

Catalan and *Catalanisme*: Linguistic Nationalism in a Global Context

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Abstract:

Linguistic nationalism has been a useful explanatory framework through which scholars have understood the relationship between language, culture, and identity. However, throughout the twentieth century, novel forces of globalisation and internationalism have conditioned and complicated expressions of what we understand linguistic nationalism to be. As a result, its function and significance in a global context remain poorly understood. This paper explores the recent history of Catalan language education to show how globalisation and processes of internationalism did not threaten the regional language or related cultural identity as one might expect. Rather, I argue, the global era provided new pathways through which Catalan and associated linguistic nationalism could be and were strengthened.

Since at least the late-nineteenth, linguistic activists have engaged the international community in pursuit of their aims in a variety of ways. Tracing the development of this engagement teaches us important lessons about linguistic nationalism and cultural diplomacy in an increasingly global context. This paper describes three main periods in the globalisation of the Catalan language. First, from the nineteenth century to Spain's return to democracy in 1978, Catalan linguistic internationalism relied on a loose network of individual scholars, activists and, exiles. Their efforts at codifying and promoting Catalan fell largely in line with other romantic European linguistic movements of the time. Second, in the immediate Post-Franco period, linguistic activists sought to embed Catalan in newly-formed European institutions and programs. These efforts were bound up in a broader hope among regionalists that the EU would provide opportunities to supersede Spanish sovereignty. Such hopes, however, went largely unrealised. Finally, since the turn of the century, Catalan linguistic activists poured their energy into creating domestic institutions to consolidate their cultural footprint. This led to new efforts at bilateral cultural diplomacy between Catalan institutions and foreign ones that were rooted in European universal values and guided by ideas of institutional prestige.

In this latest period, activists and educators benefitted from processes of globalisation and increasingly relied on notions of universalism and cosmopolitanism to support linguistic and cultural particularism. This paper, then, explores the mechanisms of this relationship and shows us how processes of globalisation can stimulate growth, dissemination, and legitimacy of minority languages.

Keywords: linguistic internationalism, globalisation, nationalism, identity

