**The Configuration of the Spanish Public Sphere: 18th-21st Centuries**

Monday 22nd June 2015

The aim of this one-day symposium was to establish a dialogue among different periods and aspects on the study of the formation and configuration of the public sphere in the Spanish-speaking world, from the 18th century up to nowadays. The event was organised by Dr Leticia Villamediana González (University of Warwick) and Dr David Jiménez Torres (University of Manchester), and supported by Hispanic Studies at Warwick and the Humanities Research Centre.

It was a truly interdisciplinary and international event, with 35 delegates from PhD students to established professors, from historians to literary scholars, and from universities in Spain, Portugal, USA, Ireland and all across the UK. Two parallel sessions ran simultaneously throughout the day, starting with papers focused on the role of individuals and the periodical press in the 18th-20th centuries on both sides of the Atlantic.

After a short break, the double-plenary embodied this spirit of debate and dialogue among different periods and disciplines. Guest speakers Dr Mónica Bolufer Peruga (Universitat de Valencia) and Dr Stephen Roberts (University of Nottingham) provided short papers on two very different yet influential figures of the Spanish public sphere, responding to each other’s paper and drawing links and comparisons between their respective periods (the early-18th and late-19th centuries, respectively).

The afternoon panels focused on international connections, genres and journalism and issues and spaces of the bourgeois public sphere, concluding with a panel on the effect that the current economic, political and territorial crisis in Spain as well as the rise of the *indignados* movement have had on Spanish understandings of what the public sphere is.

While the contributions were very diverse, the debates which followed each session strove to connect the issues raised to some wider conclusions about what exactly the public sphere ‘is’ as well as its function through history in Spanish-speaking societies. Delegates praised the liveliness of the debates that occurred throughout the day, and plans are underway to publish a collected volume based on the contributions presented at the symposium.

Leticia Villamediana González (Hispanic Studies)