

# Constructing Hegemony: Subjectivity and Antagonism in the Catalan Independence Movement (2006–2018)

Nicolas Rivera-Sarmiento

*Universitat De Barcelona, Spain*

## Abstract

This paper examines the Catalan independence movement (2006–2018) as a process through which a collective political subject was constructed. Drawing on the work of Ernesto Laclau, it approaches the movement not as the expression of a pre-existing “people”, but as the outcome of discursive practices that articulate heterogeneous social demands into a contingent political unity. The analysis focuses on how key signifiers such as independence, the right to decide, and republic functioned in the construction of a Catalan sovereigntist subject, while simultaneously establishing antagonistic frontiers within the Spanish political field. Methodologically, the paper combines discourse-theoretical analysis with qualitative data from in-depth interviews, complemented by Q methodology and cluster analysis to identify patterns of meaning-making and political positioning. The findings suggest that the Catalan case can be understood as a process of hegemonic rearticulation in which dispersed demands were progressively unified through an equivalential logic, enabling the emergence of a politically effective yet contingent collective subject. The paper contributes to debates on populism, political subjectivity, and nationalism by offering an empirically grounded analysis of a contemporary European case.

**Keywords:** Antagonism; Catalan Independence Movement; Discourse Analysis; Hegemony; Political Subjectivity