

# Travel Research Grant Report - Centre for European Studies

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In May of 2019, I had the opportunity to travel to Barcelona, Spain to conduct field research for my Master's Research Project (MRP), entitled: "The Politicization of Catalan Secessionism in the 2019 European Parliament Elections". The trip took place between May 13 to May 30, and the purpose of my travel to Barcelona was to conduct interviews with party representatives of the two main secessionist political parties: Junts per Catalunya (JxCat) and Esquerra Republicana de Catalunya (ERC).

My interest in this field began in 2017; I had registered in a course taught by Dr. Achim Hurrelmann. To be brief, this course outlined the functions of the European Union's (EU) institutions and major policies at a basic level for students learning about the EU for the first time. This is where my interest in Europe began and my ideas to write a thesis or MRP began as well. Later on in 2017, an unofficial independence referendum occurred in Catalonia. This referendum was established in order to decide whether or not Catalonia would proceed with the independence movement or not. However, the Spanish government declared the referendum to be illegal and mass violent raids began orchestrated by the Spanish government via the Spanish National Police Corps. As I have visited Barcelona on many occasions and being a native speaker of Spanish, I felt extremely connected with the ongoing situation and became deeply interested in past and current relations between Spain and Catalonia. As a result, I put these two interests of EU institutions and of the Catalan secessionist movement together to create my MRP research question.

Throughout my time in Spain, I remained in Barcelona to carry out interviews with party representatives from either of the two parties. These interviews were conducted in order to arrive at a more concrete understanding of how representatives and secessionist parties are taking advantage of their position in the EU to advance their concerns. The people that I interviewed for my research would range from high level representatives to lower level, local representatives of the secessionist political parties. The interviews were scheduled prior to my departure to Barcelona, but the majority were scheduled during my time in the city. The interview subjects would suggest who else would be interested in participating in my project.

Overall, I felt that travelling to Spain was hugely helpful for my project and thanks to the travel grant I was able to accomplish this experience. With the results that I have collected I am very excited to continue to complete my MRP project.