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Empathetic Leadership in Times of 'War' as Represented by President Emmanuel Macron**

STUDIA I ANALIZY

Key words: *empathy, political leadership, empathic policy analysis framework, France, emotional discourse*

Abstract: *This paper utilises Stephanie Paterson's empathic policy analysis framework as it explores the discursive construction of political leadership. The research focuses on the empathy French President Emmanuel Macron used during his public speech, delivered on October 12, 2023. The study identifies two emotional discourses that shape this representation of empathetic political leadership. The article analyses the assumptions underpinning this representation and the silences (that which has been left unspoken or implied) associated with it, as well as important implications for people's lives.*

Introduction

Contemporary political psychologists seek to explain how emotions influence political attitudes and behaviour¹, while political theorists have been exploring the relationship between emotions and rationality². Other research

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¹ G.E. Marcus, W.R. Neuman, M. MacKuen, *Affective Intelligence and Political Judgment*, University of Chicago Press 2000.

² R. Kingston, L. Ferry (eds.), *Bringing the Passion Back In*, UBC Press 2008.

has focused on the elicitation, generation, and suppression of emotions, ultimately shaping a specific emotional culture within parliamentary debates³. However, despite the growing interest in the role of emotions in politics, relatively little is known about the use of empathy⁴. This is surprising because, as researchers point out⁵, from the broad spectrum of emotions, it is empathy that has the potential to be agentive, motivating actions that can be transformational and change reality (in contrast to sympathy, compassion, or pity⁶). Empathy emerged in psychology during the early 20th century through the works of Theodor Lipps and Edward Titchener. The sheer number of definitions of empathy can lead to conceptual confusion. In this paper, I adopt the framework proposed by Elizabeth Segal, conceptualizing empathy as a multidimensional construct that entails the "ability to understand people by perceiving or experiencing their life situations and, as a result, gaining insight into structural inequalities and disparities"⁷. In the light of Bloom's⁸ critical argument regarding the excessive emotionality of empathy, the fact that Segal's concept of empathy combines emotions with rationality becomes all the more decisive. Segal posits that "we take physiological inputs that happen to us unconsciously and process the meaning of those sensations using our brain"⁹. Empathy has become an important subject of research. In political science, some work has framed empathy as instrumental to the pursuit of social justice, and to the cultivation of a culture of empathy in addressing society's challenges. Further, empathy "has long been conceptualized as the antithesis of contemporary governance" based on the Weberian concept of bureaucracy¹⁰. Finally, addressing the

³ K. Konecki, *Emocje i polityka. Sceny z życia polskiego parlamentu*, Łódź 2016.

⁴ A. Clohesy, *Politics of Empathy Ethics, Solidarity, Recognition*, Routledge 2013; see also: L. Muradova, K. Arceneaux, *Reflective political reasoning: Political disagreement and empathy*, «European Journal of Political Research» 2022, No. 61, pp. 740–761, DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1111/1475-6765.12490> (11.01.2024).

⁵ S. Pierre, Ph. Howden-Chapman, *The theory and practice of a politics of compassion in the private rental sector: a study of Aotearoa, NZ and 'kindness' during the COVID-19 pandemic*, «International Journal of Housing Policy» 2022, pp. 1–22. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1080/19491247.2022.2133341> (11.01.2024).

⁶ E. Segal, *Social Empathy: The Art of Understanding Others*, Columbia University Press 2018; see also: H. Arendt, *On revolution*, Penguin Books 2006.

⁷ E. Segal, *Social Empathy: A Model Built on Empathy, Contextual Understanding and Social Responsibility that Promotes Social Justice*, «Journal of Social Service Research» 2011, No. 37(3), pp. 266–267, DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1080/01488376.2011.564040> (11.01.2024).

⁸ P. Bloom, *Against Empathy: The Case for Rational Compassion*, Ecco Books 2016.

⁹ See: E. Segal, *Social...*, p. 27.

¹⁰ S. Paterson, L. Larios, *Emotional problems: policymaking and empathy through the lens of transnational motherhood*, «Critical Policy Studies» 2021, No. 15(3), p. 273. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1080/19460171.2020.1752760> (11.01.2024).

role of empathy in policy design, Schneider and Ingram¹¹ maintain that the essential compromises inherent in policymaking, crucial for the operation of a functional democracy, are partially dependent on the capacity to empathize with others. As far as political leadership is concerned, only a few studies have discussed the topic of empathy¹². Many aspects of the roles of empathy in the discursive construction of political leadership have yet to be addressed. This article explores this issue in French politics as the Israeli-Palestinian conflict of 2023 escalates.

It seeks answers to multiple questions: What is empathetic leadership in times of 'war' as represented by Mr. Emmanuel Macron? Where and by whom is this representation endorsed? Challenged? Where are the silences? How do emotional discourses shape empathetic leadership? What assumptions underpin Mr. Macron's empathetic leadership in times of 'war'? How does emotional discourse undergird them? What are the discursive, subjectification, and lived effects of empathetic leadership?

Finally, the study focuses on the work with empathy in the creation of political leadership in the Global North as exemplified by France. Using the concept of empathy, the paper reveals the complexity and the problematic nature of emotional discourses in politics and its potential implications for policy.

The article draws on the transcripts from "Address to the French People", a speech delivered to the people of France on October 12, 2023, by French President Emmanuel Macron. Employing S. Paterson's empathic policy analysis framework¹³, the study offers a fresh perspective on the use of emotions, mostly empathy, in the discursive construction of political leadership. The paper complements achievements in qualitative political science scholarship in Poland. The particular analysis of political leadership is, to the best of my knowledge, the first of its kind.

The paper begins by presenting a theoretical background of the research. It then examines the research methods used and the findings of the original empirical study. A conclusion section rounds out the work.

¹¹ A.L. Schneider, H. Ingram, *Policy design for democracy*, University Press of Kansas 1997.

¹² C. Yorke, *Making the Connection: The Role of Empathy in Communicating Policy*, «Global Relations Forum Young Academics Program Analysis Paper Series» 2020, No. 10, pp. 1–29; see also: S. Khorana, *Mediated Emotions of Migration. Reclaiming Affect for Agency*, Bristol University Press 2023.

¹³ S. Paterson, *Emotional Labour: Exploring Emotional Policy Discourses of Pregnancy and Childbirth in Ontario, Canada*, «Public Policy and Administration» 2019, No. 36(2), pp. 252–272, DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1177/0952076719869786> (11.01.2024).

A Foucauldian-inspired approach to empathetic leadership in times of 'war'

Oforu-Anim stresses that: "An extensive study on the term "political" is fairly new to the discussion of leadership. Burns (1978) and Blondel (1987) attempted to expound on the study of political leadership focusing mainly on contextualising and analysing the phenomenon. Even so, it was not until the last decade did academe and comparative political science hearken to the relevance of leadership in political studies"¹⁴. The theoretical approaches, applied so far, are accompanied by a variety of methodologies: institutional, procedural, official, psychological, and statistical studies of the composition of leadership elites; studies of values and beliefs based on interviews with specific categories of leaders; biographical studies¹⁵, and integral explanatory strategies¹⁶. In spite of this broad spectrum of methodologies and approaches, they have proven of limited use in understanding the work that political leaders have done with emotions in the context of their relationship with citizens. It was only when an interpretative approach was applied to the analysis of politics, a discursive approach, and the often accompanying qualitative methods such as in-depth interviews, case studies, or critical discourse analysis (including post-Foucauldian discourse analysis) that researchers were able to develop theoretical and analytical tools to capture the role of emotions, including empathy, in the discursive construction of political leadership¹⁷. This is why I employ theoretical and analytical frameworks that share a constructivist foundation in my work.

There are two primary forms of constructivism: 'strong' and 'weak'¹⁸. This paper aligns itself with the latter. I do not reject the existence of the material world beyond its constructions present in individuals' minds. Instead, I assume that access to the material world occurs through discourse, in which language and our intellectual constructions about the world (socially constructed knowledge) play a crucial role. Like Bierre and Howden-Chapman¹⁹,

¹⁴ D. Oforu-Anim, *Political Leadership: A New Conceptual Framework*, «Open Journal of Leadership» 2022, No. 11, pp. 398–399. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.4236/ojl.2022.114021>.

¹⁵ J.J. Wiatr, *Przywództwo polityczne. Studium politologiczne*, Łódź 2008; see also: B. Szklarski, *Przywództwo...*

¹⁶ F. Pierzchalski, *Political Leadership: Structure – Consciousness – Emotions*, Peter Lang, Berlin 2023.

¹⁷ See: C. Yorke, *Making...*; S. Khorana, *Mediated...*

¹⁸ L. Miś, *Konstruktywizm/konstrukcjonizm w socjologii, pracy socjalnej i psychoterapii*, [in:] L. Miś (ed.), *Praca socjalna skoncentrowana na rozwiązaniach*, Uniwersytet Jagielloński, Kraków 2008, pp. 27–48.

¹⁹ See: S. Bierre, Ph. Howden-Chapman, *The theory...*, p. 6.

I “focus on the assumptions informing behaviors” and examine political discourse and rhetoric. Following the Foucauldian tradition, political leadership can be treated as a ‘problematization’ that encompasses ‘implied problems’²⁰. I posit that the discourse of political leadership itself frames foreign and domestic policies. Such discourse indicates what is considered real and existing within the policymaking arena. The presentation of political leadership follows specific patterns, and this representation is socially constructed. With respect to this, the paper focuses on the conceptual foundations upon which political leadership is built. Thus, it aligns itself with a ‘problem-questioning’ paradigm²¹.

Foucauldian-inspired analyses have long been used in political science²². However, these analytical frameworks are often seen to lack systematicity²³. The empathic policy analysis framework developed by Stephanie Paterson, a Canadian political scientist (and based on Carol Bacchi’s “What’s the problem represented to be” approach), was therefore adopted for this paper. It is considered one of the more structured frameworks in Foucauldian-inspired discourse analysis.

Context, data and methods of analysis

On the early morning of October 9, 2023, Hamas terrorists infiltrated Israel from the Gaza Strip. They invaded over 20 bordering towns and killed hundreds of Israeli civilians and uniformed officers, injuring thousands and taking more than 200 people as hostages. This paper focuses on the speech given by the President of France, Emmanuel Macron, in response to these events.

²⁰ C. Bacchi, *Are ‘problem representations’ (WPR) problematizations?*, <https://carolbacchi.com/2018/06/11/are-problem-representations-wpr-problematizations> (11.01.2024).

²¹ C. Bacchi, *Analysing Policy: What’s the problem represented to be?*, Pearson Education, New South Wales 2009, p. xvii.

²² D. Stone, *Policy Paradox and Political Reason*, HarperCollins, New York 1988; see also: M. Bevir, *Political science after Foucault*, «History of the Human Sciences» 2011, No. 24(4), pp. 81–96, DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1177/0952695111412862>; Ph. Zittoun, *Entre définition et propagation des énoncés de solution, l’influence du discours en action dans le changement d’une politique publique*, «Revue Française de Science Politique» 2014, No. 63(3–4), pp. 625–646, DOI: <https://doi.org/10.3917/rfsp.633.0625> (11.01.2024); A.L. Schneider, H. Ingram, P. deLeon, *Democratic Policy Design: Social Construction of Target Populations*, [in:] P.A. Sabatier, Ch.M. Weible (eds.), *Theories of the Policy Process*, Westview Press, Boulder 2014, pp. 105–49.

²³ K. Jacobs, *Discourse analysis*, [in:] M. Walters (ed.), *Social Research Methods*, Oxford University Press, Melbourne 2019, pp. 316–340.

In my research, I investigate the narration of empathetic leadership in times of 'war'. Much like DiPaolo²⁴, I understand 'war' as the fight against terrorism, as represented by Mr. Emmanuel Macron. To achieve this, I employ "part 1: the problem" of the empathic policy analysis framework²⁵. While Paterson recommends a comprehensive application of her framework, an extensive analysis was unfortunately not possible given the small scale of this study. To establish a well-defined research approach, I narrowed down the study's focus. The research material has been limited to the transcripts from the "Address to the French People", the speech Mr. Macron delivered on October 12, 2023.

A textual analysis of the speech was conducted to identify and describe the representation of empathetic leadership in times of 'war'. This involved examining the problematizations that were reconstructed from the text. The text was read twice, each time using open coding. Previous codes were revisited and compared with later ones to achieve a deeper, more comprehensive understanding of the text's content.

Secondly, how the representation of empathetic leadership in times of 'war' is constructed within dominant discourses was described. The broader context of this representation that was silenced was then explained. The underlying assumptions that support the representation of empathetic leadership in times of 'war' were reconstructed. Next, an effort was made to understand the diverse consequences that the representation of empathetic leadership in times of 'war' has on different societal groups.

There are three interrelated categories of effects: discursive, subjectification, and lived effects. They span both symbolic and material dimensions, and require careful attention from analysts. Discursive effects arise from the way policy discourse and problem representations define what is considered 'thinkable and sayable' and possible to feel. These effects result from the endorsement of certain perspectives on empathetic leadership in times of 'war' while marginalizing alternative viewpoints. Therefore, it is essential to examine the impact of silencing (that which has been left unspoken or implied), as discursive effects influence how the representation of empathetic leadership in times of 'war' is framed and the proposed solutions for initiating change. Subjectification effects are generated by the representation of empathetic leadership in times of 'war', shaping and constraining available subject positions. This necessitates an examination of how this representation functions to govern and formulate expectations about the roles individuals should adopt.

²⁴ A. DiPaolo, *Presidential Leadership in Times of War*, [in:] J. Masciulli, M.A. Molchanov, W.A. Knight (eds.), *The Ashgate Research Companion to Political Leadership*, Routledge, London 2009, pp. 258–288.

²⁵ See: S. Paterson, L. Larios, *Emotional...*

Lived effects refer to the actual, tangible consequences that arise from the representation of empathetic leadership in times of 'war'.

Finally, the findings of my analysis are discussed in the light of the literature on the politics of leadership empathy.

What is empathetic leadership in times of 'war' as represented by Mr. Emmanuel Macron?

The president's "Address to the French People" highlights the issue of empathetic leadership in times of 'war' as a form of political leadership in which the leader immerses him or herself in the experiences of victims of terror and violence, including those of Hamas in both Israel and Palestine, as well as potential victims of terrorism in France. In this context, the concept of an empathetic leader finds its complement in the politics of compassion²⁶, which involves reframing caring and compassionate values and relationships, extending them from the private sphere of individuals to the social and public realm. But in Mr. Macron's case, this concept is grounded in empathy, rather than compassion, sympathy²⁷, or pity²⁸. According to Segal, "empathy requires understanding the situation and circumstances around another person's situation and imagining what it would be like to be in those same circumstances"²⁹. The emotional landscape in which this representation is produced is shaped by both a discourse of understanding, compassion, and active support for victims of terror and violence, as well as a discourse of condemnation, rejection, and active resistance against perpetrators of terror and violence.

In terms of the discourse of understanding, compassion, and active support for the victims of terror and violence, Mr. Macron emphasizes, "I speak in all our names when I say that we share in Israel's grief (...) That we are thinking of the families who know that they have lost one of their own, and those who await news of a loved one". The portrayal of the victims of violence invoked by such a narrative in the minds of audiences in the Global North is that of a familiar and visible population whose experiences one can

²⁶ M. Nussbaum, *Compassion: The basic social emotion*, «Social Philosophy and Policy» 1996, No. 13(1), pp. 27–58, DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0265052500001515> (11.01.2024).

²⁷ See: E. Segal, *Social...*

²⁸ See: H. Arendt, *On...*

²⁹ E. Segal, *Welfare reform: the need for social empathy*, [in:] K.M. Sowers, C.N. Dulmus (eds.), *Comprehensive handbook of social work and social welfare*, Wiley, Hoboken 2008, p. 380.

imagine³⁰. Furthermore, Mr. Macron expresses solidarity in the pain felt by the residents of Israel, including those with French citizenship who have been affected by the conflict. However, this discourse encompasses not only the Israelis. Mr. Macron also demonstrates an understanding of the concerns and fears of French Jews about their safety (this will be discussed in more detail in the section on subjectification). He acknowledges that the civilian population in Gaza is also in danger, and emphasizes that democratic nations must protect civilian populations during armed conflicts. He also acknowledges that French Muslims fear the stigmatization the Hamas attacks may bring (as discussed in more detail in the section on subjectification). Mr. Macron declares his support for the kidnapped hostages, their families, and French citizens residing in Israel.

At the same time, condemnation, rejection, and active opposition to the perpetrators of terror and violence become apparent within the emotional landscape of empathetic leadership during times of 'war', as exemplified by Mr. Macron. Firstly, there is an unequivocal condemnation of Hamas's activities and terrorism, including the potential for its emergence in France. Violence must be repudiated and stopped as it contravenes our humanity. Mr. Macron actively works through diplomacy to counter Hamas. Nevertheless, the empathetic leader advocates for countering terrorism decisively but lawfully.

Where and by whom is this representation endorsed? Challenged?

Where are the silences? How do emotional discourses shape it?

In the representation of empathetic leadership during times of 'war' outlined here and the emotional landscape in which this representation is generated, certain aspects are omitted. Due to the space limitations of the article, I will briefly mention only some of them.

First, this representation of an empathetic leader has been produced in a country with a colonial history that has not been fully reckoned with. However, it is meant to serve as a response to a conflict that is at times considered within the context of settler colonialism³¹. This can introduce certain moral, ethical, and emotional constraints to the vision crafted by Mr. Macron. It is

³⁰ See: S. Khorana, *Mediated...*, p. 15.

³¹ R. Busbridge, *Israel-Palestine and the Settler Colonial 'Turn': From Interpretation to Decolonization*, «Theory, Culture & Society» 2018, No. 35(1), pp. 91–115, DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1177/0263276416688544> (11.01.2024).

important to note, though, that the president is speaking about supporting two states (Israel and Palestine), providing humanitarian assistance to the population in the Gaza Strip, and highlighting the democratic constraints that should be considered in Israel's retaliatory actions. He also defends both French Jews and Muslims.

Secondly, Mr. Macron's vision of an empathetic leader aligns with a specific political ideology, one consistent with the principles of Western progressive left-wing politics. The concept of an empathetic leader has previously been promoted by politicians, such as a former leader of the Democratic Party in the United States, President Barack Obama³². However, Mr. Macron omits critical voices and the complexity of this stance. He calls for unity within French society and somewhat exaggerates the political consensus regarding his vision of empathetic leadership, even within French left-wing circles³³.

Thirdly, Mr. Macron constructs a theoretical concept of an empathetic leader, but it remains uncertain whether this vision will be realized in the political life of France. Given the French government's less empathetic moves, such as during the Yellow Vest protests, doubts may arise. Besides, Mr. Macron's empathetic leadership can be interpreted as a political strategy that relies on the instrumentalization of emotions to garner support – support aimed at maintaining power rather than genuine empathy for the victims of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Since 2022, Emmanuel Macron's party and government no longer command an absolute majority in the National Assembly. However, the empathetic leadership under discussion here may pertain to France's foreign policy more than its domestic policy. In this context, empathy is accompanied by a sense of action and accountability. In 2023, France consistently expressed an empathetic stance towards both Israeli and Palestinian statehood (the two-state solution³⁴). As a result, the concept of an empathetic leader within the empathetic community as represented by Mr. Macron may prove to be transformative for Israeli-Palestinian relations or could at least serve as a foundation for future solidarities with civilians in Gaza.

³² C. Pedwell, *Affective Relations: The Transnational Politics of Empathy*, Palgrave Macmillan, Basingstoke 2014.

³³ A. Troost, *Hamas jako „ruch oporu” lub straszenie „islamolewicą”. Izrael i Palestyna podzieliły Francję*, «Krytyka Polityczna», <https://krytykapolityczna.pl/swiat/ue/hamas-jako-ruch-oporu-lub-straszenie-islamolewica-izrael-i-palestyna-podzieliły-francję/> (11.01.2024).

³⁴ C. Duboise, *Déplacement en Israël : Emmanuel Macron va discuter de la création d'un État palestinien et de «l'arrêt de la colonisation»*, <https://www.lejdd.fr/politique/deplacement-en-israel-emmanuel-macron-va-discuter-de-la-creation-dun-etat-palestinien-et-de-larret-de-la-colonisation-139156> (11.01.2024).

What are the underlying assumptions that support an empathetic leadership in times of 'war' as represented by Mr. Emmanuel Macron? How does emotional discourse undergird them?

Several assumptions underpin the portrayal of empathetic leadership during times of 'war' as the representation and guidance of a national community by a political leader who places themselves in the shoes of the victims. Firstly, Mr. Macron embeds his vision of empathetic leadership in a broader context of the reality of warfare: "In the last 18 months, the world has already seen the return of war to Europe, be it in Ukraine or against Armenia, but this new violence has shocked a nation and the world as a whole". The concept of war is not neutral and shapes our perspective. Importantly, this is not about a single war but a series of armed conflicts. The French president places his message to the nation against the backdrop of increasing uncertainty, disorder, misunderstanding, and a lack of willingness for peaceful coexistence in Europe and worldwide. Mr. Macron highlights that the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is shocking but not unique. He acknowledges the cruelty of war as something that an empathetic leader and the empathetic community they represent would seek to condemn and avoid.

The second set of assumptions concerns the duty of an empathetic leader and the empathetic community they represent to strive for dialogue and peace. An empathetic leader and the empathetic community they represent cannot reconcile with war as a political strategy. The goal should be the pursuit of peace. Mr. Macron believes that an empathetic leader and the empathetic community that leader represents should be guided by respect and equal treatment of the national aspirations of all communities. Of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, he states that: "The conditions for a lasting peace are known: essential security guarantees for Israel and a State for the Palestinians". At the same time, Mr. Macron emphasizes that an empathetic leader and the empathetic community the leader represents exclude terrorism as a political strategy. An important aspect of the pursuit of dialogue and peace is the maintenance of national unity. Conflict, terror, and violence can create divisions within French society, and that can threaten the security of all social groups: "There must be no suspicion or division among us within our nation. We must remember that anti-Semitism has always been the prelude to other forms of hatred: one day against Jews, the next against Christians, then against Muslims, and finally against all those who are still the subject of hatred, because of their culture, their origin or their gender".

What are the effects: discursive, subjectification, lived?

Various discursive outcomes have been addressed elsewhere. These include the framing of empathetic leadership in times of 'war' as a means for a political leader to guide a community by stepping into the shoes of terror and violence victims; concrete consequences, such as government actions to aid French citizens in Israel (including facilitating their return to France); diplomatic endeavours by the President to de-escalate the conflict and coordinate international humanitarian support for Gaza's population; and the enforcement of extra security measures in France to safeguard Jewish and Muslim communities from hate crimes. Because all of these have been addressed, I will now shift my attention to the effects related to subjectification.

Two types of subjects are constructed by the discourse of empathetic leadership in times of 'war': the victims of conflict and those who support them, and the perpetrators of the conflict. Furthermore, three dominant subjectivities are established among the victims and their supporters. The first subjectivity comprises the suffering Israelis who have been targeted by Hamas terrorists, and French Jews living in Israel or France, who also experience anxiety, fear, and threats. As the empathetic leader, Mr. Macron expresses solidarity with these individuals and assures them that he and the French state stand by their side and will provide support.

The second subjectivity includes civilians in Gaza and Muslims in France, who are manipulated, exploited, and exposed by terrorists. Mr. Macron acknowledges their anxiety and fear, but he overlooks the fact that radicalization in some Muslim communities in France may also stem from structural factors related to social inequalities and discrimination within French society³⁵. In such cases, Mr. Macron's empathy is primarily directed at their security concerns, shifting the focus away from the discussion on inclusion in French society. It is worth noting that the ban on pro-Palestinian demonstrations in France at the beginning of the conflict was an expression of at least a lack of trust in the Muslim population³⁶. In the context of empathy for Gaza's civilians, Mr. Macron emphasizes that Israel should conduct retaliatory actions while sparing that population.

The third subjectivity pertains to "the people of France" as a united and empathetic community under the leadership of an empathetic leader. These individuals empathize with the tragedy that has befallen Israel, share their

³⁵ A.-M. Valfort, *Anti-Muslim Discrimination in France: Evidence from a Field Experiment*, «IZA Discussion Paper» 2018, No. 11417, pp. 1–67.

³⁶ See: A. Troost, *Hamas...*

thoughts with the victims of the conflict, and unequivocally stand by their side. They understand the pain and condemn terrorist attacks. They express solidarity with the victims and offer their support. They are concerned about the fate of missing and kidnapped hostages and are ready to protect French Jews while unequivocally combating anti-Semitism and hatred. At the same time, they are ready to protect French Muslims from violence. Brotherhood and national unity are important to them, and they are committed to defending the ideal of peace.

The three aforementioned subjectivities may employ empathy to obscure the pragmatics of leadership, wherein the leader, in adherence to political correctness, oscillates between the perspectives of French Muslims and French Jews. Mr. Macron endeavours to secure political support from both communities. The former comprises approximately 9% of France's population and predominantly voted for the left-wing candidate Jean-Luc Mélenchon in the presidential elections. The latter, constituting less than 1% of the French population, predominantly cast their votes for the right-wing candidate Éric Zemmour in the same elections³⁷.

In contrast, Hamas terrorists and potential terrorists in France are primarily seen as the perpetrators of the conflict, distinct from the empathetic French community. Hamas is regarded as an organization that operates unlawfully and cynically. It deliberately puts the lives of civilians in Gaza at risk in pursuit of its goal, the destruction of Israel. The empathetic community condemns terrorists, who pose a threat to democratic values while also challenging the national unity of France.

In the discursive distancing between "us" (the empathetic leader and the empathetic community that stands in solidarity with the victims of the conflict) and "them" (the terrorists), initiatives are directed towards "empowering" the victims of the conflict and the empathetic French community. The terrorists are condemned, excluded, and efforts are made to isolate them.

Conclusion

This paper describes and contextualises the discursive representation of empathetic leadership in times of 'war' constructed by French President Emmanuel Macron in his public speech, "Address to the French People", delivered on October 12, 2023. The study illustrates how the discursive representa-

³⁷ L. Jakubowicz, *Présidentielle 2022. Oui, la religion détermine le vote*, «Décideurs Magazine», <https://www.decideurs-magazine.com/politique-societe/43526-premier-tour-oui-la-religion-determine-le-vote.html> (11.01.2024).

tion of political leadership is shaped by emotional discourses. It assesses the complexities and conceptual foundations underlying this representation, and it describes what has been omitted in the representation of political leadership. The article also examines the implications of empathetic leadership representation in times of 'war' for people's lives as well as for foreign and domestic policy.

The study contributes to the field of political science in two ways. First, it adds to the ongoing debate on the role emotions play in politics. It provides nuanced insights into how political leadership is represented in emotional discourses in the context of the escalating Israeli-Palestinian conflict and terrorist attacks. Through analysis, it sheds light on the use of empathy in framing political leadership and enhances the understanding of how empathy influences people's lives and public policy. By critically examining the conceptual premises underlying the discursive representation of political leadership, the study promotes reflexivity in policymaking.

Second, the paper adopts a discursive approach to political leadership, drawing inspiration from critical discourse analysis methods. It incorporates Stephanie Paterson's empathic policy analysis framework, a structured framework in Foucauldian-inspired discourse analysis. This research tool is rarely employed in political leadership-related studies, but it holds promise for analyzing the role of emotional discourses in politics.

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