

Résumé : EUCE Bourse de Terrain
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During the summer of 2016 with the help of funding from Montréal's European Union Centre of Excellence, I spent time in France and Germany conducting interviews with political parties to understand how they see the rise of populist parties. I am currently a MA student at McGill studying how centre parties perceive populist radical right parties, and what centre parties can do to prevent their success. With the elections coming up in both France and Germany, people are carefully watching what will become of populist radical right parties in the years to come. So far, I have analyzed how centre parties respond to populist radical right parties through party manifestos as well as voter surveys, but I wanted to meet with parties to get a firsthand account of what they think is happening. There is only so much that party manifestos can reveal about a party's stance on immigration, and it does not deal directly with how a centre party may react to a populist radical right party. I wanted to understand how parties think that they can compete against populist radical right parties, and to see what they thought the future of populist radical right parties would be.

To do these interviews, I first got ethics approval from McGill, which included creating a questionnaire. I chose to conduct semi-structured interviews, so that many of the questions would be consistent throughout the interviews, but I could also ask context specific questions if necessary. Finding people to interview was difficult, but I found that everyone was very helpful even if they were not able to participate. I started my interviews in France and then moved onto Germany. My interviews in France were at the Assemblée Nationale, which added an extra security component, but it was incredible to be inside such a historic building talking about such a timely subject. It was very interesting to compare

the interviews in France and Germany- the Républicains made a clear distinction between immigration and integration, whereas with the SPD in Germany there was much more of a discussion of the refugee crisis and what Germany needs to do to adapt. The Républicains also wanted to stress the point that combatting the Front National was not a problem solely reserved for themselves- it was a responsibility for all the parties, regardless of being centre-right or centre-left. This is an important realization in France, because the research has shown that the Front National has could attract voters from across the ideological spectrum.

Both in France and Germany, the consensus seemed to be that populist radical right parties would be here to stay, but these upcoming elections would play an important role in deciding how much influence these parties would have in the future. These interviews have been helpful for my research, because they provide another angle to study the role of populist radical right parties that will greatly help when writing my research project this semester where I will use the results from my interviews in comparison with survey data from the UK. This research would not have been possible without the funding from the EUCE, and I am looking forward to finishing the final project this coming April.