

MEDIATING THE CATALAN INDEPENDENCE MOVEMENT

12-13 September, 2018

Institute of Modern Languages Research, University of London
Room 243, Senate House, Malet Street, London WC1E 7HU

PROGRAMME DAY 1

14:00 Registration

14:20 Welcome by the organisers

14:30 Panel 1

Helena Buffery (U. of Cork). Translations: The Catalan Independence "Process" in on-stage translation

This paper looks at the way in which recent translations of international texts about civil conflict have been used to mediate discourse around the Catalan Independence movement.

Nuria Bonet (U. of Plymouth). "Humour as resistance: the songs and chants of the Catalan independence referendum"

This paper examines the songs and chants of the Catalan independence movements in the run-up to the independence referendum of 1 October 2017, and the effect of the police brutality on that day on the soundscape of the movement. It argues that the humorous nature of the often spontaneous music functioned as resistance against the police repression, highlighting the dichotomy between the authoritarian police response and the peaceful protests.

It also discusses the change in tone in the soundscape of the pro-independence movement after the police brutality on the day of the referendum. In fact, it argues that the shift in power dynamics and the use of violence as method of repression is reflected in the shift from parodic songs towards more direct and combative musical expressions.

This paper analyses the music of the street protests, the music programme of the national day celebrations of 11 September and other pro-independence acts. The analysis of the protesters' repertoire reveals a telling mixture of traditional Catalan songs and popular chants, and the revival of parodic songs dating from the end of the Franco dictatorship by the Catalan band 'La Trinca'.

16:00 Coffee and tea break

16:30-18:00 Panel 2

Gabriela Viadero-Carral (Universidad Complutense de Madrid). “The conflict that went viral: Catalan political crisis in the social networks”

Spain is experiencing one of his greatest political crisis of the last decades due to the Catalan independence movement. During months we have witnessed how two opposite discourses were trying to shape the public opinion. These two discourses have reached us through traditional media but also through the digital media and especially social networks such as Twitter, YouTube or Instagram. Nowadays each one of us is a potential journalist and our information might even get viral.

In this paper we will precisely analyse two pictures and two videos that went viral and study how these pieces of information contributed to shape the two different discourses that were being held by the contending parties of the Catalanian conflict.

One of these images shows a father with his son in his arms, trying to give a flower to a Spanish Guardia Civil during the referendum that had been suspended by the Spain’s Constitutional Court. In the other picture under study we see four kids and a baby blocking the traffic during the pro-independence general strike.

About the videos, one of them was recorded during the time the Spanish Guardia Civil and National Police had been deployed in Cataluña ahead of the illegal referendum on independence for October 1st. One officer from Sevilla responded to noisy pot-banging from a pro-independence group under the balcony of his hotel singing a fandango (flamenco song) that stopped the pot-banger and elicited a few "Oles" from the protestors. The other video shows us a similar story; in this case is a resident from Barcelona that tries to stop the noisy pot-banging in his neighbourhood playing a famous Spanish song "¡Qué viva España!" (Long life to Spain) very loud.

Amanda (Mandie) Iveson (U. of Roehampton). “Tweeting the nation: the online construction of moral and symbolic boundaries in the Catalan independence process”

Grassroots organisations have been pivotal in the Catalan independence process and have used social media intensively to raise national consciousness and mobilise the public. Drawing on theories of symbolic and moral boundaries (Lamont & Molnár, 2002; Lauderdale, 1976), this paper explores the discursive constructions of nationalism of two opposing grassroots organisations – one pro-independence and one pro-union – and how these constructions are mediated on Twitter. Contrary to the public rhetoric of a modern Catalan nation, analysis suggests that discourses of deviance are present in each organisation’s narratives and concludes that the boundary work and othering strategies used by both sides contribute to the creation and maintenance of the ‘us/them’ dichotomy present in all nation building projects.

DAY 2

9:30 Panel 3

Mariola Tàrrega and **Josep Àngel Guimerà** (U. of Stirling and Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona). “When media policies became the centre of political debates: regional newspaper policies in Catalonia’s independence debate”

Newspaper policies have become one additional argument in the political dispute between Catalonia and Spain. One of the main reasons of political controversy is the existence of media policies created by subsequent Catalan governments since 1980. Particularly, Spanish nationalist parties used news media subsidies as an example of how subsequent Catalan governments attempted to influence editorial lines and consequently, advance their nationalist goals.

This paper describes and analyses, from an interpretative perspective, the aims and strategies of these media policies putting a focus on newspaper policies in Catalonia from 1980 to 2017. To do so, this paper uses policy analysis, secondary data analysis and in-depth interviews with politicians and policy makers. This study draws from nationalism studies, media systems theory and linguistic normalization theories.

The results show how Catalan news media policies respond to a financial need of a weak media market, a nation building project and party politics interests. The main argument is that in this context newspapers are seen as enablers and core institutions of Catalonia’s political system. Media policies turn press subsidies into essential tools to create market boundaries. Doing so, market boundaries are seen as determining political factors that make regional newspapers a basic instrument for maintaining the Catalan political system. We see that the system of press subsidies institutionalizes of press-politics relationship. In the light of the issue, the Catalan case shows how regional press is not only a communicative actor, but also a very important political one.

Cristina Perales-García, **Carles Pont** and **Christopher Tulloch** (Universitat Pompeu Fabra). “The Fight for the Front Page: the Procès in the Anglo-American press and the official positions of the US/UK governments in the Catalan independence story”

While the general objective of this proposal is to analyse the news coverage and op-ed articles in the US and UK quality broadsheets regarding the Catalan independence process between 2010 and 2017. The two more specific aims of the paper detect and analyse the influence of international public opinion regarding the Catalonia-Spain conflict, based on the published opinion in the Anglo-American press and to compare the diplomatic positioning of the US and UK governments on the issue in relation to the journalism produced by their respective leading titles.

The study, based largely on framing analysis, news stories and opinion columns published by The Guardian, The Daily Telegraph, The New York Times and The Washington Post from June 2010 (and the cutbacks on the Catalan Statute of Autonomy) up until the 3rd of October and the aftermath of the Referendum. This is complemented by an ethnographic study based on in-depth interviews with foreign correspondents in Spain and the official press releases of the US and UK administrations regarding the position of their respective governments with respect to the Procés.

Gemma Palà and **Guillem Suau-Gomila** (Universitat Pompeu Fabra). “The vision of the Catalan process by the European press (2010-2017): an analysis of the role of the institutional actors and the journalistic coverage”.

The Catalan independence movement is a current political and social conflict that has the coverage of good part of the media agenda around the world. It has special importance for the positioning that adopts the European Union since Spain is one of the EU member countries that is more relevant regarding economical terms. Therefore, the aim of this study is to identify the frames and alignments that the newspapers of the main European countries have -France, Germany, United Kingdom and Italy- and those of the European Union in the Catalan process. We want to detect the arguments that journalistic and institutional fields of European Union are using to speak about the Catalan independence movement. We also observe how these newspapers evaluate the role of the European Union in the conflict. To do it, we analyze the statements of European Union and eight newspapers during the period of 2010 to 2017, which supposes an amount of 700 journalistic pieces of those events with more media coverage. This period goes since the demonstration in protest for the cuts of a proposal of new Catalan statute –on July 10th, 2010- until the referendum of self-determination -on October 1st, 2017-. The study uses the content analysis to identify which frames and journalistic sources are employed from a framing and agenda-setting approach. The results show that these eight newspapers give quite a lot importance to the Catalan independence movement and all of them explain this phenomenon using the conflict frame between Catalan and Spanish governments. The newspapers coincide in requesting to the European Union a more active role in the mediation of the conflict.

11:30 Coffee and tea break

12:00-13:00 Round table (participants TBA)

END OF CONFERENCE