

MEDIATING THE CATALAN INDEPENDENCE MOVEMENT

12–13 September, 2018

Senate House, University of London, Room 243

PROGRAMME

DAY 1

3:00-3:20 Registration

3:20-3:30 Welcome by the organizers

3:30-5:00 Panel 1: Social Media

Chair: Dominic Keown (University of Cambridge)

Gabriela Viadero-Carral (Universidad Complutense de Madrid). "The conflict that went Viral: Catalan Political Crisis in the Social Networks"

Spain is experiencing one of its greatest political crises of the last decades due to the Catalan independence movement. For months we have witnessed how two opposite discourses are trying to shape public opinion. These two discourses have reached us through traditional media but also through digital media and especially social networks such as Twitter, YouTube or Instagram. Nowadays, each one of us is a potential journalist and our information might even go viral.

In this paper we will precisely analyse two pictures and two videos that went viral and study how these pieces of information contributed to shape the two different discourses that were being held by the contending parties of the Catalan conflict. One of these images shows a father with his son in his arms, trying to give a flower to a Spanish Guardia Civil during the referendum that had been suspended by Spain's Constitutional Court. In the other picture we see four kids and a baby blocking the traffic during the pro-independence general strike. With regard to the videos, one of them was recorded during the time the Spanish Guardia Civil and National Police had been deployed in Catalonia ahead of the illegal referendum on independence for 1st October. One officer from Seville responded to noisy pot-banging from a pro-independence group under the balcony of his hotel singing a fandango (flamenco song) that stopped the pot-banger and elicited a few "Olés" from the protestors. The other video shows us a similar story: in this case a resident from Barcelona tries to stop the noisy pot-banging in his neighbourhood by playing a famous Spanish song "¡Qué viva España!" (Long life to Spain) very loudly.

Mandie Iveson (U. of Brighton). “Tweeting the Nation: The Online Construction of Moral and Symbolic Boundaries in the Catalan Independence Process”

Grassroots organizations have been pivotal in the Catalan independence process and have used social media intensively to raise national consciousness and mobilise the public. Drawing on theories of symbolic and moral boundaries (Lamont & Molnár, 2002; Lauderdale, 1976), this paper explores the discursive constructions of nationalism of two opposing grassroots organisations – one pro-independence and one pro-union – and how these constructions are mediated on Twitter. Contrary to the public rhetoric of a modern Catalan nation, analysis suggests that discourses of deviance are present in each organisation’s narratives and concludes that the boundary work and othering strategies used by both sides contribute to the creation and maintenance of the “us/them” dichotomy present in all nation building projects.

DAY 2

9:30-11:30 Panel 3: Humour and the Press

Chair: Guillem Colom Montero (University of Exeter)

Núria Bonet (U. of Plymouth). “Humour as Resistance: The Songs and Chants of the Catalan Independence Referendum”

This paper examines the songs and chants of the Catalan independence movements in the run-up to the independence referendum of 1 October 2017, and the effect of the police brutality on that day on the soundscape of the movement. It argues that the humorous nature of the often spontaneous music functioned as resistance against the police repression, highlighting the dichotomy between the authoritarian police response and the peaceful protests. It also discusses the change in tone in the soundscape of the pro-independence movement after the police brutality on the day of the referendum. In fact, it argues that the shift in power dynamics and the use of violence as method of repression is reflected in the shift from parodic songs towards more direct and combative musical expressions. This paper analyses the music of the street protests, the musical programme of the national day celebrations of 11 September and other pro-independence acts. The analysis of the protesters’ repertoire reveals a telling mixture of traditional Catalan songs and popular chants, and the revival of parodic songs dating from the end of the Franco dictatorship by the Catalan band La Trinca.

Cristina Perales-García, Carles Pont and Christopher Tulloch (Universitat Pompeu Fabra). “The Fight for the Front Page: The Procès in the Anglo-American Press and the Official Positions of the US/UK Governments in the Catalan Independence Story”

The general objective of this proposal is to analyse the news coverage and op-ed articles in the US and UK quality broadsheets regarding the Catalan independence process between 2010 and 2017. The two more specific aims of the paper detect and analyse the influence of international public opinion regarding the Catalonia-Spain conflict, based on the published opinion in the Anglo-American press and to compare the diplomatic positioning of the US and UK governments on the issue in relation to the journalism produced by their respective leading titles. The study, based largely on framing analysis, news stories and opinion columns published by the *Guardian*, the *Daily Telegraph*, the *New York Times* and the *Washington Post* from June 2010 (and the cutbacks on the Catalan Statute of Autonomy) up until the 3rd of October and the aftermath of the Referendum. This is

complemented by an ethnographic study based on in-depth interviews with foreign correspondents in Spain and the official press releases of the US and UK administrations regarding the position of their respective governments with respect to the Procés.

11:30-12:00 Coffee and tea break

12:00-1:00 Round table

Participants:

Guillem Colom Montero (U of Exeter)

Dominic Keown (U of Cambridge)

Uta Staiger (University College London)

Chairs:

John London (Centre for Catalan Studies, Queen Mary, U. of London)

Mari Paz Balibrea (Centre for Iberian and Latin American Visual Studies, Birkbeck, U. of London)

END OF CONFERENCE

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