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Titre de la communication: *Celebrity politics and the leadership of the Greater London Authority*

Résumé:

In 2000, Ken Livingstone became the first elected mayor of London having campaigned aboard a purple bus adorned with the slogan "Hoot for Ken". Far from damaging his credibility, his overtly populist attitude towards this election ensured him victory against the mainstream political parties' candidates. Londoners would often – fondly - refer to him as "our Ken" throwing caution to the wind concerning actual policies. He was re-elected in 2004 following the success of his congestion charge and he openly boasted that both Thatcher and Blair had tried to crush him but that both had failed.

In 2008, the Conservatives looked desperately for a media friendly candidate who would be able to beat Livingstone on his own turf, where programmes and policies are replaced by celebrity friendly acts and discourse. With one year to go, Boris Johnson was drawn out of the hat and the race for the London mayoralty soon became a duel between "Boris" and "Ken".

"Boris" won but the two were in close competition again in 2012. This time round, both of them had a record to defend and to attack which levelled the playing field somewhat. It was a closer race than in 2008 but the Conservative candidate was able to rely more on traditional voting patterns in the outer boroughs of London where celebrity politics have less appeal.

In this contribution I shall look at the way in which elections to be mayor of London shed a particular light on political representation in our modern democracies and whether they have established a celebrity trend in political discourse that will be hard to abandon in the case of the Great London Authority.

5 mots clés: Greater London Authority, celebrity politics, Livingstone, Johnson, mayor

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