

# MOVIND MINDS FINAL REPORT

**Project title:** Visual Political Communication in digital campaigns: a comparative research between Spain and UK.

**Visiting fellow date:** 2021-09-15 to 2021-11-15

**Grantee name:** Prof. Dra. Rocío Zamora Medina, Faculty of Communication and Information Studies, University of Murcia (Spain).

## **PURPOSE OF THE MOBILITY:**

The objective of this mobility was to carry out a research project on the use of visual narratives in political communication, within the context of online campaigning. This research line represents a continuity with my previous work on strategic communication and digitalization, mostly based on social networks analysis. As it was explained on the application, my aim was to conduct an empirical comparative study between Spain and UK related to the use of visual social networks in digital campaigns. Our objective was to explore to what extent those resources are used among political parties and also party leaders as part of their communication strategies. We also wanted to measure their impact on image management building and social engagement.

After a few talks with faculty staff at the Center for Comparative Politics at Media Research, linked to the Department of Media and Communication at University of Bournemouth, we finally decided to focus our research on the recent visual social network TikTok. Specifically, the research main purpose focuses on interactive storytelling construction on Tik Tok as a strategic visual communication tool among political leaders. We also defined the corpus of analysis and, in order to have an acceptable sample, we broad it to those European leaders that are already using Tik Tok among others social networks. An empirical research has been designed as a case study to set up a quantitative comparative analysis for that purpose, measuring micro and macro levels of social media narratives. The main approach is based on visual discursive and use of Tik Tok affordances, in relation to personalization and professionalization dimensions of the political communication. The project seeks to improve theoretical framework around visual communication and also methodological aspects for the empirical analysis of this research topic.

## **DESCRIPTION OF WORK CARRIED OUT DURING THE MOBILITY:**

### From Sept, 15<sup>th</sup> till Sept 30<sup>th</sup>:

-First search for bibliographic resources at The Sir Michael Cobham Library at Talbot Campus, from where I got a study place and access to all online and physical resources. At the end of the week, I was moved to Faculty of Media and Communication main building, Weymouth House.

-First meeting with host faculty member, Anastasia Veneti (Principal Lecturer & Programme Leader MA International Political Communication) sent a mail to BU Faculty of Media and Communication staff to introduce me as BU visiting fellow with a bio and main research interests. Prof. Anastasia Veneti offered the chance to take part on a collaborative book related Visual Political Communication. She shared an example of a book chapter to be considered for my individual collaboration.

-First meeting with Darren Lilleker, director of the Centre for Comparative Politics and Media Research at BU. We shared ideas and experiences of previous research projects on visual communication and social media. Prof. Lilleker showed me the Faculty building and main installations to be used during my visiting fellow.

-Welcome meeting with Dr Dr. R. Lyle Skains, Senior Lecturer at Faculty of Media & Communication and BU

-Welcome meeting with Dr. Elena-Alina Dolea, lecturer of Diplomacy and International Relations at BU.

-Joined the "TikTok and Social Movements event" organized by Tik Tok cultures, on September 20<sup>th</sup>, 2021. I joined the TikTok-themed research network to get updated references and join future academic events. This network was comprised of Asia Pacific-based interdisciplinary scholars whose works focus on localized perspectives on the impact of TikTok.

-Partial results of my research were presented to the INDCOR Special track at the Zip-Scene Conference 2021 on September 30<sup>th</sup> in Budapest.

### From Sept 30<sup>th</sup> till October 15<sup>th</sup>:

-Joint working meeting with Darren Lilleker and Anastasia Veneti at BU. A first proposal for the collaborative manuscript was developed.

-Time to read previous studies and structure a draft manuscript with updated references that was sent to co-authors (Darren Lilleker and Anastasia Veneti) for a first look. A possible sample of political leaders on TikTok was checked.

-Working time on my individual book chapter on visual communication on TikTok.

### From October 15<sup>th</sup> till October 30<sup>th</sup>:

-Working Meeting with Prof. Anastasia Veneti to check the first draft and set up the research approach and the sample. We decided that our main contribution could be the examination of Tik Tok as a new form of political expression to research how traditional professional pol com practices are adapted on this platform. Digital architecture of Tik Tok in terms of message control for political parties was also a key point to be considered related to complexity and interactivity on this short video platform.

-Online meeting with prof. Andrius Suminas (Vilnius University) to discuss the comparative research design with other European countries.

-Improved the manuscript draft with feedback and comments from Prof. Anastasia Veneti and Prof. Darren Lilleker.

-Working on the paper presentation for the Zip-Scene Conference 2021 on September 30<sup>th</sup> in Budapest.

From October 30<sup>th</sup> till November 15<sup>th</sup>:

-Finished writing the book chapter related to the use of TikTok in visual communication.

-Three different working meetings with Darren Lilleker & Anastasia Veneti to improve the joint manuscript theoretical approach and also methodological design (coding sheet). Most of my contribution on the theoretical part was already finished. The coding sheet work was almost finished. We decided the timing for collaboration in the future.

## DESCRIPTION OF THE MAIN RESULTS OBTAINED

1. The main outlet of this mobility was projected on a collaborating academic paper -with the distinguished BU top scholars in the area, prof. Darren Lilleker and Prof. Anastasia Veneti- that will be sent to an international impact journal on 2022. During the visiting fellow time period, a first draft (mostly theoretical framework) has been already finished and also a first methodological design for this case study. The paper includes a comparative quantitative research to understand the strategic use of TikTok among European political leaders in their daily political activity, outside electoral context. We conducted a comparative study which includes a quantitative visual framing analysis of all the post published in their TikTok accounts. Main objective is to analyze the different strategic storytelling uses of TikTok from the visual communication perspective.

2. Another collaborating academic paper related the use of Tik Tok in political contexts has been designed during my stay. Concretely, with the collaboration of prof. Andrius Suminas (Vilnius University) we have worked on a comparative manuscript about the strategic uses of entertainment on social networks for campaigning online and political engagement titled "Visual Narratives on Tik-Tok for campaigning online from a comparative European perspective" that has been submitted to the call for papers of international journal *Media and Communication* special issue (expected time: june 2023) "Political Communication in times of disintermediation: digital narratives, engagement and politainment".

3. During this period, I have joined the globe academic network Tik Tok cultures (<https://tiktokcultures.com/>) that was founded in October 2020 by a group of Asia Pacific-based interdisciplinary scholars who are studying TikTok cultures from a variety of qualitative research methodologies. Concretely, I have attended to the 4<sup>th</sup> online event (conference) of this network titled "TikTok and Social Movements event" on September 20<sup>th</sup>, 2021. The event was a one-day online Symposium to showcase emergent research on the potentials, promises, pitfalls, and parameters of such social movements on TikTok. The Symposium provided a meaningful opportunity to reflect on the evolving cultures and practices around the civic and social movements on TikTok.

4. Partial results of my research were presented to the INDCOR Special track at the Zip-Scene Conference 2021 on September 30<sup>th</sup> in Budapest. As coauthor with prof. Shahira Fahmy (American University of Cairo-AUC) we presented a conference paper titled: "Using storytelling on TikTok to reduce complexity on political topics: an exploratory study of visual communication strategies from Spanish political parties".

5. I finished a book chapter on the coming book about Visual Communication in Political Communication launched from the Center for Comparative Politics at Media Research for next 2023 (editors prof. Darren Lilleker and Prof. Anastasia Veneti). My main contribution is a chapter (3.6 on the book) titled "Politics as an entertainment dance? Visual storytelling on TikTok among Spanish political parties" (linked to the partial results presented on the Budapest Zip-Scene).

6. In the coming future, as another results from my visiting fellow, a seminar (online) about my research on the use of TikTok in digital campaigns will take place for BU faculty staff and has been scheduled for January 19<sup>th</sup>, 2022.

## FUTURE COLLABORATIONS

This international mobility has been great asset not only to research and learn from other colleagues but also to open doors for future collaborations. I hold a first meeting with International Relation office at BU that can serve as starting point to launch a future Erasmus+ Study Mobility Programme between Bournemouth University (UK) and University of Murcia (Spain).

in Bournemouth, November 15<sup>th</sup>, 2021

Signed by the grantee



Prof. Rocío Zamora Medina  
Faculty of Communication and Information Sciences  
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Signed by the host at BU



Prof. Anastasia Veneti, principal academic  
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