

FRAMING THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN CATALONIA AND SPAIN: A SEMIO-NARRATIVE ANALYSIS OF THE 2012 CATALAN ELECTION CAMPAIGN ADS

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During the Spanish 2008 electoral campaign, the socialist candidate (and winner of these elections) José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero used a story which the Partido Socialista Obrero Español (PSOE, the socialist party) adopted as a basis for its campaign, a campaign that did away with debates on ideas like what solutions there might be to an economic crisis the socialists insisted on denying. Using what some authors, such as Aira (2009), have called a Lakoffian frame (Lakoff, 2004), the campaign appealed to feelings; to an emotional and uplifting impact; to the pride of feeling a democrat. In short, the manufacturing of an adapted story prevailed in a society so educated in audiovisual storytelling that it became especially epithelial, sensitive and a potential victim of persuasion by means of emotions.

As Brader (2006) pointed out, the most recognizable quality of emotions is our conscious experience of them. Moreover, emotions make their appearance in common lore and philosophy as mental dispositions that are opposed to reason. Nevertheless, today's psychologists and neuroscientists increasingly see emotions as performing a critical function, providing feedback to individuals about the significance of objects and events in relation to their goals. In addition, this feedback occurs outside of awareness, freeing individuals for more intentional processing. Thus,

emotions may be closer to the seat of reason than to its undoing (Brader & Corrigan, 2005). This idea of emotions plays a crucial role in political election affecting political participation (Marcus et al., 2000; Lerner et al., 2003).

This model exerted a powerful influence on the 2012 Catalan campaign and the electoral communication strategies adopted by parties. The text of one of the PSOE election ads, accompanied by images and music in complete harmony with it and growing to a perfect crescendo at the final outcome, demonstrates this appeal to feelings, emotions. The Catalan election campaign of 2012 can therefore be seen as having been a challenge for the spin doctors.

The elections were preceded by the mass demonstration “Catalonia, new state of Europe”, which took place on 11 September, 2012, the national holiday of Catalonia, with between 1.5 and 2 million people taking to the streets to claim independence for Catalonia in what was the most populated event in its history. The following week, at a meeting between the President of the Catalan Government, Artur Mas and the Spanish Prime Minister, Mariano Rajoy, the two leaders were in clear disagreement. Rajoy reiterated his refusal to discuss Mas’ proposed fiscal pact for Catalonia, breaking off negotiations between the two governments. In a press conference after the meeting, Mas reiterated his decision to make an important announcement on 25 September, coinciding with the general policy debate in the Parliament of Catalonia.

On September 27, during said debate a resolution was approved urging the government resulting from the election to hold a referendum on self-determination for Catalonia, preferably before 2016. Mas expressed in his speech to the opening session of the debate his conviction that the newly elected parliament would have the mission to exercise the right of self-determination for Catalonia.

Consequently, and by contrast with previous elections, Catalonia-Spain relations became a necessary axis for articulating discourse; that is, it became the central theme of the campaign on which every party had to position itself. As an issue, it was already a recurring element in the electoral programs of some parties, such as the consolidated Esquerra Republicana de Catalunya (ERC, separatist in ideology) and the newly-arrived Solidaritat per a la Independència (SI also separatist), the former having historically defined its “brand” on the relationship with Spain (openly proclaiming a desire for independence), or the PPC (the Catalan branch of the main Spanish conservative party), for whom forming part of Spain is a given and indisputable matter of course.

However, for the other parties the relationship between Catalonia and Spain was a key issue on which they had to adopt a clear stance.

Paradoxically, those parties that had not made the issue a central theme in previous elections were the ones which had historically achieved a majority government in Catalonia: *Convergència i Unió* (CiU) and the *Partit dels Socialistes de Catalunya* (PSC, the Catalan branch of the PSOE). In these elections, however, they were forced to make a clear statement on an issue which was not new -in the context of Catalonia- but which there had been no need to take a stance on previously; a statement that had to be clear, open and public and could potentially provoke conflict within their organization – between different sectors of the party, but also and especially between the party bases and the leading candidates.

From this perspective, and for these majority parties in the Catalan electoral spectrum, the communicative challenge was twofold — define a campaign strategy capable of convincing elements both inside and outside the party.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES AND SAMPLE

The specific objective of this paper is to analyze the different ways in which each of the four main political parties address the question of relations between Catalonia and Spain in their election messages. That is, we attempt to analyze whether and how each of the political parties represented in the Catalan Parliament confronts this question, how they define their starting position, the goals of the party, the goals of the country (whether Catalonia or Spain) and the means of meeting them.

In this narrative construction we will pay special attention to the ways in which each political party constructs the narrative “we”. Without going into too much detail in this section, it is worth noting that the contents of any media are analyzable from the point of view of how they conform a “we” with the viewer and that how this is done forms one of the style of the chain. Televised election ads are perfect places to conform the “we”, not only because they are an autonomous and independent statement but also due to their particular role in the context of any election process. That is, in any election campaign ad, there are references to particular aims that are to benefit the public in some way or another, there are different ways to promote participation (vote) and there are also different expressions of collective desires and/or needs. All of this shapes a “we” which is not only narrative

but also enunciative which is of particular relevance in this research conducted on the Catalan elections. Therefore, the analysis of how each political party conforms its own particular “we” becomes one of the main objectives of this research.

The sample for this analysis consists of the electoral ads produced by the four main parties involved in the elections broadcasted during the free timeslots that public media are forced to offer to political parties with parliamentary representation. It should be pointed out that these free spaces represent a remarkable exception of the Spanish electoral system¹. The following ads are included in the sample:

- 3 ads by the ruling party, *Convergència i Unió* (CiU), which had taken office in 2010 and was calling early elections;
- 3 ads by the main opposition party, the *Partit Socialista de Catalunya* (PSC). This party, along with the ERC and *Iniciativa per Catalunya Verds* (ICV-EUiA, a coalition of communist and ecologist parties), formed part of the previous three-party coalition government that ruled Catalonia from 2003 to 2010;
- 2 ads by the *Esquerra Republicana de Catalunya* (ERC), opposition party and member of the coalition mentioned in the above paragraph with the PSC and ICV-EUiA;
- 2 ads by PPC, the ruling party in Spain, broadcasted both in Catalan and Spanish language.

METHODOLOGY

This research aims to identify the main narratives generated in each of these ads, with primary emphasis on the narrative constructions referred to the image of the leader (the candidate) and to the relationship that is constructed on the one hand with his/her political party and on the other hand to the relationship constructed with the public. In the analysis of such narratives what is of paramount importance, due to the context mentioned in the introduction, is the positioning of each political party with regard to the issues related to national sovereignty and the right to decide.

¹ Thus, political parties with parliamentary representation, i.e. parties which have obtained parliamentary representation in previous elections, are entitled to a free prime-time slot on public television at lunchtime and at night. Needless to say, this kind of prerogative establishes rules that clearly contribute to consolidating those parties with parliamentary representation and make it difficult for parties without it to have their messages reach the public.

To carry out these analyses, a double methodology has been applied: the model of narrative and actantial semiotics (Greimas, 1984) and also particular aspects of the enunciative analysis (Courtés, 1976, 1989).

Thus, an analysis was first carried out of the actantial structure of narratives. This analysis, resulting from the work done in the field of greimasian semiotic analysis (Greimas, 1984), consists of identifying the main actants in each of the electoral advertisements and the role they play regarding the whole narrative structure.

The interest of this type of approach in a case such as ours is twofold: firstly, in the analysis itself, as it allows a qualitative comparison between the different narratives involved in their structure. On the other hand, and of particular significance given the context of early elections in which the relationship between Catalonia and Spain is a primary question -if not the most relevant issue and the reason for the early elections- all political parties had to make reference to it, in one way or another.

A thematic analysis in this case would therefore be extremely flat and redundant; the interest lies precisely in analyzing how each of the parties conceived this relationship by exploring the actantial structure of their narratives; what role each attributes to its leader and/or their party, where they situate “Catalonia” and “Spain” in the narratives, and what means they use to establish the parameters of the relationship.

So, the narrative roles considered are based on the Greimas (1984) narrative semiotic proposal:

- The subject. This is the central role of narrative; it is what is directed towards the object and it is usually performed by the main character of narrative, and the hero;
- The object is the function played by what is desired by the subject and it can be performed by a quality, a physical object, material or immaterial;
- The helper is the function performed by whatever subject, object, quality, institutions, etc. that helps to perform the action
- The opponent is what hinders the accomplishment of the action;
- The sender is what instigates the action;
- The receiver is what benefits from it.

This first analysis allows us to account for the fundamental differences in definitions of the starting position of each political party (or definitions of the problem) and therefore to compare the different goals established and means of facilitating and/or hindering the achievement of these goals.

This analysis would not be complete, however, if it did not also include analysis of the audiovisual resources employed in each narrative. That is, having analyzed the “what” of the narrative (the history, in narrative terms), we must analyze the “how” (the story in narrative terms). The enunciative analysis allows to identify the different audiovisual resources used to transmit the message produced by each party. This is the second method of analysis, which complements the first, although for reasons of space it cannot be fully developed in this paper. To conduct this second analysis, we used work carried out by the Groupe Mu (1992) in relation to plastic sign of the image and Gaudreault and Jost (1994) regarding the analysis of audiovisual enunciation. These two authors furthered previous literary analysis done by Genette (1990) and applied it to the audiovisual setting, splitting the notion of focus on both the cognitive and the perceptive perspectives.

In this respect, and since we are dealing specifically with televised election ads, the enunciation analysis becomes of particular relevance precisely because it includes an audio and visual analysis of the ads, using specific concepts and theoretical approaches of television and cinema analysis.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Before presenting and discussing the results of the analysis, we will provide a brief description of each of the ads.

CiU ads

The first ads (a.1) was entitled Together we are working towards a way forward. In it appears the presidential candidate for the government of Catalonia, Artur Mas, from the bottom of the screen, with sharp purple rocks in the background, moving towards the camera, as day breaks. The voice throughout the ad is his, delivering the following message: “Together we are working towards a way forward, a path where nothing is yet decided; we know it will not be an easy path, but anything is possible”.

At this moment of the ad, the light changes (day has dawned), the music is very energetic and the camera closes in on the candidate, who smiles and continues, pausing with each sentence: “We need

the strength of everyone to make it along the path, because only side-by-side can we make progress; democratically; peacefully; serenely and always telling the truth. Because it is your dreams that will guide our steps, the steps of Catalonia, the will of a people”. The images appearing in this second part of the ad are those of the candidate surrounded by Catalan flags, surrounded by an applauding audience and cheers in a collective celebration of national identity.

A female voice closes the ad: “Let’s make it possible. *Convergència i Unió*”.

The second ad is entitled *The will of a people* (A.2). It is a choral ad in which numerous citizens appear, one by one, making diverse statements (the camera gradually approaches each one closer and closer) until the candidate Artur Mas appears. These citizens –who represent different ages, professions and backgrounds- each say a sentence: “What we want is very simple; to be able to write our own destiny (in Catalan), because what nobody can deny us is our right to decide (in Spanish); and we will do so wisely; to achieve a freer, more prosperous country, with greater justice and social welfare”. The camera slows and almost imperceptibly approaches Mas in the foreground: “It’s Catalonia’s time; with the power of the majority we will be heard; it won’t be easy, but anything is possible if we make the will of a people heard”. The same female voice as in the previous ad ends the narrative: “*CiU*, anything is possible”.

The third ad, *Together we will make it possible* (a.3), begins with extreme close-ups of the candidate which can never be seen entirely, with a stern look and reflective music; speaking to the camera he says: “I know we’re living in a time of doubt, difficulties and suffering” (the shot changing with each statement). He then speaks to individuals in front of him (glimpses of the candidate and serious but attentive faces listening to his words), saying: “But now we have a historic opportunity, an opportunity that will not always be there and that we need to take advantage of; a unique opportunity to live better, together. We can reach as far as you want and on this path you know that I am and will remain by your side. Because only if we go together, can we make it possible”. The female voice ends the ad with the sentence: “Let’s make it possible on the 25th”. In this second part of the ad, the candidate’s speech accelerates, as does the proximity of the shot; the music becomes more energetic and everyone starts to smile, sheepishly at first and then quite openly with great complicity in their actions; the music, the images and the words of Mas appear to convince his listeners.

Narrative and enunciative analysis. The *CiU* ads are very consistent in their narrative structure, in the sense that all three people ascribe the main actantial roles to the same figures.

Thus, the subject of the constructed narrative is in all three cases a “we”, which in a.2. and a.3. is generic, and in a.1 takes the form of “Catalonia” and “the will of the people”. The objects pursued by this “we” are, respectively: in a.1. “The strength of everyone to make it along the path”, in a.2. it

is the citizens who vocalize what they want: “the right to decide, to write our own destiny”, “a freer, more prosperous country with greater social justice”; and in a.3. the objective is “to take advantage of a unique opportunity, an opportunity that there will never be again”. It is interesting to note that the narrative objects of the narratives constructed by CiU are transcendent and abstract objects.

To the transcendence of objects we must also add the abstraction of the helpers and opponents identified, understood specifically on the extra-narrative level due to the fact of being the ruling party, but from a narrative point of view this becomes one of the reasons for the lack of harmony that these narratives may have generated. In this respect, the helpers in the narratives are, respectively:

a.1: “side-by-side, make our strength felt”, “peacefully democratically, serenely and always telling the truth”;

a.2: “the strength of the majority”, “make the will of a people felt”,

a.3: “I am and will remain by your side”

The narrative opponents are also situated in the domain of abstraction and the toughest realism:

a.1. “the difficulties”;

a.2. “it won’t be easy” (difficulties)

a.3. “time of doubt, difficulties and suffering”

Sender and receiver are, respectively, the present and future of Catalonia in a.1., the present time and a freer, more prosperous country with greater justice and social welfare in a.2. and a time of doubt, difficulties and suffering (sender) and “reach as far as you want, to live better, together” in a.3.

Despite the high level of narrative coherence in the ads, very different strategies are employed on the level of enunciation. The first ad is about a leader who appears in almost mythical, and even messianic terms, who has a sole plan –he alone, as he is not accompanied by members of his party or citizens– a plan that requires the complicity of all, and in which the music and images of flags play a crucial role.

The ad from the second week of the campaign awards prominence to the people, the citizens of Catalonia. It is a choral ad which also constructs the idea of a “we” joining together visually (visually converging on Mas). It is interesting because visually it leaves aside the individual identity of each of the characters that appear –representing diverse productive sectors of the country (a young working woman, a freelance professional, an elderly woman in the metropolitan area, an elderly business owner, a female student, an industry worker and a librarian)– and by means of

editing and the camera zooming in on them and a very slight upward movement, these people are magnified and not only made into a single subject but integrated with Mas (the “we” in this ad includes Artur Mas, visually) in a shot in which the camera continues to zoom in, but almost imperceptibly: the citizens’ aspirations converge in Mas and he lets them out, the camera listens and he responds with: “it’s Catalonia’s time; with the power of the majority we will be heard; it won’t be easy, but anything is possible if we make the will of a people heard”. Mas is portrayed as the image of the will of a people, the destination of their aspirations and desires.

The third ad constructs a “we” that does not include Mas (Mas is the “other”), a direct interlocutor with concerned citizens. The ad begins with Mas facing the camera, the gravity of his words requiring him to (he speaks of a time of doubt, difficulties and suffering). His full face never appears; we see images of the eyes, mouth, in constant movement framed within glimpses of his interlocutors, who are sitting at a medium distance, watching him with a serious but attentive look at first, changing to a smile and a nod as he talks: he has convinced them despite the vagueness of his message. It is also interesting to note, on a plastic level, the non-specific nature of the white background –light and shadow– where Mas stands.

The comparative analysis of the narrative structure and the enunciative structure shows that this conviction is more due to the means than to the purpose; citizens’ adhesion to the candidate is based on the complicity and accompaniment to the leader rather than to the conviction of sharing a specific goal (this is not mentioned or is very abstract). Adhesion is constructed around the leader but not around the project.

PSC ads

The PSC produced three election ads: Federalism (b.1.), People (b.2) and Project (b.3). All three are visually almost identical, consisting of two distinct parts. In the first part, Pere Navarro (the PSC leader) is in the middle of a heated discussion between a right-wing woman and a left-wing man, implicitly representing the leaders of the PPC and the ERC, in which he does not participate and seeks to escape from, looking complicitly into the camera. In the second part, there is an extreme close-up of Navarro in front of a white background, with him speaking directly to the camera and asking the public for their vote.

It is worth pointing out that the three ads do not focus on three different topics, but revolve around the repetition and/or parody of phrases used by PP politicians or army officials with links to the PP; that is, instead of constructing three ads with three key points from its election manifesto, the PSC chooses three phrases that have become commonplace regarding a mindset on the Catalan national

question from a profoundly pro-Spanish and undemocratic point of view. Thus, b.1. is based on the threat made by a colonel in the army to send the Armed Forces onto the streets of Catalonia (and its counter-response by the Catalan minister) to confront the Mossos d'Esquadra (Catalan regional police); b.2. uses the statement made by the Spanish Minister for Education of wanting to "Hispanicize" Catalan pupils by introducing an education reform (which is currently in Parliament) to stop or reduce their "Catalan-ness"; and b.3. uses the accusation made by PP politicians that nationalists, separatists or those who simply support citizens' right to decide are Nazis.

This choice of phrases shows a first refusal by the PSC to articulate its own discourse in its electoral strategy. In terms of frame analysis, the PSC refuses to construct its own frame to position itself in the framework of political action of other political parties. As we will see below, the narrative and enunciative strategies of the three ads reinforce and emphasize this refusal even further.

The ads are described below.

Federalism (b.1). In this ad, the voices around Navarro say:

- (female voice, F.V.): "Separatism is nonsense",
- (male voice, M.V.): "Listen, the autonomous state will not be stopped by anyone, neither the army nor the Spanish guns..."
- (F.V.): "Let me remind you that the mission of the armed forces is to defend S-P-A-I-N. And maintain its sovereignty..."
- (M.V.): "Let me also remind you that in the event of conflict, the Catalan police...."

In the second part, Navarro, looking at the camera in a shot that does not allow his whole face to be seen, says "I am Pere Navarro, and I firmly believe that federalism is the alternative without conflict. That's why I ask you to vote socialist".

People (b.2). This ad has the same structure as the previous one, with the two different parts. In the first part, the discussion revolves around the debate on education in Catalan:

- (F.V.): "Our goal is to Hispanicize Catalan pupils..."
- (M.V.): "What you want to do is return schools to the times of a "great and free" Spain..."²
- (F.V.): "What you cannot do is manufacture separatists through education...."

² This was a recognized as one of the main Franco's claim about his centralized notion of authoritarian state.

Before this argument, Navarro again appears in front of a white background and says “I am Pere Navarro and I ask you to help me build a fairer and more caring Catalonia that works to find a way out of the crisis without making the weakest pay for it.

That’s why I ask you to vote socialist”.

And the text that appears on a blank screen reads “Federalism, the sensible alternative”.

Project (b.3). The ad repeats the same structure, and this time the subject matter is independence:

- (F.V.): “Independence will ruin all of you....”
- (M.V.): “...we’ll stay here in Spain, and we’ll die of hunger or thirst...”
- (F.V.): “You nationalists are like Nazis..!!!”
- (M.V.): “Nazis?”
- (F.V.): “The Central Government doesn’t exist for Catalonia..!!!”

In the second part, Pere Navarro appears and says, “I am Pere Navarro and I am convinced that federalism is the sensible alternative between independence and centralism. Federalism guarantees the recognition of Catalan identity and our right to decide. That’s why I ask you to vote socialist”.

Narrative and enunciative analysis. The three election ads share virtually the same images and are divided into two parts: first a very specific description of the present and a second part in which the candidate Pere Navarro addresses the camera and transmits his message.

With regard to the distribution of actantial roles, the PSC ads also have great narrative coherence. Thus, the subject of the narrative is, in all three cases, Pere Navarro and the object of the narrative is original and extremely significant in the context of the Catalan elections, with a distinct positioning regarding the sovereignty issue: Navarro wants “no conflict”, the object of his desire is to escape from conflict. This narrative choice represents the second major refusal we find in the strategy used in the PSC ads, the refusal to put forward a point of view on the complex political context of Catalonia.

In this first part of the ad, Navarro appears disturbed, overwhelmed and tired of being in the middle of an argument between a woman representing the PPC candidate Alicia Sánchez Camacho (identifiable not only because she is the only woman but also due to the content of the statements she makes) and a man who represents the ERC candidate (identifiable by the content of the statements he makes in open discussion and his confrontation with the leader of the PPC).

Thus, the PSC ads define a “them” –the other parties, which shout, make your head spin and have a very aggressive attitude verbally– and an “I”, Pere Navarro, who not only does not intervene or confront his opponents but who becomes overwhelmed, impatient, looks away, feels sick, collapses and flees.

The space where Navarro appears in the second part of these ads is completely white, with no reference to either the party, the public, or the country; it is a kind of limbo, a no man’s land, where the candidate floats with his discourse on federalism. In other words, federalism is the helper to avoid conflict, and the opponents are both the PPC and the ERC. It is interesting to note here that federalism does not appear in this narrative construction as a valid and credible option (for the public and even the candidate himself), or as an aim of the PSC or its leader, but as a simple dissuasive tool for avoiding the conflict posed by other political parties. Navarro –and by extension, the PSC– does not enter into the crucial debates of the current moment; he not only refuses to give his own point of view, but he also refuses to intervene in the social debates that form part of the political agenda at the time.

ERC ads

In the first ERC ad, the party candidate Oriol Junqueras appears sitting on the seat of a train leaning strongly from right to left. These shots are interspersed with slowed-down images of people appearing in small groups and waving at the camera, smiling happily and also moving to the left (girls on bikes, groups of friends with Catalan nationalist flags on their back, people walking together in increasingly larger numbers through towns, cities and forests). A voiceover of Junqueras says “The eleventh of September, 2 million people called out one single cry: independence. Civil society demanded, peacefully, that Catalonia become a new state in Europe. Esquerra has been struggling for many years to achieve this. And now we are immensely happy to have contributed to independence becoming the great desire and great hope of our people. Now we need to work harder than ever to make it possible”. At the end of the ad, the people marching with the Catalan nationalist flag converge with another group of people, the ERC candidates also walking to the left; in the last shot, they stop and stand facing the camera and the candidate speaks again with the other members of the party behind him (American shot): “And the ERC knows how to do it; we will make a new country for everyone”. The ad ends with the voice of Lluís Llach (renowned Catalan pro-independence singer) with a verse from one of his songs.

The second ad starts with the same image of the Esquerra leader looking out of a train window, with a glimpse (subjective thoughts), while we hear his voice saying, “The cuts being implemented by the PP and CiU are eroding the welfare state and that hurts us in Esquerra deeply”. Then more

images appear of individuals marching to the left with Catalan nationalist flags; these are images loaded with symbolism, delivered at a very slow pace and passing through different areas the candidate goes on to talk about. Junqueras' voice continues, looking from the train and saying, "That's why we want independence, with our own resources that guarantee the best in education and public health, that encourage economic growth and distribute the profits among all citizens. That's how we will make the economy grow and leave the crisis behind". The various members of the ERC then reappear walking to the left, stop and look at the camera head on while Junqueras says "And this, we in the ERC know how to do. We will make a new country for everyone". And it ends with the Llach song.

Narrative and enunciative analysis. Despite the apparent visual similarity between the two ads, their narrative structures are quite different because the distribution of actantial roles differs significantly. In the first ad, the subject of the narrative is civil society, which wants Catalonia to be a new state in Europe, wants independence, and this explicitly appears as an objective of Catalan civil society, which considers it a "great desire and a great hope". In this ad, the ERC appears first as a subject sharing the same aim (in ERC we have been struggling for many years to achieve this) and at the same time as helpers of this change "as the ERC we are immensely happy to have contributed". That is, Catalan civil society and the ERC have found one another by pursuing a common goal (independence). Catalan civil society realizes this now, whereas the ERC has spent years struggling to achieve it, but there are no reproaches, he simply states that they "are immensely happy" to finally share such a goal. In this structure, sender and receiver are, respectively, Catalonia before the eleventh of September, which had not yet begun its shift to the left, and "a new country for all", which is the beneficiary of all this. Now that Catalan civil society has realized this, "we must work harder than ever to make it possible", and the ERC appears finally as helper (and in the ERC we know how to do it; we will make a new country for everyone).

In the second ad, however, the subject of the narrative is the ERC; in this ad the object of their desire is "to make the economy grow and leave the crisis behind" and to achieve this desire, they want independence, "to get the resources that guarantee the best in education and public health". That is, in this structure, independence does not appear as a goal of civil society, nor even as the historical aim of the ERC, but as an instrument of the ERC to guarantee Catalonia has its own resources. Within this structure, the opponent role is played by "the cuts made by Convergència and the PP", while sender is exercised by an "eroded welfare state" and receiver a "new country for everyone". In other words, it is through independence that the economy can grow and leave the crisis behind, independence is not an end in itself but a means to achieve the goal of overcoming the crisis.

Analysis of the enunciative structure becomes particularly significant. Firstly, it is not mentioned in the ad why civil society and the ERC agree on the goal of independence but the camera continues to move in each frame from right to left, in a movement that is totally anti-cinematographic and contradicts the basic rules of audiovisual material. Our culture metaphorically represents progress, advance or the desired future from left to right and from the top to the bottom. It is surprising that both the train on which Junqueras is traveling and all the individuals and groups with the flags who are walking and talking in a relaxed and happy manner are moving from right to left in a clear allusion to the shift experienced by Catalan society. That is, they have already known for years, but society now has changed and now realizes, and is heading in the same direction. There is no arrogance on the part of the candidate or the party, no blame or ephemeral leadership, but rather civil society marching strongly, steadily and safely to the left. At the end, the subject of the narrative stops, looks at the camera and is constructed as a competent individual, appearing narratively as a hero, who first and foremost wants –the ERC have always wanted it, as mentioned by the voiceover– who can, and who knows (and “the ERC knows how to do it”).

In addition, the narrative analysis has little meaning in itself, since the phrases and ideas are clear, but the structure is fairly unconnected on a semantic level: Catalonia’s own resources can be used to “guarantee the best public health and education, but it’s hard to see a causal relationship between this and “stimulating the economy to leave the crisis behind” and in particular “sharing the profits among all citizens”.

PPC ads

For its campaign strategy the PPC chooses to develop two futuristic fictional settings, presenting what it believes an independent Catalonia would look like. The two ads appeared in both Catalan and Spanish languages. The first focuses on the issue of unemployment and the second on pensions, two issues on which various political and governmental sectors had also produced dramatic statements. In this respect, like the PSC, the PPC constructs its strategy on the basis of two claims made outside the campaign, although unlike the PSC it does so from ideologically close positions.

In the first part of the two ads, a white text appears on a black background that says “PP election ad in 2010”, and on a TV screen we see a news report with President Artur Mas and Carod Rovira (former leader of the ERC) in a handshake. The voiceover says “President Artur Mas and the ERC agree to hold a referendum on independence”; a text then appears against a black background saying, “We warned you two years ago” and another screen with the text “And we do again now”.

From this point onwards, the two ads are different. In the first (on unemployment) a young couple appears, seated on a couch and looking serious, watching the TV. The voiceover says, “Following independence, Catalonia has been left outside Europe, leading many businesses to leave; unemployment has now reached 30%; President Artur Mas...” and the voice fades off. Then the foreground shows the young woman with an upset expression saying, “All that talk about independence and look...” and the voiceover continues “...delayed three months...”. The screen turns blank and the PPC candidate appears, saying “Catalonia will not find a way out of the crisis alone. Together we all add up”. And the male voice says “Catalonia yes, Spain too”.

In the case of the second ad (on pensions) a retiree appears watching TV and the announcer’s voiceover says, “Following independence, President Artur Mas announced that the payment of pensions would be delayed by three months due to cash flow problems”. The retiree removes his glasses impatiently and angrily and says, “What do they think we live on?” The voiceover continues at a lower volume “... has led to the departure of many businesses...” We then hear the party’s music and the candidate, Alicia Sánchez Camacho, appears with a serious look, in close-up on a white background that reads “Your vote for the PP is the useful vote to stop independence”, fade again to white and the text with a male voiceover reading “Catalonia yes, Spain too”.

Narrative and enunciative analysis. The PPC opts for a doubly complex narrative construction: on the one hand it passes through the realm of fiction, that is, it situates its narrative in the imaginary context of an independent Catalonia, and on the other hand it constructs its narrative in two different time periods: 2010 and 2012 (past and present). In fact, talking about the past from a future situation is a narrative that is constructed in the conditional. In any case, it seems interesting to analyze the narrative structure broken down into two moments of the narrative, above all to see the roles allocated to the public and to the PPC.

Firstly, in 2010 the CiU and the ERC are the subjects of the narrative, what they want (object) is to call a referendum for independence (and implicitly, they have done so because the narrative takes place in an independent Catalonia); the implicit helper in both cases are the citizens who vote and the opponent is the party (they say they warned us in 2010). Sender and receiver are, respectively, Catalonia before (current) and Catalonia present (the futuristic present they refer to).

In 2012, the subject of the narrative are the people that want (object) to work in the first ad with young people and live in the second ad with the pensioner; in both cases the PPC is the helper (who they say is the useful option for stopping independence) and the opponents are independence, unemployment, the relocation of companies, being out of Europe (for the young people) and the delay in the payment of pensions in the latter case.

The narrative structure is complex but very clear, with very basic and simple narrative objects (the young people want to work and the retiree wants to receive his pension), providing a good starting point for creating harmony with the electorate (unemployment and the payment of pensions are issues that affect everyone and that everyone understands). The opponents are also very clear and explicitly identified in the narrative: independence and all the consequences that will come with it according to the PPC.

The citizens appear in the narrative constructed on past time (2010) as helpers of something which is implicit and considered negative: the citizens of Catalonia made a mistake in the last election voting for the CiU and the ERC, two parties that agreed to hold a referendum on independence. The PPC knew that they were making a mistake, they told them but the people did not listen.

It is a well-crafted structure as it warns the public (constructing a clear distance between them and the party, or between them and the candidate, the PPC warned the public, and they are not them, they adopt a paternal attitude towards them); and secondly, it also represents a reprimand (they warned them and they did not listen and now they must pay the consequences) and all of this is done implicitly. That is, the warning comes first and then the consequence of disobedience, without reproach but with harsh consequences. The PPC warns them, the citizens disobey, the PPC shows the punishment for disobedience.

By contrast with the narratives analyzed previously, in no case is there the construction of a “we” between the PPC and the citizenry; there is a split that was caused previously. Not only is a distance also constructed between the party and the people, but this is hierarchical and authoritarian: the PPC warns and reprimands but does not collaborate; on the contrary, it constructs a discourse that uses fear and threats as dissuasive tools.

CONCLUSIONS: KEY CONCEPTS IN THE CAMPAIGNS AND SHAPING OF “WE”

As we have seen, through the narrative and enunciative analysis, there are as many campaigns as there are political parties participating in an electoral contest. The starting points, objectives to be achieved by each political party and consequently the means used by each to achieve them differ greatly, as do their ways of appealing to the public and asking them for their vote.

As the aim of this paper is to analyze how each political party addresses the relationship between Catalonia and Spain, below is a list of the main concepts used to discuss this relationship, the characteristics ascribed to each one and how they go about constructing a narrative “we”. It is particularly interesting to identify whether this explicit or implicit construction of “we” is done in

terms of “we Catalans” or “we Spaniards” (if they are defined one way or another) and/or the type of relationship constructed between the two.

CiU campaign. In the three ads produced by this political party, Artur Mas –and not his party– uses the concepts of Catalonia and the “will of a people” to define a “we”, but the vast narrative and argumentative effort is put into the tools, in detailing what the path will be like and the difficulties (“times of doubt, difficulties and suffering”) and in the means that he personally puts into play. Thus, Mas talks about the need to “be side-by-side”, “to let our strength be felt”, to do this “peacefully”, “democratically”, to “always tell the truth”, and “always be at your side”. The “we” constructed by the CiU’s electoral strategy is embodied mainly in the means, in the how.

CiU’s electoral ads focus on the how and why rather than on the objectives, the what for. In this regard, it should be noted that Mas does not speak of the concepts of independence or sovereignty, but of a “historic opportunity”, “a path to take”. Only in the voices of the citizens in the second ad is there reference to a “freer, more prosperous country, with more justice and social welfare”, one woman speaking of the “right to decide” (curiously, a woman who speaks in Spanish and does not belong to what would be considered the bases of CiU). It is interesting to note that the strategy adopted by the CiU makes citizens say what the party’s goals are and, despite being politically correct –they do not say anything that another political party would not agree with, with the exception of PPC over the right to decide– it would at first seem inexplicable that Mas would fail to mention specific goals that made reference to people’s quality of life and only talks about the fact that the ruling party has openly and controversially cut the health and education budgets.

It is worth noting his party (CiU) does not appear in these ads and the narrative adhesion generated by Mas’ statements are based more on any charisma that the candidate may have, on almost a “faith” in his conviction (in the sense that the reasons that come into play are more emotional than rational), and not on a belief in any specific objectives. In this regard, it is interesting to note that the CiU’s construction of we in their election ads is unbalanced. That is, the well-crafted legendary figure of the leader appears on the one hand, while on the other citizens variously appear as black silhouettes with their backs turned (in the first ad), as representatives of social classes and fully integrated visually through camera movement on the candidate (in the second), and as people who are fully convinced of Mas’ belief (in the third). That is, the lack of concrete proposals, of clear and specific helpers and unwieldy opponents, is replaced visually by an integration of the citizenry in the figure of Mas. The “we” stems from belief and not conviction.

PSC campaign. The campaign produced by PSC is also a campaign in which there is no political party; that is, it is a campaign that focuses on the candidate, Pere Navarro. However, two other parties participating in the elections do appear, the parties that represent polar opposites on the

sovereignty issue: PPC and ERC. Using the most extreme parties is an easy political positioning strategy to show themselves as “centrists” and in a position that the PSOE does not openly acknowledge (the commitment to federalism).

That is, PSC strategy represents, as mentioned above, a refusal to present issues from their manifesto so as to show instead a reaction to the positions of others. The key concept in the socialist campaign is federalism, understood, as their slogan says, as “the sensible alternative”. Federalism is, in the mouth of the PSC, a concept used as an instrument to prevent conflict in Catalan society. Only in one ad do they state that “federalism ensures the recognition of Catalan identity and our right to decide” (which, incidentally, the PSOE has never openly acknowledged and the PSC did not subsequently support upon the Catalan Parliament’s resolution to call a poll to exercise this right to decide).

In the ads analyzed, there is no “we”, either of the party or with Catalan citizens. That is, at no point do they narratively construct a collective “we” of the party, its desires and/or political objectives in any of the narrative roles (the party is neither helper, subject nor explicit object and neither does it appear as explicit sender or receiver). Neither is a “we” constructed with citizens, there is no “we” with Catalonia, or the public. At best and only on a enunciative level there is Pere Navarro’s look into the camera, overwhelmed by the debate between the ERC and the PPC, which could construct a “we” with an audience equally disturbed by the treatment of sound during the argument involving the other political parties. It is nevertheless a “we” that refuses to reveal political party or country objectives, a “we” simply fleeing the confrontation.

ERC campaign. ERC constructs two election ads, very similar visually but with their own narrative distributions, as seen in the results section. On the one hand, ERC speaks openly of independence, but the narrative role this is awarded in the two ads is very different.

On the one hand, ERC understands independence as the “great desire and great hope of our people” (ad 1), whereas on the other it presents independence as a means of overcoming the crisis after referring to the government cuts implemented by the PP and CiU, which have deeply eroded the welfare state. They say “That’s why we want independence, with our own resources that guarantee the best education and public health, that encourage economic growth and distribute the profits to all citizens. That’s how we will make the economy grow and leave the crisis behind”. This last sentence is very clear in terms of declaring grand concepts, concepts about which no disagreement is possible, but it establishes causal relationships in the most innocent of utopias. The distribution of profits among all citizens is a proclamation that could virtually be situated in the domain of the most radical communist ideology and even if it is interpreted only in terms of ensuring “the best education and public health” is still only a rhetorical resource.

The “we” constructed by ERC ads is doubly interesting. On the one hand, it is a “we” with the citizens, a “we” that represents the confluence of two solid and independent entities: the party, which appears in support of its leader at the end of the ad, and the public, who are also solid, independent and united (the images are of groups of friends, individuals, couples all marching towards the same meeting, but they are not images of massive crowds in which the subject or groups are diluted).

On the other hand, the first ERC ad constructs a differentiated we because it introduces the time axis in its definition. That is, there is no simple plural “we” with Catalan society, but rather a “we” that is a result of Catalan civil society having now made independence as their desire, whereas the ERC has long fought for it. In other words, it is a “we” constructed not by an equal movement towards independence, but by a sustained holding of its position by ERC and a movement of Catalan civil society towards the same goals as ERC. With ERC, the “we” they shape is due to Catalan civil society moving towards the position of ERC, which has remained “unchangeable” over time.

PPC campaign. PPC constructs two election ads which are very similar to one another but very different from those of the other political parties. In this regard, it is worth noting that the PPC uses fiction to address the political position regarding the relationship between Catalonia and Spain.

Thus, this party situates the action in a hypothetical future of an independent Catalonia and describes what daily life would be like for two groups of people: young people and pensioners. This is a future full of misery, unemployment, with much relocation of business, having left the EU, unemployment at 30% and delays in the payment of pensions, among other things.

PPC refuses to consider an exit from the difficult situation affecting Catalonia and Spain via a specific political model or a substantial improvement or change from what exists today. It does not establish means of dialogue or exit strategies; nor does it explain how an independent Catalonia is reached. In this regard, it retains a simple conjunctive relationship of “Catalonia yes, Spain too”, an easy, non-exclusive slogan, but one which does not establish a means of coexistence for the two nations in light of the difficult situation generated by the relationship between the two governments and the economic suffocation suffered by Catalonia at the hands of the Spanish government.

The strategy of PPC also represents an escape, like that of the PSC –oddly enough, these are the two majority parties in Spain– but it is an escape through time. That is, given the difficulty of maintaining its own position in the Catalan context, and not go against the Spanish wing of the party, no alternative models are offered, or ways of reconciling both Catalan and Spanish interests, but rather what is presented is a flight to a future time –a huge jump in time– which is obviously made to look dramatic.

The PPC does not construct a “we” with the public; as it cannot. The relationship that is constructed is a “you” –the Catalans, the Catalan people, young people and pensioners– who “made a mistake, voting for the CiU and/or ERC when we –the PPC– warned you not to”. In other words, a relationship is constructed that goes beyond paternalism –the party warns the people– to become a hierarchical, authoritarian relationship and which uses threat and fear as tools of persuasion. Needless to say, this is a position that reveals a profound lack of respect for the citizens and their ability to choose, and a lack of understanding and democratic harmony with respect to this.

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