



**CHALLENGING  
NATIONAL  
NARRATIVES:  
THE CATALAN QUESTION &  
THE SPANISH CRISIS**

**THURSDAY-FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 17-18, 2016**

**NYU KJCC**

**KING JUAN CARLOS I OF SPAIN CENTER  
53 WASHINGTON SQUARE SOUTH**

Over the past few years, Spain has been going through a profound crisis, which has not only damaged the whole economic and social fabric, but also affected the entire political and institutional system. In the political debate, the notion of “crisis of the regime” established by the 1978 Constitution has often been alluded to and even the need for a “Second Transition” has been raised. Two general elections in less than half a year are proof of the political establishment’s difficulty to achieve a consensus.

In this context, the Catalan question arises as one of the most challenging issues in Spain’s political scene today. The emergence of a strong will for independence in Catalonia, resulting from a vast social movement, has led to a political deadlock. The demand for a referendum like those held in Quebec or Scotland has been considered a “defiance” by the mainstream Spanish press and denied as unconstitutional by the major political parties, hindering the possibility of a political solution.

As a matter of fact, the Catalan question plays a crucial part in understanding the way in which Spain has built itself as a nation and the way it sees itself, and has also been a key element in all the political transitions that the Spanish state has faced in the last century. Even if not always openly admitted, the so-called “Catalan problem” is clearly defying the national narrative that has accompanied the building of the modern State-Nation in Spain.

As with any other significant social movement, the mobilization in favor of Catalan sovereignty needs to be acknowledged and understood in all its complexity, in order for a solution to be found. Far from being merely an internal Spanish affaire, the analysis of the “Catalan question” raises issues that are common to other democracies: the crisis of political representation, the struggles over the meaning and functioning of democracy: the tension between pluralism vs. national unity, the effectiveness of transnational political bodies, including the European Union, and the identification of all resistance to the logic of the state (conceived as the very expression of “common sense”) with empty populisms.

The aim of this academic symposium is therefore to explore manifold implications of the Catalan secessionist movement at a time of political and economic crisis, both in a European and American context.

## JOSEP M. MUÑOZ

*Josep Maria Muñoz is the Fall 2016 King Juan Carlos Chair in Spanish Culture and Civilization. Established in 1983, thanks to the generosity of Mr. and Mrs. Milton Petrie, this endowed professorship allows New York University to bring an eminent scholar of the politics, economics, history or culture of modern Spain to campus each year.*

# PROGRAM

## THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 17, 2016

### 6:00-6:15 P.M.: WELCOME ADDRESS AND INTRODUCTION TO THE SYMPOSIUM:

Georgina DOPICO (NYU), Josep M. MUÑOZ (Visiting professor, KJCC, NYU)

### 6:15-7:15 P.M.: KEYNOTE SPEAKER

Xosé M. NÚÑEZ SEIXAS (Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität, München)

*Spanish Nationalism in the 21st Century: New Challenges, Few Responses?*

### RECEPTION TO FOLLOW.

## FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 18, 2016

### 10:00-11:20 A.M.: CATALONIA, A PLURAL SOCIETY

Andreu DOMINGO (Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona)

*Demography, Immigration and Diversity in Catalan Society*

Sharon FELDMAN (University of Richmond)

*The Catalan Question in Three Contemporary Plays:*

*Landscape, Memory, History*

Coffee break

### 11:40 A.M.-1:00 P.M.: CONSIDERING DIVORCE

Carles BOIX (Princeton University)

*Catalonia's March Toward Independence: Why Did Spain's Constitutional Arrangement Fail?*

Germà BEL (Universitat de Barcelona)

*Disdain, Distrust and Dissolution*

### 1:00-2:00PM | LUNCH

## **2:00-3:20P.M.: SOCIAL UNREST, NEW POLITICAL AGENTS**

Andrew DOWLING (Cardiff University)

*Economic Crisis, Political Emotions and Catalan Independence*

Sophie GONICK (New York University)

*Building Municipal Power: Re-centering Politics on the Urban Scale in Contemporary Spain*

Coffee break

## **3:40-5:00P.M.: CHALLENGES TO SPAIN'S IDENTITY FROM THE PERIPHERY**

Ignacio SÁNCHEZ-CUENCA (Universidad Carlos III, Madrid)

*Spanish Intellectuals and Nationalism*

Isabel ESTRADA (The City College of New York)

*Re-politicizing Documentary Footage from the Spanish Transición*

## **5:00-6:00 P.M.: KEYNOTE SPEAKER**

Luisa Elena DELGADO (University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign)

*Cordial Attachments: Secessionism, Populism and the Question of Democratic Excess*

## **6:00PM: CLOSING REMARKS**

Jordana Mendelson (NYU)

**RECEPTION TO FOLLOW.**

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