

**La Politique de la diversité : la nomination aux postes de
gouvernement des personnes de couleur sous la présidence de
Jacques Chirac et de Nicolas Sarkozy**

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ABSTRACT

At the start of the 21st century, the number of migrants from western and northern Africa, together with their children born in France, approached 20% of the French population. Up to that time, this group of people had found it difficult to obtain posts in the various levels of government, primarily because of their origins. In 2005, Jacques Chirac appointed a person to the ministry of the government whose origin was from the Maghreb. In 2007, Nicolas Sarkozy appointed three women with African origins to the ministry. The actions of the two presidents are seen as attempts to reflect the changing face of France, i.e. the diversity of its people, following the extensive immigration from western and northern Africa in the latter part of the 20th century.

Since diversity is a relatively new concept in French politics, academic books and articles on it only really began to appear with the appointment of Azouz Begag in 2005. The elevation of Nicolas Sarkozy to the French presidency in May 2007 saw an increase in their number, but the policy of diversity in the government remains a relatively new subject. The goal of this thesis is to make an assessment of the actions of Presidents Chirac and Sarkozy in their attempts to reflect the diversity of the French people in their governments. In addition, this thesis seeks to examine the reasons for the actions of Jacques Chirac and Nicolas Sarkozy.

The political figures who feature in this analysis are Azouz Begag, ministerial delegate for the Promotion of equality in the government of Dominique de Villepin under the presidency of Jacques Chirac, and three females in the government of François Fillon nominated by Nicolas Sarkozy: Rachida Dati, minister of Justice and Keeper of the Seals; Fadela Amara, junior minister for Urban Policies; and Rama Yade, junior minister for Human Rights.

The first part of the research involves an examination of the four persons nominated by the two Presidents. A profile will be developed, which will include their origin,

their experience in the world of politics before their appointment and the expertise that they brought to government. The second part examines the process of appointment of French government ministers. This involves a review of the legal structure as provided by the French constitution, culminating in the current legislation of the Fifth Republic, and the practices of the Presidents of the Fifth Republic in regard to the process of appointment. The third part focuses on the reactions of the French people to these appointments. These reactions will be obtained by a review of opinion polls conducted by major polling organisation, of various articles in the press on the four personalities, and, in addition, the reaction of the French public to them by reference to a range of comments which are posted in various blogs on the internet.