Cornish Self-determination: a semiotic analysis of political cartooning

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THE POLITICAL CARTOONING OF CORNISH SELF-DETERMINATION

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INTRODUCTION

This chapter explores the concept of Cornish self-determination through political cartooning. A selection of images from a range sources and dates has been chosen to reflect the variety of vested interests in the debate around self-determination in Cornwall. We have applied semiotic analysis to the visual and textual content of the cartoons, to explain the multimodal representation of self-determination in a Cornish context.

CORNWALL AND SELF-DETERMINATION

The politics of self-determination in Cornwall have been addressed primarily in the works of (Willett, 2013, Willett and Giovannini, 2014, Tregidga, 1999, Sandford, 2006). The works mainly contextualise the
place of Cornwall in regards to other nations and regions of the UK that have been successful and unsuccessful in achieving devolution of political power. Whilst the movement for self-determination in Cornwall can be traced back many centuries, this chapter will focus on the media from 1970 onwards. Presently, Cornwall is the only Celtic-nation in UK without political devolution.

**POLITICAL CARTOONING**

It has been suggested by Plumb (2004, p432) that political cartoons are “one of the most powerful weapons in the journalistic armoury” as it helps to expose a “certain kind of truth” (ibid). The political cartoonist’s work has often been said to act as a depictive rhetoric, when strategic pictures, verbal or non-verbal visualizations correspond with the memory of the audiences. Even though occupying relatively small space in publications, cartoons have a certain semiotic density, and in this chapter the compact visual and linguistic modalities of the images will be explored.

Political cartoons are composed of two elements: caricature, which parodies the individual and allusion, which creates the situation or context into which the individual is placed. Caricature is said to have originated around the Mediterranean, and cartoons of a more editorial nature developed in Germany, a chillier climate.

The rise of cartoons was linked to the visual propaganda by Martin Luther’s socio-religious reforms. An appeal to the cartoonists to the emerging merchant class and their rise to leadership, and the largely illiterate public was due to the distribution of simple broadsheet posters or illustrated pamphlets through population centres. Cartooning uses a range of stylistic devices including distortion, cliché, exaggeration, simplification, caricature, double meaning, allusion and irony to highlight a political point or message (Seymour-Ure, 2001). What may seem surreal and small in size often hides a well-defined target. Cartoons share rhetorical devices with Poetry, and one of them is ‘dialogism’, literally ‘double-voicedness’ because the sole purpose of acartoonists is to persuade readers to think critically about current political situations in society.

2006). An oberow a gettesten dre vras an le a Gernow ow tochya gwlasow ha ramndirow erel an RU te bev segun ha heb sevwa en ynn gowlwal digesennans a allos politek. Kyntt yllir sewya a-dheragh an omsav rag omervirans yñ Kernow dres lies kansveldehen, an chaptra ma a wra fogella war an media dhyworth 1970 bag alena rag. Yñ jydh hedhyw, Kernow yw an unn wlas keltek yñ RU heb digesennans politek.

**KARTOUNWEYTH POLITEK**

Y feu profyes gans Plumb (2004, f.432) bos kartounyow politek “onan a’n arvoù an moja gallosek yñ aruji jortalaysek” awos ev dhe weeres diskudha “unn eghen a wiryonedh” (ibid). Y leverys yñ fenowgy y hwa ober an kartounydh politek servya avel retorek portrayus, pan omethesetho leymansow strecteck, dismygyansow, kyn fons i war anow po heb geryow vyth, gans kov an voslowysi. Kyn hwrons i kevanedhi yn perthin y spys byghen yñ dyllansow, kartounyow a’s teves unn dosedh sinonithek, hag yñ chaptra ma modholethow gwelesek ha yethoniethek kesstrothys an imajys a vyth hwitthys. Kartounyow politek yw komposys a dhiw elven: gesdresas, hag a barod an unign, ha kampol, hag a great an studh po kettesten, ynn noth yw gerrys an unign. Y leverir y tallathas gesdresas a-dro dhe’n Kreisvor, ha kartounyow a natur moy pennskrifek a veu dispelyg yñ Almayn, hin yeyna. Y feu tevyan a kartounyow keskelmys dhe’n plontyans gwelesek gans amendyansow soayo-kriijk Martin Luther. An tennvos a gartounyow dhe’n renkas marchont ow sordya ha’ga tevyan dhe’n sodoth a ledyroeth, ha’n poblans dre vras anletrys, o awos bos an lezannans a skrisellow sempel po folenigow lymnys dre gresennow an poblans. Kartounweth y a dhevynkad a dhevisyow gisek y’ga mysk ogammons, krindthy, gorliwans, sempelheans, gesdresas, styr dewblek, kampollans ha gesedh dhe wolowboyniya mater po messach politek (Seymour-Ure, 2001). An pyth a hevel bos gorwir ha byghen yñ mnyys yñ fenowgh a gudh kosten kler by styr. Kartounyow a gevern devisyow retoregel gans Bardhonieth, hag onan anedha yw ’omgowsieth’, mayth yw styr y bennfenten ‘dewblek-levgneith’ drefen bos a unn acheson a gartounydh dhe berswadya redyoryon dhe brederi yñ freusel a-dro dhe studhow politek a-lemmyn yñ y’ys ledanna.
ANALYSIS METHOD

This chapter will apply the approach of Moeran (2005) and his use of frames to highlight the perspective of those inside and those outside a community. The concept itself can be traced back to Bateson (1972) and more directly to the pioneering work of Goffman and Bennett (1986) in Framework Analysis. The community in this case being those who are pushing for Cornish self-determination. This community has over the years come to encompasses a wide variety of groups. The cartoons used in this short text, have been sourced from political parties such as Mebyon Kernow, housing campaign groups such as Cornwall Concern Group, independent research organisations such as Cornish Social and Economic Research Group (CoSERG), pamphleteers like Nowodhow an Myttyn (Morning News), and social media based satire groups such as Bulloverman’s Tomb of the Bizzare. The list of other potential sources of data could go on, but due to space restriction in this text, these will be the primary items upon which we will draw. The reason frames are so useful as a theoretical devices is encapsulated by Van Leeuwen (2004) in his descriptions of the role of metaphor:

“The essence of metaphor is the idea of ‘transference’, of transferring something from one place to another, on the basis of a perceived similarity between the two ‘places’.” P30

These two places will be explored in a chronological order so that the development of different themes and styles of cartoon on the topic of self-determination can be seen to emerge.

POLITICAL CARTOONING OF CORNISH SELF-DETERMINATION: CORNWALL - INTERNAL FRAME

PRE 1970S

The movement for self-determination in Cornwall in the modern era can be traced to the formation of Celtic societies and political pressure groups after WW2 and into the 1960’s, hence the authors wished to include work from these earlier periods. Take for example the primitive pamphlet in Figure 1 from a little know organisation calling itself Nowodhow an Myttyn (Morning News). The exact date is unknown but it is likely to be before

METHOD DIELVENNANS

An chaptra ma a wra gweytha an maner a Moeran (2005) ha’y us a framyow dhe wolowbyntya gologva an re na a-jhi dhe ha’s re na a-ves kemeneth. Y hyllir sewya a-dhelergh an konsayt y honan bys dhe Bateson (1972) ha moy sny dhe’n ober ragreshek a Goffman ha Bennett (1986) yn Dielvennans Framweyth. An gemeneth y’n kas ma yw an re na usi owth omherdhya rag omervirans kernewek. An gemeneth ma re dheuth dres an vledhynnyow dhe gylyghya kemmysk efan a vagasow. An kartounyow devnydhys y’n tekst berr ma re gavas aga fennfenten dhyworth partiw politek kepar ha Mebyon Kernow, bagasow kaskyrgh anedhans kepar ha Bagas Bern Kernow, kowethyansow hwithrans ansergehek kepar ha Bagas Hwthirans Erbysek ha Kowethasek Kernewek (CoSERG), folenigoryon kepar ha Nowodhow an Myttyn (Morning News), ha bagasow ges selys yn media socyal kepar ha Bulloverman’s Tomb of the Bizzare. An rol a bennfentynnyow a vanylyon potencyal aral a yl pesya, mes dre strothans a spys y’n tekst ma, an re ma a vydh an takkennow gwreyhek anedha may tennyn ni. An acheson mayth yw framyow mar ‘vas avel devisiowe tybiethel yw berrskrifys gans Van Leeuwen (2004) yn y dheskrifysow a’n rann a vetafor:

“An sugen a vetafor yw an konsayt a ‘dreswuwrans’, dhe dreswuwrra neppyth dhyworth unn le dhe le aral, war sel a hevelepter kleuys ynter an dhew ‘le’. ” P30

An dhew le ma a vydh hwthrys yn ordy amserioneth may hyllir gweles sordya an displayans a themow ha gisow a gartoun war an desten a omervirans.

KARTOUNWEYTH POLITEK A OMERVIRANS KERNEWEK: KERNOW – FRAM PERVEDHEK

KYNS AN DHEGVLEDHEN 1970

Y hyllir sewya an omsav rag omervirans yn Kernow y’n osweyth arnowydh dhe’n furyyans a gowethasow keltek ha bagasow-nia politek wosa Nessa Bresel an Bys ha bys y’n 1960ow, ha rakhenna an awtours a vyna komprehendya ober dhyworth an spysow a-varra ma. Kemmer rag ensampel an folenik sempel yn Figur 1 dhyworth kowethyans le aswonyas hag
1970, as the price is written in a pre-decimal currency which ended into the United Kingdom in 1971.

Figure 1 is written solely in the Cornish language, the use of the indigenous Celtic language functions as a form of literary activism. There are various cartoons in this satirical pamphlet including:

— Mocking BBC radio Cornwall for its Anglicisation of speech,
— The lack of Cornish language content in newspapers,
— Republican sentiment issued towards Prince Charles, the Duke of Cornwall

Moving into the 1970’s with Figure 2, the quality of the illustration can be seen to improve. This cartoon is taken from Cornish Nation, the official publication that is attached to Mebyon Kernow – the party for Cornwall. A political party that has been central to the self-determination movement in Cornwall (Cole et al., 2011). Throughout the 1970’s Cornish Nation used the same masculine figure to signify the struggles Cornwall and its people were facing. The text reads: Embodiment of the spirit of Cornwall, Guardian of Cornish interests. With Mebyon Kernow a new Kernow Aries!


Figur 1 yw skrifys yn tien y’n yeth kernewek, us an yeth teythyek keltek a ober avel furv a weythresieth liennek. Yma kartounyow divers y’n folennik esek ma a gomprehend:

— Gul ges a Gorteb Radyo Kernow rag ysowsnekheans a gows,
— Fowt a dhalgh an yeth kernewek y’n paperyow nowodhow,
— Klewans pohlogethek dyllys troha Pennsevik Charlys, Duk Kernow

1970s

The breaking of the chains in the image relates to the 3 characters dressed in top hats shown to be running out of Cornwall. The labels on the characters read: Tory, Labour and Liberal.

Figure 2 - Male figure as an embodiment of Cornwall Source: (Cornish Nation, 1970)

Figure 3 - Masculine Figure as a Clay Miner opposing the image of a rich industrialist Source: (Cornish Nation, 1971)

Figures 3 depicts a clay pit worker opposing an industrialist. The terms Kernow and Pow Saws are the Cornish words for Cornwall and England respectively. There is a clear association with the Cornish worker as a proletariat suffering unemployment at the hands of an English capitalist. A continuation of the themes echoed in Figure 2.
Figure 4 shows the same character – the personification of Cornwall demanding autonomy from the political establishment. A commission set up to investigate the constitutional structures of the United Kingdom.

The cartoons from the 1970’s clearly have socialist and emancipatory overtones. Figures 2, 3 and 4 shows a character who is not only seeking freedom from a political system but also an economic one as well.

1980S

Figure 5 - Depictions a London immigrant to a new house in Cornwall Source: (Deacon et al, 1988)

Figure 5 it taken from a Corish research and campaign group with a focus on housing issues. The sign reads: Sold Trefaust & Sons. Trefaust being a Cornish-English portmanteau meaning house of Faust. Suggesting a Faustian pact between property developers and residents.

AN DHEGVEDHEN 1980

Figure 5 yw kemerys dhyworth bagas hwit.hrha ha kaskyrgh, ha’ga’ fog war vaters a aned-hans. An arwodh a red: Gwethys – Trefaust & Mebyon. Trefaust yw ger portmanteal Kernewek-Sowsnek a styr Tre a Faust, ow pro-
in Cornwall and external influences. The cartoon highlights the issue of Cornwall not having control over its own planning laws. A situation that exists to this day. Note the use of the London dialect of English in the speech bubble.

Figure 6 - Mebyon Kernow Leader as Superman Source: (Peninsula Voice, 1988)

Figure 6 continues the theme of the political übermensch, with a parody of Superman. Here a former leader of Mebyon Kernow is shown lifting Cornwall to safety away from and angry dragon. A vexillological symbol of the Wessex region of England. This figure whilst maintaining the superhero theme, does so with an evident amount of satire. Whereas Figures 2, 3 and 4 being taken from the magazine of a political party, entirely avoid satirising themselves. Due to the restriction on space here other cartoons from this period cannot be displayed. For example, also from the 80’s, the Cornwall Concern group used cartoons of a bulldozer driving into the Cornish peninsula, running over its national flag and destroying Celtic crosses. Embazoned on the side of the bulldozer are the words Heritage Demolition, behind the bulldozer is a picture of an industrial scene. With the associated text reading: Sale of the century...2000 years of Celtic Heritage surrounding by an image of Cornwall.
2010’S

Figure 7 - Mebyon Kernow’s leader Dick Cole depicted next to his hero namesake
Source: (Bulloverman’s Tomb of the Bizzare, 2015)

Figure 7 shows the current leader of Mebyon Kernow Dick Cole (circa 2015) next to an image of the 1940’s American comic character Wonder Boy, whose name in the comic series is also Dick Cole. This Figure once more continues the super hero theme, but as with Figure 6 the satire is evident even if it is meant in support. Figure 7 is the first noted use of colour in a political cartoon about Cornish self-determination.

Figure 7 is also the first example political cartooning related to self-determination that was sourced from social media. It comes from a satirical Facebook group known as Bulloverman’s Tomb of the bizarre. Who produce surrealist politically themed cartoons and memes.

AN DHEGVLEDHEN 2010

Figur 7 - Ledyer Mebyon Kernow Dick Cole diskwedhys ryb y worour keshenws.
Fenten: (Bulloverman’s Tomb of the Bizzare, 2015)

Figur 7 a dhiskwedh ledyer Mebyon Kernow a-lemmyn Dick Cole (a-dro dhe 2015) ryb imach an person y’n komik Wonder Boy, neb yw hewys Dick Cole keffrys y’n kevres komik. Unweyth arta an person ma a bes an thema ughworour, mes par dell yw yn Figur 6, playn yw an ges kynthia ena avel skoodhys hogen. Figur 7 yw an kynsa devnydh a liwyow merkys yn kartoun politek a-dro dhe omrewl kernewek.

Ynwedh, Figur 7 yw an kynsa ensample a gartounwethyth politek kelmys orth omrewl ha devedhys dhyworth media socyal. Ev a dheu dhyworth bagas Facebook hewys Bulloverman’s Tomb of the Bizarre neb a askor kartounyow ha mimys, gorwir ha politek aga themow.
OUTSIDE OF CORNWALL - EXTERNAL FRAME

The external framing of Cornish self-determination is also important to consider when illustrating the political cartooning concept. Here external sources are taken from media outlets based outside of Cornwall. For example Figure 8 from The Cagle Post (2012) which portrays Alex Salmond, former first minister of Scotland and leader of the SNP enthroned as a king, in front of a crowd of adoring Cornish Nationalist.

Figure 8 depicts Alex Salmond, former first minister of Scotland enthroned as king, in front of a crowd of Cornish Nationalist. Source: (The Cagle Post, 2012)

Figure 8 is designed to mock the deficiencies of the Cornish self-determination movement in comparison to the success of the SNP. The text in the top left hand corner labels the political party a secret English devolution society. Similar themes can easily be detected in Figure 9.

MES A GERNOW – FRAM A-VES

Pan lymnir an konsayt a gartounweth polítek, yth yw posek dhe brederi a-dro dhe’n framyans a-ves a omervirans kernewek. Omma, pennfentynnyow a-ves yw kemerys dhyworth tardhellow media selys ymnes a Gernow. Rag ensampel Figur 8 dhyworth The Cagle Post (2012) a dhiskwedh Alex Salmond, kyns kynsa menyster Alban ha ledyer an SNP, a’y esedh avel myghtern, a-rag routh a Genedhlogoryon Gernewek orth y wordhya.

Figur 8 a dhiskwa Alex Salmond, kyns kynsa menyster Alban, war se avel myghtern, a-dherag bush a genedhlogoryon. Pennfenten: (The Cagle Post, 2012)

Desinys yw Figur 8 dhe skornywa difygyow an movyans omervirans kernewek kehevelys orth sewena an SNP. An tekst y’n gornel a-wartha kledh-barth a hemow an parti polítek kouethas digresennans sousneker kerrínnek. Themow haval a yll bos dismygys yn Figur 9.
The caption in Figure 9 reads: “We’ve ditched the £ and adopted fudge as our currency.” Fudge being a sweet confectionary associated with Cornwall, the word is also a verb that means to fail to complete a task properly. The cartoon is mocking the economic situation of Cornwall as a poor region, whose people are backwards (see Figure 8). The themes found in the external framing of Cornish self-determination function along more traditional political cartooning lines. The difference framings of the issue of Cornish self-determination however are abundantly clear, and presumably not dissimilar to most representations of self-determination in other European Union member states.

DISCUSSION

We can see that as we move through the different decades up to 2015 how the visual modality of the cartoons change, noting the reduced articulation of detail, depth, colour and shade in the 1960, 70s and 80s (Van Leeuwen, 2004), until we reach the full technicolour of 2015. Beyond this there is a trend that runs throughout all the cartoons in this chapter that should be explored – politicians as superheroes.

POLITICIANS AS SUPERHEROES

The cartoons in the internal and external frames both utilise the conception of politicians as superheroes but to different ends. The depiction of politicians as superheroes is well documented by Plumb (2004) who suggests that they are a suitable topic for cartoons as they are indexed in the public psyche. The internal vs. external framing acts as a perfect example in the context of political figures. Figures 2, 3 and 4 can clearly be seen to be portraying a serious male character, aspiring to raise a pertinent issue. Figures 6 and 7 again present strong masculine personas but with the addition of satire. Whereas Figure 8, and 9 show the trivialisation of self-
determination issues in Cornwall. That is to state, from the internal frame political cartooning of self-determination attempts to give importance to issues that are considered trivial by others, whereas those from the external viewpoint tend to trivialised issues of self-determination. Which tends to be of high importance to those who live secessionist regions. Both frames use hero motifs to do this, but to different ends. Perhaps the best example of this is Figure 8 describing Mebyon Kernow as a secret English devolution society. Beyond the deliberate misrepresentation of the political party as English, the idea of a secret political party becomes humorously absurd. In conclusion we can return to Van Leeuwen’s idea of the ‘two places’ (passim), that is in sum this chapter shows the shift from the external to the internal frame in political cartooning represents the shift from the iconoclast to the idolisation of political heroes.
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SELF-DETERMINATION AND THE SILESIAN ISSUE


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— Also: https://doc.rero.ch/record/30413/files/Fynney_Beitrag110.pdf
On behalf of the Centre Maurits Coppieters and our partners I sincerely wish to thank the authors of the report for their groundbreaking approach to the subject and their passionate, conceptually robust and well structured factual presentations.

Finally I also wish to thank you (the reader) for your interest in our organization and for reviewing our modest contribution to a much wider European political debate in this area.

Günther Dauwen
Secretary of Centre Maurits Coppieters

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MAURITS COPPIETERS
(SINT-NIKLAAS, 1920 – DEINZE, 2005)

The Fleming Maurits Coppieters studied history and later became a Doctor of Laws and obtained a master's degree in East European studies. During the Second World War, he refused to work for the German occupier. After many years as a teacher, he worked as a lawyer for a while. He was one of the people who re-established the Vlaamse Volksbeweging (Flemish People’s Movement), of which he was the President from 1957-1963.

Coppieters’ political career began when he became a member of the Flemish-nationalist party Volksunie (VU) which was formed in 1954. With the exception of two years, Coppieters was a town councillor between 1964 and 1983. He was also elected as a member of the Belgian Chamber (1965-1971) and Senate (1971-1979). At the same time, Coppieters became President of the newly formed ‘Cultuurraad voor de Nederlandstalige Cultuurge- meenschap’ (Cultural Council for the Dutch-speaking Community, from which later the Flemish Parliament emanated), when the VU formed part of the government. In 1979, Coppieters was moreover elected during the first direct elections for the European Parliament.

As a regionalist, he became a member of the Group for Technical Coordination and Defence of Independent Groupings and Members in the European Parliament (TCDI). Among other things, he made a name for himself when he championed the cause of the Corsicans. In the meantime, Coppieters also played a pioneering role in the formation of the European Free Alliance, of which he became the Honorary President and in whose expansion he continued to play a role, even after he said farewell to active politics in 1981. In 1996, Coppieters joined forces with the president of the Flemish Parliament, Norbert De Batselier, to promote ‘Het Sienjaal’, a project with a view to achieve political revival beyond the party boundaries. Coppieters died on November 11, 2005.

Among other things, Coppieters was the author of: ‘Het jaar van de Klaproos’; ‘Ik was een Europees Parlements lid’; ‘De Schone en het Beest’. He is Honorary member of the EFA.

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