INTRODUCTION
In all European countries, including in the Netherlands and France, 'ethnic minorities', 'immigrants' and/or 'the multicultural society' have become issues high on the public and political agenda. Since the eighties, we have witnessed the intensified and largely unchallenged politicisation of these topics (Barats-Malbrel 1998; Quaderni 1998). As a result, in almost all spheres of life, 'ethnic minorities', 'immigrants' and the 'multicultural society' have become major themes of discussion, indeed of polarised debates, whether in private conversations or in written texts and public debates such as in the arena of politics and public policies. 'Minorities', 'immigrants' and 'the multicultural society' are the subject of news reports, interviews, talk shows, scientific articles, textbooks, children's songs, policy reports, parliamentary debates, conferences and so on. There is no doubt that politics in general and the extreme-right in particular has played an important role in this evolution towards politicisation. To better understand the role of politics in the (re)production of ethnic opinions that are thus widely expressed a long-term research project of the Departments of Discourse Studies of the Universities of Amsterdam and Vienna was started in 1997, at the occasion of the European Year Against Racism. The research that is here reported is part of this long-term project that engaged seven European countries. It focuses in particular on the discourse of the right and the extreme-right on ethnic issues in the Netherlands and France (1990-1997).

In France extreme-right, politically organised racism significantly increased in the period under study. In Holland, this form of racism declined. It is sometimes presupposed that this difference between Holland and France is related to the presence
or absence of a so-called 'cordon sanitaire' around the extreme-right (see Van Donselaar 1995). In France, it is said, the right and the extreme-right lack discursive distance. In Holland, it is said, the reactions of mainstream politics towards the extreme-right are predominantly characterised by boycott and distanciation strategies. To date no comprehensive study has been carried out supporting these arguments.

The aim of the study here reported is to examine commonalties and differences in the discourse of the right and the extreme-right on ethnic issues. This investigation is done from an interdisciplinary critical and comparative perspective in which the analysis of text is related to an analysis of the social context.

**COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVE**

In France, as in the Netherlands, debates about those generally designated as 'foreigners' divide public opinion. In the past decade examples of such debates include the question of headscarves, the question of illegal residents, debates about asylum rights, and the 'minority debates' which take place in the Netherlands with regular intervals (concerning media discourse in France, see Gastaut 1994a and 1994b; Prencipe 1995; Bonnafous 1991; regarding media discourse in Holland, see Van Dijk 1991). This politicisation of immigration has increasingly problematized immigration. Immigration is frequently associated with negative categories like criminality, threats to the public order, religious fanaticism, the decline of the nation and an increase in social costs. The anti-immigrant argumentative repertoires in France are mainly articulated by the National Front, the principal agent of racism in France, but other political actors have also taken up these themes (Tevanian & Tissot 1998; Barats 1998), as has the media (Bonnafous 1991). In the Netherlands since 1981 the Center Democrats (CD), amongst other marginal extreme-right groups, have tried to mobilise xenophobic sentiments.

The cases of Holland and France are also interesting to compare because of the following similarities. Holland and France are both constitutional states and have very similar political and parliamentary procedures. Both countries are members of the European Union and have a strong civil society. Both Holland and France were colonial powers in the past. They suffered in a comparable way under the fascist dictatorship of Nazi Germany. After World War II, Holland and France both experienced significant immigration in the context of decolonisation and as a compensation for shortages in the labour market. Often the same groups (labour
migrants, ex-colonials and political refugees) from the same region (a majority originates from the Mediterranean region) have been involved.

**Time Period And Data Selection**
The time period of the study was restricted to 1990-1997. At the end of the eighties fundamental political changes took place in Europe, equally affecting the social representation of immigration and thus offering a 'natural' time boundary. 1997 was the European Year against Racism, 1996-1997 the time frame of the study of the discourse on immigration in European parliamentary debates that preceded and formed the direct occasion for the actual project (see Wodak & Van Dijk 2000).
The rich amount of data contained in the parliamentary debates were complemented for this study with data from other discourse genres such as interviews, articles, public speeches etc. Indeed for most of the parties other genres than parliamentary debates were most centrally investigated. For each party that was investigated one leading and influential politician was selected. To avoid the impression that the main focus was on the discourse of individual politicians some discourse fragments of other members of these parties were also analyzed as well as more general (anonymous) discursive materials of the parties, such as party programs.

**THEORETICAL AND METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK**
The methodology of this study is imbedded in a complex and multidisciplinary theoretical framework pertaining to discourse, social cognitions (beliefs, values, knowledge, ideologies etc.) and society (see for the relation between theory and method in discourse analysis Van Dijk (2000: 55- 58). The conceptual notions of racism and discourse are central in this framework. Racism is defined as a complex, multifaceted system of domination and exclusion that produces social inequality between different ethnic groups. This system is (re)produced by social practises of dominant groups including their discourses and by shared social representations (Moscovici 1981). These social representations imbue these practises with meaning and thus legitimate social inequality and the daily organisation of dominance and exclusion. Note that in my conception racism not only refers to overt and violent forms of social domination, but also to more indirect and subtle forms of daily practises. It should however be stressed that racism is not seen as a property of individual persons, but rather as a dynamically changing, ideological dimension of
social practises, including discursive practices. Consequently this study is not about intentions (and moral judgements) but rather about social effects of and conditions for social discursive practices.

Discourse is a powerful mechanism in our modern post-industrial, communication and information society. Discourse is central to the reproduction of society. Social processes, developments and changes are reflected in texts. Discourse as a social practice plays a crucial role in the production, legitimation and reproduction of racism as an expression of ethnic dominance and exclusion.

Discourse analysis accordingly links the micro dimensions of text and speech to structures and strategies of cognition and communication and both of them to the macro dimensions of society (Van Dijk 1997). Discourse analysis analyzes text and speech at different linguistic levels: topical analysis, meaning, argumentation structures and strategies, lexical style, rhetorical figures, syntactic forms, to mention only some of the major levels of analysis. This textual analysis is related to an analysis of discourse in terms of the social actions and interaction of language users. This in turn is related to an analysis of the social cognitions involved and to an analysis of the social context, including the micro-dimensions of the social situation in which the discourse is produced and the macro-dimensions of social groups and institutions.

The expression of ethnic inequality in politics of the right and extreme-right was the central focus of this study. In particular some global strategies and local text features that are relevant for the study of racism and characteristic for prejudiced language use about immigrants as they have been identified in earlier studies, were examined (see Reeves 1983; Van Dijk 1987, 1991, 1993). In particular those analytical categories were included that were equally examined in earlier research on parliamentary debates (see Van Dijk 2000). These categories were complemented with those that after further investigation turned out to be relevant for the discourse samples under study. Thus, on a global level the topics of the discourse of the right and the extreme-right were investigated and the argumentation (topoi, fallacies) that is developed to underscore opinions or justify practices. Other semantic moves that were investigated are comparison, forms of implicitness, contrast, intertextuality and fore- and backgrounding. Major global discursive strategies like those of legitimation and referential strategies were equally examined. Another focus were local text characteristics of rhetorics (metaphors, irony, repetition, euphemisms, hyperboles, etc.) and style (lexicon). Due to lack of space it is impossible to elaborate, let alone to illustrate with discourse
fragments all the identified linguistic properties of the examined party discourses. To
give an impression some of them will however be shortly discussed in the following
sections.

FINDINGS: THE NETHERLANDS

The Discourse Of The Centrum Democraten (CD) (Center Democrats)
Little discursive data from the Dutch right-extremist party CD are available. This is
because the party is excluded from mainstream politics, boycotted by the media, the
object of intensely negative public opinion, and subject to repressive governmental
policies (cf. Schikhof 1998). Having been ostracised from public life since its
creation, the party has had only limited access to public audiences. Consequently no
discourse data derived from public speeches exists for the period under study. Nor are
any reports available of the speeches held by chairman Janmaat in private general
meetings. He was rarely quoted in news reports, and was seldom consulted by
newspaper, radio and television journalists. Thus, from 1990 to 1997, Janmaat was
only interviewed twelve times by mainstream daily and weekly newspapers.

The most important medium employed by the CD for influencing public
opinion are radio and television broadcasts. A survey among members of the CD
indicates that for 37 % of them such TV broadcasts were the main impetus for
becoming a member of the party (Esser and Van Holsteyn 1998: 87). Janmaat
generally is the CD spokesman in the radio and TV spots. Eighty-nine transcribed
speeches (72 TV interviews, 17 radio interviews) and 12 press interviews in the
period under study are used as data for this research.

Certain topics are systematically discussed in the broadcasts. The first is the
economic crisis and the domains in which that crisis expresses itself, like taxes and
the cuts on welfare, especially provisions for the elderly and the disabled. In addition
the difficult situation of different sectors of the Dutch economy like the agricultural
sector and small enterprises are discussed. Another topic is the social crisis related to
the housing shortage and education. The CD itself, other political parties and the
elections are also discussed. Other themes are determined by current affairs:
inundation in Holland, Bosnia, family policy etc. In almost every program negative
attention is given to asylum seekers and minorities essentially because they cost
money to the Dutch. Criminality is also frequently discussed.
The core of the argument made repeatedly, in every broadcast, is as follows: from an economic point of view, things are not going well in the Netherlands. The government, political parties and politicians, especially the PvdA (Labour Party), defend wrong policies. The government equally makes a mess of the implementation of policies. Mainstream parties and politicians only want to spend money on asylum seekers, minority policies and the multicultural society; that is why the Dutch have to give in more and more. The Dutch are discriminated against. The CD is the only party that defends the ordinary Dutch.

The major topics of press interviews are the CD itself, its relation with and opinion about other political parties, the treatment of the CD in the political arena and in society, its relationship with the press and press coverage of the CD, juridical verdicts and the struggle against the extreme-right, elections (programme, results etc.) and the relationship between the CD and other extreme-right parties in the Netherlands and abroad. About 12% of the interviews discuss what Janmaat calls 'the heart of the CD programme: the attitude towards foreigners' (Reformatorisch Dagblad, 19 April 1994). The topics here discussed are illegal immigrants, Islam and the limitation of civil rights.

The discourse of the CD as it is expressed in the statements of party leader Janmaat exhibits many text properties that are characteristic of prejudiced written and oral discourses about migrants. On a global level, his discourse combines a populist strategy in which the victimization of the CD and of one's 'own population' plays an important role within a strategy oriented towards the enhancement of his own credibility, the delegitimation of his political opponents, especially the social democratic party PvdA, and the negative presentation of the 'Other'. The 'Other' is constructed as a dangerous, culturally deviant outsider who is only after our riches and who threatens to undermine 'our' society. This negative other-presentation is strongly contrasted with positive self-presentation. This is combined with different forms of indirect, mystifying, even unexpressed, language use and with hyperbolical language use by the frequent occurrence of intensifiers; with a lexical strategy in which that which is considered typically Dutch is emphasized; and with the frequent use of reference to topoi, commonplace arguments, fallacies -transgressions of argumentation rules- and contrasts that sharpen the contradiction between Dutch and foreigners on a discursive level.
The 'Other': a culturally deviant, greedy and dangerous outsider

An important property of discourse is that it not only reflects reality but at the same time constructs it. Reflections of reality are used to construct representations that fit a particular ideology. Important domains on which discourse has a constructive impact are the domains of knowledge, social relations and identities (Fairclough 1992).

It is via discourse that public opinion forms its beliefs about the culture of migrants. CD discourse envisions culture as a static, homogenous and timeless entity. Cultural differences appear in this perspective as absolute, clearly delimited and nearly unbridgeable. In order to represent allochthonous people as culturally deviant the significance of relative cultural differences between groups of people are enhanced. Also causal processes in which multiple factors might play a role are reduced to one: the deviant culture.

It is in discourse that the quality of social relations between the Dutch and migrants is reflected. The discourse of the CD constructs a competitive relation, especially on the socio-economic level. The CD conceives of the interests of the Dutch and of foreigners as opposed on several different levels. All vital socio-economic fields are touched upon—housing, employment, education and welfare—because it is especially around public finance and social provisions that a fierce competitive struggle can be established. The technique of contrasting is an important instrument for achieving this end.

It is in discourse that the identity of the migrant is constructed as that of a dangerous foreigner. To construct the image of the dangerous foreigner a direct connection is drawn between migrants and criminality. It is suggested that foreigners behave like serious criminals because of 'their culture'. The negative presentation of the 'other' that is thus constructed is systematically paired to a positive presentation of the in-group, the own Dutch.

Positive self-presentation

The next example shows an explicit form of positive self-presentation in contrast with negative other-presentation:

(2) Nederland is altijd een tolerant land geweest. Buitenlanders die hier komen, 
hebben geen tolerantie (Janmaat in De Groene Amsterdammer, 7 oktober 1992). 
Nederland has always been a tolerant country. The foreigners who come here have no tolerance.
In the first sentence of this fragment tolerance is attributed to the Netherlands as a country while in the second sentence it is considered a personal characteristic that someone has (or lacks). This difference in characterisation is used to mitigate the strong contrast in the positive presentation of the in-group versus the negative presentation of the out-group. It does however not hide the blatant prejudice that is contained in this statement.

Victimisation is an important characteristic of the referential strategy that is applied when speaking of autochthonous Dutch people. The Dutch are represented as victims of the minorities, or at least of minority policies. The Dutch -most of the speeches assert- are discriminated against. Also the CD itself is characterised as a victim, that is, as victimised by dictatorial political policies. At the same time, the CD represents itself as the only party defending the interests of the ordinary Dutch, in favour of Dutch norms and values, in favour of reconstituting Dutch culture and more generally fighting to save the Netherlands from decline.

Positive self- and negative other-presentation are facilitated by the mechanism of differential differentiation. The in-group, the autochthonous Dutch who are primarily referred to as 'we', the 'ordinary', or 'our Dutch', are much more differentiated with respect to social class or social origin than the out-group, and includes: the youth, the elderly, the citizens, the farmers, the weak etc. The out-group is depicted in large, homogenous entities such as 'Muslims'.

**Lexical strategy**

Ideologies are amongst other discursive structures articulated in lexical processes (Fowler 1996). This also holds for the outspoken nationalism of the CD. The discourse of the CD is characterised by a large number of idiomatic constructions, in particular old-fashioned, typically Dutch sayings, expressions, proverbs and puns, which are employed as frequently as more popular, contemporary ones. It is known that proverbs have the function of reinforcing the arguments of the speaker. The speaker fades away, enabling a powerful and cultural utterance that reflects shared knowledge and is difficult to counter (Arnaud and Moon 1993: 324). Proverbs and sayings are not only expressed in their canonical form, they are sometimes used as the basic element for word games. Striking is their racialisation through the introduction of changes or additions such as occur in the following example: De Nederlandse
regering wikt, de buitenlander beschikt (the Dutch government proposes, the immigrant disposes). The subject of the proverb that is used in different languages De mens wikt, God beschikt (man proposes, God disposes) is here transformed in order to convey a racist message: Immigrants in Holland have more power than the Dutch government. This message may be better stored in and retrieved from memory because it is packed in an instance of shared knowledge, a proverb. Similarly, the titles of the election programmes of the CD Oost West, Thuis Best [East West, Home Best] and Trouw aan Rood-Wit-Blauw [True to Red- White-Blue] reflect the same kinds of lexical habits. In the context of the anti-immigrant ideology of the CD, language itself becomes a nationalist symbol through the frequent use of typically Dutch sayings, expressions and proverbs. This is underscored in the leaflets of the CD by the use of colours: red and blue on white paper, together representing the national tricolour flag (for an analysis of everyday nationalist symbols, see Billig 1995).

The word 'own' has a central position in the lexical repertoire of the CD, as many of the cited examples show: our 'own' Dutch youth, our 'own' population, the 'own' Dutch, our 'own' problems and our 'own' security of existence. 'Own' is one of those inconspicuous words that Billig (1995) has shown routinely contributes to the daily confirmation and reproduction of nationalist ideological repertoires.

**Strategy of the unexpressed**

A discourse-analytical approach not only means examining what is said, but also what is not said. Leaving certain things unsaid may form a conscious strategy, as is the case with the CD. This strategy is strongly related to the mechanism of theatrical role-switching that is used by the CD. The CD has a front-stage and a backstage image and must permanently be on the alert so as not to confuse the two. The CD continuously balances on the margin of the constitutional state. In 1994, Janmaat was convicted for discriminatory statements. The strategy of the unexpressed is used to cope with this threat. This strategy is applied on different levels. One way to do this is simply to eliminate certain topics. Practices such as consciously manipulated vagueness, implications, presuppositions and other forms of indirect language use are also deployed in the strategy of the unexpressed. An example of this strategy is offered by the election slogan 'full is full'. On the one hand, this slogan represents an uncontested truth. Nobody can deny that full is full. The uncontested explicit message however contrasts with the contested implicit one. The slogan 'full is full' presupposes
knowledge being held by the receiver of the message regarding what is full (the country) and what its implication is (stop immigration or expel all foreigners out of the country). In the subtext, tucked behind presuppositions and implications, an extremely controversial and contested theme is hidden. The title of the CD-election programme 'East West, Home Best' also represents an example of the strategy of the unexpressed. This title, on the one hand, has the familiar ring of a centuries-old proverb and, on the other hand, simultaneously implies the additional message 'for their own good'. This *topos* frequently occurs in anti-migration discourse, emphasising that is better for all of us if people stay in their own country. The implied conclusion of this stereotypical argument is that immigration should be stopped and remigration promoted. Janmaat represents such careful balancing, in response to the permanent threat of interdiction and trial, as his favourite sport: *for us it is a political sport to articulate the viewpoints of the CD in such a way that no one with law in his hands can take offence* (Janmaat in Elsevier, 22-1-1994).

The identified text characteristics that were here shortly discussed support the identification of the CD as a modern racist party. It is a modern racist party, however, that is under heavy social pressure not to express its real opinions, beliefs and ideology too explicitly. Where discourse analysis is able to deconstruct significations, the examined data are tremendously revealing. This is especially true for the implicit call for arson, for the references to a racist publication and for allusions that are made to Nazi conspiracy theories and anti-Semitic practices of exclusion that were found in the data. The CD discourse postulates that attempts to address the interests of asylum seekers and minorities by existing asylum- and minority policies are enacted at the expense of attending to the vital interests of the 'ordinary Dutch'. The effect of this on the 'ordinary Dutch', especially on those who are in an underprivileged socio-economic position, should not be underestimated, even if they do not vote for the CD.

**The Discourse Of The Volkspartij Voor Vrijheid En Democratie (VVD) (Peoples Party for Freedom and Democracy)**

In a meaningful discourse-analytical study not only what is said is relevant, but also who said it, in what function and in which context. This analysis of the discourse of a spokesman of the conservative liberal party VVD concerns one of the Netherlands’ most important and well-known political leaders, chairman of the party in the period
under study, Mr. F. Bolkestein. The data consist of 5 newspaper articles of one page each, 10 press interviews, and 67 transcribed radio and TV interviews by Frits Bolkestein in the period 1990-1997, as well as the introduction to his booklet *Moslim in de polder* (1997). In the 1990s, the following topics were put on the political and public agenda by Frits Bolkestein (for an overview of the opinions of Bolkestein, see Maas & Marlet & Zwart 1997):

The taboo on criticising minorities and Islam;
The superiority of Western culture versus Islamic culture (1991) and the backwardness of Islam as a religion compared to Christianity as a religion;
The necessity for migrants to adapt to the generally accepted public order, norms and values of the Netherlands;
The general lack of appreciation for Dutch culture;
The separation of church and state, freedom of expression, tolerance and non-discrimination as fundamental, identity-determining Dutch political principles;
The expulsion of migrants condemned for criminal activities;
Polygamy;
The obligation of civil servants to denounce illegal residents (1992);
The exclusion of illegal residents from social provisions and from health care, as well as the exclusion of their children from education;
The necessity for Holland to receive primarily European refugees (1994);
Full restriction of family reunification, a dispersion policy and residency for only a limited period for all asylum seekers (1995);
Turkey as a country that does not belong to Europe (because of its Islamic character) (1997).

In the time period under study the country slowly but successfully recovered from a crisis that had lasted two decennia and during which discrimination and racism increased significantly. For the first time in the Dutch post-war period, the extreme-right participated in mainstream politics. While extreme-right leaders did not succeed in finding more than marginal support for their anti-welfare, chauvinistic, xenophobic themes, the mainstream Right succeeded in bringing about a political translation of traditional commonsense issues and thereby achieved an ideological shift comparable to Thatcher's in the UK (see Hall 1991). Latent cultural racism was activated and normalised by associating the migrant population with particular characteristics of religion that are negatively valued and stereotypically formulated. By means of a
complex process of signification and legitimation, a widely-supported consensus was constructed around the notion that 'we' are superior to 'them'. The following text characteristics play a central role in this process: positive self-presentation, achieved by representing Western culture as superior, is linked to a sometimes more covert and sometimes more overt negative other-presentation in which problematization by the use of negative attributions and the use of topoi play an essential role.

**Positive self-presentation**

On a cognitive level, 'us-them' thinking in terms of religion and ethnicity is an important condition for the development of a prejudiced frame of interpretation, particularly if positive traits are related to 'us' and negative features to 'them', as is the case in the discourse of Bolkestein. An explicit and obvious form of positive self-presentation is Bolkestein's statement that 'contemporary European civilisation is more developed than the civilisation of the Islamic world' (cited in Netwerk, 20 May 1997). In different terms Bolkestein has repeatedly argued that Christian civilisation has to be considered superior to Islamic civilisation. Viewed with Bolkestein's eyes, we are not only superior, but we are also too good for this world. We have to transform the welfare ideologies of the 1970's. Positive self-presentation also takes place when the VVD presents itself as a proponent of strict migration laws and firm action. Generally, firm migration policies are only advocated when accompanied with moves of positive self-presentation, thus mitigating potential negative self-presentation. The implicit message is: it is difficult for us, as well, to accept or maintain tough policies, but our current responsibilities go beyond merely being humane. In this way, a restrictive and repressive policy is justified.

**Negative other-presentation**

It is striking that 'they' are not often directly mentioned. Sometimes they are called 'allochthons' or 'the groups'. When the neutral designation of 'people' is used it is often followed by negative attributions: 'people who are in a deprived situation', 'people who refuse to cooperate' and 'ghettos of minorities who hardly speak Dutch and who only live on welfare' (Bolkestein in NRC, 29 July 1992), 'allochthons who do not consider it urgent or necessary to get work' (Bolkestein in Hervormd Nederland, 18 March 1995). They also often appear as the 'minority problem'. Sometimes minorities even disappear from the adjectives and are only indirectly alluded to e.g. in
metaphors. Implicitness and mystifying language use fulfil the function to mitigate a too negative other-presentation. In this way possible objections of political opponents are anticipated, especially the criticism that the speaker is promoting prejudice with his discourse. In the discourse of Bolkestein, the situation of minorities, asylum seekers and the phenomenon of migration is defined in terms of the problems they entail or even of 'the problem' that they represent. 'The problem' is however neither defined nor explained. Bolkestein systematically remains vague and implicit. It is presupposed that the audience knows what 'the problem' is. In this definition of the situation, conceptualised in terms of problems with reference to foreign culture and religion, migrants' failure to adapt to Dutch culture and high (immigration) numbers play an important role. From a policy perspective, the threat of an ungovernable situation has a key role and solutions are predominantly made the responsibility of the minorities themselves. When they make an effort and adapt everything will be alright! The more the problematic character of the actual situation is emphasised, the more legitimate the call for firm action appears to be. It is here that the logic of the occurring reference to 'American situations', the 'threatening ghettoisation of the inner cities' and the imaginary 'time bomb' may be found. The constructed crisis and threat and accentuated uncontrollability fulfil a function of stimulating feelings of fear, as a result of which the audience secludes itself from less conventional, more creative and optimistic scenarios and may heavily rely on the strong leadership and policies of the liberal leader and his party. Imaginary situations are created in order to emphasise how the future is doomed to succumb under the pressure of ethnic conflict. Contemporary analogies ('American situations') are as much used as historical analogies in order to highlight the dangers of unlimited migration. We find e.g. an historical analogy in the use of the word 'volksverhuizing' (mass migration).

The implicit message that is conveyed through the use of this word is that history has taught us that mass migration movements lead to social conflicts or even to wars. The use of such unelaborated notions, replete with connotations in which the threat of violence plays a central role, creates insecurity and fear among a badly-informed audience. The emergency character of the situation is thus exaggerated. The speaker discursively constructs an image of crisis. Political crises, according to Kiewe (1998: 81) are 'discursive constructs that communicate an urgency and call for out-of-the-ordinary decisions and actions'. A crisis also calls for strong leadership to avert it, a dimension that is obviously not inconvenient for the liberal leader.
Delegitimation

Part of the intended consequence of introducing a new definition of the current situation is the delegitimation of those who previously defined the situation. The New Right defends a liberal market economy with minimal interference, but also a strong state, emphasizing the responsibility of citizens and the transformation of the welfare state into a so-called guarantee state. This concept is contradictory to the welfare-state thinking of social democracy. Several discursive references are oriented towards the delegitimation of the welfare ideology (and thus of social democratic parties that supposedly support that ideology). This is reinforced by a strategy of backgrounding and downplaying the socio-political phenomena of discrimination and racism, which are contradictory to the ideological mechanisms of a positive self- and a negative other-presentation. At the level of argumentation, this is rather frequently achieved with the help of fallacies.

Argumentation

Bolkestein expresses his standpoints and opinions on ethnic issues predominantly in the context of a public debate, the minority debate, in the media, in the context thus of an argumentative discussion with other politicians and opinion maker and, more indirectly, with the public opinion. The central issue of this debate is the definition of the ethnic situation and the policies concerning the admission of immigrants and the integration of legally accepted foreigners in the Netherlands. Different dimensions thus impact on Bolkestein's discourse: his (and his party's) ethnic opinions, socially shared norms and values with respect to ethnic issues (such as the obligation to avoid racist expressions), constraints of the political situation, doubts and critics of opponents that have to be anticipated etc. etc. A central standpoint and key arguments may however be identified. If we leave out what is irrelevant, add what remained implicit, substitute what was ambiguous and vague and reformulate his central theses in general terms, we may see that Bolkestein's argumentation throughout the examined corpus fits well into the title of his press article of 12 September 1991 in the Volkskrant: 'What is allowed and what possible, what must be done and what otherwise threatens to happen'.

*What is allowed and what possible*
'They' may live according to their own culture as far as private expressions are concerned, such as food, clothes and religion; 
'We' may express negative opinions about 'them'.

**What must be done**

'They' have to adapt to Dutch culture;
'We' have to take firm action to restrict immigration and force adaptation.

**What threatens to happen**

If we do not take firm action the outcome will be disorder, ghettoisation, chaos and aggression.

The premises however on which these conclusions are based are absent in the title and correspondingly more implicit in the text of the articles and interviews: 'we' are superior, 'they' are backward.

That Bolkestein again and again anticipates possible criticisms and replies to these critiques in no way diminishes the effect of his discourse. Cutting through his total oeuvre, the greatest logical error of Bolkestein may be that he systematically presupposes that culture is the essence of both the problem and the solution insofar as the situation of migrants and minorities in Holland is concerned.

**The Discourse On immigration of the CD And the VVD Compared**

If we compare the discourse on immigration of the Dutch extreme-right with that of the right as it is exemplified and most elaborately expressed by their leaders, the following commonalties and differences may be found.

Both the right and the extreme-right in Holland use global strategies of positive self versus negative other-presentation as predominantly expressed in referential actor descriptions and stereotypical commonplace arguments. This is indicative of the ideological character of the discourse on immigration. However, while the negative other-presentation of the CD is more explicit, that of the VVD is more subtle, more oriented towards problematisation and towards avoidance of a too explicit negative other-presentation. This may be related to the fact that the expression of ethnic dominance is contradictory to a liberal ideology that emphasises equality. The immigrant in the CD discourse is straightforwardly constructed as a culturally deviant, dangerous outsider who is only after 'our' riches. To achieve this representation a relation of competition over scarce resources like work, housing, welfare and social allocations between Dutch and immigrants is constructed with the
linguistic tool of contrasting. The positive self-presentation of the CD is mainly related to the party itself and to the Dutch working class, which are moreover both victimised, while the positive self-presentation of the right refers more to abstract notions like the western civilisation and its (liberal) political ideology.

A 'banal nationalism' (Billig 1995) is expressed by the CD where this party frequently and systematically uses typically Dutch expressions. Form and style of the language use of the CD and repetitive use of identical items indicate that the main orientation of this party is towards the Dutch working class. Although the slogan 'simplify and exaggerate' is sometimes used to characterise the discourse of Bolkestein, his texts are much more subtle, informed by academic knowledge and sophisticated when compared to those of the CD. Bolkestein obviously speaks for the educated elite rather than for a working class audience.

On a semantic level both parties present pessimistic world views and scenarios of being doomed when 'nothing is done', although, again, the discourses vary in subtlety and degree of exaggeration and one-sidedness.

While racism as a systematic form of ethnic domination is not acknowledged but on the contrary, denied and reversed by the CD, the VVD recognises the importance of this social phenomenon by declaring the struggle against it one of the pillars of its immigration- and integration programme. Nevertheless discrimination and racism are backgrounded and subtly played down as a marginal phenomenon in the discourse of the VVD leader. At the same time the 'taboo on racism' is discursively transformed and reversed into a presumed 'taboo on minorities' to be raised immediately: negative opinions on immigrants should now be honestly expressed! In this way discursive discrimination is justified and legitimated.

After having signalled commonalities and some more secondary variations it is important to emphasise some major differences in the discourses of the right and the extreme-right in the Netherlands. First of all we should here mention the fact that the CD more frequently than rightist politicians makes use of instruments of implicit language use, like presuppositions, implications and vagueness. This is clearly so because of the social and juridical pressure to conform to consensual non-racist politics and language use. Backed by constant juridical support, Mr. Janmaat does rarely 'show the end of his tongue', as a Dutch expression says and this phenomenon

\[1\] Confronted with increasing right extremism and racism in the eighties, mainstream parties agreed not to abuse minority issues in electoral campaigns.
may be one of the reasons why his party, as far as the statements of its leader Mr. Janmaat is concerned, appears to be more close to the right than it actually is. This points to the importance to keep in mind the programmatic differences between the right and the extreme-right. After all the CD programme embodies an explicit anti-immigrant approach while the VVD formally supports policies of equal opportunities and anti-discrimination. If however we consider social effects of discourse more than programmatic intentions, we may, given our findings, hypothesise that a marginally supported welfare chauvinistic form of ethnocentrism has been swamped away by a much more broadly supported although subtly formulated modern form of ethnocentric cultural racism that considers its superiority as a self evident fact of life that does not need explanation. There is no doubt that the VVD has strongly contributed to a process which makes culture/religion emerge as a plausible explanatory framework for incidents and events in the everyday life of ordinary people. This study has tried to show how this form of cultural racism based on essentialist thinking in which the dynamic of positive self and negative other-presentation is a central one, is promoted even in a political climate where equality and anti-discrimination are highly valued.

FINDINGS: FRANCE

The Discourse Of The Front National (FN)

Although the French right-extremist FN is by no means a one-issue-party, it strongly focuses on the 'immigration-question'. The FN-programme is based on the principle of 'national preference': giving priority to people of French origin and excluding 'the Other' at all levels: social, economic and political. Statements of FN-leaders, especially those of Jean-Marie Le Pen, are often provocative. The FN deliberately tries to influence lexical usages, particularly in the domains of immigration, ethnic relations and racism. More generally speaking, language is a major tool utilized by the FN for waging its ideological war (see Maricourt 1993). Indeed, Le Pen has explicitly acknowledged the central place his party gives to discursive policies, declaring once: the importance for the FN is MOT, a term that simultaneously means 'word' in French and is an abbreviated reference to Marignane, Orange, Toulon, the main municipalities under FN-rule! It is not out of the question that the FN's linguistic policies are part and parcel of the success of the National
Front, and that they enabled it, with its ideology and discourse of 'national preference', in just fifteen years to become a major instrument for promoting racism in France.

Souchard et al. (1998) have made an extensive quantitative lexical analysis of the discourse of Le Pen (1983-1996). In this study, several argumentative strategies that rely on implicitness are identified. Le Pen frequently uses arguments based on everyday evidence and commonsense reasoning, things regularly discussed, and understood and supported by everyone without needing an explanation. He also strategically uses ambiguity. A topical analysis made by the same research group reveals that the following themes are most central to the discourse of J.M. Le Pen: Morality e.g. 'the natural order of things': 40.40%, Social violence in the form of threat or struggle: 24.39%, Politics: 23.15%, Economy: 6.75% and Foreigners: 5.30%. My investigation more fully examined this last theme, 'foreigners' or 'immigration', in the discourse of Le Pen. Fifty-eight speeches, interviews and articles from the period 1990-1997 were selected from the archives of la Documentation Française. Moreover, several speeches that were held at mass meetings were downloaded from the internet, as was general information such as the party programme. Altogether this corpus consists of 264 pages of printed text. The criterion for selecting texts was thematic. Only those documents that contained the keyword 'immigration' in the thematic description of la Documentation Française were selected. I will now discuss some of the identified properties.

**Negative other-presentation**

If we may believe the discourse of Le Pen, France is in decline, threatened by invasion and on the verge of disappearing. Its civilisation is doomed. This is primarily due to a cosmopolitan plot, concealed by modern politics that strive for European unification and globalisation, and institutionalised by an anti-racist lobby that systematically privileges foreigners and oppresses the French. It is in this broader context that the immigration theme is instrumental to the strategy of the National Front. Immigrants embody, so to speak, the threatening decadence of the French nation state and civilisation. Immigration is consequently evaluated negatively in terms of the problems it generates, as a potential or very actual and future threat, not only for national French identity but for the nation as such. Immigration is systematically seen in terms of its constituting an invasion. Immigrants, once present in the country, are not only represented as a problem and the
cause of social insecurity, unemployment and other social problems. They are also directly and explicitly related to a sense of insecurity in public spaces and criminality. The threat to the nation that they represent is accentuated in apocalyptic terms. The style is hyperbolical. Differences are magnified and turned into essential differences. Categories of comparison that are frequently used are relentlessly dualistic calling for choice and absolute commitment.

More generally, immigrants are the object of a negative other-presentation by means of derogatory lexical descriptions\(^2\), allusions to racist stereotypes, negative attributions, suggestive metaphors and other rhetorical figurae. Metaphors that are frequently used when speaking of immigrants are, most systematically, those of war and of water. These metaphors, depicting unending flows of people entering Europe and resulting aggression and struggle, contribute to create fear and thereby motivate people to support restrictive or anti-immigration policies. In other instances immigrants are not only derogated - they are implicitly threatened as the following example shows: 'Si nous arrivons, ils partiront' (When we arrive, they will leave). This phrase is a prototypical one-liner by chairman Jean Marie Le Pen. Much of the information in this short sentence is left implicit. The complete message is: when we, the FN, obtain power, they, the immigrants, will leave. This kind of rallying motto favours the public acceptance of the FN proposals by associating it with a short, memorable sentence (see for the function of slogans Barry III: 19). This short phrase contains at one and the same time an implicit call to (potential) xenophobic voters to support the FN and an implicit threat to immigrants. The threat is transformed into an apparent confirmation of facts: 'they will leave', and not 'we will get them out by implementing our policies of national preference'.

**Positive self-presentation**

This negative evaluation of immigration and immigrants is in sharp contrast to the positive evaluation of 'us', in this case the French nation, its (presumed) political representative and future rescuer, the Front National, and, the father of the fatherland,

\(^2\) Lexical derogations that were found include, amongst others:

- *voyous immigrés* (Le Pen in Present, June 1991) 'immigrant hooligans'
- *bandes ethniques* (Le Pen in RTL 20 June 1991) 'ethnic gangs'.

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Jean-Marie Le Pen. Multiple cognitive resources are used to construct right-extremist nationalistic ideology, derived both from the intellectual domain - history, literature and philosophy - and from the socio-political domain - working class discourse, nationalistic discourse and a discourse of anti-fascist resistance. (Historical) comparisons, (biological) metaphors and a poetical style, along with other rhetorical instruments, are used to construct a romantic version of France and to naturalise the idea of the (French) ethnic nation and thus to legitimate defending it against 'foreign intruders' in a united, altruistic and heroic struggle, guided by Jean-Marie Le Pen, the heir of the heroes of the past. Discrimination is normalised and naturalised in the discourse of Le Pen and an ideology of 'racism without race' is developed and legitimated where causal attributions are primarily traced back to the 'natural order of things'. The 'natural order of things' is a core element of right-extremist ideology. Le Pen normalises a racist ideology while referring to nature and biology. It is natural, he argues, to prefer one's family to another, one's nation to another etc. This kind of argumentation, typical of the FN-leader, again conveys how he resorts to commonsense reasoning that is based on false analogies which themselves do not require explanation. It is also on the basis of referring to nature and biology that Le Pen normalises and legitimises irrational, xenophobic behaviour and discriminatory practices. This explanation in terms of nature, instinct and inheritance strongly recalls the once closely related, now outdated and socially and politically banned, classificatory principle of 'race' which likewise considers people from a biological point of view. This is especially the case where homogeneity and the dangers of intermixture are accentuated e.g. by representing the national community as a physical body that is 'injected' with immigrant communities in order to produce offspring. Note also e.g. how a straightforward racist argumentation (biological homogeneity leads to high performance) is circumvented by introducing a cultural detour: it is a fundamental biological rule, according to Le Pen, that cultural homogeneity leads to high performance.

The nation is represented as a self-evident fact, as is the division of homogeneous populations into nations through a natural process of categorisation that is determined by biological laws. The nation as identity-category is extensively relied upon as part of a strategy of positive self-presentation. In the discourse of Le Pen, the ethnic concept of the nation is constructed, among other ways, by elaborating on and referring to historical events. These historical narratives take whole pages and include tremendously detailed references, names and dates. Le Pen has a preference for
historical comparisons. Most frequently, he turns to the historical and symbolic figure of Joan of Arc, who in the Middle Ages saved the French from occupation by the English. He explicitly and repeatedly compares the National Front, or himself as the future saviour of the French, to Joan of Arc. He has thus succeeded in appropriating this traditional national, almost mythological, symbol that embodies all the aspirations of an oppressed people and represents the French longing for self-respect. Correspondingly, Le Pen frequently details the stories of other heroes, saints, martyrs and sages.

In Le Pen's discourse the nation is frequently compared to and entangled with the concept of family containing all the related connotations of self-evident naturalness, clear boundaries and thus exclusion, material safety, emotional security, protecting tenderness and love. This allows for the naturalisation of the nation and its representation in terms of natural exclusivity and emotional needs (for the function of naturalist discourse in racist ideology, see Guillaumin 1995: 212-238). It also enables the anchoring of the ideology of nationalism in the emotional life of the audience. This, in turn, sustains a representation of Le Pen as father of the fatherland who talks to his audience as a parent to his children, using emotive language.

A personalised, female character of France is emphasised and is attributed with many positive metaphorical properties. In line with the family metaphor France is often personified as an ideal and attractive woman, daughter of goddess from antiquity. Personifications are rhetorically used to give abstract entities, phenomena or ideas a human appearance. As Reisigl et al. emphasise 'their apparent concreteness and vividness often invites hearers or readers to identify or to feel solidarity with the personified entity or against it' (Reisigl et al. 2001: 58). Thus France and Le Pen are at the same time mother and daughter, father and son, intimately linked to each other by natural bonds.

Support for a nationalist ideology is also found in romantic, almost poetic references to the natural resources of France, a land whose natural beauty is so appreciated by tourists, thus creating modern versions of 'blut' and 'boden' associations.

Le Pen explicitly compares his rank and file to the soldiers who combated fascism in the Second World War. In this way, unified support of Le Pen's nationalist ideology is constructed. Other ideological resources are likewise used to create this unity. The discourse of Le Pen in many respects recalls the original discourse of the
Leftist workers' movement, with sometimes subtle but critical variations. The proletarians of Marxist slogans e.g. replaced by 'patriots'. These types of linguistic transformation and ironical language games are typical of Le Pen's discourse. Other resources, such as pseudo-literary, metaphorical language, are also drawn upon to underscore the nationalistic ideology. A homogenous, closely interlinked and positively evaluated we-group of French people is thus constructed.

**Euphemistic policies**

The straightforward discriminatory character of the FN programme comes to the fore in the euphemistically formulated policy principle of 'national preference' that envisions the institutionalised exclusion of immigrants. A euphemistic style does not only characterise the concept of 'national preference', the sentences detailing this policy are likewise formulated in a euphemistic way. It is e.g. not said that immigrants will no longer receive family allocations. It is only expressed that family allocations will be reserved for the French.

Justification for 'national preference' is achieved by a frequent use of comparisons that originate in common sense logic and act as legitimating devices for these policies, by the use, also, of topoi and contrasts.

**Denial and reversal of racism**

While examining the discourse of the extreme-right and its promotion of racist ideologies, it is of crucial importance to consider the way that the topic of racism and the accusation of being a racist party are discursively managed. Given that after the Holocaust anti-racism became the generally dominant social stance, it is not surprising that Jean-Marie Le Pen as leader of the Front National, like his extreme-right colleagues in other European countries, vehemently denies adhering to racist ideologies. Le Pen strongly refutes the accusation of racism which he obviously considers the most significant hurdle blocking his acceptance into mainstream politics. A whole range of linguistic tools is used to achieve this aim: denial, disclaimers and counteraccusations. The denial strategy is combined with forceful reversing moves: 'they' are not discriminated against but 'we' are! This reversal is also applied to anti-racist legislation which is considered oppressive to the freedom of expression.

Denial, reversal and victimisation allow Le Pen to represent the Front National as the natural representative of the French people and its potential saviour in the face of
foreign occupation and repression. Yet, Le Pen has repeatedly asserted the 'inequality of races'. Reversal is also achieved through the systematic use of false analogies and comparisons, where the 'struggle' of the FN is compared to the anti-fascist struggle of the Second World War and Le Pen himself is compared to Churchill; that is, he implicitly portrays himself as national liberator who saves France. As part and parcel of the same denial strategy we also find an explicit emphasising of the fact that people from foreign backgrounds are likewise members of the National Front and/or support the Front and/or admire its leader. Boomerang and reversal statements are employed to present the FN as a victim and, more broadly, to complete a vicious discursive circle portraying ethnic French people as the true victims of racism who need to be rescued. We are not racist, we are patriots! Delegitimation of the mainstream parties and especially of their immigration policies not only sustains obvious political goals, complementing attempts to legitimise the FN's own vision, but also functions as an apparent, global concession: we have nothing against immigrants only against immigration policies!

**The Discourse Of The UDF/RPR-Coalition**

For the analysis of discourse on immigration of the French mainstream Right, Groupe de l'Union pour la Democratie Francaise (UDF) and Groupe du Rassemblement pour la République (RPR) data from the parliamentary debates on immigration and nationality that were held in 1996-1997 were used. In particular two MP's were selected to illustrate the analysis: Bernard Accoyer of the RPR and François Bayrou of the UDF.

In its common election programme entitled 'Un nouvel élan pour la France' (1997), the mainstream right UDF/RPR declares to adhere to republican humanistic values such as tolerance, brotherhood and patriotism. In particular this last value is emphasised with the formula: 'faire gagner la France, partout et toujours' (make France win, everywhere and always). The ambition of the UDF/RPR coalition is to make France the engine of Europe. The election program of UDF/RPR does not explicitly speak of immigration or (anti) racism. Only the necessity to fight against illegal immigration and illegal work is explicitly mentioned. All other domains that are important for the immigrant population are implied in general objectives such as the equality of opportunities, a school 'that favours citizenship' and social support 'for those who need it'. This general absence of a specific policy is clearly related to the strong preference of these parties for assimilationist policies. Assimilation apparently implies
inclusion. The analysis of the discourse of the right shows however that this discourse is characterised by major exclusive features.

The topics that are discussed in the parliamentary debates are obviously related to the content of the draft bills under discussion and its separate articles. Related to the content of the laws on immigration and nationality, citizenship criteria are discussed as well as residence rights, visa regimes, regularisation measures and identity checks. Moreover, and not particularly related to the content of the bills, comparative topical analysis shows relatively high figures for the following topics. French rightwing MP's often point to the need of development cooperation to prevent future migration and to integration as a policy objective for legally residing immigrants. They show to be worried about the costs of immigration and about the need to adapt to European standards (which are generally considered to be more strict). Right wing politicians often consider immigrants from a perspective of potential fraud and abuse of laws and rules. French parliamentary discourse of the right is replete with references to national political identity and traditions which are considered particular, or even superior, and of references to public opinion, mostly as a legitimating device.

Overall the discourse of the mainstream right appears to be highly rhetorical. Repetitions, rhetorical questions, hyperboles and instances of irony occur frequently. Metaphors are employed to symbolize threat and danger and the risk of loss of control or the lack of restrictions on immigration and to symbolize the easiness with which immigrants succeed in obtaining permits. Metaphors are also used to symbolize the threat of racism and right extremism. Right wing political discourse appears to be organized by a global strategy of negative other-presentation, not only of the “others” who are almost systematically derogated, directly or indirectly accused of abuse of French laws and rules and thus criminalized, but also of their supposed allies, the political left.

**Negative other-presentation**

The negative presentation of the 'Other' is frequently expressed in a discourse of systematic suspicion towards migrants. Fraud and abuse are important right wing topics in French debates on immigration and nationality over the research period. It is present in the debates on almost all issues discussed: no matter if the discussion is about a new system of visa with the obligation for the government to motivate a
refusal, or about the lodging certificate, about the introduction of a special residence permit for researchers and for artists, or about permits for reasons of personal and family life, each time the mainstream right parties evoke all sorts of possibilities of fraud and abuse thereby expressing suspicion. The same is true for discussions about French nationality for all children born in France which has a legal position for the parents as a consequence, or for discussions about marriages with immigrants which may be marriages of convenience. Proposals of the bill are considered to facilitate 'evading or abusing the rules', immigrants are supposed to enter the country 'only to profit' and new rules are seen as 'open door for abuse' or 'encouragement to white marriages' etc. etc. This systematic expression of suspicion in the larger context of a strategy of negative otherpresentation clearly has a function to justify harsh measures to restrict immigration without risking of being accused for repressive policies. Especially where negative opinions about the others are expressed, we may often find mitigating devices such as cases of actor-avoidance and the use of ‘on’ as pronoun (one) instead of ‘nous’ (we).

Delegitimation

The macro-strategy of negative other-presentation is complemented by a macro-strategy of delegitimation of the political left and its proposals for revision of draft bills (and by implication of legitimation of the policy proposals of the right). Fallacies play a crucial role in this macro-strategy. The strawman fallacy and the ad hominem fallacy are central to this strategy of delegitimation. Proposals of the left are often distorted, simplified or exaggerated to facilitate critical comments and verbal aggression. Motives, credibility, integrity and consistency of the left and its policy proposals are put into question. Fraud and abuse have a predominant position too in the reciprocal accusations of political opponents. The right wing parties accuse the left of being too lax. Their concept of society is said to be too idealistic. They are supposed to favor fraud and abuse and especially illegal immigration, which will of course lead to criminality. They are accused of wanting to open the borders, of pursuing the elimination of barriers and of provoking immigration flows, especially illegal immigration. In short, the left does not observe the republican laws according to the right. The left is thus equally derogated, ridiculed and frequently accused of harming the interests of the country and thus systematically delegitimized and represented as only motivated on ideological grounds. The left is denied legitimacy on
behalf of ‘the people’. Representatives of the right – whether they are a minority or a majority, government, or opposition - claim to be the only representatives of the French people.

Positive self-presentation

A high occurrence of a local and global strategy of positive self-presentation in particular in the debates on nationality is striking. We may say that, generally, the debates on nationality that were held in November 1997 in French Parliament present a typical and at the same time particular example of an ongoing process of construction and reconstruction of the nation/the national identity, a process in which all political actors from the extreme-right, to the mainstream right, the socialists and the left in general participate (Van der Valk 2000). A strategy of positive self-presentation in the form of national self-glorification, which several political actors of the mainstream right combine with a strategy of negative other-presentation, plays a key role in this process. On a semantic level the national singularity of France, compared to other nations, is emphasised and the superiority of the French political system underlined: as the roots of the Enlightenment, of the concept of sovereignty of the people, of the Declaration of human rights, of the modern constitutional state itself may be found in France, France must be considered a role model for all nations in the world. It has a universal vocation. This strategy is underpinned by diverse linguistic realisations of which the most remarkable are the heavily rhetorical character of speeches about nationality which reflects the strong affect with which the subject is invested, instances of personification of the République and the Nation, the frequent use of the pronoun ‘we’ (the French) and toponymical (la France) and ethnonymical characterisations (français).

The Discourse On Immigration Of The Front National And The UDF/RPR Coalition Compared

Since 20 years the issue of immigration in France has been subject to a constant process of politization which was amongst others expressed in frequent changes in legislation. The multiplication of public and political debates on the subject is also indicative of a continuous triggering of this politization process around the immigration issue (cf. Barats 1998; Bonnafous 1991). These public and political debates are moreover characterized by a growing problematization and stigmatization
of immigration and immigrants with the results that the two have become almost indissociable in the public mind. The National Front which has steadily been on the rise since the beginning of the '80s largely determined the terms of the debate with other parties, in particular the political right but also to a lesser extent left wing leaders, taking over many of the principal themes, associations and standard arguments. This study may show the discursive properties of the commonalties and differences between the right-extremist discourse and the discourse of the Right. The political discourse of both the Right and the extreme-right on immigration is highly rhetorical. Both the right and the extreme-right use strategies of positive self- and negative other-presentation, associate immigrants with problematic social phenomena and express fears about the decline of the French civilization. The discourse of the right however is not only less explicit, it is also in itself more contradictory, while the discourse of the FN is strongly and consistently rooted in a social Darwinist ideology in which attributions are traced back to 'the natural order of things' that is governed by biological laws. Evidently most striking when speaking of differences between the right and the extreme-right are the programmatic differences. While the mainstream right emphasizes humanistic values like tolerance, brotherhood and equality of opportunities the FN is oriented not only towards the normalisation of a racist discourse, but also to the institutionalisation of practices of discrimination via its policies of 'national preference'. Racism as property of FN-politics is strongly denied and reversed by the party. Although the right expresses to be worried about the threat of racism and right extremism it is in its socio-political, discursive practices however much more oriented towards delegitimation of the left than towards the delegitimation of the extreme-right. The effect being that to delimit itself from the left, the anti-immigration stances are overemphasized. This dimension of discourse brings the mainstream right closer to the extreme-right.

A survey by the daily newspaper le Monde in May 1999 shows a declining support for the Front National: from 20% ever since 1983 to a recent decrease of 11% in 1999. If this support is now declining this seems not so much due to the common efforts of mainstream politics, caught as these parties are in polarized political relations and paralyzed by opposed analyses about the political responsibility for the rise of the Front National (Van der Valk 2000). Against the background of a general improvement of social-economic conditions this may rather be related to the internal quarrels and recent split in the right-extremist movement itself. It may, last but not
least, also be related to the taking over of anti-immigrant discourse by mainstream right wing parties. Despite this, the decrease in support for the Front National by the end of the nineties is a hopeful development but, given the lack of 'cordon sanitaire' the question remains if this change is accompanied by a decline of racism and xenophobia amongst the population. As the Eurobarometer study that was held in the context of the European Year Against Racism in 1997, shows France is amongst the countries that score above the European average on the exclusion of accepted immigrants, on the exclusion of newcomers and on the extent to which ethnic newcomers are considered a threat (NB scores in Belgium, Germany and Austria were even more high). 48% of French respondents declared themselves 'very racist' or 'quite racist' (the European average was 35%; the Dutch scored 31%) (European Commission 1998; Scheepers & Coenders & Lubbers 1998). The Eurobarometer study shows amongst others that feelings of racism coexist with a strong belief in the democratic system and respect for fundamental social rights and freedom. In this respect the contradictory attitudes of the French public opinion reflect those of the mainstream right.

The Discourses On Ethnic Issues Of The Netherlands And France Compared.

Some provisional concluding remarks may be made comparing the discourses on ethnic issues of the investigated political parties in the Netherlands and France. On a more abstract level, findings from both countries and all parties show a striking correspondence with the outcomes of social psychological research on stigmatisation (Heatherton & Kleck & Hebel & Hull 2000). Difference, deviance, threat, aversion, depersonalisation and dehumanisation are central to processes of stigmatisation. Neuberg & Smith & Asher (2000: 31-62) argue that the universal tendency to stigmatise is grounded in evolutionary developed rules for effective group functioning. These rules are based on the principles of reciprocity, trust, common values and group welfare. Stigmatisation occurs when these basic principles of effective and efficient group functioning are violated. Crandall (2000: 126-150) has identified two ideologies that justify stigmatisation. The first is attributional; attributions of causality, responsibility and blame serve as justifications for stigmas. The second resides in hierarchical thinking; relations of superiority and inferiority are represented as natural, good and even unavoidable.
As my analysis shows, each of the investigated political actors, in a more or less contradictory, proper way contribute to the representation of immigrant groups, first as an out-group, second as different, or even deviant, and third as threatening. In construction this representation, the examined politicians frequently, directly or indirectly, refer to the above-mentioned rules for effective group functioning, where they blame immigrants for violating the reciprocity rule, not to be trustworthy or to lack support for common moral values. They moreover explicitly refer to ideological mechanisms that justify stigmatisation by attributions of causality, responsibility and blame upon immigrant individuals or groups without taking social conditions into account and by legitimising social hierarchies. That is, the investigated political actors, even if they do not explicitly support racist ideologies, fertilise, so to speak, the social ground for stigmatisation processes to occur.

This is not to say that differences between the extremist parties countries should be neglected. In France a rather explicit anti-immigrant discourse appears to be more common and mainstream when compared to the Netherlands. Much of the discourse of the mainstream right with its emphasis on abuse adds to a negative representation of the Other and in this respect seems rather close to the discourse of the right extremist Front National. The mainstream right is more oriented towards the delegitimation of the left than towards the delegitimation of the extreme-right. The mainstream right thus does not only fail to delegitimate the anti-immigrant discourse of the FN in the eyes of the public at large, but justifies and reinforces it by an anti-immigrant discourse of its own. In the Netherlands the CD, ostracised from public life since its early years and boycotted by public institutions and mainstream opinion, has always had only little social support. Its working class anti-immigrant discourse seems to have been swamped away by more modern forms of cultural racism based on essentialist thinking as it is represented by the examined discourse of the VVD. Anti-immigrant discourse is generally more hidden.

Thus from my findings it may prudently be hypothesised that the relative support for the extreme-right as far as discursive influences are concerned, may rather be explained not by the discourse on immigration of the extreme-right by itself, but in its relation with the discourse of the mainstream right. The discourse of the right, where a discursive cordon sanitaire is lacking, may render the anti-immigrant discourse more acceptable and thus the right extremist party, main actor articulating such discourse, more legitimate. This seems to be the case in France. In the
Netherlands, given the existing cordon sanitaire, the decreasing support for the CD may likewise be explained in relation to the mainstream right that has formulated and acquired broad social support for an anti-immigrant discourse of its own: more sophisticated, more hidden, more adapted to middle-class social cognitions. This hypothesis finds support in the fact that the adherence to racist theses amongst the public at large in both countries as the Eurobarometer study (European Commission 1998) has shown, differs less than expected, given the difference in social support for extreme-right anti-immigrant parties.

I hope that the findings of this project may offer insight into the way in which the political right and the extreme-right in both the Netherlands and France, each in its own more or less contradictory way, are involved in the discursive reproduction of a system of ethnic inequality and exclusion. Presupposing that positive examples should predominantly originate from the societal 'top' with their privileged access to public definitions of social issues, I express my hope that the results of this study may be used to develop strategies against discourses that express and thus maintain ethnic inequality and exclusion and to develop policies free from ambivalence and unintended side-effects.

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Uitgevers.


