The motivations of the French National Front voters: a behavioral political economy approach

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Abstract:

The objective this paper is to explain the motivations of the French NF voters and to analyze how their political beliefs and attitudes spread out throughout the electoral body. Its methodological approach relies on two key theoretical framework: the first comes from the development of behavioral political economy, namely the theory of expressive voting (Hillman 2010), the second is driven by the theory of cognitive rationality (Boudon, 2003;2010) and the concept of justification costs (Facchini, 2016). We show that the growing support for the NF ideas among the French voters occurs because of a fall of the justification costs of their political beliefs. The latter results from two complement phenomenon. First, the number of people who share their views increases, and second because some facts may enhance the development of cognitively biased inference-making between immigration, unemployment and lack of security. Such erroneous causal relationship are widespread among the NF voters. Nonetheless, the NF views and ideas are costly to justify, essentially because social sciences and French moral authorities vigorously and frequently condemn specific arguments made by the party and its leaders.

Key words: justification cost, stigmatisation, beliefs, expressive voting

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1. Introduction

Nowadays, ideas and political views of the French right-wing extremist party, National Front (NF), have gained a growing support among the French citizens. This fact is now well-documented in the political science literature (Perrineau 2012[3], p.66). Since 2010, a significant share of the French, roughly a third, claims to agree with the party's ideas (Figure 1A). Such evolution may be interpreted either as a growing support for the extremist views of the party's founding father, Jean-Marie Le Pen (Perrineau 2012, p.65), or as a weakening of such extremists views of the NF, thus generating a wider social acceptance among the population (Duhamel 2006[4], p.57). This latter argument seems more appealing, since none of the core topics of the NF such as the death penalty, the defense of traditional values or immigration have gained the support of a majority of the public opinion since 2006. However, it is important to highlight the slow growth of acceptance of NF ideas since 2010. Indeed, 33% of the French agree with the party's ideas in 2015 against 28% in 2010 only (Figure 1A). Unsurprisingly, the key consequence of this growing support for NF ideas is the rising share of NF's voters at various election polls, and in particular at presidential election, since 1973 (Figure 2A).

In addition, when analyzing the manifesto project which discusses the program content of various political parties, the NF exhibit the following priorities: immigration issues, the conservation of traditional values and law and order. The cornerstone of the NF discourse is its negative view on immigration and especially immigration from North African countries (Figure 3A). Interestingly, it is on immigration issues that the NF's political views exhibit the greatest social acceptance. Indeed, in 2016 64% of the French agree that France host too many immigrants, they were 40% supporting this view in 1971 (Figure 4B). Although this evolution remains relatively weak compare to the figure showing that 91% of NF supporters condemn the rising immigration, it is nonetheless significant (Girard 1971[5], p.834 ; Girard 1974[6]; Dahlem 1999[7]). Another interesting evolution concerns the attitude towards building Mosque on French territory when requested by believers Muslim to practice their fate. In 2016, only 13% of the French interviewees supported the initiative against 39% in 1989.

The objective this paper is to explain the motivations of the French NF voters and to analyze how their political beliefs and attitudes spread out throughout the electoral body. Its methodological approach relies on two key theoretical framework: the first comes from the development of behavioral political economy, namely the theory of expressive voting (Hillman 2010[8]), the second is driven by the theory of cognitive rationality (Boudon, 2003;2010)[9] and the concept of justification costs (Facchini, 2016[10]). The diffusion of the attitudes in favor of the NF is interpreted as the combined result of an expressive utility driven by a protest discourse and vote on the one hand, and a fall of justification costs associated with holding anti-immigrants and anti-system political beliefs on the other hand. Expressive utility explains a protest vote towards the existing state of affair of the political system. The evolution of justification costs explains the emergence of a "support vote" for the NF's political views and arguments. The justification costs of a political beliefs generally depend on the number of people who share this belief, on the standing views of scientific and moral authorities as for the concerned political beliefs and on the accumulated knowledge (Facchini, 2016). The growing support for the NF ideas among the French voters occurs because of a fall of the justification costs of their political beliefs. The

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[3] Marine Le Pen : un héritage qui fructifie ? in Duhamel, O. et Lecerf E. (eds), l'état de l'Opinion, tns SOFRES, Paris, Seuil.

[4] Duhamel, O. 2006. Révoltes des Banlieues et image du Front National, dans état de l'opinion 2006, TNS SOFRES, Paris, Seuil.

[5] Girard, A. 1971. Attitudes des Français à l'égard de l'immigration étrangère. Enquête d'opinion publique, Population, 26, 5 : 827-875.

[6] Girard, A. 1974.

[7] Dahlem, J. 1999. Quel discours sur les immigrés et l'immigration, dans l'Encyclopedia Universalis, (1968-1988), in Mots 60, septembre, Perspectives croisées sur l'immigration, 9-29

[8] Hillman, A. 2010. Expressive Behavior in economic and politics, European Journal of Political Economy, 26 : 403-418.

[9] Boudon R (2003) Beyond rational choice theory. Annual Review of Sociology 29: 1–21
Boudon R (2010) The cognitive approach to morality. In: Hitlin S, Vaisezy S (eds) Handbook of the Sociology of Morality. New York, NY: Springer. doi: 10.1007/978–1–4419–6896–8_2.

[10] Facchini, F. (2016), Political ideological shift: a theoretical approach, Social sciences information, pp 1-14.

latter results from two complement phenomenon. First, the number of people who share their views increases, and second because some facts may enhance the development of cognitively biased inference-making between immigration, unemployment and lack of security. Such erroneous causal relationship are widespread among the NF voters. Nonetheless, the NF views and ideas are costly to justify, essentially because social sciences and French moral authorities vigorously and frequently condemn specific arguments made by the party and its leaders.

The paper is organized as follows. Section 2 discusses traditional explanations of the motivations for casting a NF ballot and highlight their deficiencies. Being inductive by nature, they do not explain the psychological process conducive to the support for the NF political views and ultimately to a NF ballot. Section 3 refers to expressive utility theory. The protest vote or alternatively the anti-system vote provides a direct expressive utility to voters, essentially because the latter hold political views that are condemned by the majority of the population. In that process, voters express their freedom of speech and take advantage of the low costs of political choices simply to enjoy exerting their freedom of thought and standing firm with their views whatever their moral content are. Section 4 provides a complement explanation by referring to the theory of justification costs. Simply put, attitudes in favor of the NF are gaining a growing importance in the electorate because their justification cost decrease. This occurs because of three underlying factors. First of all, the cost of holding and supporting erroneous inferences between lack of security, immigration and unemployment decrease. Then, the emergence of libertarian and anti-system values to the detriment of traditional and moral ones, reduce the taste for truth and goodness and promote self-expression only. Finally, the number of people sticking to theses postmodern attitudes increases, thus reinforcing their credibility. However, holding and expressing such extremist views is constrained by scientific and moral values which in essence, call for what is right and good. The paper concludes that the potential generalization of NF political beliefs on security issues, unemployment and immigration is constrained by the expressive nature of such beliefs and the moral and scientific authoritative arguments that can be mobilized, thus increasing their justification costs.

2. The rising vote for the national front: traditional explanations

Traditional explanations within the literature are generally based on statistical observations. Scholars depict the profile of the NF voter based on their socio-economic characteristics. Another approach is to rely on the role played by the evolution of such socio-economic environment. The vast majority of contributions studying attitudes towards immigrations uses this methodology. And yet, we argue throughout this paper that such an approach is not fully relevant because it assumes that a voter operating within the same conditions as a NF voter would hold the same political views and attitudes. The theory of justification costs differentiates itself from this approach because it focuses not on the objective characteristics of the real world, but on the rules and conventions that build it and especially how does a group of individuals perceive any political beliefs or attitude.

2.1 The motivations of the NF voters

The NF activist voters distrust traditional mainstream parties as they are perceived incompetent to cure social and economic problems such as unemployment and criminality. According to them, such problems are a direct outcome of immigration ((Perrineau and Mayer 1986 ; Treanton 1992[11]). Since mid-80s, opinion polls have shown that voting for the NF is motivated by immigration, criminality and the resulting of lack of security (Le gall, 1984[12]). These motivating factors being constant over time since the creation of the NF party in 1973. They characterize the ideological brand of the NF and help to explain the growing support for NF views in the public opinion. However, witnessing such growing support for the NF ideological platform should not lead us to forget the protest nature of voting for the

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[11] Treanton (1992), Nonna, Perineau : le front national a decouvert, Revue Francaise de sociologie, pp 28 54.
[12] Le gall 1984. Une élection sans enjeux, avec conséquences, Revue Politique parlementaire.

extremist party. According to Perrineau (2003), NF voters express their dissatisfaction towards democracy (the "*desenchantement democratique*"), their opposition to political correctness and their critics towards the left-wing and right ring divide within the French political arena. The promotion of the political slogan "neither from the left, nor from the right" in 1994, captures this political stand. Opinion polls conducted by OPINION WAY in 2011 clearly reflect the NF voter's political views. 90 % of NF activists agree with the statement that Islam is a danger for the republic, 88% with the statement that the euro has created inflation, 80% that building Mosque should be forbidden in France, 80% with the statement that death penalty should be reestablished and 74% with the statement that left-wing and right-wing are undifferentiated. Interestingly, 56% are also in favor the exit of France from the European Union (OPINION WAY 2011). These political statements go against the consensus, and in particular against the historical consensus among the French population about the benefits of being a member of the European Union (EU), although 2015 has shown a sharp decline in the perceived benefits of being part of the EU (Figure 8A). Similarly, it is interesting to highlight that whereas a small minority of the French was opposed to such consensus in the past, 50% of them believe now that death penalty should be reinstalled and that exiting from European Union would not be a catastrophe.

2.2 The political profile of the NF voters

Who is holding such beliefs? Initially, NF activists are well educated and belong to high income class, but since the beginning of the 80s there has been a rising support from blue collar working class. This category of citizens who suffer most from the degradation of economic and social conditions provides the main support to the idea that immigration is responsible for the high level of unemployment and the lack of security (Alidiere 2012[13]). At the beginning, NF voters were old, but they became gradually younger and less educated (Mayer 1997[14]). They were having traditional self-employed jobs, and nowadays most of them are employed in companies and live in the East and North East of France, regions that have suffered from economic decline in industries such as mining and steel (Gougou, 2013[15]),(Guilly 2010[16]; Davezies 2012[17]). This evolution in favor of sup more support for the NF views among the youth explains why 46% support the gay marriage (OPINION WAY 2011).

The standard profile of the NF voter is described as followed (Figure 5A). He is a low background education, lives in the countryside, belongs to the private sector and is a blue collar worker. Gradually, he becomes public civil servant (Figure 6A). Indeed, 23% of public servants claimed of having voted for the NF against 6% for teachers and 40% for military and police forces. Interestingly, the least qualified public servants are those who vote most for the NF. 30% of public servants who did not have a high school degree voted for the NF at the 2012 presidential election (Rouban 2014[18]). These NF voters have thus a similar profile to that of former voters of the French communist party (PCF). Indeed, workers have voted for the communist party and the extreme left until 1997. In 2002, the share of workers voting for the PCF is only 6%. The PCF has thus lost its electoral strength by losing a large number of votes from workers. The current extreme left party, *Front de Gauche*, which has de facto inherited from the PCF votes has not managed to attract and retained these votes. Todays, workers have a specific electoral behaviors, they either abstain or vote for extreme parties.

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[13] Alidiere 2012. Les temps du vote front national et de ses représentations, Hérodote, pp54 70.
[14] Mayer, N. 1997. Du vote Lepeniste au vote frontiste, Revue Francaise de Sciences politiques,pp 16-27.
Bouvet (2012), Le sens du peuple : la gauche, la democratie, le populisme, Gallimart
[15] Gougou (2013), « Les transformations du vote Le Pen : deux electorats ouvriers du front national », communication a colloque « 1972-2012 : 40 ans de FN » Universite Paris 10
[16] Guilly 2010. Fractures Francaise, Bourin.
[17] Davezies, L. 2012, La crise qui vient : la nouvelle fracture territoriale, Seuil
[18] Rouban, L. 2014. Les électorats de Marine Le Pen ou les contraintes du succès, éditions CEVIPOF, Paris.

2.3 Statistical observations and their limitations

By observing the motivations and the socio-economic profiles of NF voters, scholars are tempted to match them in order to provide a straightforward explanation. The reasoning is the following: workers and non-educated citizens would vote for the NF because they are the most exposed to the side effects of immigration such as unemployment and lack of security. Then, hostility towards immigrants would depend on the number of immigrants. There would a positive correlation between the reduction of the citizens 's share of the population wishing an increase in immigration flows and the effective increase of immigrants in the population (OCDE 2010[19]). However, facts on immigration flows do not always explain citizens' attitude towards immigration (Girard 1971). This is because individuals tend to under or overestimate the number of immigrants, but also because the number of immigrants do not tell us what the indigenous population think of immigrants. Such type of correlation does not inform the researcher about the mental process giving birth to specific attitudes for or against immigration, but most importantly, it does not tell anything about the reasons why one would associate immigration with unemployment. Interestingly, part of the literature have shown that hostility towards immigration depends on the perceived benefits of immigration, its impact on labor market and public finances, and the state of the economy. If the associated costs of immigration are perceived to be higher than their benefits, citizens will assess negatively the inflows of immigrants into the host country. This calculus is affected by the state of the economy. In period of economic recession, the risk of becoming unemployed due to the incoming competition of immigrants would be granted a higher probability of occurrence. Thus citizens may judge that there are too much immigrants in the society. Empirical evidences have shown that immigration is more socially accepted in period of economic expansion as opposed to recession (Kessler et Freeman 2005[20]; German Marshall Fund 2009[21]). Benefits of immigration are recognized only when immigrants are perceived to be a necessity to fulfill jobs that French nationals refuse to take, or when that skills that French citizens do not have (OCDE 2010, p.135; Girard 1971). Being in favor of or against immigration depends on the mapping between immigrants' skills and the needs labor market needs. Similar to the findings showing that the number of immigrants are correlated to the hostility towards immigration, such results have a limited explanatory power. Indeed they do not explain why citizens end up to think that immigrants are useful, whether they are going to take French nationals' jobs or not, whether they have good reasons to migrate in France, whether their culture is compatible with the French one or not etc.… To address these issues, we must describe the learning process leading them to relate immigration with social bad such as poverty, unemployment and/ or crime. The fact that the more educated citizens are the less reluctant to immigration shows theses learning effects, and in particular how citizens interpret aggregate data between two variables and the nature of relationship between them. Therefore, explaining attitudes towards immigration cannot be analyzed by referring to a rational calculus of benefits and costs following the instrumental rationality approach. Rather, the analytical method should be based on cognitive conception of rationality (Boudon 2003;2010) which assumes that a given individual has good reasons to believe in a theory as long as it is not challenged by a well-established fact. In other words, "it is cognitively rational to endorse a given explanation of a phenomenon, if the explanation is made of acceptable and mutually compatible statements and if the competing available theories are weaker in one way or another".[22] This conception of rationality implicitly account for a learning process, and especially on how individuals process new information. As such, one must thus analyze the French level of knowledge on immigration and its source, namely, the education system, the labor market, the media and/or every experiences of citizens

[19] Opinions publiques et immigration : attitudes individuelles, groupes d'intérêt et médias. Perspectives des migrations internationales, SOPEMI 2010.
[20] Kessler, A.E. et G.P. Freeman (2005), « Public opinion in the EU on immigration from outside the Community », Journal of Common Market Studies, vol. 43, 825-850.
[21] German Marshal Fund (2009), Transatlantic Trends. Key findings on immigration 2009 (www.gmfus.org/ trends/immigration/).
[22] Boudon (2010), chapter 2, pp18.

'daily life (Benson 2002 ; Benson et Saguy 2005[23] ; Tsoukala 2002[24]). One must understand how voters justify their political beliefs and attitudes. In this respct, the accumulated knowledge on NF voters' profiles, as well as the explanations driven by the analysis of their socio-economic environment remain limited to describe the mental process leading them to hold hostile attitudes towards immigration on the one hand, and a protest vote and discourse on the other hand. This mental process can be best described by a complement analytical framework based on the theory of expressive utility and cognitive conception of rationality. Because of its cognitive component, this approach is better equipped than traditional statistics to address the development of attitudes towards immigration and ultimately voting behavior towards the NF.

3. Protest vote and expressive utility

The primary reason why citizens vote for the NF is to express their opposition towards the political system or alternatively the "*political establishment*". As it is intrinsically a protest vote, the theory of expressive utility can help to describe the mental process leading to such voting attitude.

3.1 The expressive utility

Such an explanation is based on the idea that the utility driven by voting for the NF depends on its expressive part. The expressive utility does not come from the act of voting but rather from the meaning it provides to the voter (Hamlin and Jennings 2011[25], p.645). Logically, it accounts for the utility driven exclusively by holding a particular preference. Introducing such type of utility within the incentive structure allow to explain non-consequential choices, and in particular the non-consequential part of the act of voting (Hamlin and Jennings, 2011, p649). Then, a voter expressing a preference is a source of utility because it is a way to advocate and support his own identity. The voter's identity is a source of self-esteem. The act of voting is like a rhetoric developed by citizens in order to justify their choices. The wealthy will express a taste for redistributive policies because he knows that such attitude is costless and generates self-esteem. Displaying such attitude, he believes he will be respected by the poor who perceive him as a good person (Hillman, 2010).

3.2 The expressive foundation of the protest vote

Protest vote generates an expressive utility for voters who value the utility associated with transgression or immorality. They hold an expressive utility by supporting extremes political programs hostile for instance to Islam, homosexuality or Jewish, simply because they primarily value their freedom of expression. They prefer making judgement errors instead of searching for truth. They prefer hold immoral attitude as opposed to moral one. They prefer protesting instead of building a credible alternative. Young people may be seduced by political platforms of the NF because voting for the NF is interpreted as crossing taboos, as claiming against the majority and their parents that Europe is Christian. This is a way for shocking their peers and standing firm for being an autonomous and free human being. The taste for transgression, provocation is the result of self-esteem and the refusal of any revealed truth, any transcendental morality, any authority. The NF vote is an anti-authoritarian vote which paradoxically promotes a comeback towards authority. This freedom of transgressing taboos, of thinking

[23] Benson, R. 2002. The political/literary model of French journalism: Change and continuity in immigration news coverage, 1973-1991. Journal of European Area Studies, 10, 49-70.
Benson, R. et A. Saguy 2005. Constructing social problems in an age of globalization: A French American comparison, American Sociological Review, 70 : 233-259.
[24] Tsoukala, A. 2002. Le traitement médiatique de la criminalité étrangère en Europe, Déviance et Société, 26 : 61-82.
[25] Hamlin, A. and Jennings C. 2011. Expressive political behaviour foundation: scope and implications, British Journal of Political Science, 41 : 645-670.

and saying what we want independently from any moral or scientific authorities creates an expressive utility. In that respect, citizens' expressive utility is even greater that they constitute a minority within the society and that they manage to identify themselves as stronger enough to stand firm with their protest attitudes and discourses. Politics is the best sphere for expressing such attitudes because, as opposed to the market sphere, the cost of political decisions taken by voters are very low. For instance, displaying disrespect attitudes within the market sphere towards a colleagues, economic partner for instance would immediately generates high cost taking the form of sanctions, or lay off etc. In the political sphere, and especially when voters cast their ballot, costs are virtually nil. This rationally incentives human beings to hold extremes discourses, not because they truly believe in it, but rather because the cost of a wrong or disrespectful attitude is close to zero, because they do not face directly the consequences of their actions. Alternatively, holding such attitudes provides them an expressive utility.

4. Justification costs and "support type vote" for the NF

The first political success of the NF was to make the issues surrounding immigration attractive among the French (Figure 9A). As such, political debates on immigration and their potential side effects such as criminality and unemployment are the result of a political innovation introduced by the NF since its creation. One may thus ask the following question: why is there a growing number of citizens believing in the NF ideas and political views? There are mainly two factors which complement each other. First, this is simply because of the attraction effect of a growing number of citizens supporting the NF, affecting the justification costs of holding NF beliefs. Indeed, if expressive utility theory is useful to address the protest vote, it does not explain however why citizens have developed hostile attitudes towards immigration and incumbent political parties. It is therefore limited to describe the support process for political ideas of the NF. Justification costs theory on the other hand, is better equipped in this regard. The cornerstone of the reasoning is that the reasons and motivations behind any actions or beliefs evolve depending on their justification costs. The representative citizen has the choice between supporting the NF political views or to go against them. He assesses the costs associated with each alternatives. He chooses to support the NF because the justification costs to stand with this position are lower than the justification costs of supporting an alternative political views available on the political spectrum. In a nutshell, he chooses to support the NF because it is less costly to support than any other political attitudes. Second, citizens are engaged in a cognitively biased inference-making between immigration, unemployment and lack of security, leading them to hold erroneous beliefs. Although the NF ideas are getting a growing importance among the French electoral body, their development is constrained by the role played by experts, moral authorities and scientists who make the justifications costs of holding NF views increase.

4.1 Justification costs and group size of NF supporters

The justification costs of a given belief is a function of the number of individuals who stick to it. The more a belief is shared by a large number of individuals, the more its justification costs decline and alternatively the more the justification costs of a competing belief increase. A belief is always grounded on fate behavior. In that respect, any views on immigration, lack of security or unemployment may be interpreted as a credence good and not an experience good. Besides, the fact that a large number of French supports the NF incentives potential followers to join, and disincentives to support alternative political parties. The justification costs of supporting opposing views to the NF are even higher that the number of their followers decreases under the effect of the rise in NF supporters. Why is that? First of all, because the amount of resources needed to justify political views which oppose the NF platform increases. Indeed, the more citizens believe in immigration related issues, the less they invest in the support of NF's opposing views, and the less available the arguments in favor of these views are. Therefore, it is more costly for each citizen to justify his/her support for competing political views of

the NF. Then, this is also the case because the increase in NF supporters generates a phenomenon of cognitive dissonance. The more the number of NF supports increases, the greater NF's opponents face public discourses with which they disagree. Such experienced disagreements impose costs on them taking the form social stigmatization or insulting behaviors at one extreme. Within the French political spectrum, the less the traditional moderate left-wing and right-wing views are shared among the population, the greater their justification costs become.

4.2 Justification costs and inference errors

The justification costs of hostile attitudes towards immigration and in favor of the NF also decrease because individuals rely on heuristics to develop their political views. This mental process inevitably fuel inference errors leading them to hold erroneous beliefs (Schnellenbach and Schubert 2015[26], p.396). For instance, savers may trust a pension fund simply because it has performed better than competitors during a given period of time. They may falsely infer that this pension fund is the best. They assign the same probabilities to small and large events, without considering the uncertainty associated with the fact that the variance mean sharply decrease with the importance of the event. Individuals may have a propensity to ignore probabilities theory associated with the law of large numbers. The study of the NF vote clearly shows the existence of such cognitively biased inference making. The local experience of each voter is generalized to give birth to statements such as immigration fuels unemployment or lack of security. However, such inferences are wrong because they rely primarily on one or two cases. For instance, it has been shown that people vote massively for the NF in cities where immigration and lack of security are high (Roche 1993[27]). These socio-geographic conditions are prone to develop simultaneously the relation between criminality and feelings over lack of security and the one hand (Roche 1993), but also between immigration and feeling over lack of security on the other hand (Mergier and Fouquet 2011[28]). Interestingly, specific situations confirm this type of relationship. In 1984, the significant voting results in favor of the NF in Tourcoing as well as in cities of more than 30,000 inhabitants, were preceded by a significant rise in criminality (Alidiere, 2012). Similarly, the development of criminality in the areas of Seine Saint-Denis, in the North and East of Lyon suburb goes hand in hand with the rise in the NF vote.

Consequently, inference errors enhance the development of false beliefs leading voters to support the NF. In a cognitive sense, this process is rational. Indeed, as long as facts or scientific analysis does not arise within the cognitive environment of NF supporters in order to correct these errors, the justification costs of holding NF's views are low. Inference errors occur also because, as opposed to choices in the market sphere, choices in the political spheres can be done at very low cost. It is easy then to support the NF views after having observed a simple correlation between the rise of terrorism and Islam (Figure 10A)[29], or between the growth of immigration and unemployment (Figure 11A). The widespread generalization of NF's political views is thus the result of the following complementing factors. First, the low cost of taking decision in the political sphere. Second, the generalization of a taste for transgression. Third and as a consequence, the limited effect of experts' knowledge on the justification costs of holding hostile views on immigration. In other words, economists and social scientists can easily show that there is no link between unemployment and immigration, the expert on Islam can show that there is no proven link between Islam and terrorism. But as long as NF supporters do not pay attention to these information, their justification costs remain low. However, since NF supporters have an expressive utility associated with protesting against the "established system", they may have incentive to reject these new information and not process them.

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[26] Schnellenbach, Jan and Christian Schubert 2015. Behavioral political economy : a survey, European Journal of Political Economy, 40 ; 395-417.

[27] Roche 1993. Le sentiment d' insécurité, PUF, Paris.

[28] Mergier et Fouquet 2011. Le point de rupture : enquête sur les ressorts du vote FN dans les milieux populaires, Fondation Jean Jaurès, Paris.

[29] Voir les données RAND DataBase of Worldwide Terrorism Incidents (RDWTI) ou les rapports Global Terrorism Index, Institut for economic and peace. GTI Ranks and Scores (Figure 10A2, Annexe).

5. Conclusion

Behavioral political economy is well equipped to address the dynamic of voters and activists' attitudes towards extremist parties, and in particular to address the rising support for the NF among the French. It also enhances to understand why and under which conditions these extreme attitudes may decline. Indeed, they are constrained by the role played by moral and scientific authorities which increase their justification costs and by the expressive nature itself of the utility that individuals gain by holding transgressive attitudes. So long as views and values of the NF become the dominant majority within the population, it becomes less appealing to protest against them. If NF's views become the norm, transgression will experience a shift. And people will tend to protest again them and their political platform. Similarly, if simple correlation between immigration and unemployment become less obvious, the justification costs of holding hostile attitude towards immigration will rise, leading to a decline of NF's views attraction.

ANNEXE

Figure 1A
Indicator of support for the National Front ideology
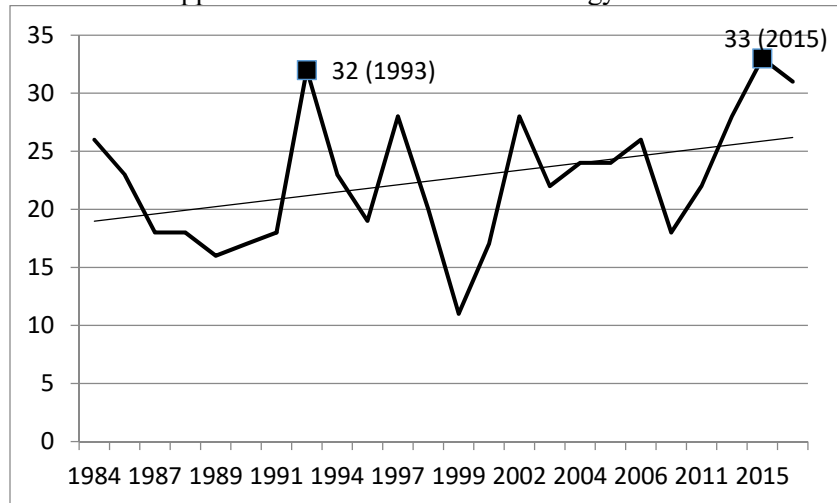
Source : Etudes TNS SOFRES done by Canal + 2011. Do you fully agree, agree, disagree or fully disagree with the ideas hold by Marine Le Pen ? For the period 1985-2016 see Teinturier, B. 2007. Pour comprendre la présidentielle de 2007, dans état de l'opinion 2007 TNS SOFRES, PAris, Seuil. Le Baromètre du FN février 2016, TNS SOFRES

Figure 2A
Voting results of NF at presidential elections since its creation in 1973
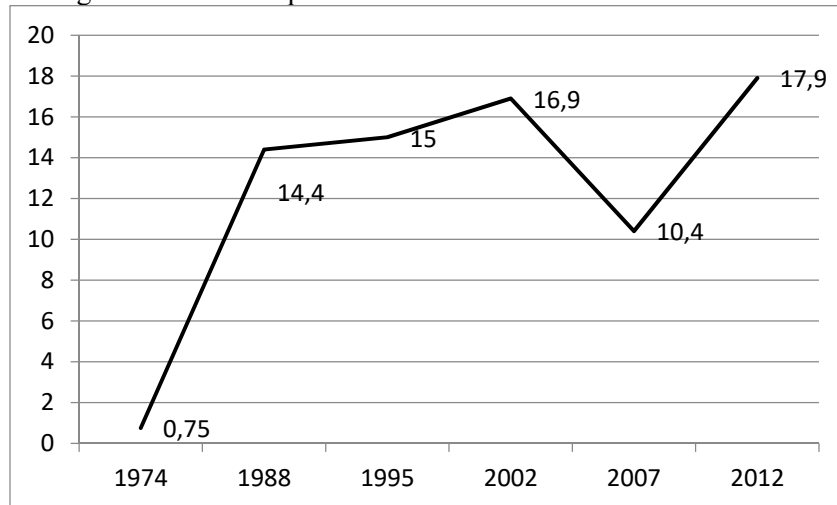
Source : Petti Guillaume 2011. Les Français et le FN état des lieux à l'aube d'une ère nouvelle, in Duhamel, O. et Lecerf, E. (eds), L'état de l'opinion, 2011, tns SOFRES, Paris, Seuil. To complement the graph, it is argued that the 70s and 80S are the year of NF development. The 90s show a strenghtening of the NF (Alidiere 2012).

Figure 3A
Hierarchical priorities of the NF
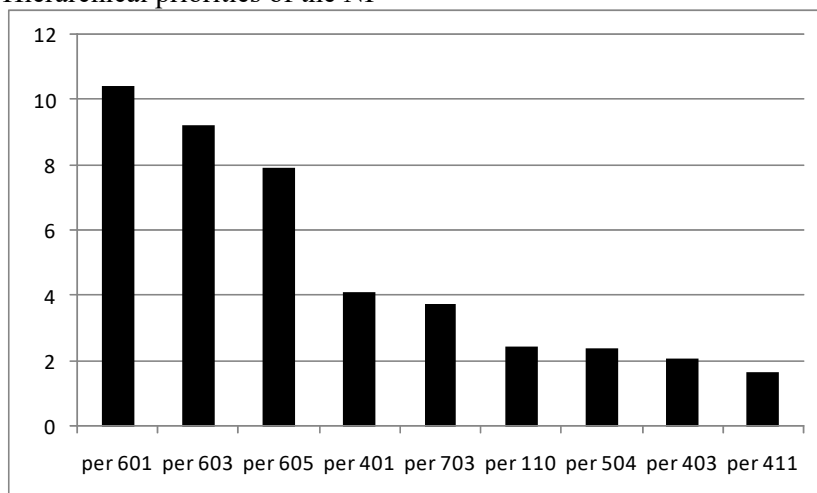
Source : *Manifesto Project* 2015 Mean of the items which have represented at least one time 5% of the program content of the party.

This figure is based on data from the *Manifesto project*. This dataset provides information on the program content of various political parties in France. One can provide a hierarchy of parties' priorities by observing the items to which parties grant the highest number of words. Our objective here is to define the political priorities of the NF. To do that, we propose to keep every items which represent more than 5% of the program content at legislatives elections during the period 1986-2012. Then we compare the share allocated by the NF to the share allocated by other parties. One can thus follow the evolution of the program content of the NF. Figure 3A provides the following hierarchy: a negative discourse on immigration (per 601), favorable to traditional moral values (per 603), to law and order (per 605), favorable to free market (per 401), to agricultural policy (per 703), negative discourse on Europe (per 110), but positive discourse on the welfare state (per 504), on markets regulation (per 403), and industrial policy (per 411). Such hierarchy predict profound changes on the role played by the state related to economic policy. It also shows that the key theme of the NF since its creation are immigration, law and order. The NF is thus clearly on the far right in the political spectrum, but not necessarily far from the extreme left as for immigration issues. This figure confirm the findings of the exiting reasons mentioned by NF supporters to their party[30]. In 2011, NF supporters provide reasons such as high number of immigrants (97% of supporters), the fact of not feeling at home anymore (Petit 2011, p.36). A second set of reasons has to do with lack of security, criminality and enforcement of judicial decisions (86%). A third set of reasons relates to reintroduce death penalty, removal of the Euro (70%) and the principle of national employment preference (66%).

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[30] Source : Petit Guillaume 2011. Les Français et le FN état des lieux à l'aube d'une ère nouvelle, in Duhamel, O. et Lecerf, E. (eds), L'état de l'opinion, 2011, tns SOFRES, Paris, Seuil.
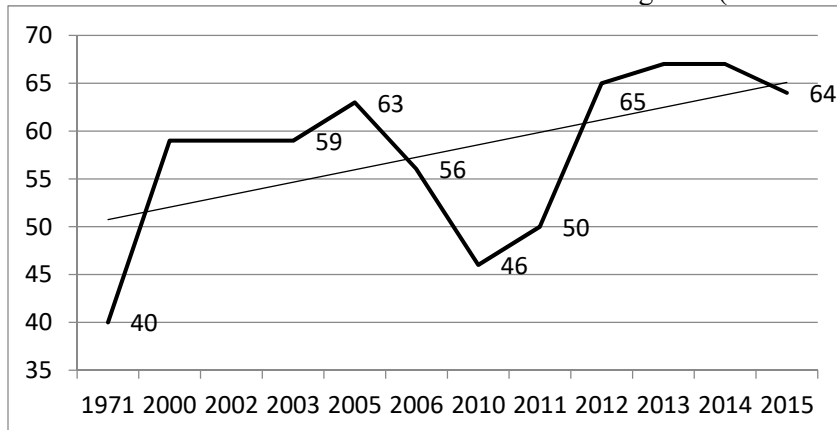
Figure 4A
Comparison between the total French electorate opinion and the NF electorate, on the question whether there are too much immigrants in France (1988-2016)
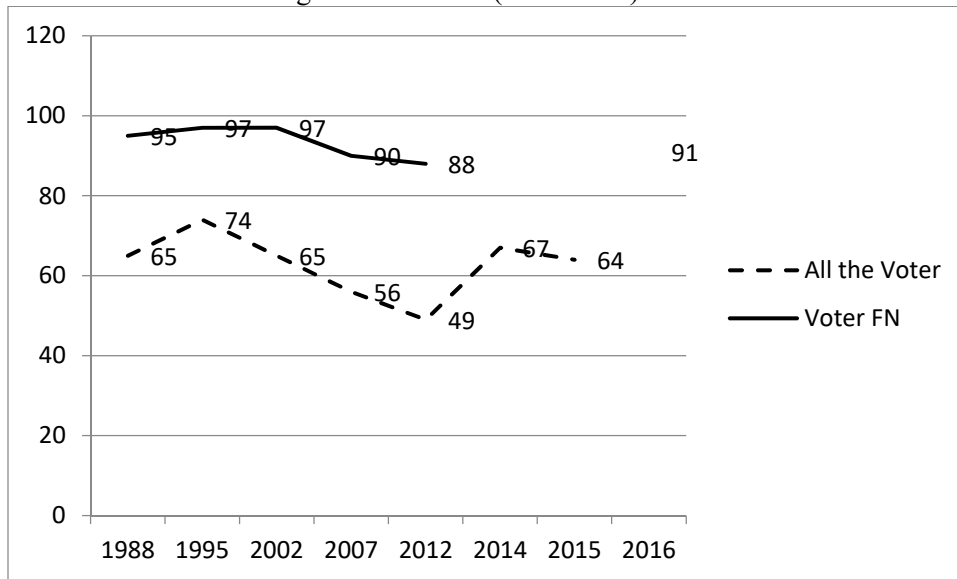
Figure 4B
Evolution of the attitudes of the French towards immigrants (1971-2015)
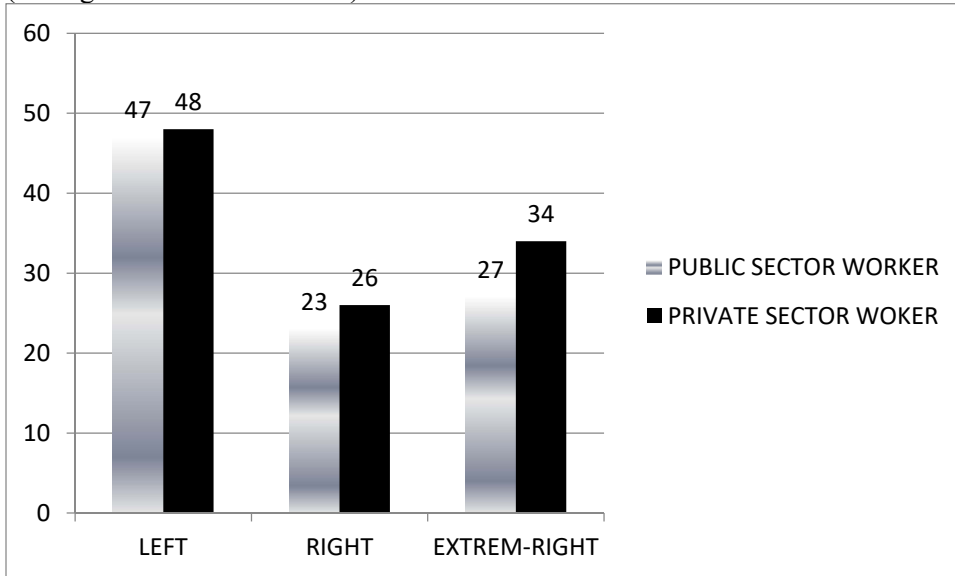
Figure 5A
From left to right, this figure shows the support for the four leading political parties coming from respectively the working populations, retirees, workers, employees and educated voters, in 2015.
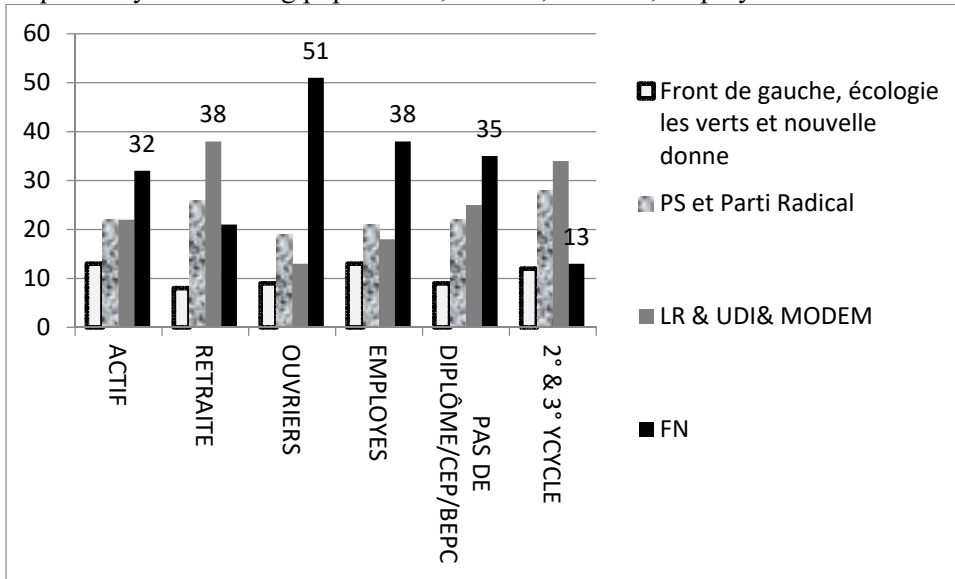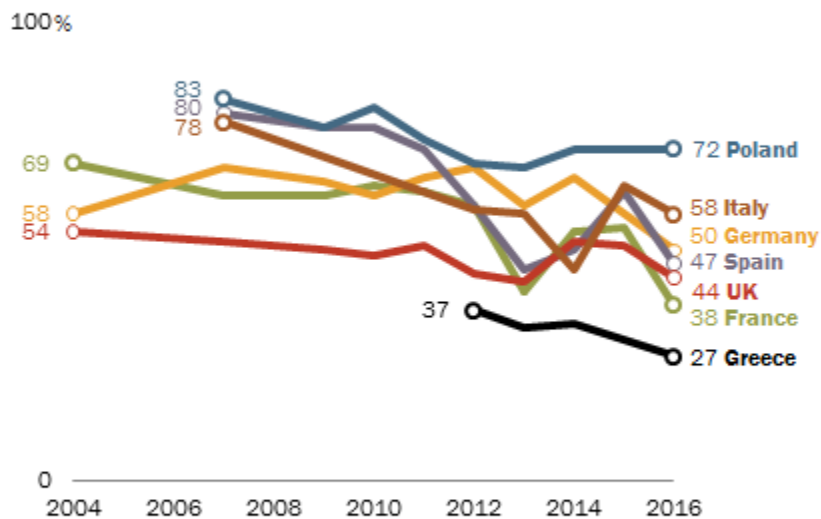

Source : IFOP 2015. IFOP Le profil des électeurs et les clefs du premier tour des élections régionales de 2015, disponible sur le site de l'IFOP.

Figure 6A
Share of private and public sector employees in the electoral body of the left, the right and extreme right (for regional election in 2015)

Source : IFOP 2015. IFOP Le profil des électeurs et les clefs du premier tour des élections régionales de 2015, disponible sur le site de l'IFOP.

Figure 8A

The French and the benefits of European Union

After short-lived rebound, views of the EU on the decline again in key European countries
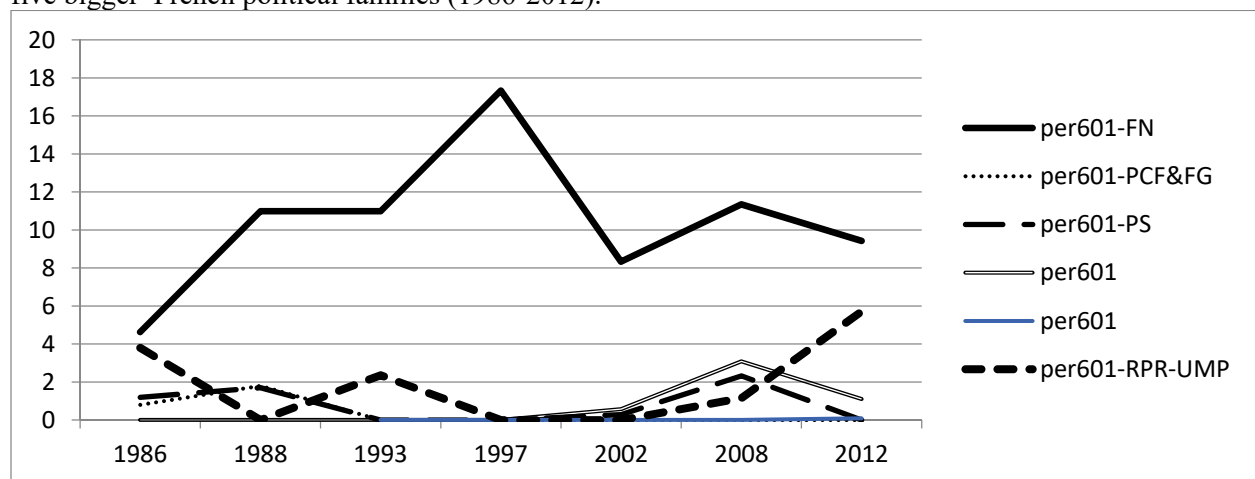
Favorable view of EU

100%

83
80
78

69

58
54

37

72 Poland

58 Italy
50 Germany
47 Spain
44 UK
38 France

27 Greece

0

2004 2006 2008 2010 2012 2014 2016

Source: Spring 2016 Global Attitudes Survey. Q10c.

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Figure 9A
Evolution of the share of words related to the danger of immigration among the political program of the five bigger French political families (1986-2012).

per601-FN

per601-PCF&FG

per601-PS

per601

per601

per601-RPR-UMP

1986 1988 1993 1997 2002 2008 2012
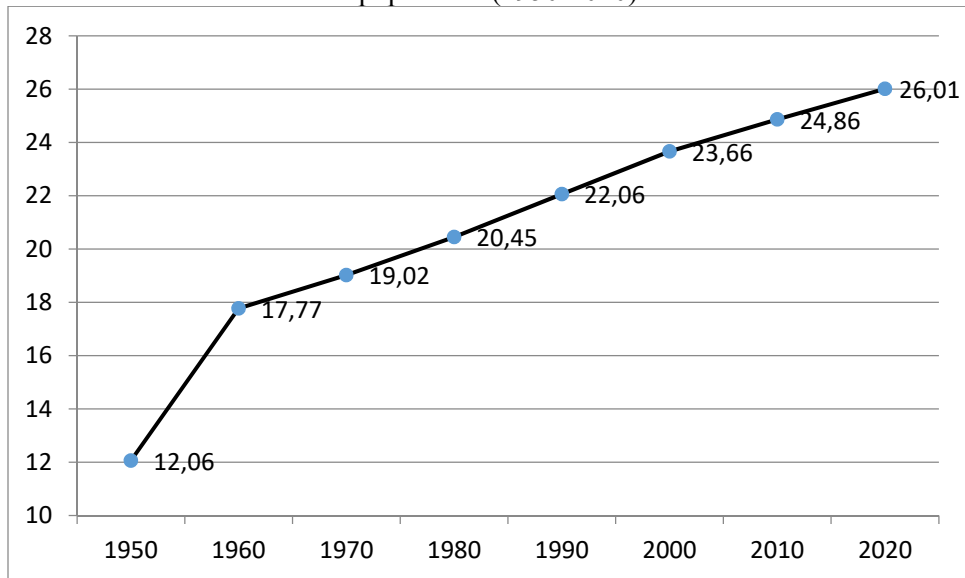
Source : *Manifesto Project* 2015.

FIGURE 10A-1
Inference between Muslims and terrorism:
By observing figures 10 A1 and 10 A2, one may be tempted to infer a direct relationship between the number of Muslims in the world and the rise of terrorism.
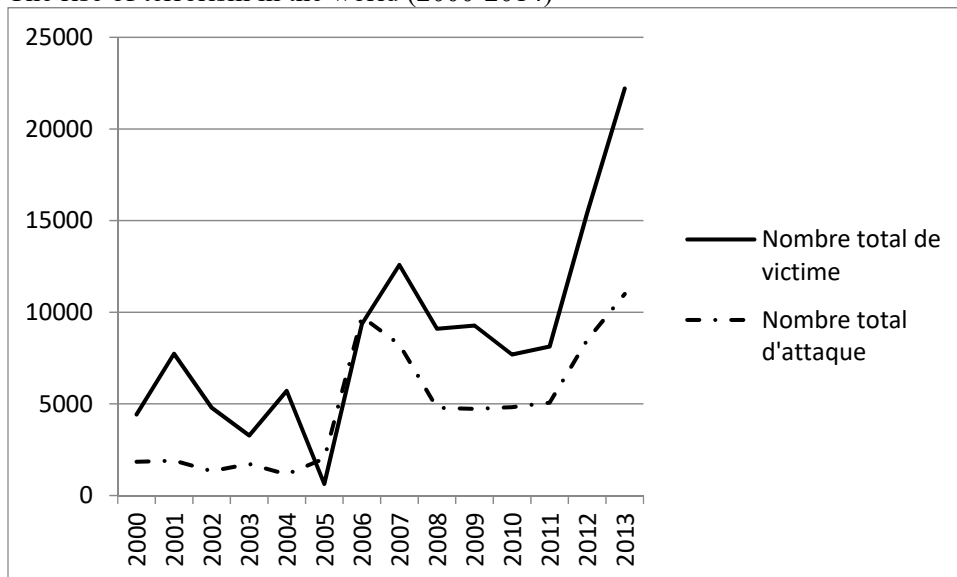
Figure 10A-1
Muslim as share of the world population (1950-2020)

Source : Kettani, H. 2010. Muslim Population in Europe 1950-2020, International Journal of Environmental Science and Development, 1, 2 : 154-164.

Figure 10A-2
The rise of terrorism in the world (2000-2014)

Source : Terrorist attacks in the world de 2000 à 2014. Rapport Global Terrorism Index, 2015. Institute for Economic and Peace.

Figure 11A
Inference between growth of unemployment and growth of immigration
By observing figure 11A1 and 11A2, one may be tempted to infer a direct relationship between unemployment and immigration in recent years. It seems difficult to reach such a conclusion for the whole period. The risk of inference errors is thus very high.

Figure 11A.1
Evolution of the number of foreigners and residents who acquired the French nationality (1851-2013)
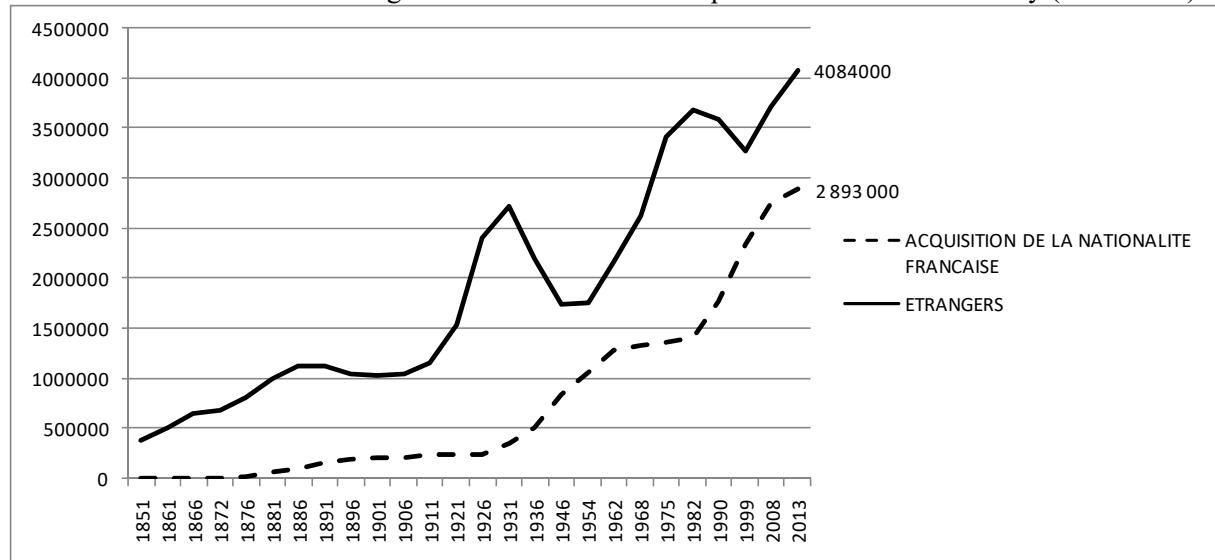
Sources : INSEE, recensement population. Évolution de la part des populations étrangères et immigrées jusqu'en 2013 (1921-2013) et pour la période 1851-1921 utilise l'annuaire statistique de la France volume rétrospective 1966, Tableaux 15 et 16 pages 61 et 62. Population par nationalité, recensements de 1851 à 1962, rubrique Français de naissance, Etrangers et Naturalisés. « Naturalisés » signifie dans le tableau de l'année 2013, série longue, français par acquisition. Il faut cependant faire remarquer que l'on peut acquérir la nationalité française par naturalisation, mais aussi par le mariage, par déclaration, etc.

Figure 11A.2
Evolution of the unemployment rate in France 1885 à 2014
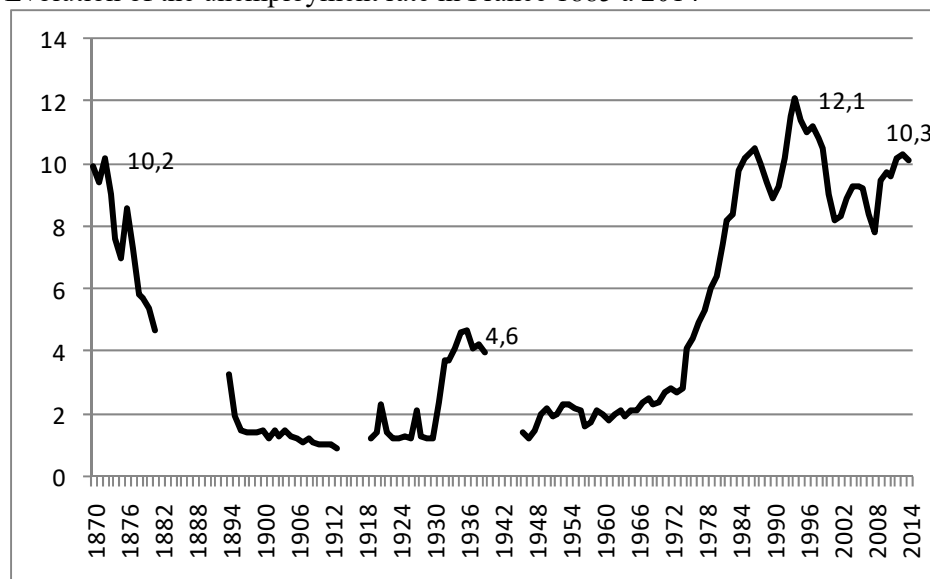
Sources : Mitchell B.R. 2007 de 1895 à 1914; CEPII de 1919 à 1939; et INSEE de 1945 à 2015. Voir aussi Flora (Unemployment, Numbers in thousands and Percentage of Appropriate Workforce) (FLORA). Les données du CEPII sont celles de Pierre Villa. Pierre Villa donne le nombre des chômeurs (variable PDRE ; CHOMAGE (BIT) – (moyenne annuelle en millier) et la population active (variable POPAC). Sur cette base on peut proposer une série de taux de chômage. A partir de 1946 la série est celle de l'INSEE série longue.