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Protocol, image, and discourse in political leadership competition: the case of Prime Minister Lionel Jospin, 1997–2002

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Abstract

This article examines the relationship between Prime Minister Jospin and President Chirac in the period 1997 to 2002. It is concerned in particular with symbolism, discourse and protocol, and how these have mediated the political competition between Chirac and Jospin. We develop a framework of analysis with several main strands. We consider the effects of the institutions of the Fifth Republic upon the political conduct of Prime Minister and President. We observe the perceived character traits of the individuals concerned, as well as the character traits expected of the offices of President and Prime Minister. We investigate the influence of the past upon the behaviour of Chirac and Jospin in the present, both in terms of notions of regime crisis which configured the institutions in the first place, and in relation to the image of previous holders of the offices (especially Charles de Gaulle and François Mitterrand).

This article analyses Lionel Jospin over the period of his premiership, 1997–2002, in terms of ‘image’, ‘personal image’, and ‘leadership image’. Let us first, therefore, distinguish our own approach from what is usually meant by these terms in recent political studies, particularly in France. The approach adopted here has little in common with the ‘*politique spectacle*’ or ‘*l’homme cathodique*’ approaches to contemporary leadership studies, approaches which amplify the significance and importance of the contemporary media and its exigencies. Such approaches have a tendency to screen out the political, the historical, and the cultural, which are thereby lost to our understanding of political leadership and its projection, in terms of how they inform it.¹ Our approach here can initially be represented as part of the traditional one of examining the political institutions themselves (the presidency, the government, the National Assembly, the political parties), and of examining them in terms of their changing relationships with one another as they move through time.

These political relationships, and the standing of the institutions, are themselves informed by public opinion and/or 'public opinion', that is, a set of views having influence (opinion), and an imagined set of views ('opinion') (imagined as) having influence in its own right. This complex relationship is itself informed by 'deeper' structures: 'long waves' of economic change, social relations, social cleavages, economic relations and phenomena, and other socio-economic structures. With some modifications we could see this model as pertaining to all comparable regimes: a series of historically and culturally fashioned institutions and actors moving through time (and political exchanges) in shifting and mediated relationships towards a decisive political campaign and final 'sprint' to the 'finish' (this being the presidential election in the context of an active party system, in the French case).

The situation in France is, however, different from comparable regimes in two decisive, and related, ways. The first is that the executive is divided into two highly personalised and, in the case of 1997–2002, antagonistic, political *sites*: the presidency (and President) and premiership (and Prime Minister). Their relationship to one another, to the other institutions, and to 'opinion' directly influences the shifting model as it moves towards the presidential election. The second and related point is that the perceived personalities, public comportment and political image of the two main office-holders, Jacques Chirac and Lionel Jospin, play a significant role in political developments, and an increasingly formative one as the political timetable moves towards the presidential elections. The images of Chirac and Jospin are also mediated by the emergence of other presidential candidates and their relationship to the two main contenders and by the impact of increasingly high-profile opinion polls, themselves becoming a formative element in the overall model, and by the treatment of the election campaign by the media more generally.

For the purposes of analysis here we shall take image to mean the publicly perceived character, character traits, and style of a political personality, whether strategically deployed or simply held by opinion as being true (usually it is a combination). We can add that the image may or may not correspond to the actual character of the political persona involved, but that it is held as being correspondent. In relation to Lionel Jospin, we can identify three aspects or types of image.

Personal image

For a politician of national stature, Jospin has had more than the average number of photographs and clips of him displayed in newspapers and magazines, and footage on television, where he looked what one might call gruff, unsmiling, or vexed. For all politicians there are 'bad photos', but, unfortunately, such an image seemed to capture a persona widely believed to correspond to Lionel Jospin; dour, grumpy, rather cold, prone to temper and exasperation ('austere'). These traits were associated with Lionel Jospin for a long time within his party, the Parti socialiste (PS), and it was his 1995 presidential campaign and subsequent leadership status which went a long way to transform this image within his immediate constituency, success bringing popularity in its wake. But the same image change was not carried forward to the wider constituency after 1997, and remained the popular view of his character.

We shall come below to the political significance of such 'perceived character', and of the accompanying traits of honesty and integrity which were also involved in this perceived 'character', and which mitigated the negative effects.

Leadership image (as Prime Minister)

This is the area of inquiry that is best known, and comparable to, say, an analysis of the UK Prime Minister, Tony Blair, as leader, and susceptible to the classic kinds of leadership studies (as broker, fixer, inspirational leader, etc.).² Here one can appraise Lionel Jospin—and in fact he came out extremely positively—against a range of criteria: did he display competence, was he in 'control' of his government, his party, partners, was he 'in touch', was he firm or steadfast in crisis? And so on. These criteria implied others; *vis-à-vis* his handling of his own party, his alliance partners, and journalists, his leadership over time, his competence in terms of government appointments (and dismissals/resignations), and the effect upon all of these of his television and other appearances, his 'art' of leadership, his perceived 'performance'. It is perhaps his longer TV interviews,³ and other declarations (on the steps of Matignon, for example, during the 'petrol crisis' of September 2000) that were not his strongest points, and where elements of his personal image, namely character traits, negatively informed his perceived leadership image. Again, we shall come below to the possible political effects of this. However, according to most frameworks of analysis, Jospin's image as Prime Minister, federator and leader of the Left remained very strong throughout the legislature.

Image in presidential context

The leadership image of Lionel Jospin was infinitely more complex and problematic than, say, Tony Blair's, because of his relationship, and the perceived relationship of his political persona, to that of the President. In fact, no comparable leader had such a situation to face, and it is because of this possibly unique situation which brings the politics of 'personality' so clearly to the fore in France. The defining characteristic of such politics is its relational character; that is to say, that the projection, development and, ultimately, fortune of Jospin's leadership image was in a dialectical relationship to Jacques Chirac's, and it was here that (perceived) character traits would take on particular significance. The reasons for this situation are both institutional (i.e. the constitutional configuration of the Fifth Republic), and historical/cultural (the French political tradition, the nature of the Fifth Republic's establishment). Let us look at how we might understand these reasons more systematically, in order to appraise the political significance of image. In order to do so we have (as elsewhere)⁴ used Kriesi's 'political opportunity structure' model.⁵

Essentially, Kriesi's model describes how new social movements (NSMs) try to attain political goals. Their activity is conditioned by a set of formal institutions (parliament, for example), but also by a set of informal procedures (e.g. ways of doing things, cultural and historically-informed political comportment), and that it is these two in configuration which make up a national setting for political action, the

‘configuration of power’.

Kriesi’s model was not designed to understand political competition between leaders, but to compare the conditions of political action for NSMs (such as the Peace Movement or the Women’s Movement). What draws us to the model is its preoccupation with the specific national conditions, both institutional and cultural, of political action: for example, whether a state is ‘strong’ or ‘weak’, whether it is ‘open’ or ‘closed’, whether there is a tradition of corporatist relations or of adversarial conflict, and so on. We are less interested here in Kriesi’s own use of this finding (in fact, France is seen as possessing a ‘strong’ and ‘closed’ state) than in a radical widening of his terms of reference. It is clear, from all the arguments about ‘l’exception française’, that France is different in its politics from many comparable states; that it has some very specific conditions; that, for example, not only the first set of Kriesi’s terms, the formal institutions—with the semi-presidential, semi-prime-ministerial regime—makes France so singular, but also the second, wherein the ‘weight of tradition’ is formative of political comportment. Kriesi’s ‘informal procedures’ in fact haul into the French polity a range of features of great significance.

By insisting upon the salience of the second set of qualities, and making them explicit in the French case, we can use his model to characterise all political competition, not just that of NSMs. We can treat, for the purposes of analysis, the whole regime as an opportunity structure, and one in which the informal has a significant impact. It is not simply the fact of a directly-elected presidency (the formal institution) which is of interest to us, but also issues such as the tradition of leadership in French political culture, the dramatic and highly personalised origin of the Fifth Republic’s founding, the subsequent personalisation of the whole regime and its party system, and so on.

If we go back to the beginning of the present regime in 1958, we may say that de Gaulle’s style of leadership was not new in 1958, it was simply brought into the mainstream. It was a heroic, dramatic and personalised form of leadership, which depended upon a doctrine of exemplary and visionary leadership on the one hand, and ‘recognition’ of the legitimacy of such by followers on the other. It brought into the Fifth Republic a romantic view of leadership that had lain, for the most part, outside republicanism. *The Fifth Republic saw the personalisation of the institutional and the institutionalisation of the personal.*

The one person truly to understand this aspect of Gaullism (apart from de Gaulle) was Jospin’s predecessor as leader of the Left, François Mitterrand. What appeared to be Mitterrand’s Damascene conversion to socialism,⁶ was in fact a conversion to the real springs of the Fifth Republic: the appropriation of socialism as a personalised ‘voice’ by a perceived exemplary leader. This was Jospin’s real heritage from Mitterrand, and from the Fifth Republic: to elaborate a vision and find a voice that met these demands while being ‘original’ and drawn from a relationship to France and the French. We could set against this, however, the idea that the dramatic origins of the Fifth Republic are now over, or else well in the background, and that ‘normal service’ has been resumed. The giants, de Gaulle and Mitterrand, have been replaced by the more human-scale Chirac and Jospin. ‘Drama’ and ‘crisis’ have not

disappeared from the polity, but have moved further into the background, though they remain resources at the level of discourse, and, when used with art and discretion, remain powerful political resources. As regards the personae themselves, prevailing political conditions 'call for' less heroic characters than de Gaulle. Nevertheless, although drama has diminished significantly, many of the conditions of political exchange within the Fifth Republic—and this is the essential point regarding the republic itself, and the political scope it offers—remain the same. The institutional configuration as regards the presidency and the personalisation of leadership and leadership image remain (and are not even the exclusive property of the main contenders for power). Personalisation and the dramatisation of political discourse remain resources within the opportunity structure of the regime, making political strategy infinitely more complex and difficult than in comparable polities, and, of course, infinitely more interesting.

Let us scrutinise Jospin's image in this framework. A first thing to note is that the relational nature of leadership politics in the Fifth Republic, and particularly the 'cohabitation' Fifth Republic, means that the determining factor or framework of Jospin's image was not himself or the PS, or even his relationship to Mitterrand's image, or to the PS, or to Trotskyism, but to Chirac and Chirac's political persona. The question was not 'Is he a "good" Prime Minister?', although to prosper he had to be, but 'Is he potentially a good President and more attractive as such than Chirac?' And in terms of 'attraction', straightforward popularity, this is where our original distinction—which we considered possibly of little consequence—actually applies forcefully: Jospin's perceived character—austere, distant—as against Chirac's furious, hand-shaking jollity. Which type was the more 'attractive'? Each persona was partly defined in terms of the other one. Moreover, during the 2002 election campaigns, character traits were replacing not only notions of political proposals but also questions of ideology and doctrine.

We should perhaps mention the resilience of Chirac's image in terms of public popularity between 1997 and 2002, and therefore the obstacle Jospin was faced with throughout his legislature. Within weeks of Chirac's election to the presidency in 1995, his popularity began to fall. His government (with Alain Juppé as Prime Minister) was extremely unpopular. In 1997, he lost a hefty majority in a quite unnecessary parliamentary dissolution, and faced five years of nothing much to do as the President of a new plural-left majority. In 1999 and 2000 the scandals concerning money laundering, electoral fraud and a range of corrupt practices when he was Mayor of Paris (1977–1995) also emerged one after the other. He faced the indignity of being brought before the courts for all this, either while President or else after he stepped down. As regards policies themselves, after 1997 he was responsible for virtually none (some remained intact from the Juppé government), and on issues such as the reform of the presidential term (from seven to five years) he was rarely in control of strategy. As for his political base, his own party (the RPR) was, after 1997, on the verge of either rebellion or implosion. The questions to be asked in terms of our analysis are, therefore: How was it, from 1998 onwards, that the President's popularity seemed to overcome difficulties, and remain buoyant, always by at least two percentage points and sometimes much more, ahead of his prime-ministerial

rival? What does this tell us about the nature and mediation of leadership (at least in the pre-campaign period)?⁷

There are in this area in France, two main types of opinion poll taken regularly and published in the press. One concerns the President and Prime Minister's separate popularity, along the lines of: 'Is so and so doing a good job?' On this kind of poll, both men generally scored well, with Chirac nevertheless scoring better (in many ways, they were linked to each other through shared approval of their co-management of the nation). The second is a competitive poll of the type: 'Who would you vote for in a presidential election?' The general conclusion was invariably that 'Jacques Chirac l'emporterait ...', usually by between two and four percentage points.

Within the constraints of an imposed public friendship and cooperation, particularly in foreign affairs and on the international stage,⁸ the relationship throughout the legislature took on a gradually deteriorating civility (we shall see below the tones this took). At times, the growing incivility was so subtle that it went unnoticed by the general public. The task for Lionel Jospin, however, was threefold, and always about image, about appropriate discursive register, and, most problematic of all, had become almost always reactive. Jospin faced three challenges: to counter a continual condescension on the part of the President, to counter criticism of his government, and to project himself as *présidentiable* without incurring the accusation of insubordination or breaking the protocol of hierarchy within the Fifth Republic. Most of these moves and manoeuvres in the Fifth Republic took the form (outside the closed doors of presidential and prime-ministerial advisors cursing at and fuming about one another)⁹ of 'événements médiatiques'. For Jospin, almost all were related to the need to maintain or promote his own public standing while quietly hoping for, if not encouraging, the tarnishing of Chirac's. Jospin could hope, at best, for only small victories in the media.

An early attempt by Lionel Jospin to break into the 'presidential' discursive arena occupied by Chirac was his interview 'La Nouvelle France qui se dessine', published in the *Journal du dimanche* of New Year's Eve 2000–2001. This interview was published just before the President's own regular national television broadcast wishing the country well for the New Year. Chirac's own broadcast was entitled 'Une année utile', and was an act of condescension towards his government, suggesting that it may have been wasting time, and might do so again. Chirac urged his government to put the country rather than lesser ambitions first. We can see how such a discursive configuration of condescension-reaction (a direct emanation of the institutional configuration) made prime-ministerial self-projection very difficult, and how proactive/reactive the two had become. Here, the question of the personal image/character of the protagonists once again became important in that, in Jospin's case, provoking his public irritation and anger became seemingly quite easy and negative for his image, while the President himself seemed able to remain friendly, unruffled and, when accused of inappropriate behaviour, ingenuous.

More than the President, whose prominent supporters no longer enjoyed national coverage (and who from Juppé, through Séguin, Sarkozy, Alliot-Marie, Pasqua, and Tiberi had suffered various political defeats and failed to capture any political

advantage after the 1997 defeat), Jospin's ministers were able to defend him against attacks upon his government. However, Chirac's much higher profile than theirs meant that his advantage was often assured, particularly as he used his presidential function as his main means of condescending criticism. He even used the annual and eminently presidential 14 July interviews to criticise the government, as we have seen. Invariably, and we shall look at this question of tone and register below, the 14 July interview, like his New Year's Eve broadcasts, always took the form of the leader admonishing his subordinates for lack of energy or wisdom, or commitment.¹⁰ Immediate responses from government and the PS always followed (in 2001, for example, Guigou, Vaillant, Lebranchu, Hollande). In response to Chirac's remarks, Jospin's supporters attempted to respond with counter-criticism that Chirac was abusing presidential authority, by using a national occasion for personal or partisan purpose. We can see, however, that the criticisms by the President, however unjustified, were, by definition and in tone, presidential and on a national scale, and the counter-criticism barely an echo of the nationally televised admonition. What about Jospin's own 'national' response? The premier gave two TV interviews of substantial length in 2000, but his most effective main 'arena' was the National Assembly. His TV performances were either poor (a man angry, affronted, or curt—with the President, with strikers, or with the journalists themselves), or else average (on TV his perceived 'honesty' was his main positive quality). Jospin's many declarations on the steps of Matignon compounded his angry image.

We have argued elsewhere that one of the main disadvantages that Lionel Jospin faced was the perpetual appropriation by the President of 'European' or 'international' discourse.¹¹ A further problem was that on the occasions where Lionel Jospin penetrated to the 'international statesman' level of image and discourse, he became vulnerable either to accusations of inexperience, or of acting beyond his role. One of the most startling incidents involved his being manhandled and showered with stones—one cut him on the head—in Palestine in February 2000. After such an unsuccessful foray by Jospin into the presidential sphere, Chirac as the President was able to say publicly that he wished to see him on his return, to explain this diplomatic disaster. The hierarchy of institutions was reaffirmed.

We can see from this brief overview that there was operating a complex, if not subtle, interplay between image and personality. The respective generic images conferred by office of the President and Prime Minister gave the former ascendancy over the latter in terms of status and protocol. Moreover, the personal traits, or perceived traits, of each man, and their strategic use and abuse, were indelibly inter-related with the offices they occupied. As incumbent President, Chirac was able to appear more presidential, while Jospin had to struggle to impose a presidential personality. A final point is to identify another prime ministerial disadvantage, and which is related to this notion of generic style, namely, that even when successful in his 'international' discourse, Jospin was pushed by protocol to enunciate the discourse, style, and register, already used by the President.¹²

In the area of protocol and discourse, and the manner in which these relate to the offices or institutions of the presidency and the premiership, we can add that it is almost destabilising of the regime itself to have an inversion of respective popularity,

just as it is difficult to interfere with a comportment that has become accepted practice. In fact, the Fifth Republic's rationale (however illogical the dyarchy itself may in fact be) is based upon such convention. Only at the beginning of each 'co-habitation'—in 1986, 1993, and 1997—did prime-ministerial popularity rival or overtake that of the President. The rest of the time, it is the *sine qua non* of the Republic, in terms of approval of the regime, and it is in this that the image of an individual is structurally part of the office s/he holds; that, quite simply, the President is the President, and the Prime Minister a subordinate.

The relationship persona-office took on its full expression—in France as elsewhere—after the terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001 in the US. At this moment, political leadership overtly displayed or enjoyed some of its protective parental symbolism, with both the President and the Prime Minister's popularity rising dramatically. What is perhaps more significant is that it was the President's which rose the most, to 74 per cent (of 'jugements positifs') as against Jospin's 63 per cent. A further and related feature of interest here is that Jospin's popularity also—as well as rising less dramatically—usually tended to fall more dramatically, perhaps in relation to the extent that the symbolic is more associated with the President, the 'real' more with the Prime Minister, so that during the strikes and demonstrations by the police and *gendarmerie* in November 2001, for example, Jospin's popularity fell a full 8 per cent, Chirac's by only 4 per cent.¹³

Conclusion

We can make three concluding remarks regarding Jospin's image (particularly *vis-à-vis* Chirac), and a more general concluding remark regarding leadership image in the Fifth Republic.

First, from our analysis, it is clear that the political persona and image of the Prime Minister are at a systemic disadvantage *vis-à-vis* the presidency. Discursively, the 'higher' discourse of international relations, European integration, and France in the world falls more often than not to the President. In instances where Lionel Jospin did achieve such a discursive register, usually it was simply to copy presidential discourse.¹⁴ In spite of Jospin's historic success as leader of a left-wing government coming to the end of a legislature intact, and still popular by any predecessor's standards, and still effective in nearly all areas of policy, by the end of 2001 he had still not caught up with the President in popularity. We might add that throughout the legislature, moreover, Chirac's daily agenda could be compared to that of a presidential campaign, once he had overcome the sense of defeat in 1997.

Second, we can ask the question, in such a structurally unequal situation, what was there, in fact, to win in the short term? Nearly everything remained at the level of the 'événement médiatique'¹⁵—small victories over press headlines, or photo opportunities—which, in fact, quite often threatened to descend into Laurel and Hardy-style (symbolic) pushing and shoving; and racing around the country trying to steal headlines from one another.¹⁶

Interestingly, the deployment of emotions available to the two men in terms of the emotional content of their image, because of the two constraining factors outlined

above (imposed goodwill and being able only to undermine each other surreptitiously), was extremely limited. For Chirac, there was the general smiling friendliness he always displayed, in addition to the contrasting Head-of-State style. For Jospin, there was a displaying of 'competence', plus the notion of 'honesty' that he had always enjoyed in the eyes of the French, but these were often accompanied by veiled annoyance and irritation, particularly in relation to the President. Regarding *each other*, the range was extremely limited for Jospin; in reaction to overt or veiled criticism, or else the capturing of headlines by Chirac, Jospin's only positive response could be that he was too busy to worry about the grand symbolic discourses, and simply imply that these were empty rhetoric, in contrast to his own 'real' work.

The third concluding remark concerning image is to note, almost in contrast to everything we have been saying, the clearly record-breaking positive image of Lionel Jospin over a full five years as a competent Prime Minister. No Prime Minister had ever achieved such a durable presence since Pompidou between 1962 and 1968. No left-wing government had ever achieved—remotely—such coherence and stability. And in many areas, particularly as regards the economy and unemployment, Jospin's 1997–2002 government compared well with any in the history of modern France.

However, the scale of Chirac's continuing popularity, in spite of a range of reasons for its decline, from his relative political irrelevance after 1997, through all his travails concerning corruption in the Hotel de Ville when he was Mayor of Paris, raises questions of the first importance regarding leadership image in the Fifth Republic, for one has to concede that the President's public popularity was a quite remarkable phenomenon, given all we have said. This brings us to our fourth and more theoretical point concerning political image, persona, and character.

Perhaps in spite of the institutional configuration and distribution of political forces, straight personal image, which we identified at the beginning of this article, is in fact much more significant than is generally assumed; that perhaps Chirac was popular quite simply because, according to a general appraisal of French 'character', he was 'sympa',¹⁷ while Jospin, austere and pedagogical, was not.¹⁸ If this is the case, then, it raises questions about the nature of the Fifth Republic, and leadership within it. Traditionally, the view has been that a Gaullian or Mitterrandian style was most appropriate to presidential leadership in the Fifth Republic. With the kind of sympathy/empathy/tolerance displayed towards Chirac, and his own clear lack of a grand heroic style, the question is raised as to whether the underlying architecture of leadership image in the Fifth Republic has changed with time. Let us return to the conceptual framework we outlined earlier, and examine again the notion of the 'configuration of power', and the relation of the formal to the informal. We can see that there have been shifts in the tone and the register of political discourse in the contemporary Fifth Republic, and that the nature of these shifts manifests itself across register, across offices and institutions, and across personalities, whether mainstream or not.¹⁹ What remains constant, however, is the personalisation of image and discourse themselves, as political resources within the power configuration of the Fifth Republic. It is not that leadership in the Fifth Republic must be Gaullist or *gaullien*, but that it must be personalised, and, to be successful, must be in a relation-

ship to French political culture (and all that this means), on the one hand, and to the institutions, in all their relational complexity, on the other.²⁰

The purpose of this article is in no way to suggest that certain tactics and strategies, adopted or not adopted, directly inform success or setback in elections. One cannot read off from the findings of an article such as this who would go on to win the elections in spring 2002. There are too many other factors needing consideration, and which are the subject of other articles in this special issue. Rather, it demonstrates that institutions, and political personality and personae are factors in political competition that should be taken more into account in political analysis.

Notes and references

1. SCHWARTZENBERG, R.-G., *L'État-Spectacle* (Seuil, 1978); COTTERET, J.-M., *Gouverner, c'est paraître* (PUF, 1997).
2. See WILLIAMS, P.M., 'Changing styles of Labour leadership', in D. KAVANAGH (ed.), *The Politics of the Labour Party* (Allen and Unwin, 1982).
3. See, for example, 'Questions ouvertes', *France 2* (5 December 2001).
4. GAFFNEY, J., 'A theory of French politics', American Political Science Association conference, San Francisco (September 2001).
5. KRIESI, H., 'The political opportunity structure of new social movements: its impact on their mobilisation', in J. CRAIG JENKINS and B. KLANDERMANS (eds), *The Politics of Social Protest* (UCL Press, 1995).
6. MITTERRAND, F., *Ma part de vérité* (Fayard, 1969).
7. See DOMENACH, N. and SZAFRAN, M., *Le Miraculé* (Plon, 2000).
8. See GAFFNEY, J., 'Governing France: an institutionalist and cultural perspective', American Political Science Association conference, Washington (September 2000).
9. According to Carton, Chirac and Jospin's closest aides, Dominique de Villepin and Olivier Schrameck, perhaps in order that even disagreement could be properly expressed, themselves practised good and affable communication. See CARTON, D., *Cohabitation, intrigues et confidences* (Albin Michel, 2000).
10. Each of these can be found verbatim in *Le Monde* the day following the broadcasts/interviews.
11. GAFFNEY, 'Governing France'.
12. This protocol was imposed during the first 'cohabitation' of 1986–1988.
13. Other big drops in Lionel Jospin's popularity in the opinion polls took place in September 2000 (over the 'petrol crisis', his score fell by 10 per cent), and throughout the second half of 2001 as the economy began to slow.
14. This is an insurmountable problem: to the extent that presidential and other discourses are in some sense generic, having acquired certain constant qualities over time, usurping a discourse means simply being seen to copy it.
15. By the end of 2001, Alain Juppé and Martine Aubry had become—as it were—the 'seconds', to use a duelling term, of Chirac and Jospin respectively. And the question had also been raised as to whether Jospin would appoint a non-official 'interim' leader, such as Fabius, for the duration of the official campaign itself.
16. There is a plethora of stories of the two teams trying to outwit each other: each man hurrying to a photo opportunity whenever there was a crisis, such as storm damage or flooding; Chirac 'stealing' the theme of ecology from the Left; Lionel Jospin being subjected to a pro-Chirac rally on one occasion; and other incidents, such as Chirac using Jospin's notes, or else deliberately leaving the Prime Minister in Toulouse airport in order to catch the cameras alone at the time of the Toulouse factory explosion in October 2001, and so on.
17. This is an abbreviation of the French word 'sympathique' which, when applied to someone's personality, is difficult to translate as it is rooted in its cultural setting: 'nice guy', 'he's all right' are approximate translations.

18. It became the stuff of editorials that Jospin's main problem was his own personality; *see*, for example, the *Le Monde* editor J.-M. Colombani's remark that 'the wall' that Lionel Jospin was up against was himself; *Le Monde* (29 août 2001).
19. Two illustrative examples of marginal political figures who have used the Fifth Republic's norms, conventions, and 'informal procedures' in this way in order to create rallies of opinion around themselves as exemplary leadership figures are Jean-Marie Le Pen, and, in the run-up to the 2002 presidential elections, Jean-Pierre Chevènement.
20. A good illustration of how complex this whole relationship of leadership is to culture, protocol, image and discourse, is the disastrous premiership of France's first woman Prime Minister, Edith Cresson. *See* WILCOX, L., 'Edith Cresson: victim of her own image', in H. DRAKE and J. GAFFNEY (eds), *The Language of Leadership in Contemporary France* (Dartmouth, 1996), pp. 79–105.