

**The Exclusion of Women from the World of Politics:
The Representation of Female Politicians Running
for the Highest Office in the Fifth French Republic**

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This is a translation of my PhD thesis which was originally published in French in October 2015 with the title “L’Exclusion des femmes de la vie politique : la représentation des femmes politiques en tant que candidates à la magistrature suprême dans la Cinquième République”.

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ABSTRACT

The concept of Double Binds as applicable to women, particularly those in politics, was first raised in 1995 by Kathleen Hall Jamieson in *Beyond the Double Bind*. Work has continued in this area and, in 2010, *Cracking the Highest Glass Ceiling*, edited by Rainbow Murray, was published. This work expanded on the issues raised by Jamieson and focussed on a range of female leaders around the world, including Angela Merkel and Hillary Rodham Clinton. It nominated six double binds that were considered to impact on women who sought high political office.

Due to restraints on the length of the thesis, only three of the double binds proposed have been examined. These have been selected by virtue of their perceived importance in relation to the female political figures examined. The double binds examined in the thesis are: Too Masculine or Too Feminine; Experienced or Symbol of Change; and Associated with a Prominent Male or Demonstration of Independence.

The six females who are examined in this thesis are: Edith Cresson, Simone Veil, Michèle Alliot-Marie, Ségolène Royal, Martine Aubry and Marine Le Pen. Each of these women has featured prominently in the French political system, with Royal, Aubry and Le Pen all having sought to contest the 2012 French Presidential election.

The approach undertaken has been to examine a wide range of books, journal articles and newspaper articles to determine how each of the three double binds has impacted on the six females. While each female has been individually assessed, conclusions relating to the six women as a whole have also been made.

The objective of this thesis has been to examine the private and political lives of the six women to determine if existing theory on double binds is applicable to each of them. Of particular interest is the role that a prominent male, be they husband, father or mentor, has in the advancement of their careers as this is an area where little research has been done to date.

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Introduction

In 2007 Ségolène Royal was the French Socialist Party candidate for the Presidential election. For a moment, one dared to think that a female was going to finally become President of the French Republic. Although Nicolas Sarkozy beat her in the second round, the arrival of Royal created much reaction in the media and among the general public. Suddenly, one started to believe that the glass ceiling which limited women was about to be broken.

If we examine the history of the participation of women in political life we observe that, with respect to women of neighbouring countries, French women were well behind in the fight for the right to vote. Here are some examples of European countries who gave women the right to vote before France: Finland (1906), Norway (1913), Denmark (1915), Poland (1917), Germany (1918), Austria and Holland (1919), Sweden (1921) and Portugal and Spain (1931). It was only in 1944 that French women obtained the right to vote.

In 1955 Maurice Duverger launched, with his book *La Participation des femmes à la vie politique*, the debate on the role of women in politics.¹ This work examined the way in which women participated in political life in four European countries, including France, either in presenting for election or exercising the functions as a member of the government. Duverger confirmed that there was a large disparity

¹ Maurice Duverger, *La Participation des femmes à la vie politique*, New York: UNESCO, 1955.

between their participation in elections and their presence in the executive of the government. According to Duverger,

with respect to the government ... political participation by women is very minimal and it reduces significantly as one gets closer to the inner circle².

Many years after the appearance of Duverger's book, this situation of non-participation continues to persist for women politicians.

Parity

It was in October 1999 that the UMP government presented "The Proposition of Law seeking to install a true parity between men and women in political life" to the National Assembly. In her preliminary remarks Marie-Jo Zimmermann, UMP Member of Parliament, notes: "today our country suffers from a major delay in the area of female participation in political life"³. The Parity Law was promulgated in 2000. Henceforth, for municipal and regional elections, strict rules were in place to ensure that parity was enforced in the compilation of electoral lists. However, in the national elections, which involve single members rather than lists, this rule is not rigorously applied and the political parties can choose to pay a fine if they do not conform. Some writers, such as Sineau (2011 and 2006), Le Feuvre (2008), Achin et al. (2007), Bereni and Lépinard (2004), and Dulong and Lévêque (2002), have conducted

² Maurice Duverger, *La Participation des femmes à la vie politique*, New York: UNESCO, 1955, p. 126.

³ Marie-Jo Zimmerman, Introductory speech for the Proposition of Law No 1850 in the National Assembly 13 October 1999. UMP: Union for a Popular Movement, party of the right. Translations from French to English in this thesis have been done by the author.

evaluations of progress in this domain since the promulgation of the law. Even if their results are mixed, they are in agreement that there is still work to be done before parity operates effectively.

With regard to the positive side of the legislation, in 2006 Mariette Sineau, a researcher at Sciences Po and a prolific writer, notes in her article “Feminisation, Political Crisis and Change: The French Case” that in the municipal elections of 2001 and the regional elections of 2004 there was “a process of feminisation without precedent”⁴. In 2006 also, Katherine A. Opello publishes *Gender Quotas, Parity Reform, and Political Parties in France*. This book exposes the reasons as to why men and women voted for the parity legislation and examines the results of the elections of 2002 and 2004. Among her conclusions, Opello notes that women have benefited more from local elections than the national ones⁵. In 2010 Rainbow Murray observes that “at each election since the introduction of the law on parity, the proportion of elected women had increased”⁶. Indeed, for the national elections the proportion had risen from 23 percent of candidates in 1997 to 38.9 percent in 2002, and to 41.6 percent in 2007⁷.

⁴ Mariette Sineau, “Féminisation, crise politique et changement: Le Cas français”, *Observatoire des inégalités*, 22 March 2006, p. 2.

⁵ Katherine A. Opello, *Gender Quotas, Parity Reform, and Political Parties in France*, Oxford: Lexington Books, 2006, pp. 144-5.

⁶ Rainbow Murray, “Women in French Politics: Still *le Deuxième Sexe* ?”, *Modern & Contemporary France*, Vol. 18, No. 4, 2010, p. 412.

⁷ Rainbow Murray, *Parties, Gender Quotas and Candidate Selection in France*, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010, p. 9 ; Mariette Sineau and Vincent Tiberj, “Candidats et députés français en 2002”, *Revue française de science politique*, Vol. 57, No. 2, 2007, p. 166.

By contrast, there are many research works which indicate that the problem of exclusion is still in existence. Mariette Sineau points out the persistent inequality of the system:

far from reducing the inequality of women in respect of power ... [the law] has only accentuated the phenomenon ... The law has failed to provoke, by extension, a process of feminisation of National parliaments by reason of individual member elections⁸.

Opello notes that, at the municipal level, there is no rule in place that demands a woman be placed at the head of a list. Without this constraint, we find that parties normally nominate a man to head the list, even if they distribute the remaining positions equally between men and women. It is therefore obvious that, for the major parties, the law has little impact. In 2007 fifteen university researchers in the work *Sexes, genre et politique* confirm this state of events: “in despite of the intentions of the promoters of the law on parity, the desired effects have been rapidly neutralised by the actual functioning of the political environment”⁹. This failure is highlighted by Mariette Sineau, who in 2011 also summarised the results of the reforms to parity ten years after their introduction. She notes that

in ten years, France has even gone backwards in the global list of prominent countries as to the proportion of female members in parliament, dropping from 42nd in 1997 ... to 58th in 2007 ... This reduction obviously shows the failure of the positive action law, of which the function was to bring about an increase¹⁰.

⁸ Mariette Sineau, “Féminisation, crise politique et changement: Le Cas français”, *Observatoire des inégalités*, 22 March 2006, p. 3.

⁹ Catherine Achin et al. *Sexes, genre et politique*, Paris: Economica, 2007, p. 135. The contributors are: Catherine Achin, Lucie Bargel, Delphine Dulong, Éric Fassin, Christine Guionnet, Stéphanie Guyon, Clémence Labrousse, Stéphane Latté, Pierre Leroux, Sandrine Lévêque, Frédérique Matonti, Marion Paoletti, Christiane Restier-Melleray, Philippe Teillet and Aurélie Troupel. The book is written as a communal work, without individual authors.

¹⁰ Mariette Sineau, *Femmes et pouvoir sous la V^e République: De l'exclusion à l'entrée dans la course présidentielle*, Paris: Presses de Sciences Po, 2011, p. 220.

One of the unfortunate consequences of the legislation is that often women find themselves in an election which is unwinnable because the constituencies considered as safe are allocated to men rather than women. Consequently, the proportion of women in the National Assembly and in the Senate has not increased appreciably. In the parliament the percentage of elected women was 10.9% in 1997, 12.3% in 2002 and 18.5% in 2007¹¹. Mona Lena Krook explains these numbers thus:

the smaller parties generally respected parity in their nominations ... because they were under pressure to maximise the amount of state subsidy they could claim ... The larger parties, in contrast, opted not to apply strict parity in their nominations ... because they had the financial resources to absorb losses of state funding¹².

Thus, it is evident that, with respect to numbers, the results of the legislation have been less positive than expected, particularly at the national level. The major parties prefer to pay a fine or lose government funds rather than implement parity into the candidate selection procedure. Rainbow Murray notes moreover that those female Members of Parliament who manage to get elected find themselves in the less prestigious parliamentary committees, while the men dominate the more coveted committees and the majority of the executive posts¹³. It is therefore clear that the fight for parity is far from being achieved.

¹¹ Rainbow Murray *Parties, Gender Quotas and Candidate Selection in France*, Basingstoke Palgrave Macmillan, 2010, p. 9.

¹² Mona Lena Krook, *Quotas for Women in Politics*, New York: Oxford University Press, 2009, pp. 197-8.

¹³ Rainbow Murray, "Linear Trajectories or Vicious Circles? The Causes and Consequences of Gendered Career Paths in the National Assembly", *Modern & Contemporary France*, 2010, Vol. 18, No. 4, p. 457.

In 2007 Christine Bard points out the lack of research conducted in the domain of gender and power. She writes,

certainly the accounts (books of discussions, autobiographies, memoirs) are abundant ... But the “gender of executive power” remains a new subject, most of the studies focusing on the legislative power and, to a lesser proportion, the parties¹⁴.

Indeed, it is only recently, and more particularly after the arrival of Ségolène Royal in the contest for the 2007 Presidential election, that the sociologists and academics have focussed on women who aspire to become President of the French Republic.

From the outset, the nomination of Ségolène Royal attracted our attention because it was the first time that a major party had nominated a female as its candidate for a Presidential election. The entry of Martine Aubry into the Socialist Party’s election to choose a candidate for the 2012 Presidential election, in which Ségolène Royal is also a candidate, the participation of Marine Le Pen in the first round of that Presidential election, and the possibility of Michèle Alliot-Marie being the UMP presidential candidate as well, reveal an evolution in the mind-set of, and also a certain optimism among, the women who believe they can attain the ultimate political post. In this context we estimate that there is a need to pursue more research on the obstacles which female candidates face in their quest for political posts. To achieve this end we will examine in particular the conditions which women have to overcome to win the highest office. Our study will endeavour to clarify the mechanisms of

¹⁴ Christine Bard, “Introduction: Femmes au pouvoir”, *Histoire@Politique*, Vol. 1, No. 1, 2007, p. 6.

exclusion by way of a case study approach which examines the private and political lives of six women who have played a significant role in the French political world over the past forty years. To this end, we are going to examine that which some researchers refer to as double binds. More particularly, we will examine how the latter slow the progression of these women towards political roles of significance.

Theoretical Framework

The expression “double bind” comes from the work of the anthropologist Gregory Bateson and the psychotherapists Don D. Jackson, Jay Harley and John Weakland. In their work on the theory of schizophrenia, the four scholars defined the double bind as “a situation where, whatever one does, one cannot succeed”¹⁵. These days, terms such as *lose-lose* or *Catch-22* are equally used to designate this phenomenon¹⁶. Pippa Norris gives us an example of a political double bind. She observes that the roles of President or Prime Minister are commonly considered as roles which demand masculine traits, and that certain portfolios, for example such as defence and the economy, are renowned for being the domain of men¹⁷. Therefore, every female leader must endeavour to overcome these stereotypes which, according to Laura Sabattini et al.,

¹⁵ Gregory Bateson et al. “Toward a Theory of Schizophrenia”, *Behavioral Science*, Vol. 1, No. 4, 1956, p. 251.

¹⁶ *Catch-22* is a novel by Joseph Heller.

¹⁷ Pippa Norris, Foreword, *Cracking the Highest Glass Ceiling: a Global Comparison of Women's Campaigns for Executive Office*, Rainbow Murray, ed. Santa Barbara: Praeger, 2010. The concept of masculinity proposed by Norris is also supported by Nannerl Keohane, *Thinking about Leadership*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010, p. 121, and Judith G. Oakley, “Gender-Based Barriers to Senior Managers Positions”, *Journal of Business Ethics*, Vol. 27, No. 4, 2000, pp. 321-2.

“can become a powerful yet invisible threat to women leaders”¹⁸. It is therefore these gender stereotypes that women must overcome when they are in leadership roles or aspire to become a leader. Should they be seeking an appropriate level of male and female traits? This is quite simply the trap, or double bind, which awaits them, because they find themselves faced with an impossible choice.

In 1995 Kathleen Hall Jamieson, with the publication of her book *Beyond the Double Bind: Women and Leadership*, launched the debate on the question of the double bind¹⁹. She notes that double binds exist for all categories of women, whether they are simple citizens or women in professional roles, such as lawyers, doctors and female politicians. She also comments that the history of western culture contains numerous examples of traps which hinder their career path²⁰. The theory of *Beyond the Double Bind: Women and Leadership* is simple: historically, women have always been subject to double binds and some have even overcome them. However, the moment that women overcome a double bind, another one presents itself. According to Jamieson, the double bind is durable but not indestructible. Examined as rhetorical frames, double binds can be understood, manipulated [and] dismantled²¹.

Kathleen Hall Jamieson presents five types of double bind in her book. The first is “Uterus/brain”. These terms relate to the traditional role

¹⁸ Laura Sabattini et al. “The Double-Bind Dilemma for Women in Leadership: Damned if You Do, Doomed if You Don’t”, *Catalyst*, New York, 2007, p. 1.

¹⁹ Kathleen Hall Jamieson, *Beyond the Double Bind: Women and Leadership*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1995.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 4.

²¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 8, 20.

of a woman as a spouse and mother. For university researchers, both the brain and the uterus place demands on the human body to function – if one is a mother, the more the uterus consumes the energy of the body, the less will be available for the brain. Thus, according to this concept of the double bind, a woman cannot use both organs at the same time. Since the stereotype tends to associate a woman with her role as mother, it follows, based on popular wisdom, that she cannot function outside this role.

The second double bind is that of “Silence/shame”. Jamieson notes that, since the Middle Ages, women attract criticism if they publicly comment on matters of a controversial nature, because only men can make public comment on a diverse range of matters. For a woman who cannot keep silent, the sanction is public shame. She is treated as a “whore”, “heretic”, “witch” or “hysterical woman”, and occasionally she is put to death for her comments.

In presenting the third double bind, that she names “Sameness/difference”, Jamieson poses the question: “By what standard is an individual assessed?” She notes that if the response is “by one’s similarity or difference” with respect to a person deemed normal, the person in question is in the position of “lose-lose”. Based on this principle, according to Jamieson, no matter how many time one plays “heads or tails”, the result is the same: it is “heads I win” for the person in power, and “tales you lose” for the person who lacks it²². It is men who

²² Kathleen Hall Jamieson, *Beyond the Double Bind: Women and Leadership*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1995, pp. 101-2.

provide the model of a public figure. For women, it is a case of forcing themselves to get rid of their image as inferior persons; they must always fight to demonstrate that they are as strong and intelligent as the men.

The point of departure of the fourth double bind, “Femininity/competence”, is that one always expects that a female appears feminine. But this characteristic is contrary to the mature and decisive behaviour which is considered the mark of competence. Jamieson notes that

in a hierarchical relation to one another [masculine vs feminine] with the masculine thought superior ... and the woman is condemned if she adopts masculine characteristics and condemned if she does not”²³.

Jamieson also observes that “women are held to a higher standard.

Women must still work harder and be better than men in order to be recognised and succeed”²⁴. It is therefore evident that a woman must demonstrate a competence beyond the norm to overcome the stereotype attached to her gender.

The fifth double bind is that of “Ageing/invisibility”. It consists of the idea that older women are seen as less attractive than their younger sisters while a man becomes more attractive and refined with the passage of time. According to Jamieson, “whether the stereotypes of ageing are positive or negative, women are disadvantaged”²⁵. She notes the significant number of older men in films, adding that the hosts of television programs, TV news presenters and journalists are rarely women

²³ Kathleen Hall Jamieson, *Beyond the Double Bind : Women and Leadership*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1995 p. 121.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 123.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 148.

over the age of fifty. She explains the situation thus: “as men age in commercials, they become more distinguished; as women age, they disappear”²⁶.

Regina G. Lawrence and Melody Rose continue the work of Jamieson on double binds in their 2010 work *Hillary Clinton’s Race for the White House*²⁷. In this study on the American presidential campaign of Hillary Clinton, Lawrence and Rose present four double binds which, according to them, form a barrier to women who aspire to the upper levels of politics²⁸. Although American politics differs from those of France, overall gender stereotypes remain similar around the world, as the work *Cracking the Highest Glass Ceiling: a Global Comparison of Women’s Campaigns for Executive Office* demonstrates. As we will see below, this latter book examines the effect of double binds on female politicians from various countries. The first double bind proposed by Lawrence and Rose is “Femininity vs. Toughness” (this latter term in place of the term “competence” proposed by Jamieson). The authors note that

a woman candidate must prove herself “tough enough” for the Oval Office, yet a woman who demonstrates her toughness is very likely to be criticized (explicitly or implicitly) on the grounds that she is unwomanly.

Their second double bind is “Equality (in lieu of the word “similarity” employed by Jamieson) vs. Difference”. Notwithstanding the change of word, there is no difference between the double bind of Jamieson and that

²⁶ Kathleen Hall Jamieson, *Beyond the Double Bind : Women and Leadership*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1995, p. 152.

²⁷ Regina G. Lawrence and Melody Rose, *Hillary Clinton’s Race for the White House*, Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2010.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 36-41.

of Lawrence and Rose because the principle is the same: male is the norm and women must demonstrate that they are equal to them. Their third double bind is “Experienced vs. Change”. This double bind proposes that a woman is, by reason of her gender, regarded as a symbol of change with respect to past practices. However, electors expect that a leader is experienced in politics. Thus, the chances for a woman who exploits her image as a symbol of change will diminish rapidly because she will find it more difficult to talk about her experience. The last double bind is “Independence vs. Dependence”. The authors present this double bind by examining the campaign of Hillary Clinton. They note that her independence was questioned in the public and media debate because of her link to Bill Clinton, the former American President. Effectively, the public suspected that, if Hilary was elected, it would be her husband who would take control of affairs, rather than her, which seriously impacted on her credibility as candidate. Through their analysis of double binds, Lawrence and Rose continually recall that “any female candidate who enters presidential politics will be presented with tactical choices that either stabilize or topple her balance between competing gravitational pulls”. Consequently, a woman who presents herself for a post in the executive must strategically construct her political campaign to avoid the pitfalls which result from the double binds.

Rainbow Murray continued the work of Jamieson and Lawrence and Rose with the publication, also in 2010, of the book of which she is both editor and contributor, *Cracking the Highest Glass Ceiling: a Global Comparison of Women’s Campaigns for Executive Office*. This book

examines nine women who became President or Prime Minister of various countries, or who sought these posts without success. The women examined are Irene Sáez of Venezuela (the author of the chapter is Magda Hinojosa); Ségolène Royal of France (Rainbow Murray); Hillary Clinton of the United States (Dianne Bystrom); Sarah Palin of the United States (Gina Serignese Woodall, Kim L. Fridkin and Jill Carle); Helen Clark of New Zealand (Linda Trimble and Natasja Treiberg); Angela Merkel of Germany (Sarah Elise Wiliarty); Ma Ellen of Liberia (Melinda Adams); Michelle Bachelet of Chile (Susan Franceschet and Gwynn Thomas); and Cristina Fernandez de Kirchner of Argentina (Jennifer M. Piscopo)²⁹.

In the introduction Murray uses as the point of commencement of her research the double binds already proposed by Jamieson and Melody and Rose. She formulates six in all: “Too Masculine or Too Feminine”; “Too Young or Too Old” (expression used by Murray instead of that of “Ageing or invisibility” used by Jamieson); “Experienced or Symbol of Change”; “Associated to a Prominent Male or Demonstration of Independence”; “Silence or Shame”, and a new double bind that Murray calls the “Mommy problem”³⁰. In respect of this last double bind, it is not a question of whether a female has or has not children. In 1992, during the TV program *Hardball* on MSNBC (a continuous news channel broadcaster in the United States and Canada), the host Chris Matthews

²⁹ Rainbow Murray, ed. *Cracking the Highest Glass Ceiling: a Global Comparison of Women's Campaigns for Executive Office*, Santa Barbara: Praeger, 2010. Due to numerous citations of this book in this thesis, we will refer to the title as follows: *Cracking the Highest Glass Ceiling*.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 15-20.

used the terms “Mommy Party” and “Daddy Party” to describe respectively the Democratic Party (party of the left) and the Republican Party (party of the right). According to Murray, these expressions are due to “the association of right-wing parties with tough policies and left-wing parties with compassionate, nurturing policy stances”. Murray notes also that “the culmination of different types of gender stereotypes and media framing make it very difficult for left-wing women to win executive office”³¹. Clearly, these women suffer a double stereotype effect: in addition to the stereotypes which are attributed to parties of the left, electors consider that female politicians are more oriented towards areas involving compassion. The political stereotype combines with female gender stereotypes, such as appearance, first name, being the wife of etc., resulting in them being further removed from the masculine image that electors have of the president of a country. This fixation on feminine traits also runs counter to the dignity and authority that one associates with a presidential figure. Murray summarises it as follows: “the mummies from the Mommy Party aren’t man enough for the job!”³² However, she comments that it is the opposite for right-wing women: their parties are considered by electors as having tougher policies, namely those considered masculine. Consequently, for women from the right, it is easier to find a balance between masculine and feminine stereotypes.

³¹ Rainbow Murray, ed. *Cracking the Highest Glass Ceiling*, Santa Barbara: Praeger, 2010, pp. 11-2. According to Murray, media framing refers to the way in which the media present political candidates. She observes that the media treat women differently from men according to gender stereotypes.

³² *Ibid.*, pp. 9-10, 20.

In 2013 Donatella Campus publishes the work *Women Political Leaders and the Media* which examines the link between female political leaders and the media. The book seeks, among other factors, to examine how media coverage reinforces gender stereotypes for female politicians. By way of case studies of prominent female politicians, Campus seeks to demonstrate that it is possible to develop different strategies to make the performances of the politicians more effective³³. Campus devotes one chapter in particular to the double bind that she names “Femininity-competence”, following the example of Kathleen Hall Jamieson. She notes that some women, as for example Margaret Thatcher and Indira Gandhi who were nicknamed “the Iron Ladies”, succeeded in neutralising the effects of this double bind. Campus thinks however that the political world today does not resemble the one that faced by Thatcher and Gandhi and that the behaviour of the two women would not meet the expectations of electors today. “In fact, nowadays, for a woman who aspires to become Prime Minister or Head of State, being too tough may be just as negative as too traditionally feminine”³⁴.

To demonstrate this hypothesis, Campus examines the 2007 Presidential campaign of Ségolène Royal and the campaign of Hillary Clinton for the 2008 Democratic Party primary, paying particular attention to the way in which the media treated them³⁵. According to Campus,

³³ Donatella Campus, *Women Political Leaders and the Media*, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013, p. 3.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 61-2.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 67-72.

Royal represents women who are considered too feminine whereas Clinton has the image of a woman who demonstrates a behaviour which is too masculine. Campus notes that Royal emphasises her role as mother of four children and extends that notion to present herself as the mother of France. She also notes that, as her presidential campaign progressed, the media treated her with less indulgence and had finished by being particularly severe in their evaluation of her competence for the post of president. Therefore, concludes Campus, Royal, having discarded her traits considered masculine, exposed herself to the double bind masculine/feminine because of her choice to adopt a feminine style of leadership. In the case of Hilary Clinton, Campus notes she already had a certain notoriety as the wife of the former President of the United States, Bill Clinton, and that some electors regarded her as the most experienced candidate for the Democratic Primary. If Clinton did not seek to cultivate the image of a maternal mother she tried, according to Campus, to play the role of a “nurturing warrior”, that is, a person tough enough to lead combatants in a war, and at the same time tender enough to understand their burdens. Whatever the situation, the media often highlighted the absence of compassion in Clinton’s behaviour, even going to the extent of calling her a bitch and castrator of men. Conscious of this fact, her campaign team developed a strategy to counter this image, but it was a strategy that the media refused to take into account. According to Campus, they continued to present Clinton as a woman who was excessively assertive and one who lacked femininity, choosing to ignore the fact that she possessed the competence and authority to be president.

For Campus, “there is no doubt that Clinton received sexist and unfair media coverage as confirmed by the lively debate between members of the press in the weeks following her withdrawal”³⁶. In despite of the efforts of Clinton to highlight her feminine traits, the media insisted on putting forward some masculine traits, the result being that she was locked into the trap of a stereotype from which she could not escape.

The analysis of Donatella Campus demonstrates clearly that, in the cases of Royal and Clinton, in despite of differences in the route, the strategy and the image of the two women, the media only aggravated the effects of the double bind “Femininity-competence”.

Methodology

This thesis is presented in the form of a case study. We have chosen this approach because we estimate that it permits a more complete examination of the difficulties that women face. To this end, we are using as our basis of departure the double binds proposed by Murray in the book *Cracking the Highest Glass Ceiling*. This work examines how the double binds apply to women who occupy or seek to occupy the roles of President or Prime Minister of countries around the world, with a particular interest in the way in which they are presented by the media. The chapter by Murray concerns Ségolène Royal. It focuses, more precisely, on the program *I have a question for you* on TF1, hosted by Patrick Poivre d’Arvor, in which two debates took place where the studio audience

³⁶ Donatella Campus, *Women Political Leaders and the Media*, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013, p. 72

interacted with each of the two final candidates for the Presidential election of 2007. Nicolas Sarkozy appeared in the first program and Ségolène Royal in the second. During each programme, the public poses questions to each candidate. Rainbow Murray examines the words of each participant to identify the stereotypes which are inherent in the questions of the public and the responses of the candidates. Secondly, she analyses the media coverage to determine if the media influenced the evaluations of the performances of the candidates by the viewers. The results are classed according to the various stereotypes, and then examined to determine which double binds determine the candidacies of Ségolène Royal and Nicolas Sarkozy through the mechanisms of *media framing*.

Drawing inspiration from the work of Murray, our study intends to look into the careers of six French women politicians who have played or continue to play a role in the politics of the Fifth Republic. They are Simone Veil, Minister for Health in the government of Giscard d'Estaing, Member of the European Parliament and its first President; Edith Cresson, first woman to occupy the post of Prime Minister, a post she held from 1991 to 1992; Michele Alliot-Marie, former minister in a range of portfolios, including Defence; Ségolène Royal, candidate for President of the French Republic in 2007 and also for the Socialist Primary of 2011; Martine Aubry, former Minister of Work, First Secretary of the Socialist Party from 2008 to 2012 and currently mayor of Lille; and Marine Le Pen, President of the Front National since 2011, Member of the European Parliament since 2004, and a councillor in various constituencies since 1998.

As this area of research is relatively new, there exist few works relating to women seeking the roles of President or Prime Minister of France. The goal of this thesis is to expand the knowledge in this area by filling in the gaps not covered in existing works in the domain of double binds, particularly in the case of French women politicians. We will examine the lives of the six women outlined above to determine how the double binds apply to each of them. Due to the maximum word limit imposed for this thesis, we will examine only three of the double binds. We have chosen “Too Masculine or Too Feminine” because Rainbow Murray and Donatella Campus both consider that this double bind must be at the centre of any study on gender in executive elections³⁷; “Experienced or Symbol of Change” since Murray considers it as equally pertinent³⁸; and “Associated with a Prominent Male or Demonstration of Independence”. This last double bind is linked to “the act of the Prince”, that is to the situation where a powerful man such as the President or another powerful politician uses their power to enable another person to advance. The appointment of Edith Cresson as Prime Minister by François Mitterrand is an example. Cresson is trapped by the fact that, in despite of the opposition of the senior members of the Socialist Party and that of the advisers of the President, Mitterrand alone decides to nominate her to the post. We have chosen this double bind because our preliminary analysis for this thesis indicated a lack of research on this subject.

³⁷ Rainbow Murray, ed. *Cracking the Highest Glass Ceiling*, Santa Barbara: Praeger, 2010, p. 243 ; Donatella Campus, *Women Political Leaders and the Media*, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013, p. 124.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 244.

We have chosen the six personalities cited above because they have succeeded in carving out a name in the world of politics and also because they represent the major parties of the right and left. Together as a whole, they represent the major political groups. With respect to Marine Le Pen, her party the National Front is not considered to be a major party, but some recent events saw the party reach a level where it could be a serious competitor to the major parties³⁹. For example, according to some opinion polls in 2011 Marine could win the 2012 Presidential campaign, or at the least, reach the second round. Subsequently, the success of the party in the legislative and municipal elections confirmed it as a possible party in government. It should be noted that, in the past, other women have sought high office, including Arlette Laguiller, leader de Lutte Ouvrière (a far-left party), who in 1974 was the first woman to contest a presidential election, and who contested each election up to 2007. But Laguiller gets only a few votes; her best year is 2002, where she receives 5.72% of the votes cast. In 2007 she only obtains 1.33%. Discussing the candidates from the minor parties, Janine Mossuz-Lavau notes:

a female in the presidential competition is not a novelty in our country. Arlette Laguiller, Huguette Bouchardeau, Corinne Lepage, Christiane Taubira, and Marie-Georges Buffet have been candidates ... But, put forward by the minor parties, they had no chance of winning⁴⁰.

³⁹ The UMP (right) and the Socialist Party (left) are currently considered the major parties.

⁴⁰ Janine Mossuz-Lavau, "Les Femmes et le pouvoir exécutif depuis 1981: La France au regard du monde", *Histoire@Politique*, No.1, 2007, p. 10. Laurence Fradin confirms this: "these candidacies were not likely to win the Presidential election", Laurence Fradin, "La Place des femmes dans la sphère publique en France sous la V^e République: femmes de présidents de la république, femmes fonctionnaires, femmes politiques", *Contemporary French and Francophone Studies*, 2008, Vol. 12, No. 2, p. 219.

For this reason, women from the minor parties have been excluded from our sample.

We are going to examine a large quantity of information relating to the six women in question. The details, which are of a textual nature, come from a large number of different sources. In order to follow, by means of these sources, the thematic axes that we seek to develop, we are proceeding by way of cross referencing of details which will permit the classification of information according to their degree of pertinence and importance. Our analysis will focus on writings which come from the women themselves and on a large number of books published by writers and journalists. The corpus will include biographies and autobiographies, works and articles written by journalists and politicians of both sex, and opinion polls. By means of all this information we will trace the journey of each of the six women from their youth through to their adult life. We will consider the circumstances of their election to parliament, their appointment to government posts or to senior posts in their political party. We will also closely examine the manner in which the media portray the women and, in particular, we will examine gender stereotypes and the mechanisms of media framing. The comments of journalists and writers form an important part of this study. For our analysis of the media we have chosen the newspapers *Le Monde* and *Le Figaro* because these are the principal daily papers and they have different political orientations, *Le Monde* being linked to the centre-left and *Le Figaro* to the right. We will also examine the weekly magazines *Le Nouvel Observateur* and

L'Express, which have been selected for the same reason, *Le Nouvel Observateur* being considered as aligned to the left, and *L'Express* to the right, both of them having wide circulations. We will also have recourse to comments coming from other papers and magazines. We have chosen periods of examination which correspond to decisive turning points in the political life of each woman, such as the moment when she commences to play a prominent political role or participates in an important ballot. These are the times where their entry into the political world arouses a public debate and a multitude of comments in the media. In general, the length of the period of examination is three or four months before and after the events in question. For Simone Veil, the significative events are her appointment, in 1974, as Minister of Health, the debate surrounding the law relating to abortion in the second half of 1974, and her election as deputy and President of the European Parliament in June 1979; for Edith Cresson, her appointment to the post of Prime Minister on 15 May 1991; for Michèle Alliot Marie, her attainment of the presidency of the Rally for the Republic Party (RPR) on 4 December 1999, her appointment to the post of Minister of Defence in 2002 and also her potential candidature for the 2007 Presidential campaign; for Ségolène Royal, the 2007 Presidential campaign, as well as her campaign for the first round of the Socialist Primary election on 9 October 2011; for Martine Aubry, the two rounds of the 2011 Socialist Primary election which finished on 16 October 2011; and for Marine Le Pen, her 2012 Presidential campaign which terminated in a loss on 22 April 2012. The political lives of Simone Veil and Édith Cresson took place in the period before the introduction of the

law on parity, while the other four women belong to the period after its introduction. At times, in order to more fully explain the context, we will cite comments outside of these periods. This analysis ceases on 30 June 2012. Major events concerning our six women after this date are outlined in Appendix 4.

In summary, it is a matter of examining the private and public life of the six women in order to identify the stereotypes and other hindrances which plunge them into the trap of the double bind at the moment where they attain posts of responsibility or aim for the highest political office. The analysis will permit us to determine the image fabricated by the six chosen women by means of their public appearances and their reactions to comments made about them. In addition, we will discover how the six women are perceived by the French people and the media. To this end, we will consider several opinion polls, such as those of Sofres and Ipsos, to track the movement in the approval rating of the women. We will also examine the archives of the National Assembly, the Senate, the European Parliament and the political parties to complete the information compiled on the six women.

Structure of the Thesis

Each chapter will evaluate a particular double bind. Chapter 1 examines the double bind Too Masculine or Too Feminine. As we have already noted, the French associate the post of President with masculine traits. Therefore, in order to be perceived as competent and credible women have to be masculine. However, they must also appear to be

feminine in order to avoid being punished for subverting gender norms⁴¹.

To establish how this double bind functions, we will examine the behaviour of the six women and their treatment by the media.

Our Chapter 2 considers the double bind Experienced or Symbol of Change. We have noted that, according to Rainbow Murray, a woman is naturally considered as a symbol of change. By contrast, a woman who represents change is considered as a woman lacking experience. Moreover, if a woman seeks to emphasise her experience, she risks losing the advantages that she can expect from her image of a woman bringing change. Our analysis will try to determine the degree of novelty that each woman represents, and for those women who have experience at governmental level, the effect that experience may have on their image of representing change. Since the media have a tendency to portray the feminine traits of candidates for executive office as a change factor, we will pay particular attention to articles in the media. Chapter 3 focuses on the double bind Associated with a Prominent Male or Demonstration of Independence. According to Rainbow Murray, a woman has more chances of becoming well-known and being accepted by the electors if she has the support of a powerful male politician, such as a mentor, husband or close relative. On the other hand, a woman who associates herself with a powerful man risks being seen as a woman lacking autonomy, with the result that she loses all credibility⁴².

⁴¹ Rainbow Murray, ed. *Cracking the Highest Glass Ceiling*, Santa Barbara: Praeger, 2010, p. 16.

⁴² *Ibid.*, p. 18.

We will see how these three double binds apply to each of our six women. For this reason, it seems necessary to us to treat each woman separately and to identify the impact of each double bind on the development of her political career. In adopting this approach, which will be in the form of a case study, it will be possible to draw conclusions which will shed light on the propositions of Rainbow Murray, Kathleen Hall Jackson, Regina G. Lawrence and Melody Rose, and Donatella Campus. Therefore, we hope to be in a position to clarify at what point, for what reasons and under which circumstances French female politicians expose themselves to the trap of a double bind.

Chapter 1: Too Masculine or Too Feminine

1.1 Introduction

Our goal is to report the pressures which are exerted on the six women we have chosen for this case study. As we noted in the Introduction, the French people associate the post of President with masculine traits. As a result, a woman who seeks this post must force herself to appear masculine. However, in line with gender stereotypes, the French also expect that a woman displays her femininity. The double bind resides in the fact that women always expose themselves to the danger of a behaviour seen as either too masculine or too feminine. Whatever she does, she goes against the expectations of the electors.

Our analysis will examine the masculine and feminine traits displayed in the public and media images of the six women. However, first of all, it is important to identify those traits which are deemed to be masculine and those deemed to be feminine. In 1957 the first research work in this area was published by McKee and Sheriffs⁴³. Using the control list of 200 adjectives of Sarbin⁴⁴, they drew up groups of traits associated with men and women. For the men, the traits of frankness, rationality, competence and assurance were identified as key. Women

⁴³ John McKee and Alex Sheriffs, "The Differential Evaluation of Males and Females", *Journal of Personality*, Vol. 25, 1957, pp. 356-371.

⁴⁴ In 1955, Theodore Sarbin modified the list of 284 adjectives compiled by Harrison Gough. His "Personality Word Card" was sent to more than 500 psychology students to determine "what are the differences of self-conception between men and women". See Theodore Sarbin and Benjamin Rosenberg, "Contributions to Role-Taking Theory: IV. A Method for Obtaining a Qualitative Estimate of the Self", *The Journal of Social Psychology*, 1955, Vol. 42, p. 75, and Harrison Gough, *Predicting Success in Graduate Training: A Progress Report*, Berkeley: Univ. of California Institute of Personality Assessment and Research, 1950.

were associated with social matters, affection and emotion. In 1972 Broverman et al. published their work on the attitudes and personal characteristics of men and women. With the aid of a “Sex-Role Questionnaire”, a group of around 100 psychology students, both men and women, identified the characteristics, the attributes and the behaviours that they considered relevant for each sex. Among their conclusions, the authors noted that women were perceived as less competent, less independent, less impartial and less logical than men. On the other hand, men were perceived as individuals who lacked interpersonal sensitivity and gentleness in comparison to women. In addition, they observed that masculine traits were considered more desirable than feminine traits. Spence et al. (1974) and Spence and Holahan (1979) modified the questionnaire of Broverman et al. so that it functioned as a measure of gender stereotypes as well as of masculinity and femininity. According to John Williams and Deborah Best, the results of Spence and Holahan were compatible with earlier research, namely that masculine traits are associated with what psychologists call “influence”, which includes aggressiveness, the will to dominate, a competitive spirit and self-confidence. By comparison, women are associated with expressiveness namely, demonstration of emotion, ease of talking and nurturing instinct⁴⁵. In 1993 Leonie Huddy and Nayda Terkildsen “found considerable evidence for the existence of gender-belief stereotypes” with female

⁴⁵ John Williams and Deborah Best, *Measuring Sex Stereotypes: A Multination Study*, London: Sage, 1990, p. 20. Refer to the bibliography for details of the works cited.

candidates being identified as more competent in areas relating to compassion, while for male candidates “the typical male traits of assertiveness, aggressiveness, and self-confidence” aided them to cope “better with military or police crises”⁴⁶. By means of a sample of 297 students from New York University, the researchers examined how the students judged male and female candidates with respect to masculine and feminine traits. As a result of this study, they identified that the typical female traits of sympathy, softness, gentleness and passiveness destined women for roles which demanded compassion, namely education, health, the poor and aged persons. By contrast, the typical male is considered as solid, aggressive and assured, traits that the authors associate with military service or the police. In addition, they note that men are regarded as more competent in the economic sector. In 1993 also, Deborah Alexander and Kristi Andersen, who had conducted research in the same domain, noted that their conclusions were, in the main, consistent with those of Huddy and Terkildsen⁴⁷. In 2004 Kathleen Dolan conducted research on the qualities that electors associated with female politicians. Her conclusions confirmed the research of Huddy and Terkildsen, and also that of Alexander and Andersen⁴⁸. Therefore, like Rainbow Murray, who used this classification of masculine and feminine traits in her analysis of

⁴⁶ Leonie Huddy and Nayda Terkildsen, “Gender Stereotypes and the Perception of Male and Female Candidates”, *American Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 37, No. 1, pp. 121,140

⁴⁷ Deborah Alexander and Kristi Andersen, “Gender as a Factor in the Attribution of Leadership Traits”, *Political Research Quarterly*, Vol. 46, No. 3, 1993, p. 542.

⁴⁸ Kathleen Dolan, *Voting for Women: How the Public Evaluates Women Candidates*, Boulder: Westview Press, 2004, p. 60.

double binds, we will use the following traits classified male or female in our examination of the political life of our six women: masculine traits include strength, competence, aggressiveness, rationality, firmness, knowledgeability and assurance. Feminine traits include warmth, gentleness, passiveness, expressiveness, compassion, emotion and sympathy⁴⁹.

The classification of traits into male and female also impacts on the different political domains inasmuch as some are seen as more masculine or feminine than others. In their study on gender differences in the attitudes and opinions of electors, Robert Y. Shapiro and Harpreet Mahajan observe that women are perceived as more competent in domains associated with compassion and sensitivity, namely, poverty, education, and matters linked to child care and health⁵⁰. Deborah Alexander and Kristi Andersen note as well that the media describe education, environment, child-minding and health as domains in which women are experts, confirming the comments of Shapiro and Mahajan⁵¹. For her part, Rainbow Murray states that the portfolios of Foreign Affairs and Economy are more related to men⁵².

In respect of female politicians, numerous studies indicate that the media, and particularly the press, have a tendency to focus on female traits

⁴⁹ Rainbow Murray, ed. *Cracking the Highest Glass Ceiling*, Santa Barbara: Praeger, 2010, pp. 8-9.

⁵⁰ Robert Y. Shapiro and Harpreet Mahajan, "Gender Differences in Policy Preferences: A Summary of Trends from the 1960's to the 1980's", *Public Opinion Quarterly*, Vol. 50, 1986, p. 51.

⁵¹ Deborah Alexander and Kristi Andersen, "Gender as a Factor in the Attribution of Leadership Traits", *Political Research Quarterly*, Vol. 46, No. 3, 1993, p. 542.

⁵² Rainbow Murray, *op. cit.*, p. 11.

and female subjects (see, for example Kahn 1994; Kahn and Goldenberg 1991). Indeed, according to Dianne Bystrom, journalists have a tendency to comment on the clothes, physical appearance and family situation of a female candidate⁵³. The ensuing analysis will focus on the fixation of the media for the body, clothes and face of female politicians. The consequence of this fixation is that the media, in their reporting, put the spotlight on appearances, rather than the ideas and political projects of women⁵⁴. This diversion represents a real handicap which impacts all female politicians.

Our analysis is going to examine each woman to establish how the traits and stereotypes defined above apply to each of them. In discussing the double bind Alexander and Andersen note that women only find their place in the political world by visibly promoting their role as mother and wife. However, they must demonstrate their power, their firmness and the ability to win, namely traits that the majority of electors consider intrinsic in the majority of male candidates⁵⁵. It is there where the double bind appears: a female must demonstrate a masculine side to meet the expectations of the French people, but this masculinisation is contrary to the feminine image that she must equally fabricate. The analysis that we undertake in the rest of this chapter will permit us to determine to what

⁵³ Dianne Bystrom, "Gender and Campaign Communication: TV Ads, Web Sites, and Media Coverage", *eScholarship*, 6 June 2006, p. 21.

⁵⁴ Dianne Bystrom et al. "Framing the Fight: An Analysis of Media Coverage of Female and Male Candidates in Primary Races for Governor and U.S. Senate in 2000", *American Behavioural Scientist*, Vol. 44, No. 12, 2001, p. 2000.

⁵⁵ Deborah Alexander and Kristi Andersen, "Gender as a Factor in the Attribution of Leadership Traits", *Political Research Quarterly*, Vol. 46, No. 3, 1993, p. 542.

extent our six women are exposed to the trap of the double bind. We commence with Édith Cresson because, as we will see, she represents the classic case of this double bind. In effect, Cresson will furnish us with the model case to which we will compare the five other female politicians.

1.2 Édith Cresson

In nominating Édith Cresson as Prime Minister on 15 May 1991 François Mitterrand wanted to mark a turning point in his politics. Lynne Wilcox describes this appointment as “a dramatic turn of events”, destined to create “a new momentum”⁵⁶. Before her appointment Cresson had directed several ministries, including Industrial Redeployment and that of External Commerce, the latter considered a masculine role. While Madam Cresson assures that her unexpected appointment was due to her political experience and to “her qualities of dynamism, firmness and determination”, others saw in it the simple fact of a concerned President making a political statement. Sheila Perry presents the appointment of Cresson in a light which is hardly favourable to Cresson: “for the truth is that in the context of France’s dual executive, Cresson was powerless”⁵⁷. In other words, Cresson lacked authority from the start. Add to that the observation widely shared that her unexpected promotion was a Captain’s choice. Therefore, if the beginning of her mandate is characterised by an elevated approval rating by reason of the warm welcome of the French people who estimated that the time had come for a woman in the post, over time the critics, who became more and more frequent, condemn her due to her sex.

⁵⁶ Lynne Wilcox, “Edith Cresson: Victim of Her Own Image” in Drake, Helen and Gaffney, John, eds. *The Language of Leadership in Contemporary France*, Aldershot: Dartmouth Publishing Company, 1996, p. 82.

⁵⁷ Sheila Perry, “Gender Difference in French Political Communication: From Handicap to Asset?”, *Modern & Contemporary France*, Vol. 13, No. 3, August 2005, p. 347.

Let us examine how the masculine traits of Cresson presented themselves in her public actions. In the press we note, in the beginning, a particular interest in the masculine traits of Cresson. On 17 May 1991, two days after her appointment as Prime Minister, Jean-Marie Colombani describes Madam Cresson as “a woman ... endowed with a fine temper, ideal for the battles ahead”. He also speaks of her “quarrelsome side ... her already famous temper ... [with] a reputation which is no longer consensual but combatant”⁵⁸. In the context of the subsequent campaign lead by Colombani against Cresson, this phrase seems to suggest that he was mocking her “capacities” in politics in praising her masculine traits, in particular that of aggressiveness. Robert Schneider, in *Nouvel Observateur* of 23 May 1991, observes with respect to the appointment of Cresson: “is it not a war chief that Mitterrand has chosen rather than a head of government?”⁵⁹ In so doing he also highlights the masculine traits of power, firmness and aggressiveness in Cresson. Finally, Yann de l’Écotais, in his editorial for *L’Express* of 31 May 1991, makes reference to Édith Cresson as an “exasperating fighter”⁶⁰. Thus, whether it is to approve or denigrate her, the press focus the spotlight on some male traits of Cresson.

Among researchers and academics, one finds the same comments. Sylvie Ollitrault observes: “Édith Cresson is not in any way a woman of harmony, she is to the contrary pugnacious and rarely ready to

⁵⁸ Jean-Marie Colombani, “Une Logique de combat”, *Le Monde*, 17 May 1991, p. 1.

⁵⁹ Robert Schneider, “Les Français regrettent Rocard, Mitterrand non plus”, *Le Nouvel Observateur*, 23 May 1991, p. 39.

⁶⁰ Yann de l’Écotais, “Bien tard”, *L’Express*, 31 May 1991, p. 4.

compromise”⁶¹. Once again, we see the traits of firmness and aggressiveness that one expects of a leader. Élisabeth Schemla tells us that, as Minister of Agriculture, “she [revealed herself] to be a tough negotiator” in the negotiations in Brussels on the price of French wheat, noting also that the French parliamentarians knew “the brutality of Édith” before her appointment⁶². As Prime Minister, her fighting spirit and her rationality are conspicuous: she courageously carries on the reforms of Michel Rocard, notably the privatisation of organisations such as the French Credit Union and Elf Aquitaine, and confronts the waterside workers on the employment monopoly of the General Confederation of Labour Union (CGT) in French ports. In addition, Madam Cresson demonstrates her capacity to impose her will: in despite of a mobilisation by academics and public servants, she implements a plan to decentralise the National School of Administration (ENA) and the French National Centre for Scientific Research (CNRS), which are relocated to Strasbourg. Lynne Wilcox comments that Cresson tried to construct an image which was akin to the masculine stereotype of a Prime Minister, namely a “leader of the government ... [who] assert[s] her authority in the eyes of the French people”⁶³, and who did not back down from the most rugged

⁶¹ Sylvie Ollitrault, “Édith Cresson, une image brisée”, in *Images, imaginaires du féminin*, Cortil-Wodon: Éditions Modulaires Européennes, 2003, p. 61.

⁶² Élisabeth Schemla, *Édith Cresson, la femme piégée*, Paris: Flammarion, 1993, pp. 51, 155.

⁶³ Lynne Wilcox, “Edith Cresson: Victim of Her Own Image” in Drake, Helen and Gaffney, John, eds. *The Language of Leadership in Contemporary France*, Aldershot: Dartmouth Publishing Company, 1996, p. 88.

political combats. The comments outlined above present in a positive manner the masculine traits of Cresson.

Conversely, there is also a negative side. Consider the words of Jacques Philan, the media guru of François Mitterrand, who thinks that “her brutality does not correspond to that which the French people hope for from a woman and a female politician in this day”⁶⁴. In effect, being capable, in the words of Franz-Olivier Giesbert, “of all the cruelties that it is possible to be afraid of”⁶⁵, Édith Cresson can only upset the people who, according to Lynne Wilcox, “demand that the behaviour of their ... Prime Minister ... is dignified at all times”⁶⁶.

In the final analysis, these are the same masculine traits that indicate that she transgressed the behavioural norms of a Prime Minister, and as a result she became estranged from the people, as the opinion polls that we discuss later demonstrate.

With respect to competence as a male trait, numerous accounts and declarations indicate that this masculine trait was glaringly absent from the image of Cresson. For example, her competency to efficiently manage a team was subject to question. In the press, the charge of incompetence is brutally evident in the headline which appeared on the front page of *Le Monde* of 18 May 1991: “Cresson ‘for how long’?”⁶⁷ This headline, which appeared the day after her appointment to the post of Prime

⁶⁴ Élisabeth Schemla, *Édith Cresson, la femme piégée*, Paris: Flammarion, 1993, p. 170.

⁶⁵ Franz-Olivier Giesbert, *La Fin d'une époque*, Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1993, p. 127.

⁶⁶ Lynne Wilcox, “Edith Cresson: Victim of Her Own Image” in Drake, Helen and Gaffney, John, eds. *The Language of Leadership in Contemporary France*, Aldershot: Dartmouth Publishing Company, 1996, p. 98.

⁶⁷ *Le Monde*, “Cresson ‘pour combien de temps’?”, 18 May 1991, p. 1.

Minister, ignores the qualities that should be promoted by reason of her experience in the executive level of government. Corinne Lhaïk, in *L'Express* of 28 June 1991, seems to delight in this derisory statement: “in thirty days, Édith Cresson has succeeded in a triple set of blunders: she upset the employees, worried the financial markets and strengthened the opposition”⁶⁸. Élisabeth Schemla summarises the negative image given to Cresson by the media:

in truth, almost all of the papers seemed to share the same opinion [that she was an unfortunate accident of which it was necessary to remove all trace as soon as possible] ... *Le Monde* does not hide its violent hostility ... [on 19 May 1991] Jean-Marie Colombani set out the terms of the assassination of Édith Cresson⁶⁹.

In *L'Express* of 31 May 1991, Dominique de Montvalon and Sylvie Pierre-Brossolette evoke the hostility of the former Prime Minister Michel Rocard who considers Édith Cresson “an irresponsible woman, in all cases an extravagant one, indeed ‘a nobody’”⁷⁰. Judgements of this type indicate that the media in general play an important role in the widely spread perception that Édith Cresson is not competent, and that she does not have the qualities of a leader. In this manner, they largely contribute to the fall of Cresson in the opinion polls during the period of her mandate as Prime Minister.

We find, outside the press, similar comments. Cresson, it is said, does not have what it takes to be Prime minister. Her Socialist colleague Élisabeth Guigou admits that “her successes at the ministries of Industry

⁶⁸ Corinne Lhaïk, “Impôts: Le Début de la révolte”, *L'Express*, 28 June 1991, p. 12.

⁶⁹ Élisabeth Schemla, *Édith Cresson, la femme piégée*, Paris: Flammarion, 1993, p. 115.

⁷⁰ Dominique de Montvalon and Sylvie Pierre-Brossolette, “L’Opération anti-Rocard”, *L'Express*, 31 May 1991, p. 10.

and External Commerce did not necessarily predispose her for the role at Matignon where the first quality required is to make the team work together”⁷¹. George Ross goes even further when he observes that Cresson “was incompetent ... unprepared to deal with her governmental colleagues and the media ... [and] to construct an efficient team”⁷². This comment highlights the fact that Cresson did not have a solid knowledge of parliamentary affairs. Sylvie Ollitrault employs a language more figurative: “three months after her arrival, the rumour of her demise is circling in the Parisian political and journalistic circles. They now refer to her as ‘the Titanic’”⁷³. Her technical competencies in the domain of the economy are also subject to question. Not only, according to Élisabeth Schemla, “did her colleagues ... [think that she] knew nothing about the economy”⁷⁴, but that incompetence became a permanent indicator of the image of Cresson, as Jane Freedman explains: “that which was particularly harmful in the way Cresson is depicted, was that she was portrayed as someone who was devoid of economic and financial knowledge”⁷⁵. Overall, researchers and academics posed as many questions on her economic competence as they did on her capacities to be leader of the team, in spite of the fact that she had occupied, before becoming Prime Minister, diverse portfolios. For the commentators that we have cited, the

⁷¹ Élisabeth Guigou, *Être femme en politique*, Paris: Plon, 1997, p. 162.

⁷² George Ross, “Fin de Règne: Several Elysian Lives”, *French Politics and Society*, Vol. 12, No. 4, 1994, p. 93.

⁷³ Sylvie Ollitrault, “Édith Cresson, une image brisée”, in *Images, imaginaires du féminin*, Cortil-Wodon: Éditions Modulaires Européennes, 2003, p. 65.

⁷⁴ Élisabeth Schemla, *Édith Cresson, la femme piégée*, Paris: Flammarion, 1993, p. 162.

⁷⁵ Jane Freedman, *Femmes politique: mythes et symboles*, Paris: L’Harmattan, 1997, p. 233.

behaviour of Cresson appears every time to be a sign of a natural “incompetence”.

The ability to speak publicly is perceived as a barrier for female politicians in their quest to demonstrate their ability due to the stereotype which portrays them as poor orators. There are two components to any analysis of a speech. The first is the timbre of the voice. According to Kathleen Hall Jamieson, “women’s vocal pitch is even judged deficient ... [because] the deeper male voice has for a long time been assumed as the norm for exercise of leadership”⁷⁶. Cresson does not escape this stereotype. For example, Robert Schneider, in *Le Nouvel Observateur* of 30 May 1991, refers to Cresson as a “woman with a high-pitched voice”⁷⁷. Therefore, stereotypes condemn Cresson to an image less than gratifying of a poor orator. The second component relates to the words used by a woman. Those of Cresson are judged too crude for a female politician, indeed for any politician. The reactions are particularly savage when Cresson, no doubt to give herself an image of authority, commenced to speak crudely. To give an example, Cresson came out with the remark in relation to the Stock Exchange of “I don’t give a damn”. Later, she retracted the remark, saying that it was a joke. Lynne Wilcox notes that the crude language of Cresson undermines her authority with her colleagues. She gives details of other language excesses of Cresson, before concluding:

⁷⁶ Kathleen Hall Jamieson, *Beyond the Double Bind: Women and Leadership*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995, p. 121.

⁷⁷ Robert Schneider, “Cresson au coin du bois”, *Le Nouvel Observateur*, 30 May 1991, p. 34.

whilst appearing to understand the hurdles which a woman in politics must overcome if she is to succeed, Cresson persisted with a frank discourse which broke the rules associated with her role⁷⁸.

To underline the misplaced character of the discourse of Cresson, *Le Monde* of 18 July 1991 cites the words of Michel Vauzelle, President of the Commission of Foreign Affairs at the National Assembly, who states: “to respect the people one must maintain a certain dignity in political language ... The people do not want vulgarity in political speech”⁷⁹. The interview with Cresson on the program *Le Droit de savoir (The Right to Know)* on TF1 on 8 July 1991, where she forecasts the establishment of charter flights to expulse illegal immigrants, brings forth the following comment:

the harshness of her words, the apparent lack of compassion, and the rigour of the measures proposed were judged inappropriate for a Socialist, for a Prime Minister and for a woman⁸⁰.

This reference to charters, which brought to mind the deportations in the Second World War, certainly goes against the Socialist program, but also incites a much wider hostility due to its brutality. In creating an image of a political leader, Édith Cresson uses a language contrary to the expectations of the French people. However, Cresson had already brought attention to herself earlier by making injudicious remarks. Four years prior to her appointment as Prime Minister, she declares to a journalist that 25% of the English are homosexual, a comment that her adversaries

⁷⁸ Lynne Wilcox, “Edith Cresson: Victim of Her Own Image” in Drake, Helen and Gaffney, John, eds. *The Language of Leadership in Contemporary France*, Aldershot: Dartmouth Publishing Company, 1996, pp. 83, 98.

⁷⁹ Jacques Amalric, “Un Entretien avec M. Michel Vauzelle”, *Le Monde*, 18 July 1991.

⁸⁰ Lynne Wilcox, *op. cit.*, p. 91.

remind her of after she became Prime Minister; and she referred to the Japanese as “yellow dwarfs” and “ants”⁸¹. Giesbert reports the reaction of the French following these comments: “the whole of France is ashamed of its Prime Minister”⁸². It is therefore clear that this strategy of “frankness”, if it truly was a strategy, rebounded on her.

With respect to her public discourses, Wilcox notes that, from her first days as Prime Minister, numerous commentators cited the speeches of Cresson as a major factor in her fall in public opinion⁸³. Pierre Servent and Pascale Robert-Diard, in *Le Monde* of 25 May 1991, comment on her first speech at the National Assembly: “whether they proclaim it loudly or discuss it quietly, whether they congratulate it or deplore it, the Members of Parliament were almost unanimous: Madam Édith Cresson failed her first oral exam”⁸⁴. According to Wilcox, Cresson refused to adapt her style to her new function of Prime Minister in despite of the signs that indicated that her speech was judged unacceptable by the French electorate⁸⁵.

Thus, Cresson’s manner of speaking harms her in her role as Prime Minister. She speaks with a high-pitched voice, in a crude manner, and is

⁸¹ Lynne Wilcox, “Edith Cresson: Victim of Her Own Image” in Drake, Helen and Gaffney, John, eds. *The Language of Leadership in Contemporary France*, Aldershot: Dartmouth Publishing Company, 1996, p. 84.

⁸² Franz-Olivier Giesbert, *La Fin d’une époque*, Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1993, p. 138.

⁸³ Lynne Wilcox, *op. cit.*, p. 83.

⁸⁴ Pierre Servent and Pascale Robert-Diard, “Dans les couloirs du Palais-Bourbon après la déclaration de politique générale du Premier ministre”, *Le Monde*, 25 May 1991.

⁸⁵ Lynne Wilcox, *op. cit.*, p. 100.

not convincing in her speeches and talks, resulting in unfavourable reactions from political figures and the media.

Let us now examine the role of feminine traits in the construction of her image of a female politician. If, as Perry said, at the beginning “her sex was a positive asset in the opinion of the French”⁸⁶, it was also, as Jane Freedman comments, “a key factor in the construction of negative images of her person”⁸⁷. Sylvie Ollitrault stresses the link between femininity and incompetence that was quickly established: “trapped by her gender, she is quickly confronted by attacks which over-valued her female identity”⁸⁸. In this respect, the clothes of Cresson represent a considerable drawback. According to Élisabeth Schemla, at the time of the television program *Droit de savoir (Right to Know)*, filmed at Cresson’s property at Tartre, “she wears a transparent rather than opaque tracksuit, a double error for her image as seen by the viewers: the outfit appears like a negligee and does not suit a head of government who has to deal with serious subjects”⁸⁹. The comment of Schemla on the clothing choice of Cresson indicates that she misunderstands the effect that her behaviour has on her image. She doubtless wanted to appear natural, but the public criticises her carelessness. Above all, her action contrasted sharply with the masculine image that Cresson moreover sought to project.

⁸⁶ Sheila Perry, “Gender Difference in French Political Communication: From Handicap to Asset?”, *Modern & Contemporary France*, Vol. 13, No. 3, August 2005, p. 344.

⁸⁷ Jane Freedman, *Femmes politique: mythes et symboles*, Paris: L’Harmattan, 1997, p. 224.

⁸⁸ Sylvie Ollitrault, “Édith Cresson, une image brisée”, in *Images, imaginaires du féminin*, Cortil-Wodon: Éditions Modulaires Européennes, 2003, p. 60.

⁸⁹ Élisabeth Schemla, *Édith Cresson, la femme piégée*, Paris: Flammarion, 1993, p. 213.

The great interest of the media in the body and clothes of women is well-known. Alain Rollat, in *Le Monde* of 18 May 1991, portrays Cresson in this way: “legs crossed, very elegant in her black suit that was nicely offset by her buttercup blouse ... her hands crossed on her knees”⁹⁰.

Noëlle Brick and Clarissa Wilks give us some examples which appeared in *Le Figaro* on 20 and 16 May 1991 respectively: “the beautiful Édith” and “a Parisian red-head; this pretty woman of 48 years with auburn hair”⁹¹.

Jane Freedman observes that descriptions such as these had “contributed to the rapid destruction of her image”. In effect, she adds,

the fact of being a woman and possessing “feminine” qualities had not aided the construction of a positive media image ... [and] it is in the main her media image which destroyed her. The press promoted an image of her as a mindless woman who lacked ability⁹².

One has to believe that, in focusing on her body, these comments result in the diminution of the image of Cresson as a strong leader. But the media do not limit their attention to the bodies of female politicians: Alain Rollat, in his interview with her, comments: “we speak a little about cooking. Madam Prime Minister says that, from now on, she will doubtless have less time ‘to prepare her husband’s dinner’”⁹³. This image of her seeking to please her husband is certain to give her a feminine image, but at what price? More generally, the female traits that are systematically put on

⁹⁰ Alain Rollat, “Première soirée chez la ‘Dame de velours’”, *Le Monde*, 18 May 1991.

⁹¹ Noëlle Brick and Clarissa Wilks, “Et Dieu nomma la femme”, *French Language Studies*, Vol. 4, No. 2, p. 239.

⁹² Jane Freedman, *Femmes politiques: mythes et symboles*, Paris: L’Harmattan, 1997, pp. 224, 235.

⁹³ Alain Rollat, *op. cit.*

display by the press harm her image because they go against the widely spread view that the role demands masculine traits.

In respect of the female side of Cresson, the final blow is delivered by the *Bébête Show*, a satirical television program on TF1 inspired by the American program, the *Muppet Show*, which ridicules political persons by presenting them in the form of puppets. In the program Mitterrand is depicted as a frog and Madam Cresson as a panther. According to Sheila Perry, the program presents Cresson as

a stupid, incompetent woman who owes her position of power to the male who dominates her, and who serves his interests to the point of being raped by him to relieve his boredom. This is an image in which Cresson is undermined politically, but in addition her womanhood and sexuality are totally degraded and violated⁹⁴.

Sylvie Ollitrault discusses the impact of the program on the image of Cresson: “puppet from start to finish, Édith Cresson never could impose her leadership. The images we get of her give the impression of a puppet without autonomy”⁹⁵. The emphasis on her female side by the producers of the program is therefore a part of a desire to denigrate her by pointing out above all her lack of competence for the post of Prime Minister.

Édith Cresson had to fight against the feminisation of her image by the media who were intent on undermining her credibility as head of government. She complains:

⁹⁴ Sheila Perry, “Gender Difference in French Political Communication: From Handicap to Asset?”, *Modern & Contemporary France*, Vol. 13, No. 3, August 2005, p. 343.

⁹⁵ Sylvie Ollitrault, “Édith Cresson, une image brisée”, in *Images, imaginaires du féminin*, Cortil-Wodon: Éditions Modulaires Européennes, 2003, p. 65.

the management of a government policy has nothing to do with the curve of a leg or the size of a bosom. The photographers ... concentrated on my knees or my thighs ... and at the National Assembly, they took close-ups of my rings or my earrings⁹⁶.

On the subject of the *Bébête Show*, Schemla cites the bitter words of Cresson: “[it] played a decisive role in the destruction of my image”⁹⁷. The words of Édith Cresson leave no doubt that she did not know how to defend herself against the persistent efforts of the media to ruin her credibility.

The opinion polls reflect the fall in popularity of Cresson. In the beginning, her appointment to the post of Prime Minister was well received since 87% of the French were “very pleased” or “pleased” by the action of the President⁹⁸. However, the triumph was of short duration.

Jane Freedman notes that

hardly a month and a half after her arrival at Matignon, new opinion polls brought bad news ... The image of the Prime Minister suffered a deterioration without precedence in so little time, a fall of sixteen points⁹⁹.

Her popularity rating continued to fall during her mandate and, according to Lynne Wilcox, in the Ifop opinion poll of 31 March 1992, two days before she resigned from her position, she only received 19%¹⁰⁰. This fall is due, in part, to the comments of the media. But, it is also true, according to the numerous accounts that we have cited, that Édith Cresson

⁹⁶ Jane Freedman, *Femmes politiques: mythes et symboles*, Paris: L'Harmattan, 1997, p. 236.

⁹⁷ Élisabeth Schemla, *Édith Cresson, la femme piégée*, Paris: Flammarion, 1993, p. 126.

⁹⁸ Ifop, opinion poll conducted 16-17 May 1991 for *Le Journal du Dimanche*.

⁹⁹ Jane Freedman, *op. cit.*, p. 223.

¹⁰⁰ Lynne Wilcox, “Edith Cresson: Victim of Her Own Image” in Drake, Helen and Gaffney, John, eds., *The Language of Leadership in Contemporary France*, Aldershot: Dartmouth Publishing Company, 1996, p. 79.

did not comprehend the behaviour that a Prime Minister needed to display in order to maintain the respect due to the position.

Édith Cresson seeks to construct a masculine image, but she has little comprehension of the type of behaviour that the French people expect from her. If she knew how to cultivate certain masculine elements in her project to construct for herself an image of a strong leader, when everything is considered it is her negative masculine traits that were most in evidence. Cresson herself tarnished her image by adopting behaviour and language deemed inappropriate.

It is obvious that the media contributed to the fall of Cresson. In spite of the favourable reaction to her appointment by some media players, as Cresson evolved in the role the media in the main turned against her and seized any occasion to put in doubt her ability and her competence for the role of Prime Minister. We have also highlighted the phenomenon of the *Bébête Show* which presents her as incompetent, useless, subjugated to the President, and therefore without authority. Overall, the media focus on the feminine elements of Cresson, as attested to by the numerous references to her clothes, her body and her jewellery. This fascination for the body can only erode her image as leader. Therefore, in spite of her political experience, Cresson is not able to assert her capacity as leader. For her, the trap of the double bind is unsurmountable because the media had ensured that her feminine traits were in the forefront at the very moment that Cresson was striving to fabricate an image of a leader.

In order to expose the situation of the double bind Too Masculine or Too Feminine we have tried to demonstrate that Édith Cresson sought to present herself as a leader who established her authority by means of the masculine traits of power, firmness, rationality and aggressiveness. This strategy did not succeed. The double bind Too Masculine or Too Feminine consists, in the case of Édith Cresson, in her repeated attempts to highlight her masculine traits, attempts that were in vain because it is the feminine side which dominates the image that we have of her. In despite of her solid training in politics, including in portfolios considered masculine, we note her deficiencies in the area of communication. Her way of speaking damages her credibility when she gives a speech or a talk; her language is simply not at the level required. In the same way, the French consider her behaviour as inappropriate for the role of Prime Minister. If she makes her debut with the express intention of presenting herself as more masculine than feminine, the French take offence to this approach because they consider that she goes beyond the limits judged reasonable for the post.

1.3 Simone Veil

From a Jewish family, Simone Veil spends her youth in a German concentration camp. Her father and brother depart for Lithuania and will not return. Her mother dies from typhoid a month before the arrival of the Allies on 15 April 1945 and therefore before the liberation of the prisoners, including Simone, from the concentration camp. These experiences are going to shape her behaviour in the years to come.

First of all, we examine the main masculine traits of Simone that the media identify. During the debate in the National Assembly on the Abortion Law in November and December 1974, Franz-Olivier Giesbert, in *Le Nouvel Observateur* of 2 December 1974, observes: “Simone Veil defended her argument with tenacity and authority”¹⁰¹. The success of Simone Veil in achieving the promulgation of the Abortion Law indicates that she has a solid knowledge of her portfolio, one of the masculine traits which form part of our analysis. With respect to the capacity of Madam Veil as minister, *Le Figaro* of 16 December 1974 notes: “Madam Veil, whose assurance, simplicity of comment and conviction make an impression ... has confirmed her success of 28 November and her undeniable qualities as minister”¹⁰². These qualities are highlighted by Jean Daniel in *Le Nouvel Observateur* of 30 December 1974, where he reports the results of a poll taken of readers of the magazine: “when we asked ourselves who had stood out the most in France [in 1974] ... the

¹⁰¹ Franz-Olivier Giesbert, “La Victoire paradoxale de Simone Veil”, *Le Nouvel Observateur*, 2 December 1974, p. 41.

¹⁰² “Avortement: projet voté au Sénat ” *Le Figaro*, 16 December 1974, p. 8.

decision was unanimous for us and those around us, a great lady, Simone Veil”¹⁰³. The same day, *L’Express* praises “the outstanding performance of Simone Veil, clear, competent, and firm, in the course of difficult debates”¹⁰⁴. In 1979, at the time of her success in the poll for the presidency of the European Parliament, Paul Guilbert, in *L’Express* of 28 July, comments: “those who discussed the novice recognised her tone of authority”¹⁰⁵. Some years later, we again find in Madam Veil the same air of authority. On 21 November 2004, *Ouest-France* publishes a portrait of Madam Veil where the author describes her as follows:

as to her personality, if her official responsibilities finished up keeping in check her rebel side, if age has tempered her fits of anger, she keeps her independence of mind ... Authoritarian, she likes power but observes with clarity its aberrations and workings¹⁰⁶.

The term “authoritarian” refers to the traits of aggressiveness and firmness. Laurent Valdiguié, in *Le Journal du Dimanche* of 13 August 2011, cites the words of Jean-Marc Roberts, the editor of *Stock* which publishes her autobiography, referring to her firmness: “she can be hard, she does not let herself be taken in”¹⁰⁷. In spite of some critical judgements, in general we find that the media display their admiration for Simone Veil by highlighting her aggressiveness, her competence, her

¹⁰³ Jean Daniel, “1974: Une Femme, un homme”, *Le Nouvel Observateur*, 30 December 1974, p. 20.

¹⁰⁴ “Le Pari sur les femmes”, *L’Express*, 30 December 1974, p. 52.

¹⁰⁵ Paul Guilbert, “Le Rébus européen”, *L’Express*, 28 July 1979, p. 34.

¹⁰⁶ “Une Femme politique différente”, *Ouest-France*, 21 November 2004.

¹⁰⁷ Laurent Valdiguié, “Simone Veil, une Française d’exception”, *Le Journal du Dimanche*, 13 August 2011.

assurance, her solid knowledge of her portfolio and her firmness, all of which are considered to be masculine traits.

Among researchers and academics, the authoritarian character of Simone Veil is the primary behaviour noted. Franz-Olivier Giesbert describes Veil as having “an astonishing strength of character, a certain hardness as well ... she exudes authority”¹⁰⁸. Maurice Szafran observes that “she opts ... for authority, indeed authoritarianism, with her male colleagues”¹⁰⁹. We observe that the word “authoritarian” is referred to in the work of Linda Trimble and Natasja Treiberg on the former Prime Minister of New Zealand, Helen Clark. In effect, Trimble and Treiberg emphasise the importance of masculine traits, including that of authority, in the construction of the political image of Clark¹¹⁰. As we know, masculine traits can be positive and negative, and can quickly become a rejection factor. On this subject, Raylene L. Ramsay points out the negative side of this trait for Veil: “one of the most popular ministers ever remains a person detested acrimoniously by a number of members of the establishment who consider her as difficult and authoritarian”¹¹¹. Laurence Pfaadt introduces a second significant trait in citing the words of the parliamentary member Yves Guéna at the time of the abortion debate: “we have been impressed by her competence”¹¹². Ramsay

¹⁰⁸ Franz-Olivier Giesbert, *Jacques Chirac*, Paris: Seuil, 1987, p. 221.

¹⁰⁹ Maurice Szafran, *Simone Veil: Destin*, Paris: Flammarion, 1994, p. 196.

¹¹⁰ Linda Trimble and Natasja Treiberg, “Either Way, There’s Going to be a Man in Charge”, in Rainbow Murray, ed. *Cracking the Highest Glass Ceiling*, Santa Barbara: Praeger, 2010, p. 129.

¹¹¹ Raylene L. Ramsay, *French Women in Politics*, New York: Berghahn Books, 2003, p. 175.

¹¹² Laurent Pfaadt, *Simone Veil: Une Passion française*, Saint-Victor-d’Épine:

explains the popularity of Veil as being due, in part, to her competence. Commenting on her interview with Veil, Ramsay signals other masculine traits displayed by Simone: “Veil demonstrated a realistic and energetic approach [with] a powerful and physical presence ... [which gave] the impression of a determined personality”¹¹³. The lexical analysis of the numerous portraits described above permit us to find the masculine traits of “power”, “aggressiveness”, “assurance”, “firmness”, and “competence”. It is therefore evident that the researchers and academics are, in the main, in agreement with the media.

We shall now consider what female traits featured in the representations of Simone Veil. Before commencing, we should note that Madam Veil, speaking about her appointment as Minister of Health in 1974, states: “for my part I was only Minister because I was a woman and on other occasions the fact of being a woman has without doubt aided me”¹¹⁴. We find here that Madam Veil displays a candid lucidity on the political advantages of the use of femininity. Given the predisposition of the media to make comments on the physical appearance of female politicians, the examples are numerous. Maurice Szafran cites *Le Monde* of 14 March 1970, which describes her thus: “Madam Veil is forty-two years old ... Married to an inspector of public finances, mother of three children she is a small brunette woman, one who is charming, reserved and

City Éditions, 2011, p.108.

¹¹³ Raylene L. Ramsay, *French Women in Politics*, New York: Berghahn Books, 2003, pp. 174, 177.

¹¹⁴ Simone Veil, Paper given at a Senate Conference on “Femmes et pouvoir (XIX^e-XX^e siècles)”, 8 March 2004.

discreet”¹¹⁵. Philippe Boucher, in *Le Monde* of 30 May 1974, two days after her appointment as Minister of Health, depicts her in this way:

her very light blue eyes, her distant grace, her everlasting smile, her bursts of laughter, her charm which is that of a woman having just entered maturity, her ever-present dignity works wonders¹¹⁶.

In *Le Figaro* of 14 December 1974, we read this sentence: “Madam Veil, in a blue and purple suit and the Attorney General, M. Jean Lecanuët, attended ... the presentation of the report of the Commission of Social Affairs”¹¹⁷. We note that there is no reference to the clothes of M.

Lecanuët. Olivier Todd, in *Le Nouvel Observateur* of 30 December 1974, observes: “for the majority of citizens, she is a woman of forty-seven years, with the beauty of her intelligence and her endurance, with superb green eyes”¹¹⁸. The fixation of the press on clothing is obvious in *Le Point* of 23 January 1984:

Simone Veil ... is associated, in the minds of the journalists, with a fashion designer: Chanel ... One would see her with messy hair and a hat, wearing jeans or even wearing high heels. Sartorial fantasy is not her strength. Hello Chanel¹¹⁹.

The fascination for appearances is underlined by Élisabeth Guigou qui states:

¹¹⁵ Maurice Szafran, *Simone Veil: Destin*, Paris: Flammarion, 1994, p. 178.

¹¹⁶ Philippe Boucher, “Madame Simone Veil: Le Mal de vivre”, *Le Monde*, 30 May 1974, p. 6.

¹¹⁷ “La Ministre de la Santé: une leçon de démocratie aura été donnée au pays”, *Le Figaro*, 14 December 1974, p. 5.

¹¹⁸ Olivier Todd, “La Révélation de l’année: Simone Veil”, *Le Nouvel Observateur*, 30 December 1974, p. 61.

¹¹⁹ “Simone Veil: Madam Chanel”, *Le Point*, 23 January 1984, p. 3.

one day when ... [Simone Veil] went shopping with untidy hair and was badly dressed, she had to suffer, in the media on the following days, comments on her so-called depression and her desire to get away from politics¹²⁰.

The media seek to present the weaknesses of Madam Veil by focusing on feminine qualities such as age, clothing, marital status, her role as mother and her beauty. We rarely find these elements in their comments on male politicians. As we observed with Madam Cresson, highlighting the female aspects harms the image of Simone insofar as a female politician must demonstrate masculine traits.

With respect to the moral qualities of Simone, Alain Duhamel notes: “she embodies a spouse and a mother, sensitivity and protection”¹²¹. All of these qualities relate to the stereotypical idea of femininity, as underlined by Christine Bard who notes that “the female gender norm is perfectly symbolised by Simone Veil who combines classic beauty and reassuring motherhood”¹²². For his part, Maurice Szafran observes that “she did not seek to dress herself up as a man to exercise her responsibilities. In her work as minister, she never forgot her gender”¹²³. Jean Bothorel also emphasises her feminine qualities: “she has this charm of the past, this old-fashioned and reassuring elegance, this calm presence”¹²⁴. Therefore, the image of Veil, the female politician,

¹²⁰ Élisabeth Guigou, *Être femme en politique*, Paris: Plon, 1997, p. 196.

¹²¹ Alain Duhamel, *Les Prétendants*, Paris: Gallimard, 1983, pp. 105-6.

¹²² Christine Bard, “Les Premières femmes au Gouvernement (France, 1936-1981)”, *Histoire@Politique*, No. 01, May/June 2007, p. 16.

¹²³ Maurice Szafran, *Simone Veil: Destin*, Paris: Flammarion, 1994, pp. 202-3.

¹²⁴ Jean Bothorel, *Le Pharaon*, Paris: Éditions Grasset & Fasquelle, 1983, p. 94.

perfectly integrates the figures of mother and wife. Even in her political actions she exudes femininity.

It is in her oratory capacity that the fragile nature of her feminine side is revealed. Indeed, numerous commentators consider that Simone Veil falls well short as a public speaker, as for instance *Le Monde* of 28 November 1974 which, in reporting the debate on abortion emphasises her failure in the public arena: “facing an audience almost exclusively masculine, Madam Veil seems moved, above all terribly alone ... equally victim of her own honesty and tolerance”¹²⁵. Discussing the speech of Veil to the National Assembly on 29 November 1974, Olivier Todd highlights the air of vulnerability of Veil during her speech:

it is a natural performance, even if the tone of Simone Veil is a little strained in front of the members of parliament. Some inflexions of the voice, some tumbles, some trembling of hands, some fits of rage, barely contained, portraying the emotion held back¹²⁶.

Franz-Olivier Giesbert, in *Le Nouvel Observateur* of 2 December 1974, notes that, at the beginning of the debate on abortion, Madam Veil speaks with “a deliberate but nervous manner which is often clumsy”¹²⁷. The stereotypical image of a female politician speaking badly is clearly evident in an interview given by Roselyne Bachelot who describes the gap between the speeches of Veil and those of male politicians:

¹²⁵ “Le Débat sur l’IVG”, *Le Monde*, 28 November 1974, p. 5.

¹²⁶ Olivier Todd, “La Révélation de l’année: Simone Veil”, *Le Nouvel Observateur*, 30 December 1974, p. 65.

¹²⁷ Franz-Olivier Giesbert, “La Victoire paradoxale de Simone Veil”, *Le Nouvel Observateur*, 2 December 1974, p. 41.

a woman has a different mode of expression to men ... One notices it clearly in the case of Simone Veil. She does not have the type of steamroller sound that men have when discussing politics. She hesitates, she stammers, she repeats herself, she gives incomplete sentences, which is generally consistent with the way women speak¹²⁸.

We find the same sentiment in the comment of Maurice Szafran who discusses a television interview of Veil in 1974: “she stammers sometimes, mixes up the syntax, and even allows herself some rough guesses”¹²⁹. The particular way she expresses herself in public appears, to certain commentators, to reveal her weaknesses; at the same time these are put down as a natural for a woman, in line with the stereotype of a woman who is unable to control her emotions. This emotional trait is contrary to the masculine trait of rationality which demands that decisions are taken logically without emotion.

It is interesting to examine the details on the approval rating of Simone Veil in light of the comments we have cited above on her masculine and feminine traits. Appendix 2 gives the results of opinion polls conducted by TNS Sofres for *Le Figaro Magazine* for Simone Veil from January 1981 to June 2002, with a peak of 68% in March 1993. She enjoys a percentage in the region of 40% for the majority of the period. Laurent Pfaadt explains these opinion polls in this way: “she remains, in the hearts of French women and men, a great heroine like Lucie Aubrac, Marie Curie or Germaine Tillon”¹³⁰. Laurent Valdiguié, in *Le Journal du*

¹²⁸ Jane Freedman, *Femmes politique: mythes et symboles*, Paris: L'Harmattan, 1997, p. 71.

¹²⁹ Maurice Szafran, *Simone Veil: Destin*, Paris: Flammarion, 1994, p. 202.

¹³⁰ Laurent Pfaadt, *Simone Veil: Une Passion française*, Saint-Victor-d'Épine: City Éditions, 2011, p. 9.

Dimanche of 13 August 2011, gives similar remarks in his comment on the opinion poll listing the Top 50 of preferred personalities: “over the years Simone Veil has become a French icon”¹³¹. Other examples attesting to her popularity: an opinion poll published in *Le Point* in 1979 “identifies Simone Veil as the most popular minister in the government”¹³². Among researchers, Mariette Sineau states that “during the five years that she was present in the government (1974-1979), Simone Veil was always at the top of the opinion polls”¹³³. These spectacular scores demand a greater analysis. We are limiting ourselves to the three elements that Raylene L. Ramsay put forward in her study: the popularity of Veil could be due in part to her motherly image, her image of a caring woman, and her courage as a Holocaust survivor”¹³⁴.

Nevertheless we also find statements which point to a convergence of masculine and feminine traits which act to her advantage in helping feminise her image of a solid and determined minister. Szafran reports that “the figure ... is decidedly complex, humanist and rigorous, while at the same time remaining a ferocious reformist and delightfully conservative”¹³⁵. Let us highlight the word “delightfully”, which indicates Veil has a certain power of seduction. On the other hand, if “ferociously”

¹³¹ Laurent Valdiguié, “Simone Veil, une Française d’exception”, *Le Journal du Dimanche*, 13 August 2011. Veil is in 4th place.

¹³² Laurent Pfaadt, *Simone Veil: Une Passion française*, Saint-Victor-d’Épine: City Éditions, 2011, p. 131.

¹³³ Mariette Sineau, “Les Femmes et le pouvoir exécutif en France: de l’exclusion ... à l’adoubement présidentiel”, *Recherches féministes*, Vol. 23, No. 1, 2010, p. 87.

¹³⁴ Raylene L. Ramsay, *French Women in Politics*, New York: Berghahn Books, 2003, p. 175.

¹³⁵ Maurice Szafran, *Simone Veil: Destin*, Paris: Flammarion, 1994, p. 177.

makes us think of an aggressive behaviour, Jane Freedman introduces some interesting nuances to the conversation:

we are left with the impression that Simone Veil cannot control her emotions. She is a combative woman, but she fights in a “feminine” way ... she belongs to the feminine domain linked to nature and passion¹³⁶

Like Szafran, Freedman presents us with mixed characteristics: the term “combative” has a masculine character while “emotions”, “nature” and “passion” relate to her feminine side. These last comments bring together masculine and feminine traits such that they coexist in total harmony.

Overall, our analysis indicates that the image of Madam Veil consists of a mix of masculine and feminine traits. We have identified in the media and scholarly articles a good number of masculine traits: aggressiveness, force, competence, assurance, firmness and a solid knowledge of her portfolio. Without any doubt these traits aid her to fabricate a reputation as an efficient and respected female politician. We have also noted that the media tend to concentrate on her femininity, that is to say her body, her clothes, and her way of speaking. With respect to her manner of dressing, we note even her classic Chanel style. In addition, the comments cited above highlight the fact that she is a mother and a wife and that she assumes fully these roles, that she displays feminine behaviour elements such as sensitivity and elegance, and that she exudes classical beauty and tranquil presence. We have noted that Madam Veil is

¹³⁶ Jane Freedman, *Femmes politiques: mythes et symboles*, Paris: L'Harmattan, 1997, p. 178.

a very popular female politician, in spite of the fact that in her era female politicians rarely occupied positions of importance.

In light of her popularity, it seems that Madam Veil was successful in making the two sides coexist, to the point where she seemed to escape any effects arising from the double bind. However, the double bind masculine and feminine is not absolutely neutralized. She was never considered as suitable for the roles of Prime Minister and President, nor a natural contender for the most important parliamentary posts. Therefore, in spite of her approval rating, Madam Veil only seems to overcome the double bind Too Masculine or Too Feminine by limiting her political ambitions.

1.4 Michèle Alliot-Marie

On May 29 2005 Jacques Chirac confides to Madam Alliot-Marie that he was considering Dominique de Villepin and herself for the post of Prime Minister. Subsequently, it is Villepin who is appointed but the fact that Alliot-Marie was in contention demonstrates her abilities in politics and the esteem that her party members had for her.

Michèle Alliot-Marie is known under the acronym “MAM”. Her mother, Renée Marie, in speaking of the childhood of her daughter, describes her as very independent. Discussing her father, Michaël Darmon observes that “Bernard Marie treated Michèle like the son he did not have. And she accepts to play that role”¹³⁷. Thus, as a young woman Michèle contemplates becoming an explorer. We note there, without doubt, the beginning of an explanation for the masculine traits that the media and the public attribute to her.

In 1999 she is a candidate for the presidency of the Rally for a Republic Party (RPR), a role considered to be masculine at that time because a woman had never been appointed to this post. On 4 December 1999 she is successful in the election battle and becomes the first female president of the RPR. She will stay in the role for three years. Discussing the circumstances of her victory, Michèle comments that “power is men’s business, above all on the Right, and career strategies go hand in hand with the masculine gender”. She adds: “for those who want to be in

¹³⁷ Michaël Darmon, *Michèle Alliot-Marie: La Grande Mulette*, Paris: L’Archipel, 2006, pp. 32, 52.

politics, making one's mark is an absolutely necessity". Thus, for her the political world is a place for those with hardened temperaments. She notes also: "I know that I give the impression of a somewhat distant woman, indeed one who is hard. It is said that I was rigid, harsh, austere and intellectual, and more"¹³⁸. It is therefore clear that for MAM a political career demands that one assumes masculine traits.

Let us first of all examine how the media present the masculine traits of Michèle Alliot-Marie at the time of her campaign for the presidency of the RPR. We find numerous examples in the press. *Le Monde* of 12 October 1999 cites Jean-Louis Saux, who presents a picture of her as "a determined and active woman ... a free woman". Sophie Huet, in *Le Figaro* of 8 November 1999, points out her personal qualities: "she is very demanding and rigorous"¹³⁹. In *Le Figaro* of 17 November 1999, Thierry Portes describes her authoritarian character at the time of a meeting in Strasbourg: "the finger raised, the voice raised, she walks back and forth in the room, fixing her gaze in turn on each person"¹⁴⁰. On December 6 1999 a correspondent from *Marianne* comments: "the RPR has found its Iron Lady, one who is methodical, determined and efficient"¹⁴¹. The term "methodical" points to the rationality of Michèle. The reference to the "Iron Lady" is explained by the incident, reported by Darmon, where she rejected the recommendation

¹³⁸ Michèle Alliot-Marie, *Au Cœur de l'État*, Paris: Plon, 2013, pp. 25, 83, 170.

¹³⁹ Sophie Huet, "Alliot-Marie, Madame Bons Offices", *Le Figaro*, 8 November 1999.

¹⁴⁰ Thierry Portes, "Michèle Alliot-Marie en vedette 'amicale'", *Le Figaro*, 17 November 1999.

¹⁴¹ "Michèle Alliot-Marie, dents longues et poing serré", *Marianne*, 6 December 1999.

of President Jacques Chirac to put François Fillon in the post of Secretary of the party: “it is I who is the boss ... it is I who will appoint the person”¹⁴². Thus, Michèle does not hesitate to display an aggressive behaviour, even when faced by the Head of State. With respect to the weekly magazines *Le Nouvel Observateur* and *L'Express*, her campaign incites little interest, particularly for the first-named. The lack of reporting of these two magazines on the female president of the principal opposition party is made all the more remarkable because they focus more on the senior male members of the party than on her.

In 1999 Michèle seems to want to distance herself from any trace of feminine sensitivity by refusing, against all expectations, to vote for the Law on Parity. *Libération* of 9 December 1999 cites the words of Michèle:

I wish that there were more women in decision making posts, whether they be political or administrative. But this law is not a good law. It is largely hypocritical, it is badly framed. It fails to fix a certain number of problems, notably those relating to the issues faced by women in political life¹⁴³.

This example shows us that Michèle does not shrink from a political decision that does not support women. Rather than pursue the objective of feminine solidarity, she prefers to examine the law in a detached fashion before arriving at a decision, an action which also signals her rationality. However, this pragmatic decision of Michèle incites controversy: on 17 November 2000, Catherine Pégard and Ludovic Vigogne in *Le Point*

¹⁴² Michaël Darmon, *Michèle Alliot-Marie: La Grande Muette*, Paris: L'Archipel, 2006, p. 161.

¹⁴³ “Droite et gauche font la parité. Seule Michèle Alliot-Marie, présidente du RPR, rejette le projet de loi”, *Libération*, 9 December 1999.

express their hostility to this decision which, for them, has betrayed women:

hardly even elected, [she] dared to come down against parity ... Her image immediately was seen as hardened. One finds her icelike, the language too controversial, and the tone too high: speech strengthens her thinking which remains unchanged¹⁴⁴.

We find in this statement terms and turns of phrase such as “hardened”, “icelike”, “language too controversial” and “speech strengthens her thinking”, all of which are contrary to the stereotypical image of a female politician. In voting against the law Michèle demonstrates the masculine traits of firmness and rationality.

Let us now look at other significant moments in the political life of Michèle so that we better appreciate how much masculine traits feature in her behaviour. We start with her post as Minister of Defence, a role considered masculine, which she occupied for five years from 7 May 2002 to 15 May 2007. Discussing the appointment of Michèle, Antoine Guiral, in *Libération* of 8 May 2002, comments: “[this appointment] will permit her to cultivate the image of herself that she wants to convey: an obstinate woman who is capable of imposing her ‘intuition’ in a universe of men”¹⁴⁵. According to Guiral, Alliot-Marie wants to bring to the forefront the spirit of competition which drives her, and to recall it at every opportunity. Discussing her first meeting with the Defence Chiefs of Staff, Michèle observes: “some years later, some Chiefs of Staff told me

¹⁴⁴ Catherine Pégard and Ludovic Vigogne, “Le Général de l’armée morte”, *Le Point*, 17 November 2000.

¹⁴⁵ Antoine Guiral, “Michèle Alliot-Marie: Ministre de la Défense et des Anciens Combattants”, *Libération*, 8 May 2002.

that, on that day, they understood they had a chief, and that had reassured them”¹⁴⁶. According to Darmon, the success of Alliot-Marie was such that in 2004 “the pro-Chirac supporters started to consider, among others, the Minister of Defence as a possible successor to Raffarin [as Prime Minister]”. He cites *Le Figaro Magazine* of 15 December 2004: “at the head of the armies since 2002 ... [she] has won the battle of credibility”¹⁴⁷. Her success as President of the RPR and in her ministerial roles indicates that MAM possesses a solid knowledge of the areas in which she works. *Le Nouvel Observateur* of 3 June 2005 provides us with other examples of the masculine behaviour of Michèle:

her frank way of speaking ... her parachute jumps and flights in Rafale and Mirage jets and also in the Alpha Jets of the precision aerobatic demonstration team of the French Air Force ... [she] insists on being called Madam “the minister” to make it very clear that it is the function which counts, and not the sex of the person who occupies it¹⁴⁸.

In 2007 Alliot-Marie adds to her “firsts” as a woman in roles considered masculine: Nicolas Sarkozy appoints her to the post of Minister of the Interior. The correspondent of *Libération* of 18 May 2007 observes that she “sees her pugnacity recompensed after a faultless journey of three years at Defence”¹⁴⁹. We see there once again the image of a competent and combative leader that she has managed to fabricate for herself. It should be noted that, in her work at the ministries of Defence and Interior, she had to fight to be accepted in a male world. In addition to the

¹⁴⁶ Michèle Alliot-Marie, *Au Cœur de l'État*, Paris: Plon, 2013, p. 80.

¹⁴⁷ Michaël Darmon, *Michèle Alliot-Marie: La Grande Murette*, Paris: L'Archipel, 2006, p. 13.

¹⁴⁸ “Portrait: Michèle Alliot-Marie”, *Le Nouvel Observateur*, 3 June 2005.

¹⁴⁹ “Alliot-Marie, l'ex-soldat de Chirac enlève l'Intérieur” *Libération*, 18 May 2007.

masculine traits of competence and solid knowledge of her work domains that we have noted above, the terms “obstinate”, “impose” and “pugnacity” evoke the masculine traits of aggressiveness, assurance and firmness.

For the researchers and writers the masculine side of Michèle is displayed in the main in her relationships with the President and other male leaders. Before considering these relationships, let us revisit the refusal of Michèle, in 2000, to support the Parity Law. Michaël Darmon notes that the media are hostile to her: “the criticisms mount: they point to her lack of humanity and her indifference to the fate of women”¹⁵⁰. Michèle’s lack of feminine solidarity is possibly explained by the fact that, in the main, MAM has evolved in roles considered masculine and that she often demonstrates a behaviour that is rigid, aggressive and firm. In May 2002 Jacques Chirac creates a new party, the Union for a Popular Movement (UMP). He and Michèle disagree over the allocations for winning candidates. Using the financial resources of the RPR as a negotiating tool, Madam Alliot-Marie negotiates with Jacques Chirac her appointment to the Raffarin government¹⁵¹. She thus becomes Minister of Defence, the first woman to occupy this sovereign post. In opposing the wishes of the President she demonstrates her strength of character. In October 2005 this trait is again on display: against the advice of military leaders, she suspends General Henri Poncet from his position due to the

¹⁵⁰ Michaël Darmon, *Michèle Alliot-Marie: La Grande Muette*, Paris: L’Archipel, 2006, p. 168.

¹⁵¹ *Ibid.*, p. 178.

death of an Ivory Coast man. This action upsets the French professional army which is also scandalised when Michèle insists that he be tried under civil justice. She also possesses a determination to overcome all resistance as Darmon highlights: “the first year of her mandate [as Minister] is difficult: Michèle Alliot-Marie demonstrates her authoritarian and directive character”¹⁵². Éric Decouty and Bruno Jeudy confirm this same determination: discussing her appointment on 18 May 2007 to the post of Minister of the Interior and of Overseas and Territorial Communities by Nicolas Sarkozy, they suggest that the appointment may have occurred in spite of the reticence of Sarkozy: “she attacks him front on, that irritates him. He does not like her manly side”¹⁵³. Obviously, it is the masculine traits which are put forward by the researchers and academics. We note, among other, terms such as “authoritarian character” and “manly side”.

As we would expect, the feminine traits of MAM are often commented on in the media. In *Le Monde* of 21 October 1999 Jean-Louis Saux highlights her femininity by using the word “charming” to describe her¹⁵⁴. On 8 November 1999 Sophie Huet describes her in *Le Figaro* as “a personality ... [who has] a grand feminine elegance”¹⁵⁵. On 28 April 2005 Muriel Frat in *Le Figaro* highlights her elegance as well:

¹⁵² Michaël Darmon, *Michèle Alliot-Marie: La Grande Muette*, Paris: L’Archipel, 2006, p. 146.

¹⁵³ Éric Decouty and Bruno Jeudy, *Sarkozy et “ses” femmes*, Paris: Plon, 2008, p. 36.

¹⁵⁴ Jean-Louis Saux, “En campagne pour la présidence du RPR, Madame Alliot-Marie n’échappe pas à ‘la question’”, *Le Monde*, 21 October 1999.

¹⁵⁵ Sophie Huet, “Alliot-Marie, Madame Bons Offices”, *Le Figaro*, 8 November 1999.

feminine, Madam Minister remains thus in all circumstances. She pursues the need for perfection to the point that she enquires as to the colour of the places where she is giving speeches to ensure that her clothes harmonise with them¹⁵⁶.

With respect to the appearance of Michèle, the comments proliferate. In 1986 Michèle appears in *Paris Match*. According to Michaël Darmon the photographer Jean Guichard

produces a photograph of her which is published on a full page. A wavy hairstyle, a long angora pullover with a large rolled neck ... Large glasses, golden earrings, painted nails, a diamond ring and a flat watch: in spite of a nervous smile, the picture is of a relaxed forty something woman¹⁵⁷.

Sophie Huet, in *Le Figaro* of 8 November 1999, observes that Michèle is “partial to beige or white suits, and often to patent leather shoes”¹⁵⁸.

Pierre Georges, in *Le Monde* of 14 December 1999, recounts to us an amusing story with respect to these suits:

at the National Assembly an officious attendant tries to prevent this lady in pants from entering the building ... in an dominating voice MAM replied: “Well, would you prefer that I took them off ?” before continuing on her way, her rebellion clearly evident.

This revolt against a parliamentary rule preventing women wearing a pantsuit demonstrates that she is not prepared to accept that women are subject to this type of sexual discrimination. Georges also focuses on her clothes: “an elegant woman, always well-dressed ... MAM always wears gloves ... she has a marked preference for luxurious pantsuits”¹⁵⁹. On 22 January 2005 Sylvie Pierre-Brossolette observes in *Le Figaro*: “she takes

¹⁵⁶ Muriel Frat, “Opération séduction à la télévision”, *Le Figaro*, 28 April 2005.

¹⁵⁷ Michaël Darmon, *Michèle Alliot-Marie: La Grande Muette*, Paris: L’Archipel, 2006, p. 94.

¹⁵⁸ Sophie Huet, “Alliot-Marie, Madame Bons Offices”, *Le Figaro*, 8 November 1999.

¹⁵⁹ Pierre Georges, “Dis bonjour à la MAM !”, *Le Monde*, 14 December 1999. Only men are authorised to wear pants while the Assembly is in session.

particular care to look after her appearance ... [and] she also looks after her physical figure ... [she has an] impeccable silhouette in an Armani suit with a grey shawl collar”¹⁶⁰. These accounts confirm the tendency of the media to focus on the clothing of women. Clearly, Michèle does not escape it either.

How is the feminine side of Michèle presented by the researchers and writers? At the time of the announcement of her candidature, in 1999, for the presidency of the RPR, she makes known “that it time that a woman takes power”. According to Darmon, it is the first time that she has put forward her status as a woman:

if she pronounces herself against feminist politics she accepts, in private, to think of politics from a feminine viewpoint, which could surprise, given her public image as a captain¹⁶¹.

In October 2006 Michèle declares that it is she who must face Ségolène Royal because “she could neutralise the ‘feminine’ advantage of Royal”, assessing herself as being “the only candidate who will be capable of beating her”¹⁶². According to Darmon, Michèle justifies this declaration thus: “our careers and our convictions absolutely oppose. The only thing we have in common is to be a woman”¹⁶³. We identify here the political strategy of Michèle who considers her experience and her sex as political weapons in her encounter with Royal. In these two examples we note that

¹⁶⁰ Sylvie Pierre-Brossolette, “Michèle Alliot-Marie”, *Le Figaro*, 22 January 2005.

¹⁶¹ Michaël Darmon, *Michèle Alliot-Marie: La Grande Muette*, Paris: L’Archipel, 2006, p. 153.

¹⁶² Rainbow Murray, “Is the Mere Presence of a Strong Female Candidate Enough to Increase the Substantive Representation of Women?”, *Parliamentary Affairs*, Vol. 61, No. 3, 2008, p. 480.

¹⁶³ Michaël Darmon, *op. cit.*, p. 263.

Michèle only evokes her sex in the context of a project of power conquest. In doing so, her female image comes within the scope of an approach resolutely masculine.

During her political life Madam Alliot-Marie has to suffer comments which refer to her childless life. Michaël Darmon cites the words of Michèle on this subject: “it is true that my ex-husband did not want a child, but the illness of Yannick [the younger sister of Michèle] and the need to protect her have channelled my maternal desire”. In February 2004 Yannick died of multiple sclerosis. According to Darmon, “henceforth it is up to MAM to watch over her niece Ludivine, for whom she is godmother, and her nephew”. He adds: “these two children permit Michèle Alliot-Marie to put in perspective the fact that she was not a mother herself”. On 28 April 2005, according to Darmon, during an interview on the television program *Special Envoy* on France 2, “for the first time she chooses to discuss her life without a child: ‘I probably feel more available for the others’”¹⁶⁴. The same day, Muriel Frat in *Le Figaro* comments on the interview: “she is more than a woman when she reveals, in veiled terms, the pain of not being a mother”¹⁶⁵. Thus, a career woman who remains childless, Michèle highlights with courage her maternal desire which is satisfied by taking charge of the two children of her sister.

Our analysis has found few indications of the feminine trait of compassion. Of course, mention is made of the compassionate actions of

¹⁶⁴ Michaël Darmon, *Michèle Alliot-Marie: La Grande Muette*, Paris: L’Archipel, 2006, p. 192.

¹⁶⁵ Muriel Frat, “Opération séduction à la télévision”, *Le Figaro*, 28 April 2005.

Michèle towards her sister. According to Darmon, “she ...moved house in order to see her each day”. We have also come across the comment of a member of her team who states their appreciation for the attention shown by Michèle. In 2005, when she was Minister of Defence, this team member described her as a person “full of generosity and human warmth ... [and] very sympathetic”¹⁶⁶. For a minister, the ministerial team resembles a family by virtue of the hours of work and the proximity of people. Apart from these two exceptions which confirm the rule, the feminine trait of compassion is lacking in the image of MAM.

With respect to the question of mastering the spoken word, during her early time at the RPR, she is known “as a bad communicator”¹⁶⁷. This failing is far from the image of a leader who masters perfectly the language in speeches and in dealings with the media, particularly, television programmes. In *Le Monde* of 12 October 1999 Jean-Louis Saux observes: “Madam Alliot-Marie prudently confines herself to vague comments, more or less incantatory”¹⁶⁸. In 1999, recognising that

her way of communicating is still defective ... [she] commenced to take lessons in communication ... [and] it is at that time she takes on a “supervisor” in communication in the person of Jean-Luc Mano.

The partnership is going to be very beneficial for her: Michel Darmon notes that, at the time of a television programme in September 2005 in relation to the publication of her book *Le Chêne qu'on relève*, “she shows

¹⁶⁶ Michaël Darmon, *Michèle Alliot-Marie: La Grande Muette*, Paris: L'Archipel, 2006, pp. 191-2, 210.

¹⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 116.

¹⁶⁸ Jean-Louis Saux, “Au RPR, l'offre ‘chiracienne’ s'élargit à Michèle Alliot-Marie”, *Le Monde*, 12 October 1999.

herself articulate in the face of the prickly style of the interviewer”¹⁶⁹. Sylvie Pierre-Brossolette, in *Le Figaro* of 22 January 2005, explains how much she benefited from the advice of Mano: “[he] aids her to overcome her scruples or her inhibitions so that she can cope with media demands. She learns how to play the game”¹⁷⁰. In 2002 she confronts Dominique Strauss-Kahn in a debate on the economy, a subject in which he is an expert. According to Darmon, “she showed that she knew how to tackle a difficult adversary”¹⁷¹. Thus, over time she became more competent in communication; she learned to handle political discourse. Unlike Édith Cresson, she succeeded in overcoming this obstacle and, as a consequence, to reinforce her image as a competent female politician.

Let us examine some comments which present a mixture of feminine and masculine traits for Michèle. Christophe Barbier and Eric Mandonnet, in *L'Express* of 9 December 1999, describe the new President of the RPR as “Madam Hercules”¹⁷², an expression which comically describes her masculine and feminine sides. Carole Barjon, in *Le Nouvel Observateur* of 9 December 1999, reports the success of Alliot-Marie in an article titled “The Victory of a Chirac in Skirts”. In the same article she describes Madam Alliot-Marie in this way:

¹⁶⁹ Michaël Darmon, *Michèle Alliot-Marie: La Grande Muette*, Paris: L'Archipel, 2006, pp. 224, 226-7.

¹⁷⁰ Sylvie Pierre-Brossolette, “Michèle Alliot-Marie”, *Le Figaro*, 22 January 2005.

¹⁷¹ Michaël Darmon, *op.cit.*, p. 226.

¹⁷² Christophe Barbier and Eric Mandonnet, “Le Non-parti du président”, *L'Express*, 9 December 1999, p. 14.

same long legs [as Chirac], same determined military approach ... behind the smile and the blonde hair ... [is] a combatant, a warrior, a chief ... [who, like Chirac, after having spoken to the press, heads] towards the toilets¹⁷³.

One doubts if this last remark would have been published it was a man.

Barjon makes reference to her “skirts” and to her “blond hair”, while juxtaposing them to masculine attributes like “determined approach”, “military-like”, “combatant”, “warrior” and “chief”. Christine Clerc also highlights the masculine and feminine traits of Michèle. At the time of her appointment as Minister of Defence, Clerc writes in *Le Figaro* of 9 May 2002:

blonde smooth hair like Hillary Clinton, long legs under her pantsuits with padded shoulders ... [she] pivoted on her high heels ... this “career woman”, methodical, self-willed and driven to excel at skiing, horse-riding and hang-gliding¹⁷⁴.

Here we find feminine references such as “blonde smooth hair”, “pantsuits with padded shoulders” and “high heels” side by side with terms which typically refer to men. The mix of masculine and feminine characteristics also appears in the reporting of Étienne Dubuis in *Le Temps* of 10 May 2002, at the moment where Michèle Alliot-Marie, new Minister of Defence, flies to Pakistan after the attacks which resulted in the deaths of eleven French naval engineers in Karachi: “keeping the language of compassion while with the victims and their relatives, she adopted that of firmness in her dealings with the Pakistan authorities”¹⁷⁵. Once again we

¹⁷³ Carole Barjon, “La Victoire d’un Chirac en jupons”, *Le Nouvel Observateur*, 9 December 1999, p. 32.

¹⁷⁴ Christine Clerc, “MAM à un train d’enfer”, *Le Figaro*, 9 May 2002.

¹⁷⁵ Étienne Dubuis, “Michèle Alliot-Marie, le baptême du feu”, *Le Temps*, 10 May 2002.

note the disparate terms of “compassion” (feminine) and “firmness” (masculine). Among the researchers and the academics, Darmon cites the words of Michèle’s friend Daniel Lumbroso: “[she] succeeds in politics because she has never accepted the fact of being a woman as a political difference, which also does not prevent her being feminine”¹⁷⁶. The last word on this subject comes from Darmon:

on the cusp of turning sixty, Michèle Alliot-Marie resembles her father with her determined, authoritarian and reserved side, and comes to terms with being fragile, emotive and sensitive like her mother ... Sentimental, indecisive, passionate and tormented, she has formed her shields: rigid, serious, a worker, a go-getter ...¹⁷⁷.

Overall, the commentators present more masculine traits than feminine in their portraits of Michèle. The feminine traits are limited in the main to the clothes, the hair and other aspects of her face and body. It is her masculine traits which are at the forefront: we find terms and phrases like “methodical”, “self-willed”, “excel”, “firmness”, “determined”, “authoritarian”, “determined approach”, “military-like”, “combatant” and “chief”. Thus, for the commentators, the masculine traits clearly prevail in the image of MAM.

Let us finish by a comment on the evolution of the popularity rating of Madam Alliot-Marie. At the time of her election as President of the RPR in December 1999, an Ipsos opinion poll for *Paris Match* indicates that this election is seen as good news for 60% of those surveyed¹⁷⁸. Among the opinion polls undertaken since this date, the Ipsos

¹⁷⁶ Michaël Darmon, *Michèle Alliot-Marie: La Grande Murette*, Paris : L’Archipel, 2006, p. 265.

¹⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 270-1.

¹⁷⁸ Ipsos, Opinion poll conducted from 9 to 11 December 1999 for *Paris Match*.

Barometer of Political Action for *Le Point* (Appendix 1) indicates that, in the main, her popularity rating remains constant, with a peak of 65% in May 2007. She only suffers a major fall following the revelation in January 2011 that she had lied with respect to some issues regarding Tunisia, which could have been harmful to French politics. She resigns on 27 February 2011. However, given the impressive scores she received for more than a decade, we must recognise that the French had a particular esteem for Madam Alliot-Marie.

Overall, our examination indicates that Madam Alliot-Marie has a tendency to promote her masculine side. Those who write about her concentrate in the main on her masculine traits; the reference to her feminine traits are rare, with the exception of the references to her clothes and body. She speaks with firmness and she is not afraid to engage in a trial of strength with male politicians. We also note that she imposes her will on the President of the Republic, which shows her strength of character. In addition, she demonstrates a masculine behaviour by doing parachute jumps or taking flights in the planes of the French air force.

If she totally takes on her masculine roles, there are indications that she also wants to be perceived as a woman, even if the references to her femininity are rare in her autobiography. She limits herself to saying that she regrets being prevented from “going window shopping with [her] friends”. Moreover, she affirms that she is not a feminist and that she “had never invoked her femininity to demand a post or to excuse an error”¹⁷⁹.

¹⁷⁹ Michèle Alliot-Marie, *Au Cœur de l'État*, Paris: Plon, 2013, pp. 125, 215, 275.

Michèle pays attention to her appearance, she wears Armani clothes, she exercises to keep her figure, she diets, and she demonstrates compassion towards her sister's children. However, her female image has a character almost military about it. For example, her fetish for pantsuits, the discipline in her daily life with a work day that commences around five o'clock in the morning, her fitness regime, and her erect stature, all elements giving the impression of a figure with a military appearance.

The outcome is summarised in this way: Madam Alliot-Marie tries to put forward her masculine and feminine qualities to convince the French people that she possesses the virtues of a leader. On the masculine side are found the traits of power, competence, aggressiveness, rationality, firmness, solid experience in her roles and assurance. On the feminine side, we find the traits of compassion, sympathy and generosity.

According to Rainbow Murray she is “one of the rare women who succeed in straddling the ‘feminine/masculine’ binary”¹⁸⁰. However, our analysis demonstrates that Michèle promotes her masculine traits more than her feminine ones. It is nevertheless true that the feminine traits, as they are presented in the media and the works of experts, do not take away anything from her image of a competent female politician. The accession of Michèle to the post of President of the RPR, and her success in the portfolios of Defence and Interior in particular, demonstrate that she succeeded in overcoming the obstacles which a woman who seeks

¹⁸⁰ Rainbow Murray, ed. *Cracking the Highest Glass Ceiling*, Santa Barbara: Praeger, 2010, p. 62.

masculine roles must face. Overall, if Madam Alliot-Marie gives the impression of having surmounted the double bind Too Masculine or Too Feminine, it remains that she did not succeed in obtaining the investiture of the UMP for the presidential of 2007, and finished by disappearing from the world of politics. Her career having been cut short, we can draw the conclusion as to the double impossibility which can be formulated thus, *not female enough, not male enough*.

1.5 Ségolène Royal

Unlike the other women, Ségolène Royal had already participated in a presidential election: in 2007 she competed against Nicolas Sarkozy in the second round, but only gained 47% against the 53% of the winner. In 2011 she is again a candidate in the Primary Election for the 2012 presidential nomination for the Socialist Party. She loses in the first round with 7% of the votes, a result which represents an enormous drop and the infliction of a major blow to her political aspirations. Our analysis is going to be based on her campaigns for the 2007 Presidential election and the 2011 Socialist Primary. As we will see, Madam Royal tries to put forward her feminine qualities rather than her masculine ones.

It is useful for us to see how she positions herself in relation to the group of traits deemed masculine. Let us commence with the masculine trait of aggressiveness. In 2006 Ségolène clearly demonstrates her hostility towards the Socialist Party in taking the decision to establish her campaign headquarters at 282 Boulevard Saint-Germain, rather than at the head office of the Socialist Party, and she refuses to listen to the advice of senior members and experts of the party. Éric Besson, her former campaign adviser who resigned to join the Sarkozy team, confirms that “everything is decided between Ségolène and her advisors in the most intolerable obscurity, without even the knowledge of the leaders of the Socialist Party!”¹⁸¹ Christine Courcol and Thierry Masure also note that

¹⁸¹ Éric Besson, *Qui connaît Madame Royal ? Entretien avec Claude Askolovitch*, Paris: Grasset, 2007, p. 18.

“Royal frequently presents herself as a combatant ... The ‘Madonna’ has an iron hand”, and they cite a senior official of the party who states: “when she believes she is right, nothing or no-one, I tell you, will make her change her opinion”¹⁸². Discussing a television debate between Royal and Sarkozy during the 2007 presidential campaign, Lionel Jospin refers to “her pugnacity”¹⁸³. On 10 October 2011, François-Xavier Bourmaud in *Le Figaro*, refers to her aggressive character: “Royal does not show herself to be less aggressive against her two rivals, Hollande and Aubry, denouncing one of them for their ‘inaction’ and the other one for their electoral ‘inexperience’”¹⁸⁴. These statements indicate that, in the heat of political battle, Madam Royal does not hesitate to demonstrate an aggressive character.

In respect of the masculine trait of assurance, on 15 December 2005 *Le Nouvel Observateur* publishes an article on Ségolène. In it, François Bazin quotes her:

I feel ready ... If the momentum continues ... if the electors of the Left ask me ... then I will naturally present myself. The others will not have a choice. It will be me! ... I often reflect on it and I have no doubt: it [the campaign] will succeed¹⁸⁵.

¹⁸² Christine Courcol and Thierry Masure, *Ségolène Royal: Les Couloirs d'une défaite*, Paris: L'Archipel, 2007, p. 37.

¹⁸³ Lionel Jospin, *L'Impasse*, Paris: Flammarion, 2007, p. 80.

¹⁸⁴ François-Xavier Bourmaud, “Six stratégies à l'épreuve du premier tour”, *Le Figaro*, 10 October 2011.

¹⁸⁵ François Bazin, “Et si c'était elle ...”, *Le Nouvel Observateur*, 15 December 2005, p. 9.

Lionel Jospin also notes “her assurance” at the time of the televised debate between Royal and Sarkozy discussed above¹⁸⁶. Courcol and Masure evoke the confidence of Royal, who is unaffected by her defeat in the 2007 presidential campaign: “in summary, we have lost, but it is very much in spite of me”. Royal adds: “the result is exceptional when you take into account all of our constraints and the strength of the Right”¹⁸⁷. Her assurance is also on display at the time of the 2011 Socialist Primary. As in 2007, in despite of a crushing defeat in the Primary, her self-confidence is evident: on 5 September *Le Point* cites her words: “I have a charisma, an aura, I am a political heavy-weight”¹⁸⁸.

The masculine traits of firmness and aggressiveness are highlighted by Courcol and Masure when, in 2004, Royal becomes President of the Regional Council of Poitou-Charentes: they note that “her adversaries prefer to nickname her ‘Zapaterreur’ because she is authoritarian, without qualms and she alone decides”¹⁸⁹. Discussing the alliance that Royal proposed to François Bayrou during the 2007 Presidential campaign, Jospin denounces it:

the form itself was novel. The sudden strategic change was decided by Ségolène Royal ... Neither the National Office of the Socialist Party, nor the campaign council of the candidate, nor certainly the militants, had been informed or consulted¹⁹⁰.

¹⁸⁶ Lionel Jospin, *L'Impasse*, Paris: Flammarion, 2007, p. 80.

¹⁸⁷ Christine Courcol and Thierry Masure, *Ségolène Royal: Les Coulisses d'une défaite*, Paris: L'Archipel, 2007, p. 13.

¹⁸⁸ “Ségolène Royal plus en forme que jamais”, *Le Point*, 5 September 2013.

¹⁸⁹ Christine Courcol and Thierry Masure, *op. cit.*, p. 75. This citation refers to the Socialist Spanish Prime Minister José Luis Zapatero.

¹⁹⁰ Lionel Jospin, *op. cit.*, pp. 80, 82. Bayrou is the leader of the Union for French Democracy, a centre-Right party.

Her authoritarian character was again in evidence during the 2011 Socialist Primary. On 1 March 2014 Benoît de Valicourt states in

Atlantico:

Ségolène Royal showed her capacity to affront her own camp, her political adversaries and male politicians ... It seems that Madam Royal is authoritarian and that she knows how to impose her views, whether they are good or bad¹⁹¹.

Thus, in the view of the commentators Madam Royal exhibits a firm and aggressive behaviour in the sense that she often takes decisions on her own and demands that others follow them.

The masculine trait of competence is the subject of much media discussion following the decision of Royal to acquire a greater level of experience in the domain of Foreign Affairs, an area traditionally considered the domain of men. Ségolène decides to launch herself on a series of overseas trips. On 30 November 2006 she travels to the Middle East where she meets, in Beirut, the heads of Hamas and Hezbollah. This visit proves to be a mistake. She commits a diplomatic error: she insists on meeting the chiefs of Hamas against the advice of her advisors. No doubt unaware that the parliamentary member Ali Ammar is denouncing France and the United States, she remains passive for the twenty minutes of the speech. This results in unfavourable comments. Christine Courcol and Thierry Masure observe that “in Paris the Right exploits the situation, declaring that it proves that Ségolène Royal ‘is not suitable for’ the function that she is seeking”¹⁹². As a result of the hostility generated by

¹⁹¹ Benoît de Valicourt, “Ségolène Royal présidente? Ce que pourrait être son bilan si elle avait été élue à la place de François Hollande”, *Atlantico*, 1 May 2014.

¹⁹² Christine Courcol and Thierry Masure, *Ségolène Royal: Les Coulisses d’une défaite*,

that visit, Royal deferred a visit to the United States to meet Hillary Clinton, the candidate for the Democratic Party nominee for the Presidential election, to January 2007 and then cancelled it. Ben Clift notes that Royal committed a series of blunders in her quest to acquire experience in foreign affairs. For example, in Canada she supported the demands for the succession of Quebec, which enraged the Prime Minister; she praises China for the swiftness of its justice system; and she demanded that nuclear technology be withheld from Iran, which incited controversy¹⁹³. These stances had an inverse effect to that which she had expected, and as a result she once again found herself in the trap of the double bind which makes a female politician appear more and more incompetent.

More generally, Catherine Achin and Elsa Dorlin observe that “the ‘competence’ of Ségolène Royal had indeed on numerous occasions been in question, and her ‘blunders’ in particular discussed”¹⁹⁴. Marie-Noëlle Lienemann and Philippe Cohen also comment on this lack of competence: “the electors ask themselves why, three months before an election, a future President of the Republic has not yet formed her views on the major policy areas and seems to be unaware of the country’s priorities”¹⁹⁵. With respect to the economy, Rainbow Murray and Sheila

Paris: L’Archipel, 2007, pp. 111-2, 114.

¹⁹³ Ben Clift, “The Ségolène Royal Phenomenon: Political Renewal in France?”, *The Political Quarterly*, Vol. 78, No. 2, April-June 2007, p. 289.

¹⁹⁴ Catherine Achin and Elsa Dorlin, “J’ai changé, toi non plus”, *Mouvements*, 5 April 2007.

¹⁹⁵ Marie-Noëlle Lienemann and Philippe Cohen, *Au revoir Royal*, Paris: Perrin, 2007, pp. 86-7.

Perry note that Royal is the subject of attacks on her economic policy, which is frequently considered as irresponsible. The doubts on her competency obviously put her capacity as a leader in doubt¹⁹⁶. The charge of incompetence is also prevalent in her role as candidate for the presidency and as campaign leader. The more time passes, the more her presidential campaign becomes mired in crisis. According to Bacqué and Chemin, the meeting requests pile up and “the major union leaders see their meetings cancelled, or moved to another date and then cancelled”. They add that the communication between Ségolène, her spokespersons and team members changes for the worse: to the questions from the media as to what Ségolène is doing, “most often they are incapable of telling them”¹⁹⁷. When all is considered, it is evident that the presidential campaign of Ségolène Royal did not convince her collaborators, her party, or the French people that she truly had the level of competence required for the role of Head of State. As a result, by default the masculine trait of competence figures in the numerous comments made.

In spite of the interest aroused by some masculine traits of Ségolène Royal, it is her femininity which is predominantly at the forefront. Muriel Gremillet observes in *Libération* of 21 August 2006: “Ségolène Royal is a woman ... [who] since her political debut ... has

¹⁹⁶ Rainbow Murray and Sheila Perry, “A Right Royal Mess: Why Did the French Say ‘Non’ to the Opportunity of Having a Woman President?” A speech presented to the 2008 Ordinary General Assembly of the American Political Science Association from 28 to 31 August 2008, p. 7.

¹⁹⁷ Raphaëlle Bacqué and Ariane Chemin, *La Femme fatale*, Paris: Albin Michel, 2007, pp. 146,148.

never missed an occasion to highlight her femininity”¹⁹⁸. On 10 September 2011 *Le Monde* reports on the speech made by Royal at Montreuil where “she enumerated a program committing her to her responsibility as a woman of State in front of the nation”¹⁹⁹. By using the term “woman” rather than that of “Head of State” Madam Royal announces her campaign strategy which above all seeks to bring out her image of a woman.

As we can expect, the media do not miss the chance to focus on the body and clothes of Royal. Here are two comments published on *Le Parisien* of 12 February 2007: “Ségolène Royal – this time dressed in red and no longer in white”, and in the same edition, the editorial writer describes the clothing of Ségolène on the occasion of her speech at Villepinte: “red jacket with black buttons over a white t-shirt and a skirt in orange muslin”²⁰⁰. At the time of the 2011 Socialist Primary, Thierry Dupont describes her thus in *L'Express* of 2 September 2011: “Ségolène Royal, blue jacket, black pants and smiles at the ready”²⁰¹. These comments have in common a preoccupation for the attraction of the body and the clothes of a female politician. If the campaign strategy of Ségolène is to promote her image as a woman, we can assume that the comments on her appearance give her comfort in this strategic choice.

¹⁹⁸ Muriel Gremillet, “Être une femme, l’arme absolue”, *Libération*, 21 August 2006.

¹⁹⁹ “Ségolène Royal détaille son programme à Montreuil”, *Le Monde*, 10 September 2011.

²⁰⁰ “Les Promesses de Royal” and “Deux heures d’un discours-fleuve”, *Le Parisien*, 12 February 2007.

²⁰¹ Thierry Dupont, “Royal, ‘Je suis celle qui a le plus travaillé’”, *L'Express*, 2 September 2011.

The feminine side of Royal is also well in evidence in the writings of the researchers and academics, Sheila Perry notes that, as early as 1992, Royal is aware of the impact that the birth of her fourth child can have on her image as a woman:

as the first of a new generation of female ministers who give birth during their mandate, she shows her infant to the media to prove her competence in the roles of mother and minister²⁰².

Raphaëlle Bacqué and Ariane Chemin add to the discussion: “she underwent, in the summer of 2005, a surgical procedure to realign her teeth, and to change her chin and smile”²⁰³, no doubt in preparation for the 2007 presidential campaign. Christine Courcol and Thierry Masure also highlight the femininity of Royal:

all through her political journey Ségolène is going to play, to the end and to the point of excessiveness, the “female” card; sometimes to emphasise her difference, sometimes to put herself in the role of victim²⁰⁴.

Isabelle Garcin-Marrou confirms this: “the female side of Ségolène Royal has constituted an incontestable element of the [2007] campaign”²⁰⁵. The comments of Laurence Fradin in relation to the femininity of Ségolène are more precise:

²⁰² Sheila Perry, “Gender Difference in French Political Communication: From Handicap to Asset?”, *Modern & Contemporary France*, Vol. 13, No. 3, August 2005, p. 348.

²⁰³ Raphaëlle Bacqué and Ariane Chemin, *La Femme fatale*, Paris: Albin Michel, 2007, pp. 109-10.

²⁰⁴ Christine Courcol and Thierry Masure, *Ségolène Royal: Les Coulisses d’une défaite*, Paris: L’Archipel, 2007, p. 29.

²⁰⁵ Isabelle Garcin-Marrou, “Ségolène Royal ou le difficile accès au panthéon Politique”, *Mots. Les Langues du politique*, No. 90, July 2009, p. 14.

this candidate has very much put forward her feminine side, whether it is from the physical viewpoint (photogenic candidate and pretty woman, with attention given to clothes and to their symbolism) or from the point of view of axes of the various interests displayed, supposedly to be feminine²⁰⁶.

In respect of the appearance of Royal, according to Catherine Achin the year 2006 saw a change because she henceforth wears “tailored suits with a white or red jacket, occasionally a leather jacket. All of her feminine advantages are highlighted and modernised”²⁰⁷. On 16 November 2006 she is campaigning in Melle where, according to Courcol and Masure, she is dressed in white, her fetish colour²⁰⁸. Rainbow Murray observes that, during the presidential campaign, there were numerous comments on her clothes, particularly her preference for white jackets. This resulted in a number of nicknames such as “The Madonna”, “The Lady Dressed in White” and “The Virgin Marie-Ségolène”²⁰⁹. The rule under which she seems to have operated is to wear bright colours with a design that is simple and classic; that is, eternally female.

With respect to other feminine traits, Madam Royal seems to naturally express a feminine sensitivity. She shows, for example, compassion during the television program *I Have a Question to Put to You* on TF1 on 19 February 2007, where a man suffering from multiple

²⁰⁶ Laurence Fradin, “La Place des femmes dans la sphère publique en France sous La V^e République: Femmes de Présidents de la République, femmes fonctionnaires, femmes politiques”, *Contemporary French and Francophone Studies*, Vol. 12, No. 2, 2008, p. 219.

²⁰⁷ Catherine Achin and Elsa Dorlin, “J’ai changé, toi non plus”, *Mouvements*, 5 April 2007.

²⁰⁸ Christine Courcol and Thierry Masure, *Ségolène Royal: Les Coulisses d’une défaite*, Paris: L’Archipel, 2007, p. 99.

²⁰⁹ Rainbow Murray, ed. *Cracking the Highest Glass Ceiling*, Santa Barbara: Praeger, 2010, p. 58.

sclerosis is discussing his illness. Ségolène “gets up from the couch on which the guests are sitting and places her hand on his shoulder and consoles him”²¹⁰. This action illustrates perfectly the comment of Murray and Perry who state that Royal excels in the domains of compassion and sympathy²¹¹. But it is the feminine trait of emotion which is also found in the image of Ségolène. Discussing a speech that she made at the Earth Summit held in Rio de Janeiro in June 1992, Courcol and Masure comment: “a speech of emotion more than reason, of compassion more than action ... a frequent situation in the speeches of Ségolène Royal”²¹². In summary, among the feminine traits found in Ségolène Royal, we discern, in particular, those of compassion, emotion and sympathy.

Like all women examined here, Madam Royal is faced with the prejudice that women are poor orators. Discussing her speeches, Courcol and Masure make some unflattering comments: “the tone of her speeches is monotone and incantatory like the chants which so much pleased her father, or like the mesmerizing rhythm of a hypnotist”²¹³. Reporting the official investiture of Ségolène Royal on 26 November 2006 as the Socialist Party candidate for the 2007 Presidential election, Courcol and Masure observe: “a mediocre speaker ... Her voice is monotonous, the

²¹⁰ Christine Courcol and Thierry Masure, *Ségolène Royal: Les Coulisses d'une défaite*, Paris: L'Archipel, 2007, p. 167.

²¹¹ Rainbow Murray and Sheila Perry, “A Right Royal Mess: Why Did the French Say ‘Non’ to the Opportunity of Having a Woman President?”, A speech presented to the ordinary general assembly of the American Political Science Association from 28 to 31 August 2008, p. 7.

²¹² Christine Courcol and Thierry Masure, *op. cit.*, p. 63.

²¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 37.

body motionless, with non-existent body language”²¹⁴. Beyond these speaking faults, we observe a political approach which, in essence, attaches little importance to the situation of women. Mariette Sineau notes that the speeches of Ségolène fail to reach women:

all in all, everything happens as if Ségolène Royal had not known how to speak to the women of the country, failing to echo their problems and to appear capable of protecting them from job insecurity²¹⁵.

Whether it is related to the tone of her voice or to her political message, Madam Royal does not succeed in overcoming the stereotype which presents women as poor speakers.

Overall, it is clear that feminine traits dominate the image of Ségolène Royal and that, in spite of the positive opinions that they provoke, they fail to offset the masculine traits which are either in excess (authority) or absent (competence), such that there remain large parts of the electorate who view poorly her capacity to manage the country.

It is now appropriate for us to regard the popularity rating of Madam Royal. In 2006 she rises in the opinion polls and, in November 2006, wins the Socialist Primary for the 2007 Presidential election with 61% of the votes. The Ipsos Barometer of Political Action for *Le Point* (Appendix 1) indicates that popularity rating of Ségolène reaches a peak of 67% in June 2006. From that time it fell progressively: 45% in June 2007, 27% in June 2009. Henceforth, it oscillates mainly in the thirties, with a

²¹⁴ Christine Courcol and Thierry Masure, *Ségolène Royal: Les Coulisses d'une défaite*, Paris: L'Archipel, 2007p. 104.

²¹⁵ Mariette Sineau, “Effets de genre, effets de génération?: Le Vote hommes/femmes à l'élection présidentielle 2007”, *Revue française de science politique*, Vol. 57, No. 3, 2007, p. 359.

peak of 46% in May 2012. At the time of the Socialist Primary in October 2011, she receives 34% which puts her behind her competitors: François Hollande is at 56% and Martine Aubry at 47%.

It is therefore clear that, in the period between the two presidential campaigns, Madam Royal became less and less popular. François-Xavier Bourmaud, in *Le Figaro* of 9 February 2011, comments on the fall: “[she] does not manage to overcome the gap with her potential rivals for the Socialist Primaries ... [even if] she chose to present herself as the candidate of the ‘people’”.²¹⁶ This strategy of proximity with the people does not succeed. The Ifop opinion poll undertaken on 25 February 2011 for *Le Journal du Dimanche* provides reasons for the fall since 2007. It compares the results for the month of February in 2007 and 2011. To the question asking which of the participants they will vote for, the result for Ségolène Royal is 25% in 2011, against 44% in 2007. Among the other subjects covered in the opinion poll, the one which records the greatest fall is her image as a presidential candidate, which records 29% in 2011 against 42% in 2007. If the French were attracted by her image as a woman and a novelty at the beginning, from 2006 to 2011 the questions on her capacity to manage the country multiplied. The culminating point of her downfall is her low score of 7% in the 2011 Socialist Primary. The electoral punishment was most severe. It is interesting to read the damning article in *Le Journal du Dimanche* which explains the opinion

²¹⁶ François-Xavier Bourmaud, “Royal ignore les sondages et poursuit sa campagne”, *Le Figaro*, 9 February 2011.

polls in this way: “the magic has disappeared for the 2007 Presidential finalist ... she no longer seduces the French people or the members of the SP”²¹⁷. The results indicate that the female traits which, at the beginning had assured her personal attraction, finished by appearing as proof of her incapacity to lead the country.

It is the media who contribute to the rapid growth and decline of the popularity of Royal. Marie-Noëlle Lienemann and Philippe Cohen highlight the part of the media in the success of Royal in the 2006 Socialist Primary: “they swung their weight behind Ségolène Royal during the internal campaign”²¹⁸. At the start of her 2007 Presidential campaign, Madam Royal continues to benefit from the support of the media. Marlène Coulomb-Gully observes that the latter “created each piece of the ‘Royal phenomenon’, considered as a ‘media bubble’”²¹⁹. However, as the Presidential campaign progresses her relationship with the press deteriorates. Patrick Mennucci, her former assistant campaign director, notes: “it was in the month of January [2007] that the force of the media turns against her ... From then on, they are much more critical”²²⁰. Coulomb-Gully observes that the media had “shown an excessive severity with respect to the candidate, whose ‘blunders’ were systematically highlighted”²²¹. Donatella Campus supports this comment in noting that

²¹⁷ “La Chute de la maison Royal”, *Le Journal du Dimanche*, 26 February 2011.

²¹⁸ Marie-Noëlle Lienemann and Philippe Cohen, *Au revoir Royal*, Paris: Perrin, 2007, p. 12.

²¹⁹ Marlène Coulomb-Gully, “Présidentielle 2007. Médias, genre et politique”, *Mots, Les langages du politique*, No. 90, July 2007, p. 7.

²²⁰ Patrick Mennucci, *Ma candidate*, Paris: Albin Michel, 2007, p. 203.

²²¹ Marlène Coulomb-Gully, *op. cit.*, p. 7.

during the campaign the media became more scathing, more hostile, to the extent that they judged her severely in their evaluation of her competence and her reputation²²². Royal contributes to the poor relationship with the media. Bacqué and Chemin note that “in the group of journalists who follow her, all are aware of the audacity of Ségolène and her tendency to lie, even when the evidence contradicts her”²²³. Discussing her difficulties with the press, Ségolène Royal admits: “between the journalists and myself there exists an unbreakable glass wall”²²⁴. If this breakdown of relations with the media has a negative effect on her campaign, it did not prevent her from obtaining 47 per cent of the votes in the Presidential campaign.

At the time of the 2011 Socialist Primary, Royal does not receive the support of the media who continually point out her weaknesses. When David Revault d’Allonnes calls Royal “the ex-finalist of the 2007 Presidential campaign ... The auto-proclaimed champion of ‘green growth’”²²⁵, he is being sarcastic re her ecologic credibility while at the same time referring to one of the portfolios, of which she was formerly a minister, that is judged to be non-masculine. On 29 September 2011, François Bazin in *Le Nouvel Observateur* comments on the results of an opinion poll carried out by Viavoice: among her weaknesses he cites

²²² Donatella Campus, *Women Political Leaders and the Media*, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013, p. 67.

²²³ Raphaëlle Bacqué and Ariane Chemin, *La Femme fatale*, Paris: Albin Michel, 2007, p. 182.

²²⁴ Ségolène Royal, *Ma plus belle histoire, c’est vous*, Paris: Grasset, 2007, p. 61.

²²⁵ David Revault d’Allonnes, “Royal et Aubry divergent sur l’avenir de l’EPR de Flamanville”, *Le Monde*, 23 September 2011.

the fact that she appears fragile and naive, and that the French people do not know who she really is. With respect to that which Bazin calls “the menaces” which arise in her electoral campaign, he nominates above all her lack of economic competence, her image deemed to be artificial and her tendency to easily lose her temper. He also comments that “opinion is uncertain when faced by a political ‘product’ that disorientates and seduces at the same time”²²⁶. The idea that she “disorientates” the French gives the impression that her political ideas are not popular. After her loss in the Socialist Primary, we find these telling titles in *Le Monde*: “The Tears of Ségolène and her followers”²²⁷ and “The SP salutes the courage and the ‘touching’ tears of Ségolène Royal”²²⁸. On 13 October 2011 Renaud Dély, in *Le Nouvel Observateur*, draws a link between her failure and feminine stereotypes:

in a country harshly struck by the crisis and divided by Sarkozyism, the followers of the left expressed a double need of solidity and appeasement ... [but] the weaknesses and persistent uncertainties of Ségolism could not satisfy her [Royal]²²⁹.

By comparison to her campaign for the 2007 Presidential election, in 2011 the media display their total dissatisfaction with the Socialist Primary candidate, a dissatisfaction which often points to her feminine traits.

Let us recap our analysis. A number of observers say that, as leader of her 2007 campaign team, she wants to control everything. The

²²⁶ François Bazin, “Ségolène Royal: la femme qui tranche”, *Le Nouvel Observateur*, 29 September 2011, p. 32.

²²⁷ “Les Larmes de Ségolène et de ses partisans”, *Le Monde*, 9 October 2011.

²²⁸ “Le PS salue le courage et les larmes ‘touchantes’ de Ségolène Royal”, *Le Monde*, 10 October 2011.

²²⁹ Renaud Dély, “La Chute de la maison Royal”, *Le Nouvel Observateur*, 13 October 2011, p. 39.

resulting chaos gives her a bad image and puts in doubt her abilities and competence. In addition, she seems to be mistaken as to the expectations of the French, which also indicates a lack of political competence. Our analysis demonstrates her traits of aggressiveness and assurance but, as she demonstrates it to a fault, the overall result is negative. At the beginning of her 2007 campaign she is very popular, principally because as a woman she represents a new era. However, as her campaign progresses, the French become aware of her weaknesses and it is the media who play an important role in this process: having treated her like a star at the beginning of her 2007 campaign, the media started to highlight her blunders and her lack of competence. As a result, Madam Royal does not satisfy one of the criteria for a leader which demands that she demonstrates a range of masculine traits. If the media point out her excessive combativeness and aggressiveness, they also emphasise the absence of masculine traits such as competence, firmness, and the ability to manage the portfolios of Economics and Foreign Affairs.

This failing is exacerbated by the tendency, in the press, to put forward her feminine traits such as her physical appearance and her appointment to the head of a “feminine” ministry, that of the Environment. At the time of her 2011 Socialist Primary campaign, she continues to put forward her image of mother and woman. During this time the media had in the main forgotten her. It is her competitors, Hollande and Aubry, who they favour. We have also noted that the writers and academics go back to the image of Madam Royal as a poor orator, which is a mark of a feminine stereotype. Overall, by highlighting her feminine traits as well as the male

traits that are lacking, the commentators confine her to the double bind in the sense that all her efforts to give herself an image of a leader only exacerbate the traits which are missing.

1.6 Martine Aubry

In order to measure at which point Martine Aubry, daughter of the emblematic figure of the Socialist Party, Jacques Delors, exposes herself to the double bind Too Masculine or Too Feminine, we will first examine the different masculine traits attributed to her by the media and other publications. Her authoritarian character immediately appears as the most obvious masculine trait. If Isabelle Giordano observes that “some [of the party officials] complained about the authoritarian tone of Martine ... [and] her failure to listen”²³⁰, Marcelo Wesfreid, in *L'Express* of 9 September 2011, notes with respect to her that “it is her enemies who point out her hardened character, somewhat authoritarian”²³¹. On 11 October 2011 Albert Zennou in *Le Figaro* describes Martine as “authoritarian and dogmatic”²³². Joseph Macé-Scaron, in *Marianne* of 26 May 2012, lists the nicknames of Martine: “the Mèremptoire’ (or ‘Mairemptoire’), ‘Titine of iron’, and ‘the Tsarina’”. He adds: “her insulting authoritarianism and her notorious anger are publicly well-known”²³³. Hervé Gattegno, in *Le Point* of 27 August 2012, also comments on the authoritarianism of Martine: “she is often brutal, authoritarian to the point of autocracy”²³⁴. Raylene L. Ramsay highlights the same trait when she observes that “the management of Martine ... was often considered as too authoritarian”²³⁵.

²³⁰ Isabelle Giordano, *Martine, Le Destin ou la vie*, Paris: Bernard Grasset, 2011, p. 62.

²³¹ Marcelo Wesfreid, “Aubry: toutes griffes dehors”, *L'Express*, 9 September 2011.

²³² Albert Zennou, “Martine Aubry, candidate préférée de la droite?”, *Le Figaro*, 11 October 2011.

²³³ Joseph Macé-Scaron, “La Stratégie d’une peau de vache; Martine Aubry”, *Marianne*, 26 May 2012.

²³⁴ Hervé Gattegno, “Martine Aubry ne pense qu’à elle”, *Le Point*, 27 August 2012.

²³⁵ Raylene L. Ramsay, *French Women in Politics*, New York: Berghahn Books, 2003,

For their part, Rosalie Lucas and Marion Mourgue refer to “her frank side, her strong independent character”. They give support to this comment by referring to the words of her friend, Adeline Hazan: “she is an anxious person. She is a perfectionist ... [she has] her fits of anger, her criticisms and her authoritarianism”²³⁶. These comments clearly demonstrate that the authoritarian character that she shares with Édith Cresson and Helen Clark, among others, is particularly evident in Martine.

To examine how she demonstrates the masculine trait of competence, notably her capacities as a leader, we will examine the various posts that she has occupied. We commence with the post she occupied at Péchiney from 1989 to 1991, before her entry into the Cresson government. According to her employer, Jean Gandois, she performed the post of assistant director with talent. Philippe Alexandre and Béatrix de l’Aulnoit observe: “in the management committees ... [Gandois] delights in seeing his protégé stand up to him and even to contradict him before a group of yes men”. They point to her capacities as a leader in noting that, “like Gandois, she could have managed a major enterprise”, and by way of confirming it cite the words of Pierre Guillen, former head of UIMM: “she would have been perfect as the head of Edf”²³⁷.

In October 1993 she establishes the Foundation Acting against Exclusion (Face) which has “an ambitious objective: to revitalise six pilot

p. 196.

²³⁶ Rosalie Lucas and Marion Mourgue, *Martine Aubry: Les Secrets d’une ambition*, Paris: L’Archipel, 2011, pp. 15, 42.

²³⁷ Philippe Alexandre and Béatrix de l’Aulnoit, *La Dame des 35 heures*, Paris: Robert Laffont, 2002, pp. 96, 98. UIMM: Union of Metallurgical Industries.

districts ... by giving preference to integration by way of employment”²³⁸.

Madam Aubry benefits from her relationships with several major employers to obtain finance for the activities of the foundation. In addition, her role as President of Face assures her of the continuity of the media presence that she established in her role as minister in the governments of Cresson and Bérégovoy.

As Minister of Employment and Solidarity in the Jospin government, Martine fights to implement a major piece of legislation. It is, in this case, the promulgation on 19 January 2000 of the law to reduce the working hours per week to 35 hours. From then on, she carries the nickname “Lady of the 35 Hours”. The achievement of this great reform is proof of her capacities as Minister and demonstrates that she has a solid knowledge of her portfolio.

On 21 November 2008 she is elected First Secretary of the Socialist Party, of which she has been a member since 1974. Madam Aubry works tirelessly to reunite the party and her success in the role becomes evident, as highlighted by Jean-Michel Normand in *Le Monde* of 23 March 2010: “Martine Aubry ... commences to make her mark ... On Sunday she made herself the new champion of unity”²³⁹. Lucas and Mourgue also note that “Martine Aubry is henceforth in her rightful place” and that her Socialist colleagues “feel it is fashionable to be seen at her

²³⁸ Rosalie Lucas and Marion Mourgue, *Martine Aubry: Les Secrets d'une ambition*, Paris: L'Archipel, 2011, p. 33.

²³⁹ Jean-Michel Normand, “Martine Aubry acquiert une nouvelle légitimité”, *Le Monde*, 23 March 2010.

side”²⁴⁰. These accounts indicate that her performance as First Secretary is widely appreciated.

In March 2001 Martine became mayor of Lille. Since that time, she has enjoyed a high approval rating among the Lille citizens, as Lucas and Mourgue indicate: “after some difficult beginnings, the Socialist has finished up by making her mark and having herself accepted”²⁴¹. Indeed, in the second round of the 2008 poll, her political ticket receives 66.6% of the votes. Isabelle Giordano describes it thus: “the first time suspicion (‘she is not from around her’) has given way to an exceptional popularity, and a re-election with a score only seen in non-democratic countries”²⁴². A part of her success is due to the links that she forms with the employers in the region. These networks permit her to promote economic activity in the town. Her re-election in 2008 by a great margin, the growth of the town during her time as mayor, and the fact that she knew to include the employers in the development of the town all attest to her leadership qualities.

It is useful to examine how the image of Aubry as a potential leader develops during her campaign for the 2011 Socialist Primary. If the departure of Martine to attend an International Symposium of Contemporary Art in Quebec was viewed badly, as shown by the comment of the blogger David Colla who writes in *Le Figaro* of 10 August 2011: “it

²⁴⁰ Rosalie Lucas and Marion Mourgue, *Martine Aubry: Les Secrets d'une ambition*, Paris: L'Archipel, 2011, p. 106.

²⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p. 67.

²⁴² Isabelle Giordano, *Martine, Le Destin ou la vie*, Paris: Bernard Grasset, 2011, p. 65.

is not in Quebec that Madam Aubry is going to obtain credibility”²⁴³, taken as a whole she has the image of a serious and credible candidate. According to Sylvain Courage, who writes in *Le Nouvel Observateur* of 1 September 2011, the strategy of Martine to give herself a presidential image is seen in her decision to visit, on 29 August 2011, Marseille to challenge Claude Guéant from the UMP who “was there to install a new Prefect in charge of security”. Courage adds that “she passed her first test ... by presenting herself as a resolute adversary of Sarkozy”²⁴⁴. On 5 September 2011 Bastien Millot of *L’Express* reports that, “by defying Claude Guéant on the subject of security, a symbolic area, Martine is trying to increase her credibility on sovereign matters”²⁴⁵. Nicolas Barotte and François-Xavier Bourmaud, in *Le Figaro* of 13 September 2011, note that “she presents herself in that situation as the president of security”²⁴⁶. On 10 October 2011, according to *Libération*, she repeats the approach: “[she] came to challenge Nicolas Sarkozy, also on a visit to the Creuse region, on the theme of ‘the breakdown of public services’ in the rural locality”²⁴⁷. Thus, the media are in agreement in recognising her capacity to fight on equal terms with her rivals.

²⁴³ “Martine Aubry de passage au Québec”, *Le Figaro*, 19 August 2011.

²⁴⁴ Sylvain Courage, “Hollande-Aubry: la guerre sans nom”, *Le Nouvel Observateur*, 1 September 2011.

²⁴⁵ Bastien Millot, “La Semaine ‘coup de poing’ de Martine Aubry”, *L’Express*, 5 September 2011.

²⁴⁶ Nicolas Barotte and François-Xavier Bourmaud, “La Campagne d’Aubry inquiète ses Troupes”, *Le Figaro*, 13 September 2011.

²⁴⁷ “Dans la Creuse, Aubry défie Sarkozy sur la ‘casse des services publics’”, *Libération*, 11 October 2011.

However, doubts exist on the desire of Martine Aubry to be a Presidential candidate. Thomas Wieder, in *Le Monde* of 24 August 2011, is surprised that she communicates so little with the people. According to Wieder, “since she declared herself candidate ... [she] has addressed the French once. It was on July 14, in the form of a three minute film message, broadcast on the internet”. For Wieder, this approach is not that of a candidate who hastens to enter “into the battle”²⁴⁸. Michel Veron also questions her desire to be President: in *L’Express* of 5 October 2011 he cites the words of a young Aubry supporter: “all former presidents ... were not afraid to display their desire for power. She, she does not want the power for the power”²⁴⁹. This apparent lack of ambition accentuates the doubts as to her intention to undertake a campaign and undermines her image as a future leader.

Following her declaration of candidature, the idea spreads, principally among the supporters of François Hollande, that she is a default candidate. This suspicion is widely reported by the press: David Revault d’Allonnes, in *Le Monde* of 19 September, observes that, the day before, Strauss-Kahn confirmed that a pact existed between himself and Martine whereby she would not be a candidate as long as he was in the running. For her part, Martine denies the existence of this pact: “do I have the look of a default candidate?”²⁵⁰ Still, all the same, according to

²⁴⁸ Thomas Wieder, “Martine Aubry adresse une ‘Lettre aux Français’ pour relancer sa Campagne”, *Le Monde*, 24 August 2011.

²⁴⁹ Michel Veron, “Primaire PS: Aubry peut-elle encore gagner?”, *L’Express*, 5 October 2011.

²⁵⁰ David Revault d’Allonnes, “‘Pacte DSK-Aubry’: le camp Aubry réplique aux soutiens de Hollande”, *Le Monde*, 19 September 2011.

François-Xavier Bourmaud in *Le Figaro* of 19 September, “the supporters of François Hollande ... [make it known that] Martine Aubry ... [is] ‘the default candidate’ of DSK”²⁵¹. Sylvain Courage, in *Le Nouvel Observateur* of 22 September 2011, uses a similar phrase²⁵², and on 14 October 2011, in between rounds one and two, Courage describes her in the same weekly magazine as “the replacement for DSK”²⁵³. The idea that Martine is a default candidate can only harm her credibility and her image as a potential President.

It is not only her image of default candidate that goes against the image that the French people have of a leader: her economic competence is also put in question by the media. On 24 August 2011 Gino Delmas cites in *L'Express* the words of an Aubry supporter: “it is not in the area of the economy that she will be able to differentiate herself from François Hollande. It is better that she concentrates on social matters”²⁵⁴. On 5 October 2011 *L'Expansion* reports the results of a BVA opinion poll conducted from 29 to 30 September 2011: “François Hollande is overwhelmingly judged more credible than his rival for the Primary, Martine Aubry, on economic issues”. In fact, 60% of the French have confidence in Hollande against 22% for Aubry²⁵⁵. On 5 October 2011

²⁵¹ François-Xavier Bourmaud, “Primaires: des propos qui gênent Martine Aubry”, *Le Figaro*, 19 September 2011.

²⁵² Sylvain Courage, “Martine fait de la résistance”, *Le Nouvel Observateur*, 22 September, p. 37.

²⁵³ Sylvain Courage, “Aubry/Hollande: les clés du duel (1/4)”, *Le Nouvel Observateur*, 14 October 2011.

²⁵⁴ Gino Delmas, “Prise entre plusieurs feux, Aubry reste ‘imperturbable’”, *L'Express*, 24 August 2011.

²⁵⁵ “Hollande plus crédible qu’Aubry sur l’économie”, *L'Expansion*, 5 October 2011.

also, in an article titled “Less credible than Hollande” on the same opinion poll, *Challenges* notes that “on all the issues relating to the economy, he clearly dominates Martine Aubry in the opinion of the French”²⁵⁶. The large difference in the two scores indicates that, for the electors, the economic competence of Aubry is greatly inferior to that of Hollande.

Overall, the results on the capabilities of Martine are mixed. Certainly, as assistant director at P  chiney, as First Secretary of the Socialist Party, and as mayor of Lille, she made her mark, as the comments demonstrate, and to a certain extent her rationality is in evidence. Nevertheless, her campaign for the 2011 Socialist Primary raised questions on her competence, particularly in the domain of the economy, and her approach to the campaign itself raised doubts on her desire to be a candidate. In short, if she has achieved the image of a competent political woman when faced by Strauss-Kahn or Hollande, she finds herself with an image which is less competent.

The journalists, writers and researchers observe numerous masculine traits in Aubry, and we commence with that of assurance. A correspondent from *Nouvel Observateur* reports on 26 August 2011 that, during an interview that day on France Inter, Martine tries to position herself as the saviour of the party that Fran  ois Hollande had left in a poor state:

²⁵⁶ “Moins cr  dible que Hollande”, *Challenges*, 5 October 2011.

after succeeding François Hollande at Solferino street in 2008, [I had] transformed a SP which ‘invoked pity’ into a party ‘ready to govern’ ... I think that today I am best placed to run our country²⁵⁷.

Raylene L. Ramsay breaks down her image into several masculine traits: “in public life, Aubry prefers to present an image of the non-seductive, competent technocrat, close to the masculine/universalist pole, and generally eschewing the feminine side”. She cites the phrases used in the media : “‘a superwoman’, someone who possesses ‘authority’, ‘moral intransigence’, ‘frankness’, ‘acerbic humour’ and the ‘determination of a bulldozer’”²⁵⁸. These terms present a large range of masculine traits for Madam Aubry. Isabelle Giordano notes that, according to Audrey Linkenheld, who works with Aubry at the head office of the Socialist Party and at the town hall of Lille, Martine presents an image “of a political animal with a great determination”²⁵⁹. To these traits Philippe Alexandre and Béatrix de l’Aulnoit add that of aggressiveness: “Martine is ... brutal”²⁶⁰. Martine herself recognises her image is widely seen as masculine: on 9 September 2011 Marcelo Wesfreid, in *L’Express*, cites her words: “the French know me ... They know that I am resolute”²⁶¹.

With respect to her appearance, Raylene L. Ramsay observes that Martine adopted an austere approach to her manner of dress since it presented the least risky path, and, to support this she cites a critic who

²⁵⁷ “Aubry estime avoir transformé un PS qui ‘faisait pitié’ en parti ‘prêt à gouverner’”, *Le Nouvel Observateur*, 26 August 2011.

²⁵⁸ Raylene L. Ramsay, *French Women in Politics*, New York: Berghahn Books, 2003, pp. 197, 199.

²⁵⁹ Isabelle Giordano, *Martine, Le Destin ou la vie*, Paris: Bernard Grasset, 2011, p. 20.

²⁶⁰ Philippe Alexandre and Béatrix de l’Aulnoit, *La Dame des 35 heures*, Paris: Robert Laffont, 2002, p. 36.

²⁶¹ Marcelo Wesfreid, “Aubry: toutes griffes dehors”, *L’Express*, 9 September 2011.

describes her as “a monk in skirts”. Ramsay also notes her refusal to play the game of seduction, which is the inverse of the situation of Édith Cresson who was considered as too seductive and too sexy²⁶². However, over the years Martine Aubry submitted to pressures to the point where a change in her dress was observed. Béatrice Massenet, who interviewed Martine in 2010, described it as

softer, less strict ... there had been a change over twenty years. No more skirts, no more dresses, still the flat shoes but more pant suits. Coloured jackets ... brightly coloured scarves²⁶³.

This change of image is also taken up by Rosalie Lucas and Marion Mourgue: they speak of “her shoes without heels, very classic, her jackets and her pants not always close fitting, like Angela Merkel”. In despite of this change of image, her appearance does not bring flattering comments: Lucas and Mourgue cite the comedian Anne Roumanoff: “what does Martine Aubry do with her old clothes? She wears them”²⁶⁴. In spite of this change, it appears that Martine does not devote much time to her appearance, as Ramsay highlights in citing the words of Martine: “that which interests me is to achieve, not to look attractive”²⁶⁵.

Therefore, it is clear that Martine Aubry, in comparison to the other women in our analysis, does not consider that her appearance is important.

²⁶² Raylene L. Ramsay, *French Women in Politics*, New York: Berghahn Books, 2003, p. 196.

²⁶³ Béatrice Massenet, *Et qui va garder les enfants ?*, Paris: Robert Laffont, 2011, p. 41.

²⁶⁴ Rosalie Lucas and Marion Mourgue, *Martine Aubry: Les Secrets d'une ambition*, Paris: L'Archipel, 2011, p. 123.

²⁶⁵ Raylene L. Ramsay, *op. cit.*, p. 196.

In respect of her media image, in the beginning she was reticent to be in the spotlight. On the occasions where she puts herself forward, it is without great success. For example, according to Isabelle Giordano, “her advisers tried many times to soften the media appearance of Martine”²⁶⁶. However, in February 2009, when she was First Secretary of the Socialist Party which was performing poorly in the opinion polls, Martine consents to an interview with a journalist from the women’s magazine *Gala* where she divulges the details of her private life. On 29 March 2009 she is a guest on the program *Vivement dimanche* presented by Michel Drucker on France 2. Once again, it is her private life which is revealed to the viewers. In November 2009 she makes her first appearance in the women’s magazine *Closer*, but it is without the permission of Martine. On the front cover appears a photo of her and her husband during a visit to China and, inside, a double page of photos. Martine denounces these pictures that she calls “the work of indiscreet tourists”²⁶⁷. Nevertheless, having become a candidate for the 2011 Socialist Primary, she is on the cover of *Paris Match* on 20 July 2011 with her husband: inside the magazine we find six pages devoted to the couple and their private life. Like the interviews with *Gala* and Michel Drucker, it is by way of the pragmatic choice to show her private life that Martine seeks to promote her femininity.

²⁶⁶ Isabelle Giordano, *Martine, Le Destin ou la vie*, Paris: Bernard Grasset, 2011, p. 82.

²⁶⁷ Rosalie Lucas and Marion Mourgue, *Martine Aubry: Les Secrets d’une ambition*, Paris: L’Archipel, 2011, pp. 115-6.

The stereotype that deems women fail in the area of political speech also applies to Martine Aubry. According to *L'Express* of 21 July 2011, to overcome her inadequacy in communication Aubry engaged a communication adviser²⁶⁸. Undoubtedly she had realised that she needed the advice of an expert with the approaching election for the Socialist Party. However, there exist situations where the communication of Martine is judged lacking. To highlight this, Nicolas Barotte notes in *Le Figaro* of 24 August 2011: “the media battle of summer was won by Françoise Hollande ... The speeches of Martine Aubry did not have the effect expected”. To explain this failure, he cites the words of a close adviser of Martine: “she is perhaps too serious ... The game of communication is not her forte. She has trouble playing the game”²⁶⁹.

To see how the speech of Martine Aubry evolved over the course of the campaign, it is interesting to note the way in which she adopted a harsh tone and language. Marcelo Wesfreid observes in *L'Express* of 9 September 2011 that “for a long time, it is her enemies who point out ... her fits of bad temper and her jibes”. He adds that now she has to catch up on the start enjoyed by her competitors, she “is determined to transform this hurdle into an asset”²⁷⁰. A journalist in *L'Express* of 6 October 2011 contemplates the idea of Martine Aubry conducting an “offensive ‘anti-Flamby’ which aims to ‘attack the supposed lack of will and character of [Hollande]’”. Aubry utters the signature phrase: “one could not beat the

²⁶⁸ “Martine Aubry dans *Paris Match* pour combattre les rumeurs”, *L'Express*, 23 July 2011.

²⁶⁹ Nicolas Barotte, “Aubry cherche à rassurer son camp”, *Le Figaro*, 24 August 2011.

²⁷⁰ Marcelo Wesfreid, “Aubry: toutes griffes dehors”, *L'Express*, 9 September 2011.

hard Right with a soft Left”²⁷¹. The approach of Martine is explained at the time of a speech given at Paris on 6 October 2011 where she affirms that “compromise is not exactly in my temperament”²⁷². The theme of firmness in her speech is confirmed by François Bazin who notes in *Le Nouvel Observateur* of 8 October 2011:

to mark a difference with François Hollande ... Martine Aubry had therefore adopted a war tone ... It is therefore in the firmness of her words that she displays her specificity. Speak harshly, speak clearly, and speak truly²⁷³.

Discussing the campaign of Martine, Frédéric Martel, in *L'Express* of 12 October 2011, notes that at the beginning “her communication was disorganised”. He observes that, towards the end of her campaign the turn of phrase which depicts Hollande as a soft Lefty is due to the idea that “she could not win technically; she could only beat him politically”²⁷⁴. Pascal Rossignol, in *L'Express* of 17 October 2011, mentions the danger which the harsh language of Martine exposes her to: in effect, it “risks compromising the necessary reconciliation of all socialists”²⁷⁵. By using the expression “soft Left” it is possible that she is demonstrating a behaviour that the people consider as too aggressive for a leader, as in the case of Édith Cresson. In pointing out continuously the harsh words of

²⁷¹ “Aubry soigne la ‘gauche molle’ de Hollande”, *L'Express*, 6 October 2011.

This comment makes reference to the nickname “anti-Flamby” with which the Guignols had dubbed François Hollande a few years before.

²⁷² Raphaëlle Besse Desmoulières, “À trois jours de la primaire, Aubry passe à l’offensive”, *Le Monde*, 7 October 2011.

²⁷³ François Bazin, “Les Candidats au banc d’essai: Martine Aubry, le ‘diesel’”, *Le Nouvel Observateur*, 8 October 2011.

²⁷⁴ Frédéric Martel, “Hollande-Aubry: le favori et la ‘come-back girl’”, *L'Express*, 12 October 2011.

²⁷⁵ Pascal Rossignol, “Primaires PS: le rendez-vous raté de Martine Aubry”, *L'Express*, 17 October 2011.

Martine, the press is complicit in the propagation of an image of a candidate with a barely satisfactory way of speaking, and which falls short of that tolerated for a potential leader.

It is useful to examine the normal reaction of the media to focus on the clothes, the body and face of women. *L'Express* of 21 July 2011 describes the appearance of Martine and her husband in *Paris Match* in this way “Martine Aubry poses in a flowery shirt on the cover of the weekly magazine”²⁷⁶. On 25 August *Le Parisien* observes that she is dressed “in her traditional red jacket”²⁷⁷. Raphaëlle Besse Desmoulières, in *Le Monde* of 7 October 2011, also refers to it in his comment on her last campaign meeting: “red jacket, white blouse, black pants”²⁷⁸. If these comments have an air of triviality, the case of a photograph which appeared on the front page of *Libération* on 20 September 2011 merits a much greater examination. A journalist from *L'Express* describes the photo thus: “the photo shows an oval image of the face of the ex-First Secretary coming out of obscurity, green eyes made up, lips darkened”, before citing the words of Olivier Beuvelet, professor of contemporary literature and lecturer in Image at the University of Paris 3 - Sorbonne Nouvelle: “she resembles more a strange fantastical apparition than a woman of action”²⁷⁹. It should be noted that the photographer, Yann

²⁷⁶ “Martine Aubry dans *Paris Match* pour combattre les rumeurs”, *L'Express*, 21 July 2011.

²⁷⁷ “Martine Aubry: ‘Je reverrai à la baisse le salaire du président’”, *Le Parisien*, 25 August 2011.

²⁷⁸ Raphaëlle Besse Desmoulières, “À trois jours de la primaire, Aubry passe à l’offensive”, *Le Monde*, 7 October 2011.

²⁷⁹ “Aubry en Une de *Libé*: Dark Knight ou Blue Velvet ?”, *L'Express*, 20 September 2011.

Rabanier, published similar images for the five other candidates, but these did not incite as much controversy. By putting the photo on its front page *Libération* seeks to provoke the political class by displaying an almost perverse interest in the feminine traits of the candidate. Marcela Iacub, in *Libération* of 8 October 2011, explains the photo thus:

she gazed with an expression of desire and seemed to be seeking that we regarded her in the same way. This is not only because Martine Aubry is attractive in it, more attractive than in any other of her photos, but because one sees there a woman crossed like almost all humans by this ordinary mystery, by this banal miracle of sexuality²⁸⁰.

The comments of Iacub highlight the presence in the photo of a secret femininity that her normal behaviour would seem to want to deny. In summary, the propensity of the media to refer to the clothes and body of Martine demonstrates that she cannot escape from the feminine stereotype which insidiously impacts on the perception of female politicians.

To terminate our analysis, let us examine the popularity rating of Martine Aubry. According to Rosalie Lucas and Marion Mourgue, “since her entry into the Cresson and Bérégovoy governments she has quickly gained in notoriety and more than one male politician envies her popularity rating”²⁸¹. On 5 January 1995 Robert Schneider reports in *Le Nouvel Observateur* the results of a TNS Sofres opinion poll on the 1995 Presidential Campaign, conducted from 26 to 28 December, where she arrives on top of the list of socialist politicians. He notes that “54% of the

²⁸⁰ Marcela Iacub, “Martine Aubry révélée”, *Libération*, 8 October 2011.

²⁸¹ Rosalie Lucas and Marion Mourgue, *Martine Aubry: Les Secrets d'une ambition*, Paris: L'Archipel, 2011, p. 9.

socialist supporters think that she would represent the Left well”²⁸². Over the years her popularity rating remains high. Lucas and Mourgue note: “from 1997 to 2001 she acquires her highest popularity”²⁸³. According to the Ipsos opinion poll conducted for *Le Point* (Appendix 1), the Barometer of Political Action for Madam Aubry gives the impressive figure of 51% in June 2011. Nevertheless, in spite of her experience and her efforts to firm up her credibility as leader, Martine remains behind her rivals in the Socialist Primary. On 10 October 2011 Baptiste Legrand reports in relation to a LH2 opinion poll conducted on the 7th and 8th of October 2011 for *Le Nouvel Observateur*: “François Hollande is judged more credible than Martine Aubry to win for the Left”²⁸⁴. The inferiority of Martine in relation to Hollande in the eyes of the electors is confirmed by the fact that Hollande wins the second round of the poll by 57% to 43%. In spite of her defeat in the Primary, the popularity rating of Martine in October 2011 is at 47%, and it maintains itself at this level until May 2012. In June 2012 it falls to 40%. Even at this level, it is still a significant score, and it seems that, for the French, she imposes herself on a long-term basis as a leading female politician.

Our review of the political and professional journey of Martine Aubry demonstrates that she is highly regarded at Péciney and that, in the posts she occupied in the inner sanctum of the government, overall she

²⁸² Robert Schneider, “Le Virage à gauche moqué de Jacques Chirac”, *Le Nouvel Observateur*, 5 January 1995, p. 24.

²⁸³ Rosalie Lucas and Marion Mourgue, *Martine Aubry: Les Secrets d’une ambition*, Paris: L’Archipel, 2011, p. 43.

²⁸⁴ Baptiste Legrand, “Hollande, mieux placé qu’Aubry pour faire gagner la gauche”, *Le Nouvel Observateur*, 10 October 2011.

achieves a positive result. We note that she imposes in “masculine” roles without her gender being seen as a hindrance to her actions. Her work as First Secretary of the Socialist Party also demonstrates her real capacity as a leader. The same applies for her work as a minister in the government and her role as mayor of Lille for more than thirteen years. Our analysis demonstrates that she possesses other masculine traits such as power, assurance, aggressiveness, rationality and a solid knowledge of the sectors for which she was responsible, to which is added the firmness that the French appreciated in her roles as minister. Let us note however that she spent a long time as a minister in the sole sector of work, and it should be noted that, having stayed for a long time as minister in the one sector of work, she was never head of a ministry considered masculine.

The outcome for the masculine traits of Martine is mixed. The media highlight the real capabilities of Martine in her roles at Péciney, as First Secretary, and as minister. They also frequently report specific traits such as authoritarianism, a term that we have noted above refers to the masculine traits of firmness and aggressiveness. By contrast, there is a tendency to focus on her inadequacies in the economic domain and they seem to want to point to her supposed reticence to campaign for the Socialist Primary, thereby instilling doubt in the minds of the socialist supporters. If the media aid Martine to construct an image of a leader by favouring certain masculine traits, they destabilise her at the same time by giving the impression that her economic knowledge is inferior to that of François Hollande.

In relation to her feminine traits, the fact that she avoids promoting them undoubtedly aids her in putting forward her capabilities as a leader. Having entered late into the campaign for the 2011 Socialist Primary in June 2011, Madam Aubry recognises that she must use the media to advance her campaign and, for the first time, she decides to reveal her private life in the popular press. In effect, her feminine side features in the columns of the press who do not miss an opportunity to portray certain aspects of her physical appearance. The photo published by *Libération* is typical of the media obsession for the body, an obsession which in this case is so very obvious that it makes the femininity of Aubry disquieting. The media make known moreover that the economic credibility of Martine is inferior to that of Hollande, which calls to mind the stereotype whereby women are not seen to have the capabilities to be a leader. When the press reveal that her candidature is linked to that of Strauss-Kahn, she finds herself in the trap of the double bind to the extent where the impression that one has of Martine as a default candidate seems reinforced by her gender.

Madam Aubry adopts a strategy which seeks to present her masculine side. In spite of that, she trails François Hollande all through the campaign for the Primary. She does not manage to convince the electors that she is a legitimate candidate. The situation of the double bind ensues from the persistent perception of an inescapable servitude in relation to the masculine candidates in her camp. Her links with DSK, which give the impression that she is a substitute candidate, create the perception that she has neither the capacity nor the will to be leader. For

the French people she does not succeed in demonstrating her masculine traits sufficiently in order to convince them that she is suitable for the post of President. On the other hand, it is probable that, for certain electors, she lacks feminine qualities. Although the media may be attracted to her physical appearance, her image is not that of a reassuring feminine figure. If she balks at showing her feminine side, and does not accept to do it for electoral reasons, it is because the masculine traits underlying her image are seen as rather more natural. Neither sufficiently male, nor sufficiently female, like Michèle Alliot-Marie the situation of the double bind imposes to thwart her efforts to impose her credibility as a potential Head of State.

1.7 Marine Le Pen

As President of the National Front, Marine Le Pen contests the first round of the 2102 Presidential election. Even if she does not win through to the second round, *Le Point* of 22 April 2012 announces that she “has attained her objective: in a few months she has made her mark as the head of a political party ... and brings the extreme right to a level never before seen”²⁸⁵. Moreover, the popularity rating of Madam Le Pen, which climbs over the months after her ascension to the presidency of the National Front, had given cause to anticipate a good result in the French Presidential election. In spite of her undeniable success it should be noted that, as the first woman to occupy the post of president of a political party which supports traditional values, she finds herself in a particular situation with respect to the double bind Too Masculine or Too Feminine. The analysis which follows will seek to clarify the case of Marine Le Pen.

Our analysis commences by the examination of the masculine traits highlighted by the media and certain general or specialist publications. First of all, let us examine the trait of aggressiveness as displayed by Marine Le Pen. On 15 January 2010 Anne Rovon observes in *Le Figaro* that, at the time of the debate with Éric Besson during the program *It is for you to judge* on France 2,

the one-on-one debate between the minister and the vice-President of the National Front was turbulent. It allowed without doubt the French to see more clearly how much difficulty Besson and Le Pen had to keep their calm²⁸⁶.

²⁸⁵ “France: La Réussite du pari de la ‘dédiabolisation’ de Marine Le Pen”, *Le Point*, 22 April 2012.

²⁸⁶ Anne Rovon, “Le Débat entre Éric Besson et Marine Le Pen tourne au duel”, *Le Figaro*, 15 January 2010.

Her aggressiveness is also highlighted by Caroline Fourest and Fiammetta Venner: during a televised debate between Marine and Jean-François Copé on LCI on 28 March 2011, “Marine Le Pen appears ice-like, full of rage with a muted violence”²⁸⁷. The authors also note that, during the program *It is for you to judge* in 2011, where Marine and the journalist Alain Duhamel are guests, Duhamel describes Marine as “belligerent”. Duhamel also criticises her in an interview with Fourest and Venner on 6 April 2011 in these terms: “he [her father] is very violent in public but not in private. In her case, the reverse applies”²⁸⁸. Anna Cabana, in *Le Point* of 29 May 2014, describes Marine as an “autocrat ... [who] manages the party with a fist of iron”. She also refers to her “uncontested authority” and the fact that “Marine Le Pen uses it without hesitation”²⁸⁹. This trait of aggressiveness of Marine indicates that she is assertive, which is linked to the masculine trait of assurance. We also note that Marine does not hesitate to counter-attack when she considers that people are imposing on her rights. Each time that she is subject to a comment that she considers insulting, she threatens to lodge a complaint. There are a number of examples of this behaviour: on 6 January 2011 *Europe1* points out that Madam Le Pen has lodged a complaint against the weekly magazine *VSD* for violation of her private life and those of her children²⁹⁰; on 31 March

²⁸⁷ Caroline Fourest and Fiammetta Venner, *Marine Le Pen*, Paris: Bernard Grasset, 2011, p. 381.

²⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 76.

²⁸⁹ Anna Cabana, “Derrière Marine Le Pen, silence dans les rangs”, *Le Point*, 29 May 2014.

²⁹⁰ “Marine Le Pen porte plainte contre *VSD*”, *Europe1*, 6 January 2011.

2011 *L'Express* reports that she has lodged a complaint against Rama Yade for having written on her blog site that money is the single obsession of the Le Pen family²⁹¹; and on 21 July 2011 *L'Express* makes known that she has lodged a complaint against Caroline Fourest and Fiammetta Venner “for defamation and insult after their biography on Marine Le Pen is published”²⁹². It appears that confrontation is part of the character of Martine.

The masculine trait of competence is decisive for the image of Marine Le Pen. In order to fabricate for herself a presidential image Marine knows that she must demonstrate her capabilities in portfolios considered masculine, such as that of the economy. On 9 December 2010 *Le Parisien* observes that she “wants to forge her credibility by increasing the number of speeches on the economy”²⁹³. However, her efforts are not successful. On 19 November 2011 Marine presents her presidential project which contains a series of economic measures. *Rue 89* refers these measures to Mathieu Plane, an economist at Sciences Po, for evaluation. Plane concludes the measures are unworkable. He delivers a verdict against the policy of protectionism, noting that other countries would take “retaliation measures”. With respect to the proposition to devalue the currency, he thinks that it would lead to hyperinflation. Even worse, he considers her project to leave the euro zone “would provoke a terrible

²⁹¹ “Marine Le Pen porte plainte contre Rama Yade”, *L'Express*, 31 March 2011.

²⁹² “Marine Le Pen porte plainte contre Caroline Fourest”, *L'Express*, 21 July 2011.

²⁹³ “Marine Le Pen veut investir le terrain économique pour être crédible”, *Le Parisien*, 9 December 2010.

financial crisis by way of a domino effect”²⁹⁴. Other commentators also express their disapproval. If Gérard Bon, in *Le Nouvel Observateur* of 31 March 2012, recognises that Madam Le Pen “does not forget ... her fundamentals on ... the economic situation”, elsewhere her project is challenged²⁹⁵. According to Fourest and Venner, Alain Duhamel considers her economic program as “inconsistent” and “perilous”²⁹⁶. Estelle Gross, in *Le Nouvel Observateur* of 18 April 2012, cites Sylvain Crépon who claims: “she ... lacked credibility on the economy”²⁹⁷. Thus, the proliferation of criticisms made against her economic plan does not bode well for her campaign. The failure of Marine to construct a credible economic plan doubly exposes her to the stereotype according to which women are seen as lacking competence in economic matters.

In respect of her capabilities in foreign affairs, a portfolio which, as we have previously noted, is judged to be the domain of men, Marine envisages embarking on a series of voyages. In November 2011 she makes a journey to the United States. The outcome of this visit is, in the main, negative. Caroline Derrien, in an article headed “The American Nightmare of Marine Le Pen” which appeared on 4 November 2011 in *Les*

²⁹⁴ “La France rêvée de Marine Le Pen: son programme décrypté”, *Rue 89*, 19 November 2011.

²⁹⁵ Gérard Bon, “Marine Le Pen veut déjouer les sondages”, *Le Nouvel Observateur*, 31 March 2012.

²⁹⁶ Caroline Fourest and Fiammetta Venner, *Marine Le Pen*, Paris: Bernard Grasset, 2011, p. 76.

²⁹⁷ Estelle Gross, “Marine Le Pen sera le ‘troisième homme’ de la présidentielle”, *Le Nouvel Observateur*, 18 April 2012. Sylvain Crépon is a researcher at University Paris-Ouest-Nanterre and has studied the National Front since the middle of the 1990s.

Echos, notes that she “visibly had trouble in convincing personalities and American politicians to come and listen to her”²⁹⁸. On 5 November 2011 *France Soir* observes that there are “a number of missed meetings, even if she, finally, had a meeting with the libertarian Ron Paul ... and with Joe Walsh, a Republican representative from Illinois”²⁹⁹. With respect to other trips, Guillaume Perrault notes in *Le Figaro* of 18 November 2011 that she has the intention, in the course of the campaign, to visit “Martinique, Guadeloupe and Guyana ... [and to] fly to Russia in January”³⁰⁰. However, according to *Le Parisien* of 1 February 2012, she has to cancel the voyages to Martinique and Guadeloupe because of the close proximity of the lodgement date of 16 March 2012 for the required 500 documents from elected members supporting her Presidential candidature. In addition, she lacked the funds to undertake these voyages³⁰¹. It should also be noted that her visit to Russia did not occur. Nevertheless, on 7 February 2012 she travels to Île de La Réunion where she spends two days. Overall, the efforts of Madam Le Pen to try and gain a reputation in the French overseas departments and territories, and overseas generally, were less than fruitful. For Le Pen, the absence of the masculine trait of competence, notably in the key domains of the economy and foreign affairs, can only undermine her image as a potential Head of State. On the

²⁹⁸ Caroline Derrien, “Le Cauchemar américain de Marine Le Pen”, *Les Echos*, 4 November 2011.

²⁹⁹ “Marine Le Pen: Quel bilan de ce voyage aux États-Unis?”, *France Soir*, 5 November 2011.

³⁰⁰ Guillaume Perrault, “Marine Le Pen cherche à relancer sa candidature”, *Le Figaro*, 18 November 2011.

³⁰¹ “Marine Le Pen courtise les outre-mer, mais doit renoncer à son voyage aux Antilles”, *Le Parisien*, 1 February 2012.

reverse side, in pursuing a strategy to advance her reputation in the two domains, it is clear that she is adopting a rational approach, that is to say a masculine trait.

Let us now turn to the question of her rapport with the media.

Contrary to her father, Marine is widely appreciated by the media.

Discussing the favourable treatment given to Marine by the press, Fourest and Venner observe:

it is suffice to read the press clippings which salute her political ascension to be convinced: “popular in the media”, “efficient”, “telegenic personage”, “revelation of the year”. The least that we can say is that the daughter receives better press than the father³⁰².

Emphasising her positive links with the media, Nicolas Lebourg notes in *Le Nouvel Observateur* on 1 March 2012:

Marine Le Pen has for a long time been described as the queen of the media. Not only does her message get through to the audience, but she seeks to install closeness with the press³⁰³.

It is therefore clear that, overall, she succeeds in maintaining good relations with the media, which allows her to get her message through to the wider public.

The question of the mastering of vocal expression is a competence that many female politicians fail to achieve in the eyes of the populace. The date of 5 May 2002 represents a turning point for Marine. Due to a lack of senior members from the National Front to comment on the results of the second round of the Presidential election, France 2 invites her to

³⁰² Caroline Fourest and Fiammetta Venner, *Marine Le Pen*, Paris: Bernard Grasset, 2011, p. 62.

³⁰³ Nicolas Lebourg, “Marine Le Pen est-elle anti-système?”, *Le Nouvel Observateur*, 1 March 2012.

join their television discussion. According to Caroline Fourest and Fiammetta Venner, “it is ... the beginning of the Marine Le Pen era. She has just gained her stripes as a spokesperson”³⁰⁴. Sidonie Sigrist, in *Le Figaro* of 17 April 2012, confirms this in describing her as a “skilful communicator”³⁰⁵. Abel Mestre and Benoît Hopquin also give some reasons in *Le Monde* of 2 May 2012:

the campaign of the President of the NF is constructed around targeted messages which are aimed at several different groups. In order to do that, Marine Le Pen knew how to adapt her speeches³⁰⁶.

The note of discord comes from Philippe Moreau Chevrolet who, in his article in *Le Nouvel Observateur* on 27 November 2013, highlights a weakness in her speech: “these days [she] expresses herself on every subject, at the risk of getting out of control and spoiling her image”³⁰⁷.

But, overall, the commentators appreciate the talent of a woman who, by her own confession, is “better at speaking than writing”³⁰⁸.

In respect of the tone of her voice, Agnès Catherine Poirier describes the voice as “deep and strong”³⁰⁹. In that respect she recalls the voice of Margaret Thatcher who took lessons to lower her voice to more closely approach that of a man. Marlène Coulomb-Gully also notes that

³⁰⁴ Caroline Fourest and Fiammetta Venner, *Marine Le Pen*, Paris: Bernard Grasset, pp. 115-6.

³⁰⁵ Sidonie Sigrist, “Marine Le Pen brouille les genres”, *Le Figaro*, 17 April 2012.

³⁰⁶ Abel Mestre and Benoît Hopquin, “Une Certaine idée du FN”, *Le Monde*, 2 May 2012.

³⁰⁷ Philippe Moreau Chevrolet, “Marine Le Pen multiple les couacs: La Présidente du FN a-t-elle perdu la main?”, *Le Nouvel Observateur*, 27 November 2013.

³⁰⁸ Marine Le Pen, *À contre flots*, Paris: Grancher, 2011, p. 143.

³⁰⁹ Agnès Catherine Poirier, “Can Marine Le Pen Win in France?”, *The Nation*, 24 October 2011, p. 24.

she “has the strong raucous voice of a smoker”³¹⁰. In relation to the content of her speeches, we find numerous examples which underline the harshness of the words of Marine. Nicolas Lebourg comments in *Le Nouvel Observateur* of 29 March 2012: “when she inserted the question of Islam into her speeches, she did it in the framework of a strong-armed Republican discourse”³¹¹. On 30 March 2012 the correspondent of *Le Nouvel Observateur* notes, in respect of a meeting at Nantes on 25 March 2012, that Marine has “clearly radicalised her speech on immigration, insecurity and Islam”³¹². Denis Charlet, in *L’Express* of 17 April 2012, observes with respect to her final campaign meeting at Zénith that evening: “Marine Le Pen definitely conquered the room by her virulent speech on immigration”³¹³, and Guillaume Perrault, in *Le Figaro* of 18 April 2012, notes with respect to the same meeting that it is marked by a very fierce speech”³¹⁴. Marlène Coulomb-Gully summarises these comments on the speech of Marine by highlighting “the power, the force, indeed the regular brutality which is shown in her words”³¹⁵. In effect, the masculine voice and hard and aggressive speeches are not surprising given her role as President of a party of the extreme right. But this harshness in

³¹⁰ Marlène Coulomb-Gully, *Présidente: Le Grand défi*, Paris: Payot, 2012, p. 330.

³¹¹ Nicolas Lebourg, “Marine Le Pen, l’extrême-droite et l’islamophobie”, *Le Nouvel Observateur*, 29 March 2012.

³¹² “En meeting à Nice, Marine Le Pen veut faire mentir les sondages”, *Le Nouvel Observateur*, 30 March 2012.

³¹³ Denis Charlet, “Le Pen rêve de faire mentir les sondages”, *L’Express*, 18 April 2012.

³¹⁴ Guillaume Perrault, “Le Pen veut ‘leur montrer qu’ils ont tort’”, *Le Figaro*, 18 April 2012.

³¹⁵ Marlène Coulomb-Gully, *op. cit.*, pp. 329-31.

the language can very well shock those who do not accept the ideology of the National Front. The tension which occurs around the harsh speech of Marine Le Pen puts her in a situation of the double bind. In effect, it is difficult for her to find a happy medium between the expectations of the militants of the NF and those of other French people who are unaccustomed to hear a female politician speak with such aggressiveness.

Overall, our analysis indicates that, for the commentators, Marine Le Pen demonstrates a marked competence in the handling of the political discourse. Thus, like Michèle Alliot-Marie, Marine overcomes the communication barrier. In addition, the political success and the popularity rating of Marine show that community norms could be in the process of changing, which will promise a better future for the women who are caught by the double bind Too Masculine or Too Feminine. The success of these two women in their fight against the stereotype which presumes that a female is a poor orator allow us to think that political women have really commenced to minimise the harmful effect of this stereotype. This question, which merits a more detailed consideration, will be revisited later in this study.

The female side of Madam Le Pen's image is linked with her family situation. Twice divorced, she often promotes her role as the single mother of three children. Guillaume Perrault, in *Le Figaro* of 16 April 2012, shows how she uses this in citing her reaction to the delinquency problem: "I give you my view as mother of a family"³¹⁶. Sidonie Sigrist,

³¹⁶ Guillaume Perrault, "Le Pen accuse droite et gauche d'avoir 'trahi'", *Le Figaro*,

in *Le Figaro* of 17 April 2012, makes the same observation: “mother of three children, divorced two times, the Frontist candidate aims to rely on her personal journey: ‘I know what it is like to bring up children alone’”³¹⁷. Denis Tugdual, in *L’Express* of 2 May 2012, cites the words of a female resident of Le Havre on this subject: “she is a modern woman. Like me, she is divorced with three children”³¹⁸. It is therefore evident that Marine Le Pen and the media both promote her role as mother. This role is certainly a political benefit and one of the most obvious female traits she demonstrates.

As President of a party of the extreme right, Marine Le Pen finds herself confronted by situations where her femininity is in conflict with the political values of the party. Marlène Coulomb-Gully points out the game of stereotypes to which Marine Le Pen is exposed to at the time of her ascension to the presidency of the National Front: “it is troubling to see a woman represent a party of the extreme right, one which has strong masculine values that show little interest in respect of women”. Coulomb-Gully gives us an example:

she says that she is favorable to PACS and to the Veil law, displaying a form of modernity to which the National Front policies in respect of feminine roles is hardly predisposed³¹⁹.

The position taken by Le Pen goes against the conservative values of the National Front. But as Caroline Fourest and Fiammetta Venner point out,

16 April 2012.

³¹⁷ Sidonie Sigrist, “Marine Le Pen brouille les genres”, *Le Figaro*, 17 April 2012.

³¹⁸ Denis Tugdual, “Contre Le Pen en 2002, pour ‘Marine’ en 2012”, *L’Express*, 2 May 2012.

³¹⁹ Marlène Coulomb-Gully, *Présidente: Le Grand défi*, Paris: Payot, 2012, pp. 329-30. PACS: Civil Pact of Solidarity.

her position in relation to abortion is less clear. They note that Marine “declares herself to be in favour of life ... [and that] she does not wish to repeal the Veil law, but wants to remove reimbursement for abortion”³²⁰. This idea of non-reimbursement represents an interesting compromise between her experience as a woman and her role as President of the National Front. The position that she takes with respect to the Veil law clearly demonstrates the political ability of Marine. Faced with the paradox that a young woman at the head of a party of the extreme right represents, she adopts an approach which permits her to find ground which can satisfy the members of the National Front and other French people. Once again we find examples of the rationality of Madam Le Pen.

In relation to the attention that the media pay to the body and clothes of women, Marine Le Pen, in the same way as other female politicians, does not escape. On 19 March 2010 Titiou Lecoq observes in *Slate*: “at the time of her appearance on the television screens in 2002, Marine Le Pen was a young blond woman, composed and smiling”³²¹. On 5 November 2010 Mariana Grépinet, in *Paris Match*, presents two different images for Marine: at the time of a debate held in the proximity of the palace of Versailles, “Marine Le Pen wore the uniform [of the traditional NF Versailles resident]: a long dark pleated skirt and a jacket tucked in at the waist”. Later the same day, at Nord-Pas-de-Calais,

³²⁰ Caroline Fourest and Fiammetta Venner, *Marine Le Pen*, Paris: Bernard Grasset, 2011, p. 179.

³²¹ Titiou Lecoq, “Marine Le Pen, la nouvelle ligne du Front”, *Slate*, 19 March 2010.

she is wearing jeans, a black jacket over a light tee-shirt, and high-heeled boots. To hold back her hair, she had exchanged her 80's headband for a pair of designer sunglasses³²².

This clothing flexibility, this uncomplicated style, is the mark of youthfulness which seduces. Pascale Nivelles, in *Libération* of 15 January 2011, comments in relation to her physical appearance: “she shakes her blonde hair”; “she lost 10 kilos in four years”; and “she has foregone her long hair resembling Loana, adopting the cut worn by Claire Chazal and Laurence Ferrari, two of the favourite personalities of the French”³²³. On 25 February Dominique Albertini notes in *Le Journal du Dimanche* that she is wearing “a very simple shirt and jeans”³²⁴. Mathilde Laurelli observes in *L'Express* of 6 March 2012: “shirt, a shoulder bag ... The style of the President of the National Front, a guest on the program *Words of the Candidate* on TF1 Monday night, oscillates between elegance and all-purpose”³²⁵. Other comments which signal the femininity of Marine: on 20 February 2012 Nicolas Estienne d'Orves discusses in *Le Figaro* the participation of Marine in the program *We are not asleep* on France 2. He finds her “equal to herself ... up to the high heels of the candidate”. The author refers to her femininity indirectly by comparing her to another guest, the singer Izia: “like Marine, Izia wears high heels and black

³²² Mariana Grépinet, “Marine Le Pen: le nouveau visage de l'extrême droit”, *Paris Match*, 5 November 2010.

³²³ Pascale Nivelles, “Elle n'a rien d'une blonde”, *Libération*, 15 January 2011. Loana is a French personality who made her debut in *Loft Story*. Claire Chazal and Laurence Ferrari are presenters of television news on TF1.

³²⁴ Dominique Albertini, “Marine Le Pen en tenue de campagne”, *Le Journal du Dimanche*, 25 February 2011.

³²⁵ Mathilde Laurelli, “Marine Le Pen, l'ambivalente madame tout-le-monde”, *L'Express*, 6 March 2012.

pantyhose”³²⁶. The numerous comments which make reference to her clothes and her body seem to mark a particular interest in her spontaneity and her disposition. Certainly the qualities are in line with the expectations of the public with respect to young women who evolve on the political scene. However, according to Rainbow Murray they are diametrically opposed to the masculine traits such as authority and voluntarism³²⁷. Marlène Coulomb-Gully in fact proposes that her female image and her role as president converge to trace the particular political destiny of Marine Le Pen:

seductive, indeed sexy, the model of *Masculine-Feminine Girl* embodied by the Frontist leader is without doubt also a response to the paradoxical injunction of the National Front which sees its virile values represented by a woman³²⁸.

For Coulomb-Gully, faced with the enigma which surrounds her post of president, Marine uses her femininity to neutralise the stereotypes which dictate that the leader must be a man. On the one hand, the fact that the media focus on the traits of a young seductive woman tends to disqualify her for the role of Head of State. On the other hand, the image of Marine Le Pen shows the party of the extreme right in a new light, with the result that it can henceforth communicate with a much larger public. Thus, that strategy of renewal aids her to get around the double bind Too Masculine or Too Feminine.

³²⁶ Nicolas d’Estienne d’Orves, “Marine le Pen chez Laurent Ruquier? Un non-événement. À rebours de toute ...”, *Le Figaro*, 20 February 2012.

³²⁷ Rainbow Murray, ed. *Cracking the Highest Glass Ceiling*, Santa Barbara: Praeger, 2010, p. 16.

³²⁸ Marlène Coulomb-Gully, *Présidente: Le Grand défi*, Paris: Payot, 2012, p. 331.

Let us now consider the movement in her approval rating.

According to the Ipsos Barometer of Political Action conducted for *Le Point* (Appendix 1), in June 2007 she is at 20%, then she suffers a fall which brings her to 10% in January 2009, before her score reaches 33% in May 2012. In the first round of the 2012 Presidential election, on 22 April, Marine Le Pen obtains 6.4 million votes, i.e. almost 20% of the electorate, which indicates that she had become an important political figure. This percentage does not permit her to progress to the second round because François Hollande and Nicolas Sarkozy beat her with 28% and 27% respectively. However, it demonstrates that Marine Le Pen has the confidence of a large part of the population. That said, in spite of this score, her chances of winning the election are minimal. One must remember that *Le Parisien* of 17 January 2011 notes, in discussing the opinion poll conducted by Obea/Infraforces after her ascension to the post of President of the National Front, that “more than 3 out of 4 French people (76.5%) estimate that Marine Le Pen ... will never be President of the Republic”³²⁹. We recall the 2002 election where her father, having reached the second round of the Presidential election, was crushed by the Republican vote. In spite of changes she made to the National Front and a rising popularity rating, Marine would have probably suffered in 2012 the same fate as her father. It is to be noted that she failed in the 2012 Legislative election for Hénin-Beaumont: she reaches the second round of

³²⁹ “Marine Le Pen présidente? 76% des Français n’y croient pas”, *Le Parisien*, 17 January 2011.

17 June 2012, but is beaten by the socialist Philippe Kemel who wins with a margin of 118 votes. Even if her popularity rating continues to climb, her journey towards the Executive summit is proving very difficult.

The analysis undertaken to this point is summarised in this way: *ipso facto*, Marine le Pen is in a masculine role because of her role as President of a party of the extreme right founded on masculine values. The behaviour she displays in her political life visibly responds to that demand of masculinity. She demonstrates assurance, power, firmness, rationality and aggressiveness, which are all masculine traits. If she shows herself to have little competence in foreign affairs and the economy, we find that she is a good speaker, and that she is not afraid to denounce and castigate persons with whom she does not agree. She maintains good relations with the media, even if she criticises them occasionally, and she performs very well on television. Nevertheless, the media have a tendency to emphasise her feminine traits, such as her role of mother, her image of a modern woman, her blond hair, and her lack of competence in economic management. In addition, like all women, the media focus on the body and clothes of Madam Le Pen. However, it is clear that Marine also seeks to emphasise her femininity. As Sidonie Sigrist highlights in *Le Figaro* of 17 April 2012 in citing the words of Janine Mossuz-Lavau, “she has a certain seduction about her and plays on the fact that she is a woman”³³⁰.

Contrary to the feminine stereotype that the media do not cease to reinforce, she displays ostensibly masculine characteristics. It is the

³³⁰ Sidonie Sigrist, “Marine Le Pen brouille les genres”, *Le Figaro*, 17 April 2012.

pervasiveness of the latter that presents a problem for Madam Le Pen since her role as leader of the NF, which demands a masculine behaviour, has a tendency to weaken her image among the French who are not adherents to the party. The brutality that Marlène Coulomb-Gully refers to is the inverse of the feminine traits of compassion and emotion. Indeed, we find few references to these two last traits in the articles and the books on Marine Le Pen. It is the same for the traits of sympathy and kindness which are also lacking in Madam Le Pen. For her, the feminine traits consist in the curious reconciliation between the role of mother and a free dressing style. Certainly there exists a tension between her image of a seductive woman and the masculine behaviour that she adopts with a view to consolidating her status as the political leader of the extreme right. The more she demonstrates a masculine behaviour, the more her feminine image is forgotten, and the more the non-adherents are shocked. The double bind Too Masculine or Too Feminine is in evidence due to the challenge that this political situation represents because it is difficult for there to be coexistence of the necessary masculine and feminine behaviours desired by the public. In despite of this situation, Marine succeeds in imposing herself as a woman in the role of leader of a party of the extreme right, and her popularity rating climbs. In comparison to the other women who are caught in the trap Too Masculine or Too Feminine, she sets herself apart because she knows how to surround the figure of a ferociously protective single mother and that of a free uninhibited woman with a series of masculine behaviours. We find that common points exist between Le Pen and Michèle Alliot-Marie; they both demonstrate a strict

character, almost military, and they have overcome the feminine stereotype which considers a woman to be a poor speaker. With Marine, it appears that her situation as party head, combined with her image of a modern woman, and the talents that she possesses, aid her to get around the double bind to a certain extent.

1.8 Conclusion

The masculine and feminine traits examined in this chapter are derived from the work of McKee and Sheriffs, Broverman et al., Spence et al., Spence and Holahan, Williams and Best, Huddy and Terkildsen, Alexander and Andersen, Dolan, and Murray on the stereotypes that we have defined in the introduction³³¹. The masculine traits are strength, competence, aggressiveness, rationality, firmness, knowledgeable and assurance, and the feminine traits are warmth, gentleness, passiveness, expressiveness, compassion, emotion and sympathy. We indicated at the start of the chapter that the traits the French people identify with the post of President of the Republic are masculine ones. As a result, the women who seek to attain to this post must demonstrate these masculine traits. On the other hand, there is also an expectation on the part of the French people that women show feminine behaviour. These contrasting demands suggest that women must seek to balance these two types of behaviour. However, this balance depends on the situation and abilities of each woman. In addition, differences exist due to the number of combinations of masculine and feminine traits, with the result that the mechanism of the double bind varies for each woman.

In respect of masculine traits, it is Michèle Alliot-Marie, Simone Veil, Martine Aubry and Marine Le Pen who demonstrate them the most. Each of the four women are attributed the qualities of aggressiveness, strength, firmness and assurance. Other traits exist which are not common

³³¹ Refer to notes 42-48 for the works of these authors.

to the four women. For Édith Cresson and Marine Le Pen, competence does not appear on the list of qualities normally attributed to them, even though we find other masculine traits for them. In the case of Ségolène Royal, our analysis indicates that she demonstrates the masculine traits of aggressiveness, firmness and assurance. Nevertheless, our analysis points to a lack, both real and perceived, of her rationality, competence, strength and knowledgeability. Overall, all women demonstrate masculine traits to varying degrees. It should be noted that, among the women who demonstrate the greatest number of masculine traits, Madams Veil, Alliot-Marie and Aubry are perceived as competent in their roles. Given that, for the French, it is competence which is deemed essential for a female politician, it is not surprising that these three women benefit from an elevated popularity rating in the opinion polls.

With respect to the feminine traits, of all the women it is Simone Veil who presents the most. She demonstrates emotion, compassion, sympathy, warmth and gentleness. By comparison, these traits are hardly discernible for Michèle Alliot-Marie, Martine Aubry and Marine Le Pen. These women prefer, clearly, to promote their masculine side. Édith Cresson does not seek to highlight her feminine traits, which is not surprising given her efforts to assert her masculine traits. Conversely, Ségolène Royal, whose Presidential and Socialist Primary campaigns were constructed around her female image, displays a multitude of feminine traits, including emotion, compassion and sympathy. Thus, we find different combinations of traits for each of the six women. That which is evident is that, to measure the complexity of the mechanism of the double

bind one cannot look at these feminine traits in isolation but as a function of the dynamic of masculine and feminine traits for each woman.

How is the double bind, Too Masculine or Too Feminine, demonstrated for each of the six women? Our first observation is that the double bind impacts all of the women in one way or another. Édith Cresson, the only woman in our sample who occupied the post of Prime Minister, seeks to promote her masculine traits to the exclusion of her feminine ones. On the other hand, the media neglect her masculine traits and they focus on her feminine side. The final blow is, without doubt, her character in the *Bébête Show* which presents her as being controlled by the President, and therefore without authority and the attributes of a leader. It is consequently obvious that the media played a major role in the downfall of Cresson. But it is also true that Cresson contributes to her own situation by exaggerating her masculine traits in search of a masculine image. Her crude way of speaking and her aggressiveness are obviously a step too far and shock the French people. We note, moreover, that the more she displays a masculine behaviour, the more the media feminises her image to the point that she loses all credibility. In this way, Édith falls fatally into the trap of the double bind which cuts short her political career.

Simone Veil is an anomaly: of all the women, she demonstrates the greatest range of feminine and masculine traits. Among the masculine traits, Veil succeeded in demonstrating competence, a masculine trait particularly prized by the electorate. But she also demonstrates feminine traits. Certainly, the media especially point out the latter, as for example her weaknesses in the oratory area and her image of a woman and mother,

but the elevated popularity rating of Veil, which continues for such a long time, is the reflection of a political career which has succeeded in the long term. Nevertheless, in spite of her popularity rating, and in spite of the fact that she displays masculine traits, it is her feminine side which dominates due to the major reforms that she introduced in favour of women. In addition, her portfolios are related to domains which are considered feminine. It is true that her role as President of the European Parliament is judged to be masculine, but, as we will see later, it is Valéry Giscard d'Estaing who is responsible for her election to this post. As the masculine traits remain in the background and it is her feminine side that largely predominates, the career of Simon Veil could not propel her to the summit of the State.

In respect of Madam Alliot-Marie, our analysis demonstrates that she displays more masculine than feminine traits. That was due, we think, to her post of leader of the RPR political party where she could demonstrate her capability as a leader. Her competence is also widely recognised in her work as Minister of Defence and Minister of the Interior, portfolios considered as being masculine. The popularity rating of Michèle and the approval she received for her political actions in the government indicate that she is much appreciated by the French people. On the feminine side, she demonstrates feminine traits by her fashion style, and it is remarkable that Madam Alliot-Marie did not suffer electoral repercussions as a result of the tendency of the media to promote her feminine traits. At first sight it seems that, to a certain extent, Madam Alliot-Marie avoids the trap of the double bind. However, contrary to

Simone Veil, it is her masculine side which matters. We must suppose that an image devoid of feminine traits is not the desired image for a female candidate, and that that hardness had hindered Madam Alliot-Marie in her quest to become the UMP candidate for the 2007 Presidential election.

In the two election campaigns that she contested Ségolène Royal displayed her feminine traits to the exclusion of her masculine traits. She decided to adopt this approach, without doubt, after having learned lessons from the failure of Édith Cresson. However, she did not succeed in gaining the confidence of the French people in either of these two major polls. In fact, her popularity rating falls considerably in the period between the campaigns of 2007 and 2011. Treated as a star by the media at the beginning, they then turn against her. By highlighting her feminine side and by pointing out her lack of masculine traits such as competence, the media put in question her political abilities. Like Édith Cresson, the media played an important role in the drop in popularity of Royal. However, Madam Royal also contributes to her failures by seeking to promote her feminine traits to the detriment of her masculine ones. As a result, it is impossible for her to demonstrate that she is a leader capable of leading the country. The situation of Ségolène Royal clearly demonstrates the theory of Rainbow Murray, that is to say a woman who seeks a high-level post will not succeed if she adopts an approach which emphasises her feminine traits to the exclusion of her masculine ones.

Overall, our analysis indicates that Madam Aubry displays a masculine behaviour. We noted that Martine makes her mark in her roles

as assistant Director at P  chiney, First Secretary of the Socialist Party, Mayor of Lille, and in her posts in the government. Her successes in these roles indicate an elevated level of competence. However, she does not succeed in showing her economic competence. In respect of her feminine side, in the beginning Martine is reticent to display her feminine traits. We noted that her advisors tried to persuade her to soften her image, which resulted in her changing her appearance somewhat and discussing her private life in magazines and television programs. Naturally the media have a tendency to focus on the appearance and body of Martine. However, we find two significant actions by the media which undermine the masculine image that Martine wants to put forward: firstly, the publication in *Lib  ration* of a photo which depicts Martine as a seductive woman; and secondly, the action of the media in presenting Martine as a candidate of substitution in the Socialist Primary. In both of these cases, it is a matter of the feminisation of her image and an attack on her credibility. It is true that her successes in various roles and the predominance of masculine traits suggest that she would be able to overcome the double bind. However, her image of a candidate inferior to Fran  ois Hollande and Dominique Strauss-Kahn creates the perception that she lacks the will and the determination necessary to be elected President.

As leader of the National Front, a party founded on traditional masculine values, Marine Le Pen must display masculine traits and indeed she does it with aplomb. Of all our women, she demonstrates a very masculine character: our analysis finds that she exhibits a behaviour which

is aggressive, brutal and powerful. Like her father, she does not refrain from denouncing things with which she does not agree. But, unlike her father, she pursues a policy which seeks to promote an image of her and of the party which is less disturbing pour the average French person. We have also noted that, unlike the feminine stereotype, Marine is a good speaker and that she presents well on the television screens. But Marine also demonstrates some feminine traits. She presents an image of a single mother with three children, and her dressing habits give testimony to naturalness and a simplicity which appeal to the public. In the media, it is her feminine traits that feature: one finds references to her role as a mother, to her image of a young modern woman, and to her clothes and her body. It is noteworthy that these feminine traits do not prevent her from succeeding in her role of leader of the National Front. In the 2012 Presidential election she received votes well in excess of the traditional level for the Front. For Marine Le Pen the double bind exists by reason of the fact that her role as leader of the extreme right naturally leads her to harden her image: the more she promotes her masculine traits, the more she risks alienating herself from the majority of the French. However, as we have seen, Marine Le Pen in the main avoids falling into this trap: her feminine traits operate perfectly to alleviate the effects of an excessive masculinisation.

Overall, the women have trouble in mastering the political effects of the double bind due to the fact that the French people do not see them in the same way as male politicians. The need to find a balance between masculine and feminine traits to satisfy the expectations of the people

poses a problem for female politicians for two reasons: the impossibility of controlling the image that the media put forward of them; and the circumstances and abilities of each woman. However, the results of our study bring hope inasmuch as some of the women in our study succeeded in resisting the blight of the double bind. We found that the image of a modern woman and mother, the demonstration of political ability, the eagerness to manipulate the media and the will to cultivate a talent as a speaker have permitted some women to bypass the trap. This indicates that the perception of French people is in the process of changing and that, for women politicians, one can hope that it will be much easier in the future to overcome the obstacle of the double bind Too Masculine or Too Feminine.

Chapter 2: Experienced or Symbol of Change

2.1 Introduction

The media have a tendency to depict female politicians as a symbol of change because they represent a novelty and therefore a change from the practices of the past. However, Rainbow Murray notes that “according to the stereotype, a woman who is new and different, is, by definition, lacking in experience and the networks which are expected of a leader”. The situation of the double bind arises from the fact that a female politician who puts forward her experience risks losing the advantages that she can draw from her image as the bearer of change. By contrast, Murray notes that, in the circumstances where a female possesses experience, the latter could be under-estimated because of the tendency to accentuate her novelty and her difference³³².

Our goal is to determine if the French, the media and male politicians consider the six women as a symbol of change. We will also examine their level of political experience to establish to what extent the situation of a double bind emerges for the women who are experienced and who, as a result, do not manage to present themselves as a symbol of change. In order to do this we will examine works of university researchers and press articles, as well as opinion polls.

³³² Rainbow Murray, ed. *Cracking the Highest Glass Ceiling*, Santa Barbara: Praeger, 2010, p. 14.

2.2 Édith Cresson

Commenting on the announcement of the appointment of Édith Cresson as Prime Minister during the evening news on 16 May 1991, Élisabeth Schemla notes: “the French people ... know virtually nothing about this unexpected head of government who is neither a person with a television profile nor a star of politics”³³³. Thus, at the time of her appointment by François Mitterrand, Cresson is almost unknown outside the party and the parliament. For the French, she is a new arrival: her political career and the various posts that she occupied are almost unknown. In addition, unlike most of the male politicians of the time, she is not a graduate of ENA or Sciences Po. Thus, following the definition proposed by Rainbow Murray, the first woman to occupy the post of Prime Minister represents in many respects a breath of fresh air at the head of the executive.

Édith Cresson explains why the President had chosen her: during an exchange with Mitterrand on the merit of Pierre Bérégovoy as Prime Minister, the President tells her:

it would not be new enough. After Rocard, [Prime Minister at the time] everything will have to be different: content, style, ambition. The people will have to feel the change ... With Béré, it is assured inaction³³⁴.

Without doubt Mitterrand is correct. At the beginning, 87% of the French consider themselves “very pleased” or “pleased” with the appointment of Cresson. The arrival of Cresson promised a new approach which was

³³³ Élisabeth Schemla, *Édith Cresson, la femme piégée*, Paris: Flammarion, 1993, p. 93.

³³⁴ Édith Cresson, *Histoires françaises*, Paris: Éditions du Rocher, 2006, p. 132.

going to improve the lives of the French. For them, Édith represented change, the beginning of a new momentum.

To examine the attitude of the media towards Édith Cresson, it is useful to look back in the past. When she becomes Minister for Agriculture on 22 May 1981, a post that she was the first female to occupy, the comments are rare. Thierry Pfister writes an article in *Le Nouvel Observateur* of 25 May 1981 in which he discusses the members of the new government. Among the four women nominated to the Mauroy government he only mentions one, Nicole Questiaux. There is no reference to Cresson³³⁵. For his part, Jacques Grall, in *Le Monde* of 26 May 1981, discusses with scepticism the appointment of the “red-headed Parisien”. For Grall, it is a case of “a major surprise” which “can appear like a provocation in a circle which is not particularly feminist”³³⁶.

Ignored by the media at the time of her appointment as the first woman at the head of an Agriculture ministry, by comparison, ten years later Madam Cresson provokes numerous comments when she becomes the first female to occupy the post of Prime Minister. Here are some examples of the reactions which appeared in the media. On 16 May 1991 *Les Echos* comments that “François Mitterrand ... entrusts a woman with the task of imparting a new momentum to the majority”³³⁷. Jean-Marie Colombani, in *Le Monde* of 17 May 1991, sees in it the sign of a positive evolution:

³³⁵ Thierry Pfister, “L’Équipe du troisième tour”, *Le Nouvel Observateur*, 25 May 1981, p. 25.

³³⁶ Jacques Grall, “Une Femme à la terre”, *Le Monde*, 26 May 1981.

³³⁷ “Le Retour de la politique”, *Les Echos*, 16 May 1991.

the President has put his confidence in a woman; he is innovating, and therefore shows that he has modernised French society that ... is henceforth ready to be directed ... by a woman ... The President therefore wanted to give “a new momentum ” to the evolution of the country³³⁸.

On May 23 1991, *Le Nouvel Observateur* devotes several pages to Madam Cresson. Laurent Joffrin notes that

this appointment could even, for better or worse, correspond to an absolutely real turning point in the course of French political life, one which only happens once or twice in a decade³³⁹.

Robert Schneider observes in *Le Nouvel Observateur* of 30 May 1991:

her arrival at Matignon already changes, of itself, the political order. If by chance she succeeds, if she gives a new momentum to the country, the whole political landscape will be turned upside down³⁴⁰.

Yann de l'Écotais, in his editorial in *L'Express* of 31 May 1991, also gives his approval:

François Mitterrand ... has done well ... He has chosen well: Édith Cresson ... has all the qualities to break the malaise which has progressively taken over the country ... Psychologically, the shock is favourable³⁴¹.

Schneider, in *Le Nouvel Observateur* of 6 June 1991, shines the light on the depth of the changes that Mitterrand envisaged for the country: “the choice of Édith Cresson constitutes ... a break. She was appointed to be decisive, to make changes, ‘to antagonise’, as they say at the Élysée, when it is necessary”³⁴². It seems that, for Mitterrand, the appointment of

³³⁸ Jean-Marie Colombani, “Une Logique de combat”, *Le Monde*, 17 May 1991, p. 1.

³³⁹ Laurent Joffrin, “Du violon au clairon”, *Le Nouvel Observateur*, 23 May 1991, p. 34.

³⁴⁰ Robert Schneider, “Cresson au coin du bois”, *Le Nouvel Observateur*, 30 May 1991, p. 34.

³⁴¹ Yann de l'Écotais, “Bien tard”, *L'Express*, 31 May 1991, p. 4.

³⁴² Robert Schneider, “1991: Comment éviter la défaite ?”, *Le Nouvel Observateur*, 6 June 1991, p. 43.

Cresson is the occasion to not only change the orientation but also the tone of French politics. Overall, the comments of the media demonstrate that her appointment is perceived as an important moment in the history of the Fifth Republic.

To see how the image of Cresson as a symbol of change articulates to her political experience, it is appropriate for us to briefly retrace her career. It commences in 1975, the year where she is candidate in the third district of Vienne. She was not elected on that occasion but, in 1977 she is elected mayor of Thuré in the region of Poitou-Charentes, and in 1979 she is elected to the European Parliament. Édith Cresson joins the government of Pierre Mauroy in 1981 as Minister of Agriculture. Following that, she manages the portfolios of Exterior Commerce and Tourism, Industrial Redeployment and Commerce, deemed to be a masculine role, and European Affairs. For a female politician of that era, it is an impressive CV. Lynne Wilcox highlights the extent of that experience: “[she] was not a political novice; neither was she unaware of the protocol governing ministerial office, nor was she unaccustomed to media attention”. Wilcox adds that, at the time of her appointment as Prime Minister, Cresson had been active in politics for over 27 years and was accustomed to the male-dominated world of politics³⁴³. Éric Le Boucher and Patrick Jarreau, in *Le Monde* of 16 May 1991, point out the indisputable political experience of

³⁴³ Lynne Wilcox, “Edith Cresson: Victim of Her Own Image” in Helen Drake and John Gaffney, eds. *The Language of Leadership in Contemporary France*, Aldershot: Dartmouth Publishing Company, 1996, p. 81.

Cresson before her appointment³⁴⁴, as also does the correspondent of *Les Echos* of 16 May 1991³⁴⁵. Thus, it is undeniable that, at the time of her appointment as Prime Minister, the media recognise the political experience of Cresson. However, as Élisabeth Schemla observed, before her appointment Madam Cresson is almost unknown by the French due to her absence from television programs and her reticence to be in the limelight. It is therefore obvious that a paradox exists in the case of Madam Cresson: for an experienced female politician who promises a complete break, she is hardly visible.

The situation is summarised in this way: at the time of the appointment of Cresson as Prime Minister, the expectations of the French correspond to the situation observed many times for female politicians, that is to say that they represent change and that, as a result, they are considered inexperienced. In the beginning, the media are almost unanimous in saying that her appointment brings the change that the country needs. Her novelty conforms to the proposition of Murray which postulates that a woman is naturally considered as a symbol of change. But it is there that the double bind reveals itself. If she possesses an undeniable political experience, largely recognised by the media, she remains, as the comment of Schemla indicates, largely unknown by the French who rather see her image as one of a female politician who

³⁴⁴ Éric Le Boucher and Patrick Jarreau, “Madame Edith Cresson, une fidèle du Président”, *Le Monde*, 16 May 1991.

³⁴⁵ “Édith Cresson: Une femme de défi et de séduction”, *Les Echos*, 16 May 1991.

promises change. This situation exposes her to political attacks which affect her credibility.

Let us now view the situation which arises in the period following her appointment. We noted in Chapter 1 that, shortly after her appointment, the media started to turn against Madam Cresson. The case of Jean-Marie Colombani, editor in chief of *Le Monde*, enlightens us on the evolving approach of the media after her appointment. At the start, Colombani considers her appointment a good thing, but very quickly he starts to depict her as inefficient in her role of Prime Minister. Throughout the media, and among the French, the enthusiasm created by her appointment collapses rapidly, as demonstrated by the opinion polls. With the passage of time, it is her moods and errors which feature in the newspapers, so much so that her image as an experienced female politician, already minimalised, is totally eroded. The media regard her more as a disaster than a symbol of change. The fact that she presented herself at the beginning as a symbol of change accelerated the process of the erasure of her political experience. As a result, she can no longer extricate herself from the trap which deems a woman labelled as a symbol of change will be unable to lastingly impose herself as an experienced female politician.

2.3 Simone Veil

At the end of 1980 Valéry Giscard d'Estaing considers Madam Veil as a replacement for the Prime Minister, Édouard Balladur because, according to him, “she would bring an indisputable freshness and a favourable opinion from the voters”³⁴⁶. Even though he finishes up rejecting the idea on the pretext that she would not be interested, it is clear that Giscard considers Veil as a veritable prime mover of change.

As the analysis of a double bind obliges us to compare the “novelty” of a female politician to her real experience, it is appropriate that we briefly retrace her career. Before her entry into the government, Veil worked in the judiciary administration. In the beginning her knowledge of politics is limited to the social life of her husband who is a senior public servant. Over time, in her role as a public servant, she is more closely linked to politics. As a result, she meets Jacques Chirac. In 1964 Jean Foyer, the Attorney General, offers her a post in the Civil Affairs Branch where she is involved in a number of major reforms in respect of family law. Henceforth she acquires experience and networks in government services. She meets Georges Pompidou in 1969. It is a fortunate meeting for Veil because it leads to her appointment as Secretary of the Superior Council of the Judiciary on 14 March 1970. As we will see in Chapter 3, Pompidou will be responsible for the appointment of Veil to other government posts. At the time of her appointment as

³⁴⁶ Laurent Pfaadt, *Simone Veil: Une Passion française*, Saint-Victor-d'Épine: City Éditions, 2011, p. 149.

Minister of Health in 1974, she is not well-known among the French, but she has a reputation among the senior public servants. However, since the French are unaware of her experience gained in her public roles, Veil does not have the image of an experienced politician. The perception of Veil's lack of political experience is in conformity with the logic of the double bind which presumes that a woman is immediately viewed as new and different and that she represents change.

Let us examine the reactions of the media and university researchers to the appointment of Veil as Minister of Health. On 20 May 1974 Guy Claisse, in *L'Express*, gives us an explanation by citing the words of Valéry Giscard d'Estaing after he won the Presidential election: "I have understood in this campaign that you wanted change, change politically and socially"³⁴⁷. The appointment of Veil to the role of Minister reflects this desire for change. Even though it was remarkable, this appointment gave rise to few comments in the media. It is the senior members of the party of the Right, such as Jacques Chirac, Michel Poniatowski and Jean-Pierre Fourcade, who always appear in press articles. Among the women, it is Françoise Giroud, co-founder and director of *L'Express*, before her appointment to the post of Secretary of State charged with feminine matters, who attracts the attention of the media.

³⁴⁷ Guy Claisse, "Giscard: 100 jours pour tout changer", *L'Express*, 20 May 1974, p. 15.

It is as a woman, since women were little represented in the political world at the time, that Simone Veil interests the daily papers. For example, Paul Guimard, in *L'Express* of 3 June 1974, returns the debate to the sexual question:

she is a beautiful minister, but, once again, one who conforms too much to the standard image of female skills, and it is agreed that they should not stray too far from social or public welfare³⁴⁸.

In effect, Guimard is emphasising the limits of political action which Madam Veil, as a woman, could claim. Also on 3 June 1974, Guy Claisse publishes in *L'Express* an article on the new government. We find in it a photograph of Madam Veil at her desk in the Ministry of Health. But there is no reference to Veil in the article, as if the photograph must suffice to highlight the change of which Giscard d'Estaing spoke³⁴⁹. Following her appointment, the President gives Veil the task of achieving the passage of the law on abortion. In giving this mission to her, the President recognised without doubt that a totally new approach was required to introduce a law which, up till then, had not survived the parliamentary debates.

With respect to the experience of Simone before her appointment to the post of minister, the press in the main remain quiet. One of the rare comments is that of Philippe Boucher, which appeared in *Le Monde* of 30 May 1974, in which he outlined the career of Simone before her appointment. According to Boucher, her successes in the diverse roles

³⁴⁸ Paul Guimard, "La Surprise et l'étonnement", *L'Express*, 3 June 1974, p. 22.

³⁴⁹ Guy Claisse, "Qu'est-ce qui peut changer", *L'Express*, 3 June 1974, p. 15.

that she had occupied are such that, “when the announcement is made of an increase in the participation rate of women in the government, her name is cited among the first few”³⁵⁰. The lack of comments in the media on the political experience of Veil indicates that it does not follow the normal journey of a minister who rises to power from the ranks of the party.

Encouraged by Valéry Giscard d’Estaing, Simone nominates for the European election on 10 June 1979 as chief candidate for the Udf party. This time, the media take an interest in Simone Veil. Franz-Oliver Giesbert, in *Le Nouvel Observateur* of 5 March 1979, presents a summary of the private and professional life of Simone, including her posts in the Public Service and as minister. He describes her as “the darling of the French”, and notes that she “has been at the top of all opinion polls in the past five years”³⁵¹. This popularity is confirmed by the comment of Sylvie Pierre-Brossolette who reports the results of an Udf opinion poll in *L’Express* of 21 April 1979: “[Simone] is leading by far ... 49% of the French consider that her name makes them want to vote for the Giscard list”³⁵². In *L’Express* of 5 May 1979, Albert du Roy explains the candidature of Simone in this way:

the exceptional rating that she enjoys in the opinion polls and the impossibility of finding in the Udf another ‘rallying point’ convinced Giscard that, in spite of her political inexperience, Simone Veil was the only possible chief candidate³⁵³.

³⁵⁰ Philippe Boucher, “Madame Simone Veil, Le Mal de vivre”, *Le Monde*, 30 May 1974, p. 6.

³⁵¹ Franz-Oliver Giesbert, “Simone en première ligne”, *Le Nouvel Observateur*, 5 March 1979, p. 34.

³⁵² Sylvie Pierre-Brossolette, “Udf: La Cohue de parrains”, *L’Express*, 21 April 1979, p. 33.

³⁵³ Albert du Roy, “Europe: La Grande bagarre”, *L’Express*, 5 May 1979, p. 30.

Discussing the choice of Simone as chief candidate for the Udf list, Giesbert notes in *Le Nouvel Observateur* of 5 March 1979: “the minister the least ‘political’ of the government has accepted the ‘mission Europe’ of Valéry Giscard d’Estaing”³⁵⁴. The comment of Giesbert mirrors the general opinion which sees the appointment of Veil as a strategy of Giscard in his quest for the 1981 Presidential election. As Robert Schneider writes in *L’Express* of 19 May 1979:

this [European] election which foreshadows the first round of the 1981 Presidential election, offers the future candidate Giscard an excellent occasion to reinforce his advantage over Jacques Chirac and François Mitterrand³⁵⁵.

Therefore, for Giscard, it is the popularity de Simone which influenced his choice for the head of the list. For the French, it is also her novelty as a candidate in a political poll which has mobilised them in her favour.

Laurent Pfaadt observes with respect to her political campaign: “Simone Veil is a novice even if she has learned a lot since 1974 ... [because] she has yet to contest an election”. Up until then, recalls Pfaadt, Madam Veil refused calls for her to participate in political elections³⁵⁶. Sylvie Pierre-Brossolette, in *L’Express* of 12 May 1979, reports “her campaign of invisible handicaps ... [of which] the first is her inexperience”³⁵⁷. Thus,

³⁵⁴ Franz-Olivier Giesbert, “Simone en première ligne”, *Le Nouvel Observateur*, 5 March 1979, p. 34.

³⁵⁵ Robert Schneider, “Le Bon choix européen de Giscard”, *L’Express*, 19 May 1979, p. 38.

³⁵⁶ Laurent Pfaadt, *Simone Veil: Une Passion française*, Saint-Victor-d’Épine: City Éditions, 2011, p. 136.

³⁵⁷ Sylvie Pierre-Brossolette, “Campagne européenne 1979: Les Boulets de Simone Veil”, *L’Express*, 12 May 1979.

for the media and academics, it is the novelty of Madam Veil that one must remember in the campaign for the European elections.

Finally, it is appropriate for us to examine the election of Simone Veil as President of the European Parliament on 17 July 1979. This time, the electors are the Members of Parliament, and not the French people. On 14 July 1979, Albert du Roy discusses her candidature in *L'Express*: “the obvious advantage of a Veil presidency: a new image for a new assembly”³⁵⁸. As the first woman to seek the post of President, Madam Veil immediately appears as a symbol of change. It is likely that she is almost unknown by the members who come from the other countries which form the parliament. In any case, her election is achieved because Valéry Giscard d'Estaing and Michel Poniatowski are responsible for her success. Discussing Poniatowski, Kathleen Evin observes in *Le Nouvel Observateur* of 23 July 1979 that “Simone Veil owes her election to him”. Indeed, according to Evin, highly placed French officials had given up some key European posts to other European countries, including Germany and Great Britain, in compensation for which they voted for Madam Veil³⁵⁹. Once again, Madam Veil imposes herself as a symbol of change to the extent that, for the members of the European Parliament, her political experience does not enter into the situation. It is rather the decisions taken at the highest level of European governments which ensure the election of Madam Veil as President.

³⁵⁸ Albert du Roy, “Simone II”, *L'Express*, 14 July 1979.

³⁵⁹ Kathleen Evin, “Strasbourg: ‘combinazioni’ et magouilles”, *Le Nouvel Observateur*, 23 July 1979, p. 27.

The reaction of the media to these three events raised by our analysis is summarised below. At the time of the appointment of Veil as Minister of Health, she did not incite much interest, even if one readily saw in her the renewal that the President wanted. Later, at the time of her election as a member of the European government, there is an awakening of the interest of the media because she is on top of the opinion polls, even if that interest is linked to the campaign strategies of Giscard for the 1981 Presidential election. At the moment of her candidature for the presidency of the European Parliament, she presents herself again as a symbol of change. She features in the columns of the media, but once again it is more due to the efforts of Giscard than to those of Veil. Looking back over her journey, Albert du Roy identifies the repeated successes of a woman politician for whom the novelty has always been an electoral argument of substance, at the price of the erasure of her political experience.

Madam Veil has always been a favourite of the French. As we noted in Chapter 1, her popularity rating climbs very quickly after her appointment to the government in 1974, and it has practically never decreased since then. Laurent Pfaadt, speaking of her role as Minister of Health, comments:

she does not know that, in accepting the post, she is climbing the first steps of an incredible and historic career. Simone Veil was a cog; she was going to become a paragon ... a symbol³⁶⁰.

³⁶⁰ Laurent Pfaadt, *Simone Veil: Une Passion française*, Saint-Victor-d'Épine: City Éditions, 2011, p. 93.

Veil represents undeniable change at that time. For Valéry Giscard d'Estaing, it was time that a woman was given responsibility for the passage of the law on abortion, which in the past had never obtained the support of parliament. Why is she popular? Among the reasons advanced is cited her life as a deportee, but also the symbolic image of a woman to whom had been entrusted the task of leading the battle for women generally. Discussing the debate on abortion, Françoise Gaspard affirms: “we quickly understood that she was not attackable ... because of her deportation, but not only that, also due to her highly developed feminism”³⁶¹. To that task she brought her presence, and her sensitivity as a woman. In addition, according to Alida Brill, Veil is recognised for her grand conviction and “her respect for principles rather than opportunity”³⁶². Charged with the advance of reforms on abortion and later divorce, Madam Veil well and truly represents the evolution of the status of women. With respect to the double bind Experienced or Symbol of Change, Veil definitely places herself on the side of change, since her political experience, which comes very late in her career, has never been an electoral benefit. It is true that, having spent five years in Social Services, she is experienced in the political game. At the time of her election as a member of the European Parliament she had considerable experience as a minister. However, she lacks experience as a parliamentary member and knows little about the electoral process and

³⁶¹ Maurice Szafran, *Simone Veil: Destin*, Paris: Flammarion, 1994, p. 195.

³⁶² Alida Brill, *A Rising Public Voice: Women in Politics Worldwide*, New York: The Feminist Press, 1995, p. 163.

interaction with electors. As it is the novelty of Madam Veil which prevails with her political experience being ignored, one hardly sees the phenomenon of behaviour associated with experienced female politicians.

From the time of her appointment as minister in 1974, Madam Veil is regarded as a symbol of change. It is her novelty which immediately attracts attention. It is equally the case at the time where she becomes a member of the European Parliament. For the French, the fact that she is an experienced minister has little impact because it is her merit as a symbol of change which counts. As was the case at the time of her appointment as Minister of Health, her novelty was highly appreciated by the French with the result that she was definitely viewed as a symbol of the renewal of the institutions. This situation is the inverse of Murray's hypothesis which proposes that the value of being a symbol of change risks being no longer a factor if a woman is experienced. For Madam Veil, political experience is not an issue and never exposes her to attacks targeting her competence and her credibility since, each time, her image as a woman as the bearer of change assures her the posts that she seeks.

If the double bind Experienced or Symbol of Change has little hold on the career of Simone Veil, it is because she is not beaten on the terrain of experience. Whether it is a question of the era, character or opportunity, Simone Veil avoided the debilitating effects of the double bind phenomenon.

2.4 Michèle Alliot-Marie

At the time of her success, on 4 December 1999, in the presidential election for the RPR party, Madam Alliot-Marie already possesses experience in the political world but, as we know, this is not always fully recognised precisely because, as a woman, she embodies “naturally” a new and unheard of force.

Let us summarise her experience up to the time of the poll. From 1972 to 1978 Alliot-Marie works in the parliamentary offices of Edgar Faure, Gérard Ducray, Bernard Stasi, Jean-Pierre Soisson, and Alice Saunier-Seité. From 1978 to 1981, she is parliamentary substitute for her father, Bernard Marie, the member for Pyrénées-Atlantiques. It is in March 1986 that she enters the National Assembly as the member for Pyrénées-Atlantiques, and she remains in that position until 2012 when she is beaten in the second round of the legislative elections. In March 1986 also, she becomes a member of the government of Jacques Chirac as Junior Minister for Teaching, reporting to the Minister for National Education, René Monory. She will occupy this post until May 1988. She makes a return to the government in March 1993 as Minister of Youth and Sports and remains there until May 1995. She also distinguished herself at the municipal level. Between June 1995 and June 2002 she is mayor of Saint-Jean-de-Luz, a district situated in the department of Pyrénées-Atlantiques in the Aquitaine region. Thus, at the time of the poll for the presidency of the RPR in 1999, she had already proved herself in the political world. The question which therefore poses itself is to know to

what extent this experience has an effect on the phenomenon of double bind in respect to Madam Alliot-Marie.

During the campaign of Michelle for the presidency of the RPR, it was Michèle and not her rival Patrick Devedjian who, for the supporters of the party, brought hope of a final settlement of the problems of the party. The media applaud her entry into the contest. Carole Barjon, in *Le Nouvel Observateur* of 14 October 1999, describes her as a “new personality, a woman”³⁶³. Eric Mandonnet, in *L’Express* of 28 October 1999, cites the remarks of a senior member of the RPR: “let us at least give another image of the movement and let us elect a woman”³⁶⁴. On 25 November 1999 a correspondent of *Le Figaro* cites the words of Patrick Devedjian, the candidate eliminated in the first round: “Michèle Alliot-Marie [embodied], in a dynamic campaign, a desire of renewal and an image of modernity”³⁶⁵. Thierry Portes, in *Le Figaro* of 4 December 1999, takes up the theme of modernity in describing the two candidates for the second round in this way: “a woman [Michèle] ... who would represent ‘modernity’, facing a man [Delevoye] ... who would embody a political world more ‘traditional’”³⁶⁶. Thus, the comments of the journalists point to the candidature of Madam Alliot-Marie as representing novelty and modernity, that is, change. It is therefore evident that, like all women for whom the image is immediately that of a bearer of “change”, Madam

³⁶³ Carole Barjon, “Alliot-Marie candidate bis”, *Le Nouvel Observateur*, 14 October 1999, p. 20.

³⁶⁴ Eric Mandonnet, “La Compagnonne”, *L’Express*, 28 October 1999, p. 16.

³⁶⁵ “RPR: Devedjian et Fillon soutiennent Alliot-Marie”, *Le Figaro*, 25 November 1999.

³⁶⁶ Thierry Portes, “Le Tournant d’une présidence”, *Le Figaro*, 4 December 1999.

Alliot-Marie promises to bring, more than her male colleagues, a breath of fresh air to the RPR party.

The image of Michèle as a female bringing change becomes clearer if we regard her popularity rating. To commence with, the opinion poll conducted by CSA in the period from 22 October to 4 November 1999 for *Le Parisien* reveals that Madam Alliot-Marie is the leading candidate for the presidency of the RPR³⁶⁷. The BVA Group poll for *Paris Match* for the period 9 to 11 December 1999 reports that 60% of the people questioned think that her election is good news³⁶⁸. Her elevated scores explain why the election of Alliot-Marie to the presidency of the RPR is well-received by the French. For them, the arrival of a woman can only bring beneficial changes. In that respect, the reaction of the French is similar to that of the media.

According to the double bind Experienced or Symbol of Change outlined by Rainbow Murray, a woman who is experienced risks losing the advantages linked to her novelty, and a woman perceived as a symbol of renewal can see her experience ignored. The danger therefore, for Michèle, would be that for the media and the French her novelty as a future first president of the RPR far outweighs her experience and that by an unfortunate extension one finishes by considering her as a less serious candidate. We will see that the more her career advances, the more this situation of the double bind affirms itself. However, at the moment of her

³⁶⁷ Michel Samson and Jean-Louis Saux, "Renaud Muselier se rallie à Jean-Paul Delevoye dans la compétition pour la présidence du RPR", *Le Monde*, 10 November 1999.

³⁶⁸ Ipsos, opinion poll conducted from 9 to 11 December 1999 for *Paris Match*.

accession to the presidency of the RPR party, given that she obtained 62.23% of the votes of the supporters in the second round against her competitor Jean-Paul Delevoye, it is evident that the question of experience did not influence the result. It was her image as a symbol of change that prevailed.

The second major moment in the career of Madam Alliot-Marie is her appointment as Minister of Defence on 7 May 2002. The media focus on the fact that she is the first woman in the post in the Fifth Republic period. Laure Mandeville delights, in *Le Figaro* of 9 May 2002, at the arrival of the first woman in this “prestigious and sought after post of Minister of Defence”³⁶⁹. In the eyes of the journalists the image of MAM as a woman bringing change is irresistible. This time her political experience is much greater than in 1999, principally due to her role as President of the RPR. This experience is well recognised by the media. For example, on 8 May 2002 Sophie Huet, in *Le Figaro*, presents in detail her experience in parliamentary offices of male politicians, in government and in municipal politics³⁷⁰. On 8 May 2002 also, a correspondent from *Reuters* comments: “Michèle Alliot-Marie allies charm to an impressive series of diplomas and to an experience of political life acquired at the side of her father”. The journalist also speaks of her experience as Junior Minister and Minister in the government, and of her presidency of the

³⁶⁹ Laure Mandeville, “Baptême du feu pour Michèle Alliot-Marie”, *Le Figaro*, 9 May 2002.

³⁷⁰ Sophie Huet, “Alliot-Marie, une femme aux Armées”, *Le Figaro*, 8 May 2002.

RPR³⁷¹. The same day, Antoine Guiral in *Libération*³⁷², and on 10 May 2002, Jean-Pierre Neu in *Les Echos*³⁷³, make the same observations. It is therefore clear that the experience of Michèle Alliot-Marie is well publicised by the media. Nevertheless, as was the case in 1999, her image as a woman symbolising change prevails because of her novelty as the first woman in charge of a sovereign ministry. Perceived as competent in the different posts that she occupied, Madam Alliot-Marie had considerable political experience and the profile of a party leader. However, she does not suffer the disadvantages of an association with the ruling body of the party, but rather projects an image of modernity and change.

The comments of the researchers and academics are in agreement with those of the media to the extent that they recognise the degree of political experience of Michèle. Michaël Darmon notes that Michèle, in her role as Minister of Defence, broadened her competency in several domains, including those of the economy, education, industry and diplomacy³⁷⁴, because of the extent and diversity of the ministry. Éric Decouty and Bruno Jeudy, discussing her role as Minister of Defence, notes: “she has ... succeeded in her journey at the ministry ... she remains one of the rare ‘pros’ immediately operational”. They note above all that later, as Minister of the Interior, a post she takes up on 18 May 2007, this

³⁷¹ “Alliot-Marie, soldat de Chirac à la Défense”, *Reuters*, 8 May 2002.

³⁷² Antoine Guiral, “Michèle Alliot-Marie – Ministre de la Défense et des Anciens Combattants”, *Libération*, 8 May 2002.

³⁷³ Jean-Pierre Neu, “Ministre de la Défense et des Anciens Combattants Michèle Alliot-Marie – un démarrage sur les ...”, *Les Echos*, 10 May 2002.

³⁷⁴ Michaël Darmon, *Michèle Alliot-Marie: La Grande Muette*, Paris: L’Archipel, 2006, pp. 16-7.

experience is not detrimental to her image of a woman who is a symbol of change³⁷⁵. Without doubt, this is assured by the fact that she distinguishes herself with panache from the experienced men in dark suits who surround her in the party.

The image of Michèle must be seen in comparison to the opinions of the French people as revealed in the opinion polls. In May 2002, following her appointment as Minister of Defence, the opinion poll TNS Sofres conducted for *Le Figaro Magazine* (Appendix 2) shows Madam Alliot-Marie at 39%, a major increase on the figure of 27% for the previous month. In fact, henceforth, except for the month of October 2002 where she is at 39%, the percentage of Michèle in the poll remains above 40% until she is appointed Minister of the Interior, and of Overseas and Territorial Communities. It is therefore clear that the appointment of MAM and her actions in the role of minister are highly appreciated by the French.

The third event that we examine is the UMP candidate selection process for the 2007 Presidential election. In the last months of 2006, speculation on her candidature was intense. Ludovic Vigogne observes in *Le Parisien* of 25 September 2006: “more and more of her close associates are convinced: MAM wants to be a candidate for the Presidential election”³⁷⁶. Béatrice Houchard, in *Le Parisien* of 7 October 2006, also anticipates her participation: “Michèle Alliot-Marie will be a candidate at

³⁷⁵ Éric Decouty and Bruno Jeudy, *Sarkozy et “ses” femmes*, Paris: Plon, 2008, pp. 32, 36.

³⁷⁶ Ludovic Vigogne, “Alliot-Marie rêve d’être candidate”, *Le Parisien*, 25 September 2006.

the Presidential election. This time, it is certain³⁷⁷. However, if her ambition is clearly on display, she lacks the support necessary to become the UMP candidate, so much so that she lets it be known that she could run outside the party. To this end, in October 2006 she creates the association *Le Chêne* to ensure that she has a political and financial base. With regard to the opinion polls, she remains less popular than Nicolas Sarkozy. According to the Popularity Rating poll of TNS Sofres (Appendix 2), she is at 37% in November 2006 and suffers a fall in December to 31%. By contrast, Nicolas Sarkozy is at 50% and 48% respectively. Philippe Ridet, in *Le Monde* of 9 December 2006, highlights her isolation within the party: “Madam Alliot-Marie appears very much alone in her attempt to reverse the scenario of the designation of the UMP candidate for the presidential election³⁷⁸. On 12 January 2007, Madam Alliot-Marie puts an end to the speculation and announces that she is going to withdraw and support Nicolas Sarkozy. Frédéric Gerschel notes in *Le Parisien* of 13 January 2007 that it was

a decision expected, because the Minister of Defence did not have a choice. After having for months threatened her candidature for the UMP role, then as an independent, she could see that there were no dynamics being created in her favour. And that the opinion polls did not improve³⁷⁹.

It is now appropriate for us to examine the double bind which is in evidence on this occasion. As the first UMP woman putting forward her candidature for the Presidential election, she benefits from the image of a

³⁷⁷ Béatrice Houchard, “MAM sera candidate”, *Le Parisien*, 7 October 2006.

³⁷⁸ Philippe Ridet, “Madame Alliot-Marie a du mal à convaincre les chiraquiens de sa légitimité pour 2007”, *Le Monde*, 9 December 2006.

³⁷⁹ Frédéric Gerschel, “UMP. Alliot-Marie a capitulé”, *Le Parisien*, 13 January 2007.

woman who promises a renewal. But, in this case, she would have to face Ségolène Royal who, as we will see later, was very popular. Indeed, as the opinion polls indicated that she could win the Presidential election, there was therefore a strong chance that the image of renewal of Madam Alliot-Marie was minimised as a result of the “Royal effect”. In relation to the political experience of Michèle, if one is accustomed to seeing her exercise important responsibilities in the party and in the government, and if her capabilities were well recognised, it is Sarkozy who had the confidence of the supporters of the UMP. For the latter, Sarkozy was better placed than Alliot-Marie to face Royal because he demonstrated the traits of a strong leader. Thus, the political experience of Michèle Alliot-Marie was eclipsed by that of Nicolas Sarkozy. In summary, her situation is summarised by the formula “not enough”: not as experienced as Sarkozy, not as novel as Royal.

In conclusion, Michèle Alliot-Marie commences her campaign for the presidency of the RPR after having acquired a significant political experience. Her experience at all levels of politics are recognised but rarely commented on; the media associate the arrival of Michèle with the process of political modernisation. In addition, the opinion polls show that the great majority of the French consider that her election as president of the RPR is good news. Therefore, it is clear that the success of Madam Alliot-Marie is due principally to the fact that she personifies change. The comments of the media and her popularity in the opinion polls amply demonstrate that the novelty represented by a woman at the head of a major party largely outweighs the question of her experience. At the time

of her appointment, in 2002, as Minister of Defence, she once again represents novelty. As the first woman in this sovereign post, she again arouses the curiosity of the French. In the case of her campaign for the Presidential election in 2007, she seeks the nomination of the UMP because she thinks that, as a woman, she is capable of beating Ségolène Royal. However, she does not succeed in convincing the supporters of the UMP that she would be the best candidate. Why did this failure occur? For the media and the French, it is Ségolène Royal who embodies change. Certainly, as a woman Madam Alliot-Marie arouses the interest of the electorate, but the presence of a rival minimises the credit that Michèle would hope to be able to receive from her femininity. On the other hand, the political experience of Michèle is less imposing than that of Sarkozy, so much so that she is perceived as less experienced than him. A situation of the double bind exists here to the extent that she suffers a double blow of misfortune: she is daubed with an experience inferior to that of Sarkozy, and at the same time, the advantage of her sex is reduced because of the enthusiasm shown towards Ségolène Royal. A loser in both domains, Michèle Alliot-Marie is condemned to occupy “second place”.

2.5 Ségolène Royal

Ségolène Royal has participated in two campaigns: the 2007 Presidential campaign and the 2011 Socialist Primary. We noted in Chapter 1 that, at the beginning of her 2007 Presidential campaign, Ségolène Royal is very popular, principally because she is a woman and she represents a new era. However, at the time of the 2011 Socialist Primary, she is perceived to be significantly experienced, even if the posts she occupies vary little between the two elections. We examine the situation of the double bind for Ségolène in the two campaigns.

Let us firstly commence by examining the political journey of Ségolène. In 1980 she graduates from ENA. Her first experience in politics is as a member of the 1981 Presidential campaign team of François Mitterrand. This is a turning point for her: “if it were not for 1981, I would not have been drawn into politics”³⁸⁰. Subsequently, Jacques Attali, a presidential adviser, invites her to join his team and, from 1982 to 1988, she is project leader in the Corporate Office of the presidency of the Republic. Her political career commences in 1988, the year where she becomes the Socialist Party Member of Parliament for Deux-Sèvres in the region of Poitou-Charentes, a role which she will occupy until 2007. In April 2004, she becomes President of the regional council of Poitou-Charentes, a post in which she will continue until 30 June 2012. With regard to her career in the government, in April 1992 Madam Royal enters

³⁸⁰ Christine Courcol and Thierry Masure, *Ségolène Royal: Les Coulisses d'une défaite*, Paris: L'Archipel, 2007, p. 41.

the team of Pierre Bérégovoy as Minister for the Environment. She remains there until March 1993, the month in which the Right wins the legislative elections. In June 1997 she is appointed Special Minister for School Education, reporting to Claude Allègre in the government of Lionel Jospin, a post which will last until March 2000. She then changes portfolio and takes over the post of Special Minister for Family and Children. In March 2001 she adds to it the responsibility for Handicapped Persons. She remains in this expanded portfolio until the victory of the Right in the legislative elections of May 2002. Thus, it is clearly evident that, at the time of her 2007 Presidential campaign and that for the 2011 Socialist Primary, Ségolène possesses major experience in politics at the national and regional level.

The media are certainly complicit in the construction of the image of a candidate that cannot be ignored. On 22 September 2005, one saw her in *Paris Match* playing badminton with her daughter Flora³⁸¹. This is a repeat of 1992, the year where, as Minister of the Environment, she appeared in *Paris Match* with her newly born Flora. From that moment on she is the star of the media. According to Rainbow Murray and Sheila Perry,

her unusual approach to politics, her modernist ideas and her novelty status, combined with her photogenic appearance, ensured that she boosted magazine sales whenever there was a feature about her³⁸².

³⁸¹ Christine Courcol and Thierry Masure, *Ségolène Royal: Les Coulisses d'une défaite*, Paris: L'Archipel, 2007, p. 85.

³⁸² Rainbow Murray and Sheila Perry, "A Right Royal Mess: Why Did the French Say 'Non' to the Opportunity of Having a Woman President?" A speech presented at the 2008 ordinary general Assemble of the American Political Science Association from 28 to 31 August 2008, p. 5.

The media focus on Royal: on 26 September 2006, Christine Courcol and Thierry Masure report: “Ségolène Royal [is] followed by ‘a procession of journalists’”³⁸³. She wins the Socialist Primary on 16 November with 60.65% of votes, well ahead of Dominique Strauss-Kahn (20.69%) and Laurent Fabius (18.66%). Why this extraordinary success? The response is unquestionably the novelty that Madam Royal represents. According to Françoise Gaspard, the socialist supporters wanted to signal their desire for a renewal of the political class and chose her because of her charm in the face of the masculine chauvinism of her competitors³⁸⁴. The analysis of Rainbow Murray confirms this:

in the early days of her campaign, Royal personified change in at least three ways ... her ideas were innovative ... her style of campaigning was new ... [and] as the “first woman”, she was a physical embodiment of change³⁸⁵.

On 5 December 2006, the agency *Media-Ratings* notes with respect to Royal and the media: “for more than a year, all of the media participated in the public and political rise of Ségolène Royal”³⁸⁶. Isabelle Mandraud, in *Le Monde* of 21 February 2007, reports on the world tour of Ségolène Royal:

³⁸³ Christine Courcol and Thierry Masure, *Ségolène Royal: Les Coulisses d'une défaite*, Paris: L'Archipel, 2007, p. 94.

³⁸⁴ Françoise Gaspard, “Ségolène Royal and the Socialist Party”, *Dissent*, Fall 2007, p. 27.

³⁸⁵ Rainbow Murray, ed. *Cracking the Highest Glass Ceiling*, Santa Barbara: Praeger, 2010, pp. 59-60.

³⁸⁶ “Les Médias nous disent-ils tout ce qu'ils savent sur Ségolène Royal?”, *Media-Ratings*, 5 December 2006.

we are there. Twenty, thirty, forty journalists and photographers from the print media, radio and television who are permanently following Ségolène Royal, from the Great Wall of China to the suburbs of Lille. We call that the “Ségo tour”³⁸⁷.

Courcol and Masure confirm that her campaign strategy is working: “each radical position taken by Ségolène Royal reinforces her domination in the opinion polls and the media”³⁸⁸. It is therefore clear that, at each moment, Ségolène draws attention to her image of a modern woman. Royal herself accentuates this: on campaign in Lyon on 7 March 2007, she declares “I do not ask you to vote for me because I am a woman, but I am a woman and with me politics will never be the same as before”³⁸⁹. The new orientation that she brings to French politics reminds us of the proposition of Rainbow Murray whereby the media present women as the promise of a break from the past and of a favourable future. However, as a result of her experience in the government and as president of the regional council of Poitou-Charentes, Madam Royal is known by the French at the time of her nomination for the 2006 Socialist Primary. In addition, she does not hesitate to make known her experience in politics. Rainbow Murray and Sheila Perry note that, in an interview on TF1 on 19 February 2007, Madam Royal states that she worked with François Mitterrand for seven years, that she knew the processes of the presidency and of the government, and that she had been a Minister three times and a Member of Parliament four times³⁹⁰. Nevertheless, her political experience, although

³⁸⁷ Isabelle Mandraud, “Ma Vie avec Ségo”, *Le Monde*, 21 February 2007.

³⁸⁸ Christine Courcol and Thierry Masure, *Ségolène Royal: Les Coulisses d’une défaite*, Paris: L’Archipel, 2007, p. 95.

³⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 34.

³⁹⁰ Rainbow Murray and Sheila Perry, “Why Did the French Say ‘Non’ to the

considerable, rarely featured in the media coverage of the 2007 campaign.

Christine Courcol and Thierry Masure highlight this fact:

although three times a minister, president of a region, and a member of parliament for close to twenty years, Ségolène Royal accomplished the remarkable feat of appearing like a woman who defends new ideas, novel methods, one capable of embodying change³⁹¹.

To the extent that the fascination of the media for the new force personified by Royal dominates over all other consideration, the debate on her experience is set aside.

The opinion polls conducted at the time of her campaigns of 2006 and 2007 are predictable. According to the TNS Sofres Popularity Rating poll (Appendix 2), Ségolène Royal is at 37% in October 2005. At that particular moment it is her socialist colleague and companion in life, François Hollande, who appears at the top of the opinion polls for the 2006 Socialist Primary. However, the popularity of Hollande commences to fall while that of Ségolène climbs rapidly: at the end of 2005, “she is leading by far in the preferences of the socialist supporters for the Presidential election”³⁹². Her popularity reaches 61% in December 2006, immediately after her official nomination as the Presidential candidate for the Socialist Party. This impressive score for a political personality is probably due to her decision to remain separate from the Socialist Party, and to her manner of embodying a new approach to the political process. Madam Royal

Opportunity of Having a Woman President?”. A speech presented to 2008 ordinary general Assembly of the American Political Science Association from 28 to 31 August 2008, p. 4.

³⁹¹ Christine Courcol and Thierry Masure, *Ségolène Royal: Les Coulisses d'une défaite*, Paris: L'Archipel, 2007, p. 82.

³⁹² *Ibid.*, p. 87.

knew to construct for herself an image of a woman who was a symbol of change, an image which is not affected by the fact that she possesses a considerable experience in politics. But, the logic of the double bind supposes that a woman who is experienced risks losing the advantages of her novelty and therefore to fall in the opinion polls. In the case of Ségolène Royal, the image of a modern and innovative woman is so strong in 2007 that she withstands any negative impact.

By contrast, at the time of the 2011 Socialist Primary, Ségolène Royal is a personality well-known by the French. Her experience in the government remains unchanged since the 2007 Presidential election because, with the Right being in power, she did not have a portfolio in the government. But she continues to exercise her functions as president of the Poitou-Charentes regional council. Now well-known to the French, she appears less as a symbol of change. On 29 November 2010, she announces her candidature for the Socialist Primary. However, unlike 2007, her campaign does not provoke the interest of the French people. On 10 February 2011, Elie Arié, in *Marianne*, comments on this difference as follows: “forced to play the single card of public opinion and of sentimentality depoliticised, she never understood that it did not suffice”³⁹³. This time, Madam Royal badly interpreted the expectations of the French. She was no longer in tune with the electorate. On 26 February 2011, Cécile Amar, in *Le Journal du Dimanche*, notes in respect

³⁹³ Elie Arié, “Pourquoi Ségolène Royal ne sera pas élue en 2012”, *Marianne*, 10 February 2011.

of the question ‘does she have what it takes to be President of the Republic?’” that 50% of the French believed so in 2006, but that the number is only 29% in 2011. Amar makes this damning statement: “the magic has disappeared for the finalist of the 2007 Presidential election. According to an Ifop enquiry, she no longer seduces the French or the SP supporters”³⁹⁴. Certainly, she has an undeniable notoriety due to her 2007 Presidential campaign, but she no longer sparks the same enthusiasm. She no longer has the novelty factor.

In 2011, the media presence of Ségolène Royal is less important than before. A journalist notes in *France Soir* of 23 February 2011:

politically ... the former candidate of the Socialist party barely seems to exist. Dominique Strauss-Kahn, Martine Aubry and François Hollande occupy the media space devoted to the SP³⁹⁵.

Thierry Dupont, in *L'Express* of 2 September 2011, puts forward a reason for this bad media image: “to win the [Primary], the candidate is relying on her experience from 2007 and on the results of four years of preparation”³⁹⁶. Nicolas Barotte, in *Le Figaro* of 15 September 2011, also refers back to the preceding campaign: “she has experience in debates: those of the 2006 primary against Laurent Fabius and DSK, and against Nicolas Sarkozy at the time of the 2007 Presidential election”³⁹⁷. For the press, she no longer really embodies change. François-Xavier Bourmaud, in *Le Figaro* of 17 September 2011, observes in relation to the first debate

³⁹⁴ Cécile Amar, “La Chute de la maison Royal”, *Le Journal du Dimanche*, 26 February 2011.

³⁹⁵ “Ségolène Royal se fait discrète”, *France Soir*, 23 February 2011.

³⁹⁶ Thierry Dupont, “Royal: ‘Je suis celle qui a le plus travaillé’”, *L'Express*, 2 September 2011.

³⁹⁷ Nicolas Barotte, “Royal: mettre un peu de piment”, *Le Figaro*, 15 September 2011.

of the 2011 Primary on France 2: “she no longer provoked the spark that some expected”³⁹⁸. The magic of 2007 has disappeared; Royal has lost her image of a new force. In effect, she joins the group of SP politicians such as Jospin, Fabius and DSK, while being less credible than these gentlemen. François Bazin, in *Le Nouvel Observateur* of 29 September 2011, explains the study undertaken by Viavoice thus: “Ségolène Royal has ‘matured’ for 56% of the people surveyed and for 66% of Socialist supporters. But she has not changed. There lies the key”³⁹⁹. The problem for Royal is that she can no longer respond to the expectations which had carried her to victory in 2006. Seductive and interesting in 2006, Royal is no longer seen as such in 2011. She is now seen as a woman firmly anchored in the political world. David Revault d’Allonnes and Samuel Laurent report this in *Le Monde* of 29 September 2011: “[some] internet users ... reproach her for a lack of renewal of her ideas in comparison to 2007”⁴⁰⁰. Her novelty henceforth evaporated, her ideas judged outmoded, she no longer occupies the centre of the media scene. She can no longer rely on her political experience because, having put aside the question of her experience at the time of her 2007 campaign, she is unable to revive it in 2011.

³⁹⁸ François-Xavier Bourmaud, “Après les sondages, Royal entend faire mentir les ‘commentateurs’”, *Le Figaro*, 17 September 2011.

³⁹⁹ François Bazin, “Ségolène Royal: la femme qui tranche”, *Le Nouvel Observateur*, 29 September 2011, p. 32. It is the author who highlights the phrase.

⁴⁰⁰ David Revault d’Allonnes and Samuel Laurent, “Ségolène Royal: ‘Au PS, il y a des fédérations verrouillées pour contrôler l’ensemble des votes’”, *Le Monde*, 29 September 2011.

In respect of the popularity rating of Madam Royal, it remains at a low level all through her campaign for the 2011 Socialist Primary. The highs of 2007 have long gone: in the Ipsos opinion poll for *Le Point* (Appendix 1) she is at 32 % when she announces her candidature in November 2010, and at 34% in October 2011, the date when she competes in the Socialist Primary election. The opinion polls predict a bad result in the poll, placing her in third position after François Hollande and Martine Aubry. She refuses to accept the results of the opinion polls and denounces that which she calls a manipulation of figures: she is sure of obtaining a surprising result. For the media, she maintains her character of a surprising and unpredictable woman who could cause a surprise upset. Marcelo Wesfreid, in *L'Express* of 9 September 2011, does not dismiss the possibility of a late surge: “a month out from the Primary, Ségolène Royal becomes the candidate who, even among her adversaries, one commences to be wary of”⁴⁰¹. In spite of her results in the opinion polls, numerous commentators like Nicolas Barotte in *Le Figaro* of 14 September 2011 recognise her positive factors: “without her, the socialists would be bored ... Ségolène Royal assures a show”⁴⁰². Nevertheless, in the first round of the Socialist Primary, the opinion polls proved to be right, and Royal only obtains 7% of the votes. Thomas Wieder, in *Le Monde* of 11 October 2011, explains her disappointing score by saying that she misread the electorate:

⁴⁰¹ Marcelo Wesfreid, “Royal, ‘l’indignée””, *L'Express*, 9 September 2011.

⁴⁰² Nicolas Barotte, “Primaire: le forcing de Royal”, *Le Figaro*, 14 September 2011.

representing herself as the “*spokesperson of the people who are suffering*”, Madam Royal bet ... on the mobilisation of the working-class areas, hoping to obtain the same scores as in 2007. The bet failed⁴⁰³.

In *Le Nouvel Observateur* of 13 October 2011, Renaud Dély points out the absence of passion in Ségolène: “the candidate ... seemed dispirited. She had lost that singularity and that passion which had resulted in the annihilation of her competitors [in 2007]”⁴⁰⁴.

The situation in 2011 is clear: the French people no longer consider Madam Royal as a candidate capable of changing politics. Her experience in the political world remains unchanged since 2007, but the perception of the French people has changed. In 2007, her experience was not taken into account because it was the idea of her novelty which occupied centre stage. But, in 2011, the French only saw in her a less attractive version of the 2007 candidate. Therefore, she no longer profited electorally from her image as a symbol of change. She becomes a victim of the double bind because the image of an experienced woman comes to obscure that of a modern woman with new ideas. But it is also true that her image of an experienced woman is no longer in the forefront.

In conclusion, we have established that Madam Royal possesses significant experience in politics by virtue of her ministerial posts in the government, as president of the Poitou-Charentes region and as parliamentary member for Deux-Sèvres. In 2006/7, Ségolène Royal, a

⁴⁰³ Thomas Wieder, “Carte: Royal ne séduit pas les quartiers populaires”, *Le Monde*, 11 October 2011. It is the author who highlights the phrase.

⁴⁰⁴ Renaud Dély, “La Chute de la maison Royal”, *Le Nouvel Observateur*, 13 October 2011, p. 39.

photogenic woman, presents as a new face, a female politician who brings new ideas. In the beginning, for the press in particular, her campaign innovations presented her as an emblematic figure. For the socialist supporters, who had suffered the humiliation of the defeat of their candidate Lionel Jospin in 2002, Ségolène represents the chance of a great victory. At the time of the second round of the 2007 Presidential election she scores 47% of the votes, which represents an honourable score. It is evident that her novelty contributes greatly to the result and her political experience is not a major factor for the French because it is the idea of her novelty which predominates.

However, in 2011, we see the reverse. This time she is no longer considered as a symbol of change since she is known by the French because of her 2007 Presidential campaign. The interest surrounding her 2011 campaign does not attain the heights of 2006/7, as indicated by the opinion polls. Her political experience has not changed since her presidential campaign but, as a result of the media image she constructed during the 2007 campaign, Royal gives the impression that she is an experienced female politician well entrenched in the political scene. The perceptions that she no longer represents renewal, conjugated with her experience as president of the Poitou-Charentes regional council, conform to the proposition of Murray that postulates that an experienced woman loses the advantages linked to a candidature promising change. Thus, if Madam Royal continues to rely on her difference and her newness, as she did in 2007, the image of a woman bringing change is no longer the same. Her modest score in the 2011 Socialist Primary indicates that she no

longer profited from her real experience in the affairs of the region and of the country. Therefore, she is the victim of the double bind Experienced or Symbol of Change because the image of an experienced woman who continues to trot out worn out ideas weighs on her image of renewal.

2.6 Martine Aubry

At the time of her announcement of her candidature for the 2011 Socialist Primary on 28 June 2011, Martine Aubry had already accumulated significant experience in the affairs of government. After completing her studies at Sciences PO, then at ENA, she enters the public service in 1975, principally in the ministries of Employment and Social Affairs. From 1989 to 1991 she works in the private sector as assistant director in the P echiney group, an enterprise managed by her mentor Jean Gandois, future president of the National Council of French Employers. In 1991 she is invited by  dith Cresson to be Minister of Work, Employment and Vocational Training. Following that, she is minister in the governments of Pierre B er govoy (1992 to 1993) and Lionel Jospin (1997 to 2000). In addition, she is the head of the Socialist Party from November 2008 to September 2012. After her defeat by Fran ois Hollande in the 2011 Socialist Primary rumours spread that she would be the next Prime minister. However, it is Jean-Marc Ayrault who is appointed to the role by the President. Madam Aubry refuses the invitation to manage a super-ministry combining Culture, National Education and Youth because she considers that, given the appointment of Ayrault as the head of government, her “presence in the government would not have any meaning”⁴⁰⁵. How was the experience of Martine perceived by the media and the French during the period between her

⁴⁰⁵ Thomas Wieder and David Revault d’Allonnes, “Martine Aubry ne sera pas au Gouvernement”, *Le Monde*, 16 May 2012.

declaration of candidature and the second round of the 2011 Socialist Primary?

Before we examine her media image, we should note that Madam Aubry was keen to cultivate her image as an experienced female politician. Her father, Jacques Delors, also made known her political experience. On 5 August 2011, *L'Express* cites the words of Delors: “she is the best because she has government experience, she has a great knowledge of issues ... and as a consequence she is the best to take on Sarkozy”⁴⁰⁶. Madam Aubry, in an interview with *Le Parisien* on 25 August 2011, speaks of her “experience ... in union and community activism ... [and of her] responsibilities in the public service, having been minister two times”⁴⁰⁷. At the time of an interview, on 19 September 2011, with journalists from *Les Inrockuptibles* magazine, she explains why she is going to win: “it is because of the experience acquired in the community, union and ministerial responsibilities that I have undertaken”⁴⁰⁸. In the press, Raphaëlle Besse Desmoulières reports in *Le Monde* of 7 October 2011 on her last campaign meeting at Paris: “her ‘experience’ as number two in the Jospin government ... [is an asset] that she intends to put forward against her competitors”⁴⁰⁹. A journalist in *Le Monde* of 9 October 2011 notes that, after having qualified for the second round,

⁴⁰⁶ “Jacques Delors au sujet de Martine Aubry: ‘Ma fille est la meilleure’”, *L'Express*, 25 August 2011.

⁴⁰⁷ “Martine Aubry: ‘Je reverrai à la baisse le salaire du président’”, *Le Parisien*, 25 August 2011.

⁴⁰⁸ Hélène Fontanaud et al. “Martine Aubry: ‘Je pense que je vais gagner’”, *Les Inrockuptibles*, 19 September 2011.

⁴⁰⁹ Raphaëlle Besse Desmoulières, “À trois heures de la primaire, Aubry passe à l’offensive”, *Le Monde*, 7 October 2011.

Madam Aubry again mentions her experience in declaring: “to be president in 2012, it will be necessary to have experience”⁴¹⁰. The image of an experienced woman is certainly one of the main components of her campaign.

The press articles in the period before the first round of the Socialist Primary rarely discuss the reformist desire of Martine Aubry. She therefore has difficulty in giving the image of a female politician working to bring about change, in spite of her “Toulouse oath” where she proposes

a real change, not a modification nor a supplement, even less an adaptation of policy which fails and of a system which collapses ... [and that her program is] an ode to the youth; real change, it is for the young people that we want it, you will be the generation of change⁴¹¹.

On 9 September 2011 Edmond Maire, former secretary-general of the FDCL, echoes this approach in stating in *Le Monde* why he will vote for her: the 2012 Presidential is, he says, the occasion of renewal and it is Martine Aubry who is its incarnation⁴¹². However, overall the absence of references to Aubry as the candidate who brings hope for change is striking. On the other hand, François Hollande presents more as the candidate of change. On 1 September 2011, he unveils his campaign film clip with the slogan “We have a future to change”⁴¹³. Since Martine is a

⁴¹⁰ “Martine Aubry: ‘Face à une droite dure, il faut une gauche forte’”, *Le Monde*, 9 October 2011

⁴¹¹ “Martine Aubry se dit ‘prête à présider la République’”, *Le Monde*, 7 September 2011.

⁴¹² Edmond Maire, “Pourquoi je voterai pour Martine Aubry”, *Le Monde*, 9 September 2011. FDCL: French Democratic Confederation of Labour.

⁴¹³ “François Hollande lance son clip de campagne”, *Le Point*, 2 September 2011.

woman, we expect that she would be presented as a new force, a promise of change. However, the fact that neither the media nor Martine herself evoke a candidature of renewal indicates that the credit that she likely to get from it will be limited. It is Hollande who will steal the advantage.

In the final analysis, Martine Aubry does not systematically search to present herself as a symbol of change, the one exception to the rule being her “Toulouse oath”. In that respect, the media follow suit. By contrast, it is the political experience of Martine which is at the forefront in the columns of the press, as it is for Martine Aubry who was keen to evoke her responsibilities at all levels of political life.

Let us review the popularity rating of Martine Aubry since her entry into the Cresson government. We commence by examining the Popularity Rating opinion poll of TNS Sofres (Appendix 2) which poses the question to the French in respect of various political persons “Would you tell me if you wish to see them play a major role in the course of the months and years to come?” Aubry enters into the opinion poll with a percentage of 23% in September 1993, two years and four months after her appointment as a minister in the Cresson government. She reaches a peak of 61% in July 1997. At the time of her election as the First Secretary of the Socialist Party on 26 November 2008 she has a score of 38%. At the point of her entry into the campaign for the Socialist Primary, in June 2011, she is at 45%, and in October 2011, at the time of the Primary, she is at 42%. By contrast, François Hollande is at 46% in June 2011, and at 45% in October 2011, which represents a slight advance with respect to Martine. It is interesting to note that Hollande obtains these

levels of popularity in despite of the fact that he has never had ministerial responsibilities in the government. In the case of the Ipsos Barometer of Political Action for *Le Point* (Appendix 1), the results are similar. The Ifop Opinion Polls for *Paris Match* (Appendix 3) also give similar results. On the whole, it is evident that Martine maintains an elevated popularity rating. As the opinion polls show, Martine is behind François Hollande in the second round of the Primary. In despite of this defeat, her scores in the opinion polls of Ipsos and TNS Sofres remain above 40% during this period, and those of Ifop place her in 10th position in the classification for the same period. These impressive results indicate that Martine Aubry imposes herself lastingly as a major figure in the political world. If the situation of the double bind applies to Martine, the effects of it are less harmful than for other women

We have observed that Martine Aubry appears in the Ifop top 10 list of political persons (Appendix 3), and that her popularity rating is such that she advances to the second round of the 2011 Primary. She obtains a natural advantage from the fact that, as a woman, she embodies change. However, given that she does not seek to vigorously fabricate an image of a woman of renewal, the electoral advantages that she could draw from it are minimal. The enigma for Madam Aubry is that, as we have noted above, she does not manage to impose herself in the contest against Hollande who lacks experience in the country's national and international affairs and who has never held a portfolio in the government. By putting to one side any concern to change the system, Martine Aubry does not embody change as much as Hollande. Without any doubt Madam Aubry

has a considerable experience, and as she enjoys an elevated popularity rating, one would suppose that her campaign strategy targeting her experience was the right one. It remains, however, that the image of an experienced female politician does not suffice to propel her ahead of François Hollande. According to the proposition of Murray, the clear demonstration of political experience risks losing the electoral advantages linked to her status as a candidate of renewal. This is the case with Martine Aubry who finds herself in the little enviable situation of a popular and experienced female politician who nevertheless is defeated by a masculine rival who is less experienced.

Playing the card of renewal would have perhaps propelled her ahead of Hollande, even if that would have obscured the importance of her experience. In any event, the situation of the double bind causes her to fail against a less-experienced candidate, but one who appears more innovative, since Martine had ceded this territory to him, and also who was seen more competent due to the fact, in part, that he was a man.

2.7 Marine Le Pen

In comparison to the five other women, Martine Le Pen had never had responsibilities in the government. Daughter of Jean-Marie Le Pen, president of the National Front from October 1972 until his resignation in January 2011, Marine Le Pen had never been far from politics. However, at university she studies law, obtains a masters and a higher education diploma, and becomes a lawyer at the Paris Bar. She joins the National Front in 1986, at the age of 18. In 1993, she contests the legislative elections for the first time in the 16th constituency of the 17th district of Paris, but she fails to win the seat. In 1998 she leaves the Bar and becomes the lawyer for the National Front. According to Sylvain Crépon, it is “a role which allows her to learn the workings of the party and to acquire a sound experience of internal adversity”⁴¹⁴. Her political experience is limited to the posts she occupied at the National Front, particularly that of president of the party since 16 January 2011, her role as member of the European Parliament since 2004, and that of regional councillor for Nord-Pas-de-Calais from 1998 to 2004 and again from March 2010 up to the present. She was also municipal councillor for Hénin-Beaumont from March 2008 to February 2011, and regional councillor for Île-de-France from March 2004 to March 2010. Our analysis is limited to the campaign of Marine for the 2012 Presidential election. Given her particular political profile, the question that arises is to

⁴¹⁴ Sylvain Crépon, *Enquête au cœur du nouveau Front national*, Paris: Nouveau Monde, 2012, p. 55.

establish how the double bind Experience or Symbol of Change operates for Madam Le Pen in the course of her campaign.

It is appropriate, firstly, to examine the attitude of the media towards Madam Le Pen, commencing with the image of a modern woman promising change that they promote, particularly at the beginning. It is worth examining some examples found in the press. On 5 November 2010, Mariana Grépinet publishes in *Paris Match* an article titled “Marine Le Pen: the new face of the extreme right”. Grépinet notes in the article:

she gives a new face to her movement. Her extremist image has gone and, at the same time as she looks after the traditional electorate, Marine poses as a true innovator⁴¹⁵.

On 15 January 2011, the day before her election to the presidency of the party, *Libération* publishes an article which contains a photo of her with the caption: “at 42 years of age, the successor to Jean-Marie Le Pen, modern and intelligent”. In this article, Patrick Neville mentions her youth in comparison to her father and other male politicians, and the anticipation of major changes in the governing bodies of the National Front⁴¹⁶. Elected to the presidency of the National Front on 16 January 2011 and the first woman in a role which up till then was the domain of men, Madam Le Pen is doubtless perceived as a symbol of change. She embarks on a program to detoxify the National Front by formulating a new strategy for the party. This promise of change of approach is emphasised by Andrea Bambino

⁴¹⁵ Mariana Grépinet, “Marine Le Pen: le nouveau visage de l’extrême droite”, *Paris Match*, 5 November 2010.

⁴¹⁶ Pascale Nivellet, “Elle n’a rien d’une blonde”, *Libération*, 15 January 2011.

and Raphaël Hermano, who observe in *Agence France-Presse* of 16

January 2011:

in her first speech as president, Marine Le Pen distanced herself from her father to make herself the champion of the NF, a supporter of a “strong State”, secular and republican, charged to defend the French against “free trade” and the obsession with money⁴¹⁷.

Vincent Kessler, in *L'Express* of 28 February 2012, also raises this wish to change the image of the party: “this Tuesday, the president of the NF was keen to distance herself from her father and his recent controversial remarks”⁴¹⁸. Speaking of the new image that Marine wants to create for the party, Nicolas Lebourg declares in *Le Nouvel Observateur* of 1 March 2012: “she clearly inscribes in the desire to make the movement respectable”⁴¹⁹. On the whole, her strategy of detoxification is largely approved, so much so that the popularity of the National Front rises, as demonstrated by the score of 18% that Marine obtains in the first round of the Presidential election.

For other journalists, it is the status quo, indeed even the return to the political plan of the National Front of her father. For example, on 17 January 2011, François Wenz-Dumas writes in *Libération*: “like her father, she embodies ‘racism’ and ‘intolerance’”⁴²⁰. The same day, *France Soir* publishes an article regarding an opinion poll undertaken by

⁴¹⁷ Andrea Bambino and Raphaël Hermano, “Marine Le Pen consacrée à la tête du Front National”, *Agence France-Presse*, 16 January 2011.

⁴¹⁸ Vincent Kessler, “Marine Le Pen reconnaît ses ‘divergences’ avec son père”, *L'Express*, 28 February 2012.

⁴¹⁹ Nicolas Lebourg, “Marine Le Pen est-elle anti-système? ”, *Le Nouvel Observateur*, 1 March 2012.

⁴²⁰ François Wenz-Dumas, “Marine Le Pen, la montée en nuisance”, *Libération*, 17 January 2011. It is the journalist who highlights the words.

Obea/Infraforces. It observes that “52% of people interrogated did not judge her as ‘credible’ ... [and that] Marine Le Pen is not a ‘bearer of new ideas’ for 59% of the French”⁴²¹. Following the announcement, on 19 November, of her 2012 presidential plan, the press once again compare her to her father. Nicolas Lebourg notes, in *Le Nouvel Observateur* of 7 February 2012: “in spite of their divergences, Le Pen daughter and father attach themselves to the same internal standard of the extreme right: that of national populism”⁴²². In *Marianne* of 11 February 2012, Régis Soubrouillard relies on the book of Magali Balent, *Le Monde selon Marine*, to evoke “continuity between the speeches of Jean-Marie Le Pen and his daughter on the questions of international policy”⁴²³. In *20 minutes* of 20 February 2012, Anne-Laëtitia Béraud evokes a return by Marine Le Pen to the political line of her father:

up until now, the candidate for the Presidential election had taken care to distance herself from the style [of her father] ... But when the opinion polls, two months out from the first round, falter for the National Front candidate ... Marine Le Pen seems to adopt a new strategy. A return to NF fundamentals ... [she] increasingly relied on the practices and codes of her father at the time of her last meetings⁴²⁴.

One can suppose that, the recent memory of her father’s role, and the hard fringe of the party still exercising influence, Marine Le Pen could not go as far in her politics as she wanted.

⁴²¹ “Marine Le Pen est-elle crédible?”, *France Soir*, 17 January 2011. It is the journalist who highlights the expression.

⁴²² Nicolas Lebourg, “Marine Le Pen est-elle d’extrême droite?”, *Le Nouvel Observateur*, 7 February 2012.

⁴²³ Régis Soubrouillard, “La Diplomatie FN de Jean-Marie à Marine Le Pen”, *Marianne*, 11 February 2012.

⁴²⁴ Anne-Laëtitia Béraud, “Quand Marine Le Pen fait (plus) du Jean-Marie Le Pen”, *20 minutes*, 20 February 2012.

Naturally, like all women she is considered as a symbol of change, and our analysis of the media has identified several references to her capacity to embody change during her campaign for the Presidential election. However, we are far from the fascination with which the media had welcomed the entry of Ségolène Royal into the campaign of 2006. Certainly, the image of the National Front changed, but for Marine the image of a woman who is a symbol of change did not suffice for her to qualify for the second round. As the proposition of Murray anticipated, Marine gained certain advantages from the treatment of the media, but given the doubts on her capability to embody change, the credit which she gained at the beginning dissipated. She exposes herself to the double bind to the extent that the weight of the party and the name Le Pen continued to impact the image of an innovating woman that she tried to fabricate.

Let us now consider the experience of Marine and the way in which the media report it. Her case is particular because, as we have noted above, she possesses experience as a member of the European parliament as well as at the local level, but she lacks experience in government. The results of our analysis of the media hardly surprise: the references to her experience are minimal. To deal with this lack of experience, she adopts a campaign strategy which consists of presenting herself, as stated by Nicolas Lebourg in *Le Nouvel Observateur* of 29 March 2012, as “the voice of the people”⁴²⁵. Gérard Bon explains her approach in *Le Nouvel Observateur* of 31 March 2012:

⁴²⁵ Nicolas Lebourg, “Marine Le Pen, l’extrême-droite et l’islamophobie”,

Marine Le Pen puts forward a new slogan. “I am the French exception; I am the only candidate to believe in France and to refuse to allow France to grow weaker and her values to diminish”⁴²⁶.

Guillaume Perrault, in *Le Figaro* of 18 April 2012, confirms this image of a candidate of exception: he speaks about the last campaign meeting where Marine “presented herself as the defender ‘of the invisible, the forgotten’”⁴²⁷. The insistence on her proximity to the people has the effect of leaving in the shadow the question of her experience. As a result, this strategy exposes her to accusation of inexperience, and that all the more so because she is a woman.

The conclusion that we draw from our analysis of the media is that the journalists put forward the image of a courageous young woman who embodies change, even if that image is tarnished by the nature of her party and by the burdensome presence of her father who continually invites comparisons. With respect to her political experience, we find that neither Marine nor the press attach great importance to it. The act of presenting herself as the “voice of the people” only partly compensates for this lack of experience, leaving the door open to suspicions as to her competence. Such is the situation of the double bind in which she finds herself: if Madam Le Pen is considered as a symbol of change, the electoral effect of it is lessened by the idea of incompetence which develops between the lines.

Le Nouvel Observateur, 29 March 2012.

⁴²⁶ Gérard Bon, “Marine Le Pen veut déjouer les sondages”, *Le Nouvel Observateur*, 31 March 2012.

⁴²⁷ Guillaume Perrault, “Le Pen veut ‘leur montrer qu’ils ont tort’”, *Le Figaro*, 18 April 2012.

The question of the popularity of Marine Le Pen provides light on her image of a candidate of renewal. On 17 January 2011 Viavoice publishes an opinion poll which looks at a number of political personalities, including Marine Le Pen. In his summary, associate director François Miquet-Marty makes reference to “her youth (42), [and] the fact that she is a woman” as points of difference with her father. He clearly presents her as a woman reflecting change. On 8 March 2011, Harris Interactive publishes its opinion poll which examines the intentions to vote in the first round of the 2012 Presidential election. The opinion poll asks participants for whom they would vote if the Socialist candidate was Dominique Strauss-Kahn or François Hollande. Marine Le Pen obtains a score of 24% of intentions to vote for each male, the highest score of all the men and women politicians in the opinion poll⁴²⁸. A Viavoice opinion poll, carried out in January 2012, tries to draw the “portrait of the electoral potential of Marine Le Pen”. It concludes that “34% ‘have confidence’ in her to ‘best express the problems of people’, 26% to ‘propose good solutions for France’, [and] 26% also to ‘exercise government responsibilities’”. According to the author of the report,

that which is striking is ... the capability of Marine Le Pen to highlight awareness of a not insignificant part of people declaring themselves moreover close to the political parties of the government ... and the Left is not exonerated by this penetration⁴²⁹.

⁴²⁸ Harris Interactive, opinion poll “Intention de vote pour le 1^{er} tour de l’élection présidentielle de 2012” conducted from 5 to 6 March 2011 for *Le Parisien*.

⁴²⁹ Viavoice, opinion poll undertaken for *Libération* from 5 to 6 January 2012.

Therefore, it is evident that Madam Le Pen arouses the public interest of the French, and that for these people she embodies change, not only in comparison to her father, but also to the politics of Nicolas Sarkozy.

This political interest translates into an increase in the popularity rating of Marine. In the Ipsos Barometer of Political Action (Appendix 1), Madam Le Pen obtains a score of 26% in January 2011, the month of her election to the presidency of the NF. Subsequently, her score is 25% in June and August 2011 before attaining 33% in May 2012. The TNS Sofres Popularity Rating poll (Appendix 2) gives similar results. It is notable that, in the two opinion polls, she has a score greater than 25% since January 2012. This score indicates that she makes her mark as a major candidate in the Presidential election. However, in despite of a significant popularity rating, Madam Le Pen is less preferred for the post of President than the other candidates. In the general classification of the Ifop Opinion Poll (Appendix 3), Madam Le Pen is in position 42 out of 50 in January 2011, 44 in September 2011, and 41 in April 2012. These results indicate that she remains less popular than the other political personalities and that her popularity varies little since her election as head of the party in January 2011. In April 2012, Viavoice publishes an opinion poll undertaken from 12 to 13 April 2012 which asks participants which candidate they wanted to see as President. Marine Le Pen is in 5th position with 13%, behind François Bayrou (22%), Jean-Luc Mélenchon (24%), Nicolas Sarkozy (33%) and François Hollande (44%)⁴³⁰. If it is

⁴³⁰ Viavoice, opinion poll undertaken from 12 and 13 April 2012 for *Libération*.

evident that, for a number of the French, she represents the renewal of politics, this image finds its limits when it is a case of her status as a presidential candidate. For this reason, we can conclude that Madam Le Pen is considered as a symbol of change up to a certain point, because she never manages to be a credible presidential candidate.

What conclusions can we draw from this? Firstly, she is more popular than her father. Her highly discussed arrival at the head of the National Front, her efforts to detoxify the party and the fact of being a woman, all these factors operate to cause her approval rating to climb. Marine Le Pen represents a new era in politics and, as the first woman in the role of president of a party of the extreme right, she embodies change for the supporters of the NF and some supporters of other political parties. This fact conforms to the proposition of Rainbow Murray who predicts that all women, because of their sex, are perceived as a symbol of change. But, as the Ifop general classification demonstrates, the electoral advantages that Marine obtains from this do not go sufficiently far to make her a credible candidate. With respect to her experience, as we have noted above, she lacks experience in government, but she has served for a long time as regional and municipal councillor, and as member of the European Parliament. Overall, she is less experienced than the five other women. As a result of her lack of experience in ministerial roles, she adopts a populist strategy which heightens the questions on her credibility. Consequently, in despite of the fact that she presents as a symbol of change, Madam Le Pen finds herself in the situation of the double bind due to the fact that her novelty is incessantly coloured by the idea of an

eventual return to the hard politics of the party and by the doubts on her capability to govern the country.

2.8 Conclusion

This chapter has looked at the double bind Experienced or Symbol of Change. According to the proposition of Rainbow Murray, on the one hand a woman is naturally considered as a symbol of change because of her sex, even if it possible that she loses part of the credit she receives for it because of her experience. On the other hand, a woman who seeks to put forward her political experience risks losing her image of a new and seductive candidate

If all women are considered as capable of personifying change, it still remains that the situation is different for each woman. Édith Cresson is very much a symbol of change from the moment of her appointment as Prime minister because, as “first woman” in this role, she incites the enthusiasm of the press and the French. The same exists for Michèle Alliot-Marie and Ségolène Royal, who win internal elections of their party, Michèle for the post of president of the RPR in 1999, and Ségolène as candidate of the Socialist Party for the 2007 Presidential election. Being the “first women”, they arouse the hope of change. The sudden and late entry of Simone Veil into the political world, at the time of her appointment as Minister of Health, assures that she embodies change, as her popularity rating shows.

By contrast, for Martine Aubry and Marine Le Pen, the image of a woman who is a symbol of change is less prominent. In the case of Martine Aubry we have noted that, during the campaign for the SP primary, she did not stress her desire to embody change. We saw that “omission” contributed to her failure. In the case of Marine Le Pen, for

the supporters of the National Front and some of the French people she brings newness and modernity, particularly at the beginning of her campaign for the 2012 Presidential election. Indeed, the media present her as a candidate likely to win through to the second round. But, as her scores in the opinion polls indicate, she remains less credible than the other candidates. The problem which presents itself to Marine is that, as successor to her father at the head of the National Front, the people expect that she will remain faithful to the name and to the political line of the father. Consequently, the advantage that she obtains from her image as a woman bringing change is reduced. As First Secretary and President respectively of their parties, Aubry and Le Pen had trouble in positioning themselves as a symbol of change. In the case of Martine, it is the systematic promotion of her experience in the political world and above all in executive power which hides the virtues associated with the image of renewal and freshness. For Marine, it is her status as the heiress of the Le Pen name and the weight of the hard fringe of the National Front which obscures her capability to personify change.

In respect of the question of political experience, each of the six women has a different profile. For Édith Cresson, the political experience, which is considerable, is not taken into account at the time of her appointment to the post of Prime Minister because it is more her novelty which is promoted. Gradually, as the attention shifts towards her political action, the criticisms become harsher, and she finds herself caught in the trap of the situation of a woman who is a short-lived symbol of renewal.

In 2007 Ségolène Royal has experience in a range of ministerial portfolios, in municipal politics, and in her role as a member of the National Assembly. However, her novelty as a candidate for the 2007 Presidential election incites the French to think about the new orientation that she may bring to politics rather than her political experience. By contrast, in 2011 she no longer benefits from her image as a candidate bringing hope of change. She is now considered experienced by reason of the considerable media coverage of her 2007 presidential campaign, even if in the interim she has not exercised responsibilities in government. Therefore, in 2011 Madam Royal finds herself in the inverse situation to that of 2007. She no longer profits from her status as “first woman” because she continues with the same ideas from 2007 and no longer reassures with respect to her capabilities to govern the country. In 2011, therefore, she sinks into the situation of the double bind which can be summarised by the formula: not new enough and not experienced enough.

As for Michèle Alliot-Marie, at the time of her success in 1999 in the ballot for the presidency of the RPR, she already possesses considerable experience as a Member of Parliament and as a Junior Minister in the government. However, the novelty that she represents as the first woman in the role of president of the party has the effect of deflecting attention from her experience. This situation reoccurs in 2002 at the time of her appointment as Minister of Defence. Once again, in spite of her considerable experience in the government and in the governing body of the party, the novelty of a woman in this sovereign role, previously the domain of men, results in the exclusion of her political

experience. For the French it is her image of a woman promising change which dominates. Thus, in these two situations, the idea of novelty does not present a disadvantage to Michèle. The UMP campaign for the 2007 Presidential election results in different circumstances for Michèle.

Naturally, as the first woman to seek the candidature of the party for the position of President, she personifies change, as in 1999 and 2002.

However, it is Ségolène Royal, her socialist competitor, who is the darling of the media and the French, and she has trouble in having accepted her image as a woman bringing change. In addition, in spite of her considerable political experience, pitted against Nicolas Sarkozy this experience always appears as inferior. So, the question of the double bind poses itself by reason of the double blow of misfortune which results in the impression that she is less a symbol of change than Royal and less experienced than Sarkozy.

For Simone Veil, we have established the fact that she lacked experience in politics at the time of her appointment as Minister of Health in 1974. For the French, the arrival of a woman in this ministerial post is a great surprise. Her lack of political experience does not seem to disturb the French, as the opinion polls demonstrate. Thus, if doubts arise on her competence, they are drowned in the waves of hope that spring from her novelty. At the time of her election to the European Parliament in 1979, she is well-known by the French and she now has experience in politics because of her role as Minister of Health and the controversy which surrounded the Veil law on abortion. However, as a woman, she continues to bring hope of change. Obviously, the French are still attached to this

female politician with the air of warmth and integrity which cause one to forget her membership of a limited circle of political leaders. We have noted that the popularity rating of Simone Veil stayed elevated during her political career. Still perceived as a symbol of change, the political experience of Madam Veil is accepted, or at least is never seriously under question.

Martine Aubry has considerable experience in the government, in the private sector, and as First Secretary of the Socialist party. But, as we have noted above, she runs second to François Hollande even though she features among the most popular politicians, and in despite of the fact that Hollande has never held a post in the government. It is obvious that, for the Socialist supporters, the experience of Martine Aubry is less recognised and that they perceive her competence as being inferior to that of Hollande. For Martine, the situation of the double bind is demonstrated by the fact that the French gravitate towards Hollande who they consider as a sure winner.

We note that Marine Le Pen does not have experience in the government and that her limited experience as a regional and municipal councillor, and as a member of the European parliament, does not incite very much interest on the part of the French. Her populist politics moreover only aggravate the impression that she lacks political experience. It is therefore clear that, given her lack of political experience, she suffers from the harmful effects of the double bind.

We have established that all the women are considered as a symbol of change to varying degrees. The situation of the double bind is very

much in evidence for Madam Cresson and Madam Royal (2007), who are capable of embodying change but who are also perceived as incompetent due to the lack of media discussion of their experience. The effect of the double bind is diminished for Madam Veil (1974). Her novelty is promoted to the point of compensating for her lack of political experience. For Madam Veil (1979) and Madam Alliot-Marie (1999 and 2002), the idea of novelty tends to mitigate the suspicions of incompetence in the case of the two women. As a result, the situation of the double bind seems less debilitating. The cases of Simone Veil and MAM show that it is possible for some women to escape the trap of the double bind. The question henceforth poses itself as to whether the place that a woman occupies on the political chess board can be a factor of vulnerability, and if, in other terms, the fact of being a woman of the left or the right predisposes to the situation of the double bind. We estimate that this question merits further evaluation by researchers.

Like Édith Cresson and Michèle Alliot-Marie, Madam Aubry has considerable experience. She does not choose to put forward her novelty, which represents a considerable electoral risk if one considers the case of the other women. It is true that she obtained a sizeable percentage of votes in the Socialist Primary, thus avoiding the debacle that Ségolène Royal had to endure in 2011, but she could not convince the French that she merited being candidate of the Socialist Party for the 2012 Presidential election. This result coincides with the proposition of Rainbow Murray which postulates that a woman who puts forward her experience loses the advantages linked to the image of novelty of which she can naturally take

advantage. Therefore, in the Socialist Primary it is her rival François Hollande who presents himself as the bearer of change. It is by the eroding of the image of a woman as a symbol of change that Martine Aubry finds herself as a victim of the trap of the double bind.

Marine Le Pen is an enigma. As “first woman” in the role of president of the National Front she immediately appears as a symbol of change. However, we have noted that the Le Pen name weighs on this image of renewal to the extent that the ideas and the political style of Marine risk at any moment to swing towards those of her father. Since her political experience in the management of the affairs of the country is minimal, the situation of the double bind does not apply as it does to the five other women. It nevertheless remains that her significant score in the first round of the 2012 Presidential election indicates that her efforts to detoxify the party has found a certain success and that she has succeeded in convincing a part of the electorate of her capabilities as leader.

Overall, our analysis indicates that the three women from the left are more severely impacted by the double bind than Madams Veil and Alliot-Marie (1999 and 2002). Madam Le Pen does not suffer the effects at the same level as the three women of the Left. The different situations which present for the women of the Left and the Right remind us of the double bind “the Mommy problem” that we have described in the Introduction. According to Rainbow Murray, the stereotype problem leads to the situation where the women of the Left are treated differently from

the other female politicians⁴³¹. It would be interesting to see, using Murray's approach, at which point the political orientation of a woman can be determinant when one examines the different effects of the double bind. This is a question which will doubtless be the object of subsequent works.

⁴³¹ Rainbow Murray, ed. *Cracking the Highest Glass Ceiling*, Santa Barbara: Praeger, 2010, pp. 11-2.

Chapter 3: Associated with a Prominent Male or Demonstration of Independence

3.1 Introduction

In this chapter we will focus on the links of the six women with important figures in the political world. According to the concept of the double bind put forward by Rainbow Murray, the stereotype of a woman who depends on an influential man is difficult to overcome. The links with the influential man hinder her actions and tarnish her image of a woman exercising important responsibilities. We can evoke, in this context, the cases of “daughter of” and “wife of”. In these situations a woman, because of this association, is going to remain in the shadow of this man or this close relative, except in circumstances where she can demonstrate her independence and thus assure her credibility as a leader. The double bind Associated with a Prominent Male or Demonstration of Independence also impacts female politicians having a powerful husband because the public think that it is the husband who is taking the decisions once the woman is elected. Consequently, she must fight to demonstrate that she is independent and therefore credible⁴³².

⁴³² Rainbow Murray, ed. *Cracking the Highest Glass Ceiling*, Santa Barbara: Praeger, 2010, p. 18.

3.2 Édith Cresson

As we have noted in Chapter 1, it is François Mitterrand who appoints Madam Cresson to the post of Prime Minister, a post that she is the first woman to occupy. The analysis which follows is going to examine the conditions under which Édith Cresson exposes herself to the situation of the double bind whereby a woman who occupies an important role appears as dependent on an influential man and risks being perceived as inept to govern. To this end, it is appropriate to clarify the influence of François Mitterrand and other male politicians on her political career.

We commence by examining the role that her husband Jacques plays in her career. They married in 1959 and remained so until the death of Jacques in 2001. His career was spent, in the main, with Peugeot where he occupied various posts from 1959 to 1989. Following that, he was president of the Association for Trade Compensation from 1990 to 2001. Thus, his career evolved far from the political world. On 25 February 1992 Annick Cojean notes in *Le Monde* that he “says he a stranger to the universe of ministers, evades meetings, and prefers evenings watching television to the dinners at Matignon”. Cojean cites the words of Jacques on his role: “like Mr Thatcher ... I am the husband, I belong to the club of prince consorts”⁴³³. All this allows us to believe that Jacques Cresson, a stranger to the world of politics, has not been in the situation of directly influencing the political choices of Édith.

⁴³³ Annick Cojean, “L’Éclatement de l’empire soviétique précipite le retour vers des formes archaïques du commerce: Jacques Cresson, ‘M. Compensation’”, *Le Monde*, 25 February 1992.

In respect of Edith's links with François Mitterrand, the situation is different. At a meeting at the end of 1967 of the Convention of Republican Institutions (CIR), a political party created by Mitterrand in 1964, Cresson meets him for the first time. But it is 1969, according to Édith Cresson, that Mitterrand becomes interested in her. It was at the moment that she spoke on agricultural policy⁴³⁴. From that moment on, a friendship develops between them, and Édith becomes his chauffeur. In 1975, at the time of the Socialist Party congress at Pau Mitterrand, by now the First Secretary of the party, appoints Madam Cresson to the post of National Secretary for Youth and Students. On 22 May 1981 she joins the Mauroy government as the first Minister of Agriculture. Subsequently, she is Minister of External Commerce and Tourism (from March 1983 to July 1984), Minister of Industrial Redeployment and Exterior Commerce (from July 1984 to March 1986), Minister of European Affairs (from May 1988 to October 1990), and finally her appointment as Prime Minister on 15 May 1991. All of these roles have the stamp of François Mitterrand, President of the Republic at the time of these appointments. Cresson recognises it moreover: "I owed my career to François Mitterrand"⁴³⁵. Indeed, as we noted in Chapter 1, her appointment to the post of Prime Minister raises suspicions that she only attained this position as a result of a special relationship with the President. According to Jane Jenson and Mariette Sineau,

⁴³⁴ Édith Cresson, *Histoires françaises*, Paris: Éditions du Rocher, 2006, p. 35.

⁴³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 141.

the most frequent innuendos imply that she owes her position not so much to her political ability but to the “intimate” relations that she had had in the past with the Head of State⁴³⁶.

Jane Freedman has her suspicions:

in the mind of the public and in the comments of the press, the relationship between François Mitterrand and Édith Cresson had the appearance of one of seduction. It was said that Mr Mitterrand had appointed Édith Cresson to the position of Prime Minister because of a sexual relationship which existed between them⁴³⁷.

The idea that Cresson would have had a liaison with François Mitterrand leads to the perception that she depends on the goodwill and the whims of the President, leaving her in an unenviable position for a Head of government. Guy Schwartz, her former communication adviser, notes in relation to an interview on an American television station: “she does not react when the journalist mentions that she had been the mistress of Mitterrand”⁴³⁸. The fact that the rumour has never been denied plays a part in its substantiation. For Jane Freedman, “Édith Cresson ... never succeeded in dispelling the image which portrayed her as the creature of Mr Mitterrand”⁴³⁹. We find in this comment the classic prejudice according to which men succeed as a result of their own efforts whereas women owe their progression to amorous liaisons with powerful men. It is obvious that these insinuations undermined the credibility of Édith Cresson in her role.

⁴³⁶ Jane Jenson and Mariette Sineau, *Mitterrand et Les Françaises: Un Rendez-vous manqué*, Paris: Presses de Sciences Po, 1995, p. 334.

⁴³⁷ Jane Freedman, *Femmes politiques: mythes et symboles*, Paris: L’Harmattan, 1997, p. 225.

⁴³⁸ “Édith Cresson ou l’autopsie d’un naufrage”, *Médias*, No.1, June 2004.

⁴³⁹ Jane Freedman, *op. cit.*, p. 227.

In respect of the reactions of the media following the appointment of Cresson, Jane Freedman puts forward the following comment:

the accent is therefore placed on the fact that the appointment of Madam Cresson was a tactic of Mr. Mitterrand to try and please the “elected women members” and also “the feminist associations”. This type of comment immediately presents Madam Cresson as a tool of the President, a “gadget”.

Freedman reinforces the image of a woman totally subjugated to the President in citing an article in *Le Figaro* of 17 May 1991, of which the language is revealing:

M. Mitterrand, the brilliant helmsman, has just drawn from his hat a new rabbit ... A new feat: a woman at Matignon ... unquestionably, Madam Cresson constitutes an ingenious subject and is “amusing for her novelty”⁴⁴⁰.

This portrait has the effect of tearing to pieces the credibility of Cresson. We also see it in the report by Élisabeth Schemla in respect of the television program *Le Point sur la table* on TF1 on 19 May 1991. There were

five journalists and writers ... [who] effectively delivered a barrage of fierce criticism to Édith Cresson ... She is only a publicity stunt and a bluff by Mitterrand ... a miserable puppet, of whom Bérégovoy ... holds the strings, a poor woman lacking ideas, one that intelligent men would never let lead⁴⁴¹.

Therefore, for a number of commentators, her appointment as Prime Minister is not legitimate, since she owes it completely to the whim of the President. The same applies in the case of the satirical television program *Le Bébête Show* which mocks Madam Cresson by presenting her as a woman subjugated to the President. In general, the media contribute to the

⁴⁴⁰ Jane Freedman, *Femmes politiques: mythes et symboles*, Paris: L’Harmattan, 1997, p. 227.

⁴⁴¹ Élisabeth Schemla, *Édith Cresson, la femme piégée*, Paris: Flammarion, 1993, p. 114.

generalisation of the stereotypical idea whereby a woman has need of an influential man to reach positions at the upper levels of politics. In this case, the image of Édith Cresson being subjugated to the President translates into the diminution of her credibility in the role of Prime Minister.

It is also appropriate to examine the link between Madam Cresson and Abel Farnoux, a senior public servant and friend of long-standing. She meets him for the first time in 1983, but it is in 1988, when Cresson is appointed as Minister of European Affairs, that he commences work for her as an external adviser. Henceforth, he works closely with her and becomes her confidant. Discussing the resignation of Cresson from her ministerial post in October 1990, Franz-Olivier Giesbert states: “Abel Farnoux, her friend, her adviser and her guru, would have implored her to take this step”⁴⁴². Elisabeth Schemla also highlights the influence of Farnoux over Édith Cresson:

the political and media circles, already very circumspect, ponder on the matter: within this duo, which one truly is in charge ... The press evoke the “guru”, or “the father image”, the “mysterious” influence of Abel over Édith. Everything reinforces the idea that Cresson, beneath her assertive behaviour, is in reality a subjugated woman, in the best of tradition⁴⁴³.

Farnoux follows her to Matignon as a special adviser. Henceforth, according to Giesbert, “the new masters of France are inseparable ... The State is amused by the daily extravagances that the Matignon couple

⁴⁴² Franz-Olivier Giesbert, *La Fin d'une époque*, Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1993, p. 125.

⁴⁴³ Elisabeth Schemla, *Édith Cresson, la femme piégée*, Paris: Flammarion, 1993, pp. 188-9.

commit innocently”⁴⁴⁴. However, the efficiency of Farnoux in his role is in question. Annie Kahn, in *Le Monde* of 26 May 1991, poses the question and provides a reply to it:

why does Madam Édith Cresson continue to employ a man so controversial? A senior public servant provides this response: “Numerous people have recommended that she get rid of him ... [but] with Abel Farnoux, she is fulfilled. Moreover, he corresponds closely to her temperament”⁴⁴⁵.

The rumours on the nature of their relationship spread. Jane Freedman comments:

the idea that she owed her position to a man were not limited to her relationship with the President. A disparaging discourse also existed on the relationship between Édith Cresson and her personal adviser, Abel Farnoux⁴⁴⁶.

Once again, Madam Cresson faces rumours which suggest that a special relationship exists between her and an influential man, albeit a subordinate. Questions are raised as to who is really making the decisions, the common view being that it is Farnoux. As Madam Cresson does not dispute these questions, they impact on her credibility.

It is not surprising that, in face of these questions, Madam Cresson seeks to demonstrate her independence. We can cite, among other examples, an incident arising between her and Laurent Fabius the day following her appointment as Prime Minister. Cresson finds Fabius in the waiting room of her office without invitation: he complains that there are not enough of his colleagues in the government. In particular, he wants

⁴⁴⁴ Franz-Olivier Giesbert, *La Fin d'une époque*, Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1993, p. 134.

⁴⁴⁵ Annie Kahn, “M. Abel Farnoux, conseiller spécial à Matignon. Un Spécialiste de la Provocation”, *Le Monde*, 26 May 1991.

⁴⁴⁶ Jane Freedman, *Femmes politiques: mythes et symboles*, Paris: L’Harmattan, 1997, p. 229.

“Pierre Mauroy to be in the government, leaving himself the position of First Secretary of the party, in preparation for the coming presidential election”⁴⁴⁷. Schemla quotes the comment of Cresson in response: “there has never been a question that Mauroy returns and he will never return!”⁴⁴⁸ This categorical refusal has repercussions for the new Prime Minister: according to Franz-Olivier Giesbert, “Cresson believes she knows why Laurent Fabius showed such hatred towards her when she was at Matignon: she had too strongly rejected his desire to install his own people”⁴⁴⁹. A second incident occurs at the time where, as Prime Minister, she acts against the advice of Pierre Bérégovoy, her Minister of the Economy. Faced with a slowing economy, Cresson proposes that the minimum wage be increased at a higher rate than that fixed by legislation. Bérégovoy does not agree, and the rumours spread that he is going to resign. Cresson stands firm, and on 20 June 1991 she announces an increase of 2.3% rather than the 1.7% permitted by law. However, this show of force proves costly for Édith Cresson since Bérégovoy subsequently does his best to block her initiatives. According to Élisabeth Schemla, Bérégovoy henceforth mounts “a permanent coup d’État” against Cresson⁴⁵⁰. Our third example concerns the senior figures in the Socialist Party. According to Élisabeth Schemla, “to clearly signal her independence from the SP hierarchy”, she suppresses “the traditional

⁴⁴⁷ Édith Cresson, *Histoires françaises*, Paris: Éditions du Rocher, 2006, p. 137.

⁴⁴⁸ Élisabeth Schemla, *Édith Cresson, la femme piégée*, Paris: Flammarion, 1993, p. 106.

⁴⁴⁹ Franz-Olivier Giesbert, *La Fin d’une époque*, Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1993, p. 143.

⁴⁵⁰ Élisabeth Schemla, *op. cit.*, p. 140.

breakfast ... [with] the senior members of the party”⁴⁵¹. This action, which puts an end to a long standing practice, seems to have been motivated by the numerous criticisms made against her by her colleagues. Despite her desire to isolate herself from these people, as Élisabeth Schemla observes, “she is ... put to the test, denounced as a prisoner of her government, and above all, of the intransigent Pierre Bérégovoy. She is a woman under the influence [of others]”⁴⁵². It is clear that the desire for independence of Édith Cresson renders her all the more vulnerable to the stereotype of a dependent woman. We know moreover that Cresson does not manage to obtain from Mitterrand the government that she requested, because of the opposition of party officials and of the lukewarm support given to her by the President himself. Thus, subordinated to François Mitterrand and incapable of maintaining her distance with respect to the senior members of the Socialist Party, Madam Cresson does not manage to portray an image of a strong and independent leader.

What conclusions can we draw from this analysis? Édith Cresson owes her political career, culminating in the position of Prime Minister, to the President. Her links with Mitterrand are such that we see the appearance of rumours of her presumed sexual relations with the President. The idea of her total submission is taken up by the media who present Madam Cresson as the puppet of Mitterrand, a toy in effect. It is clear that she faces the stereotype which presumes that a woman has need

⁴⁵¹ Élisabeth Schemla, *Édith Cresson, la femme piégée*, Paris: Flammarion, 1993, p. 110.

⁴⁵² *Ibid.*, p. 139.

of an influent man to succeed in politics. In respect of Abel Farnoux, her confidant and adviser, two situations exist which taken together, impact the image of Cresson. Firstly, the idea being spread of their sexual relationship, and secondly, the fact that Madam Cresson did not succeed in demonstrating that it was her making the decisions. Once again, Édith Cresson puts herself in a situation where she gives the impression that she needs an influent male to exercise her responsibilities. A third factor presents itself for Cresson: her actions as Prime Minister result in her estrangement from the party and her colleagues. Our analysis of the difficult relationships with her colleagues in the government shows that the more she tries to go her own way, the more she falls into the disastrous situation of a woman subjugated to the will of men. The consequence of this is that Cresson no longer receives the support of her colleagues. Her approval rating drops and in the end the President asks for her resignation from the position of Prime Minister. Incapable of demonstrating her independence from the President, from Farnoux and from her colleagues, she is clearly victim of the stereotype which presumes that a woman depends on an influential man to advance in politics. As time passes, and the mistakes multiply, as her attempts to free herself from the links stifling her are exhausted, Madam Cresson locks herself more and more into the trap of the double bind.

3.3 Simone Veil

As we have noted in Chapter 2, before her appointment as Minister of Health in 1974 Simone Veil met Jacques Chirac and Georges Pompidou as a result of the social activities linked to the employment of her husband, Antoine. The men of power had certainly recognised the exceptional qualities of Simone. However, as the following analysis is going to demonstrate, the intervention of these influential men did not prevent the demonstration of the independent character of Veil throughout her career. With this in mind, we will examine her links with some important figures to see to what extent they represent a political advantage to Madam Veil.

We commence first of all by the examination of the role of her husband in the political life of Simone. The two meet in 1945 and marry on 26 October 1946. Simone was 19 at that time. After his studies, which resulted in a degree from Sciences Po, Antoine commences working as a parliamentary officer at the Council of the Republic (now the Senate). From 1947 to 1971 Antoine works as a public servant. In 1971 his career changes direction and he becomes administrator, then chief executive officer of the Union of Air Transport (UTA), an aviation company which, in 1992, merges with Air France. In addition to these posts in administration and in private enterprise, Antoine also had political functions. He was, notably, elected as a councillor for Paris in 1971, and re-elected in 1983. For her part, Madam Veil, herself a graduate of Sciences Po, chooses to stay at home until 1954. However, her personal ambition was not lacking. In 1954 she ceases her life as a housewife. Once she finishes her law studies, she announces to her husband that she

wants to become a lawyer. She laments the fact that her mother had to renounce a professional life due to the community attitudes at the time which forced her to remain at home, a sacrifice “that the young woman judged as sometimes unjust”⁴⁵³. Faced with a husband who wants her to stay at home in line with the norms of the period, Simone doggedly stands firm and they arrive at a compromise: she will enter the judiciary. The couple participate in political circles as a result of the different positions of Antoine. It is through these networks that Simone meets Georges Pompidou and Jacques Chirac, whom we will discuss later. Did Antoine have any influence on the political career of Simone Veil? None of our analysis indicates that Antoine played a direct role in the political ascension of Simone, even if his contacts had undoubtedly facilitated the integration of Simone Veil into the political world.

The appointment of Madam Veil as Minister of Health in 1974 is due to her links with Georges Pompidou. She meets Pompidou for the first time in 1969. On 14 March 1970 Madam Veil is appointed general manager of the Council of the Judiciary (CSM) by the President. According to Pfaadt, “the close relationship with the Pompidou couple explains her appointment”⁴⁵⁴. In her role at CSM she frequently meets with the President. At his request, she is appointed to the role of Administrator of the French Broadcasting Corporation (ORTF) where she is the first woman to sit on the Board, and she has a similar post at the

⁴⁵³ Laurent Pfaadt, *Simone Veil: Une Passion française*, Saint-Victor-d'Épine: City Éditions, 2011, p. 17.

⁴⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 81.

Foundation of France. As a result of her connection with Georges Pompidou, both in the Public Service and the upper levels of power “her name joins the list of the foremost women in France”⁴⁵⁵. The influence of Pompidou ends with his death on 2 April 1974. In May 1974 Madam Veil finds a new mentor: the new President, Valéry Giscard d’Estaing, who appoints her as Minister of Health. Discussing the relationship between the President and Simone, Laurent Pfaadt notes that “there was never friendship between Simone Veil and Giscard d’Estaing, just respect”⁴⁵⁶. But, as we will see later, Giscard d’Estaing is going to play a prominent role in her political career. Giscard asks his Prime Minister Jacques Chirac to find women “who are new in politics”. Chirac puts forward the name of Simone Veil on the advice of his principal adviser, Marie-France Garaud, a friend of Simone. At that time Simone and Chirac know each other slightly, even if, as Simone comments, she had “already had come in contact with Chirac ... [because her] husband had occasion to meet him in the political circles of power”⁴⁵⁷. Valéry Giscard d’Estaing knew little of Simone at the time that Chirac put her name forward. Indeed, Simone is not the first choice of the President for the position of Minister of Health: he prefers Anne-Marie Fritsch, but Chirac refuses to accept her and insists on his choice of Simone Veil. Thus, according to Laurent Pfaadt, “the initiative well and truly comes from Jacques Chirac”⁴⁵⁸. In summary, her

⁴⁵⁵ Laurent Pfaadt, *Simone Veil: Une Passion française*, Saint-Victor-d’Épine: City Éditions, 2011, p. 83.

⁴⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 121.

⁴⁵⁷ Simone Veil, *Une Vie*, Paris: Éditions Stock, 2011, pp. 148-9.

⁴⁵⁸ Laurent Pfaadt, *op. cit.*, p. 92.

attainment of the role of Minister of Health is because of the negotiations between Chirac and Giscard d'Estaing over the entry of a woman into the government.

The events leading to her election as a member of the European Parliament in 1979 are marked by the will of Valéry Giscard d'Estaing. After the appointment of Veil as Minister, Giscard d'Estaing follows her career with interest. Her success at the National Assembly, where she succeeds in having the law on Abortion enacted, establishes her reputation in the political world. It is Giscard d'Estaing who encourages Simone Veil to contest the European elections as the head of the UMP list of candidates against his old rival Jacques Chirac. Albert du Roy explains in *L'Express* of 14 July 1979 that Giscard insists that Veil be at “the head of the list to obtain the maximum number of French votes”⁴⁵⁹. Madam Veil conducts a good campaign, and her list finishes in first position; that of Chirac comes fourth. Several days after her election as a parliamentary member, she becomes President of the European Parliament thanks to the support of Giscard d'Estaing who convinces Helmut Schmidt to give the German votes to Madam Veil. Thus, it is Giscard d'Estaing who is the force behind the election of Simone: he wants a French person, and in particular Simone, in the post of President, and does all he can to ensure it happens. It is therefore clear that, without the support of the President, Simone would not have been a candidate for the European election, nor would she have been at the head of the list, nor would she have risen to the

⁴⁵⁹ Albert du Roy, “Simone II”, *L'Express*, 14 July 1979, p. 50.

presidency of the European Parliament. The case of Simone Veil shows that, in French politics in the 1970s, a woman had need of the support of an influential man to obtain an important position.

In spite of the support that she received from Pompidou, Chirac and Giscard d'Estaing, Simone Veil had a real desire to maintain her independence. According to Maurice Szafran, "she would never be dependent on a man ... She does not put up with it, she has never accepted the hypocritical paternalism of men"⁴⁶⁰. Laurent Pfaadt emphasises this in noting that she is

independent and intransigent with her conscience and her convictions in defiance of ideologies, men and friendship ... she refused to play political games and compromise her principles⁴⁶¹.

Let us consider some situations where she shows her desire for independence. Veil comments that, in 1976, "I refused to join the newly created RPR, to the fury, I must say, of Jacques Chirac"⁴⁶². Our second example relates to her election as a member of the European Parliament in 1979. Even if Giscard d'Estaing was the instigator of her candidature, he did not associate himself directly in the campaign. In fact, Veil undertakes the campaign without his support. As a result of her work and that of her fellow candidates, her list comes first. Finally, we quote an incident which takes place in the course of the first year of her presidency of the European Parliament in 1979. She rejects the budget proposed for 1980, enraging Raymond Barre, the French Prime Minister. Madam Veil "has to face the

⁴⁶⁰ Maurice Szafran, *Simone Veil: Destin*, Paris: Flammarion, 1994, p. 196.

⁴⁶¹ Laurent Pfaadt, *Simone Veil: Une Passion française*, Saint-Victor-d'Épine: City Éditions, 2011, pp. 8-9.

⁴⁶² Simone Veil, *Une Vie*, Paris: Éditions Stock, 2011, p. 175.

hostile attitude of her former Prime Minister ... who protests against her opposition, in vain⁴⁶³. Thus, it seems that Simone Veil has an independent character and that she does not necessarily agree to endorse a policy that goes against her will, her opinion, and her convictions.

The situation is therefore summarised as follows: the appointment of Simone Veil as Minister of Health is the result, not solely due to her close links with the President of the Republic or the Prime Minister, but also her links with the Pompidou couple, her friendship with Marie-France Garaud and her competence demonstrated in her roles in the judiciary and boards of directors. But it is Pompidou who launches Veil in her political career, and then it is Giscard d'Estaing and Chirac who are responsible for her entry into government. In the case of the entry of Veil into the European Parliament and her election as President, it is Giscard d'Estaing who contrives to ensure her success. To the extent that she benefits from her links with influential political men, she reinforces, as it were, the stereotype according to which a woman needs an influential man to succeed in politics. We have noted that occasions exist where she demonstrated her independence. Far from hindering her political rise, the displays of her will of independence seem to have given her a remarkable popularity rating. Thus, in the case of Simone Veil, the situation of the double bind, so harmful for some of her female colleagues, does not profoundly impact her. Simone Veil certainly benefited from the support

⁴⁶³ Laurent Pfaadt, *Simone Veil: Une Passion française*, Saint-Victor-d'Épine : City Éditions, 2011, p. 145.

of several men with different political opinions, but she has at the same time avoided, through her spirit of independence, any risk of compromise of principles.

3.4 Michèle Alliot-Marie

On 18 September 2005 MAM announces during an interview on *Grand rendez-vous* on Europe 1: “I will not be the follower of anyone”. According to Darmon, she means by that “neither ally, nor accomplice, nor adversary. It is clear: MAM announces her intention to henceforth play only for herself”⁴⁶⁴. But, at the time of her election to the presidency of the RPR, in 1999, and her appointment as Minister of Defence in 2002, does she show total independence? The following analysis seeks to propose responses to this question.

Let us firstly commence by the examination of the roles played by her husband, Michel Alliot, and her current companion, Patrick Ollier, in her political career. The first is a French academic, specialising in legal anthropology. In 1968, Alliot becomes Chief of Staff for Edgar Faure, Minister of Education, and in 1970, he is one of the founders of University Paris-VII (today Paris Diderot), of which he is the first president. On 23 June 1971 he and Michèle marry. An assistant in the department of legal ethnology at University Paris II Panthéon-Assas, Michèle is far from the political world at that time. In 1972, she joins the office of Edgar Faure, now Minister of Social Affairs where Michel is still Chief of Staff, as a ministerial adviser. Michaël Darmon notes that according to Renée Marie, mother of Michèle, Faure had known the young woman for a long time, even if “other observers assure that it is very much her husband who

⁴⁶⁴ Michaël Darmon, *Michèle Alliot-Marie: La Grande Mulette*, Paris: L’Archipel, 2006, p. 206.

employed her⁴⁶⁵. On 2 April 1973, Faure is appointed as president of the National Assembly, terminating the employment of Michel and Michèle. Michel returns to academic life and Michèle, who worked for less than a year in the Faure office, returns to the university sector for a short period before entering the offices of Bernard Stasi (from 1973 to 1974), Gérard Ducray (1974), and Alice Saunier-Seïté (from 1976 to 1978). In the period from 1978 to 1985 she works in the private sector as administrator and managing director of Uta-Indemnité. The Alliot couple divorce in 1984. Overall, it is probable that the role of Michel in the political career of his wife in the period up to their divorce is that of companion rather than as mentor. Michèle meets her current companion, Patrick Ollier, for the first time in 1974. Ollier worked in various positions in the offices of male politicians. From 1970 to 1973 he is adviser to the Prime Ministers Jacques Chaban-Delmas and Pierre Messmer and, from 1974 to 1981, as adviser for the ministers Georges Gorse, Paul Dijoud and Alain Peyrefitte. In 1981 he takes up a position in the private sector as adviser to the president of the Béghin-Say group, a producer of sugary snacks. In 1988 Michèle and Patrick become romantically linked and start living together. Michèle has been a member of the government since 1986 as a Junior Minister. Ollier enters into national and regional politics: he is the member for Hautes-Alpes from 1988 to 2002 and, in 2001 he is elected as municipal councillor and then in 2004 becomes mayor. Doubtless the

⁴⁶⁵ Michaël Darmon, *Michèle Alliot-Marie: La Grande Mulette*, Paris: L'Archipel, 2006, p. 67.

experience he obtained in these diverse roles were of benefit to Michèle to a certain extent, but Michèle already had experience in important positions, including the presidency of the RPR and roles as Junior Minister and Minister. As the experience of Patrick is inferior to that of Michèle, it is doubtful that he played a determining role in her political career. Moreover, he prefers to stay in the background. For example, at the time that Michèle announces that she is going to contest the RPR election, he abandons his political ambitions in order that she can commit herself fully to that goal. From then on Ollier is at her side to support her in her career, including her campaign for the presidency of the RPR. It is clear that it is the career of Michèle which comes first for the couple. Thus, in respect of her ex-husband and Patrick Ollier, it is obvious that Michèle charts her course in politics by way of her own efforts, and that her links with the two men are not decisive for her career.

Her father, Bernard Marie, plays a major role in her political rise. Member for Pyrénées-Atlantiques from 1967 to 1981, Bernard chooses Michèle as his parliamentary substitute from 1978 to 1981. A former rugby referee and well-known by the French people, Bernard has an impressive address book which includes Jacques Chirac who, like him, was elected Member of Parliament in 1967. According to Michaël Darmon, it is Bernard who convinced his daughter to align herself with Chirac, and “in 1981, she finds herself propelled by her father to the doorstep of the neo-Gaullist party directed by Chirac“. Darmon also notes that “her first true status is that of ‘daughter of’ ... [and that she] has always been protected like a saint in a small niche”. He adds that “the

influence of Bernard Marie at the time of the major turning points of the career of his daughter is significant”⁴⁶⁶. On 8 May 2002 Antoine Guiral, in *Libération*, comments that “her father ... pilots her career”⁴⁶⁷. In summary, Bernard Marie is responsible for the entry of his daughter into politics. It is as a result of his significant address book and particularly his friendship with Jacques Chirac that she launches herself into her political career.

The links between Michèle and Jacques Chirac are of prime interest to us. When, in 1968 at Biarritz, Michèle meets him for the first time Chirac invites her to join his team, but she categorically refuses: “thank you, but there is no question of it happening. Politics does not interest me, and I will never join”⁴⁶⁸. It is in 1981 that the links between Chirac and Michèle become closer. Chirac notes a change in Michèle who speaks spontaneously of her interest in politics. It is the beginning of their political partnership: Chirac “adopts” Michèle by nick-naming her “little Michèle”. That year, she commences her apprenticeship at the RPR, while maintaining her functions as professor of commercial law at Université Paris 1. Michaël Darmon notes: “she progresses rapidly in the party machine ... Moreover, we know that she has the support of Chirac”⁴⁶⁹. On 20 March 1986 she is named Junior Minister for Education in the government of Jacques Chirac. In July 1999 their friendship is put to the

⁴⁶⁶ Michaël Darmon, *Michèle Alliot-Marie: La Grande Murette*, Paris: L’Archipel, 2006, pp. 81, 83-4, 196-7.

⁴⁶⁷ Antoine Guiral, “Michèle Alliot-Marie – Ministre de la Défense et des Anciens Combattants”, *Libération*, 8 May 2002.

⁴⁶⁸ Michaël Darmon, *op. cit.*, p. 51.

⁴⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 86.

test. The presidency of the RPR is vacant and Jacques Chirac favours Jean-Paul Delevoye. However, Madam Alliot-Marie also proposes to contest the election. Advised of this by Michèle, Chirac does not react unfavourably. According to Darmon, “Chirac ... does not dissuade her from presenting herself”. On the contrary, “from the month of October, Chirac sends discreet messages in favour of MAM”⁴⁷⁰. Thus, in addition to explicit support for Delevoye, Chirac gives an implicit support to Michèle who finishes up winning. On 7 May 2002 Chirac, now President of the Republic appoints Michèle as Minister of Defence. She is the first woman to occupy this role. In addition, as we have noted above, in 2005 Chirac even contemplates appointing Michèle as Prime Minister. Unquestionably, Chirac plays a major role in the political career of Michèle. It is he who appoints her to the government in 1986, who implicitly supports her in her candidature for the presidency of the RPR in 1999, and who appoints her to the powerful role of Minister of Defence in 2002. We have also observed that Michèle is considered as being protected by Chirac. Would she have advanced without the support of Chirac? It is highly improbable, given the power possessed by Chirac in his roles of President and Prime Minister of the Republic.

How did Michèle demonstrate her desire for independence with respect to Jacques Chirac? Our first observation is that she is a strong woman, in fact stubborn. In effect, it is in her exchanges with Chirac that

⁴⁷⁰ Michaël Darmon, *Michèle Alliot-Marie: La Grande Muette*, Paris: L’Archipel, 2006, pp. 154, 158.

we discover her independent character. In 1968, as we have noted above, Chirac, then Junior Minister for Social Affairs, asks her to join his team, but she refuses. In 1978, during a meeting of the RPR, Chirac proposes that she become a member of the party. She again rejects his proposal. In 2001, now president of the RPR, Michèle refuses to appoint François Fillon as General Secretary of the party, against the opinion of Chirac. At the beginning of 2002, when Chirac refuses to give her a major role in his team for the presidential campaign, she threatens to go on holidays, taking the cheque book of the RPR with her. This action, which would have deprived Chirac of campaign funds, succeeded in him reversing his decision. On 23 April 2002, during the presidential campaign Chirac creates a new party, the Union for a Popular Movement (UMP), to establish “a fusion of the right and centre”⁴⁷¹. In the beginning, Michèle is against this proposition which would result in the dissolution of the RPR. However, she recognises that this transformation is inevitable, and starts negotiations with the president. Once again, she utilises the RPR funds as a bargaining tool. She requests several roles, including those of Prime Minister and president of the National Assembly and Chirac finally appoints her Minister of Defence in exchange for the transfer of the funds from the RPR to the UMP. Far from being totally subjugated, Madam Alliot-Marie shows that she can rebel against the authority of the President, indeed even to put pressure on him. Her competence in political

⁴⁷¹ Michaël Darmon, *Michèle Alliot-Marie : La Grande Murette*, Paris: L’Archipel, 2006, pp. 175-6.

roles, which we have discussed above, aids her to in part mitigate the harmful effects arising from the stereotype which presumes that a woman has need of an influential male to advance in the political world. Nevertheless, in despite of these demonstrations of independence in relation to Chirac, Michèle still remains in the shadow of her mentor. She certainly does not escape from the situation of the double bind which states that a woman who seeks to assert her independence remains all the more dependent on an influential male.

How do the media portray the independence of Madam Alliot-Marie? In the period before the election for the presidency of the RPR in 1999, we find few articles which make reference to the links between Chirac and Alliot-Marie. On 12 October 1999, Jean-Louis Saux limits himself to simply evoke the “two candidates, Mr. Delevoye and Madam Alliot-Marie, as being the closest to Jacques Chirac”⁴⁷². But Thierry Portes, in *Le Figaro* of 17 November 1999, points clearly to the independence of MAM in relation to Chirac:

Madam Alliot-Marie attacks those in the presidential circle. To her direct competitor, Jean-Paul Delevoye, who readily accepts the support of the President, Michèle Alliot-Marie thus pits her quality “of a woman who is not under influence, who has never placed herself in a camp”⁴⁷³.

We have noted above that Michèle forces the hand of Chirac at the moment that she contests the presidency of the RPR, while it is Jean-Paul Delevoye, her competitor, who has the imprimatur of the President. The

⁴⁷² Jean-Louis Saux, “Au RPR, l’offre ‘chiracienne’ s’élargit à Michèle Alliot-Marie”, *Le Monde*, 12 October 1999.

⁴⁷³ Thierry Portes, “Michèle Alliot-Marie en vedette ‘amicale’”, *Le Figaro*, 17 November 1999.

media also support him, as, for example Jean-Louis Saux who, on 20 November 1999, describes Delevoye as the “official candidate of the Élysée”⁴⁷⁴, or Thierry Portes who, on 22 November 1999, notes the “instructions from the Élysée in favour of Jean-Paul Delevoye”⁴⁷⁵. For her part, Madam Alliot-Marie does not seek to present herself as the preferred candidate of the President, and as a result the press tend rather to highlight the independence of Michèle, refuting those who claim that she depends on Chirac for her election as president of the RPR. Jean-Louis Saux explains her success in this way:

although engaged in politics since the beginning of the 70s, Michèle ... linked to Jacques Chirac since that time ... managed to impose the idea that she knew, if need be, to stand up to the President of the Republic while being loyal but totally free⁴⁷⁶.

Some years later, the press willingly discuss her spirit of independence. On 20 May 2002, *The Guardian* comments that Michèle had never hesitated to disobey Chirac, and cites as an example her nomination for the presidency of the RPR⁴⁷⁷. Another example of her independence: Sylvie Pierre-Brossolette notes in *Le Figaro* of 22 January 2005: “each time that Jacques Chirac proposes that she move from the Defence portfolio to that of Foreign Affairs, she refuses”⁴⁷⁸. This same desire for resistance is displayed at the time of the 2007 Presidential Election. Here are three

⁴⁷⁴ Jean-Louis Saux, “Les Militants du RPR votent samedi pour élire leur nouveau Président”, *Le Monde*, 20 November 1999.

⁴⁷⁵ Thierry Portes, “Delevoye et Alliot-Marie au coude à coude”, *Le Figaro*, 22 November 1999.

⁴⁷⁶ Jean-Louis Saux, “Le Président du RPR est élu au terme d’une vraie campagne électorale”, *Le Monde*, 5 December 1999.

⁴⁷⁷ “The New Iron Lady – Don’t be Fooled by the Smile”, *Guardian*, 20 May 2002.

⁴⁷⁸ Sylvie Pierre-Brossolette, “Michèle Alliot-Marie”, *Le Figaro*, 22 January 2005.

examples of headlines on the subject: “Alliot-Marie dreams of being candidate” (*Le Parisien*, 25 September 2006), “Michèle Alliot-Marie also prepares to enter into the campaign” (*Le Figaro*, 30 November 2006), and “MAM will perhaps contest without the UMP” (*Le Parisien*, 28 December). However, in the main her links with Chirac are rarely discussed, and one has the impression that it is Madam Alliot-Marie who takes the decisions, not Chirac. Overall, the press present Madam Alliot-Marie as independent in her interactions with Chirac but, there exist, at the same time, suspicions on the part of some journalists that in the end she submits to his will.

Nevertheless, for some in the press, the appointment of MAM as Minister of Defence in 2002 is seen as proof of her submission to Chirac. The language of Jean-François Pécresse, in *Echos* of 7 May 2002, is revealing: “after having accepted to sacrifice her RPR on the altar of the UMP, Michèle Alliot-Marie is given Defence”⁴⁷⁹. On 8 May 2002, *Reuters* notes: “a declared adversary of the merger of parties of the Right in a coalition like the Christian Democratic Union, Michèle Alliot-Marie had to submit to the desire of the Head of State”⁴⁸⁰. Antoine Guiral observes in *Libération* of 8 May 2002: “she had to accept reality. After having resisted for several months ... [the proposition of Chirac to establish a new party], she finished up by conceding in the period between the two rounds of the election”⁴⁸¹. If these comments emphasise the

⁴⁷⁹ Jean-François Pécresse, “La Difficile composition du ‘gouvernement de mission’”, *Les Echos*, 7 May 2002.

⁴⁸⁰ “Alliot-Marie, soldat de Chirac à la Défense”, *Reuters*, 8 May 2002.

⁴⁸¹ Antoine Guiral, “Michèle Alliot-Marie – Ministre de la Défense et des Anciens

submission of Michèle to Chirac, they also demonstrate her pragmatism, given that she is the beneficiary of a major ministry.

Overall, the press present Madam Alliot-Marie as independent in her interactions with Chirac, even if there exist, at the same time, some journalists who believe that, in the end, she submits herself to his will.

To recapitulate, the advantages obtained from her links with her ex-husband and her companion are minimum. Doubtless Patrick Ollier participates in the political life of Michèle, but he remains for the most part in her shadow. The influence of her father is real. His address book and, in particular, his friendship with Jacques Chirac, are important for the political career of Michèle. But, it is the relationship which forms between Chirac and Michèle which counts the most. As the mentor of Michèle, Chirac encourages her to make the first steps in the political world and he is responsible for her government appointments. In spite of the differences of opinion between the two, including the situation of her candidature for the presidency of the RPR, her choice for the position of General Secretary of the RPR, or the discussions regarding the funds of the RPR, the links between the two of them remain strong. Chirac supports Michèle to the point of considering her for the role of Prime Minister. Madam Alliot-Marie most certainly depends on her father and Jacques Chirac in her political career. Indeed, she forged her path in spite of sometimes tense relations between herself and Jacques Chirac, and from this perspective, the divergences of viewpoint only confirm the closeness

of links between the two ambitious personalities. The situation of the double bind thus consists in the trap in which Madam Alliot-Marie finds herself: she manages to liberate herself from her mentor only to find herself in his wake.

3.5 Ségolène Royal

The political life of Madam Royal is dominated by her relationship with François Hollande. In 1978 they meet at ENA where they are studying. Subsequently, they become a couple and raise four children, but choose to not marry. As Hollande is in the role of First Secretary of the Socialist Party from 1997 to 2008, we can expect that Ségolène benefits from her companion's situation to advance her own career. The following analysis is going to examine how the scenario of the double bind is on display in this situation. In the summer of 2008, Ségolène enters into a relationship with André Hadjez, a businessman specialising in the marketing of books. We will firstly examine his role in the political career of Ségolène, and then the links that Royal forms with Hollande and other political figures.

On 20 September 2009, Cécile Amar, in *Le Journal du Dimanche*, notes that Hadjez is “very talented in multimedia ... [which] has nothing to do with politics”. She adds that “in spring 2009, André Hadjez enters fully into the political strategy of Ségolène Royal ... [as] adviser”⁴⁸². Hadjez remains with Ségolène for less than three years, their relationship terminating at the end of July 2011. Even if he assists Ségolène in her campaign for the 2011 Socialist Primary, his lack of experience in the political world indicates that he does not play a major role in the campaign of Ségolène, who already possesses a considerable political experience,

⁴⁸² Cécile Amar, “Cet Encombrant compagnon”, *Le Journal du Dimanche*, 20 September 2009.

including her role as Socialist candidate for the 2007 Presidential campaign.

The links between François Mitterrand and Madam Royal are decisive. Ségolène Royal participates in his 1981 campaign team and works in the position of adviser in the Presidential Corporate Office from 1982 to 1988. During this time she is unknown to Mitterrand. According to Raphaëlle Bacqué and Ariane Chemin, “it is in 1988 that he commences ... to observe her more closely”. During a ceremony to celebrate the re-election of Mitterrand as President, Ségolène asks him for a constituency for the 1988 legislative elections. Bacqué and Chemin observe that it is thanks to Mitterrand that she is a candidate for Deux-Sèvres, an election that, against all expectations, she wins: “Mitterrand ... is ecstatic with this success ... ‘*What an exploit! What talent!*’”⁴⁸³. According to Christine Courcol and Thierry Masure, the next turning point occurs around 1992, the year where “François Mitterrand, under the charm of this young woman, one who is combative and sure of herself, offers Ségolène Royal the ministry of the Environment”⁴⁸⁴. It is therefore Mitterrand who launches Royal into the government. Royal remains in the portfolio until March 1993, the month that the Left is beaten in the legislative elections. Mitterrand does not succeed in the 1995 Presidential election and his death, in 1996, puts an end to his direct influence on the political career of Royal.

⁴⁸³ Raphaëlle Bacqué and Ariane Chemin, *La Femme fatale*, Paris: Albin Michel, 2007, pp. 99-100. It is the authors who use italics.

⁴⁸⁴ Christine Courcol and Thierry Masure, *Ségolène Royal: Les Coulisses d'une défaite*, Paris: L'Archipel, 2007, p. 62.

For her part, Ségolène claims to be a follower of the heritage of Mitterrand in her campaigns for the 2006 Socialist Primary and the 2007 Presidential election. According to Bacqué and Chemin, “when her close friends ask her how they can help her during the campaign she ... [responds] ‘say that I knew François Mitterrand well’”. The authors add: “the truth is that Ségolène Royal imagined that there was, in her fight for the Socialist nomination, then in the contest for the Élysée, benefit in the usage of the name of François Mitterrand”. They give some examples of this usage: “her campaign material [for the Primary] displays on the front page a photo of the President and the slogan ‘Generation Mitterrand’”; for the publicity video launching the Primary campaign “they had ... dug up some photos of the young member of parliament with the President”. Finally, during her 2007 Presidential campaign, in Peking, like Mitterrand in 1981, she announces the “‘100 propositions’ of her ‘Presidential pact’”, recalling the “‘110 propositions’ of 1981” of Mitterrand⁴⁸⁵. It is evident that François Mitterrand plays a leading role in the political career of Royal, either as a result of his actions in her favour, for example, by appointing her to the government, or in a posthumous way, by way of the claim by Ségolène of the Mitterrand heritage in her campaigns for the Primary and the Presidential election. Thus, far from being the sign of a desire for independence, the recourse to François Mitterrand’s heritage

⁴⁸⁵ Raphaëlle Bacqué and Ariane Chemin, *La Femme fatale*, Paris: Albin Michel, 2007, pp. 93-6, 100.

bears witness to a desire to associate herself to a person who dominated politics for a whole French generation.

Four years later, at the time of the 2011 Socialist Primary, the scandal which surrounds Dominique Strauss-Kahn is the centre-piece of interviews and debates. The pact between Martine Aubry and DSK in respect of candidature for the SP is under attack from Royal. She also directs her attacks at François Hollande, now her competitor. Madam Royal again invokes the memory of Mitterrand, as shown by the press articles on Royal in 2011. On 8 January 2011, during an interview with Sophie Landrin and Olivier Schmitt of *Le Monde*, Madam Royal states:

for seven years at his [Mitterrand's] side at the Élysée, then in his government, as well as in the Parliament, elected with his support in his birth region, I have never forgotten his commitments⁴⁸⁶.

On 6 May 2011, *L'Express* reports the comments of Royal who, the day before the thirtieth anniversary of the election of Mitterrand as President, pays an exaggerated homage to her former mentor:

I am here through recognition. I learned this political trade next to him for seven years in the Presidency of the Republic, and then he accompanied me in the legislative elections in the region where he was born⁴⁸⁷.

On 8 May 2011 she attends a meeting of supporters to celebrate this anniversary. A journalist notes the comment of a supporter: “the true successor to François Mitterrand is called Ségolène Royal”⁴⁸⁸. This idea is taken up on 9 May 2011 by Jacques Demarthon in *Le Monde*: “two days

⁴⁸⁶ Sophie Landrin and Olivier Schmitt, “Ségolène Royal: ‘J’ai envie de succéder à François Mitterrand’”, *Le Monde*, 8 January 2011.

⁴⁸⁷ “Royal: ‘J’ai beaucoup appris auprès de Mitterrand’”, *L'Express*, 6 May 2011.

⁴⁸⁸ “2012: Ségolène Royal, héritière de François Mitterrand ?”, *RTL*, 9 May 2011.

before the thirtieth anniversary of the accession of François Mitterrand to the Élysée, Ségolène Royal sought to position herself as the direct heiress of the former Socialist President⁴⁸⁹. As a result of this claimed identification built on a strong political link, she risks fuelling the idea that she owes him her career and position. From this viewpoint, she exposes herself to the stereotype identified by Rainbow Murray, according to which a woman has need of a powerful male to impose herself in the political world.

We now examine the link between Ségolène Royal and François Hollande. After having graduated from ENA in 1980, she and François obtain, in 1982, positions in the office of Jacques Attali, and from there commenced their respective political careers. Ségolène alone is appointed to the government: Hollande has never been in the role of Minister or Junior Minister. Both were elected Members of Parliament in 1988. Hollande is elected Mayor of Tulle in 2001 where he remains until 2008, the year in which he becomes president of the regional council of Corrèze. He leaves this position on 11 May 2012 as a result of his election as President of the Republic. Ségolène becomes president of the regional council of Poitou-Charentes in 2004 and she occupies this position until 30 June 2012. Thus, their respective political careers follow more or less the same trajectory. As we have noted above, the career of Ségolène takes a turn in September 2005 when she announces her Presidential ambition.

⁴⁸⁹ Jacques Demarthon, “Ségolène Royal veut incarner l’héritage de François Mitterrand”, *Le Monde*, 9 May 2011

From then on, the campaign of Ségolène gains momentum, and her scores in the opinion polls start to climb. In the beginning, Ségolène was at pains to not be seen as stealing the limelight from François. According to Bacqué and Chemin, “each time she climbed a new rung of power, Ségolène Royal always worried about the fate of her companion”⁴⁹⁰. However, the opinion polls continue to place Ségolène ahead of François, setting in motion a keen interest in her potential candidature for the Primary. Hollande does not publicly react to the actions of his companion and seems prepared to let her campaign all alone. In September 2006 Hollande announces he will not contest the election. Over time their relations deteriorate, culminating in the announcement of their separation by Ségolène on the evening of the second round of the 2007 Presidential election, confirming the suspicions of the press regarding their separation.

How did Hollande contribute to the campaigns of Royal? In his position of First Secretary of the Socialist Party we expect that he does his utmost to support her. However, according to Rainbow Murray, during the Presidential campaign the support he gave Royal was minimal and he often criticised her in the public domain⁴⁹¹. In addition, at that time, rumours spread of a sexual relationship between Hollande and a journalist, Valérie Trierweiler, which was supposed to have started in 2005. These rumours have a negative effect on the campaign of Ségolène, who strives

⁴⁹⁰ Raphaëlle Bacqué and Ariane Chemin, *La Femme fatale*, Paris: Albin Michel, 2007, p. 16.

⁴⁹¹ Rainbow Murray, ed. *Cracking the Highest Glass Ceiling*, Santa Barbara: Praeger, 2010, p. 61.

hard to hide the deterioration of their relationship. On 17 June 2007 *Le Figaro* quotes Éric Besson who estimates “that the difficulties of the couple were ‘a fact which weighed objectively on the Presidential election’”⁴⁹². Élise Karlin comments on the end of the relationship in *L’Express* of 20 June 2007:

the intimate quarrels between François Hollande and Ségolène Royal would have clouded the electoral scores, disrupting decisions, and changing the direction of events⁴⁹³.

For her part, Madam Royal kept Hollande at a distance during her campaign. According to Bacqué and Chemin, “just before Christmas, he realises that he is already in the dark ... He is obliged to beg for information in regard to her in order to keep himself informed”⁴⁹⁴.

According to Courcol and Masure, “she does not warn him about her declarations in advance, and he finds out about them in the media”⁴⁹⁵.

What is more, Ségolène does not accept François Hollande as her campaign director. Patrick Mennucci comments: “it would have been sensible for Hollande to become campaign director”, but Royal refuses because of “the state of the personal relations”⁴⁹⁶. Nevertheless, Mennucci deplores the fact that Hollande does not demand that “the party machine supports her. It is his role as First Secretary ... But he does not do it”. He also comments that “the office of Hollande is managed by Stéphane Le

⁴⁹² “Ségolène Royal et François Hollande se sont séparés”, *Le Figaro*, 17 June 2007.

⁴⁹³ Élise Karlin, “L’Histoire Vraie d’une rupture”, *L’Express*, 20 June 2007.

⁴⁹⁴ Raphaëlle Bacqué and Ariane Chemin, *La Femme fatale*, Paris: Albin Michel, 2007, p. 138.

⁴⁹⁵ Christine Courcol and Thierry Masure, *Ségolène Royal: Les Coulisses d’une défaite*, Paris: L’Archipel, 2007, p. 92.

⁴⁹⁶ Patrick Mennucci, *Ma candidate*, Paris: Albin Michel, 2007, pp. 134-5.

Foll, notoriously anti-Royal”⁴⁹⁷. It should be noted that the book of Ségolène, *Ma plus belle histoire, c’est vous*, which was published after the Presidential election and which dealt with her campaign, only makes reference to her ex-companion five times in 306 pages. Her bitterness towards Hollande is evident.

In the first place, it seems that Royal does not try to benefit from her privileged relations with the head of the party. However, we can ponder on the efforts of Ségolène Royal to give the impression that Hollande and herself still lived together. On 30 June 2006, *Le Figaro* reports that Royal “discusses a possible civil marriage that summer with ... Hollande”⁴⁹⁸. On 28 March 2007, in an interview with Marie-Françoise Colombani, Royal responds to a question on the subject: “yes, we are still together and, yes, we still live together”⁴⁹⁹. However, this is not true. To fuel the fiction that she and François still live together, and to hide their separation from the French, she has constructed at her campaign head-office “a private space, a large comfortable room where ... [she could] without the knowledge of others, at any time sleep, dream, listen to music or play sport”⁵⁰⁰. During the 2007 campaign, according to Bacqué and Chemin, the French people commence questioning the state of their relations. These questions throw the Royal camp into panic and it requires strong insistence by the advisers of Ségolène such that on 29 March ...

⁴⁹⁷ *Ma candidate*, Paris: Albin Michel, 2007, pp. 139, 144

⁴⁹⁸ “Ségolène Royal évoque son mariage avec François Hollande”, *Le Figaro*, 30 June 2006.

⁴⁹⁹ Ségolène Royal and Marie-Françoise Colombani, *Maintenant*, Paris: Flammarion, 2007, p. 72.

⁵⁰⁰ Ségolène Royal, *Ma plus belle histoire, c’est vous*, Paris: Grasset, 2007, p. 289.

they appear together on the platform where she finally kisses him on the cheek in public”⁵⁰¹. Thus, Royal takes extreme measures to give the impression that she maintains good relations with François. It is only at the moment that she recognises she has lost the Presidential election that she announces their separation. Marie-Noëlle Lienemann and Philippe Cohen provide a possible reason for this deceit: “she had all the legitimacy which goes with the First Secretary since she was the partner of the Leader”⁵⁰². It seems that Royal wanted to perpetuate the idea of a normal relationship between François Hollande and herself to optimise her chances in the election.

It is clear that Ségolène Royal maintains an ambiguity on her relationship with François Hollande. She seeks to keep herself apart from Hollande as, for example, by refusing to appoint him her campaign director, but at the same time she wants to ensure that the French are not aware of their separation. This latter fact shows that she seeks to preserve the image of a woman living in a normal family situation. However, keeping Hollande at a distance during the campaign demonstrates her independence from her former companion who, moreover, makes no effort to support the campaign of Ségolène in defiance of, it seems, his role as First Secretary of the party. For Madam Royal, her personal circumstances helping, the desire to be independent remains uppermost

⁵⁰¹ Raphaëlle Bacqué and Ariane Chemin, *La Femme fatale*, Paris: Albin Michel, 2007, p. 211.

⁵⁰² Marie-Noëlle Lienemann and Philippe Cohen, *Au revoir Royal*, Paris: Perrin, 2007, p. 41.

even if she knew that it was in her interest to persuade the French people that she still lived with Hollande. Thus, we can claim that her links with François Hollande do not prevent her from displaying her independence, and that her quarrel with the Leader of the party does not lead to harmful effects in her brilliant campaign of 2007.

At the time of the 2011 Socialist Primary Hollande and Royal are competitors. Hollande is at the top of the opinion polls and Ségolène is far behind, in third position. Rainbow Murray, in her analysis of the media coverage of the 2011 Socialist Primary, notes that for Royal there are few family references, and that the stereotype “wife of” seems to no longer apply in 2011⁵⁰³. Ségolène does not seek the aid of François: on the contrary, she opposes him. For example, on 7 September 2011, François-Xavier Bourmaud of *Le Figaro* reports the words of Ségolène: “the weak point of François Hollande is inaction”⁵⁰⁴. Bourmaud also notes in *Le Figaro* of 4 October 2011: “Royal denounces the posture of François Hollande who boasts of wanting to embody a ‘normal’ president”⁵⁰⁵. On 5 October 2011 *Le Parisien* comments that “Royal puts her former companion in his place”⁵⁰⁶. These comments indicate that Royal not only wants to keep her distance from Hollande, but also wants to fight him in the political arena. Thus, in 2011 Madam Royal claims her autonomy by

⁵⁰³ Rainbow Murray, “Progress but Still no Présidente: Women and the 2012 French Presidential Elections”, *French Politics, Culture and Society*, Vol. 30, No. 3, 2012, p. 53.

⁵⁰⁴ François-Xavier Bourmaud, “Royal éreinte Hollande et Aubry”, *Le Figaro*, 7 September 2011.

⁵⁰⁵ François-Xavier Bourmaud, “La Primaire PS côté coulisse”, *Le Figaro*, 4 October 2011.

⁵⁰⁶ “Troisième débat PS: Un Ton beaucoup plus vif” *Le Parisien*, 5 October 2011.

making him an adversary in her campaign. The situation is exacerbated by the bitter relations between Ségolène and Madam Trierweiler, the companion of François. Overall, in 2011, as with her 2006 and 2007 campaigns, Madam Royal has to cope without the support of François Hollande. But, unlike 2006 and 2007, there are no longer any advantages to draw from the supposed proximity of her former companion. Without the dynamic of a relationship with the Leader of the party, the French are no longer listening to her.

What are the links between Ségolène and the Socialist Party and its senior members? At the beginning of the 2007 Presidential campaign, she adopts a strategy which consists of moving away from the SP and its senior members, including Jospin, Lang, Fabius, and Strauss-Kahn. The approach of Royal is highlighted by Isabelle Mandraud in *Le Monde* of 21 February 2007: “the Royal style is in a word a very personal tone which totally excludes others”⁵⁰⁷. She establishes her headquarters at 282 Saint-Germain Boulevard and not at the head office of the Socialist Party, to differentiate herself from the political line of the party. This action provokes strong reactions within the Socialist Party. For example, Patrick Mennucci, assistant director of the presidential campaign of Royal, notes “the hostility that ... the machine of Solferino Street rapidly displays towards [her]”⁵⁰⁸. Royal describes the conditions in which she has to work as follows: “in a word we are working on our own; the war machine of the

⁵⁰⁷ Isabelle Mandraud, “Royal cherche à imposer son style”, *Le Monde*, 21 February 2007.

⁵⁰⁸ Patrick Mennucci, *Ma candidate*, Paris: Albin Michel, 2007, p. 137.

SP is non-existent”⁵⁰⁹. For her part, Madam Royal refuses to consult the experts of the Socialist Party, preferring her own advisers to them.

According to Raphaëlle Bacqué and Ariane Chemin, “at the Socialist Party the members of parliament who specialised in the economy, in social affairs, in education ... wait in vain for telephone calls from ‘2-8-2’ which do not come”. Bacqué and Chemin explain the strategy of Ségolène Royal, who obviously had a goal of displaying her independence from the SP, thus: “Royal does not want at any price to seek help from the senior leaders of the party”⁵¹⁰. Lionel Jospin criticises the approach of Royal: “when she makes a call to them [the senior members], they were present, when she kept them at a distance, they accepted it ... [It is] not without having to suffer some offensive comments”⁵¹¹. However, in February 2007 Royal, facing a fall in popularity, is quick to appeal to the senior leaders and from 22 February Jospin, DSK and Fabius respond⁵¹². But the relations between Royal and the senior leaders remain tense. On 20 March 2007, at the time of a rally organised by the group at the Maison de La Mutualité, we find Laurent Fabius in the first row: he is attending the meeting at the request of Ségolène. However, “she does not acknowledge him on her arrival. The former Prime Minister takes this badly ... the episode is significative of the coolness of their relations”⁵¹³. For her part,

⁵⁰⁹ Ségolène Royal, *Ma plus belle histoire, c’est vous*, Paris: Grasset, 2007, p. 66.

⁵¹⁰ Raphaëlle Bacqué and Ariane Chemin, *La Femme fatale*, Paris: Albin Michel, 2007, pp. 145-6.

⁵¹¹ Lionel Jospin, *L’Impasse*, Paris: Flammarion, 2007, p. 61.

⁵¹² Ariane Chemin, “Ségolène, la seconde jeunesse de Chevènement”, *Le Monde*, 16 March 2007.

⁵¹³ Christine Courcol and Thierry Masure, *Ségolène Royal: Les Coulisses d’une défaite*, Paris: L’Archipel, 2007, p. 209.

Royal criticises the minimal mobilisation of the senior leaders: “the electors wanted my former rivals to aid and support me”. She adds: “a candidate nominated by party members has the right to expect clear support”⁵¹⁴. Jospin, who contests this version of facts, summarises the situation of Ségolène in this way: “one cannot distance oneself constantly from the SP and its leaders and then blame them for the defeat”⁵¹⁵.

Let us summarise the situation in which Ségolène Royal finds herself in 2007. She seeks at the start to display her independence from the SP and its leaders. She tries to campaign without the support of these senior members but, as her campaign progresses, she recognises that she cannot succeed on her own. Her campaign in trouble, she appeals to these senior people to support her. However, her relations with her Socialist colleagues remain cool, indeed tense. Thus, the efforts of Royal to maintain her independence did not succeed because she had to call the senior members to her rescue at the moment her campaign turned for the worse. It is clear that Royal seeks to assert herself but, like all women, she falls into the trap of the double bind which requires both the support of her colleagues, and the proof that she can succeed without them, at the same time.

We now examine the 2011 Socialist Primary. The failure of Royal in the poll for the position of First Secretary of the SP, in 2008, is significant because it deprives her of the networks within the party. In *Le*

⁵¹⁴ Ségolène Royal, *Ma plus belle histoire, c'est vous*, Paris: Grasset, 2007, p. 291.

⁵¹⁵ Lionel Jospin, *L'Impasse*, Paris: Flammarion, 2007, p. 61.

Figaro of 11 October 2011, Nicolas Barotte and Gabriel Petitpont point to the consequences of this failure in citing the comment of Delphine Batho, a member of the campaign team of Royal: “it was very difficult to launch a candidature for the Presidential campaign without the machine, without the party”⁵¹⁶. In contrast to 2006/7, doubtless to overcome the practical difficulties, Royal decides to use the resources of the Socialist Party, each candidate having at their disposition offices and telecommunications. In *Le Figaro* of 26 July 2011, François-Xavier Bourmaud notes that

it is from the press room of the party that she will hold her first weekly press conference ... [the place] confers henceforth a more official character to the speeches of Ségolène Royal than when she expressed herself from the town hall of the 4th [Paris] district or from the head office of her association Désir d’avenir⁵¹⁷.

Putting aside the location of her speeches, we find few indications of support, material or political, being offered by the SP. Rather, it is Hollande and Aubry, former First Secretaries of the SP, who benefit from the support of the party, which is not surprising given that the Primary was a contest between them. Madam Royal receives only minimal support. With respect to her campaign team, it lacks the talent of 2007. Four members of her 2007 team left to join the team of Hollande: Vincent Peillon, François Rebsamen, Julien Dray and Patrick Mennucci. Jean-Louis Bianco, who with Mennucci was campaign director in 2007, remains in the team, but he also seems to have doubts about Royal: on 10 February 2011 Elie Arié, in *Marianne*, observes that Bianco announced

⁵¹⁶ Nicolas Barotte and Gabriel Petitpont, “Ségolène Royal veut continuer à peser malgré Tout”, *Le Figaro*, 11 October 2011.

⁵¹⁷ François-Xavier Bourmaud, “Quand Ségolène Royal s’incruste rue de Solferino”, *Le Figaro*, 26 July 2011.

that he will not necessarily support Royal in 2012. Nevertheless, Bianco ends up joining the team in 2011 as a special adviser⁵¹⁸. Contrary to 2007, where she rejected the Socialist senior figures, the Ségolène of 2011 has to, according to Sylvie Pierre-Brossolette and Michel Revol, be friendly and conciliating towards these people (who she does not like)⁵¹⁹. But, apart from Bianco, the senior members of the party do not participate in the campaign of Ségolène. On 20 October 2011, Elisabeth Chavelet, in *Paris Match*, discusses the isolation of Ségolène in the Socialist Primary: “since [2007] no-one, neither the party, nor the senior members, nor the French, makes it easy for her”⁵²⁰. Overall, in spite of more peaceful relations with the Socialist senior personnel, we do not find any indication that she openly sought their support. Certainly, the latter did not take the initiative to aid her. Without their support, Royal lacks the necessary resources to conduct a good campaign. Her situation in 2011 clearly demonstrates the difficulties faced by a female politician who, isolated from the party, seeks to construct an image of a presidential woman.

What conclusions can we draw from our analysis? Firstly, the link between Mitterrand and Royal is of major importance for the political career of Royal. It is Mitterrand who ensures her candidature in the election for Deux-Sèvres in 1988, and who appoints her Minister of the Environment in 1992. Then, in 2006/7, Madam Royal evokes her link

⁵¹⁸ Elie Arié, “Pourquoi Ségolène Royal ne sera pas élue en 2012”, *Marianne*, 10 February 2011.

⁵¹⁹ Sylvie Pierre-Brossolette and Michel Revol, “Ségolène Royal, l’iconoclaste”, *Le Point*, 26 June 2011.

⁵²⁰ Elisabeth Chavelet, “Ségolène Royal: derrière les larmes, la guerrière”, *Paris Match*, 20 October 2011.

with Mitterrand in the course of the campaign: she lets it be known that she worked with him over a period of time, and she puts his image in her campaign photos. In 2011, she again displays her link with Mitterrand. It is evident that, for Royal, the memory of François Mitterrand will be of benefit in her campaigns. Consequently, there is a convergence between this link with François Mitterrand and the postulation of Rainbow Murray according to which a woman depends on an influential man to propel herself into the upper spheres of the political world.

Our analysis has also examined the link between Royal and Hollande. In the first place, we can imagine that Ségolène Royal benefits politically from their long-term relationship and the important role of Hollande in the Socialist Party. However, Royal does not seek to take advantage of it. This is due in part to the failure of their relationship, but equally to the political ambition of Ségolène. During her campaigns of 2006 and 2007, she maintains her distance from François Hollande to the point that it is often in the papers that he learns the comments and campaign choices of Ségolène. It is therefore obvious that she chooses to display her independence. Nevertheless, we have also established that Royal was keen to prevent the revelation of the breakdown of their relations. We can infer that this situation goes against her efforts to keep her independence. Thus, in 2006/7, while seeking to display her independence she maintains the image of a woman living harmoniously with Hollande. In 2011 Royal and Hollande are competitors, and Royal has to fight both he and Martine Aubry. This time, she openly attacks Hollande. But, in 2011 her status as a political celebrity assured, due

primarily due to her 2007 Presidential campaign, the fact remains that she suffers a resounding defeat in the first round of the Primary. This failure seems to strengthen the perception that a woman has the need to be surrounded and supported to succeed in politics. It is therefore evident that Royal, without the real or implicit support of her former companion, is unable to convince the French of the credibility of her candidature.

In relation to the relationships between Royal and senior members of the party, in 2007 Royal adopts a strategy at the beginning which seeks to keep them at a distance. In addition, she ignores the experts of the party and prefers to use the expertise of her team. Thus, at that time she is acting independently of the SP and its senior leaders. But, the moment that her campaign goes badly, Royal appeals to the senior leaders. However, she does not integrate them totally into her campaign team, and does not hesitate to criticise the party for not having supported her. In 2011, apart from Bianco, the senior members depart from her campaign team, and she accepts her isolation. Without the support of the party and its senior members in 2011, Madam Royal seeks in vain to convince the French that she has the capacity to be the Socialist candidate for the 2012 Presidential election. The estrangement of the senior party members must have played a part in her failure in the Primary and underlines, as we have established above with respect to her links to François Hollande, that the seeking of independence can represent a considerable stumbling block for a female politician.

How does the situation of the double bind apply to Ségolène Royal? According to the stereotype identified by Rainbow Murray, a

woman needs an influential male to advance in the political world. If she commenced her 2007 campaign by moving away from the Socialist Party and its senior members, at the moment that her campaign struck hurdles she appeals to the same senior leaders. This action highlights the trap which affects numerous female politicians, namely that desires of independence sometimes react adversely on them. In respect of her links with François Hollande, while trying to keep him at a distance during the campaign, Royal believes she must perpetuate the fiction of her living with Hollande throughout the length of her campaign.

In 2011, the situation is different because this time she is isolated from the Socialist Party, from its senior leaders and from François Hollande. Without their support, her campaign does not gain momentum and she suffers a crushing defeat in the Socialist Primary. Thus, isolated and exposed to a humiliating fall, she personifies the trap of the double bind which dictates that a female politician must, at the same time, affirm her independence and benefit from the support of a system dominated by men, at the risk of losing her credibility and her soul.

3.6 Martine Aubry

We have noted above that Aubry is the daughter of Jacques Delors, a significant political identity. He is considered as a possible Socialist candidate for the 1995 Presidential election, but renounces his candidature on 11 December 1994. According to Rainbow Murray, a woman who is regarded as “the daughter of”, or “the wife of”, risks evolving in the shadow of that influential male and must fight to demonstrate that she is capable of achieving in her own right⁵²¹. The analysis which follows will seek to determine the role this paternal link plays in the political ascension of Madam Aubry. We will also examine her links with other political figures.

First of all, let us examine the situation of the two husbands of Martine to measure the level of support that they bring to her political career. The first one is Xavier Aubry, who she meets at Sciences Po in 1970. Married in 1973, they separate in 2002. Mr. Aubry, who is a chartered accountant, rarely appears in the comments of authors and journalists. According to Rosalie Lucas and Marion Mourgue, Xavier was “already a very discreet man ... who did not become involved in the career of his wife”⁵²². In November 1991, Xavier Aubry gives his first interview to a journalist from *Le Point* who cites his words: “this will be the also the last, just to show that I truly exist ... It is essential to properly separate our

⁵²¹ Rainbow Murray, ed. *Cracking the Highest Glass Ceiling*, Santa Barbara: Praeger, 2010, p. 18.

⁵²² Rosalie Lucas and Marion Mourgue, *Martine Aubry: Les Secrets d'une ambition*, Paris: L'Archipel, 2011, p. 50.

lives, in order to not destabilise them”⁵²³. Her second husband, Jean-Louis Brochen, is a lawyer and a former President of the Bar in Lille. In 1995, he becomes head of the Cultural Action committee in the Lille Council and, according to Lucas and Mourgue, “it is in this framework that he meets Martine Aubry”⁵²⁴. At that moment, Madam Aubry had already accumulated significant experience in politics as minister in the governments of Cresson and Bérégovoy. Brochen himself enters into municipal politics in 1989 as councillor for Roubaix. However, at the time that Martine Aubry becomes mayor of Lille in 2001, he gives up his political career. On 20 March 2004 they marry. It seems that Brochen prefers to remain incognito from the French, in line with the wishes of his wife. According to Lucas and Mourgue, at the time of their journeys by car, Martine

sits in the front ... Her spouse sits in the back. The man is always discreet when he accompanies his wife on a trip. Often three steps behind, to avoid being in the range of the cameras or the photographers⁵²⁵.

Indeed, the support of Brochen is that of a husband rather than a male politician. Therefore, neither the first nor the second husbands of Martine are prominent in the political world. Having a discreet husband could be an advantage for a female politician. In any case, we are far from the situation of a woman whose career is forged by her association with an influential husband.

⁵²³ “Xavier Aubry: le commissaire”, *Le Point*, 23 November 1991.

⁵²⁴ Rosalie Lucas and Marion Mourgue, *Martine Aubry: Les Secrets d'une ambition*, Paris: L'Archipel, 2011, p. 50.

⁵²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 49.

In respect to Socialist personalities having exercised an influence on the political career of Martine, we noted in Chapter 1 that it is because of Édith Cresson that Martine enters politics. Édith explains this appointment as follows: “[Martine] managed GEM Social Europe and it is there that I learned to appreciate her courage and her incredible work capability”⁵²⁶. With the resignation of Cresson on 2 April 1992, Martine is renominated as Minister by Pierre Bérégovoy. Her mandate finishes in March with the defeat of the Socialist Party in the legislative elections. On 18 April 1995, according to Lucas and Mourgue, Jospin praises Martine as “the female politician who is doubtless the most brilliant at present”⁵²⁷. On 4 June 1997, Martine is appointed Minister of Employment and Social Solidarity in the Jospin government. After Cresson launched her in her political career, Bérégovoy and Jospin help her to realise her ambitions. Madam Aubry therefore largely benefited from the actions of the three Prime Ministers.

The role played by Pierre Mauroy in the political ascension of Martine is decisive. Mauroy is a former Prime Minister, former First Secretary of the Socialist Party of which he is an emblematic figure, and former mayor of Lille. It is he who launches Martine in her municipal career by proposing that she form a tandem with him for the June 1995 municipal elections. Until that moment, Martine had refused numerous solicitations to enter into municipal politics. According to Lucas and

⁵²⁶ Edith Cresson, *Histoires françaises*, Paris: Éditions du Rocher, 2006, p. 121.
GEM: Mutual Aid Group.

⁵²⁷ Rosalie Lucas and Marion Mourgue, *Martine Aubry: Les Secrets d'une ambition*, Paris: L'Archipel, 2011, p. 38.

Mourgue, she “is seduced by the offer and accepts the deal”⁵²⁸. She becomes his deputy mayor and succeeds him as mayor in 2001. In this latter role, she acquires a political base for the rest of her career. According to Isabelle Giordano, “one cannot prevent oneself from thinking that this town would have been a formidable field of experimentation for national politics. Lille is a springboard to other destinies”⁵²⁹. Her success as mayor of a town with more than 100,000 people is highlighted by Lucas and Mourgue who cite the words of Alain Minc, political adviser, economist and writer: “I find that she is doing a fantastic job in Lille”; and those of Pierre Mauroy: “in bringing her here, I made a good choice ... She succeeded in the position by knowing how to bring to it her new personal touch”⁵³⁰. In view of these favourable comments on her successes at Lille, one can say that Martine took advantage of her collaboration with the former mayor.

After the examination of Socialist figures, it is time to ask ourselves about the role of the father of Martine, Jacques Delors, in her political career. Daughter of an important figure, it is natural that she has the nickname “the daughter of”. Jane Freeman notes that “in France, Martine is often named the ‘daughter of Jacques Delors’”⁵³¹. According to Philippe Alexandre and Béatrix de l’Aulnoit, “nothing annoys her more than when she reads in an article: ‘Martine Aubry, the daughter of Jacques

⁵²⁸ Rosalie Lucas and Marion Mourgue, *Martine Aubry: Les Secrets d’une ambition*, Paris: L’Archipel, 2011, p. 35.

⁵²⁹ Isabelle Giordano, *Martine, Le Destin ou la vie*, Paris: Bernard Grasset, 2011, p. 126.

⁵³⁰ Rosalie Lucas and Marion Mourgue, *op. cit.*, pp. 67, 86.

⁵³¹ Jane Freedman, *Femmes politique : mythes et symboles*, Paris: L’Harmattan, 1997, p. 159.

Delors”⁵³². Rosalie Lucas and Marion Mourgue make the same observation: “since the start of her career she has never appreciated being systematically compared to Jacques Delors”, noting that “Martine Aubry has never ceased to break loose from the overwhelming paternal figure which is so hard to follow”. Jacques Delors, for his part, recognises this. According to Lucas and Mourgue, he “remains quiet as often as possible, for fear of bothering his daughter”. It is clear that the two, father and daughter, are concerned about wanting to preserve the independence of the latter. But, given the importance of this paternal presence, does Martine truly pursue her own direction? As an adolescent, according to Lucas and Mourgue, she is an attendee at meals where union leaders and heads of enterprises could be found⁵³³. According to Béatrice Massenet, these meetings formed the convictions of Martine, so much so that later the fight against inequalities became her cause⁵³⁴. It is highly probable that these meetings led her to think of a political career, but Delors urges Martine to first enrol at Sciences Po and then ENA in order that she obtains the training that he did not receive. The action of the father therefore armed Martine for a political career. There is also the moment where, according to Alexandre and de l’Aulnoit, “he opens his address book”. One of these contacts is Pierre Guillen, director of UIMM, of whom we spoke about in Chapter 1 and who “provides her details of the leaders of business

⁵³² Philippe Alexandre and Béatrix de l’Aulnoit, *La Dame des 35 heures*, Paris: Robert Laffont, 2002, p. 25.

⁵³³ Rosalie Lucas and Marion Mourgue, *Martine Aubry: Les Secrets d’une ambition*, Paris: L’Archipel, 2011, pp. 13, 18, 22-3.

⁵³⁴ Béatrice Massenet, *Et qui va garder les enfants ?*, Paris: Robert Laffont, 2011, p. 36.

organisations”⁵³⁵. She has recourse to it in her role as minister and as director of the association Face. But it is not only the address book of her father which interests Martine. The political ideas of her father contain the seeds of her own policy on the employment of youth which favours those who do not succeed at school, and her policy on the reduction of the working week to create jobs. According to Alexandre and de l’Aulnoit, Martine “regards enviously the toolbox of her father, this formidable arsenal that she is going to pillage without shame”⁵³⁶. Given that Martine inherits the address book of her father and that she draws profusely on his political ideas, it would be false to say that she operates independently from him. Thus, in spite of her efforts to distance herself from her father, she evolves as it were in his sphere of influence, and knows how to benefit from it. One can clearly see that, in respect of her links to her father, her desire of independence does not prevent her from demonstrating pragmatism in her political choices.

Our analysis would not be complete if we did not consider the role of Jean Gandois, “her godfather, her second father since 1989”⁵³⁷. As we noted in Chapter 2, Gandois is her mentor. It is to him that she owes her role of assistant director at the Péchiney group, and therefore her career in the private sector. According to Alexandre and de l’Aulnoit, “Martine is the daughter, the heiress of which Gandois dreams ... [who calls her] ‘my

⁵³⁵ Philippe Alexandre and Béatrix de l’Aulnoit, *La Dame des 35 heures*, Paris: Robert Laffont, 2002, p. 30.

⁵³⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 30, 34.

⁵³⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 95.

little Martine”⁵³⁸. His affection for her reveals itself at the time of her resignation from the group: according to Gandois, “when Martine came to tell me that she was leaving Péchiney, we both cried”⁵³⁹. Two years later, at the time of the launching of Face on 5 October 1993, it is Gandois who is on the platform with Martine. Once again, he is there to support her, and the Péchiney group, like many other enterprises, donates funds to the foundation. According to Alexandre and de l’Aulnoit, “Gandois gave the future lady of 35 hours a formidable weapon” because she can totally refute the accusations made against her by the opposition Members of Parliament when they accuse her of lacking experience in the world of business”⁵⁴⁰. Overall, she obtains few political advantages as a result of her relationship with Gandois, even if the experience she gains at Péchiney was useful to her, and even if the networks that she then constructs have been beneficial. In summary, her link with Gandois is, once again, a sign of the importance of the support on an influential male in the career of Martine.

How does Martine Aubry, who knew how to benefit from the support of several influential men, manage to ensure her political independence? We have already noted that she does not accept the idea that she profits from the fact of being the daughter of Jacques Delors. From the time of her entry into the government she makes her personal

⁵³⁸ Philippe Alexandre and Béatrix de l’Aulnoit, *La Dame des 35 heures*, Paris: Robert Laffont, 2002, pp. 40, 96.

⁵³⁹ Rosalie Lucas and Marion Mourgue, *Martine Aubry: Les Secrets d’une ambition*, Paris : L’Archipel, 2011, p. 31.

⁵⁴⁰ Philippe Alexandre and Béatrix de l’Aulnoit, *op. cit.*, p. 99.

position known. In April 1995, she “refuses the number two position of the party that Jospin offers her ... Martine henceforth considers that she alone is capable of embodying a new socialism, a modern democracy”⁵⁴¹. This action supposes the existence between herself and her colleagues of political divergences that are sufficiently major such that she wants to distance herself from the political line of Jospin. In 1997, Lionel Jospin becomes Prime Minister, making possible the return of Martine Aubry to the government. Lucas and Mourgue observe that Martine “finds herself ... at the head of an enormous ministry ... At the time, the commentators claim ... that it is she who insisted to Jospin that she be appointed”⁵⁴². This taking of initiative demonstrates that she deals with her political destiny with assurance from the base of her own convictions. Another example of her independence: Sylvie Pierre-Brossolette and Michel Revol, in *Le Point* of 18 March 2010, note that Bérégovoy and Martine have “relations which are often difficult”⁵⁴³. The two journalists thus imply that Martine does not withdraw from political combat in the interior of her party and that, before her colleagues, Martine likes to make her difference felt.

In respect of Pierre Mauroy, her mood swings and the accusations of incompetence she makes against him are public knowledge. For example, Philippe Alexandre and Béatrix de l’Aulnoit note that Martine

⁵⁴¹ Philippe Alexandre and Béatrix de l’Aulnoit, *La Dame des 35 heures*, Paris: Robert Laffont, 2002, p. 85.

⁵⁴² Rosalie Lucas and Marion Mourgue, *Martine Aubry: Les Secrets d’une ambition*, Paris: L’Archipel, 2011, p. 38.

⁵⁴³ Sylvie Pierre-Brossolette and Michel Revol, “Les Sept Vies de Martine Aubry”, *Le Point*, 18 March 2010.

never fails to criticise the actions of Mauroy: “as if Mauroy was unaware that the diva did not care about ridiculing in a loud voice, in the Paris restaurants, the archaic protocol which reigns in the council office ... of its old mayor”. She is not afraid either to pressure Mauroy: having found a problem with a Lille project, she “calls ... [Mauroy who is on holidays] with the tone of a CEO: ‘Pierre, it is very serious. Come back immediately’”. The authors comment that often “her words contrast sharply with those of Mauroy”, and that he never corrects her. Martine turns a deaf ear to Mauroy who

strongly advised his heir apparent to involve herself in the SP Federation [of Pas-de-Calais]. But Martine never felt like wasting her evenings ... or to use her energy in a local body responsible for implementing policy⁵⁴⁴.

In choosing to keep her distance and display her independence in respect of Mauroy, she is affirming her desire to be independent.

She equally knew to impose herself in her role at the head of the SP. On 28 January 2009, Marcelo Wesfreid notes that the First Secretary has “the nicknames of ‘Captain’ and ‘School Mistress’”⁵⁴⁵. These terms remind us of a person who knows to be decisive in matters. On 25 November 2009, namely a year after her election to the position of First Secretary of her party, François Gervais, in *Horizons politiques*, notes that “the mayor of Lille has imposed herself as the ‘boss’ of the SP”⁵⁴⁶. Jean-

⁵⁴⁴ Philippe Alexandre and Béatrix de l’Aulnoit, *La Dame des 35 heures*, Paris: Robert Laffont, 2002, pp. 87, 89-91.

⁵⁴⁵ Marcelo Wesfreid, “Martine Aubry, la cheftaine du PS”, *L’Express*, 28 January 2009.

⁵⁴⁶ François Gervais, “Un An après sa désignation laborieuse comme Première secrétaire du PS”, *Horizons politiques*, 25 November 2009.

Michel Normand, in *Le Monde* of 23 March 2010, explains it in this way: “in putting forward the union of the Left and ecologists ... she remains the master of the game ... [and] she reinforces her brand new authority over the Socialists”⁵⁴⁷. These two comments indicate that Madam Aubry is not afraid to impose her own will in the face of the multitude of opinions and sensibilities found in a major political party. Her force of character is highlighted by Lucas and Mourgue, who cite the words of Martine on her functions as First Secretary of the SP: “up until now, I have been the First Secretary that you wanted me to be ... Now I will be the First Secretary that I want to be”⁵⁴⁸. It is clear that Madam Aubry managed the Socialist Party with a firm hand while showing an authoritarian and independent spirit.

To conclude the analysis, we propose that while claiming her independence, Martine Aubry gains politically from being “the daughter of” Jacques Delors. Her introduction to politics when she was still a young girl, the efforts of her father to ensure she enrolls at Sciences Po and ENA, and the paternal address book aid Martine to find her place in the political world. Édith Cresson, Pierre Bérégovoy and Lionel Jospin, by appointing her to the government, also played a major role in the political life of Martine. However, it is Pierre Mauroy who, with Jacques Delors, contributes the most to the evolution of her career. It is Mauroy who, by persuading her to enter politics in Lille, launches her in her municipal

⁵⁴⁷ Jean-Michel Normand, “Martine Aubry acquiert une nouvelle légitimité”, *Le Monde*, 23 March 2010.

⁵⁴⁸ Rosalie Lucas and Marion Mourgue, *Martine Aubry: Les Secrets d'une ambition*, Paris: L'Archipel, 2011, p. 93.

career. Overall, thanks to the efforts of her father and other Socialist personalities, Madam Aubry is in a situation to make a good political career, reminding us of the postulation that a woman has need for the support of a father, a husband or other political figures to progress in the political world.

To avoid the career of Martine being reduced to these sole associations, it was necessary that she affirm her independence by displaying a real political will. Martine is not lacking in demonstrating her independent side. Her difficult relations with Bérégovoy, her attacks on Mauroy, and particularly her actions as First Secretary of the SP where she imposed her will on the party, are indicators of an independent woman. Nevertheless, that she did not succeed against Hollande in the 2011 Socialist Primary indicates that, for the supporters of the SP and the French, she was not the best presidential candidate. It is possible that this is due in part to the idea that she is “the daughter of” Jacques Delors, the “protégé” of Mauroy or the “favourite” of Jean Gandois, without forgetting that it was Édith Cresson who appointed her to the government. However, in spite of the efforts of Madam Aubry to chart her own course, she remains forever in the shadow of influential men, and as a result does not manage to neutralise the perception, in public opinion, of a woman having need of masculine support. According to the mechanisms of the double bind, whatever she does to extract herself, she inexorably falls back in.

3.7 Marine Le Pen

As the daughter of Jean-Marie Le Pen, founder and first president of the National Front, Marine Le Pen has surely not failed to benefit from this family link. The analysis which follows seeks to determine what role this link plays in the political career of Marine.

To commence with, let us examine the men with whom Marine has lived. She meets her first husband, Franck Chauffroy, at a Fete of the Bleu-blanc-rouge, an annual meeting of supporters and party members of the National Front. On 21 January 2005, Bruno Fay notes in *Le Monde* that Chauffroy is “the manager of an enterprise in the Val d’Oise, Atouts Stands, which is contracted to organise the major events of Bleu-Blanc-Rouge”⁵⁴⁹. They marry in 1997 and divorce in 1999, their three children being placed in their mother’s care. Apart from their common political interest, nothing suggests that Chauffroy has an influence on the political career of Marine. The second husband of Martine is Eric Iorio, a National Front member from the age of 18. At the time of their meeting in 1999, he is National Secretary for Elections at the NF and regional councillor for Nord-Pas-de-Calais; she is the lawyer for the NF and also regional councillor for Nord-Pas-de-Calais. In an interview, on 15 June 2002, with Philip Delves Broughton from *Spectator*, Iorio confesses that it was difficult to live with Marine because of her well-known status, and that he always had to retreat into the shadows⁵⁵⁰. The couple marry on 14

⁵⁴⁹ Bruno Fay, “Le Pen: le dernier Empereur?”, *Le Monde*, 21 January 2005.

⁵⁵⁰ Philip Delves Broughton, “Dangerous Liaison”, *Spectator*, 15 June 2002.

December 2002 but their marriage only lasts until 2006. Like Chauffroy, Iorio does not play a major role in the political career of Marine. The third man who shares his life with Marine is Louis Aliot, her current companion. A member of the National Front since 1990, he occupies numerous posts in the party, including that of General Secretary in 2005. Up until then, the career of Louis at the National Front evolves, for the most part, at the side of Jean-Marie Le Pen. The links between himself and Marine are those that normally form between the senior members of a political party. In 2005, Aliot commences working for Marine at the association Générations Le Pen, which is presided over by Marine and which has as its objective the changing of the political line of the party. It is only in 2009 that the two commence their relationship. In 2010 Aliot resigns from his post of General Secretary of the party to become operational director of the campaign of Marine for the 2012 Presidential election. Unlike the two husbands of Marine, Louis has real responsibilities within the National Front, and as such he doubtless contributed to the rise of Marine to the presidency of the party. In short, Louis plays a role of collaborator and of support in the career of Marine. However, Marine is still the dominant political figure since the two commenced living together in 2009, Louis Aliot remaining, due to his role, in the background.

To appreciate the influence of Jean-Marie Le Pen, we must go back to the childhood of Marine. President since 1972 he holds a prominent position in the political world. It is in 1983, at the age of 15, that she makes her debut in politics. That year she accompanies her father in his

campaign for the municipal elections. Having become a lawyer in 1992, Marine finds that the link with her father causes her to be vilified by many French people. Charles Jaigu, in *Le Point* of 22 November 2002, notes: “she attempts to become a business lawyer ... [but] the clients reject her”⁵⁵¹. According to Marine, “nobody wanted to be associated with Marine Le Pen: it was quite simply envisaged as professional suicide”⁵⁵². Consequently, the lawyer has to limit herself, in the main, to cases concerning the NF, its supporters and its senior members. In the beginning, she forges her own way without the aid of her father. According to Sylvain Crépon, she keeps herself “rather at a distance from politics”⁵⁵³. It is the party congress in Strasbourg, held in April 1997, which is going to change her opinion. At the congress, Le Pen lets it be known for the first time that he wants his daughter to be on the committees of the National Front. He presents Marine as a candidate for the Central Committee of the party, but this initiative fails because of the opposition of the Mégret group, for whom Marine constitutes a threat given that Mégret himself seeks the presidency. However, two weeks later, Le Pen imposes his daughter by way of his list of twenty supplementary members. Caroline Fourest and Fiammetta Venner note in respect of the appointment of Marine: “it is therefore by the single act of the father that she enters the Central Committee”⁵⁵⁴. As we will see below, it is the beginning of a long

⁵⁵¹ Charles Jaigu, “La Hussarde blonde”, *Le Point*, 22 November 2002.

⁵⁵² Marine Le Pen, *À contre flots*, Paris: Grancher, 2011, p. 160.

⁵⁵³ Sylvain Crépon, *Enquête au cœur du nouveau Front national*, Paris: Nouveau Monde, 2012, p. 54.

⁵⁵⁴ Caroline Fourest et Fiammetta Venner, *Marine Le Pen*, Paris: Bernard Grasset, 2011, p. 100.

series of actions of Le Pen to advance Marine up the ladder of the National Front.

Having knowledge of the affairs of the National Front, Marine proposes in 1997 that the party creates a legal service and that she be named director. Her proposition receives unanimous approval from the executive board of the party, including Bruno Mégret, number two in the party and a competitor of Jean-Marie Le Pen for the post of president. Marine commences her functions on first of January 1998. From that moment on, she is going “learn all about the machinery of the party and ... acquire a solid experience of the internal adversity”⁵⁵⁵. In 2000, she is on the party executive. Then, at the time of the 2003 Nice Congress, she joins the Central Committee as vice-president thanks again to her father. The actions of Le Pen in 2003 remind us of those of 1997. In the poll for the hundred members of the Central Committee, Marine only arrives in 34th position. As she did not obtain sufficient votes, according to Sylvain Crépon, the father “has to ... use his right of appointment for her to join the executive board and offer her the vice-presidency of the movement”. Thus Marine becomes, thanks to the intervention of her father, vice-president of the party. Then, in 2004, Le Pen intervenes again to place Marine on the electoral list for the European elections. According to Crépon, Le Pen imposes his choice “by virtue of his decision-making omnipotence ... [because] he relegates to ineligible places some of his

⁵⁵⁵ Sylvain Crépon, *Enquête au cœur du nouveau Front national*, Paris: Nouveau Monde, 2012, p. 55.

‘opponents’, indeed refuses to put them on the list”⁵⁵⁶. Crépon also notes that, later, at the time of the Bordeaux Congress in November 2007, “Le Pen reorganises the executive board according to his own desires”⁵⁵⁷, and he appoints Marine and Bruno Gollnisch, a former general delegate, as vice-presidents. Now on the executive board in second position behind Gollnisch, she is well-placed to succeed her father. It should be noted that Le Pen made these appointments without consultation.

In April 2010 her father announces he will not contest the 2012 Presidential election. It is Marine and Gollnisch who will contest the ballot to be the NF candidate. In her campaign Marine does not shrink from the idea of benefiting from her family link. According to Crépon, “the approach of Marine Le Pen consists ... of benefiting from the paternal legacy (by his name, his assistance to eliminate her internal opponents as well as his almost official support)”⁵⁵⁸. Andrea Bambino and Raphaël Hermano, in *AFP* of 16 January 2011, equally point out the role of the father in the campaign of his daughter: “Marine Le Pen ... benefited from the significant weight of paternal support”⁵⁵⁹. Thus, Marine is appointed the head of the party thanks to her father. As the long serving president of the National Front Le Pen possesses an uncontested authority, and he is always re-elected without opposition. Driven by his desire to create a Le Pen dynasty at the National Front he does his utmost to ensure the success

⁵⁵⁶ Sylvain Crépon, *Enquête au cœur du nouveau Front national*, Paris: Nouveau Monde, 2012, p. 94.

⁵⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 101.

⁵⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 103.

⁵⁵⁹ Andrea Bambino and Raphaël Hermano, “Marine Le Pen consacrée à la tête du Front National”, *Agence France-Presse*, 16 January 2011.

of his daughter. Sylvain Crépon notes the existence of “a certain nepotism which was the trademark of Jean-Marie Le Pen, of which his daughter had largely been the beneficiary in her ascent”⁵⁶⁰. For Marine, “the reality was of course something different”⁵⁶¹. In her book *À contre flots*, she comments that the daughters of Le Pen were an ideal target to attack the father and that, during the battle between Le Pen and Bruno Mégret for the control of the party in 1999, “Mégret and his colleagues developed ... over and over again the concept of nepotism” to weaken the father and his daughters. Mariana Grépinet questions the comment of Marine in *Paris Match* of 5 November 2010:

she widely claims that to be the daughter of Le Pen had never helped her ... But, like many of the daughters and sons of political men, she readily acquired political recognition. And she well understood that it was in her interest to play both sides of the fence⁵⁶².

If we look at the facts, we can see that Marine takes advantage of her links with her father and that it is his personal power which ensures that Marine Le Pen becomes president of the party. Without her father, it is doubtful that she would have obtained this position.

Marine was always close to her father. Her mother considers her as “the absolute clone of her father”⁵⁶³. From the time he took control of the National Front, Marine supports him and, in the main, she attempts to not diverge from his policies. Each time criticisms are raised against Le

⁵⁶⁰ Sylvain Crépon, *Enquête au cœur du nouveau Front national*, Paris: Nouveau Monde, 2012, p. 107.

⁵⁶¹ Marine Le Pen, *À contre flots*, Paris: Grancher, 2011, pp. 176-7.

⁵⁶² Mariana Grépinet, “Marine Le Pen: le nouveau visage de l’extrême droit”, *Paris Match*, 5 November 2010.

⁵⁶³ Pascale Nivellet, “Elle n’a rien d’une blonde”, *Libération*, 15 January 2011.

Pen, Marine defends him vigorously. Caroline Fourest and Fiammetta Venner quote the words of Marine: “I do not feel the need to oppose him”. They summarise the attitude of Marine in this way:

to keep her distance without disowning, nor opposing him; it is on this narrow line that she tries to forge her own political path, without giving up the idea of attacking anyone who criticises the declarations of her father⁵⁶⁴.

Elaine Sciolino takes up this theme in *The New York Times* of 27 April 2003. She notes that the political ideas of Marine mirror those of her father of whom she has always been an ardent defender⁵⁶⁵. Fourest and Venner observe on this subject: “his daughter never risks provoking him ... Marine Le Pen remains under the custodial shadow of her father”⁵⁶⁶. In this way, Marine shows herself faithful to her father and defends him spontaneously against his detractors.

However, there are situations where Marine demonstrates her independence in respect of her father. Before she became president of the party, Marine knows that it is necessary for her to create a different image from that of her father in order to make the party advance. The first indication of her independence is her desire to normalise the party. She wants the party to no longer be considered as a party of the extreme right. Le Pen gives his approval to this change of image but, in January 2005, he deviates from it in an interview with the journalist Jérôme Bourbon of *Rivarol*, to whom he declares that the German occupation of France in the

⁵⁶⁴ Caroline Fourest and Fiammetta Venner, *Marine Le Pen*, Paris: Bernard Grasset, 2011, p. 58.

⁵⁶⁵ Elaine Sciolino, “The New Face of France’s Far Right”, *New York Times*, 27 April 2003.

⁵⁶⁶ Caroline Fourest and Fiammetta Venner, *op. cit.*, pp. 345-6.

Second World War was not inhumane⁵⁶⁷. This remark threatens to cause a rupture between the two of them. Marine takes offence: “to the point that they stopped seeing each other” for several weeks⁵⁶⁸. According to Fourest and Venner, it is as a result of these inopportune declarations of Le Pen that Marine “takes the decision to launch herself into the succession races”. This decision, according to the authors, “is an immense step for her as she was always afraid to harm the image of her father”. Fourest and Venner also note that, in a television broadcast on France 5 in March 2009, “she clearly keeps her distance from the words of her father on the gas chambers”. They cite the words of Marine: “I do not think that it is a detail of history”⁵⁶⁹. We see in these comments that Marine refuses to defend the words of her father if they are not defensible.

Once she became president of the party, Marine barely moves away from the political line of her father. Like him, Marine defends the anti-immigration policy which has always been a major theme at the National Front. On 20 February 2012, Anne-Laëtitia Béraud, in an article in *20 minutes* sub-titled “Return to Fundamentals” notes that immigration “is henceforth at the heart of the public declarations of the candidate”⁵⁷⁰. Marine seems to approve the declaration of her father in respect of the subject of double nationality of football teams, particularly the French

⁵⁶⁷ Jérôme Bourbon, “Dire résolument non à la Constitution, à Chirac et à la Turquie”, *Rivarol*, No. 2698, 7 January 2005, pp. 6-7.

⁵⁶⁸ Sylvain Crépon, *Enquête au cœur du nouveau Front national*, Paris: Nouveau Monde, 2012, p. 97.

⁵⁶⁹ Caroline Fourest and Fiammetta Venner, *Marine Le Pen*, Paris: Bernard Grasset, 2011, pp. 57-9.

⁵⁷⁰ Anne-Laëtitia Béraud, “Quand Marine Le Pen fait (plus) du Jean-Marie Le Pen”, *20 minutes*, 20 February 2012.

team. According to *La Dépêche* of 3 June 2010, Marine declares “that she does not identify with the French football team ... [and that] some players have ‘another nationality in their heart’, and ‘wrap themselves in other flags”⁵⁷¹. Marine also notes, with respect to the so-called obsession of the National Front for immigration: “the truth is that immigration, if it is not the only problem in France, far from it, is nevertheless one of the most serious and the most important”⁵⁷². The same applies for the economy and particularly the Euro. During the 2009 European campaign led by Jean-Marie Le Pen, *Le Parisien* of 16 March 2009 notes that “once again he criticised the ‘euro which is slowly creating a truly social nightmare”⁵⁷³. Marine, in her 2012 Presidential campaign, continues the policy of her father by defending leaving the Euro, one of the key planks of her campaign. In respect of the policy referred to as “national priority” which forms one of the pillars of her 2012 Presidential project, Marine largely adopts the policy of national preference that the National Front and her father have pursued since the 1980’s. The idea of a political convergence between Le Pen and his daughter is taken up by Tracy McNicoll who observes in *Newsweek* of 28 February 2011 that Marine is even more rigorous than her father, to the point that it would be false to call Marine “Le Pen light”⁵⁷⁴. The almost unwavering continuity of the politics of the

⁵⁷¹ “Mondial 2010. Marine Le Pen ne se reconnaît pas dans les Bleus”, *La Dépêche*, 3 June 2010.

⁵⁷² Marine Le Pen, *À contre flots*, Paris: Grancher, 2011, p. 291.

⁵⁷³ “Le Pen contre Bruxelles et l’euro”, *Le Parisien*, 16 March 2009.

⁵⁷⁴ Tracy McNicoll, “France’s Extreme-Right Makeover”, *Newsweek*, 28 February 2011.

National Front indicates that Marine does not seek to liberate herself from the imposing power of her father.

However, there are times when Marine, as president, follows a political line which differs from that of her father. At the time of an interview with Saïd Mahrane in *Le Point* of 3 February 2011, Marine responds to a question on the Nazi camps of the Second World War by taking an opposite view to that of her father: “that which happened is the height of barbarism”⁵⁷⁵. Then, on 4 April 2011, *Time Magazine* notes that, even if she defends the political ideas of her father, her position in favour of abortion and her defence of single mothers who work represent a more moderate policy than that of her father⁵⁷⁶. More generally, according to Sylvain Crépon, she forces herself to “appear like the figure of ‘modernity’, and of renewal”⁵⁷⁷. Crépon explains:

currently, the president of the National Front, twice-divorced, who lives in cohabitation in an extended family with her companion who is himself divorced, becomes ... the typical incarnation of a modern woman who manages both a private life and a professional one⁵⁷⁸.

Marine herself confirms it: “the birth of my children, my divorce, that period alone with them almost made me ‘a feminist’”⁵⁷⁹. This new image is also highlighted by *The Economist* on the day before the election for the presidency of the National Front. It publishes an article on Marine which

⁵⁷⁵ Saïd Mahrane, “Les Camps ont été le summum de la barbarie”, *Le Point*, 3 February 2011.

⁵⁷⁶ “Marine Le Pen”, *Time Magazine*, 4 April 2011.

⁵⁷⁷ Sylvain Crépon, *Enquête au cœur du nouveau Front national*, Paris: Nouveau Monde, 2012, p. 102.

⁵⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 244.

⁵⁷⁹ Marine Le Pen, *À contre flots*, Paris: Grancher, 2011, p. 188.

depicts her as a modern working mother; even if it notes that she resembles her father with her imposing stature, her raucous voice and her capacity to provoke controversy⁵⁸⁰. Raymond Kuhn and Rainbow Murray also highlight this change at the head of the party. They note that, as a candidate younger than her competitor and as a woman in a party dominated by men, she is in a position to project an image which is less divisive and less aggressive than her father⁵⁸¹.

During the Jeanne d'Arc public holiday on 1 May 2011 Marine declares that the French people comprise, among others, Jews, Muslims and homosexuals⁵⁸². This important declaration is also in conflict with that of her father who, in the past, denounced these groups. This stand of Marine in respect to homosexuals demonstrates her desire to modernise the policy of the National Front. For Crépon,

no doubt the words of Marine Le Pen contributed to the breaking down of the reticence of homosexuals who, until then, hesitated to take the step of party membership, even though they shared a good number of National Front ideas.

He adds that “the majority of homosexual National Front supporters ... [that he] interviewed ... indicated that they could not have joined the party if Jean-Marie Le Pen had continued to preside over the National Front”⁵⁸³.

Crépon also raises, as an example of the change of approach of Marine in relation to her father, the presidential project of Marine for

⁵⁸⁰ “A Respectable Front: France’s Far Right”, *The Economist*, 15 January 2011.

⁵⁸¹ Raymond Kuhn and Rainbow Murray, “France’s Left Turn: Mapping the 2012 Elections”, *Parliamentary Affairs*, Vol. 66, 2013, p. 7.

⁵⁸² Sylvain Crépon, *Enquête au cœur du nouveau Front national*, Paris: Nouveau Monde, 2012, p. 241.

⁵⁸³ *Ibid.*, p. 270.

families: “it is undeniable that the presidential project of Marine Le Pen contains tangible changes compared with the former programs of the National Front”. The new policy of Marine proposes to give to women the right “to freely choose between working and the education of their children”. Up to that moment the policy of Le Pen dictates that the role of a woman is limited to that of mother of her family, and that she must “devote herself full-time to the education of her children”⁵⁸⁴. Marine also differentiates herself from her father in the way she treats journalists, with whom she forms cordial links. By contrast, the contempt that Le Pen displays towards the media increases their hostility towards him. Tracy McNicoll, in *Newsweek* of 28 February 2011, notes that Marine had become the new darling of the French media⁵⁸⁵. Sylvain Crépon confirms this: “under the leadership of Marine Le Pen and her team, relations with journalists ... had greatly mellowed”⁵⁸⁶. Our last example relates to the subject of laicity. In an interview with Sylvain Crépon on 25 October 2011, Marine says that she is “a radical convinced laywoman”. Her position contrasts sharply with that of her father whose “speeches ... evolved ... in line with his links with the traditional Catholic sector”⁵⁸⁷. Here again, Madam Le Pen differentiates herself from her father by adopting a stance which is less rigorous, more tolerant and more in line with societal norms.

⁵⁸⁴ Sylvain Crépon, *Enquête au cœur du nouveau Front national*, Paris: Nouveau Monde, 2012, pp. 246-7.

⁵⁸⁵ Tracy McNicoll, “France’s Extreme-Right Makeover”, *Newsweek*, 28 February 2011.

⁵⁸⁶ Sylvain Crépon, *op. cit.*, p. 75.

⁵⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 209.

However, there exist some signs that show that Marine did not always have free reign in her role as president. Discussing the status of Honorary President of the National Front conferred on Jean-Marie Le Pen at the time of the 2011 Tours congress, Fourest and Venner note: “all the same, some problems reveal what awaits the new president ... [since the father] had certainly not decided to step down, nor to be bored”. The idea of the domination of the father is taken up by Yann, sister of Marine, who describes their respective roles in this way: “the president, it is still him. And the leader, it is Marine”⁵⁸⁸. That is to say that the father, as Honorary President, continues to influence the destiny of the National Front, and that, even though president, Marine must always face the power and the whims of her father.

To develop the image of the National Front, Marine seeks to distance herself from some of the political ideas of her father. In so doing, she is acting against the expectations of some of the supporters of the party who continue to prefer the ideas of the past. However, Marine succeeded in convincing the French that she is more moderate and more modern than her father. Although “the daughter of” Le Pen, Marine demonstrates that she can, on some occasions, exist independently from him, and as her score of 17.9% of votes in the first round of the 2012 Presidential election demonstrates, the change of image has been well-received by the French. It is there that her independence finds its limits.

⁵⁸⁸ Caroline Fourest and Fiammetta Venner, *Marine Le Pen*, Paris: Bernard Grasset, 2011, pp. 344-5.

According to the proposition of Rainbow Murray, the double bind presumes that a woman having links with a prominent man cannot totally free herself from him. This is obviously the case for Marine Le Pen who still leads the party in the wake of her father.

To conclude, let us first of all note that, in the case of the three companions of Marine, their support is limited to that of a supporter and fellow senior member of the National Front. The image of a strong woman who dominates her companions and the relative anonymity of them indicate that the logic of the double bind does not obviously impose itself in this situation.

The analysis of the role of Jean-Marie Le Pen shows that he plays a dominant role in the entry of Marine into the National Front and in her ascent through the ranks of the party, culminating in the post of president. Desirous of perpetuating the Le Pen dynasty, the father does his utmost to ensure Marine becomes president. For her part, Marine shows herself faithful to her father. For her, Le Pen must conduct the politics of the party as he pleases; her role is to defend him at all times. Despite some displays of a desire to be independent, Marine remains forever in his shadow. It is difficult for her, therefore, to counter the idea that her career is forged by her father, and not by her own efforts. Considered from this angle, the situation of Marine Le Pen aligns with the proposition of Rainbow Murray in respect of the trap which lies in wait for all ambitious women, whereby she cannot succeed without the intervention of an influential man.

Having become president of the party, she oversees the renewal of some political choices. Her strategy of detoxification of the party goes against the policy of her father, and therefore represents a demonstration of independence. The same applies for the policy on the family. As a divorced woman who works and who lives with Louis Aliot without being married, Marine displays a political line more in accordance with the France of today, as her popularity rating confirms. As a result she is opposing the traditional values of the National Front. The problem for Marine is that the father maintains a sphere of influence in the party. At the time of the 2012 Presidential election, he is still the all-powerful person in the National Front. Although favourable to the process of detoxification undertaken by Marine, Le Pen continues to make comments which are in contradiction with this new orientation. The inescapable figure of the father, and the fact that he presided over the National Front for 38 years, result in a situation where Marine has trouble in dispelling the idea that she is the creature of her father. Despite the independence displayed by Marine, the father is ever present. She cannot escape from the trap of the double bind which dictates that a woman who endeavours to take her place in the upper levels of politics finds herself forever linked to the authority and the networks of a powerful man.

3.8 Conclusion

Before summing up our analysis and drawing conclusions, we must remember that, according to Rainbow Murray all women find themselves in the situation of the double bind. In other words, they cannot rid themselves of the highly embarrassing idea which dictates that it is impossible for them to advance to the upper levels of the political world without the support of an influential male. On the other hand, a woman who is linked to a prominent man risks lacking credibility and thus to suffer electoral setbacks.

Firstly, we examined the companions of the six women. We identified two categories. The first one concerns men who are not part of the political world. In this category, we find the husbands of Madams Cresson and Aubry. They operate far from politics and remain forever in the background of the political action of their spouses. They have no influence on the political rise of their wives. Our second category relates to the companions who are in politics. Two sub-categories exist: firstly, the companions who are not, strictly speaking, politicians, such as the husband of Simone Veil who works as a public servant and who occupies important roles which see him mixing with male politicians, and the husband of Michèle Alliot-Marie who, an academic by profession, works for a period of time as chief of staff for Edgar Faure. We saw that the links that the husband of Simone forms with male politicians as a result of the posts that he held in major political institutions lead to a friendship with the Pompidou duo. As a result of this link Simone is appointed to the Boards of ORTF and the Foundation of France. In respect of Michèle, it

seems unlikely that the conditions in which she finds herself during the period she works with her husband in the office of Edgar Faure are capable of launching her into politics. The consequences for the two women are entirely different: Madam Veil makes a name for herself in politics as a result of the associates of her husband, while for Madam Alliot-Marie the political benefits from her relationship with her husband are less important.

The second sub-category relates to the companions who directly participate in politics, either at the national or municipal level. Here we find the companion since 1988 of Michèle Alliot-Marie, Patrick Ollier, who is a Member of Parliament and who supports Michèle in her political aspirations; the companion of Ségolène, André Hadjez, whom we noted had participated in her campaign for the 2011 Socialist Primary; the second husband of Martine Aubry, Jean-Louis Brochen, who is a municipal councillor but who resigns from his post at the moment that Martine becomes mayor of Lille; and the two husbands and the current companion of Marine Le Pen who are actively involved in the party. François Hollande, companion of Royal for almost 30 years, is also in this sub-category, but given the circumstances surrounding the end of that relationship, it is appropriate to treat him separately. In this sub-category, the companions have subordinate roles and tend to remain in the background while the women exercise important responsibilities in the government or in their party.

Over all, we have established that, for all of the women who feature in our analysis, with the exception of Ségolène Royal whose

relationship with François Hollande in 2006 and 2007 is exceptional, the companions are not at the forefront in the development of their political careers and consequently their influence on the political career of their female companion is minimal.

For obvious reasons, we have focused on the links with Presidents and Prime Ministers. Marine Le Pen is a case apart since she has never benefited from this type of link. In fact, it is her father, the historical head of the National Front, who guides Marine through her political journey. For the other women, the links with leaders of the executive are varied. Among them, Madam Cresson is a unique case insofar as some suspected her of having intimate relations with President Mitterrand. Rumours of this nature seriously damaged her credibility as a political leader, as shown by the humiliating treatment inflicted on her by the producers of the *Bébête Show*. In respect of Simone Veil, the progression of her career is simply due to the actions of Presidents Pompidou and Giscard d'Estaing, as well as Chirac in his role as Prime Minister. Unlike Cresson, Veil demonstrates an independent character in the exercise of her duties, and her appointments are therefore seen as a consequence of the quality of her political action. Nevertheless, without the support of the three men, Madam Veil would not have become an emblematic political figure. In the case of Madam Alliot-Marie, it is obvious that Jacques Chirac, as President and Prime Minister, plays an important role in her political career. Even if, on occasion, Michèle demonstrates an independent spirit, overall she always remains close to her mentor. As for Ségolène Royal, we have observed that it is Mitterrand who launched her on her career by

appointing her Minister of Environment in 1992. For her part, Ségolène Royal systematically claims a link to Mitterrand at the time of her political campaigns, even presenting herself as his heiress. The link between Royal and Mitterrand is only partially beneficial for her. Certainly, Royal gains extra prestige, but the continued exploitation of this link only highlights a highly burdensome loneliness with respect to her Socialist colleagues. In respect of Martine Aubry, she enters government thanks to Édith Cresson, Prime Minister at that time. Her journey within the government is assured by Pierre Bérégovoy, the successor to Cresson. Later, it is Lionel Jospin in his role as Prime Minister who appoints Martine to the post of Minister of Work and Social Solidarity. If there are occasions where she demonstrates her independence from Bérégovoy and Jospin, we are led to believe that without these mentors she would never have succeeded in politics, in spite of her political successes such as the enactment of the 35 hour working week. On the whole, all the women, with the exception of Marine Le Pen, benefit from a link to a President or a Prime Minister. Without the support of these influential men it is doubtful that the five women could have entered the executive. This situation conforms to the stereotype proposed by Rainbow Murray that a woman has need of an influential male to advance in politics, and therefore she must fight to demonstrate her independence.

Let us now examine the women who are the daughter of a prominent male politician. In this group we have Michèle Alliot-Marie, Martine Aubry and Marine Le Pen. The fathers of the three women have different characteristics. Bernard Marie is a Member of Parliament and

former rugby referee. It is Bernard who is the force behind the entry of Michèle into politics. However, it is his link with Jacques Chirac which proves defining for Michèle. Martine Aubry is different because her father, Jacques Delors, is an emblematic figure in the Socialist Party, to the point that he is considered as a potential candidate for the 1995 Presidential election. It is Delors who urges his daughter to pursue political studies and to make a career in politics. His address book is also very useful for her to establish a network. In respect of Marine Le Pen, her ascent to the presidency of the National Front is due principally to her father. It is he who appoints her to various posts in line with his desire to establish a Le Pen dynasty at the head of the party. His status as founder and president of 38 years gives him an aura which allows him to push Marine into the managerial groups of the party without meeting opposition. In the main, Marine respects the status and political line of her father, even if there are some political ideas with which she does not agree. Overall, the fathers who are politicians have the means and the necessary contacts to ensure the entry of their daughters into politics.

We now consider the other political figures that play a major role in the political careers of the six women. We have established that Édith Cresson has a close link to her adviser Abel Farnoux, with whom, according to the rumours, she would have had intimate relations. As a result of this rumour and the impression that it is Farnoux who makes the decisions rather than Cresson, the credibility of Cresson falls to the point that it is reflected by the opinion polls. In respect of Martine Aubry, there are two men who figure in the evolution of her career. First of all there is

Pierre Mauroy, the former First Secretary and doyen of the Socialist Party. It is he who facilitates her accession to the position of mayor of Lille, even if she is not afraid to demonstrate her independence from him. The second mentor of Martine is her former boss, Jean Gandois, an important businessman who entrusts her with a major role at the P echiney group and who contributes to the finances of Face, the major social movement that Martine founded in 1993. It is therefore clear that these men aided Martine in her political career.

We have kept S egol ene Royal to the end because she represents a different situation to the other women. As First Secretary of the Socialist Party, her companion Fran ois Hollande is the probable candidate for the 2007 Presidential election. But the popularity rating of S egol ene is such that Hollande withdraws from the contest. When she becomes the official candidate of the Socialist Party, his support for her Presidential campaign is minimal. S egol ene, for her part, keeps Fran ois at a distance, following a deliberate strategy which consists of maintaining her independence from the party and its senior members, including Hollande. This demonstration of independence by S egol ene does not result in harmful electoral consequences at the beginning, but as her 2007 campaign progresses, she has to call on these same senior members. One also ponders on the fact that she saw fit to evoke, even after her separation from Fran ois Hollande, their relationship as a couple and even to allude to a future marriage. The ambiguity of her declarations on her relationship with Hollande during the 2007 campaign certainly shows the complexity of political life in that it demands the difficult reconciliation of public and

private life. In summary, the situation of the double bind is apparent in the case of Ségolène inasmuch as she is caught between the political necessity to resort to the support of François Hollande in her 2007 campaign and her desire to display her independence. The case of Ségolène Royal shows that the display of independence is not always the panacea that one believes. In her 2011 campaign she lost her capability to convince and seduce, so much so that she finds herself in third position in the opinion polls, well behind François Hollande and Martine Aubry. If her link with Mitterrand is still a positive element, it has no real effect on the opinion polls and, as we have noted, she no longer had a link with Hollande during her 2011 campaign. Without support, the political campaign of Ségolène never finds its momentum. The situation of the double bind strikes Madam Royal harshly because the search for independence leads to her isolation.

The circumstances differ for each woman, even if the same stereotypes, and also some realities, reappear. We saw that all women owed their appointment to important posts to an influential man. Marine Le Pen is a unique case because, descended from a marginalised political party, she accedes to posts of responsibility within the party thanks to the sole intervention of her father. For Madam Cresson, the circumstances of her appointment by Mitterrand give her the image of a submissive woman which tarnishes her image as a leader. In addition, her credibility as Prime Minister is put in question by the media who are hostile towards her. For these reasons, she represents an extreme case of the double bind insofar as her image of “a puppet” finishes by winning. For the women who seek to

display their independence, we find different situations. Madam Royal, in her campaigns of 2006 and 2007, and Madams Veil, Alliot-Marie and Aubry are careful to affirm their independence, but they are all haunted by the stereotype which dictates that they cannot progress in politics without the support of an influential man. In despite of their desire to display their independence, they find themselves in the situation of the double bind due to the links that they necessarily maintain with these men. This is very much the case for the women in our analysis who have a mentor, whether he is President, Prime Minister, father or companion.

4.0 Conclusion

This thesis has as its point of departure the difficulties faced by women who seek to reach posts of responsibility. We have relied on the works of Kathleen Hall Jamieson, Regina Lawrence and Melody Rose, Donatella Campus, and Rainbow Murray, to present our concept of the double bind, and we have used as the basis of our approach the six double binds put forward by Rainbow Murray in *Cracking the Highest Glass Ceiling*⁵⁸⁹. Murray observes that a female politician is affected by the trap of a double bind because of the gender stereotypes that the media systematically put forward in their treatment of the news. The constraints of time and number of words result in our examination being restricted to three of the six double binds. It is useful for us to briefly recall them. The first double bind which appears in our analysis, Too Masculine or Too Feminine, arises from the fact that the French consider the post of President of the Republic as a post which requires masculine traits. Thus, in order to be perceived as competent and trustworthy, women must appear masculine. However, they must also appear feminine in order to avoid giving the impression of wanting to transgress gender norms. Our second double bind is Experienced or Symbol of Change. This double bind results from the idea according to which a woman always represents the hope of a break from the political practices of the past. However, we have also noted that a woman who is new and different can give the

⁵⁸⁹ Rainbow Murray, ed. *Cracking the Highest Glass Ceiling*, Santa Barbara: Praeger, 2010.

impression of lacking experience and the necessary networks for a leader. On the other hand, a female politician who highlights her experience risks losing the benefits that she can gain from her image of a woman bringing the hope of change. Our last double bind is Associated with a Prominent Male or Demonstration of Independence. This double bind arises from the idea that a woman cannot rid herself of the highly embarrassing idea that it is impossible for her to reach the upper levels of the political world without the support of an influential male. On the other hand, a woman with links to a prominent male, risks losing her credibility as a leader because she appears incapable of governing on her own.

We have studied the three double binds with the assistance of a detailed examination of a range of sources, in particular books, daily papers and magazines, which discuss the six women, and also the archives of national organisations. We have looked at the private and political lives of the six women to establish to what extent these double binds impact upon them as they aspire to the most important roles in the Fifth Republic government. We have also considered the way in which the media depict the women and their systematic recourse to gender stereotypes, particularly at the time of campaigns for national or European elections. Finally, we have examined opinion polls, for example Sofres and Ipsos, to measure the popularity of the women.

Our examination commenced with the double bind Too Masculine or Too Feminine. It is clear that all the women are touched by this double bind, but to various degrees. Consciously or not, the behaviour of the

women, except for Royal, tends towards the masculine traits defined in numerous sociological works highlighted in the work of Rainbow Murray. Madams Alliot-Marie, Veil, Aubry and Le Pen seem to want to demonstrate behaviour where masculine traits predominate, without doubt with the aim of highlighting their competence and credibility as a political leader. Madam Cresson, who also displays masculine traits, finds herself in a situation of an heightened double bind, essentially because she chose to emphasise masculine traits considered unacceptable for a Prime Minister, as for example her way of speaking crudely. The absence of feminine traits for Madam Cresson results in a lowering of her popularity rating because her behaviour goes against the expectations of the French people, especially after the interest that she aroused as the first woman in the post of Prime Minister. Thus, her efforts to impose her authority alienate the French people who do not accept her masculine behaviour. In respect of Madam Veil we find an interesting mixture of masculine and feminine traits that the French seem to approve. Her competence in her role as Minister is not in doubt, as the favourable opinions in the opinion polls indicate, but it is noteworthy that Madam Veil never sought one of the two posts at the head of the executive. Madam Royal, in comparison to the other women, highlights her feminine side which gives her advantages at the beginning of her 2007 campaign. It is true that she demonstrates some masculine traits, but it is her feminine side that she seeks to put in the forefront. However, more and more the electors doubt her capabilities. In summary, her feminine traits did not suffice to propel her ahead of Nicolas Sarkozy in the 2007 election. In 2011, it is again her

female side that she seems to want to promote, but she benefits little from it. Her failure in the 2011 Socialist Primary indicates that her campaign strategy, which focuses on her femininity, no longer appealed to the French people. Royal is well and truly in the trap of the double bind because, for the French, a president must demonstrate so-called masculine traits, but even so, does she have to disown her femininity? All in all, each woman represents a combination of masculine and feminine traits according to their qualities and situation. Consequently, there is no question of aiming for a perfect balance. However, the example of Simone Veil gives testimony to the fact that clearly showing both sides, viz. masculine and feminine, is a factor of success.

We have established that the media play a major role in the construction of the image of female politicians. We have noted their tendency to highlight their feminine traits, to have a particular interest in their clothes, their bodies and other signs of femininity. This sometimes leads to disastrous consequences. For example, the presentation of Madam Cresson as the mistress of François Mitterrand leads to a fall in her credibility as Prime Minister. In fact, the hostility that the media displayed towards her after she became Prime Minister contrasts with the enthusiasm with which they welcomed her appointment. The same about-turn is seen at the time of the campaigns of Ségolène Royal for the 2007 Socialist Primary and Presidential elections. In the beginning, the media reacted favourably to the appointments of both women, and contributed to the creation of a positive media image. However, once they take up their roles, the image that the media presents of the two women deteriorates.

We have noted that the two women do not seek the support of the media, and it is possible that this indifference contributed to the degradation of their image during their political career. In respect of Martine Aubry, she also does not seek to create favourable links with the media, especially at the beginning. It is only at the moment that the popularity of the Socialist Party falls that she turns towards the media to correct the downslide. As for Madams Veil, Alliot-Marie and Le Pen, we have established that the media systematically focus on their clothes and bodies. Overall, for all of the women, the media choose to not raise the question of their competence, or else they arrange matters to put it in doubt by means of gender stereotypes. We think that female politicians must be aware of the harmful effects from the treatment of the media, and it is essential that they put a strategy in place to combat them.

In respect of our second double bind Experienced or Symbol of Change, it is necessary to recall that Rainbow Murray says that a woman is naturally considered as a symbol of change. In effect, the six women embody the idea of change, but to varying degrees. All of the women are considered as “the first woman” in one way or another, and the favourable reaction of the French people is attested by the opinion polls for each of them, and by the positive reaction of the media to the appointment of the women to posts in the government or their political party. This is obviously the case for Michèle Alliot-Marie and Simone Veil who receive the accolades of the media as women bringing change. It nevertheless happens that, for some of the women, over time the media turn against them. For Madams Cresson and Royal the about-turn results in a

diminution of credibility. For Madam Royal, as her campaign progresses her competence and credibility are questioned because of her famous campaign blunders which are widely commented on by the media. In the cases of Martine Aubry and Marine Le Pen, our analysis has demonstrated that they do not seek to promote their image as a woman symbolising change. For Marine Le Pen, it is obviously her image as a leader of a party of the extreme right that takes away the novelty normally associated with the arrival of a woman in a post of responsibility.

How does the real political experience of the women modify the perception of their competence? Rainbow Murray observes that an experienced woman could lose the advantages that, in terms of her image, her novelty as a female politician could bring. The case of Madam Veil allowed us to shed light on this situation because it provides a view contrary to the declaration of Murray. At the time of her appointment as Minister of Health in 1974 she does not have political experience. By contrast, in 1979, the year in which she nominates for the European elections, she has experience in the affairs of government as a result of her role as Minister of Health. Her success in the role, and her admirable battle to have the abortion law passed, ensure that she keeps her image of an esteemed female politician. Thus, her experience as minister does not undermine her image of a woman bringing hope, nor to the perception of her capacity to work and succeed, and as a result she escapes from the logic behind the double bind. For Madam Le Pen, the political experience is limited to her responsibilities at the National Front, her posts as municipal and regional councillor, and as a member of the European

Parliament. As she never occupied a post in the government, one questions her capacity to govern the country. In despite of her impressive score of 18% of votes in the first round of the 2012 Presidential election she does not advance to the second round, implying that the lack of political experience prevails over the image of a woman bringing change that she wanted to fabricate. In respect of Michèle Alliot-Marie, at the time of her arrival to the Presidency of the RPR in 1999, and her appointment as Minister of Defence in 2002, she already possesses significant political experience, but it is her image as a woman who is a symbol of change which dominates. We note, however, that she is in a double bind: at the time of her campaign for the 2007 UMP Primary, Michèle is less a symbol of change than Ségolène Royal, and less experienced than Nicolas Sarkozy.

Madam Cresson finds herself in the same situation as Madam Alliot-Marie in 1999 and 2002. Despite her considerable experience in the government, it is her novelty as a woman who represents change which prevails at the start. The putting to one side of her experience only lasts for a time. She finishes up by coming up against harsh and persistent questions raised by the media. In respect of Martine Aubry, she has a vast experience in the government, as mayor of Lille, and as First Secretary of the Socialist Party. Her campaign strategy seeks to exploit that experience, but at the risk of depriving her of the advantages that she is likely to derive from her image as a symbol of change. In the case of Ségolène Royal, at the time of her 2006 and 2007 campaigns she has experience in the affairs of government. Her excellent score of 47% of the

votes in the second round of the 2007 Presidential election indicates that this experience did not damage her image of a woman promising change. However, at the time of her campaign for the 2011 Socialist Primary it is her experience as a woman with a strong media presence expressing herself on every subject which prevails. This time the experienced woman overshadows the woman who symbolises change. The public no longer believe in her real competence, and is no longer seduced by the promise of change that she wants to personify.

All things considered, our analyses confirm those of Rainbow Murray for the double bind Experienced or Symbol of Change. All the women are perceived as a symbol of change, and for those who have experience, the question of their competence for the post is largely excluded, or else it is only raised to extinguish the hope of change that the women wanted to generate. Simone Veil, in 1979, is an exceptional case due to her high popularity rating and her recognised capability as a female politician. Michèle Alliot-Marie, in 1999 and 2002 escapes the harmful effects of the double bind as a result of an image of a woman bringing change which is not devalued by her considerable political experience. The situation of these two women demonstrates that an exceptional female politician can mitigate the devastating effects of the double bind if the assessment of her political action is positive.

Our last double bind, Associated with a Prominent Male or Demonstration of Independence, concerns the links that women form with prominent men. The question, in the last chapter, was to know if women have need of these men to succeed in entering or assuring their future in

politics. We also sought to also determine whether, in the circumstances where a woman demonstrates independence with respect to these prominent men, her credibility is necessarily impacted. Our first observation was that, except for Simone Veil and Ségolène Royal, none of the companions play an important role in the political career of their wife or partner, in despite of the fact that some men work in politics, or as a Member of Parliament, or as an employee or supporter of a political party. The situation of Madam Veil is different because her husband is a senior public servant who attends political functions with his wife, allowing them to forge friendships with the Pompidou couple. For Madam Royal, her companion of long date, François Hollande, is the First Secretary of the Socialist Party, which places her close to the governing body of his party. However, in her 2007 Presidential Campaign Madam Royal commenced by keeping Hollande at a distance but, with her campaign in trouble, she appeals to him for support. It is clear that, without the support *in extremis* of the First Secretary, the electoral successes of 2007 would have been less assured. In 2011, Madam Royal had neither the support of Hollande nor that of the other key men of the party, leading to the failure of which we are aware.

Our analysis also looked at Presidents and Prime Ministers and their role in the political career of our six women. Except for Marine Le Pen, who did not have a link with men on the Executive, the relationship with a Prime Minister or a President of the Republic plays an important role in their political career. Among these women, Madam Cresson is considered the model case of the double bind because her appointment is

considered to be the result of her intimate relations with President François Mitterrand. As a result, she is forever perceived as being subject to the will of the President. This idea is exacerbated by the media who mock her to such a point that her credibility as Prime Minister is seriously impacted. In the case of Madam Royal, she presents herself as the heiress of François Mitterrand which, in a way puts her in the shadow of the former president. For Madams Veil, Alliot-Marie and Aubry, without the support of Presidents and Prime Ministers their entry and their subsequent journey in the political world are not assured. If they show themselves as displaying their independence in relation to these men on the Executive, as in the cases of Madams Alliot-Marie and Aubry, the fact remains that they cannot totally dissociate themselves from these men who opened the door of the political world to them. They always incur the risk, because of these links, of losing their credibility and image as a strong and independent leader.

Our analysis has also targeted the women who are in the category of “daughter of” a prominent man. Here we find Michèle Alliot-Marie, Martine Aubry and Marine Le Pen. These three women entered politics as a result of the intervention of their father and, for Madams Alliot-Marie and Aubry, they benefited from the address books of their fathers. In the case of Marine Le Pen, the direct intervention of the father explains her progress within the party, culminating in her election as president. Once again, our results concur with the proposition of Rainbow Murray who postulates that a woman has need of a prominent person, be he father, husband or mentor, to succeed in politics. In the case where signs of

independence are shown, as with Martine Aubry, we have noted that the women in question know how to use the influence and the address books of their fathers to advance in politics.

Our analysis confirms the work of Rainbow Murray by demonstrating that it is always the mentors, the fathers or other influential personalities who are the force behind the career of a woman. We have also demonstrated that, in situations where a woman seeks to display her independence, the stereotype of a dependent woman does not disappear and can even lead to a loss of credibility.

Our investigation is therefore summarised thus: the three double binds of Rainbow Murray which form our analysis impact our six women for various reasons and at different levels. We have demonstrated that a female politician must always be conscious of the stereotypes that the French attach to the posts of President or Prime Minister. It is not suffice that she adopts masculine traits, as our analysis strongly demonstrates. She must be aware that a female politician can always obtain an electoral benefit from her femininity since she is naturally considered as a symbol of change. By contrast, her political experience is less appreciated by the electors and her competence is susceptible to be questioned at any moment. We have also determined that a female politician can better attain the highest levels of politics if she has the support of a prominent man. Nevertheless, in the circumstances where she displays her independence in relation to this man, she will not be assured of a gain in credibility because she seems isolated. In summary, a female politician must face the double binds as defined by Rainbow Murray. If she

manages to have a successful career it will be due, in part, to the manner in which she manages these inescapable traps.

The French political system is unique in that the post of President is by far the most powerful because he can appoint and dismiss the Prime Minister and dissolve the parliament, a personal prerogative without redress. If our analysis shows that the stereotypes which are found in the French political world do not differ from those that exist in other countries around the world and if, as the works of Rainbow Murray and Donatella Campus indicate, the female politicians from different countries are impacted by the same double binds, one can rightly demand if a parliamentary political system such as that in Australia would not produce different results. Are the women welcomed, perceived or treated differently according to the regime in which they evolve? The ascension of Julia Gillard to the post of Prime Minister on 24 June 2010 presents an opportunity to respond to these questions. One can anticipate research studies along these lines.

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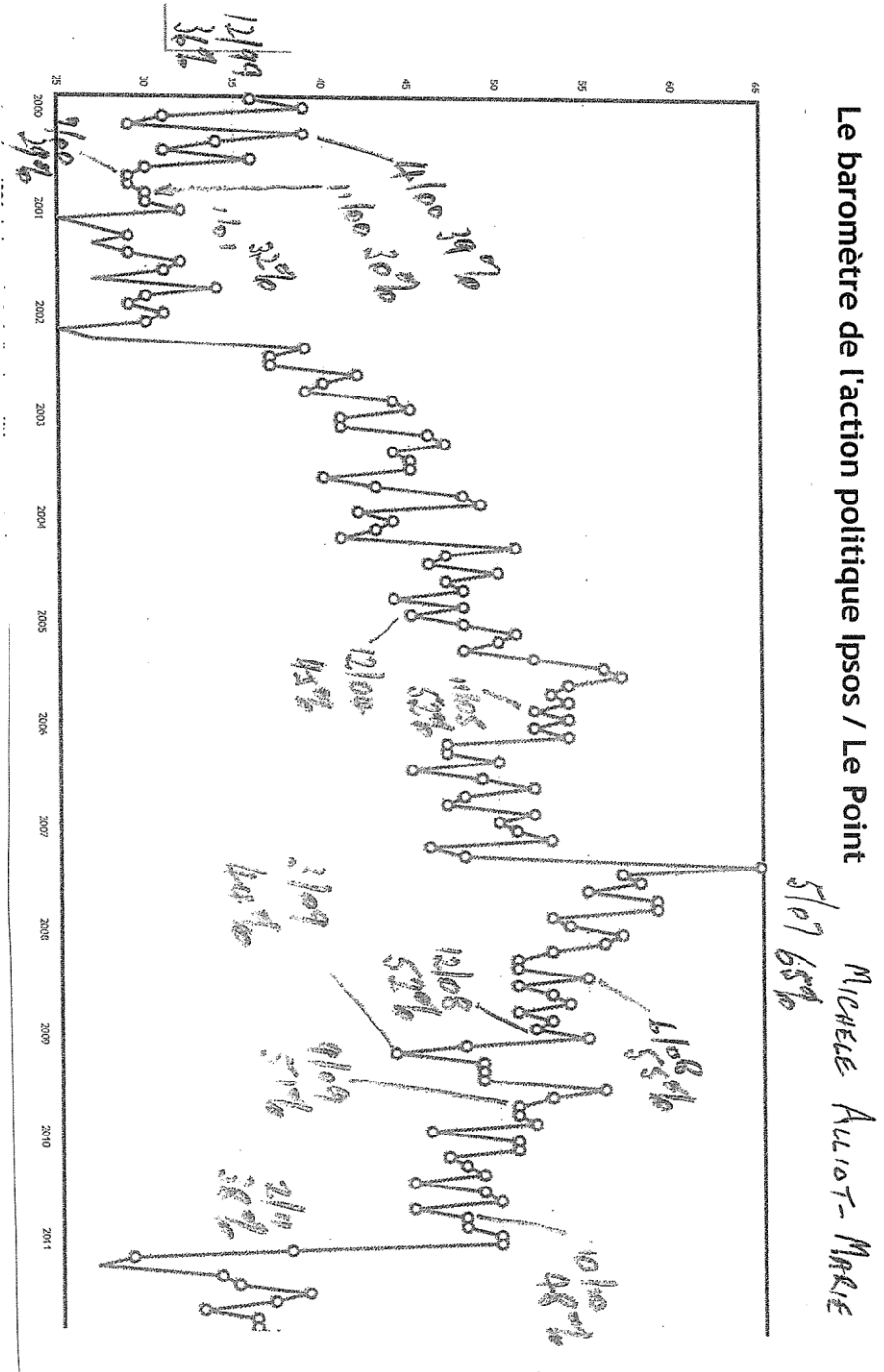
Appendix 1 The Ipsos Barometer of Political Action for *Le Point*

Launched in 1996, the Barometer of Political Action each month measures the popularity of the Head of State, the Prime Minister and the principal French political leaders. For each survey, Ipsos questions, by telephone, a sample in the region of 1000 persons who are representative of the French population aged 18 years and above. The sample is constructed using the quota method (sex, age, profession, type of town and region). The following question is posed:

"What opinion do you have on the actions of the following political figures?"

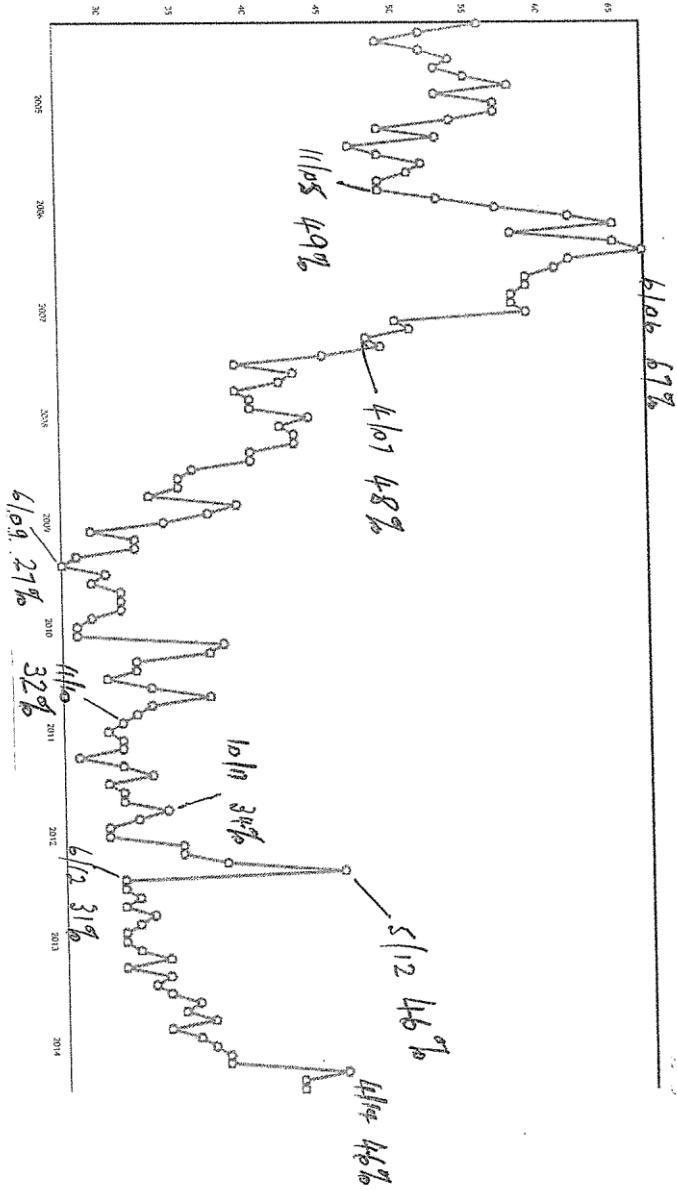
The "Favourable" total combines the responses of "very favourable" and "rather favourable", the sub-total "Unfavourable" combines the responses "rather unfavourable" and "very unfavourable", the score of NSP represents the proportion of people who do not give an opinion.

Appendix 1 The Ipsos Barometer of Political Action for *Le Point* – Michèle Alliot-Marie



Appendix 1 The Ipsos Barometer of Political Action for *Le Point* – Ségolène Royal

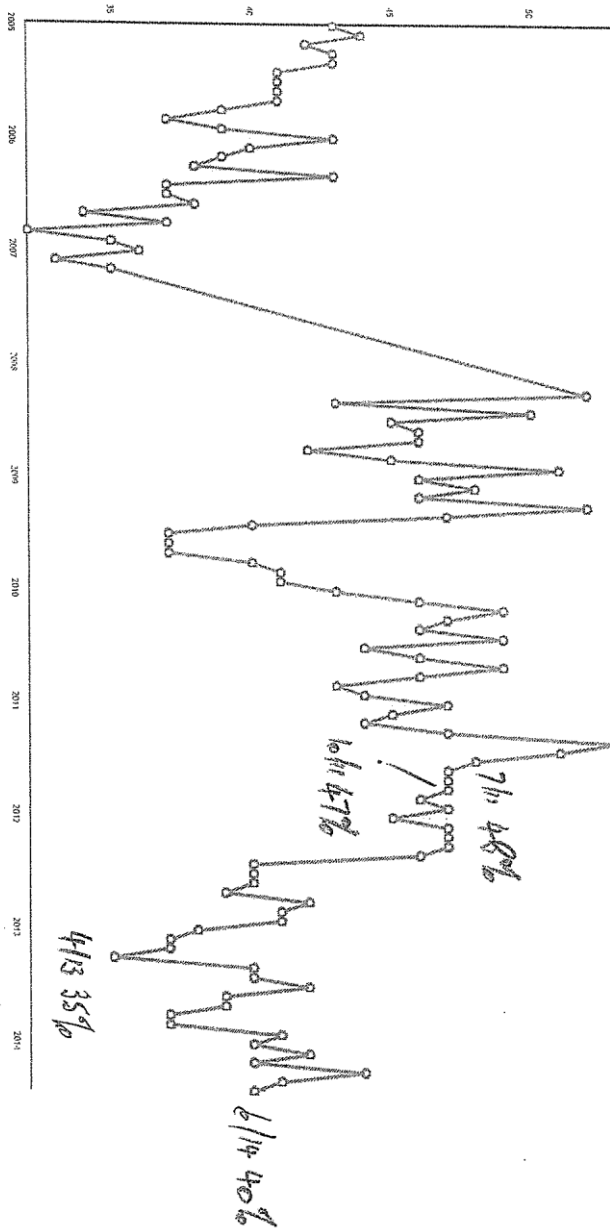
Le baromètre de l'action politique Ipsos / Le Point
SEGOLENE ROYAL



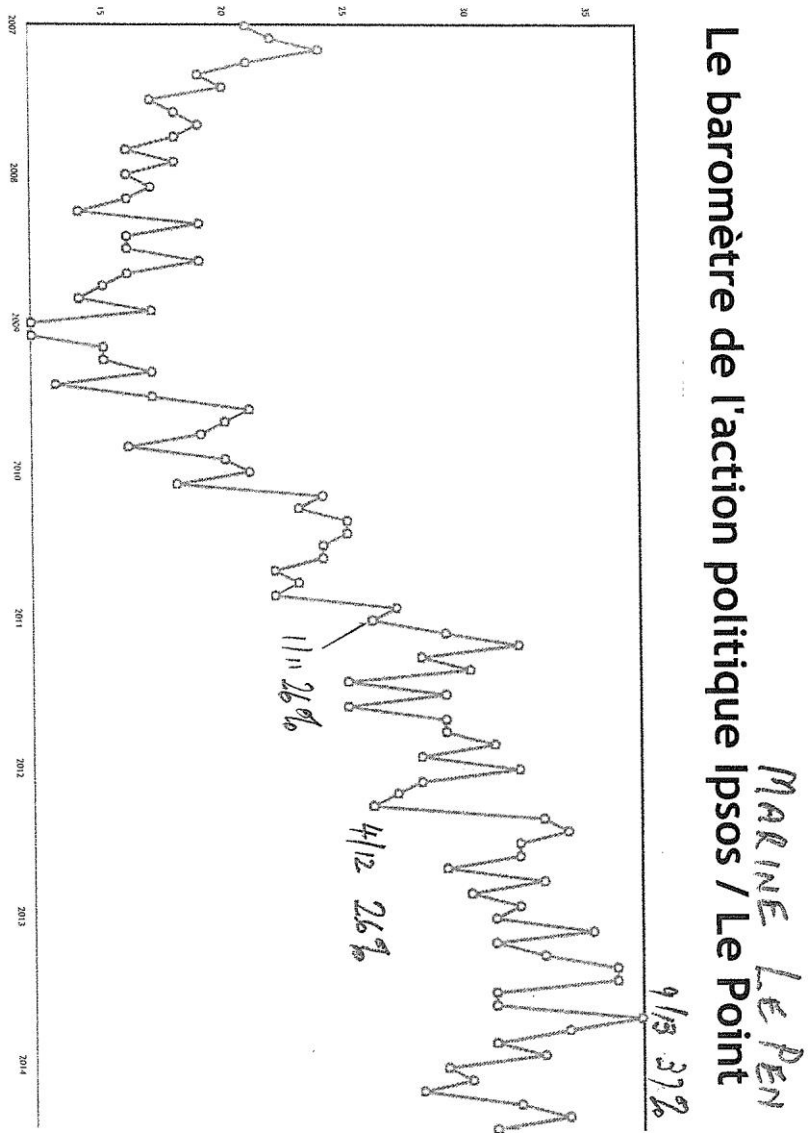
Appendix 1 The Ipsos Barometer of Political Action for *Le Point* – Martine Aubry

Le baromètre de l'action politique Ipsos / Le Point

MARTINE AUBRY



Appendix 1 The Ipsos Barometer of Political Action for *Le Point* – Marine Le Pen

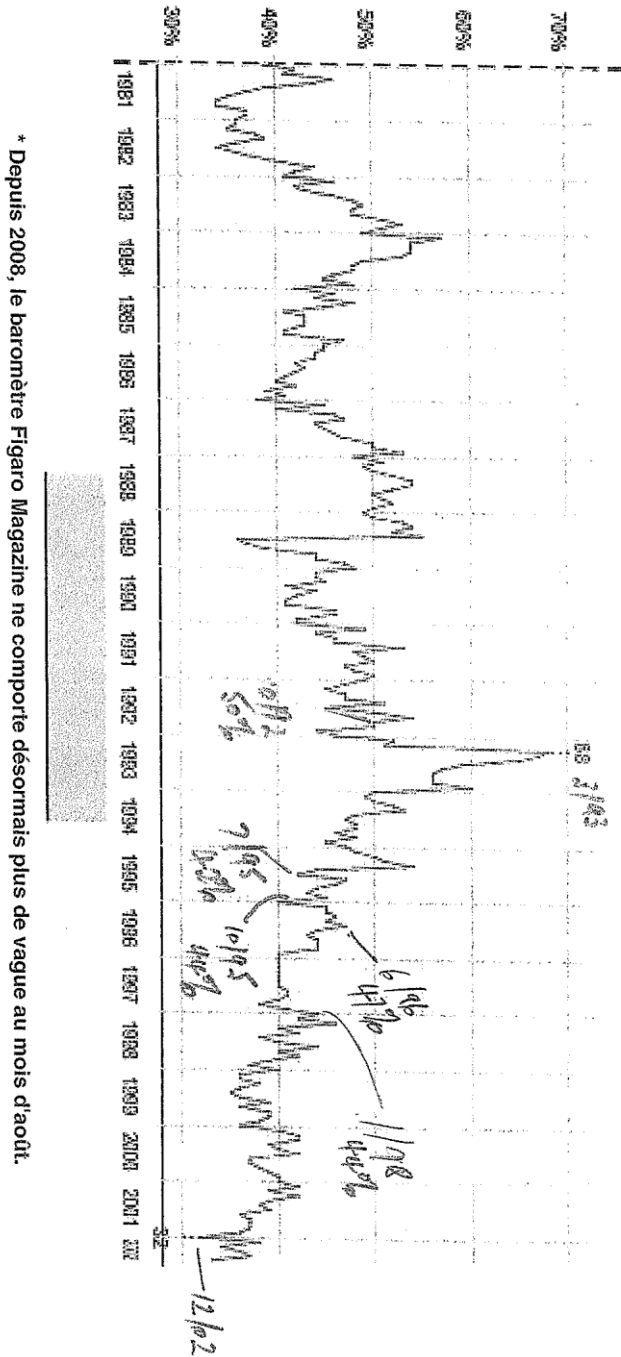


Appendix 2 Popularity Rating - TNS Sofres/*Figaro Magazine*

Question: “Would you tell me if you would like to see them play a major role in the course of the months and years to come?”

**Appendix 2 Popularity Rating TNS Sofres/Figaro Magazine –
Simone Veil**

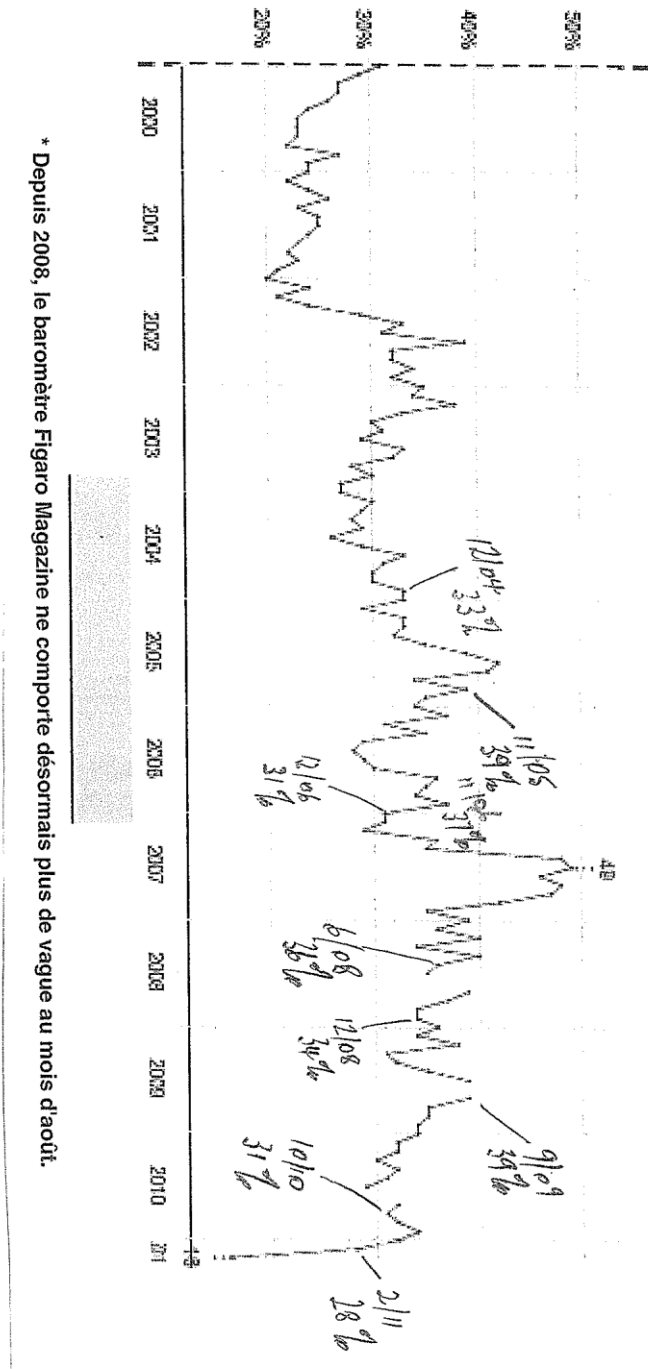
Cote d'avenir - Simone Veil
 Source : Baromètre TNS Sofres / Figaro-Magazine
 Ensemble des Français (%)



* Depuis 2008, le baromètre Figaro Magazine ne comporte désormais plus de vague au mois d'août.

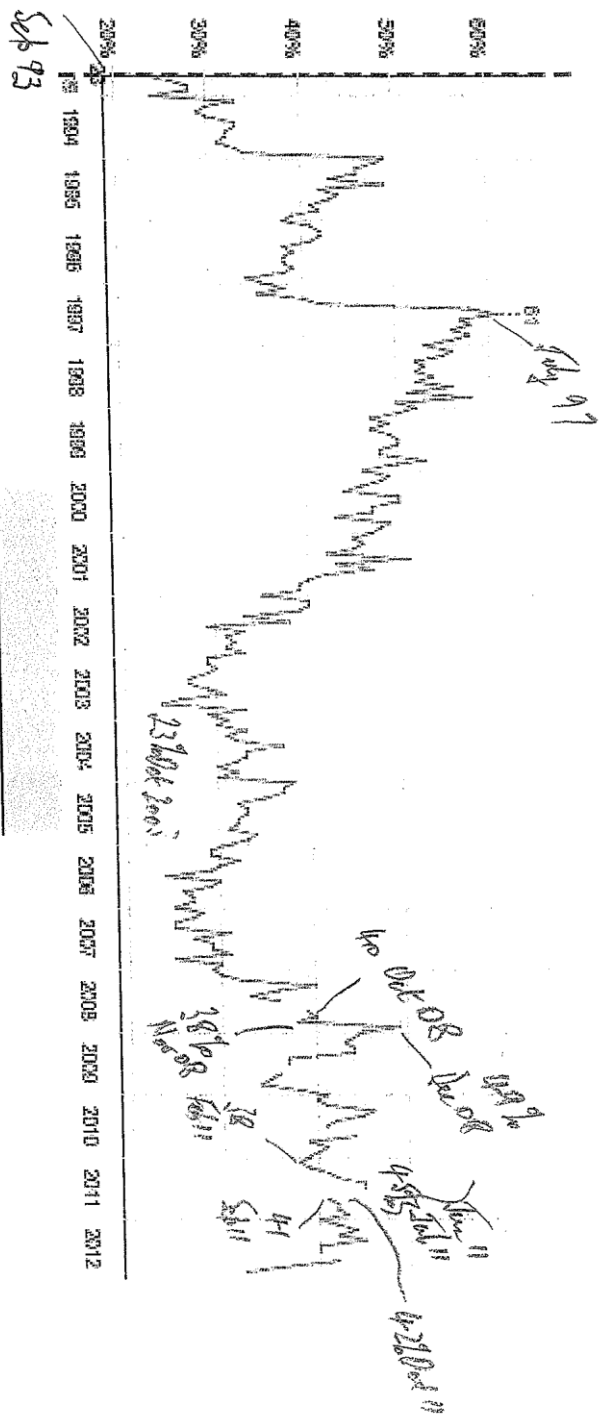
**Appendix 2 Popularity Rating TNS Sofres/Figaro Magazine –
Michèle Alliot-Marie**

Cote d'avenir - Michèle Alliot-Marie
Source : Baromètre TNS Sofres / Figaro-Magazine
Ensemble des Français (%)



**Appendix 2 Popularity Rating TNS Sofres/Figaro Magazine –
Martine Aubry**

Cote d'avenir - Martine Aubry
Source : Baromètre TNS Sofres / Figaro-Magazine
Ensemble des Français (%)

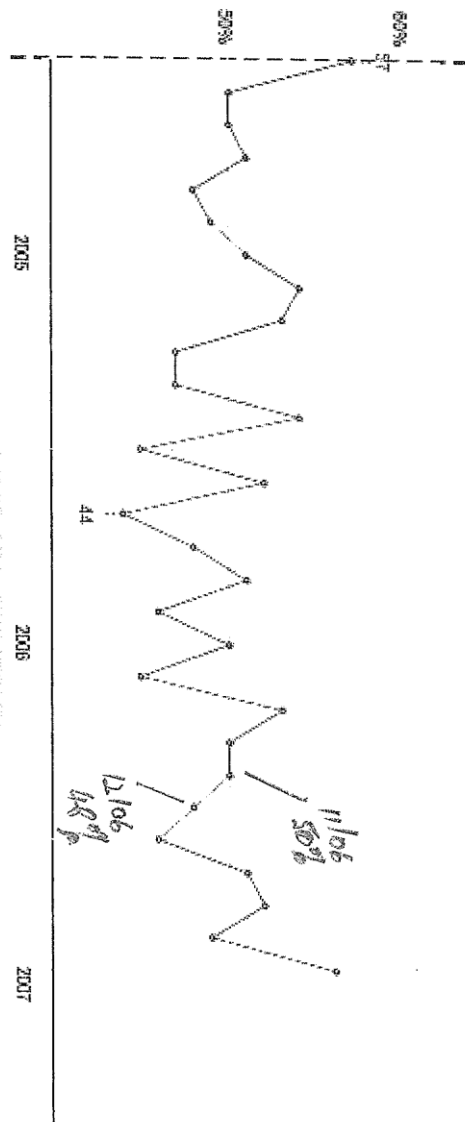


* Depuis 2008, le baromètre Figaro Magazine ne comporte désormais plus de vague au mois d'août.

Appendix 2 Popularity Rating TNS Sofres/Figaro Magazine –

Nicolas Sarkozy

Cote d'avenir - Nicolas Sarkozy
Source : Baromètre TNS Sofres / Figaro-Magazine
Ensemble des Français (%)



* Depuis 2008, le baromètre Figaro Magazine ne comporte désormais plus de vague au mois d'août.

Appendix 3 Ifop Opinion Poll for *Paris Match*

Question: For each of the following personalities, tell me if you have an excellent opinion, a good opinion, a bad opinion, a very bad opinion or if you do not sufficiently know them?

**Appendix 3 Ifop Opinion Poll for *Paris Match* – Marine Le Pen
December 2010/January 2011**

– Récapitulatif : Total bonne opinion –

Classement Janvier 2011	Classement Décembre 2010 ^(*)	Nom des personnalités	Rappel Décembre 2010 (%)	Janvier 2011 ^(**) (%)
31	(30)	Roselyne Bachelot	40	39
32	(33)	Chantal Jouanno.....	36	38
33	(32)	Manuel Valls	38	38
34	(29)	Luc Chatel.....	40	37
35	(35)	Nicolas Sarkozy	36	37
36	(39)	Brice Hortefeux	33	34
37	(31)	Ségolène Royal	40	34
38	(38)	Pierre Moscovici.....	33	33
39	(43)	Jean-Luc Mélenchon	32	33
40	(37)	Cécile Duflot.....	33	32
41	(36)	Benoît Hamon	35	32
42	(40)	Marine Le Pen	33	31
43	(47)	Nadine Morano	29	30
44	(42)	Arnaud Montebourg	32	30
45	(45)	Vincent Peillon	29	29
46	(41)	Bruno Le Maire.....	32	29
47	(44)	Eric Woerth	32	29
48	(46)	Laurent Wauquiez.....	29	28
49	(48)	Jean-Marie Le Pen	25	20
50	(49)	Nicolas Dupont-Aignan	20	18

(*) Rappel du classement du mois précédent.

(**) Les personnalités ex aequo ont été classées selon les décimales.

(-) Non testé lors de l'enquête précédente

**Appendix 3 Ifop Opinion Poll for *Paris Match* – Marine Le Pen
July/September 2011**

– Récapitulatif : Total bonne opinion –

Classement Septembre 2011	Classement Juillet 2011 ^(*)	Nom des personnalités	Rappel Juillet 2011 (%)	Septembre 2011 ^(**) (%)
31	(37)	Pierre Moscovici	37	38
32	(38)	Arnaud Montebourg	36	38
33	(35)	Luc Chatel	38	38
34	(39)	Jean-Luc Mélenchon	36	38
35	(32)	Nicolas Sarkozy	41	37
36	(41)	Laurent Wauquiez	34	36
37	(33)	Eric Besson	39	36
38	(44)	Claude Guéant	32	35
39	(40)	Bruno Le Maire	35	34
40	(36)	Cécile Duflot	37	34
41	(42)	Benoît Hamon	34	33
42	(34)	Ségolène Royal	39	33
43	(46)	Brice Hortefeux	31	32
44	(43)	Marine Le Pen	33	32
45	(45)	Nadine Morano	31	31
46	(48)	Vincent Peillon	25	30
47	(47)	Gérard Longuet	27	29
48	(-)	Gérard Larcher	(-)	26
49	(49)	Nicolas Dupont-Aignan	19	20
50	(50)	Jean-Marie Le Pen	18	19

(*) Rappel du classement du mois précédent.

(**) Les personnalités ex aequo ont été classées selon les décimales.

**Appendix 3 Ifop Opinion Poll for *Paris Match* – Marine Le Pen
March/April 2012**

– Récapitulatif : Total bonne opinion –

Classement Avril 2012	Classement Mars 2012 ^(*)	Nom des personnalités	Rappel Mars 2012 (%)	Avril 2012 ^(**) (%)
31	(35)	Hervé Morin	37	40
32	(32)	Ségolène Royal	39	40
33	(28)	Nicolas Sarkozy	41	40
34	(33)	Benoît Hamon	37	38
35	(46)	Nicolas Dupont-Aignan	27	38
36	(37)	Laurent Wauquiez.....	35	37
37	(30)	Roselyne Bachelot	40	37
38	(39)	Cécile Duflot.....	34	36
39	(34)	Luc Chatel	37	36
40	(41)	Claude Guéant	33	35
41	(40)	Marine Le Pen	34	35
42	(43)	Michel Sapin	31	34
43	(38)	Bruno Le Maire	34	33
44	(45)	Gérard Longuet.....	29	30
45	(44)	Vincent Peillon	29	29
46	(-)	Jean-Marc Ayrault	(-)	28
47	(48)	Nadine Morano.....	24	27
48	(47)	Brice Hortefeux	26	27
49	(49)	Najat Vallaud-Belkacem.....	20	23
50	(50)	Jean-Marie Le Pen	18	18

(*) Rappel du classement du mois précédent.

(**) Les personnalités ex aequo ont été classées selon les décimales.

(-) Non testé lors de l'enquête précédente

Appendix 4

Events following 30 June 2012, the termination date of this thesis, until its submission for examination in October 2015.

As the period of examination of the careers of the women finishes on 30 June 2012, it is appropriate to give a brief overview as to what has become of them since.

The political lives of Madams Cresson and Veil are finished at that date, so there are no events to highlight in their respect. In respect of Madam Alliot-Marie, her political life as a minister terminates on 27 February 2011, the date on which she resigns from her post as Minister of State, and Minister of Foreign and European Affairs. She is beaten in the 2012 legislative elections, and as a result has not participated in national affairs since this date. However, she is elected as a European Member of Parliament in 2014. Ségolène Royal returns, on 2 April 2014, to the government as Minister of Ecology, Durable Development and Energy. She still continues in this post. With respect to Martine Aubry, she continues to perform her role as mayor of Lille. In 2014, in the weeks before the municipal elections on the 23 and 30 March, rumours circulate of her in the post of Prime Minister. For some people, Martine Aubry is in the running, even though she denies it. Thierry de Cabarrus, in *Nouvelobs* of 15 February 2014, publishes an article entitled “Martine Aubry at Matignon: 10 (good) reasons for François Hollande to appoint her”⁵⁹⁰.

⁵⁹⁰ Thierry de Cabarrus, “Martine Aubry à Matignon: 10 (bonnes) raisons pour François Hollande de la nommer”, *Nouvelobs*, 15 February 2014.

However, the appointment does not eventuate. She no longer participates in national politics as a member of the Socialist Party.

Being the youngest of the six women, it is not surprising that Madam Le Pen is still active in politics. Currently she is president of the National Front, and in this role she is aiding the progression of the party. She still occupies the posts of European Member of Parliament and regional councillor for Nord-Pas-de-Calais. If, as we noted in Chapter 1, Marine did not succeed in the 2012 legislative elections, 2015 proves to be a better year for her. Winning a single seat in the 2012 elections, the National Front wins 62 in 2015. For Marine, it is the sign that her politics are receiving a growing proportion of approval from the French.

However, it is the fallout with her father which dominates her political life. According to Guillaume Stoll in *Le Nouvel Observateur* of 3 April 2015, during an interview between Jean-Marie Le Pen and Jean-Jacques Bourdin on BFMTV on 2 April 2015 the father once again repeats that “the gas chambers [in the Second World War] were a detail of history”⁵⁹¹. In another interview with *Rivarol*, the Extreme-Right and Marshall Petain supporting weekly magazine, he repeats the comment and attacks his daughter and other senior members of the National Front who had condemned him⁵⁹². Marine reacts immediately: Paul Laubacher, in *Le Nouvel Observateur* of 8 April 2015, notes that she publishes a statement

⁵⁹¹ Guillaume Stoll, “Dans la famille Le Pen, je voudrais le père, la fille et ‘le détail de l’histoire’”, *Le Nouvel Observateur*, 3 April 2015.

⁵⁹² Paul Laubacher, “Jean-Marie Le Pen dans *Rivarol*: ‘L’on n’est jamais trahi que par les siens’”, *Le Nouvel Observateur*, 7 April 2015.

in which she announces “that she will ‘oppose’ the candidature of her father ... in the December regional elections in Provence-Alpes-Côte d’Azur”. Laubacher observes that “it is the first time that she contemplates sanctions against her father in spite of his numerous gaffes”⁵⁹³. On 5 May 2015, she announces the suspension of her father from the party, and the launching of a process to remove from his post as Honorary Chairman. The father contests the legality of these actions, and the courts find in his favour. However, on 20 August 2015 he is summoned to appear before the executive body of the NF. Marine is conspicuously absent from this meeting “in order to not ‘be judge and party’”⁵⁹⁴. The executive body announces the removal of its Honorary Chairman. Le Pen signals “that he would contest the decision in the courts”⁵⁹⁵.

⁵⁹³ Paul Laubacher, “Entre Marine Le Pen et son père, ‘la rupture est désormais totale’”, *Le Nouvel Observateur*, 8 April 2015.

⁵⁹⁴ “Marion Maréchal-Le Pen: ‘J’étais contre l’exclusion de mon grand-père’”, *Le Monde*, 22 August 2015.

⁵⁹⁵ *Ibid.*