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The Persuasiveness of Western European Far-right Movement - the Case of France and the Front National

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Abstract

Social and economic issues coupled with the growing social discontentment have led to a surge in popularity of far-right movements. In France, the far-right represented by Marine Le Pen and her party, the Front National (FN) were predicted to have a fair chance of winning the 2017 election. The rebranding of Marine Le Pen's image and the strategy of persuasion used have helped her rise as a serious candidate and imposed the far-right in the French landscape. The present study offers an analysis of the strategy of persuasion used which includes an analysis of the discourse and the image of Marine Le Pen during the 2017 elections. The study employs qualitative method and is based on secondary resources, primarily speeches and social media postings. The findings of the research have shown that behind Marine Le Pen's success lies a strategy of persuasion which first started with the policy of *dédiabolisation*. This policy aimed at rebranding Marine Le Pen and the FN's image in order to create a friendly representation of the far-right and make its message acceptable. Marine Le Pen heavily relies on the use of pathos to establish her credibility and convince the public. The second part of the findings demonstrated how Marine Le Pen's narratives and the rhetoric aimed at framing issues to create an emotional response and ultimately influence the audience in her favor. This emotional response is created through the use of sensational examples, words, generalities and scapegoating.

Keywords: far-right, Marine Le Pen, political communication, rhetoric

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Introduction

The recent success of France's main far-right party, the Front National (FN) has been the center of many debates. How can a party once considered an outcast become so popular for the past five years? The FN experienced a spectacular revival under the leadership of Marine Le Pen who took over the party in 2011 and has led it to the final step of the 2017 French Presidential election (Stockemer, 2014). These elections have presented Marine Le Pen as a serious political heavyweight. Although defeated at the step of the presidency, the far-right candidate's historical success is

undeniable. Marine Le Pen beats the FN's record of the percentage of votes during a Presidential election, collecting 34 per cent of vote in 2017 against 17.9 per cent in 2012 and 17.8 per cent in 2002 (Ouest France, 2017). Furthermore, the symbolic bar of ten million voters was crossed which as a result, implements the FN as an important political force and changes the French political landscape. The elections saw the elimination of the two traditional parties, the Socialists and the Republicans during the first round which are the traditional parties usually competing for presidency since the establishment of the Fifth Republic (Ouest

France, 2017). The FN's resurgence in national politics has often been analyzed as the consequence of current events affecting the country such as terrorism, the refugee crisis, the economic crisis and popular discontentment towards the EU (Stockemer, 2016).

If the rise of the FN has often been studied as the result of external factors, less attention was directed to its communication strategy which has played an undeniable part in its growing popularity among the French population. Creating an effective communication strategy is essential for any political parties to attract voters and achieve their political goals. Motivated by the desire to establish itself as one powerful political party in France, the FN under Marine Le Pen underwent deep organizational and strategical changes known as the policy of *dédiabolisation* in order to appeal to a larger public through the rebranding of its image and its representation in the media as well as adapting its communication strategy.

Amidst all the controversies the FN has been through since its creation and the negative labels attached to its name, Marine Le Pen has successfully convinced a large part of the French public to support and trust her. By posing as the savior of the French nation and by promising to give back to French people their voice and challenge the current establishment, Marine Le Pen has rallied a huge following who will most likely support her in the upcoming elections. What can explain this turnaround?

Several reasons are behind this success story. Having been once an isolated party without many prospects, the FN has become one of the most influential parties in France today. The FN has proved how powerful images and words can be. By feeding off the tensions between the population and the Government as well as the tension between the population and the EU, the FN has presented a rhetoric with nationalistic undertones which has resonated with different fractions of society.

Marine Le Pen's slogan "In the name of the people" or "*Au nom du peuple*" in French set

the tone of her electoral campaign. The far-right candidate introduces herself as the candidate for every French citizen regardless of their origins, religion, sexual orientation or skin color. (Le Pen, 2012, April 27). The FN candidate was predicted to have a fair chance to win the presidency which has positioned her as one the most favorite candidate during the 2017 elections (Rondel, 2017).

The present research offers an analysis on the rise of far-right nationalism in France from a communication perspective. In order to better understand Marine Le Pen's success this study analyzes the following question: how has the FN constructed and communicated its rhetoric to reach its current level of popularity among the French population? The goal is to analyze the rhetoric's construction especially the guiding ideas and the narratives delivered during the 2017 Presidential elections as well as the way the FN through Marine Le Pen communicates it to the general public. The study provides an analysis of the FN's communication strategy in particular the components of its effectiveness.

Material and Methodology

The present research uses qualitative method. The sources include primarily speeches, personal blog post and social media postings which were produced by Marine Le Pen for and during the 2017 elections. In order to understand the strategy of persuasion used by the far-right candidate, the theories used are Fisher's narrative paradigm, dramatism by Burke and Aristotle's theorization of rhetoric.

This paradigm is based on the assertion that "people are storytelling animals" (Griffin, 2012). According to Fisher, human beings experience and comprehend life as a series of narratives which have a beginning and an end, conflicts and characters. (Griffin, 2012). Narration can be defined as a sequence of actions, words or deeds which have a certain meaning for the people who live, create and interpret them. The narrative paradigm assumes that human communication should be comprehended as stories. People judge stories

according to their coherence and fidelity. Coherence refers to how likely the story sounds to the listener, the consistency of the characters' acting and how the story hangs together (Griffin, 2012). Fidelity reflects the experiences of the listener. the fidelity of a story should provide good reasons to guide future actions (Griffin, 2012).

Dramatism uses different ways to convey messages. According to Burke, dramatism uses identification as "a common ground between [the] speaker and [its] audience" (Burke, 1950) thus it is used as a tool of persuasion. The substance refers to the physical characteristics of a person, the beliefs, the experiences, attitudes, occupation, personality and talents. (Griffin, 2012). Identification means that there is an overlap between the substance of the speaker and the listener, the greater this overlap, the greater the link of identification is established (Burke, 1950). Identification plays an important role in convincing people. For Burke, persuasion is the speaker's attempt to convince the audience to accept his/her view on reality. The dramatic pentad is a tool of analysis helping to understand how the speaker tries to convince an audience by using five elements of the human drama: the act, scene, agent, agency and purpose (Griffin, 2012). According to Burke, the goal of rhetoric is the purgation of guilt. The term guilt includes a vast range of feelings, going from tension to shame, anxiety or disgust (Griffin, 2012). The goal of this kind of rhetoric is to get redemption by searching for a scapegoat or by self-blaming. However, humans usually prefer accusing someone else of all their problems rather than blame themselves (Griffin, 2012). This make scapegoating the main method of redemption.

Rhetoric is defined by Aristotle as the capability in particular situation to use means of persuasion (Griffin, 2012). Therefore, the definition focuses on the speaker's choice to use specific words to have an impact on the audience. Rhetoric plays an undeniable role during elections as speakers are motivated to increase their electoral bases by convincing potential voter to choose them. The theorization

of rhetoric by Aristotle explains how persuasion is done. The function of rhetoric is the discovery of all the available means of persuasion. The use of rhetoric aims at making the truth seems more probable.

The means of persuasion can either be artistic or inartistic proofs. Artistic proofs are proofs which are not created by the speakers such as documents like letters, testimonials of witnesses, etc. Inartistic proofs are proofs created by the speaker. Aristotle defines three types of inartistic proofs: the logos (logical), pathos (emotional) and the ethos (ethical) (Griffin, 2012).

Rhetoric can be divided into five principles called the canons of rhetoric. The canon of rhetoric helps measuring the quality of a speaker. The first principle is the invention. The invention the creation of enthymemes and examples. The speaker takes inspiration of general and specialized knowledge to create arguments and a reasoning pattern. The reasoning establishes the causal link between causes, effect and motives (Griffin, 2012). The second principle is arrangement which refers to the arrangement of the arguments in a speech. The introduction has to catch the attention of the listener, establish the credibility of the speaker and the purpose of the speech. (Griffin, 2012) The third principle is the style. Aristotle particularly focused on metaphors to help the audience understand the message and also as aesthetic. (Griffin, 2012) The fourth principle is the delivery. The delivery of a speech has to be natural and persuasive. (Griffin, 2012) The last principle refers to memory. A good speaker is able to give his/her speech from memory. A speaker is able to recollect ideas and phrases from his/her mind (Griffin, 2012).

Some critics have targeted this theory of rhetoric which represents the image of a passive audience which means that speakers are able to achieve their goals as long as they analyze the audience accurately and carefully. The other critic concerns the canons of rhetoric which should add the principle of situation as the

context of a speech also influence the audience (Griffin, 2012).

Result and Discussion

Politics, especially in democratic countries such as France, is based on the ability to communicate and convince potential voters through the spoken language as well as the politician's style and self-representation in the public sphere. The aim of political communication is to successfully build trust (Charteris-Black, 2011).

Throughout the 2017 French elections, Marine Le Pen gave speeches and participated to the two official presidential debates. During these events, the far-right candidate was able to expose her program and her narratives on different issues. Social media such as Instagram, Marine Le Pen's private blog named "*Carnet d'espérances*" and Facebook were used to shape her public image.

In compliance with the "144 Presidential Engagements" published by the FN in sight of the upcoming elections, the message conveyed throughout the FN's campaign details Marine Le Pen's project for France, her engagements and electoral promises (Le Pen, 2017). This documents presents a clear overview of the far-right candidate's political objectives in five domains considered critical by the FN. Marine Le Pen's speeches during the Presidential election period were mainly based on this present document as the core of her campaign.

During her different public appearances between April 10th and May 6th 2017, dates of the official beginning and ending of the election campaign, Marine Le Pen's speeches were similar in content. Just like Donald Trump's campaign in 2016, Marine Le Pen relied on a repetitive and simple style of speech which according to observers was a strategic tool to draw the public (Bishof & Senninger, 2017). The reason lies first in the need to expose each candidate's main project for the country in a concise and precise way (Bishof & Senninger, 2017). Second, the candidates need to be consistent with their project's main line of ideas

in order for the general public and the media to identify and interpret the candidate's ideas and opinions (Bishof & Senninger, 2017).

Particularly, far-right parties have had a growing interest in simplifying the communication strategy in their campaign to appeal to the population. Knowing the ultimate goal of the far-right is to rally the support of the population by creating a separation between the people and the elite within a society, the repetitive and simple communication strategy enables these parties to increase their number of voters (Jagers & Walgrave, 2007; Mudde, 2004). By targeting the population as a whole, there is a need to adapt communication in order to reach as many people as possible to increase their electoral base support.

For persuasion to take place, there is a need to establish identification between the speaker and the audience (Burke, 1950). Voters evaluate the integrity, the morality and the honesty of a politician through the consistency between the politician's words and actions and the efficacy of the arguments presented (Charteris-Black, 2011). However, the politician's style and self-representation also plays an important part in influencing the voters. The impression politician gives to the public and the public's identification to the speaker are the premises of an effective persuasion strategy (Charteris-Black, 2011).

For Marine Le Pen, establishing a certain identification with the public has been a challenge given the reputation of the FN and her father's legacy (Matonti, 2013). During the 2017 elections, Marine Le Pen has worked on softening image. The far-right candidate introduced several symbolical changes. The first change introduced in sight of her political campaign is the decision to detach herself from her surname and to present herself as Marine. The second noticeable change is the absence of the tricolored flame, symbol of her party and the FN's name in every public display. Instead the blue rose was chosen to represent the far-right candidate. Launching Marine Le Pen's 2017 campaign without any symbols of her party

aimed at breaking with the FN's masculine and aggressive image (Matonti, 2013).

Although being a woman, Marine Le Pen has often been portrayed with very masculine traits and physical features by French media which, for example insisted on her resemblance with her father by pointing out her laugh, her mannerisms, and physical features (Matonti, 2013). This masculine image has been conveyed in different media programs. It is notably the case with TF1's program *Les Guignols*, in which Marine Le Pen is portrayed by her father's puppet wearing a blonde wig. The daughter is represented through her father's traits showing the continuity between the two characters (Matonti, 2013). As a consequence, Marine Le Pen's image is perceived as masculine, harsh, aggressive and xenophobic.

The Presidential elections were the opportunity to radically change Marine Le Pen's representation in the media. Through her use of social media, the far-right candidate has been creating a brand new image of herself, this time softer and reassuring. Her private blog *carnetsdesperances.fr* which was set up in 2016 in preparation for the 2017 elections, works towards this rebranding of Marine Le Pen's persona, insisting on her feminine and committed side as well as her representation as an enthusiastic leader of the opposition (Houchard, 2016). This work on her image is reflected through the pictures posted from 2016 to 2017. The blog displays pictures mixing intimacy, media stature and elements which accredits her position as a stateswoman (Houchard, 2016).

There is a will to humanize Marine Le Pen's character to the public's eye by showing Marine Le Pen as a regular French citizen. This humanization strategy aims at softening her very tough image. Pictures posted in her social media portray Marine Le Pen as an animal lover, as a traveler, as a working woman and someone enjoying typical activities such as drinking coffee at the bar and relaxing at home (Le Pen, n.d). It brings more proximity and authenticity to her image as people will not perceive her as a

political character. The goal is to establish identification with the general public by showing that despite being a politician, Marine Le Pen is first a regular French citizen.

Marine Le Pen's brand new image also insists on her quality as a woman, a mother and a lawyer (Le Pen, 2017, February 5). For the elections, Marine Le Pen's candidacy focused on femininity. As a woman, she states that her liberties are being restricted and other women might feel the same (Le Pen, 2017, February 5). As a mother and parent, she has the same worries as other parents concerning the future of her children, especially in a context in which insecurity is growing (Le Pen, 2017, February 5). Her social media highlights her feminine and maternal side. To illustrate this, Marine Le Pen posted several pictures of her with children. On March 24th 2017, she posted on Instagram her visit to a maternity in Chad (Le Pen, 2017, March 24). She also displays in her social media, several pictures of her young supporters (Le Pen, 2017, March 31; Le Pen, 2017, April 24). These pictures aim at representing her as a maternal figure and a figure of inspiration for the younger generations, especially for girls and young women. Her strategy targets a specific feminine public as she is the only woman candidate for the Presidential elections. She takes advantage of her gender to establish identification.

From the beginning of 2017, the observations show that Marine Le Pen has made the strategic move to completely detach herself from the FN. Her social media outlets do not expose any symbols relating to the party. Her blog, for example, is entirely depoliticized and void of any reference to the far-right. With her strategy based on the people, Marine Le Pen has to be more inclusive and appear as a non-extreme political figure. The identification strategy Marine has put in place revolves around humanizing and feminizing her image. As such, it becomes easier to convey her message, inspire trust and convince potential voters.

The goal of politics is to influence and persuade people to vote for a political candidate. The honesty, morality and integrity of a

candidate make up the principal qualities influencing the voter's decision to elect a candidate (Chateris-Black, 2011). Language is the principal means of communication through which different methods of persuasion can be deployed. In the classical tradition of rhetoric, Aristotle argues that rhetoric is based on three artistic proofs, namely ethos, logos and pathos. The observations demonstrates that Marine Le Pen relies mainly on pathos to influence her audience (Griffin, 2012). By playing with her audience's feelings, the goal is to create emotions that are receptive to the objective of her speeches. In particular, Marine Le Pen draws on the negative feeling such as fear or anger to convince the audience of the urgency of France's situation.

Taking anger as an example, Aristotle recognized that anger arises when people are unable to fulfil a need (Griffin, 2012). In order to wake up this feeling of anger, the main tactic used by the far-right candidate is to create an antagonist relationship between parties. When discussing the issue of immigration Marine Le Pen states during the public reunion held in Pageas that "immigration is expensive, it costs you a fortune because immigrants have access without any restrictions to our generous welfare system, to all government-guaranteed minimums allowances, free education, aid for social housing and even access to free public transportations" (Marine Le Pen, 2017, April 13).

In this case, Marine Le Pen compares the treatment of immigrants and French people regarding healthcare. Anger is provoked by affirming that French people who are contributing to social welfare, are not the ones enjoying the social benefits at its fullest. It causes anger because the audience feels that French nationals should be the rightful ones enjoying social welfare in their own country.

It is a typical feature of far-right ideology to view and interpret society in terms of conflict between an elite and the people. During the 2017 elections, Marine Le Pen creates this antagonist relationship between

French citizen, the Government and the EU which are constitute the elite. She is playing with pathos to generate indignation and anger in the public. From the far-right perspective, this elite is usually demonized. Marine Le Pen's speech in Marseilles on April 19th 2017 highlights the hypocrisy of the elite who is working hand in hand with the European institutions against the interest of the country and its people by, for example exposing France to all the evils by stating: "They are looking forward to the abolishment of the borders of our country, the same people who would not let the doors and windows of their house open" (Le Pen, 2017, April 19). It is a strategy which Marine Le Pen often employs in her speeches. The far-right candidate designates the French political elite as the main culprit of France's loss of sovereignty. In this particular case, Marine Le Pen points out the determinism of the elite who is trying to convince the population that the EU that is essential and the logical continuation for France by saying:

We were always told that the EU was something irreversible and lifelong like a prison sentence [...] " and "The elite wants to make us believe that the only solution is to give up France to the technocrats in Brussels. (Le Pen, 2017, April 17).

The comparison of the EU to a prison sentence is sending a clear image to the audience that the people are not free to rule their country as they want to. It is done with the aim to provoke controversy and ultimately to raise awareness of the situation which is putting the public at a disadvantage.

In her speeches, Marine Le Pen always portrays herself as the denunciator of the hypocrisy of the elite working for its own interests and benefits at the cost of the people. Denouncing hypocrisy is a strategy widely used in politics to discredit the opponent. The public in general does not like hypocritical politicians. The reason is that the public assumes that

hypocritical politician think of themselves as being more virtuous than what they truly are (Khazan, 2017). As a result, Marine Le Pen appears as a good and honest person for denouncing the unjust actions and policies taken by the French Government in accordance with its obligations towards the EU.

The use of pathos is also justified by the politic of fear pursued by Marine Le Pen during her campaign. The politic of fear which the FN is propagating throughout the campaign targets the vulnerability of French society today in order to gain popularity especially among the undecided voters (Blunden, 2004). The politic of fear pursued throughout the elections campaign has greatly influenced the narrative delivered by the FN. Therefore, the narrative is framed to match the scare campaign.

The different narratives delivered during Marine Le Pen's political campaign all follow a similar pattern which can be explained by the dramatic pentad. The stories told by the far-right candidate are always set in a context of extreme urgency, in which France and its people are threatened by, immigrants, the European Union, terrorism, etc. As such, the characters of her narratives are holding an antagonist role whereas Marine Le Pen represents herself as the denunciator and the savior of the French nation. For example, immigrants are described as dishonest people taking advantage of the French social system, fundamentalists are participating to the division of France's unity by propagating radical ideology and the EU is contributing to the growing insecurity in the country notably through the mishandling of the refugee crisis and its common policies. The way the act is played in each narrative, demonstrates how each issues are affecting negatively France and its people. Marine Le Pen starts her narratives by creating a context in which insecurity is constant on a global level before going down to the personal level by creating fear for example regarding French national identity and the unity of the country. In the fifth presidential conference given on April 11th 2017, the first part of the speech focused on terrorism and the role of

fundamentalists before slowly directing the discourse towards the need to stop the implementation of communities which is leading to the division of the country and ultimately impacts French national identity.

Marine Le Pen's narratives clearly designate the enemies thus through the process of scapegoating which enables the purgation of guilt. As explained by Burke, guilt is a catchall term for negative feelings such as anxiety, shame, disgust, etc. (Griffin, 2012). The main goal pursued by rhetoric is the purgation of guilt (Griffin, 2012). Each narrative presented to the public name an enemy as the root of France's decline.

To frame the enemy, Marine Le Pen attaches a feeling and a meaning to the main issues discussed during the 2017 elections. As an illustration, hostility is raised through the use of devil terms. When immigration is mentioned it is often followed by words such as "tragedy", "oppression", "destroyed", "grave", "misery", "dread", "becoming like a Third World country", "out of control" (Le Pen, 2017, April 17) The lexical field of words refers to affliction. It helps building this negative image. The word immigration used by the far-right candidate is regarded as a devil term due to the meaning the FN is attaching to it. The term "EU" is often followed by words such as "absurd", "utopia", "without limit", "a joke", "forcing French citizens' hands", "imposing" and "an ultra-liberal monster" (Le Pen, 2017, April 17; Le Pen, 2017, April 15) which gives the idea of an institution imposing its insane policies, and directives against the population's will.

On the other hand, god terms hold a positive connotation. The analysis shows that through the process of securitization, the term "national borders" is strongly associated with the word "protection". Other words associated with the term "national borders" include "regulation" (Le Pen, 2017, April 17) which gives the idea of order, organization and control which according to the FN is impossible to have with the open border policy, "avoiding" (Le Pen, 2017, April 15) which refers to the possibility to reduce

uncertainty and threats and “not a withdrawal” (Le Pen, 2017, April 15) meaning that putting borders back does not signify that France is isolating herself from the world. However, given the fact, that Marine Le Pen’s narrative primarily focus on negativity, devil terms are more common in her rhetoric rather than god terms.

The framing of the narrative and the language used produce an emotional effect on the listener. The feelings mainly aimed at are anger, fear and indignation. By focusing her narrative in order to produce negative feelings enables Marine Le Pen to manipulate her audience into thinking that the solution to get rid of the different enemies presented in her narratives is to elect her as the next President.

The media has played an important role in reinforcing the fidelity and the coherence of the different narratives presented by the far-right candidate. In the context of the refugee crisis, the media heavily participated to this narrative by exposing the difficulties faced by the EU at the external borders and the lack of solidarity between the members with countries refusing to alleviate the burden of peripheral states by taking in some refugees. The mishandling of the crisis has sparked a lot of criticisms and led to public discontentment. The media has greatly contributed to the negative perception of the EU and the refugee crisis by focusing on sensationalism, by failing to provide reliable and details information about the crisis and by reporting anti-migrants and anti-Muslim statements which increase public concern over safety (Greenslade, 2015). Moreover, the reporting of terrorist attacks and its links to radical Islam contributes to the growing rate of islamophobia in Europe, leading to an incomprehension and fear in France towards Islam.

An important point to mention is that narratives conveyed by Marine Le Pen during her campaign are very characteristic of the far-right meaning that these type of narratives are also used by other far-right movements thus the public has become quit familiar with far-right ideas. For example, UKIP in the United

Kingdom has polarized the question of social benefits by claiming just like the FN that immigrants are draining the social welfare system. Immigration was a key-issue which played an important role during the Brexit referendum (Ford, 2018). It has become part of the narrative that has been used by several different far-right parties especially in Western Europe to create hostility towards immigrants. Over time, this type of coverage influences the general public. this widely spread idea that immigrants are taking advantage of European social welfare. As a consequence, people are more likely to believe in narrative such as the one promoted by Marine Le Pen, as the story makes sense and reflects the reality of what is happening.

By following a strategy based on pathos, Marine Le Pen seeks arguments which can create a strong impact on the listener. In line with the narrative presented to the public, Marine Le Pen offers a strategic arrangement of her arguments which follows a deductive pattern, leading the audience to conclude that all France’s decline is created by the different enemies designated in her narratives. The strength of her argumentation lies in the examples used to illustrate her arguments. As Marine Le Pen mainly focuses her rhetoric on pathos, the examples are strategically chosen to produce an emotional effect on the audience. Often times, the examples presented to the audience are usually events which have been covered by the media. The public has a point of reference when Marine Le Pen discusses issues such as immigration or the EU. The far-right candidate relies on sensationalism to trigger an emotional response. By mentioning the example of Calais, the audience links the image of immigration to the Jungle, thus creating a negative perception towards immigration in general. Choosing to talk about Calais is strategic as the city represents the symbol of the failure of migration policy (Lévy-Abegnoli, 2017). Concerning the issue regarding France’s membership to the EU, Marine Le Pen justifies the need for France to renegotiate its

membership to the European institutions by taking the example of the Brexit.

It serves as a reassurance and proof that leaving the EU would not be detrimental to France. The Brexit in 2016 was heavily covered by the media, the Leave camp actually shared the same perspective and opinions on the EU and the question of national sovereignty as Marine Le Pen. A second example is the discussion around the question of France's unity and the presence of different cultural, ethnic and religious communities in the country. Specifically, Marine Le Pen attacks the Muslim community knowing that in France there is a clear lack of knowledge and misconceptions conveyed by the media about this community. In order to strike the mind of her audience, Marine Le Pen demonstrates how the Muslim community's culture goes against French values and beliefs. According to her, "it can't be accepted that the beating of wives is allowed. It can't be accepted that a woman is assaulted, or insulted due to her choice of clothing by someone who considers her inappropriate because of religious beliefs" (Marine Le Pen, 2017, April 11) and as such "[...] the equality between men and women must be scrupulously respected." (Le Pen, 2017, April 11). These statements reflect a negative portrayal of Islam as a religion promoting violence and the submissiveness of women which the media have been spreading in Europe. The examples chosen are striking and clashes with the French culture and Western culture in general, which view women as equal as men and as such are entitled to receive the same amount of respect. This reinforces the fear that French national identity is declining in favor of way of life coming from elsewhere. In that sense, it becomes easier to manipulate the audience by instituting fear of the other.

Furthermore, Marine Le Pen's rhetoric aimed at simplifying the message by playing with concepts and terms in order to reach a wider audience. The far-right candidate has taken advantage of the public's lack of knowledge regarding issues such as secularism or the functioning of the EU. The concepts and terms

used during her speeches do not have a proper definition and given a clear explanation. For example, often times, Marine Le Pen does not specify what kind of immigration she is targeting, legal, illegal or both. It gives rise to confusion as legal and illegal immigration are two different phenomena with different impacts which can't be dealt with the same way. In her narrative, immigration appears as a catchall phrase which gathers all other issues affecting France. She is presenting immigration as the main cause of France's economic and social troubles.

The observations also show that Marine Le Pen transforms concepts to fit her narrative. During the 2017 elections, Marine Le Pen offers a certain explanation of the secularism concept from the perspective of the prohibition to show religious belief on the public space. The 2004 law on secularism defines the concept as the separation between the Church and the State. This law guarantees that the freedom of religion for every citizen. This freedom of religion means the right to believe or not to believe in a religion (Fessard, 2017). Marine Le Pen's proposition is to ban every ostensible religious symbols in the public space. This proposition mainly targets the Islamic veil. Marine Le Pen's reasoning is that if the niqab is prohibited in the public space then all type of Islamic veil should be prohibited as well according to the concept of secularism (Fessard, 2017). However, the prohibition of the niqab was not taken based on secularism. It is a question of public order as the niqab does not enable the identification of the person by police forces on the public space. Secularism enables people to wear any type of clothing however state agents are bound by the prohibition to wear ostensible religious symbols (Fessard, 2017).

Marine Le Pen plays with the meaning and the words in order to convince the audience. It is important to know that people have little to no knowledge about this concept. It is easier to persuade and play with words as long as the message is rational. A second illustration of the simplification of concept or terms is the description of the relationship between national

sovereignty and the supranational character of the EU. The goal is to convince the public that France has lost its sovereignty. From an academic perspective today, the main debate regarding national sovereignty turns more around the transformation of this concept (Constantinesco, 2013). France and all other members are part of a hybrid institution which is not a state nor an international organization (Constantinesco, 2013). Marine Le Pen simplifies this issue by presenting it from only from the perspective that being a member of a supranational institution leads to a loss of sovereignty. It is easier to present this issue from this perspective rather than to explain how the EU actually works knowing that most people do not have precise knowledge about the subject. It allows manipulation to take place.

Marine Le Pen's rhetoric also has the tendency to present a generalization of the issues discussed during her political campaign. The interchangeability of the terms employed such as Muslims, fundamentalists and in certain cases migrants or refugee and terrorist is done deliberately to lead the audience to associate these words together. One interesting example is the following lines which are among the most memorable statements of the speech given in Paris:

The truth is that there are costs and social weakening. Behind mass immigration there is communitarianism. Behind mass immigration there is delinquency. Behind mass immigration, there is Islamism. Behind mass immigration, there is terrorism. There is this immediate annoyance, there is this immediate threat, there is the transformation of our country that you can see, there is a threat on the long run and our values of our civilization, of our traditions, of our landscape. In plain language, our identity as French people is being challenged. (Le Pen, 2017, April 17)

The strength of this part of the speech lies in its dynamic style which is easy to understand and to remember due to the repetition of words. It also establishes a direct causal link between the issues and their source. It provides answers to people as why their country is facing many challenges in simple words. Convincing people through simple yet powerful statements was the main key which seduced a large audience.

Conclusion

The 2017 Presidential has shown More than anything, Marine Le Pen has succeeded in conveying her ideas and positions to the general public and more importantly to convince her listeners which shows that since 2011 the number of French agreeing with the FN is increasing, going from 18 per cent to 33 per cent (Ouest France, 2017).

This demonstrates that the strategy put in place contributed to Marine Le Pen's popularity. The analysis show clearly that the arguments presented to support her different narratives leaned strongly on the pathos. Her rhetoric exploits the pathos to focus on the issues faced by France and the main culprits causing them. Negative feelings such as fear, indignation, the sense of insecurity and anger are targeted through the use of rhetoric. Much to Aristotle's disapproval, Marine Le Pen manipulates these destructive emotions to inspire her audience to take extreme actions such as stopping immigration, expelling people suspected of terrorism or offering the possibility to leave the EU. Emmanuel Macron, Marine Le Pen's main opponent pointed out during the second round of the debate: "[...] I am not going to tell you that you are the real heir not only of a surname [but] of a system which thrives on the anger of the French." (TF1, 2017, May 2).

Her rhetoric clearly shows her tendency to lean on the pathos especially through her repetitive and simple style, the use of generalities, the mix between concepts and her framing of the issue to fit her narrative and to create fear as well as anger based on the

assumption that if nothing is done, France and the French will be doomed. This enable the process of victimage to take place. The use of the dramatic pentad highlighted the way Marine Le Pen presented her narratives, the devil terms which contributed to increase the negative feelings in her audience as well as the arrangement or the agency of the arguments to maximize the effect on the audience. Her discourse heavily emphasizes on scapegoating as a solution to all the miseries of the French people.

Pathos is also used to build Marine Le Pen's credibility or ethos. To strengthen her ethos Marine Le Pen's narratives, focus on the misfortunes and miseries of the population, linking them to the main antagonists of her narratives such as the EU, the French Government or the fundamentalists by contrasting the message. She presents herself as the accuser, the denunciator and the potential leader for a change. The roles Marine Le Pen gives a certain representation of herself in these narrative which aims at building this image of an honest and reliable person unlike her opponents and the establishment which are demonized. It contributes to her credibility. As a result, the audience is drawn to this persona as Marine Le Pen represents the change.

Furthermore, Marine Le Pen's rhetoric plays with words and concepts to create deliberate confusion during her speeches in order to feed her narratives. The discussions about immigration and national identity have proved that this was done in order to lead the audience to make links between for example, refugees and terrorism, Muslim, radicalism and non-French. Marine Le Pen takes advantage of the lack of knowledge people might have to advance "her truth" which does not reflect reality.

Part of Marine Le Pen's success is due to the context of France today. Some critics of Aristotle have stated that a fourth component, the situation, should be added to the theory of rhetoric (Griffin, 2012). The context or the situation can have an influence over people.

Insecurity has had a fundamental role over people's perception of the the world. It goes without saying that France is facing complex social and political issues. The media have helped building and strengthening this sense of insecurity among the public. The public starts to believe that France is not safe which Marine Le Pen has taken advantage of by pushing narratives feeding off this feeling. A politician like Marine Le Pen, with her words and promises appears as a comforting figure. In this context, it becomes easier to persuade people.

Marine Le Pen has demonstrated quite convincing lines of arguments to support her narratives, using effective and sensational examples to illustrate her statements. These examples were also contributing to the pathos by generating once again fear and anger. The far-right candidate uses sensationalism by pursuing her politic of fear. The aim is to shock the listener, to create controversies in order for a message to get widespread and be talked about in the media.

Although Marine Le Pen's campaign ended with a defeat, the far right candidate has managed to beat all odds by imposing herself as a serious candidate for France's presidency. Her case reflects a global phenomenon of the radicalization of European societies which highlights a profound feeling of uneasiness among the populations. As a result, the future of Europe is questioned. Marine Le Pen's defeat does not signify the end of the far-right movement in France. On the contrary, the party's future has never seemed so bright. The FN is already turned towards the future, preparing for the 2019 European Parliament elections and the municipalities elections in 2020. There is a strong the possibility that Marine Le Pen's party will grow stronger for the 2022 Presidential elections. The far-right movement in France and in the rest of Europe should not be underestimated. It has the potential to dangerously flourish, casting a dark shadow over the future of Europe and potentially repeating history again.

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