



## Charlie Hebdo's Political Stance in the 2024 French Legislative Elections

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### Abstract

The 2024 French legislative elections became a crucial arena for political parties to capture public attention through media coverage. Medias revealed its biases and ideological stances in reporting the elections. Charlie Hebdo, known as a left-leaning satirical publication, also expressed its perspectives on the 2024 French legislative elections through its published texts. This study aims to discover the political bias and stance of Charlie Hebdo in its coverage of political party campaigns in France. Using a qualitative methodology with Fairclough's (1995) critical discourse analysis approach, focusing on textual analysis, discourse practices involving text interpretation, and socio-cultural dimensions. In examining the text, Le Querler's (1994) syntactic analysis is utilized to analyze sentence structures and function of article headlines. Leech's (1982) semantic analysis is applied to study the meaning of words referencing different political parties. The findings reveal that Charlie Hebdo tends to criticize all groups but with varying intensity. Charlie Hebdo sharply criticizes the far-right group, Rassemblement National, while criticizing the centrist group as weak. Meanwhile, for the left-wing group, Charlie Hebdo offers constructive criticism. The sharp criticism of Rassemblement National is also reflected in the article titles, which feature sentences employing sentence pivots and direct objects (COD) with negative connotations.

### Extrait

Les élections législatives françaises de 2024 ont constitué un moment crucial pour les partis politiques, cherchant à capter l'attention du public à travers la couverture médiatique. Les médias ont souvent révélé leurs biais idéologiques dans leur traitement des campagnes. Charlie Hebdo, publication satirique connue pour son positionnement à gauche, a également exprimé sa vision des élections à travers ses articles. Cette étude vise à analyser les biais politiques et la position adoptée par Charlie Hebdo dans sa couverture des campagnes électorales en France. En s'appuyant sur une méthodologie qualitative, l'analyse utilise l'approche critique du discours de Fairclough (1995), intégrant l'étude des textes, des pratiques discursives et des dimensions socioculturelles. L'analyse syntaxique de Le Querler (1994) est employée pour examiner les structures des phrases et les fonctions des titres, tandis que l'approche sémantique de Leech (1982) explore les significations des mots associés aux différents partis politiques. Les résultats révèlent que Charlie Hebdo critique tous les groupes, mais avec des intensités variables. Il critique vivement le Rassemblement National, considère le centre comme faible et offre des critiques constructives à la gauche. La critique acerbe du Rassemblement national se reflète également dans les titres des articles, qui comportent des phrases utilisant des pivots et des objets directs (COD) à connotation négative.

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## INTRODUCTION

The French legislative elections have become one of the most significant events in 2024, or perhaps in the history of French politics. This is due to President Emmanuel Macron's decision to dissolve the National Assembly. Initially scheduled for June 2027, the elections were moved forward by three years. According to Article 12 of the French Constitution, elections following a dissolution must be held within 20 to 40 days (Deloy, 2024) of dissolution. Based on this regulation, the elections were held on June 30 and July 7, 2024. The primary reason behind Macron's dissolution of the National Assembly was the rising strength of the far-right political party, Rassemblement National (RN), and the crushing defeat of the President's political coalition, Ensemble, in the European elections (Gougou, 2024). By holding the legislative elections earlier, Macron aimed to shift the burden of the political crisis and the potential rise of RN while attempting to regain political control.

Rassemblement National (RN), formerly known as Front National before its rebranding in 2018, is a far-right political party with significant influence in France. Founded in 1972 by Jean-Marie Le Pen, the party has grown into a significant force in French politics, particularly under the leadership of his daughter, Marine Le Pen, who led the party from 2011 to 2022. According to Xia (2024), prior to Marine Le Pen's leadership, Front National was regarded as a "fascist party". After taking over leadership, Marine Le Pen distanced the party from her father's controversial statements about Nazis and took steps to moderate the party's image and reduce its radical ideology (Xia, 2024). RN is now led by Jordan Bardella, the first leader outside the Le Pen family. As reported by Britannica, authored by Ray (2024), Bardella's leadership marks a generational shift in RN. The party gained popularity among young voters and the working class. This shift contributed to RN's victory in the 2024 European elections, where it secured 31.5% of the vote, becoming the first French party to achieve over 30% in European elections since 1984 (Preve, 2024).

With the dissolution of the National Assembly, RN, as the majority party in the 2024 European elections, faced competition from other parties of the center and left. This aligns with the tripolar structure (left-center-right) in French politics, which replaced the traditional left-right rivalry. According to Capoccia (2024), this change was triggered by Macron's 2017 victory as a centrist candidate and was reinforced by the dynamics of the electoral system. In the 2024 French legislative elections, the three largest blocs were RN (in coalition with Les Républicains), Ensemble (the President's coalition), and Nouveau Front Populaire, an alliance of left-wing French parties. According to Schickler & Hodgson (2024) on Euronews, RN, in coalition with Les Républicains (LR), won the first round with 33.1%. Les Républicains, a center-right political party in France, was founded on May 30, 2015, as a successor to the Union for a Popular Movement (UMP), established in 2002 under former President Jacques Chirac. As reported by The Economist (2024), Eric Ciotti, leader of LR, fielded over 60 legislative candidates in alliance with RN.

On the left, an alliance named Nouveau Front Populaire (NFP) was officially launched on June 10, 2024. According to Phelan (2024), this alliance was formed in response to the growing influence of right-wing parties, particularly RN, with the aim of uniting various left-wing parties for the 2024 legislative elections. Phelan (2024) also noted that NFP emerged from the former left-wing coalition, New Ecological and Social People's Union (NUPES), which dissolved due to internal conflicts and differing views, especially on international issues such as the war in Gaza. Avoiding the name NUPES, they chose Nouveau Front Populaire, inspired by the 1930s alliance formed to fight fascism and advocate for workers' rights, the Front Populaire. NFP comprises several left-wing parties, including La France Insoumise (LFI), Les Écologistes, Parti Communiste Français (PCF), and Parti Socialiste. Among these, Parti Socialiste has the most experience, with François Mitterrand (1981-1995) and François Hollande (2012-2017) having served as Presidents. Hollande's low approval ratings in 2016 paved the way for the rise of LFI, led by Jean-Luc Mélenchon, a former Parti Socialiste member. Mélenchon has faced criticism for statements on Israeli military operations in Gaza, deemed antisemitic (Saul & Seymour, 2024). Following LFI and Parti Socialiste, other major forces in the alliance include Les Écologistes, also known as Europe Écologie Les Verts (EELV), and Parti Communiste Français (PCF).

To counter the left and right blocs, the centrist coalition Ensemble re-entered the elections. Ensemble, a liberal political coalition in France, was formed by President Emmanuel Macron in November 2021 as Ensemble Citoyens, serving as the President's majority coalition. Led by Gabriel Attal, the coalition comprises Renaissance (RE), Le Mouvement Démocrate (MoDem) led by François Bayrou, Horizons founded by former Prime Minister Édouard Philippe, and smaller parties (Deloy,

2024). Ensemble's votes in the 2024 elections reflect a significant shift in public sentiment, moving from centrist policies toward more polarized political choices. This was marked by the absence of a parliamentary majority for any party or coalition.

During the elections, the media played a crucial role in covering political parties and the electoral process. The media not only shaped public opinion but also influenced perceptions of political coalitions based on their ideological leanings. Dwiputri & Laksman-Huntley (2020) asserted that every media outlet operates under an ideology that shapes its content. In France, as Serres (2024) explained, media is generally divided into two ideological spectrums: right (conservative) and left (egalitarian). Media ideology does not always determine support for specific political groups. Kumala & Laksman-Huntley (2024) found that despite alignment between media ideologies and certain parties, preferences for specific parties can still emerge. Therefore, an in-depth analysis of the media's political stance is essential to understanding this dynamic.

This study focuses on Charlie Hebdo, a left-leaning satirical magazine in France renowned for its critical and provocative approach to religious issues (Wolska-Zogata, 2015). Satire is closely tied to humor. According to Tsymbal & Rudenko (2022), humor is meant merely to entertain the audience, whereas satire mocks, criticizes, and highlights societal or an individuals flaws. Its content not only critiques religious extremism but also highlights issues such as politics, racism, and various social problems (Thoyyibah, 2022). Charlie Hebdo was founded in 1970 by François Cavanna and Georges Bernier as a successor to the banned magazine *Hara-Kiri*, following a controversial satirical cover on the death of General de Gaulle (Sénéjoux, 2016). Neffati (2019) stated that Cavanna and Bernier's working-class backgrounds influenced their leftist ideology.

Consistent with its position on the far-left of French politics, Charlie Hebdo's history is marked by ideological divisions and betrayals (BBC, 2015). One example is the resignation of senior cartoonist Maurice Sinet following a dispute over allegations of antisemitism (Cross, 2016). Currently, Charlie Hebdo's director is Sourisseau, known as Riss, who joined the magazine in 1992 and assumed leadership after the tragic event of January 2015, when the magazine's office in Paris was attacked by gunmen and claimed twelve casualties (Savelkoul et al., 2022). Charlie Hebdo continues to publish weekly editions and exclusive web content. According to Charlie Hebdo's official website, each weekly edition features an editorial text that provides the magazine's perspective and helps readers understand its content and context (Root, 1996), alongside various articles and *planches* (illustrations depicting specific issues).

There have been several studies on Charlie Hebdo, such as Ayu & Sarasati (2024), Aldrian et al. (2024), Tsymbal & Rudenko (2022), and Miranda (2019). Ayu & Sarasati (2024) examined the freedom of speech exercised by Charlie Hebdo and how Charlie Hebdo defended its rights. This study collected data through interviews with French journalists. The findings of this study indicate that the freedom of speech exercised by Charlie Hebdo is something commonplace and a reflection of the value of secularism embraced by French society. Aldrian et al's (2024) research focused on Islamophobia contained in Charlie Hebdo caricatures using Roman Jakobson's (1960) semiotic theory. Tsymbal & Rudenko (2022) examined the Charlie Hebdo satire and compared it with cartoons found in the Ukrainian magazine *Perets*. Through this research, it was found that Charlie Hebdo's satire focused more on international issues. Charlie Hebdo tends to use straightforward and harsh words to make a satire of politics and politicians (Tsymbal & Rudenko, 2022). Furthermore, Miranda (2019) examined Charlie Hebdo caricatures using critical discourse analysis theory. It was found that Charlie Hebdo did not criticize any particular religion and rejected all forms of fanaticism. Through critical discourse analysis by linking the socio-cultural context in France, the many criticisms of Islam in the Charlie Hebdo caricatures raised suspicions about the Islamophobia that appears to exist in French culture as a whole. However, in the study, Miranda (2019) did not specifically use a particular critical discourse analysis theory. Miranda (2019) explained Van Dijk's (1988) and Fairclough's (2002) critical discourse analysis theories without directly writing which theory was used although, from the description of the results and discussion, the use of Fairclough's (2002) critical discourse analysis theory is reflected.

Critical discourse analysis is used to analyze the ideology of a media. According to Fairclough (1995), critical discourse analysis examines how language use becomes an arena for social groups to compete and fight for their ideologies. Fairclough (1995) emphasizes the importance of uncovering ideology in the microstructure (text) by always linking it to the macrostructure (context outside the text), as well as how this connection can contribute to problem-solving and solution-finding. Some studies use critical discourse analysis to analyze ideology. One of them is a study conducted by Herlina in 2023, which compared French and Indonesian media on the issue of terrorism. Furthermore, Aisyah & Miranda (2021) also used critical discourse analysis to determine the political ideology and

immigration discourse adopted by five French Presidential candidates in 2017. In addition, Kartikasari (2020) also used Fairclough's (1995) critical discourse analysis to find out the construction of news in six Indonesian media (Kompas TV, SCTV, Indosiar, Tribunnews, cnnindonesia.com, and TV One).

Based on research, many studies have been conducted on Charlie Hebdo. Miranda (2019) researched Charlie Hebdo's ideology using Fairclough's critical discourse analysis. However, the issue that became the focus was content about religion. Tsymbal & Rudenko's research (2022) compared the expression of the French satirical media, Charlie Hebdo, with the Ukrainian satirical media, Perets but did not analyze more deeply the ideology of Charlie Hebdo. In addition, in this study, critical discourse analysis is supported by a more in-depth analysis using Le Querler's (1994) syntactic analysis on the sentence structure and function of the article title, as well as Leech's (1982) meaning component analysis for words that refer to each political camp. This approach can provide a more comprehensive understanding of Charlie Hebdo's political ideology in reporting the French elections.

## RESEARCH METHODS

The method used in this study is a qualitative approach to analyze Charlie Hebdo texts regarding the 2024 French legislative election. The data sources consist of six texts: five articles and one editorial text published between the dissolution of the National Assembly and the conclusion of the second round of the election. During this period, Charlie Hebdo published five weekly issues, starting with issue 1664 on June 12, 2024, three days after the dissolution of the assembly. This issue only contained an editorial discussing Macron's dissolution decision. Issues 1665-1668 contained lead articles discussing election-related issues. The web article published on July 19, 2024, discussed the first day of the post-election National Assembly. The six texts used consist of two articles that talk about RN, one each about NFP and Ensemble, and two texts that talk about all three groups.

The data were analyzed using Fairclough's (1995) critical discourse analysis approach. Fairclough (1995) developed three dimensions of analysis: text, discursive practice, and socio-cultural dimensions, with further interpretation conducted through context and intertextuality. For text analysis, this study applied Le Querler's (1994) syntactic theory on the article headline's sentence structure and function, as well as Leech's (1982) semantic component analysis to understand terms referring to each coalition. Le Querler explained that sentence structures consist of syntagms at the core, while Leech emphasized breaking down semantic components to grasp differences in meaning. Vocabulary was examined using definitions from online dictionaries Larousse.fr and LeRobert, incorporating intuition and experience to determine semantic features. However, in this study, semantic components are only taken from the dictionary to avoid subjectivity.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Charlie Hebdo's Coverage of the 2024 French Legislative Elections

As previously outlined, the main dimensions of critical discourse analysis are the text, discursive practices that include the interpretation of the text, and the socio-cultural praxis dimension. In the text dimension, Fairclough (1995) highlights that the linguistic aspects of a text are analyzed to demonstrate how linguistic elements contribute to the creation of meaning and how these elements can reinforce or weaken certain ideological meanings (Moghaddam, 2024).

Through Le Querler's (1994) syntactic analysis of the titles of editorial texts and articles from Charlie Hebdo, a notable trend emerges: Charlie Hebdo predominantly uses nominal phrases (*syntagme nominal*) as titles. Out of the six analyzed texts, four feature titles in the form of phrases, while the other two use simple sentences. News headlines play a crucial role in an article, as they not only create the first impression for readers but also influence how readers understand and retain other content related to the headline (Ecker et al., 2014). The following is a structural and functional analysis of three article titles, each discussing RN, NFP, and Ensemble.

*“Législatives. Comment Bardella a ruiné les repas de famille”*  
(Legislatives. How Bardella ruined the family dinner)

**Table 1. Charlie Hebdo’s Article Headline Structure published on June 19, 2024**

<i>Législatives</i>	.	<i>Comment</i>	<i>Bardella</i>	<i>a</i>	<i>ruiné</i>
<i>Nom</i>		<i>Adverbe</i>	<i>Nom</i>	<i>Verbe</i>	
<i>Syntagme Nominal</i>		<i>Syntagme Adverbial</i>	<i>Syntagme Nominal</i>	<i>Syntagme verbal</i>	
<i>CC de but</i>		<i>CC de maniere</i>	<i>Sujet</i>	<i>Pivot</i>	

<i>les</i>	<i>repas</i>	<i>de</i>	<i>famille</i>
<i>Article défini</i>	<i>Nom</i>	<i>Prep.</i>	<i>Nom</i>
<i>Syntagme Nominal</i>		<i>Syntagme nominal prep.</i>	
<i>COD</i>			

The title of the article about the RN, published on June 19, 2024, takes the form of a sentence with Bardella as the main subject, acting as the agent of the action, and the *pivot* in the form of the verb *ruiner* in the *passé composé* tense. The direct object (COD) of the action is *les repas de famille*, a nominal phrase (*syntagme nominal*) expanded by the preposition *de* to provide more specific information. In addition to its core elements, the sentence includes supplementary details. *Législatives* functions as a *complément circonstanciel de but* (*CC de but*), providing context for the article, which centers on the legislative elections. This function is reinforced by the opening sentence of the article: "*À l’approche des législatives anticipées, le poulet-frites du dimanche a désormais un drôle de goût*" ("As the early legislative elections approach, Sunday’s chicken and fries now have a strange taste"). This statement emphasizes the tension within families arising from preparations for the legislative elections. The article also discusses conflicts among family members supporting different political sides, further clarifying that *Législatives* is the focus of the discussion. Meanwhile, *Comment* acts as a *complément circonstanciel de manière* (*CC de manière*), explaining the way the subject’s action is carried out. Similarly, the title of the article about the left-wing party is also a sentence. As shown in Table 2, this title focuses on the right-wing party, with RN being used as the *sujet*.

*“Gauche : le RN ressuscite le grand cadavre à la renverse”*  
(Left: RN resurrects a grand corpse)

**Table 2. Charlie Hebdo’s Article Headline Structure published on July 10, 2024**

<i>Gauche</i>	:	<i>le</i>	<i>RN</i>	<i>ressuscite</i>	<i>le</i>	<i>grand</i>	<i>cadavre</i>
<i>Nom</i>		<i>Article défini</i>	<i>Nom</i>	<i>verbe</i>	<i>Article défini</i>	<i>adjective</i>	<i>nom</i>
<i>Syntaxme nominal</i>		<i>Syntaxme nominal</i>		<i>Syntaxme verbal</i>	<i>Syntaxme nominal</i>		
<i>CC de but</i>		<i>sujet</i>		<i>pivot</i>	<i>COD</i>		

<i>à</i>	<i>la</i>	<i>renverse</i>
<i>Prep.</i>	<i>Article défini</i>	<i>Nom</i>
<i>Syntaxme nominal prep.</i>		
<i>CC de manière</i>		

The verb *ressuscite*, functioning as the *pivot*, is used to indicate the main action, "to resurrect." The direct object (COD) of this action is *le grand cadavre*, a nominal phrase (*syntaxme nominal*) referring to the right-wing party. This title also includes two additional modifiers: *Gauche* acts as a *complément circonstanciel de but* (*CC de but*), providing context that the article is intended as a critique of the left-wing party, and *à la renverse* serves as a *complément circonstanciel de manière* (*CC de manière*), offering a more specific explanation of *le grand cadavre*, which, having been "dead," is now resurrected. In comparison, the article about the centrist party uses a phrase-based title, as shown in Table 3. Phrases, as syntactic elements lacking a complete subject and predicate, are often employed to create a concise and attention-grabbing effect for readers.

“*Législatives. Attal en campagne : Les 24 minutes du Mans*”  
(Legislatives. Attal in campaign: The 24 minutes of Le Mans)

**Table 3. Charlie Hebdo’s Article Headline Structure published on June 26, 2024**

<i>Législatives</i>	.	<i>Attal</i>	<i>en</i>	<i>campagne</i>	:
<i>Nom</i>		<i>Nom</i>	<i>Prép.</i>	<i>Nom</i>	
<i>Syntagme nominal</i>		<i>Syntagme nominal</i>	<i>Syntagme nominal prép.</i>		

<i>les</i>	<i>24</i>	<i>minutes</i>	<i>du</i>	<i>Mans</i>
<i>Article défini</i>	<i>Nom</i>		<i>Article défini</i>	<i>Nom</i>
<i>Syntagme nominal</i>			<i>Syntagme nominal</i>	

This choice of phrasing also serves to provide more room for interpretation, so that readers can immediately understand the point of the article without reading further. The title of this article is a phrase because there is no verb that functions as a *pivot*. The title is divided into two parts separated by a full stop (.) and a colon (:) which serve to provide structure and hierarchy of meaning. The first part, *Législatives*, is a stand-alone *syntagme nominal*, providing the general context of this article, which is about legislative elections. The second part, *Attal*, is also a *syntagme nominal* followed by *en campagne* as an adverb that shows the activity of the subject, *Attal*, who is campaigning. The use of a full stop separates the main topic (*Législatives*) from the more specific information (*Attal en campagne*), while the colon signals that the article will elaborate further details or explanations about *Attal's* campaign activities. The title highlights the subject and context directly, without any narrative elements, making it simpler and clearer to convey the main theme of the article.

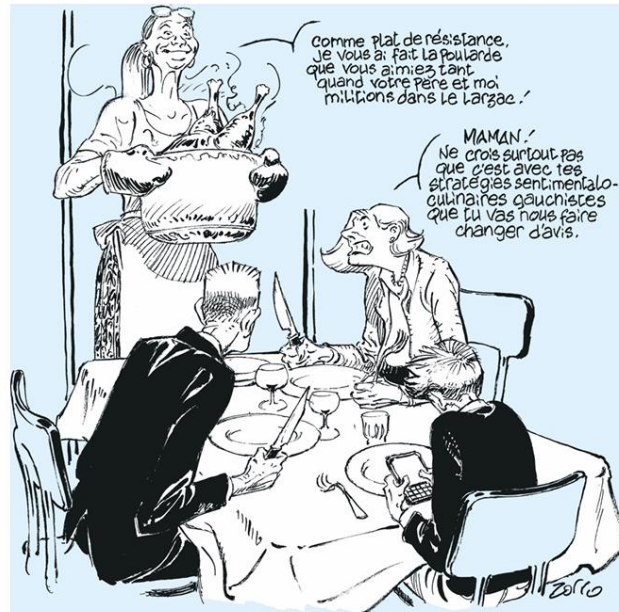
Charlie Hebdo's coverage of the legislative elections tends to use titles in the form of phrases. This is evident in the article about *Attal's* campaign (centrist bloc), which directly conveys the context of the legislative election campaign through a phrase. Meanwhile, titles in the form of sentences are used to highlight the flaws of RN. A more detailed explanation of this will be elaborated through semantic analysis in the following section.

### ***Right Wing as A Threat***

As previously explained, the title used for the article about the RN, published on June 19, 2024, is a simple sentence. Table 1 shows that *Bardella* acts as the sujet, while *a ruiné* serves as the *pivot* connecting the subject to the direct object (COD) *les repas de famille*. Additionally, the element *comment*, which functions as a *complément circonstanciel* (CC), indicates that the text will elaborate on how *Bardella* is perceived to have ruined family dinners. The use of the verb *ruiner*, which carries the semantic component *endommager* (damage), conveys a negative connotation, strengthening the critique of *Bardella* and, indirectly, the right-wing party he represents. Meanwhile, the object *les repas de famille*, a prepositional nominal phrase (*syntagme nominal prépositionnel*), highlights the social impact of this action, particularly on the intimate sphere of family.

In this article, the RN is portrayed negatively. This is reflected in the vocabulary used to refer to the RN or *Bardella*. The author employs terms such as *raciste* and *viriliste* to describe RN supporters. The term *raciste* (racist), with the semantic components *xénophobe* (xenophobic) and *intolérant* (intolerant), reflects a critical stance toward the discriminatory and intolerant attitudes associated with the RN. Additionally, the term *viriliste* (male chauvinist), with the component *patriarcal* (patriarchal), suggests a stance that supports traditional gender hierarchies. This representation portrays the right-wing party as problematic in relation to progressive values. *Mondon* (2023) states that the rise in the popularity of the far-right indicates the growing normalization of reactionary politics, particularly in terms of racism. This is further supported by the revelation that 38 members of the National Assembly

from the RN exhibit racist, xenophobic, and anti-Semitic attitudes (Varma & Reinerd, 2024). The negative depiction of the right-wing party is further reinforced by two illustrations included in the article.



**Figure 1.** Illustration in Charlie Hebdo's article published on June 19, 2024

Figure 1 illustrates a mother on the left side enthusiastically talking about the dinner she has prepared. In the illustration, the child remarks, "*stratégies sentimentalo-culinaires gauchistes*" (leftist sentimental-culinary strategies). This suggests that the mother in the illustration has prepared a dish with sentimental value. However, the child, an RN supporter, responds to the mother with skepticism or even cynicism, perceiving her actions as an attempt to change his political stance. The younger child ignores the mother's arguments, focusing instead on a phone or gadget in hand. This reflects the temperament of a right-wing supporter suspicious of the motives behind seemingly simple or apolitical actions. Aligning with this perspective, Vasilopoulos et al. (2018) explain that the RN leverages societal anxieties to bolster its popularity. This creates an emotional bond between the RN and its supporters, making them more defensive of their chosen political group, the RN. In contrast, the content of the illustration suggests that the mother is attempting to employ sentimental strategies.





**Figure 2.** Illustration in Charlie Hebdo's article published on June 19, 2024

In Figure 2, the image reinforces the previous narrative. It depicts a mother, and a child holding a baseball bat while wearing a Bardella mask. The mother says, “*tu recommenceras à embêter les oiseaux migrateurs après !*” (You can go back to bothering the migratory birds afterwards). This illustration alludes to the RN's anti-immigration image. Numerous depictions frame the party as radical, extreme, nationalist, or anti-immigration (Abdeslam, 2021). In an article published on June 26, 2024, about the Ensemble campaign, Charlie Hebdo also referred to the right-wing party using the term *immigrationniste*. This term is presented with a negative connotation, indicating criticism of Macron for creating new controversies by adopting terminology typical of the far-right, such as *immigrationniste*. In the article, this is conveyed through the sentence: “*Emmanuel Macron vient alors de lancer une énième polémique en reprenant des termes de l'extrême droite, tels que « immigrationniste »*” (Emmanuel Macron has just sparked yet another controversy by using terms from the far-right, such as *immigrationniste*). This indicates that the author attempts to portray Macron negatively, much like Charlie Hebdo depicts the RN, as something undesirable and to be avoided.

On the same day the article was published, an anti-RN demonstration took place in Lyon. According to Le Progrès (2024), various anti-RN demonstrations had occurred across multiple locations following the announcement of the dissolution of the assembly for early elections, which could result in RN's victory, given its success in European elections. In this context, Charlie Hebdo expressed its opposition to RN through an article published on June 19, 2024. This article took the form of an interview with a left-wing supporter who had family members voting for RN. In the same weekly edition, Charlie Hebdo also published an article titled “*Mille et une mauvaises raisons de voter RN*” (A Thousand and One Bad Reasons to Vote RN).

In addition to highlighting racism and anti-immigration, Charlie Hebdo emphasized RN's pro-Nazi history through an article published on July 3, 2024. The author critically portrayed RN as a party that has normalized far-right ideologies through a strategy of *dédiabolisation*—a process of reducing or even erasing the negative and harmful connotations associated with something (Larousse, 2024)—making the party appear more acceptable than before. This was evident in the statement: “*Il n'y a plus aucune honte à voter extrême droite*” (There is no longer any shame in voting far-right). This normalization has enabled RN to exploit public dissatisfaction with issues such as immigration, cultural identity loss, and economic and security concerns. Support is often built on fears, as expressed by a voter in the article: “*Je vais voter à l'extrême droite parce que je crains pour mon pouvoir d'achat*” (I will vote far-right because I fear for my purchasing power). The author also highlighted the irony of the Obernai community, which supports RN despite living near the Le Struthof concentration camp—a historical

symbol of far-right atrocities. The author wrote: “*On peut ainsi vivre à 20 km d’un ancien camp de concentration et faire totalement fi du passé*” (One can live 20 km from a former concentration camp and completely disregard the past). This reflects a disconnection between historical lessons and modern political realities. Many RN supporters focus on defending “traditional values”. These values are often used by RN to reject diversity and social change, emphasizing threats to local identity.

Additionally, the article was published three days after the first round of elections, during which RN led with 33.1% of the vote. In this article, RN is portrayed as the only party considered representative of right-wing voters. A supporter stated: “*Le RN, c’est la droite, le seul parti de droite, d’ailleurs*” (RN is the right, the only right-wing party, actually). The narrative that RN will restore authority appeals to various groups, including those disillusioned with moderate parties. However, the article criticizes public acceptance of RN as a form of neglecting critical historical lessons. The author concluded with the statement: “*Les tabous sont usés, la mémoire délavée*” (Taboos have faded, memories have eroded), warning that RN’s normalization could revive the dangers of far-right ideologies from the past.

A similar theme was addressed by Charlie Hebdo in an article published on July 10, 2024, three days after the second round of elections. While this article primarily focused on NFP’s shortcomings during the elections, it still frequently referenced RN. Charlie Hebdo stated: “... à l’Assemblée, prêt à s’arranger avec la mémoire des crimes nazis et avec ses conséquences jusqu’à aujourd’hui” (...in the Assembly, ready to reconcile with the memory of Nazi crimes and their consequences for today). The article’s title focuses on RN despite the content largely discussing NFP. This is evident in Table 2, where the title is structured as a sentence with RN as the subject actively performing an action, while *gauche* (the left) provides context for the article. Given the article’s overall context and Charlie Hebdo’s prior critiques, *le grand cadavre* (the great corpse) in the title refers to far-right ideologies presumed dead. This interpretation is reinforced by an illustration of a skull resembling Marine Le Pen’s hairstyle. The skull is depicted performing actions reminiscent of past far-right atrocities.



Figure 3. Illustration in Charlie Hebdo’s article published on July 10, 2024

The depiction of the RN as something dangerous was also illustrated by Charlie Hebdo at the beginning of the election announcement in the editorial text from the June 12, 2024, edition. The writer’s negative sentiment toward the right-wing is evident in the use of the word *abcès* (abscess), which literally refers to a collection of pus, carrying connotations of filth, disgust, and danger. According to the online dictionary Le Robert (2024), in a political context, the phrase *vider l’abcès* means to resolve a tense situation. This depiction is reinforced by the statement: “... *ficher la trouille aux électeurs en brossant un tableau abominable du Rassemblement national*” (... frightening voters by painting a heinous picture of the Rassemblement National). The writer uses the word *abominable* (heinous), which includes semantic components such as *mauvais* (bad), *l’horreur* (horror), *crime* (crime), and *horrible* (horrifying), further reinforcing the negative sentiment toward the right-wing as being a major threat.

An article published on July 19, 2024, shows a shift in the depiction of the RN compared to previous articles. Charlie Hebdo portrays the RN with negative connotations, noting it as a threat.

However, in this article, the focus is more on the strategic character of the party. Based on the semantic components of the vocabulary used, the writer describes the RN as a group carefully strategizing its actions. Words like *mijoter* (to simmer) indicate that the RN is preparing its steps with meticulous planning and care. Meanwhile, the use of the word *assurer* (to ensure) suggests that the RN is working to maintain its position with confidence and control, although they do not feel entirely secure, as reflected in words like *craindre* (to fear) and *anxieux* (anxious), which reveal a sense of uncertainty and anxiety among party members. This shift indicates that, although the RN is in a stronger position after the election, they remain cautious and strategic, striving to secure their position while addressing challenges and uncertainties.

### ***Fragility of the Left Coalition***

The article published by Charlie Hebdo on July 10, 2024, about the left-wing has a unique structure, featuring four subheadings written by different authors, each focusing on a distinct aspect. Upon deeper analysis, each subheading reveals the internal divisions within the NFP, which prevent the group from achieving complete unity. This article highlights sharp criticism of the fractures within the NFP, which should ideally symbolize the political unity of the left in France. Based on semantic component analysis, Charlie Hebdo portrays the NFP as a fragmented group, marked by significant internal conflicts between moderate and radical partys. In one section, LFI is depicted negatively, particularly using terms like *antisemitisme* (antisemitism) and *radicaux* (radicals). The writer emphasizes that LFI's radicalism weakens the NFP's ability to act as a united and secular bloc. In this article, Charlie Hebdo links LFI's radicalism to the risk of reigniting public fears, as expressed in the statement that the right-wing and far-right exploit LFI's radical rhetoric to revive "*la peur des rouges*" (the fear of the reds), referencing the fear of communism in 1981. When François Mitterrand was elected President in 1981, he included Communist ministers in the government, which heightened fears of communism. Critics were concerned that this signaled a shift toward communist policies, potentially endangering democratic and economic freedoms. However, these fears subsided as Mitterrand's policies proved to be more moderate than initially anticipated. In fact, the deviations in 1981 were significantly more minor in scale compared to those in the following decade (Jobard, 2015).

In the final subheading, the writer uses vocabulary that implicitly portrays disunity and internal divisions, both within local communities and in broader contexts concerning the NFP's victory. Phrases like "*On se croise, on ne se mélange pas*" (we meet, but do not mix) clearly highlight persistent social and cultural segregation despite claims of diversity. This tension is further emphasized with terms like "*mixité à deux vitesses*" (two-speed diversity), indicating unequal inclusivity where dominant groups continue to control spaces and resources. The phrase "*Ceux qui vont et viennent... et ceux qui n'en sortent jamais*" (those who come and go... and those who never leave) reflects that mobility and freedom are only enjoyed by certain groups. This vocabulary creates an image of a fragmented environment where the NFP's political victory fails to foster social cohesion and reveals significant challenges in overcoming internal and societal fragmentation.

The critique of the left-wing is also reflected in the title. As previously mentioned, the article's title features a subject focused on the RN, while *Gauche* (left) is used as a *complément circonstanciel de but*. When examining the article's content, the title is intended to critique the left by presenting the rise of the RN as a threat caused by the NFP's failures during the election. This implies that the RN's resurgence is not solely due to its strength but also the negligence of the left-wing. Charlie Hebdo not only criticizes the RN's rise but also highlights the NFP's internal weaknesses, which are seen as failing to capitalize on political momentum and instead creating opportunities for opponents to grow stronger.

This article was published three days after the second round of elections, which was won by the NFP. However, the NFP's percentage of victory was insufficient to secure a majority in the National Assembly. This explains why the NFP's victory does not bring relief. Many left-wing supporters shifted to vote for the right in this election, as mentioned in the editorial text of the weekly edition where this article was published. The editorial explains that the left's victory was achieved through a weak alliance and last-minute compromises, as stated in the following: "*la victoire de la gauche rassure, mais elle a été obtenue au prix de tractations et de désistements de dernière minute*" (the victory of the left is reassuring, but it was achieved at the cost of last-minute negotiations and withdrawals). The editorial also criticizes the left-wing's political strategy, which tends to avoid controversial issues such as security, immigration, and authority. This is described as retreating to their "comfort zone" of social

agendas. This critique reinforces the argument from the previous article that the left's failure to address significant challenges has opened the door for the RN's resurgence, which successfully attracts voters through populist and extreme rhetoric.

Meanwhile, another left-leaning media outlet, *Libération*, also published a similar article about the NFP's victory. The article, written by Quinio (2024) on July 7, 2024, discusses the NFP's strategy for winning the election. In the article's conclusion, the writer notes that despite the NFP's victory, the RN's strength is also growing, as expressed in the sentence: "*Etre à la hauteur lui interdit aussi d'oublier que l'extrême droite est plus puissante que jamais dans notre pays*" (Meeting this challenge also means not forgetting that the far-right is stronger than ever in our country). Similar coverage by *Libération*, a left-wing media outlet, reinforces Charlie Hebdo's position as a left-leaning publication.

The article published on July 19, 2024, reinforces the view that the left-wing, while competitive and active, also faces significant challenges in maintaining unity and focus in confronting the RN's threat. Through semantic component analysis and word choice, the writer portrays the left-wing as a competitive group. The use of words like "*Vainqueur*" (winner), "*Adversaire*" (opponent), and "*Compétition*" (competition) suggests that the left is seen as aggressive in political rivalry. However, vocabulary related to challenges, such as "*Inviter*" (to invite) and "*Mesurer*" (to measure), as well as provocations like "*Provoquer*" (to provoke) and "*Insolence*" (arrogance), indicate that the left's internal dynamics are fraught with conflicts and complex negotiations. This is reflected in statements like "*Comme si, au sein du NFP, sortir des noms consensuels était devenu un plus grand défi, que de s'assurer de pouvoir gagner une élection*" (As if, within the NFP, coming up with consensus names had become a bigger challenge than ensuring election victory), which highlights the difficulty in choosing leaders who can unite and represent all sides. This article specifically focuses on the left-wing using sentences and a narrative structure that emphasizes their internal rivalries. The choice of title, which uses the term "*magouilles*" (manipulations), taken from a quote by Mathilde Panot, the leader of LFI, underscores how internal competition often involves tactics perceived as lacking transparency.

The analysis above highlights the internal divisions within the NFP. Despite efforts to present itself as a united force, the NFP is portrayed as a fragile coalition with internal conflicts between moderate and radical partys, further damaging its image. The writer underscores the negative impact of radicalization, particularly within LFI, which exacerbates political tensions and benefits the right-wing. Additionally, the left's inability to address key issues like security and immigration has created opportunities for the RN's resurgence. Overall, Charlie Hebdo demonstrates how disunity and the failure to tackle crucial issues jeopardize the political future of the left-wing in France.

### ***The Center's Fragility to Criticism***

In the article published on June 26, 2024, the centrist party, Ensemble, is depicted as a group that often avoids addressing issues. The word *mobiliser* is used to highlight the efforts of politicians, especially Attal, to positively engage the public. The semantic components of *mobiliser* include elements of action (*action*) and unity (*rassemblement*), as seen in the statement: "*multiplie les visites dans les régions pour écouter et répondre aux préoccupations des citoyens*" (conducting numerous visits to regions to listen and respond to citizens' concerns). Conversely, the word *contourner* reflects a strategy of avoidance issues without direct confrontation. This meaning is evident in the description of the centrist party, particularly Macron, who is described as avoiding sensitive issues with generalized responses, as noted in the statement: "*détourner les questions sensibles par des réponses générales*" (diverting sensitive questions with general answers). The vocabulary *rassurer* is used to describe efforts to reassure the public. Attal is portrayed as more successful in this regard, as shown in the phrase: "*Attal sait rassurer les citoyens avec des réponses concrètes et une approche empathique*" (Attal knows how to reassure citizens with concrete answers and an empathetic approach). In contrast, Macron is often depicted as failing to meet public expectations due to a perceived elitist attitude. Another distinction is evident in the use of *stopper*, which conveys decisive action to halt something. Overall, the centrist party is portrayed as a group that tends to avoid direct confrontation, both with other partys and with the public, reflecting a broader strategy of evading criticism. The article also differentiates between Macron and Attal. The public tends to view Attal more favorably because he is depicted as engaging with citizens through a reassuring and non-elitist communication style. This underscores the role of words like *mobiliser* and *rassurer* in shaping public perceptions of political actors.

Aligned with the impression conveyed in the text, the author crafts a headline that critiques Attal's campaign. As shown in Table 10, after the colon (:), the nominal syntagm "*les 24 minutes du*

*Mans*” (The 24 Minutes at Le Mans) is used. However, upon reviewing the complete text, the author does not mention 24 minutes but instead refers to “*demi-heure*” (half an hour). This discrepancy highlights the author’s critique of Attal’s brief campaign. During the campaign, Attal and his team appeared to avoid direct engagement with the public. This is evidenced by the sentence: “*enfermé dans une brasserie avec des sympathisants et des soutiens, uniquement des personnes acquises à sa cause*” (confined to a brasserie with sympathizers and supporters, only those already aligned with his cause).

A similar portrayal appears in the editorial text dated June 12, 2024. The vocabulary used to describe the centrist party in this text contains semantic components referring to obstruction or limitation, particularly in the context of power relations and governance. Words such as *pouvoir* (power), *gouverner* (govern), *refuser* (refuse), and *bloquer* (block) illustrate efforts to control, prevent, or halt specific processes. For instance, *pouvoir* encompasses components like *avoir* (having), *droit* (right), *permission* (permission), and *possibilité* (possibility), indicating control over the right and ability to act or make decisions. Similarly, *gouverner* carries meanings like *diriger* (direct), *exercer* (exercise), and *conduite* (conduct), referring to an ability to regulate and lead with authority, allowing for the control of situations. On the other hand, *refuser* (refuse) signifies opposition to actions or decisions that should be taken, with components such as *répondre négativement* (respond negatively), *décliner* (decline), and *se rebeller* (rebel). This illustrates a rejection of authority. The word *bloquer* (block) carries semantic components like *empêcher* (prevent), *l’arrêter* (halt), *impraticables* (unfeasible), and *l’immobiliser* (immobilize), indicating actions that stop something or to make something inoperable. All these terms connect to the semantic field of obstruction. In this context, the obstruction may refer to practices aimed at hindering debates or decisions, as explained in Le Robert (2024) as efforts to obstruct parliamentary debates or group actions. Such obstructive actions are evident in the statement that Macron avoids signing regulations and limits government decisions in certain areas where constitutional approval is required. This demonstrates that these actions are part of a broader strategy of obstruction.

The analysis reveals that Charlie Hebdo employs headlines and vocabulary to critique the centrist party, particularly through representations of Macron and Attal. Using nominal phrases without verbs in headlines reflects a more descriptive approach, avoiding assertive narratives, which aligns with the party’s perceived political weakness in responding to social issues. Furthermore, the critique of obstruction in policymaking, through terms like *pouvoir*, *gouverner*, *refuser*, and *bloquer*, highlights that the centrist party, especially Macron, tends to avoid concrete actions instead of blocking or limiting policies. Overall, Charlie Hebdo uses language to depict the centrist party’s inability to address criticism, with Attal standing out as the only figure perceived positively due to his empathetic and concrete approach.

## CONCLUSION

Through an analysis of syntactic structure and function, it is evident that Charlie Hebdo exhibits a distinctive pattern in crafting article headlines, particularly in political contexts. Charlie Hebdo portrays the RN negatively, framing it as a threat rooted in far-right ideology, which clashes with the values upheld by the publication. As Tsymbal & Rudenko (2022) noted, Charlie Hebdo employs sharp and straightforward language in its critiques, reflected in its headline construction. While the publication typically opts for concise, phrase-based headlines, it deliberately uses complete sentences to strengthen its critical stance against the RN. As Ibrahim & Laksman-Huntley (2023) explain, simple and complex sentences can convey information more clearly. Headlines focused on the RN are often structured as sentences with negative connotations, including those where the RN serves as the subject, such as articles addressing the NFP. This distinct approach to headline writing underscores Charlie Hebdo’s opposition to the far-right. The choice of vocabulary further highlights criticism of the right-wing, focusing on sensitive issues like racism and anti-immigration, which are frequently associated with the RN, thereby reinforcing a predominantly negative sentiment toward the party.

Charlie Hebdo’s criticism is not limited to the right-wing; it also extends to other parties, including the left-wing LFI, which has been scrutinized for cases of anti-Semitism, revealing how



sensitive issues shape party representation. Moreover, the NFP faces harsh criticism for errors during the election process, highlighting its weaknesses as a fragmented coalition. The Ensemble, part of the President's coalition, is criticized for avoiding unfavorable scrutiny and criticism. A gradation in Charlie Hebdo's criticism is also apparent. The publication delivers particularly sharp critiques of the RN during the campaign and second-round elections. Its criticism employs extremely negative language, aiming to portray the RN as a public threat to be avoided. However, after the second-round elections won by the NFP, Charlie Hebdo shifted its focus to criticizing the NFP, though the RN remains a key target portrayed as a strategic entity, as illustrated in articles about the first day at the National Assembly.

Initially, Charlie Hebdo appeared neutral by criticizing all party. However, upon deeper analysis, differences in the critiques emerge. By criticizing all party, albeit with varying intensity, Charlie Hebdo appears to adopt an approach centered on exposing the weaknesses of parties deemed contrary to its values. This aligns with Miranda's (2019) findings, which indicate that Charlie Hebdo does not critique specific religions but opposes fanaticism across all faiths. Similarly, in the context of the legislative elections, Charlie Hebdo critiques all party, albeit with harsher criticism directed at the RN. The publication's partiality is evident in the differing tones of its critiques. Analyzing the semantic components of the vocabulary reveals distinct purposes behind criticisms of the left, right, and center. Charlie Hebdo critiques the left as fragmented, warning it to consolidate its strength to counter the right-wing. The publication is harsher on the political right, portraying it as a force to be avoided. Meanwhile, the center is depicted as weak and inclined to evade criticism.

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