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**The Front National at the heart of the French political scene
and the consequences for the UMP's failing strategy to win back
and remain in power**

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Political Science:

The *Front National* at the centre of the French political stage: a consequence of the UMP's losing strategy to win and stay in power

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"Earthquake"; "tidal wave"; "volcanic eruption" (1)... The French media made a beeline for the language of natural disasters to describe the *Front National*'s (FN) victory in the European elections on 25 May 2014. The reaction in the press proves that these results are a significant historic event in French political life: for the first time, a party at the far-right of the political spectrum had won an election in France.

Admittedly, 21 April 2002 may have set something of a precedent. In coming second in the presidential elections, Jean-Marie Le Pen had proved that the FN could secure high numbers of votes. However, the current situation is not at all on the same scale at that in 2002. Firstly, the electoral contexts are not alike: the FN leader's success in reaching the second round of the presidential elections could then be explained by a number of political parties putting up candidates for the first round of the elections (2). The inflated number of parties was especially unfavourable for the left, as it found itself deeply divided and was therefore unsuccessful in fielding a candidate in the second round (3). Secondly, the number of votes secured by the FN must be viewed in context. Indeed, whilst it is obvious that it was an unprecedented success for the party, it achieved a much better result in 2012: the number of votes for Jean-Marie Le Pen was lower than that garnered by his daughter, Marine Le Pen, ten years later (4), which adds weight to the argument that 2002 is far from being a zenith for the FN. Furthermore, the abstention rate seen in 2002 was much higher than in 2012, which goes some way to qualify the FN's 2002 breakthrough (5). Finally the "shock of 21 April" prompted a large-scale response not only from political parties, who put up a united front in condemning and countering the FN's success, but also from the French populace, which took to the streets in large numbers on election night and on 1 May – International Workers' Day – to protest against Le Pen's party. Conversely, the 2014 European elections met with little response from French society: on the evening when the results were announced, there were no mass demonstrations, and the national campaign organised, amongst others, by young high-school students was a failure. Moreover, while French political parties emerged from the 2002 elections stronger than ever, 2014 saw their relative collapse: the right, embodied by the *Union pour un Mouvement Populaire* (UMP) is divided and on the brink of implosion; the socialist left has suffered yet another defeat marked, in particular, by its desertion by part of its traditional support base.

If we examine the results of the 2014 European elections in detail, we cannot help but notice the FN's success. With an almost equal turn-out, the party increased its 2009 result by 400%. It came first in five of the eight major electoral districts established for the European elections. It came second in two others, behind the UMP. France's Overseas Countries and Territories were the only

district where the FN came fourth. A majority of voters in sixteen out of twenty-two regions voted for the FN, with levels over 30% in seven of these. As regards the *départements*, the FN came first in 71 of them. On a European level, France is not the only country where a far-right and/or populist party won. For the first time in its history, the United Kingdom saw a "rebel party (6)", the United Kingdom Independence Party (UKIP), win the elections (7). The latter, founded in 1993, made a significant breakthrough, adding a further 11 MEPS to its total number of representatives (24 in total). It is anti-Europe and campaigns for the United Kingdom's independence, which would lead to the UK's withdrawal from the European Union. In Denmark, the Danish People's Party was also victorious (8). The latter party is described as populist and xenophobic.

The 2014 European elections were therefore historic for the far-right on both a national and a European level. However, as regards French political life, they are a distraction: while the FN has indeed achieved impressive election results, we must remember that those results serve only to confirm the party's steady progress since 2010. Furthermore, over the last four years, the FN has achieved results which have attracted less media coverage but are nonetheless significant and even of greater interest in analysing the FN's growing influence in French national politics. Thus, as mentioned above, Marine Le Pen came third in the 2012 presidential elections with more votes than her father secured ten years earlier and against a smaller number of parties. Those elections are of greater significance for the French electorate than the European elections, as is shown in the higher voter turn-out. Equally, the 2012 parliamentary elections gave the FN two seats in the National Assembly, which had not happened since 1988. More recently, the FN won thirteen municipal councils at the 2014 municipal elections (9) and a large number of councillors (10).

This situation is all the more surprising when one considers that from 2007 to 2009, the FN was so unpopular that many observers predicted its demise. The most obvious illustration of that decline is the 2007 presidential elections: the FN won only 10.44% of the vote, a fall of 6 percentage points as compared with the first round in 2002. So what could explain this reversal of fortune?

In order to understand the rise of the FN from 2012 onwards, we must go back to its years in the wilderness and see what caused its collapse at the polls in 2007. The explanation can be found in the rise of Nicolas Sarkozy within the UMP and the campaign strategy that he and his team developed from 2004 onwards to win the 2007 presidential elections. One of that campaign's main objectives was announced by Sarkozy himself: he intended to "tackle the FN on its home turf" (11), both geographical and ideological, To achieve this aim, he stripped the Le Pen rhetoric away from the FN's favoured topics whilst building his own leadership ethos, which allowed him to present himself to his electorate as a legitimate presidential candidate and win over Le Pen voters by appearing more credible in implementing the latter's policies. This strategy worked for a time (electoral successes of 2007 and 2009) but, ironically, its long-term effect was the advances made by the FN and, on a deeper level, the party's gravitation from the fringes to the heart of the French political landscape. It also spawned the wider acceptance of the views held by the far-right, as shown by a greater outspokenness in French society. We cannot, however, ignore the part played by the FN in its own institutional legitimisation: the arrival of Marine Le Pen, in 2011, was an especially significant event for the part. Her "de-demonisation" strategy, which included a "republicanisation" of her views, accelerated the trend brought about by Sarkozy's own strategy (12).

In order to account for this scenario, we will present our findings in two parts. We will firstly show that the FN's advances are the fruit of a rhetorical convergence between each party's discourse, resulting (for the most part) from the strategic re-orientation instigated by Sarkozy's team from 2004 onwards; and, secondly, we will examine the consequences of that convergence for French political life.

## 1. Winning over the right: a rhetorical convergence resulting from the UMP's new strategy

With a personality to instigate and embody it, the new strategy put forward by the main party of France's institutional right would never have seen the light of day. Nicolas Sarkozy, a member of the "*cadets de la droite*" (13) generation, succeeded in building himself the leadership ethos necessary to impose a successful strategic reorientation. To do this, he capitalised on a troubled political context within the UMP, which allowed him to become chairman of the party; this is the key for anyone wishing to run for office. It was with a view to taking power that the *délepénisation* strategy – a difficult balance between the republican right and the far right – was formulated and succeeded in propelling its main proponent to the presidency.

### 1.1 Nicolas Sarkozy, the embodiment of the new right

Nicolas Sarkozy became leader of the UMP on 28 November 2004, during the party conference at Le Bourget. He appeared to be the only man able to ensure that the party would retain the Presidency. The first question to be asked in light of that situation is one of understanding the context in which Sarkozy succeeded in becoming leader of the party and, therefore, rallying the UMP around him, when he had been one of the most divisive personalities in the eyes of the left as well as those of his own party since his arrival at the French Ministry of the Interior in 2002.

### 1.1.1 Constructing the Sarkozy image: an uninhibited leader

In order to attain high office within the party and then secure the Presidency, Nicolas Sarkozy had, since entering the Ministry of the Interior, sought to forge himself an image as a charismatic leader. To do this, he made particular use of language.

Language is one of the elements in building the image of a leader. An ethos, constructed primarily through words, is necessary for a candidate's speech to have any force of persuasion. It is only possible for an orator to argue, convince or contradict if they have a positive self-image. Furthermore, while a politician's image is forged though his speeches, that image will decide whether a speech is well received by voters. Damon Mayaffre (14) shows that, in order to give himself an authority worthy of high office, Nicolas Sarkozy used language above all for the image that it would confer (*ethos*) and not for the logic behind the speech (*logos*). That is to say, he used words to project his own personality rather than the substance of his speech. Furthermore, it was not only a matter of putting himself in the spotlight; the Sarkozy image reflected in his speeches had to be that of a determined, authoritative person ready to volunteer his service whilst also being paternal and thus inspiring confidence as a wise man offering protection to the weak. This is expressed, inter alia, in the over-use of *je* – "I" – and *moi* – "me": ""I" takes the place of a manifesto and strips it of all meaning. "Me" (pronoun) replaces "France", the "people", or the "Republic" (nouns)" (15). The inordinate use of *on* or "it" is also a constant in Sarkozy's discourse. According to Mayaffre, it is there as a counter-balance to the *I-me* pairing and also contributes to the construction of a leadership ethos: "Everything is done in a speech for Nicolas Sarkozy's *je-moi* (I-me) to appear as the only protection against a threat made all the more worrying by the fact that it is unqualified by the use of "it" (16). What is more, the promotion of the ethos of Sarkozy as

guide is based on the forbidden and therefore on the abundance of negative formulations and turns of phrase in his speeches. He is the one who permits and prohibits, because he is responsible and vested with authority: "On the subject of authority, Sarkozy's discourse is above a discourse *of* authority: a paternal or martial authority likely to say "no", likely to say "do not…"" (17). Finally, the use of "I want" abounds in Sarkozy-speak:

*"NS's charisma is thus built through the stage management or publicity (the fact of making public) his desire to become or to be President. As the winner can be defined as he who wants to win, the President is defined as he who wants to be President. Since 2006, NS has made no apologies for his ambition: he has made it an argument in his favour [...]; once elected, that desire to be president is beyond all doubt".* (18)

While Nicolas Sarkozy presented himself as a charismatic guide, an image constructed through his specific use of language, he also wanted to be an "uninhibited" leader. This is done through specific lexical and grammatical turns of phrase, such as the recurrence of more relaxed expressions (*qui est-ce qui…*, *ça…*, *je veux pas*), which give the impression of a man of the people who speaks like the people and not like an intellectual or a technocrat (19), but also whilst laying claim to a right-wing identity.

Just as with the construction of the leadership ethos, taking on such a partisan identity is one of the bases of the strategy put in place by the UMP to appeal to FN voters. Their chosen candidate had to appear to be credible, and indeed more credible than Jean-Marie Le Pen, all whilst reassuring the FN electorate as to the content of the UMP's manifesto. This was the first time under the Fifth Republic that the leader of a dominant party, on the right of the political spectrum, so openly declared his political stance. Such determination in asserting a political identity can be explained by the generational effect: Nicolas Sarkozy is a member of the "*cadets de la droite*" – the right-wing cadets, young cadres rising through the party's ranks following the defeat of the RPR (20) at the hands of the *Parti socialiste* (PS – the French Socialist Party) in the 1981 presidential elections. This was the left's first electoral victory since the Fifth Republic's inception in 1958 and contributed to a generational renewal within the republican right fuelled by young people radicalised by the Socialists coming to power and determined to use ideas in order to vanquish the forces of the left. There was then a manifest desire on the part of those young cadres to establish their right-wing credentials and reject *en masse* the "laxity" deemed inherent to the left. This vehemence towards socialists can be seen in Sarkozy's anti-May 1968 speech. In his diatribe, he rejected the idea of a society in decline which was, according to Sarkozy, the result of the events of May 1968 and of left-wing government. Behind May 1968, he was also taking aim at the events of 1981 so it is not surprising that, in the Sarkozy's eyes, the "liquidation of the legacy of May 1968" should be synonymous with the assertion of an alternative model and, therefore, with the promotion of right-wing values.

## 1.1.2 A favourable political context

The UMP was officially born on 17 November 2002 during the party conference at Le Bourget. It was the result of the merger of the three main parties on the republican right: the Gaullists of the RPR; the liberals of the *Démocratie Libérale* (Liberal Democracy) Party; and the centrists, the majority of whom were members of the *Union Démocratique Française* (French Democratic Union). At the same conference, during which old political formations were absorbed into the new entity, the members elected their new leader: Alain Juppé. He could be considered as the *dauphin* to

Jacques Chirac, then serving his second term as President of the Republic. Juppé embodied the Gaullist trend. The UMP was thus adapted to him so as to allow him to run for office and succeed his mentor. He therefore quite naturally became leader of the UMP to await the presidential elections.

Nicolas Sarkozy's supporters began to sow discord in 2003. Their leader had been Minister of the Interior for a year by that time, a position that he used, as we have already seen, to construct his ethos as a guide able to lead a country. Tensions grew between *sarkozystes* and *chiraquiens*, each defending a very different conception of politics. This was also a generational clash between those still bearing the Gaullist standard (the *chiraquiens*) and those who felt that it had to be updated and its message overhauled (the *sarkozystes*).

Two events allowed handed victory to Nicolas Sarkozy and his supporters. Firstly, the UMP suffered crushing defeats in the 2004 regional elections, in which the Socialists seized control of twenty out of twenty-two regions. More significantly, Alain Juppé was arrested by police in July 2004 as part of the investigation into fictitious jobs at Paris City Hall and was consequently forced to resign. With no other *chiraquien* leader able to unite the factions within the UMP, Nicolas Sarkozy emerged as being the only man capable of accomplishing the task. This set of circumstances thus allowed him to outflank the once hostile Gaullist right, which found itself compelled to follow and support him. He naturally became leader of the UMP following the election on 28 November 2004, in which he won 85.09% of the vote. The margin of victory was such as to bolster his legitimacy as then he appeared to be the chosen candidate of the republican right.

## 1.2 Winning over the right and reassuring the centre: *délepénisation*

Sarkozy's team then had all the authority needed to begin the party's strategic reorientation, employing a double tactic drawn from the lessons of 2002. Nicolas Sarkozy endlessly hammered home his point, namely that the FN was a symbol of xenophobia and racism, and that it was anti-democratic. At the same time, he set about republicanising themes usually evoked by the FN. He thus embodied exactly a blend of right and far-right. This marked the beginning of the "uninhibited right" era, and Nicolas Sarkozy personified this best. Indeed, from the time of his arrival at the Ministry of the Interior in 2002, he was able to present himself as the leader in the fight against insecurity. He succeeded in taking that particular theme away from the *lepéniste* right in such a way that political rhetoric on security was no longer directly associated with an attempt to adopt far-right themes, as it had previously been in France during the 1980s. The assertion that insecurity is a right-wing issue whilst associating it with republican political discourse allowed Sarkozy to "de-lepenise" the subject, i.e. strip away associations with the Le Pen style of rhetoric. The same strategy was used in relation to illegal immigration and criminal justice policy. Sarkozy's rhetoric became even more radical from 2005 onwards, when he began his preliminary presidential campaign. He intended to take on the FN on its home turf, be that geographical or ideological. To do this, he turned to the issue of immigration law. He declared that he was going to seek out FN voters "one by one" and proved it when he adopted the following stance: "If some of them are bothered by living in France, let them leave a country that they don't like" (21). He then began advocating "selective immigration", which allowed him to distance himself from the Le Pen discourse but was only a more respectable version of the far right's own policy. The announcement, on 8 March 2007, of a Ministry of Immigration and National Identity was also part of the strategy to win the FN vote through the "republicanisation" of FN policy, a strategy that proved to be a winning one: in the first round of the 2007 presidential elections, not only did

right-wing voters stay loyal to their candidate, but Sarkozy had also won over a third of Jean-Marie Le Pen's supporters, the latter only winning 11% of the vote. Furthermore, Sarkozy won by a comfortable margin at the second round, securing 53% of the vote and allegedly gaining support from 70% of those voters who had voted for Le Pen at the first round (22). Le Pen himself had, however, called on FN voters to abstain. The same pattern repeated itself for the parliamentary elections in June of the same year. The FN came to grief and did not get beyond 5% (23) when it had hoped to win back the votes taken by the UMP. In the 2008 municipal elections, the party collapsed altogether, winning 0.93% of the vote at the first round and 0.28% at the second. The results from the 2008 cantonal elections were no better. The FN then began its spell in the wilderness; 2010 saw Jean-Marie Le Pen announce his resignation as leader while the party suffered a wave of defections and serious financial difficulties.

Nicolas Sarkozy's new strategy had won the day. Thanks to the charisma and credibility that he has built up for himself during his time as minister, President Sarkozy had won at the ballot box. The strategic reorientation he had instigated within the UMP in what was a favourable political context, had worked in such a way as to secure votes that both the right and the left had believed to be lost. He also succeeded in not frightening off the more centrist electorate, even winning votes from other sections of society by not only playing on his personality as a leader but by relying on French society's latent potential for xenophobia. The FN was defeated and did not recover after the presidential elections.

The roles were reversed three years later. The FN began to do well from the 2010 regional elections onward and continued to make gains right up until its victory in the 2014 European elections. While the Sarkozy strategy had worked in the short term, we cannot help but see that its effects were not sustainable over time. As has been shown by European research, it had a boomerang effect resulting in the trivialisation and legitimisation of far-right themes, as well as the wider acceptance of radical right-wing parties.

## 2. A new strategy, ineffective in the long run: the normalisation of the FN through the legitimisation of its themes

2010 was pivotal, with the FN's return to the French political stage and a sea-change in the French representation of immigration, authority and Islam.

The issue here is one of ascertaining the extent to which the UMP's strategy contributed to the shift of the margins in France's political arena and the recrudescence of the population's intolerance.

### 2.1 The reversal of the political spectrum: a legitimised, arbitral FN

*The only advantage of the "sarkozyste" discourse is that it legitimises our own. Our voters know that this government hasn't solved any problems and they have returned to the fold in the regional elections.* (24)

The above comment, made by French MEP Bruno Gollnisch, is far from meaningless. Indeed, if we examine the investigations conducted by European researchers into the radical right, we reach the same conclusion. According to their analysis, the adoption by a mainstream right-wing party of themes belonging more traditionally to the far right leads to the wider acceptance of far-right themes and political thought and to a shift in a country's political margins, whereby parties on the

fringes of national politics move towards the centre, thus allowing them to dominate public debate.

Joost Van Spanje and Wouter Van Der Brug measured the impact of tactics adopted by dominant parties *vis-à-vis* the radical right. They concluded that pursuing a strategy of exclusion results in extremist parties maintaining their radical stances without getting worse. Conversely, integrating themes and stances associated with the radical right into a manifesto, or even working with the radical right, results in the trivialisation or wider acceptance of far-right ideology whilst weakening the extremist party (25).

Kay Arzheimer examined the issue of whether support for far-right parties grows because the main parties do not adopt strong stances on those themes evoked by the radical right, what Arzheimer terms "the conspiracy of silence"; or whether, on the contrary, the fact that the dominant parties adopt the ideological stances of far-right parties cements support for the latter. On the basis of the results of an investigation conducted in seven European countries from 1980 to 2002, he concluded that the second hypothesis holds true: not only does it legitimise those parties but it also perpetuates them (26).

According to Joost Van Spanje, who based his findings on a study of political ideologies in Europe, the more established a far-right party becomes, the greater the contagion for other political, even left-wing, parties. This contagion is seen especially in themes that then become central to political debate (particularly those concerning security and immigration) (27).

If we combine the results from these different studies and apply them to France and the UMP, we can assert that the new strategy implemented in 2007 allowed the FN to become more widely accepted and take a position at the centre of the political stage. This would explain the party's growing successes at the ballot box. A further consequence, according to Joost Van Spanje and Wouter Van Der Brug, is the trivialisation of far-right thinking in society. In order to verify this theory, we will now turn to the annual reports published by France's *Commission nationale consultative des droits de l'Homme* (CNCDH – National Consultative Commission on Human Rights).

## 2.2 The wider acceptance of far-right themes: greater outspokenness in French society
The Commission's experts have shown that, for the first time since the creation of indexes on French representations on immigration, the curve is inverted: while French society has become more open year on year, the indicators reversed in 2012, showing a growing intolerance.

The CNCDH's 2012 report tells us that the perceptions and attitudes of French people on racism have evolved in particular. Indeed, we are witnessing a significant increase in the recriminations made against immigrants and growing criticism of Islam. The most striking fact is that this finding is not limited to right-wing voters but extends to the French population as a whole. This downward trend emerged in 2012, persisted in 2011 and became more acute in 2012. Thus, while previously we saw leaps in the level of conjectural intolerance, today we can wonder whether the conjectural has now become structural.

As regards racism, its level has admittedly remained stable as compared with 2011 but that disguises the ever more widely held view that racist acts may sometimes be justified. Furthermore,

while the percentage of people declaring themselves to be racist has remained more or less stable, the number of individuals stating that they are not racist has fallen by 5% per year. Above all, the feeling that there are too many immigrants in France has increased sharply (+10% compared to 2011 and +22% compared to 2009). It is also interesting to note that while the majority of those stating that there are too many immigrants in France are right-wing sympathisers, that feeling is less widespread amongst left-wing voters. It has thus increased by 3% amongst right-wing voters and 11% amongst left-wing voters. Moreover, the belief that in France "you don't feel at home anymore" has risen by 6 percentage points, its highest level since 1990.

Islam is also increasingly criticised, the positive view of the religion having fallen by 7% in a year. This brings with it an increased hostility towards the practices associated with Islam.

Finally, if we look now at the tolerance index, it is closer to that of 2001, showing a sharp decrease. The analysts who contributed to the report stress the fact that the phenomenon is not only unprecedented in terms of scale but also in terms of duration. Indeed, it in the first that the index has fallen in three consecutive years.

This data is especially striking as it calls into question what is known as the "ratchet effect":

*The consecutive falls in levels of tolerance had always remained higher than the minimum levels reached in periods of decline. This is how that the 2000 minimum was still higher than the 1991 level, and the 2005 minimum was higher than the 2000 one. For the first time, the 2012 minimum was lower than that in 2005.* (28)

This phenomenon is widespread amongst right-wing sympathisers, which means that it has moved even further to the right as compared with previous years. The most striking fact is that the level of intolerance has increased in French society as a whole, which shows that tensions have spread through all the groups questioned.

The FN's advances since 2010, together with the trivialisation of its thinking within French society, therefore originated in the UMP's strategic reorientation from 2004 onwards in its desire to stay in power. This innovative strategy would have been impossible without a charismatic leader able to rally his party and its voters under his banner, and was successful in the short term. However, as we have seen, its advantages were not sustainable in the long run.

The *sarkozystes*' show of force ultimately went against them and the violence of the boomerang effect threatens to smash the UMP to pieces. The party will have to rebuild and escape the noose that it willingly placed around its own neck. The main issue now is as to whether it will gravitate back towards its traditional centrist allies or continue with its drift further to the right of the political spectrum; and, above all, whether it will have time to pick itself up before the 2017 presidential elections.

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**Notes:**
(1) For example: Arianne Chemin, « *La France en éruption volcanique* », Le Monde, 26.05.2014, available at www.lemonde.fr; Alexandre Sulzer, « *Européennes : le raz-de-marée FN* », L'Express,  26.05.2014 available at www.lexpress.fr; Jean-Baptiste Garat, « *La victoire du Front national provoque un séisme politique* », Le Figaro, 26.05.2014, available at http://www.lefigaro.fr
(2) Six parties had their candidacies approved by France's Constitutional Council.
(3) The Socialist party thus found itself isolated and unable to join forces with the *Verts* (Green Party), the *Parti communiste* (Communist Party) or the *Parti radical de gauche* (Radical Left Party).
(4) In the first round of the 2002 presidential elections, Jean-Marie Le Pen garnered 16.86% of the vote, i.e. 4,804,713 votes. In the second round: 17.79% i.e. 5,525,032 votes. In the first round of the 2012 presidential elections, Marine Le Pen garnered 17.90% of the vote, i.e. 6,421,426. She therefore beat her father in terms of both percentage and the number of votes.
(5) The abstention rate in 2002 was 28.4 %, the highest in the first round of the presidential elections since the beginnings of the Fifth Republic. The same rate was 20.3% in the second round. In 2012, abstention stood at 20.5% in the first round and 19.7% in the second.
(6) This is also how UKIP leader Nigel Farage defines himself.
(7) It won 27.5% of the vote, being 14 seats in the European parliament.
(8) It won 4 seats by garnering 26.6% of the vote.
(9) The thirteen towns are not all officially FN but are at the very least part of a far-right trend. Thus the mayor of Béziers, Robert Ménard, is not a member of the FN but the latter supported him during his campaign. Jacques Bompard, mayor of Orange, left the FN in 2005 and campaigned under the banner of the *Ligue du Sud* (Southern League).

(10) 1,544 municipal councillors according to results compiled by the Ministry of the Interior.

(11) Matthias Bernard, *La guerre des droites : droite et extrême droite en France de l'affaire Dreyfus à nos jours*, Paris, Odile Jacob, 2007, p. 251

(12) This subject merits an article on its own. We may still stress that the FN implemented its own strategic re-orientation later than the UMP did. It was only when Marine Le Pen was elected party leader in 2011 that the "de-demonisation" strategy was launched with a view to normalising the party's discourse. The strategy is almost a mirror image of the UMP's, as it seeks to advocate republican principles (such as secularism) in order give the FN credibility and legitimacy in its bid for power. It wishes to appear respectable and, in order to so this, it does not intend to present itself as anti-democratic or anti-republican. However, it is also a matter, like it is for the UMP, of retaining its more radical supporters by maintaining its anti-system image and through greater professionalization achieved by recruiting and training party cadres. It is the overlap between these two strategies – that of the FN and of the UMP – which blurred the line between the parties' respective identities and discourses. Indeed, with each borrowing tactics from the other, the result is two kinds of political rhetoric that tend to muddy the ideological waters for voters.

(13) Jacques Frémontier, *Les cadets de la droite*, Paris, Le Seuil, 1984, 303 p.

(14) Damon Mayaffre, *Nicolas Sarkozy, mesure et démesure du discours* (2007-2012), Paris, Presses de la fondation nationale des sciences politiques, 2012, 368 p.

(15) Ibid., p.197.

(16) Ibid., p.104.

(17) Ibid., p.307.

(18) Ibid., p.313

(19) It should be noted on this point that Florence Haegel has highlighted, in *Les droites en fusion* (published in 2012 by *Presses Universitaires de Sciences Po*), the inferiority complex shared by UMP members *vis-à-vis* left-wing voters deemed more intelligent and cultured. We can also connect the comments made by both researchers and put forward the idea that the way in which Nicolas Sarkozy speaks is also a way for him to take "non-intellectualism" on as part of his identity and thus put an end to his supporters' inferiority complex.

(20) *Rassemblement Pour la France*

(21) Matthias Bernard, op. cit., p. 261

(22) Ibid., pp. 262-263

(23) He lost 7 percentage points as compared with the previous presidential elections.

(24) Bruno Gollnisch quoted by Jean-Baptiste Mallet, « *FN-UMP, Les liaisons dangereuses (1) – Relookage extrême* », Regards, 6 janvier 2011, available at www.regards.fr

(25) Joost Van Spanje et Wouter Van Der Brug, *The Party as Pariah : The Exclusion of Anti-Immigration Parties and its Effect on their Ideological Positions*, West European Politics, 30 (5), 2007, p. 1022-1040 in Florence Haegel, *Les droites en fusion, transformations de l'UMP*, Paris, Presses de la Fondation nationale des sciences politiques, 2012, p. 275

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