

The representation of the Cooperation North-South in the Catalan media

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Abstract

The media of reference in Catalonia (press, radio, TV and internet) propagate an image of cooperation and solidarity that combine, in different proportions depending on each case, a neocolonialist and paternalistic framework with another framework based on emancipation and empowerment for both South and North oriented to structural changes.

This paper presents the preliminary results of a quantitative and qualitative study, still underway, carried out as a part of an Initiative organised with the financial support of the European Union Project n. DCI-NSAPVD/2012/279-805. The project, called "Network of Journalists and Communicators for cooperation and development", is run by the consortium formed by Catalan Federation of NGO, RESACOOOP (Réseau Rhône-Alpes d'appui à la coopération internationale) and Consorzio ONG Piemontesi.



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1. Methodology.

1.1. Objects and objectives. The objectives of the study that we are presenting are, first, to analyse how the media in Catalonia represent solidarity and cooperation itself. And, second, correlate such representation with the ideological position of the journalists of that beat and the editors. Therefore, there are two objects of study:

- ♣ the broadcasted or published pieces in the local and regional Catalan media, related to cooperation or international solidarity (CSI)
- ♣ the conception that journalists and editors have about cooperation and solidarity.

In order to obtain the desired results we have scaled the procedure in diverse specific targets:

- ♣ rebuild the ideological matrix of the discourse in every media about CSI;
- ♣ identify and describe the promoted ideological frames;
- ♣ rebuild the ideological matrix of the media newsroom about CSI;
- ♣ Identify possible stereotypes about the South in both discourses;
- ♣ And relate the published discourses to the expressed discourses during the interviews with the members of the media.

1.2. Hypothesis. While we achieve our goals, we expect to be able to verify or refute the following general hypothesis: media combine two different visions about CSI, one based on Solidarity and Equity with another one that is neocolonial and tainted with negative stereotypes about 'receivers' of cooperations and positive images about the

'givers'.

The distinction between the two focuses is inspired on the document Finding Frames: *New ways to engage the UK public in global poverty*, elaborated by Andrew Darnton with Martin Kirk. [1]

The verification of the general hypothesis will be revealed through the following specific hypothesis:

1. There are propositions in the journalistic discourse that promote explicitly or implicitly a frame ` characterised by:
 - promoting charity, charities (as organisations), donations, and a western way to understand development,
 - and it is focused on the efectivity of the aid in the short term, the corruption of the receiver's society, and communication as a one-way and exceptional solidarity campaigns.
2. Alternatively, there are propositions in the journalistic discourse that implicitly or explicitly present `another frame characterised by:
 - the promotion of justice and equity; social movements and NGO's; the mutual support north-south and partnership; the well-being, freedom and ocial, environmental and economical responsibility; good government, dialogue and commitments;
 - responsibility reports on actors from the North and not only actors from the South; frauds; the non-accomplishment of the commitments and neocolonial acts.
3. There are stereotypes about the South.

1.3. Corpus and sample.

Two television channels broadcasting for the whole Catalonia have been chosen to study the media discourse (TV3 and 8TV, first public and second private); two radio station (Catalunya Ràdio and RAC1, first public, second private) also reaching all Catalonia; five newspapers (La Vanguardia, El Periódico, El País-Cataluña, ARA and Punt-Avui); five newspapers of just local reach (Diari de Girona, Diari de Tarragona, El Segre, Regió 7 and Nou9), and a news website (VilaWeb).

The sample has been gathered during the last year. Although the pieces haven't been chosen neither in a systematic nor in a random way by the investigator, they have the advantage to be the most relevant pieces in an evaluation of the journalists.

In addition, as the European project this investigation belongs to has as a final aim to create a network of reporters and communicators about cooperation, the method to select the pieces to analyse is a better and more effective way to achieve the final objective instead of a random or systematic selection.

To get a general idea on the conception of the journalists and the media about CSI, a directive and an editor from every medium will be interviewed. This phase hasn't started at the moment this document was delivered. The analyses of the pieces isn't finished, but 67 have been done so far.

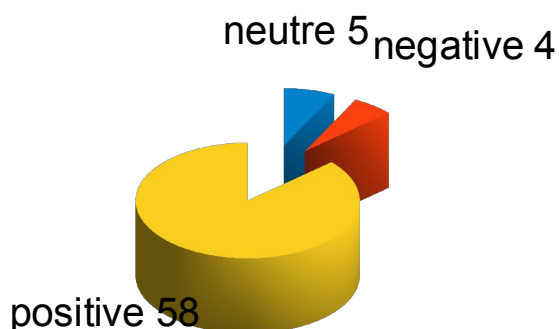
2. Results

2.1. Positive vision.

The majority of the analysed pieces have a positive view on cooperation or international solidarity, no matter what field is treated. Even though this is not surprising because these pieces have been chosen by the journalists, asked by an investigation team clearly in favour of the cooperation, the result is an indicator that this is the main tone in the information about cooperation. However, the next graphic 1 shows a numeric result.

Graphic 1.

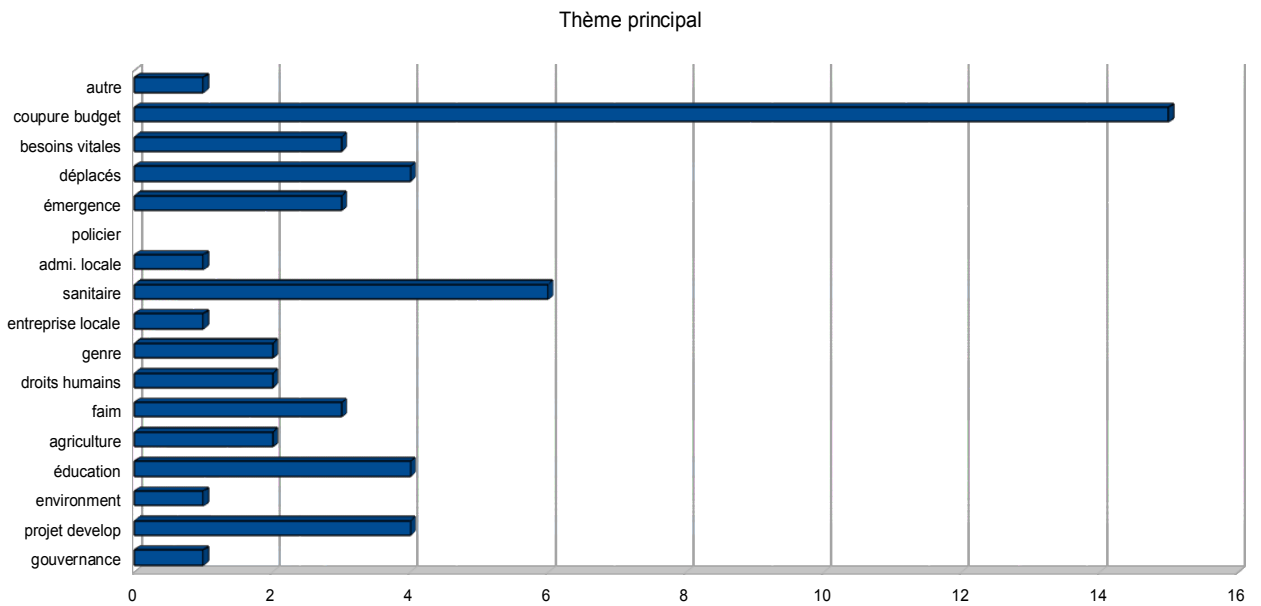
Vision de la coopération



2.2. Political diversion in times of cuts.

The main topic of the pieces has been the cuts on public administration (Catalan and Spanish governments) that have affected the subsidies on cooperation projects of all kinds, but mainly managed by NGO's. These are not the vast majority but as we can see on graphic 2, there are more pieces about this subject than from others.

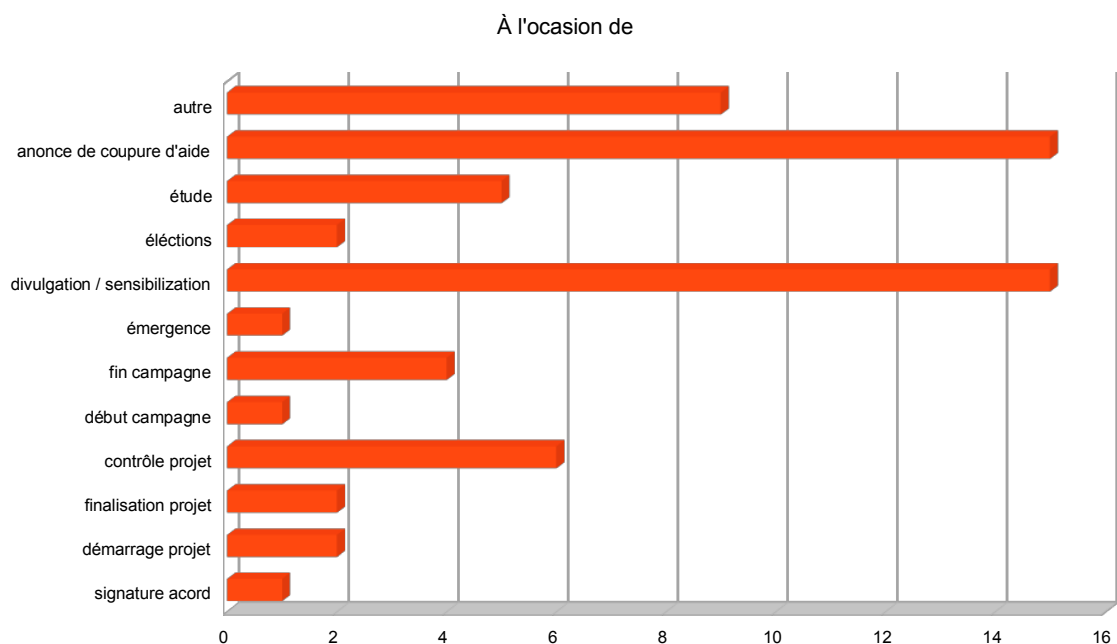
Graphic 2



2.3. Increasing awareness and divulgation have strong presence

NGO's press offices often wonder how to gain attention and coverage on cooperation. Despite the last result, where an information with political influence as cuts on a field (cooperations) which is perceived as positive, has a big presence, our results show that the 'news peg' can also remain on the raising or increasing awareness or the divulgation of cooperation projects. Graphic 3 shows 'in occasion of what' our object of analyse have been published.

Graphic 3. Amount of pieces published because of different grounds

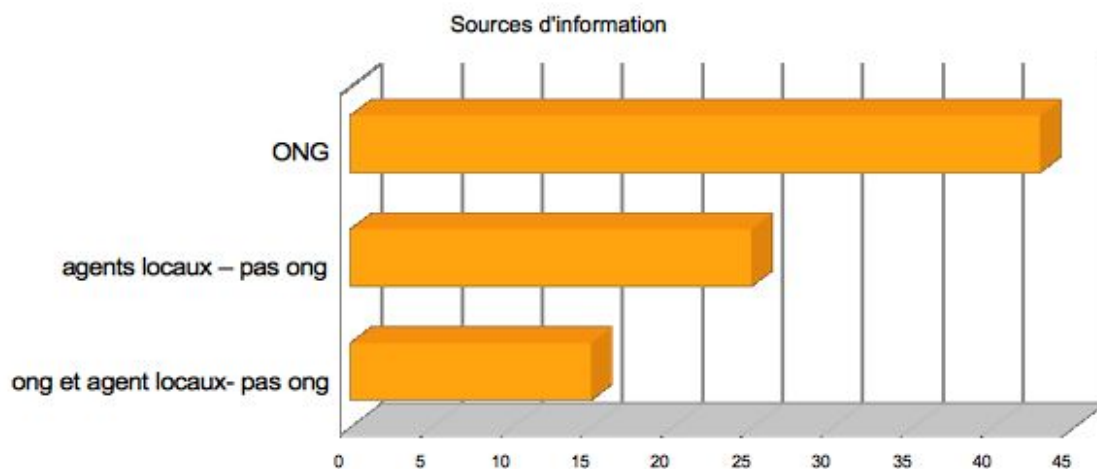


However, if we move from global facts to specific, we observe that the more the selection criteria on the media are tougher (because they have a Catalan reach and have small redactional surface), then the more present is their cases themes that provoke political erosion.

On the local media the divulgation about specific projects have a bigger room, mostly when the participants are locals. It is the well known criterium of proximity. These characters have a voice, even though those from the South haven't, because the report in this case have been produced with the material (information and photographs) brought from expatriate aid workers.

The voice of the actors from the South appears if the journalist has traveled where the project is running and that happens – clearly visible from the texts – if an emergency has occurred and media sent reporters or if the government or the NGO funds the trip. Graphic number 4 shows the presence of witnesses.

Graphic 4. Sources of information



2.4. Balanced charity values and transforming values

The most promoted value is 'Aid' in diverse variations: 'Aid in the South', 'Aid for the Third World', 'Humanitarian Aid', 'Health Aid', 'Educational Aid'. Also in the simple versions of 'Donations' or 'Enterprise's donations'.

The next group of values in quantitative importance – in the investigation so far – relates to the human rights defence, understood as social, economic rights and solidarity as a fight for these values.

The third block promotes cooperation between equals and finds that measures such as self-development and sustainability are positive.

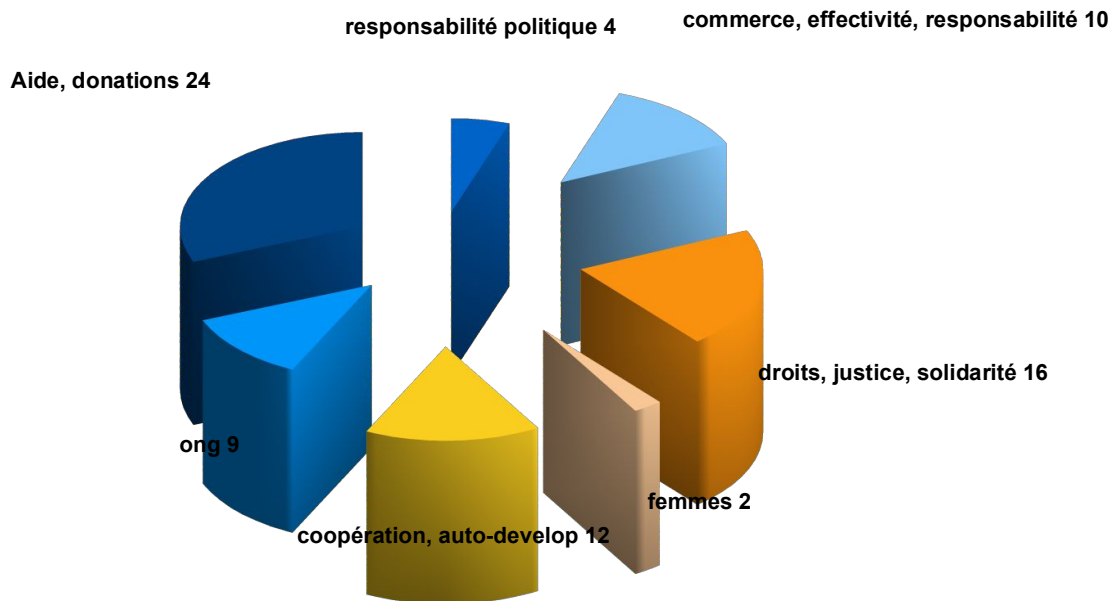
On the same level of importance, there is a group of values such as 'faire trade', 'Aid effectivity', 'enterprise responsibility' and 'NGO's' as a value itself – as a solidarity tool too -. The pieces that treat NGO's as a value are actually the ones that talk about budget cuts on cooperation and about the debts of the governments to these organisations. Some articles propose – following the same pattern – not only that the NGO's are a value, also their 'independence' is a value and consequently suggest new ways to gain associates and present positively the NGO as agents to exert political pressure.

Regarding women, one piece mentioned empowerment and another the fight against sexist attacks.

In the information referring cuts and debts, the value of political responsibility is promoted. On the 5th graphic, we can observe how the values on vertical solidarity from North to South (blue pieces) are more than the pieces treating rights, justice and self-development (orange pieces).

Graphic 5. Quantity of pieces that promote certain values

Valeurs promues synthétisées

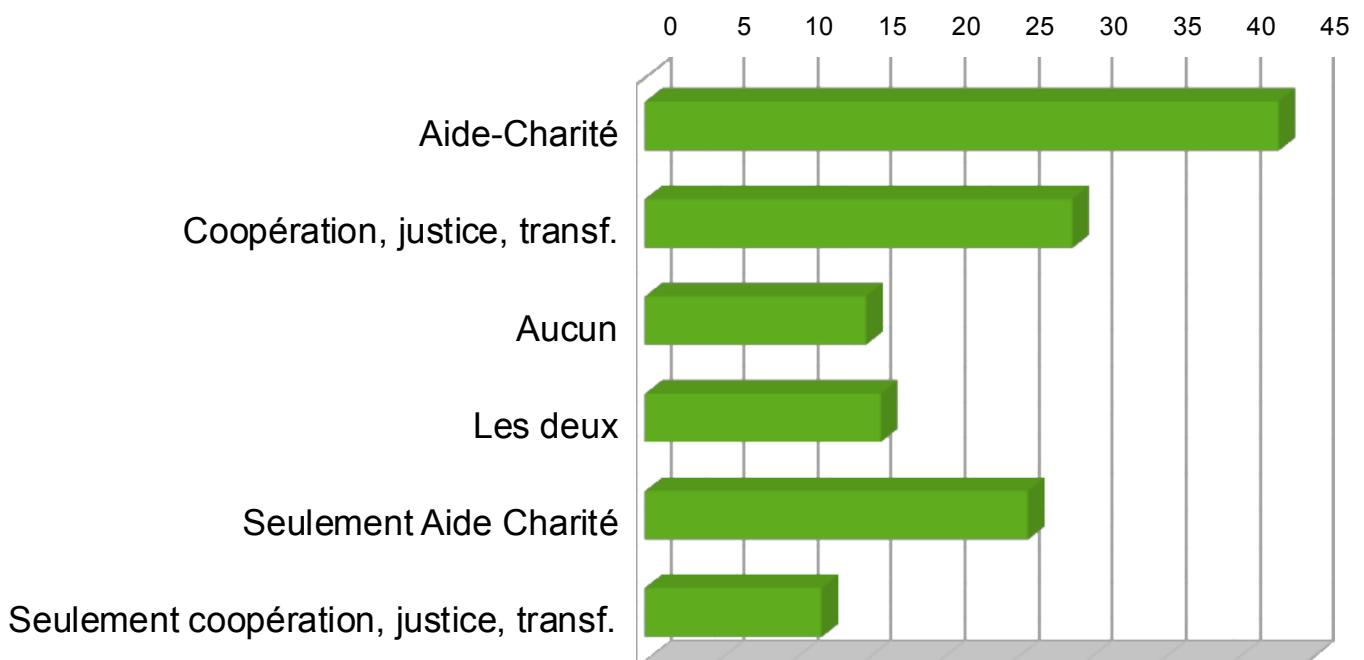


2.5. More presence of the charity frame

As the majority of the pieces are quite large (full page, double pages, some 30 minutes TV programmes), any of them can contain (explicitly or implicitly) a considerable number of relevant proposals that even not being necessarily contradictory they have different orientations.

For that reason, on the analysis pattern—grill we have used, we have gathered all present and relevant proposition in such that we have been able to consider if a piece promotes one, none, or both frames at the same time. This result is shown on the 6th graphic.

Graphic 6. Presence of the frame orientations



It is interesting to observe that in some pieces (those related to erosion politics) it is not possible to distinguish between frames. When they touch the issue of cooperation they do in a plain way.

In a less relevant number (15 pieces) both frames are promoted at the same time.

In general, we can affirm that there are more pieces that promote the 'Aid-charity' frame than the ones that promote 'Cooperation-Justice-Transformation'.

Globally 'Aid-charity' frame is the most present. Here are some examples of propositions that promote it:

- 'Avances como los registrados en alimentos se verán truncados por culpa de los recortes en cooperación' (Punt-Avui, 06/07/2011) ['Achievements on food will be truncated for the cuts on cooperation']
- 'Hay jóvenes que aprovechan el verano para realizar trabajos solidarios' (Diari de Tarragona, 08/08/2011) ['Some young people make the most of their summer on doing solidarity jobs']
- 'Los proyectos responden a las necesidades justificadas en espacios de escasez por todo el mundo' (Diari de Tarragona, 23/04/08) ['The projects respond to justified needs in scarcity spaces all over the world']
- 'Los ciudadanos comprometidos recolectan fondos para los jóvenes desfavorecidos de República Dominicana' (Nou9, 26/02/10) ['Committed citizens raise funds for the disadvantaged youngsters on Dominican Republic']
- 'La aplicación efectiva del tratamiento de la enfermedad dependerá de los donantes de fondos del Norte' (Cat ràdio, 23/03/13) ['The effective treatment of the diseases will depend on the North donors']
- 'La incapacidad y corrupción del gobierno haitiano deja desamparada a la población de manera que las acciones de cooperación internacional son positivas, justificadas y totalmente necesarias o imprescindibles para la supervivencia de la población haitiana enferma' (TV3, 16/11/11) ['The inability and corruption of the Haitian government leaves the population defenceless, what makes international cooperation acts positives, justified and totally essential or indispensable for the survival of the ill population']

Here are some examples of proposition on a positive orientation of 'Cooperation-Justice-Transformation':

- 'Las empresas farmacéuticas no están interesadas en los problemas de África' (La Vanguardia, 27/01/13) ['Pharmaceutical enterprises aren't interested on African problems']
- 'Hace falta una reforma agraria para tener seguridad alimentaria' (Cat Radio, 2013) ['To attain food security an agrarian reform is needed']
- 'El comercio es justo si hay: precio justo, condiciones laborales dignas, es sostenible, retorna beneficio a la comunidad' (TV3, 18/06/10) ['It's a fair trade if there is: a fair price, decent and dignified working conditions, it is sustainable, and the benefit returns to the community']
- 'Las poblaciones receptoras sufren explotación, marginación e injusticia' (Diari de Tarragona, 23/07/06) ['The receiving population suffer exploitation, marginality and injustice']
- 'Las ONG del Sur tiene métodos e ideas concebidas para trabajar problemas específicos de su país que han demostrado que funcionan y que tienen efectos de desarrollo a largo plazo tanto a nivel individual como comunitario' (TV3, 20/6/2011) ['NGO's from the South have ideas and methods to work specific problems in their country that function and that have long term effects on development at an individual and community levels']

2.6. Lacking stereotypes, but there are some.

Forms of stereotypes about the citizens of the South have been found in the 13% of the pieces, even though they aren't flagrant generalisations, as far as their appearance related to individuals or groups, it becomes suggested that the characteristic of the stereotype affects all the individuals of a country or ethnic group.

The evocation of 'poverty' or 'extreme poverty' and 'poverty and passivity' might be understandable in the information about emergencies, but the reiteration of these characteristics to a specific populations and sometimes specifying just their nationality, keeps the door open to generalisation.

The same occurs when recalling corruption or the incapability to govern or sustain a public administration, referred to certain human groups. Also, sometimes, these incapacities are related to what media describe as 'superstition' fostering thus another stereotype.

REFERENCES

[1] Andrew Darnton with Martin Kirk, Finding Frames: New ways to engage the uk public in global poverty, Oxfam & UK Aid, London, 2011.