Of War and Water:
Metaphors and Citizenship Agency in the Newspapers
Reporting the 9/11 Catalan Protest in 2012

ENRIC CASTELLÓ
ARANTXA CAPDEVILA[1]
Universitat Rovira i Virgili, Catalonia, Spain

Metaphors, organized in superdomains and articulating scenarios, are a powerful tool in framing a given social or political conflict. This article studies the use of metaphors in the reports of the mass demonstration held in Barcelona on September 11, 2012, in favor of Catalan self-determination. The authors analyzed 917 extracts from the main Spanish and Catalan newspapers. The results show that the most frequent superdomains were *nature-weather* and *war-fortress-battle* schemes, and they were used to construct different scenarios about the meaning of the political event. The research reveals major differences in metaphor use between the Catalan and the Spanish dailies covering the demonstration. The authors conclude that metaphor scenarios articulated a diverse discourse about the influence of citizenship agency on the political process for greater autonomy or even the independence of the region.

Keywords: citizens' agency, democracy, demonstrations, metaphor, nationalism, political conflict

Introduction

The events of September 11 have very different meanings for Americans (terrorist attacks in 2001), Chileans (coup d'état and death of Allende in 1973), and Catalans (defeat in the Succession Wars and conquest of Barcelona by Bourbon's Spanish troops in 1714). Each nation commemorates these events in a national context, and in the case of Catalonia, it is the national day, habitually consisting of an official act in the morning and a popular demonstration in the afternoon. Up to this point, you, the reader,

have been conducted to a narrative about September 11 apparently devoid of any point of view or ideology. But this is not the case. We have explicitly used *terrorist* in the context of America's September 11, *coup d'état* and *death* in the context of Chile's, and *defeat* and *conquest* in the context of Catalonia's. Moreover, the three examples have been given in national contexts and therefore positioned as comparable, even though the last is about three hundred years old. None of this language or its discourse strategy is without a viewpoint to explain its context. For example, using the word *death* for Allende's disappearance could imply a skeptical attitude about the official explanation of suicide. If it were to continue, this story about a mass demonstration would contain more of these types of lexical choices. Language offers both infinite possibilities and limitations.

The demonstration that took place in Barcelona in 2012 in favor of the independence of Catalonia was massive. With the slogan "*Catalunya, nou Estat d'Europa*" ("Catalonia, a New European State"), hundreds of thousands of citizens protested as they marched through the main streets of Barcelona.[2] Media around the globe reported on the huge amount of people who came out in support of a self-determination process.[3] This demonstration had a second episode in 2013, when demonstrators formed a 480-kilometer human chain from the French frontier in the north of Catalonia to the southern extreme, and a third in 2014, when 1.8 million people returned to the streets of Barcelona to form a giant mosaic to call for a referendum.[4]

This situation led to political mobilization and nonbiding referendums in the last years, and Muñoz and Guinjoan (2013) have noted that the increasing media coverage did play a mobilizing role despite its having a marginal role for other factors that influence political participation. A turning point occurred in 2010 when the Spanish Constitutional Court pronounced a judgment against the Catalan Statute, which had been approved by both Spanish and Catalan parliaments and a popular referendum. The consequent exacerbation of the polarization of media and journalistic positions in Spain has already been studied in the context of newspapers (Perales, Xambó, & Xicoy, 2012) and radio (Montagut, 2012). A series of political statements in 2011 stacked the debate around the regional structure of Spain known as the *autonomic model* (Capdevila & Ferran, 2012).

The 2012's demonstration, organized by the nongovernmental organization Assemblea Nacional Catalana (National Catalan Assembly), had political consequences when the president of the region, Artur Mas, called for an election. His party was punished in the ballot boxes, but the number of MPs in the Catalan parliament backing self-determination increased. The support for self-determination has grown year by year: According to the Centre d'Estudis d'Opinió, 60% of Catalans would vote yes in a referendum

---

[2] The figures about participation differ according to the source: the organizers claimed 2 million people, the Catalan authorities 1.5 million people, and the Spanish authorities 0.6 million people. Regardless, the demonstration was one of the highest citizenship concentrations in the history of Spanish democracy and the most important in the Catalan context.

[3] Reports appeared in *Le Monde, Corriere della Sera, International Herald Tribune, The Guardian,* and *O Estado de Sao Paulo*, for example.

[4] Again, figures of participation contrasted: 1.8 million people (local police) versus 0.5 million people (Spanish authorities).

for independence, and 74% want a vote on the matter (*La Vanguardia*, 2014). In 2014, the regional parliament organized a nonbinding consultation in which 2.5 million people participated, with the result an overwhelmingly victory in favor of independence (see Minder, 2014).

This article compares the journalistic reports and opinion articles about the mass demonstration of September 11, 2012, in the Spanish (Madrid-based) and Catalan (Barcelona-based) press. To achieve this goal, the research applied a discourse analysis focused on metaphors, collecting a corpus of texts published in main newspapers and departing from existing categorizations from Andreas Musolff's (2004) research on media coverage of European integration debates in the United Kingdom and Germany. That the protest was important for Spanish and European politics is beyond any doubt, and the role the media played in narrating the political event is of great interest in understanding how discourse, using an array of rhetorical tools and figures, articulates different conceptions of citizenship participation and the capacity to take part in a political process of such magnitude as the celebration of a referendum to found a new European state.

Theoretical Approach

Metaphor is a linguistic tool to relate something we explain (e.g., a demonstration) to something our audience has previous experience or knowledge of (e.g., a storm). That is to say, a metaphor primarily establishes analogies, and analogical relationships are commonly imbued in a text as conventional language use (Goatly, 2007). In media reporting, metaphors bring a text into the realm of subjectivity in the sense that they add connotation to the meanings of the story. Cohen-Almagor (2008) considers that subjectivity "can be preferable to objectivity when media cover illiberal and anti-democratic phenomena" (p. 136). Indeed, journalistic language tends to become more balanced or morally neutral in political reports and analyses when journalists covering democratic expression or when demonstrations do not include violence or hate speech. In political communication, metaphors are commonly used and natural both in informal, conversational and very formal communications. For example, Ruth Wodak (2009) analyzed how a group of members of parliament from several countries displayed diverse scenarios regarding their conceptions of the European Union and how they had made these modes of speech about the union routine, taking for granted their own national viewpoints. Using container metaphors ("the heart of Europe," "the melting pot," and "the fortress"), these politicians articulated a set of scenarios to express their conception of the EU as a political organization (Wodak, 2009, p. 64). These scenarios are also attached to source domains.

Discourse domains are central or organizational topics that provide a narrative with order and organization. In a study focused on British and German press coverage of European integration, Musolff (2004) determined a map of 12 superdomains specific to and commonly found in political discourse: *way-movement-speed*, *geometry-geography*, *technology-building*, *group-club-class*, *school-discipline*, *economy-business*, *love-marriage-family*, *life-health-strength*, *game-sport*, *war-fortress-battle*, *performance-show*, and *nature-weather*. Musolff subsequently took a closer approach to metaphor analysis by relating metaphors to narratives through the concept of scenarios. Therefore, the superdomain used in political speech is as important as the scenario in which this metaphor is inserted or to which the narrative is contributing. Scenarios are defined as micronarratives "that dominate the discourse

manifestations of source domains" (Musolff, 2006, p. 23). According to this, in these scenarios, we can evaluate particular dispositions and preferences of national discourse communities.

Arguably, if scenarios articulate narratives about a topic, social problem, or event, we can also find some of the classical elements of narrative analysis. That is, we can determine "actors as agents that perform actions" (Bal, 1985, p. 5), and when an actor develop actions, that actor is considered an actant in narrative theory (Herman & Vervaeck, 2001, p. 52). It is possible to evaluate the level of agency of these actors in these narratives: The agency is understood not only as the capability of the narrator to tell the story but also as the potentiality of each character to transform and evolve the events. In this respect, actants have passive or active roles, or higher or lower levels of agency. The differences in the agency salience of an actor in a narrative offer different scenarios while using the same source domains. The analogies activate accounts of a given topic. For example, describing the people demonstrating in the streets as a "tsunami" or as an "explosion of celebration" have different implications on the conceptualization of the demonstration and how this expression is considered. The narrator is loading the meaning in three different ways: (1) cognitively, by associating the expression with "destruction" and "disarray" or with "party" and "fun," given that readers have knowledge about tsunamis and celebration; (2) discursively, by articulating a discourse on the demonstration because the metaphor is anchored in a more complex explanation of the political context—a tsunami is an undesirable natural disaster that is out of control, causes destruction, and creates fear; an expression that activates the "discourse of fear" that with no doubt will locate a news source as an agent of social control (Altheide, 2002, 2013); and (3) narratively, by organizing actors and actions in the story that moves toward a (desired) closure (Horst & Lolk, 2003) and provides the actors with a certain level of agency. In the example, the *tsunami* analogy would offer an exaggerated level of agency to the demonstration in comparison to the *celebration* analogy.

When reporting and commenting on the relationship between Catalonia and Spain, journalists and analysts rely on metaphors of *love-marriage-family*, which Musolff (2004) also detected in conceptions of the European Union. However, scenarios change when different versions of these metaphors are used, such as a *couple* living in the same house, a *marriage* with some binding contract, or the *parent-child* relationship (including those involving a teenager or young adult who wants to leave home). In these different metaphorical constructions to express relationships between national communities, the agency of one of the actors declines dramatically. Scenarios within the same superdomain can use different micronarratives to explain the conflict. Moreover, even when explaining the same events and conflicts, journalistic reports bestow the same actors with differing amounts of agency, as observed by O'Donnell and Castelló (2011) in their study of public television broadcasts in Spain and Catalonia. Here we can observe how the use of a given metaphor (e.g., *marriage*) to refer to the relationship between Spain and Catalonia, or Scotland and England, not only articulates a specific discourse on this relationship (e.g., understanding the marriage as a relationship between two individuals with same rights and duties) but also ordering the discourse in an easy-to-understand narrative, a story about engagement, feelings, responsibilities, and so on, and even suggesting suitable future conclusions (divorce, friendly separation, reconciliation) with relevant moral debates (dignity, submission, independence). When analyzing metaphors used by journalists, we are walking through a field in which discourse and narrative approaches intersect.

In the early 1908s, Lakoff and Johnson (1980) established that metaphors are used to gain knowledge about our world and are therefore one of the main tools for constructing meanings of political and social reality. Therefore, metaphor is not just a rhetorical tool, as it enables us to learn about a complex or a new reality (the relationship between two nations, a demonstration, etc.) starting from realities that are closer to us or that are common knowledge (*show*, *natural disaster*, etc.). In analytical terms, we distinguish between a "target domain" and a "source domain" (Mio, 1997; Musolff, 2004). However, narrators insert metaphors into complex discourse, working with other figures and constructing meaning from knowledge the audience is assumed to have. Moreover, as Musolff states (2004), the use of the same metaphor in similar national cultures does not imply that "metaphoric discourse has to be similar" (p. 5), because even the same source domains can articulate different discourse positions regarding the target domain. For example, the profile of a given newspaper reader needs to be taken into account, as a given metaphor can easily connect with the meanings preferred by different types of audiences. In political issues and reports, metaphors can help to schematize and transfer a given viewpoint of the issue or target domain being narrated by the journalist or analyst. Therefore, metaphors are not only about simplifying political events and making them understandable, but they are also persuasive by proposing a given understanding of the target domain. They even "can stir emotion or bridge the gap between logical and emotional (rational and irrational) forms of persuasion" (Mio, 1997, p. 121).

Volumes of literature have been published about how politics and politicians strategically use metaphors to achieve specific goals by framing topics on the news agenda. Cammaerts recently analyzed the Belgium political crisis, pointing out that Belgian media elites used sets of metaphors within the *sports-games*, *war*, *culinary*, and *transport* domains to express political immobility, blame the other side, foster national unity, and stress the chaotic situation, even giving the sensation of imminent state termination (2007–2011). In this case,

> the frequent use of (some) metaphors by political and media elites resulted in more division rather than convergence of positions. Metaphors indicating a move towards seeking solutions and willingness to compromise were less preeminent than those that symbolized gridlock or internal as well as external conflicts and tensions. (Cammaerts, 2012, p. 244)

But Cammaerts also pointed out that the use of a given type of metaphor for editorial or ideological positioning of the discourse does not automatically signal misuse. Persuasion can play an important role in the use of metaphors and authors. Charteris-Black (2006) has noted this dual role (cognitive and persuasive) not only in the sense of constructing a given meaning for the target domain. Metaphor intrinsically contains a powerful persuasive impulse in relation to its cognitive role. We are persuasively guided toward a given understanding of the matter. Accordingly, when using a metaphor to explain a mass demonstration in the streets, we are persuasively guiding our readers to a given meaning of this demonstration. Further, since the metaphor proposes a certain scenario, we are articulating a narrative about the topic. Therefore, the use of metaphors is closely linked to the articulation of media frames, a process that several authors have been studying since the late 1980s (Entman, 1993; Modigliani & Gamson, 1989). Some types of metaphor usage can be directly related to the articulation of a defined

media frame in the news, and this concept has been tested for the topics of immigration (Van Gorp, 2005) or genetically modified crops (Vilella, 2010).

In this article, we analyze the source domains of the metaphors used by journalists and politicians in newspaper texts about the mass demonstrations for a vote of self-determination. The metaphors defined a set of scenarios, or micronarratives, to explain this political event. Within the broader context of the piece, the type of domain in use at any given moment was less important than the scenario generated by its usage. Once we had a map of the source domains and an articulation of the suitable scenarios the media proposed, we were able to evaluate the agency that these stories gave to the citizenship. The agency salience of the participants in the demonstration is therefore not relevant per se, but it is a marker of the conception that the narrator has of citizenship. This is a matter of power and democracy and of actor definition: Who is leading the evolution of the political process? Who has legitimacy to drive a constitutional change in the country? Who is following whom (are political leaders and representatives led by citizens or vice versa)?

Methodological Note

The authors selected eight main dailies sold in Spain and Catalonia to acquire a corpus on the treatment of the September 11 demonstration. In the case of Spain, the newspapers were *El País, El Mundo, ABC,* and *La Razón,* all of them leading titles of current Spanish journalism with headquarters in Madrid, although they also have delegation offices in Barcelona. It should be noted that these dailies have some different pages for their editions in Catalonia, with regional supplements. The selected Catalan newspapers, all based in Barcelona, were *La Vanguardia, El Periódico de Catalunya, Ara,* and *El Punt Avui,* the former two with bilingual editions (Spanish and Catalan) and the latter two with editions in Catalan only. To study how these newspapers reported and commented on the event, we collected all the information and opinion articles published in their printed editions in the two days after the demonstration (September 12, 2012, and September 13, 2012). The corpus was compounded by text excerpts; we selected all the texts that fulfilled one of the following criteria: (1) the text referred to the concept of *demonstration* (*manifestación/manifestació*) followed by a *comment*; (2) the text constructed an alternative reference to or a synonym for the word *demonstration*; or (3) the text made use of a metaphor to refer to *demonstration*. We defined *comment* as any qualification of the word *demonstration*. For example, if the text mentioned a "huge demonstration," we collected it in the corpus under criterion 1. Sometimes texts referred to the *mani* (an informal abbreviation for demonstration) or *gentada* (crowd), and these were also included, under criterion b. If a text used *march* or *waves*, it was also considered, under criterion 3. The collection of texts gave us not only a list of all the metaphors used to refer to the event *demonstration* (criterion 3) but also a productive set of texts referring to the event that could offer further context for the metaphor itself. When the text just mentioned "demonstration" without any comments, the reference was discarded, as were all literal references to "demonstration." Therefore, the corpus was the set of texts commenting on the demonstration, expanding its meaning or establishing analogies in the form of metaphors. Our study especially focused on the metaphor analysis (that is, on the excerpts included under criterion 3). To better understand the presence of superdomains in the findings, we should note that the referent of our research was the demonstration and not the relationship between Catalonia and Spain or the territorial structure of the country.

A total of 917 excerpts were collected and a list of metaphors was compiled. To better comprehend the use of metaphors and the construction of meaning regarding the demonstration, we turned to the original text in the main superdomains to describe how scenarios had been constructed. Then, a narrative analysis identifying actors and actions was necessary to evaluate micronarratives and agency salience of the participants in the demonstration. This evaluation took into account the lexical choices in the comments, synonyms, and metaphors to describe the demonstration and to construct its meaning. Our starting point was first to observe Musolff's (2004) categorization in order to check whether metaphors on the demonstration would match, but without forcing the interpretation to fit all analogies in this scheme and letting the metaphors speak for themselves.

Results

Not all of 917 texts included in the list articulated a full metaphor about the demonstration. Many metaphors were repeated several times in different newspapers and journalistic genres. When comparing Spanish and Catalan coverage of the demonstration, we noted that it filled far more pages in the Catalan papers, with the topic being overwhelmingly the front-page issue and main story of the day. Unsurprisingly, then, Catalan newspapers used far more metaphors than the Spanish press; although our research was not quantifying but qualitatively analyzing the set of metaphors, this was noteworthy.

From the beginning we found that some superdomains included in Musolff's scheme were scarcely represented in the demonstration narratives, and even one of them was entirely absent (*group-club-class*). On the other hand, a set of metaphors did not fit within the categories. Besides *group-club-class*, another six superdomain categories were almost irrelevant: *geometry-geography*, *technology-building*, *school-discipline*, *economy-business*, *love-marriage-family*, and *game-sport*. It should be noted that some of the metaphors did indeed have highly significant micronarrative formulations. For example, "orgy" (*orgía*), which would not easily match the *love* domain due to its strictly sexual meaning, was used to describe the event and the enthusiasm of the people demanding self-determination. The fact that some of the superdomain categories were not important or had scarce presence is also meaningful: The demonstration participants were not conceived as a *group* or a *club* or described like a *family*. For the superdomain of *discipline*, we detected a common use of the term "march" (*marcha/marxa*) that could be included in this category but also in the superdomain of *war-fortress-battle*. In this sense, we had to evaluate each use by taking the context into account. Armies *march* with discipline, but at the same time, this term is without doubt a military one. All in all, we soon considered that metaphorical superdomain analysis requires interpretation and that texts oblige the researcher to take the context of each expression into account.

Among the other five superdomains represented in the storytelling of the demonstration, *way-movement-speed* was almost irrelevant but had certain nuances. When metaphors of water first began to appear in the texts, we considered whether they were also expressing movement (e.g., "river," *río*; "flash flood," *riada*) or whether they should be labeled in the category of *nature-weather* (e.g., with "cloud," *núvol*)*. As with *march*, some of the *water* metaphors required the interpretative approach and the consideration of the overall text to critically analyze their use. We decided on the second option, at the same time bearing in mind that these superdomains could have tangential fields of common meanings.

After a deeper investigation of the metaphor scenarios, we clearly saw that they were associated with the natural power of water.

In that sense, we also noted that superdomain analysis requires a holistic approach to texts in which the researchers consider the narrative structure or the discourse proposal embedded in the pieces. Therefore, although some of the metaphors in *way-movement-speed* were significant, especially in the Catalan press ("way," *via*; "path," *camí*; "shaking," *sacsejar*), this superdomain was overall rather residual in comparison with those described in the following sections. Of the four remaining superdomains, we detected that two of them, *life-health-strength* and *nature-weather*, could be considered Spanish-preferred and Catalan-preferred, respectively. The other two, *war-fortress-battle* and *performance-show*, occurred in all publications, despite their constructing very different scenarios. All these considerations confirm Musolff's (2006, p. 23) affirmation that scenario analysis is a necessary complement to superdomain mapping. Curiously, two superdomains establishing scenarios for the meaning of the demonstration were preeminent, one transversal (*war-fortress-battle*) and one limited to Catalan dailies (*nature-weather*), the latter being particularly attached to what we have defined as metaphors of water.

Frankenstein with a hangover at the opera. Madrid-based press, specifically *ABC, El Mundo,* and *La Razón,* articulated a set of metaphors attached to the super domain *life-health-strength*. Accordingly, the demonstration became a living creature that "eats" or "feeds," as expressed in an opinion column of *La Razón*:

> This *demonstration has fed* the secessionist spirit like no other mobilization has ever done. . . . Yesterday, regardless of the reasons for going to the demonstration, *independentism "ate"* everything. [*Esta manifestación ha alimentado* el espíritu secesionista como no había hecho ninguna movilización anterior. . . . Ayer, se fuera a lo que se fuera a la manifestación, todo se lo "comió" el independentismo]. (Rañé, 2012, p. 3, emphasis added)

"Eating" here means swallowing everything—in other words, any other motive for attending the demonstration—which suggests there may have been several reasons to protest in the street that day. As well as a creature that "ate" everything, the demonstration is also a tool to "feed" secessionism. In a text from *ABC,* the demonstration is a "symptom" (*síntoma*) of "a society divided by the delirium of its governors" ("una sociedad dividida por el delirio de sus gobernantes") (ABC, 2012, p. 8). Meanwhile, *El Mundo* used "sweat/exude" (*exudar*) and "hangover" (*resaca*) in a set of analogies that also personalized the demonstration as a living being.

Perhaps the most creative and singular metaphor referred to the event as "Frankenstein's monster." The use of the metaphor was highly significant, and we interpreted that it fit rather well to the superdomain of *performance-show*, attached to the characters of Mary Shelley's novel and more clearly to its popular film adaptations. The text was part of an editorial article in *El Mundo* titled "Frankenstein's Monster Gets Away" ("A Frankenstein se le escapa el monstruo", 2012), expressing the editorial position of the daily. In this graphic image of how the daily considered the event, the demonstration is framed as a film or show in which the monster has escaped from its creator, Frankenstein, referring to the president of Catalonia, Artur Mas:

In other words, Mas has had the same experience as Doctor Frankenstein: *the monster he created* in the laboratory as an *experiment* got out of control and acquired *its own life*, causing damage that its inventor had not foreseen. [*Dicho de otra manera, a Mas le ha sucedido lo mismo que al doctor Frankenstein: que* el monstruo que creó *en el laboratorio para* experimentar *se le escapó de su control y adquirió* vida propia, *provocando unos daños que su inventor no había calculado.*] (Editorial, *El Mundo*, 2012, p. 3, emphasis added)

It is not absolutely clear whether the monster here refers to the demonstration or to playing at independence that has resulted in the mobilization of hundreds of thousands of people in the street, following top-down logic (from political, economic, and media elites to the people). According to this editorial, Artur Mas is committed to "managing" the situation; the people in the street do not seem to have any agency in their capacity to demonstrate. The horror-film scenario offers very limited agency to participants given that the monster is a kind of manipulated creature, an experiment of his creator (a political leader, the one loaded with agency rather than the people in the streets).

"The one who took the monster out for a walk now has to solve the problem of what to do with it in the street" [*Es quien ha sacado a pasear al monstruo quien tiene ahora que resolver el problema de qué hace con él en la calle*] (Editorial, *El Mundo*, 2012, p. 3). This extract from the editorial in *El Mundo* is rather illustrative: the monster (the protesters? the independence movement?) in the street has been brought out by Catalan political, economic, and media elites (commanded by Artur Mas, Dr. Frankenstein), who are now responsible for leading it back home. The people in the street are devoid of any agency; they are a driven being, a kind of loony creature out of control that needs to be shown the way home. In this scenario, the micronarratives are clear about the agency of the (clearly dehumanized) people in the streets: it is nonexistent.

The *performance-show* domain was better articulated on the front pages of Catalan *Ara*, whose headline of September 12 reads "Independencia (Primer acte)" ("Independence (First act)")," above a large picture showing thousands of people in the streets at the heart of the demonstration. For this daily, this is the "first act" of an opera that would be followed by a "second act," as expressed in the headline the day after: "Convèncer el món (Segon acte)" ("Convincing the World (Second act)"). In the text of September 13's editorial, *Ara* talks explicitly within this superdomain, developing the scenario:

It is in this context that we must place the speech that the president will give in Madrid today, which in fact will be *the second act* of *the play* that began with the demonstration of Tuesday. [*És en aquest context que hem de situar el discurs que avui farà el president a Madrid, que, de fet, serà el* segon acte *de l'obra que va començar amb la manifestació de dimarts.*] (*Ara*, 2012, p. 3)

For the Catalan daily, the demonstration is the opening act of a longer play acted out on several stages, including the streets of Barcelona and offices of Madrid. Artur Mas, the president, is one of the main actors in this play, as are the demonstrators, who, in this scenario, represent Catalonia or the people. The

micronarrative is that of an epic opera with acts that will drive the plot to an apotheosic finale. This scenario grants a high degree of agency to the protesters, who are a synecdoche of all Catalans. Here, Mas, as the leader representing the people of Catalonia, seizes the people's claims, as stated in the main chronicle: "Mas makes the clamour in the Diada for an independent state his own" [Mas fa seu el clam per l'estat propi de la Diada] (Casas, 2012, p. 4).[5]

      An army took over Barcelona's streets. In the storytelling of a demonstration that saw very few incidences of disorder considering its dimension and that was mainly peaceful, the language of violence and war was notable. In the Madrid-based dailies, the demonstration was a "powder keg" (*polvorín*), a "nationalist challenge" (*desafío nacionalista*), or a kind of "projectile" (*arma arrojadiza*). These analogies appeared in dailies that articulated combative comments, looking at violence from the past. One article in *ABC*, for example, establishes an analogy between the demonstration in Barcelona and all excesses of nationalism, including Jewish pogroms, the slogan *"ein Volk, ein Reich, ein Fürher,"* Castro's regime in Cuba, and the terrorism of ETA. In this discourse, "what happened on Tuesday in Catalonia is not an exception to the rule" [*lo sucedido el martes en Cataluña no constituye una excepción a la regla*] (San Sebastián, 2012, p. 13). Another text in *El Mundo* uses a similar strategy:

> Lenin, Mussolini and Hitler created an opinionated opinion and imposed it because they were not concerned with freedom. But they imposed themselves only because the weakness of tsarism, the Italian monarchy or the Weimar republic; by demoralizing, cowardice, blindness or accommodative turncoat of the ruling classes. Isn't that what is happening in Catalonia? [*Lenin, Mussolini y Hitler crearon una opinión opinada y la impusieron, precisamente porque no les importaba la libertad. Pero solo se impusieron por la debilidad del zarismo, la monarquía italiana o la República de Weimar: por la desmoralización, cobardía, ceguera o chaqueterismo acomodaticio de las clases dirigentes. ¿No es eso lo que está sucediendo en Cataluña?*] (Jiménez Losantos, 2012, p. 2).

      These references to totalitarian dictatorships, nondemocratic regimes and terrorism can be not directly related to war; however, these analogies, in context, tended to approach the metaphors to a violent past and the superdomain of *war-fortress-battle*. The protesters played the role of people manipulated by a nationalist, top-down propaganda "machine" driven by the Catalan Generalitat. The agency salience of the protesters is reduced to following the dictates of these elites, comparable with the aforementioned totalitarian dictators: "Did they [totalitarian leaders] wait for public opinion? No. They herded the flock and the sheep went along. [*¿Esperaron la opinión pública [los líderes totalitarios]? No. Arrearon al rebaño y allá fueron las ovejas*.]" (Jiménez Losantos, 2012, p. 3). The participants in the demonstration are associated with sheep ruled by a shepherd (the political leaders of totalitarian regimes and what automatically activates an analogy to the current Catalan president), and therefore also dehumanized.

---

[5] *Diada* is the national day of Catalonia.

Metaphorical figures in some Madrid-based articles also stressed the following ideas: "machine" (*maquinaria*)*,* "fuse" (*mecha*)*,* "explosion" (*explosion*)*,* "euphoria-provoking weapon" (*arma euforizante*)*,* "havoc" (*órdago*)*,* and "combating" (*combatir*)*.* Nevertheless, it should be noted that *El País* tended to avoid using war language, and its editorial talked about an "exhibition of power" (*exhibición de fuerza*)*,* moving the language into a mixture of the *performance-show* and *war-fortress-battle* domains (Editorial, *El País*, 2012, p. 26).

The *war-fortress-battle* superdomain also featured in the Catalan press, but the figures of speech were softened by use of the word "march" (*marxa*)*,* which in Spanish and Catalan has a very similar meaning to "demonstration"; indeed, in some contexts, they can be used as synonyms, activating an everyday and even unnoticed metaphor (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980), despite being attached to the aforementioned domain. The demonstration was therefore commonly referred to as "the march," and the people "took" (*pren*) the street. In Catalan dailies, it was an "explosion of celebration" (*explosió de festa*) or a "parade" (*desfilar*), and the people "invaded" (*envaeix*) a public place to express their opinion. This more nuanced *battle* and *war* lexicon is apparent in the following description:

> The atmosphere in the capital city was buzzing before the demonstration in the afternoon, and the local demonstrators and those who had arrived from elsewhere exhibited their *panoply of peaceful weapons of expression*: *senyeres* and more *senyeres*.[6] [*La capital bullia de l'ambient previ a la manifestación de la tarda i els manifestants locals i arribats d'arreu exhibien la seva* panòplia d'armes d'expressió pacífica: senyeres *i més* senyeres] (Moreno, 2012, p. 22, emphasis added)

In Catalan usage, the fighting lexicon and figures of speech are not associated with a threat but with the people's determination to claim and fight for their rights. The "weapons" are their banners and flags, a "peaceful expression." This way, the metaphor of *war* is automatically softened as a new scenario is activated for the same superdomain. The same domain displays a very different discourse on the demonstration. And, as previously stated, the protesters are a synecdoche of the whole country, as expressed by this headline from *La Vanguardia* "Catalonia Says Enough" [Catalunya diu prou] (*La Vanguardia,* 2012, p. 1). The presence of *war* language in all types of newspapers meant this superdomain was the most transversal in the studied corpus. The main difference between the scenarios in Barcelona- and Madrid-based dailies (with the exception of *El País*) concerned the agency of the people in the street. In the latter, they are depicted as manipulated masses, while in the former, they constitute a conscious concentration of people with a clear political aim.

The uncontrolled power of water. What we have called metaphors of *water* are rather recurrent in all the dailies except for *La Razón,* but particularly in Catalan reports. We included *water* in the superdomain of *nature-weather* since it expresses not only speed or movement but also strength, produced in a wide range of forms when nature unleashes its power. We found references to the demonstration as a "flash flood" (*riada*), "flood" (*inundación*), "tsunami", "surge" (*oleada*)*,* "wave" (*ola*), "flow" (*afluencia*), "overflow" (*desbordamiento*), "tide" (*marea*), "ocean" (*océano*), "river" (*riu*), something

---

[6] *Senyera* is the flag of Catalonia.

"flowing into/discharging" (*desembocar*), and "current" (*corriente*). The target domain of these expressions is the demonstration, and all of these terms conjure up the scenario of a strong flow of people. Pictures of the streets filled with people, banners, and flags accompany the texts.

The Catalan newspapers drew a scenario in which people have the power to move forward in the self-determination process and that the time has come for politicians and political leaders to go with the flow; in this story politicians are just pushed up by this popular power. The scenario here is that the demonstration is an overflowing current of water, and it is time for politicians to manage the situation. Some opposing viewpoints coincide in this scenario, as in the following examples, first from a Barcelona-based newspaper and then a Madrid-based newspaper.

> In Convergència [the ruling party in Catalonia's government], the feeling is more ambivalent. On the one hand, they are happy, but on the other, they know that it's up to them *to handle* the situation, and they are aware that *the people*—mostly, their voters— *are surging above* predictions and agendas. [*A Convergència la sensació és més ambivalent. Per una banda estan contents, per l'altra saben que els toca administrar la situació, i s'adonen que la gent—en gran mesura, els seus votants—està desbordant previsions i agendes.*] (Soler, 2012, p. 22, emphasis added)

> Many will be glad to see that independentism is *rising like foam* in Catalonia (46%, according to the survey published yesterday in *El Periódico*), but the problem is how Mas is going *to manage this overflow of enthusiasm* that is asking him to disengage from Spain. [*Muchos se sentirán felices al comprobar que el independentismo* sube como la espuma *en Cataluña (un 46% según la encuesta que ayer publicó* El Periódico*), pero el problema es* cómo va a gestionar Mas esa riada de entusiasmos *que le pide el desenganche de España*.] (García-Abadillo, 2012, p. 13, emphasis added)

In these examples, the people have a great agency, as they are fostering political changes, but the administrator of the situation is the governing political party (in coalition with Unió Democràtica). Despite coinciding in the image of an overflow, the scenario differs greatly in lexical choice and use of metaphor. For example, the Spanish daily analyst makes an analogy with "foam" (always ephemeral and inconsistent), while for the Catalan opinion maker, it is "the people" (using synecdoche again) and their determination that is pushing politicians to act. The above mentioned editorial article from *Ara* explicitly states that in the first act, the people's voice and claims take center stage, and in the second act, the president takes over (*Ara*, 2012). This is a very different narrative choice from the one drawn by *El Mundo* in a headline the following day: "The Secessionist Tide Drowns His [Mas'] Demand for a Fiscal Pact" ("La marea secesionista sepulta su reivindicación de pacto fiscal") (Sastre & González, 2012, p. 1). Here, the powerful tide is harming the president's strategy of demanding a fiscal pact, as the protesters refuse to accept anymore negotiations. In this narrative, the water, unleashed, is destructive; it is nature untamed. Therefore, the situation has become messy; chaos difficult for politicians to sort out. It is similar to the image used in an article by a professor of the Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona in *El País*:

> And now what? I am afraid that neither the bailout nor the fiscal pact will serve to *stop
> that tide.* A new and difficult era has begun. [*¿Y ahora qué? Me temo que ni el rescate ni
> el pacto fiscal sirvan para* detener esa marea. *Empieza una nueva y difícil etapa*.]
> (Subirats, 2012, p. 11, emphasis added)

The political conflict resulting in a street demonstration has turned into a major problem for the political leaders, not in the sense that they have to move forward or take responsive measures, but in the sense that they should "stop" it, which becomes the objective of any plausible solution. Political conflict is therefore inherently a problem, and the questions are who can send these people back home and how. What we learn from this domain is that, as Musolff says (2004), the same superdomains can articulate different discourses depending on the scenarios that articulate micronarratives. In addition, we state that the same scenarios can result in different discourses about micronarratives, the agency offered to actors, and the structure of the plot in each case. The same scenario of *water* operates differently in Catalan and Spanish narratives. For the former, the power of the water is positive and must be used to move forward (it is time for politicians and representatives to act); for the latter, the current is a dangerous and uncontrolled power that must be stopped (it is time for politicians to correct the situation and return it to calm).

Finally, it is noteworthy that other *nature-weather* superdomain uses also had a particular presence in the Spanish press. Using a very different image and metaphor, an article in *El País* suggests the demonstration has no chance of transforming political events; rather, it is the organizers (ANC) that hold the power to drive the process: "ANC is not satisfied with the *march*: they want it to be a *fruit* that ripens into independence" [*La ANC no se conforma con la* marcha: *quiere que sea un* fruto que madure *hasta lograr la independencia*] (Roger, 2012, p. 12, emphasis added). The image of a ripening fruit that will inevitably fall from the tree is an analogy of the people protesting, indicating that it is only a matter of time before the implications are seen. What level of agency can hold a ripe fruit hanging in a tree?

Conclusion

In this article, we articulated an analysis on the metaphors used in Spanish and Catalan newspapers reporting about the massive demonstration that took place in Barcelona on September 11, 2012. As observed, the taxonomy of Musolff offers insight into how the media constructed the meaning of the demonstration and how they considered the citizens participating in it. Overall, the Spanish press tended to prefer the *life-health-strength* domain, although they also used transversal superdomains, including *war-fortress-battle*. Perhaps most important, the scenarios that Spanish media constructed tended to minimize the demonstrators' agency or to depict a scenario of risk (using terms such as *mass* and *giant* and calling the people *impossible to govern*). A mainstream and transversal story of the demonstration used the metaphor *THE PEOPLE IS A CURRENT OF WATER* including terms related to *flood*, which other authors have studied in relation to immigration (Charteris-Black, 2006; O'Brien, 2003; Santa Ana, 2003). The *water* metaphor often appeared as a warning that something uncontrollable was, in this case, *taking* the street. But the relation between source and target domains and the ways in which each newspaper used the metaphor of *water* were different. We found, therefore, a metaphor variation (Kövecses, 2005) of *people* as *water* that does indeed provide diversity in the positioning of the meaning

(Argaman, 2008). The analogy of uncontrolled nature (*river water*) establishes the target domain (the demonstration) as something the audience already knows (the catastrophic consequences of a flood). This scenario treats the people as a potentially dangerous and violent entity.

The Catalan narratives of the demonstration also used the *water* metaphor to report on the event, but in a different way. Here, the water could be intelligently driven, smartly controlled like a machine to move the process forward. Catalan mainstream dailies offered the command of this machine to the politicians, especially to President Artur Mas. Some minor interpretations, like the one in *El Periódico* (Sintes, 2012, p. 6), also give a principal role to Spanish President Mariano Rajoy, saying that he needed to evaluate the situation, but allocating the major parts to the Catalan president. Overall, the Catalan dailies refer to the demonstration as an analogy for the Catalan people as a whole, at times without any nuances. Some analysts complained about the way that certain Madrid-based journalists treated such a major demonstration. One of the writers in *El Punt Avui* protested with irony to the Madrid-based accounts of the event (an idea that summarizes the lack of agency that these accounts offered to the people): "In other words, it is precariousness or Mas that is pushing the people towards independence. Because the people are idiots and never think for themselves. Especially, if the people are Catalan" ["*O sigui, que la precarietat o Mas empenyen la gent a la independència. Perquè la gent és imbècil i no pensa mai sola. Sobretot, si la gent és* catalana"] (Sanchís, 2012, p. 3). When Catalan newspapers preferred the *way-movement-speed* and *nature-weather* superdomains, this narrative was about a power (coming from the citizenship) that could be used to change the political context.

Musolff's scheme partially fit the studied corpus as a set of target domains. In this regard, Musolff's categories are not necessary for examining every piece of discourse or narrative on a political conflict like the one examined here, and for us, they were a departing point; our main objective was not to exactly match the corpus analyzed with them. When adapting the categories for our case study, we found that some of the superdomains were present (e.g., *war-fortress-battle* and *nature-weather*) but others (*love-marriage-family* and *economy-business*) were not. One explanation for this is that our research analyzed only those metaphors that referred to the specific target domain (the demonstration) and not all the metaphors that appeared in the texts. Another reason is that Musolff's list of superdomains applies more precisely to relationships among countries than to specific political expressions like the one analyzed in this study. The final consideration is that language and cultural context determine the mapping of superdomains in a given text, which Musolff (2004) also noted. However, superdomain mapping was rather useful for ordering the recurrent analogies in the compared texts and for evaluating the agency these analogies indicated.

To sum up, Spanish media tended to minimize participants' agency, whereas Catalan narratives used the *nature-weather* superdomain to give agency to the people demonstrating in Barcelona streets; to ascribe to them the power to change the current political context. In an age of demonstrations and protests, the way mainstream newspapers treated the mass demonstration that took place in Barcelona September 11, 2012, serves to illustrate how journalism articulates the meaning of citizenship. In their use of language, the political reports and opinion pieces we studied tended to insert the national and sometimes nationalist viewpoints of their respective newspapers to create texts that try to better connect with the public. The Spanish papers minimized the agency of the people and cited them as problems for

national interests; the Catalan papers showed the demonstrators as expressing the desires of the entire nation. The micronarratives in these texts represented the people as a danger to the establishment (the state) or as a powerful force to change the establishment and establish a new one. These narratives explained how a huge part of the population (of 7 million)—participants in a demonstration—could or could not take part in a crucial political process that questioned the structural power of the state itself.

References

ABC. (2012, September 12). El nacionalismo agita el espantajo de la independencia [Nationalism stirs independence's scarecrow]. *ABC*, p. 8.

Altheide, D. (2002). *Creating fear. News and the construction of crisis.* New York, NY: Walter de Gruyter.

Altheide, D. (2013). Shielding risk. *Catalan Journal of Communication and Cultural Studies, 5*(1), 97–120. doi:10.1386/cjcs.5.1.97_7

Ara (2012, September 13). El front diplomàtic (SEGON ACTE) [The diplomatic front (SECOND ACT)]. *Ara*, p. 3.

Argaman, E. (2008). In the same boat? On metaphor variation as mediating the individual voice in organizational change. *Applied Linguistics, 29*(3), 483–502. doi:10.1093/applin/amn021

Bal, M. (1985). Introduction. In M. Bal (Ed.), *Narratology. Introduction to the theory of narrative* (pp. 3–9). Toronto, Canada: University of Toronto Press.

Cammaerts, B. (2012). The strategic use of metaphors by political and media elites: The 2007–11 Belgian constitutional crisis. *International Journal of Media & Cultural Politics*, *8*(2–3), 229–249. doi:10.1386/macp.8.2-3.229

Capdevila, A., & Ferran, E. (2012) El 'recorte de la autonomía'. Posicionamiento mediatico ante las declaraciones de Aznar y de Zapatero desde el análisis textual [The 'autonomy cutback.' Media positioning in regards of the statements of Aznar and Zapatero from textual analysis]. In E. Castelló (Ed.), *La mediatización del conflicto politico: Discursos y narrativas en el contexto español* [The mediatizaton of political conflict: Discourse and narrative in the Spanish context] (pp. 39–60). Barcelona, Spain: Laertes.

Casas, F. (2012). Mas fa seu el clam per l'estat propi de la Diada [Mas takes the claim for a self state]. *Ara*, p. 4.

Charteris-Black, J. (2006). Britain as a container: immigration metaphors in the 2005 election campaign. *Discourse & Society*, *17*(5), 563–581. doi:10.1177/0957926506066345

Cohen-Almagor, R. (2008). The limits of objective reporting. *Journal of Language and Politics, 7*(1), 136–155. doi:dx.doi.org/10.1075/jlp.7.1.07alm

Editorial, *El Mundo*. (2012, September 12). A Frankenstein se le escapa el monstruo [Frankenstein's monster gets away]. *El Mundo*, p. 3.

Editorial, *El País*. (2012, September 12). Diada histórica [Historic national day]. *El País*, p. 26.

Entman, R. M. (1993). Framing: Toward clarification of a fractured paradigm. *Journal of Communication*, *43*(4), 51–58. doi:10.1111/j.1460-2466.1993.tb01304.x

García-Abadillo, C. (2012, September 12). No seáis imbéciles [Don't be idiot]. *El Mundo*, p. 13.

Goatly, A. (2007). *Washing the brain: Metaphor and hidden ideology*. Amsterdam, Netherlands: John Benjamins.

Herman, L., & Vervaeck, B. (2001). *Handbook of narrative analysis.* Lincoln, NE, and London, UK: University of Nebraska Press.

Horst, M., & Lolk, M. (2003). The Dramaturgical need for closure. Mass-mediated stories of risk. In K. Riegert (Ed.), *News of the other. Tracing identity in Scandinavian constructions of Eastern Baltic Sea Region* (pp. 222–241). Göteborg, Sweden: Nordicom.

Jiménez Losantos, F. (2012, September 12). El triunfo separatista [The separatists' victory]. *El Mundo*, p. 2.

Kövecses, Z. (2005). *Metaphor in culture. Universality and variation.* Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

La Vanguardia. (2012, September 12). Catalunya diu prou [Catalonia says enough]. *La Vanguardia*, p. 1.

La Vanguardia. (2014, March 18). El 60% está a favor de la independencia y el 75% avalan la consulta [60% is backing the independence and 75% wants a referendum]. Retrieved from http://www.lavanguardia.com/politica/20140318/54403186568/60-catalanes-votarian-favor-independencia-ceo.html

Lakoff, G., & Johnson, M. (1980). *Metaphors we live by*. Chicago, IL, and London, UK: University of Chicago Press.

Minder, R. (2014, November 9). Catalonia overwhelmingly votes for independence from Spain in straw poll, *The New York Times.* Retrieved from http://www.nytimes.com/2014/11/10/world/europe/catalans-vote-in-straw-poll-on-independence-from-spain.html

Mio, S. J. (1997). Metaphor and politics. *Metaphor and Symbol*, *12*(2), 113–133.

Modigliani, A., & Gamson, W .A. (1989). Media discourse and public opinion on nuclear power: A constructionist approach. *American Journal of Sociology*, *95*(1), 1–37.

Montagut, M. (2012). El caso de la sentencia del Tribunal Constitucional sobre el Estatut en la radio matinal: La ductilidad del catalanismo político [The case of the Constitutional Court sentence about the Statute in the morning radio: Ductility of political Catalanness]. In E. Castelló (Ed.), *La mediatización del conflicto politico: Discursos y narrativas en el contexto español* [The mediatizaton of political conflict: Discourse and narrative in the Spanish context] (pp. 79–94). Barcelona, Spain: Laertes.

Moreno, M. (2012, September 12). El triomf de l'estel [The victory of the star]. *El Punt Avui*, p. 22.

Muñoz, J. & Guinjoan, M. (2013). Accounting for internal variation in nationalist mobilization: unofficial referendums for independence in Catalonia (2009–11). *Nations and nationalism, 19*(1), 44–67.

Musolff, A. (2004). *Metaphor and political discourse. Analogical reasoning in debates about Europe*. New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan.

Musolff, A. (2006). Metaphor scenarios in public discourse. *Metaphor and Symbol*, *21*(1), 23–38.

O'Brien, G. (2003). Indigestible food, conquering hordes, and waste materials. Metaphor of immigrants and the early immigration restriction debate in the United States. *Metaphor and Symbol, 18*(1), 33–47.

O'Donnell, H., & Castelló, E. (2011) Neighbourhood squabbles or claims of right? Narratives of conflict on Spanish and Catalan television. *Narrative Inquiry, 21*(2), 191–212. doi:10.1075/ni.21.2.02odo

Perales C., Xambó, R., & Xicoy, E. (2012). La crisis del modelo de Estado. La sentencia del Estatut de Catalunya y el 10J [The crisis of the state model. The sentence on the Catalan Statute and the 10J]. In E. Castelló (Ed.), *La mediatización del conflicto político. Discursos y narrativas en el contexto español* [The mediatizaton of political conflict. Discourse and narrative in the Spanish context] (pp. 61–78). Barcelona, Spain: Laertes.

Rañé, J. M. (2012, September 12). El día después [The day after]. *La Razón* (*ed. Catalunya*), p. 3.

Roger, M. (2012, September 12). Los organizadores se reunirán con el presidente catalán para pedirle la secesión [Organizers will meet the Catalan president to ask for secession]. *El País*, p. 12.

San Sebastián, I. (2012, September 13). Nacionalismo de cartera [Wallet nationalism]. *ABC*, p. 13.

Sanchís, V. (2012, September 13). La gent és imbècil [The people is idiot]. *El Punt Avui*, p. 3.

Santa Ana, O. (2003). *Brown the tide rising. Metaphors of latinos in contemporary American public discourse.* Austin, TX: University of Texas Press.

Sastre, D .G., & González, G. (2012, September 12). El juego independentista se le va a Mas de las manos [The independence game out of Mas' hands]. *El Mundo*, p. 1.

Sintes, M. (2012, September 12). La decisió o la no decisió del PP [The decision or no-decision of PP]. *El Periódico de Catalunya*, p. 12.

Soler, T. (2012, September 12). Una legislatura que agonitza [A dying legislature]. *Ara*, p. 6.

Subirats, J. (2012, September 12). !Menudo lío! [What a mess!]. *El País*, p. 11.

Van Gorp, B. (2005). Where is the frame?: Victims and intruders in the Belgian press coverage of the asylum issue. *European Journal of Communication*, *20*(4), 484–507. doi:10.1177/0267323105058253

Vilella, M. (2010). Press news coverage of GM crops in Catalonia in 2005: A case study in environmental communication. *Catalan Journal of Communication and Cultural Studies*, *2*(1), 23–41. doi:10.1386/cjcs.2.1.23

Wodak, R. (2009). *The discourse of politics in action*. New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan.