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# Is Environment still a good appeal for French political agenda?

A semiotic analysis on French “professions de foi” for President elections

COCE 2017, Leicester, 06/29 – 07/02

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# Introduction

France does not escape the current global context of decreasing environmental concerns on the political agenda

(Libaert, 2016, Baygert N., Hananel C. , 2016, Cox, Peluzzo, 2016, Pascual Espuny 2012, 2016).

Environment

- Media and political peaks at national and international political events  
Grenelle de l'Environnement, 2007 , Cop 21, 2015
- has connoted and boosted during a short time the French public space and political decisions.

But the effect of bellows is visible: in everyday life, the picture is less brilliant.

- dilution of themes,
- lack of leadership,
- post-crisis reaction attitude,
- complex and lethargic nesting with Europe.

**Yet, emergencies are there, at the international as well as the national level**

# French Context

## French Paradox

- Engaged in the energy transition,
- Nuclear power penalizes its decision-making
- Consequent inertia in the chain of decision
- Misunderstanding of the public opinion.

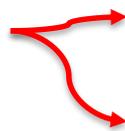


At the forefront of biotechnology and some innovative sectors of the economy, France lags many decisive issues lacking sufficient economic incentives

Nevertheless, French have never been more sensitized and directly affected by environmental issues

# Research Questions & Methodology

So why?



Why such a dichotomy between citizen expectations and political responses?

What does public environmental communication look like in France and what challenges does it face to become more effective?

Other sub-questions arise

Is it a problem of discourse or embodiment?

What about the place of the profane content in relation to the expert 's?

Does the environmental communication meet the public's sympathy, is it resonating?

What about projection and the declination of the legal framework?

We seize the opportunity of the presidential campaign in France, 2017

**Professions de foi,  
media interviews,  
programs, etc...  
of the candidates  
for the Presidency  
of French Republic**





# Theoretical framework

Dichotomy  
 Public space  
 Commitment



# Methodological Framework

## Semiotics and content analysis

- Ecole de Paris,
  - Catellani, 2011, 2016, Boutaud, Berthelot Guiet, 2015, Eco, 2013, Floch, 1995
- Content analysis at several levels.
  - plastic level (forms and colors, commonplaces, visual stereotypes),
  - figurative-iconic level (representations of objects of the world become icons),
  - discursive level (themes, "motifs" and scenarios evoked)
  - rhetorical and topoi level
  - illustrations (knowledge and proofs),
  - narrative and values contained levels



## Présidentielle : la priorité des candidats sur l'environnement

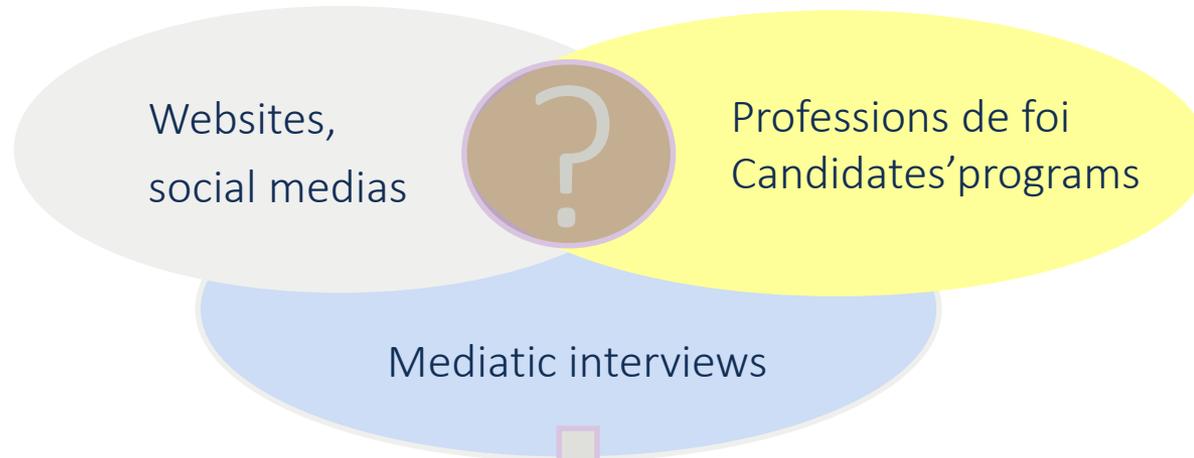
"L'environnement n'est pas une priorité pour les candidats"





# Methodological framework

Some 198 contents



- information and organizational communication science research (Grammaccia, 2001, 2006, Weick, 1995, Libaert, 2006)

- considerations around the flow of ideas researches (Latour, 1989, Callon, 1998, MacKenzie, 2003)

semio-pragmatics study, which enables a visual approach and in the context of the signals emitted by the various media of communication. It complements the analytical device by the image and meaning, according to a proven methodology of semiologists and linguists.

# Results

A discursive matrix with political entries

- A classical partition between:
  - *International/national level*
  - *European/anti-european considerations*
  - *Technical discourse/ deontological discourse*
  - *Nuclear/ alternative energies*

- New thematics:
  - *Maritime biodiversity*
  - *Animal Welfare*
  - *« Grenelle de l'alimentation »*
  - *Shorts circuits*

- New semantics:
  - *Transition*
  - *Commons*
  - *commitments*

# Results

plastic level : traditionnal iconography, blue entry  
(forms and colors, commonplaces, visual stereotypes),  
French nature, french villages  
Blue: sea, ocean, maritime biodiversity

figurative-iconic level :

(representations of objects of the world become icons),

-groves (french « bocages »

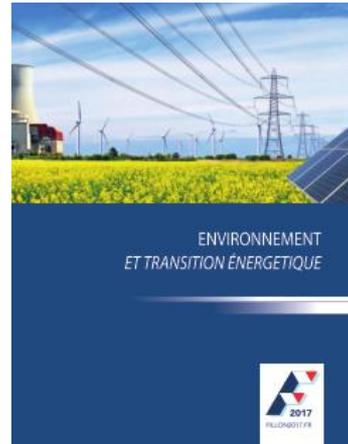
French mammals (foxs)

French cliffs

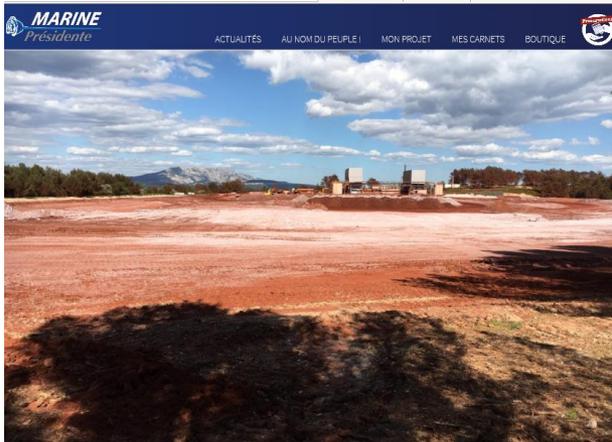
Typical french villages



**En Marche! Iconigraphy**



**LR Iconigraphy**



**FN Iconigraphy**



**PS Iconigraphy**



**La France Insoumise Iconigraphy**

# Discussion and conclusion

## + ABOUT TO ALL RESPONSIBLE CITIZENS:

On the 1<sup>st</sup> of June, President Donald Trump decided to withdraw the United States from the Paris agreement, which gathered more than 190 countries united against climate change.

This decision is unfortunate but it only reinforced our determination. Don't let it weaken yours. We are ONE planet and Together, we can make a difference.

France has always led fights for human rights. Today, more than ever, we are determined to lead (and win!) this battle on climate change.

Emmanuel Macron, President of France.



**I WANT TO MAKE OUR PLANET GREAT AGAIN**

## The Trump Effect and Macron Opportunism

- ◉ extremely efficient in terms of action/reaction
- ◉ perfectly adapted to social networks
- ◉ From a first circle of the environments supporters to a second audience
  - International frontline
  - French positioning
    - » French environmentalists
    - » French patriotism.

BUT: We can not measure in this study the effects of these new and recent positioning



Thank you for your attention  
Merci de votre attention