

Catalonia's Independence Process and its Hindrance by "Anxiety Culture"

Bàrbara Roviró

Catalonia at present is an Autonomous Community ('Comunitat Autònoma') and an integrative part of the Spanish State. Yet it is right now officially heading for its complete independence in order to become an internationally recognized political state of its own. The decisive step is to be the referendum Catalonia has decided to hold on October 1st 2017. In my talk, I will try to point out how the Catalan Government's engagement in the independence process is being hindered by the official Spanish state policy which reacts to its main fear of being gravely weakened in its economic power in case Catalonia should break away. In face of the democratic and peaceful way Catalonia is following, there is hardly any argument left for the Spanish State than to declare any political separation from the political entity of Spain as definitely illegal. But this categorical attitude, rhetorically reduced to a simple 'no', doesn't provide any basis for a constructive public discourse on the matter. So, what happens is that defenders of the Spanish unity make use of discursive strategies which do not refer to facts but intend to establish the frightening outlook for political disorder, economic collapse and social strife. Stoking these fears and evoking some kind of uncontrollable future for an independent state of Catalonia comes close to a dystopian view on the possible result of a quite normal democratic process. It is indeed a way of shaping the public discourse in order to make use of what can be referred to as the 'Anxiety Culture' by which our modern societies are deeply affected.