

Being a leader in the Americas and Europe

Leaders and leaderships in contemporary political discourse

International Colloquium

Maison de l'Amérique Latine

Laboratoire Communication et Politique-CNRS

19-21 November 2014

“Leader” and “leadership” are powerful expressions in contemporary political vocabulary. But what exactly is meant by these two terms? Can we differentiate between them and, if necessary, based on which criteria? In any case, it is undeniable that the figure of the leader is built and it manifests itself in discourse, and that leadership is the product of that construction, while at the same time being the source of a new creation. Indeed, especially discourses defined the image of leaders and as such were an important part in the elaboration of their leaderships. This was the case of the *Dakar speech* delivered by French President Nicolas Sarkozy in July 2007, known and publicised through the massive circulation of the following extract: “the African man has never really entered history”. This was also the case of Néstor Kirchner’s *ESMA (Escuela Superior de Mecánica de la Armada) speech*, which embodied the struggle for (historic) memory and justice, and against impunity and oblivion in Argentina of the previous decade. Another example is the “A more perfect Union” speech by the then USA presidential candidate, Barack Obama, in Philadelphia in March 2008, where he expressed his vision on the racial question in the USA.

In addition to the speeches of politicians, other types of discourse also contribute to the construction of leaders and leaderships. Here we can mention the role of media discourse in which the proliferation of neologisms derived from politician's names demonstrates the growing personalisation of politics: “Blairism”, “Berlusconism”, “Chavism” or “Lulism” or even “Merkozy”, “Merkollande” just to name a few. One may wonder if these types of use are central in the establishment of leadership. Notwithstanding, widespread use in media of such terms and phrases suggests that the time of “great leaders” in Europe and in the Americas is not yet over.

In this context, the issue of the figure of the leader and of the notion of leadership finds its legitimation. We propose to address it through its discursive construction. In other words, the key is to consider the ways in which leaders and leaderships emerge and evolve in a process

of discursive co-construction, involving various social actors: the leaders themselves, but also the media, the citizen body and even the scientific community.

The objective of this colloquium is to contribute to a better understanding, from a multidisciplinary perspective, of topics related to leadership. A multidisciplinary approach will help us, in fact, relate the linguistic, discursive and argumentative mechanisms called in the co-construction of both the figure of the leader and the leadership with knowledge from various disciplines, such as History, political science, political philosophy and social psychology. Discourse is the focus of this conference, and as such corpus studies will be preferred. Our desire is to try to break down barriers between disciplines to engage in a common reflection on a common and transnational subject: the issue of leaders and leaderships in political discourse.

This colloquium also aims to exchange points of view of researchers from diverse geographical horizons about this common object of inquiry. The comparison can be done at different levels, namely between different countries / cultures belonging to different geographical areas (European countries / Latin American countries), between different countries / cultures belonging to the same geographical area (Argentina / Brazil) and within the same country. In this way, we seek to answer this question: how do comparative analysis prove to be relevant for a better understanding of the figure of the leader and leadership?

In this perspective, we propose, not exhaustively, the following thematic axes:

- **From a charismatic to a populist leader: similarities and differences in discourse.**
This axis provides the space to inquiry about issues related to populism, charisma and identifying features of a populist discourse.
- **Representations and imaginaries in the construction of the figure of the leader and of his leadership.** Which representations and social imaginaries can be seen in this construction process? Can we identify the emergence of a new imaginary characteristic of a leadership?
- **The failure in policy: counterexamples of leaders.** Are there leaders without leadership? What place could we give to “failures” in politics and how to analyse them?
- **Leaders seen by the media.** We will focus on the influence of media discourse in the construction of the figure of the leader and of the leadership. The analysis of slogans and sound bites find its place here.

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- **Leaders and gestures.** We will focus on verbal interaction in the political sphere and, more specifically, on the gestures and physicality in politics. In which ways helps gesture to build the figure of a leader and strengthen its leadership?

Proposals may be submitted in French, Spanish, Portuguese and English. The official language of the conference is French, but papers can also be presented in other languages. However, participants will be asked to use power point slides in French.

Following this event, we plan to publish papers on different media: books and magazines in print and / or electronic.

Schedule:

- **January 31, 2014:**

Submission of proposals to the email info@colloqueleaders2014.org in two files Word: 1) the first includes the name of the author(s), their institutional affiliation, their email address, title of the proposal, a summary maximum of 500 words, 5 references and 5 keywords, 2) the second must be anonymous with the title of the proposal only and a summary of 500 words, 5 references and 5 keywords.

- **From March 17, 2014:** Response to the proposals.
- **May 2014:** Opening of the registration.
- **November 19-21, 2014:** Date of Colloquium.

Confirmed Keynotes Speakers:

Leonor ARFUCH (Universidad de Buenos Aires)

Patrick CHARAUDEAU (Université de Paris 13, CNRS – LCP)

Georges COUFFIGNAL (IHEAL-CREDA – Paris 3 – Sorbonne Nouvelle)

Rut DIAMINT (Universidad Torcuato Di Tella)

Ida Lucia MACHADO (Universidade Federal de Minas Gerais)

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Darío RODRIGUEZ (CERI – SciencesPo Paris)
Philippe-Joseph SALAZAR (University du Cap)
Yeny SERRANO (Université de Strasbourg)
Geneviève TRÉGUER-FELTEN (Syled-Cediscor, Sorbonne nouvelle ; Gestion & Société CNRS)
François VERGNIOLE DE CHANTAL (Paris Diderot)
María Alejandra VITALE (Universidad de Buenos Aires)

Partner Institutions:

- AAR (Asociación Argentina de Retórica) : www.aaretorica.org

<http://colloqueleaders2014.org/>

- Association ADAL (Analyse des Discours de l'Amérique Latine) : <http://adalassociation.org>
- ALED (Asociación Latinoamericana de Estudios del Discurso – Associação Latino-americana de Estudos do Discurso) : <http://www.aledportal.com>
- ALR (Asociación Latinoamericana de Retórica) : <http://www.alretorica.org/>
- Institut des Amériques (IDA) : <http://www.institutdesameriques.fr>
- Institut des Hautes Études de l'Amérique Latine (IHEAL) – Centre de Recherche et de Documentation sur les Amériques (CREDA / UMR 7227) : <http://www.iheal.univ-paris3.fr>
- LCP CNRS (Laboratoire Communication et Politique) : <http://www.lcp.cnrs.fr>
- Maison de l'Amérique Latine de Paris : <http://mal217.org>
- Université Paris 3 – Sorbonne Nouvelle : <http://www.univ-paris3.fr>

