marine LE PEN Jean-Luc MÉLENCHON
April 1st, 2022	Emmanuel MACRON Marine LE PEN Jean-Luc MÉLENCHON	Marine LE PEN Emmanuel MACRON Jean-Luc MÉLENCHON
April 2nd, 2022	Marine LE PEN Jean-Luc MÉLENCHON <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V0xwB3ctfHo">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V0xwB3ctfHo</a> Emmanuel MACRON	Jean-Luc MÉLENCHON Marine LE PEN Emmanuel MACRON

April 4, 2022	Emmanuel MACRON Marine LE PEN Jean-Luc MÉLENCHON <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XrbkRor7rZA">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XrbkRor7rZA</a>	Jean-Luc MÉLENCHON Marine LE PEN
April 5, 2022	Marine LE PEN Emmanuel MACRON Jean-Luc MÉLENCHON	Jean-Luc MÉLENCHON Marine LE PEN
April 6, 2022	Jean-Luc MÉLENCHON <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YluxDCbNjHg">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YluxDCbNjHg</a> Emmanuel MACRON Marine LE PEN	Emmanuel MACRON Jean-Luc MÉLENCHON
April 7, 2022	Marine LE PEN Jean-Luc MÉLENCHON <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WK9lz9yXDMw">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WK9lz9yXDMw</a> Emmanuel MACRON	Emmanuel MACRON Jean-Luc MÉLENCHON
April 8, 2022	Emmanuel MACRON Marine LE PEN Jean-Luc MÉLENCHON <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5vMRhGSyafc">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5vMRhGSyafc</a>	Marine LE PEN <a href="https://www.france24.com/fr/france/20220407-pr%C3%A9sidentielle-les-clips-de-campagne-des-12-candidats">https://www.france24.com/fr/france/20220407-pr%C3%A9sidentielle-les-clips-de-campagne-des-12-candidats</a> Emmanuel MACRON <a href="https://www.france24.com/fr/france/20220407-pr%C3%A9sidentielle-les-clips-de-campagne-des-12-candidats">https://www.france24.com/fr/france/20220407-pr%C3%A9sidentielle-les-clips-de-campagne-des-12-candidats</a> Jean-Luc MÉLENCHON <a href="https://www.france24.com/fr/france/20220407-pr%C3%A9sidentielle-les-clips-de-campagne-des-12-candidats">https://www.france24.com/fr/france/20220407-pr%C3%A9sidentielle-les-clips-de-campagne-des-12-candidats</a>

### Professions of faith:

First round professions of faith of Jean-Luc Mélenchon, Marine Le Pen, and Emmanuel Macron published on the website of the *Commission Nationale de Contrôle de la Campagne électorale en vue de l'Election Présidentielle* (CNCCEP) and sent by post in March 2022. <https://www.cnccep.fr/candidats.html>

### **Candidacy announcement:**

Le Pen, Marine, Candidacy announcement for the 2022 presidential election, Meeting of the Rassemblement National in Fréjus, September 12, 2021. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KbvDa-sHATk>

Melenchon, Jean-Luc, Candidacy announcement for the 2022 presidential election, interview given to TF1, November 9, 2020. [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Rd\\_GGFHi-x0](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Rd_GGFHi-x0)

Macron, Emmanuel, Candidacy announcement for the 2022 presidential election, a video titled '*Emmanuel Macron. Le Candidat*' published on the official campaign YouTube channel of the candidate, on March 4, 2022. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vT1uvtxMxPE>

## Appendix B: Code NRC Lexicon

```
# Install and load the required packages (run these lines the first time only)
install.packages(c("syuzhet", "textdata", "writexl"))
library(syuzhet)
library(textdata)
library(writexl)

# Download and load the NRC lexicon
lexicon_nrc <- get_sentiments("nrc")

# Example list of sentences
sentences <- c(

  "Dear French people, I am happy.",
  "Today we are at the start of a new campaign!"

)
# Initialize an empty list to store the results
results_list <- list()

# Loop over each sentence and perform sentiment analysis
for (sentence in sentences) {
  results <- get_nrc_sentiment(sentence, lexicon = lexicon_nrc)
  results_list[[sentence]] <- results
}

# Create a data frame from the results
results_df <- do.call(rbind, lapply(names(results_list), function(sentence) {
  cbind(sentence = sentence, results_list[[sentence]])
}))

# Write the results to an Excel file
write_xlsx(results_df, "test_v2_NRC_lexicon.xlsx")
```









