

On (National) Citizenship and (De)Politicised Nations: Everyday Discourses About the Catalan Secessionist Movement

Cristina Pradillo-Caimari¹, Andrés Di Masso Tarditti¹, Eleni Andreouli²

[1] *Department of Social Psychology and Quantitative Psychology, University of Barcelona, Barcelona, Spain.* [2] *Department of Psychology, The Open University, Milton Keynes, United Kingdom.*

Journal of Social and Political Psychology, 2023, Vol. 11(1), 291–308, <https://doi.org/10.5964/jspp.9275>

Received: 2022-04-06 • Accepted: 2022-12-21 • Published (VoR): 2023-06-22

Handling Editor: Maria Fernandes-Jesus, York St. John University, York, United Kingdom

Corresponding Author: Cristina Pradillo-Caimari, Department of Social Psychology and Quantitative Psychology, University of Barcelona, Passeig de la Vall d'Hebron, 171, 08035, Barcelona, Spain. E-mail: cpradillo@ub.edu

Supplementary Materials: Materials [see [Index of Supplementary Materials](#)]



Abstract

This paper examines the Catalan independentist movement understood as a paradigmatic case of secessionist politics in a European context. Drawing on recent rhetorical-psychological studies on citizenship and nationhood, we explore how constructions of citizenship and national identity interweave to shape, warrant, and contest opposing arguments about Catalan independence and Spanish sovereignty. We conducted a discursive-rhetorical analysis of thirty open-ended interviews and one focus group with Catalan residents that held different positions towards independence. The analysis shows that arguments for independence construct secession demands as a citizenship right that, in turn, assumes different versions of the Catalan national community. Arguments against independence reify the Spanish national identity by constructing it as a political community where all citizens have the same rights. Both argumentative poles position “the nation” as a core element in political citizenship discourses. Specifically, we argue that a diversity of citizenship formulations stressing democratic rights, practices, and political traditions, rhetorically work both to support and to challenge otherwise explicitly ethnic, cultural, and civic understandings of nationhood. The article advances a historically situated approach of citizenship and national categories attending to their specific rhetorical mobilisations in current independentist conflicts.

Keywords

Catalan independentism, secessionism, citizenship, nationalism, rhetorical psychology

Non-Technical Summary

Background

Catalonia is a Spanish territory that has historically claimed its national distinctiveness. In 2012, Catalan independentism raised due to different economic, social, and political factors. After several mass protests and institutional acts, the Catalan Government supported the celebration of a self-determination referendum in October 2017. The Spanish government did not allow it and tried to prevent it. This led to an important political and judicial conflict between these institutions and increased discontent among lay citizens in these territories.



Why was this study done?

Our goal is to understand how ordinary people in Catalonia argue for/against independence in that conflicted context. As independentism mobilises nationalist demands, we try to understand the particular ways by which nations are claimed in European countries. Specifically, we focus on how Catalan independentism also implies arguing in citizenship terms, as secessionist demands open a debate about political communities and their rights.

What did the researchers do and find?

We analysed everyday talk about Catalan independentism. This data was collected mainly through interviews. All fieldwork took place after the non-authorized referendum and during the judgement and conviction of Catalan independentist leaders. We find that ordinary people usually defend or oppose independence using citizenship constructions. While pro-independence arguments construct secession as a right that Catalans have, anti-independence ones argue that secession violates the rights of all the Spaniards to decide on its territorial organization. This kind of arguments can reproduce or contest classical ethnic, cultural, and civic conceptions of the national community. On the other hand, we show that there is an overt debate about using Catalan national symbols and traditions to demand independence.

What do these findings mean?

Our findings highlight that Catalan secessionist conflict makes national identities an explicit political issue which is discussed in different ways. We have found that claiming (national) rights becomes a form to assert national communities without suspicion of being a nationalist. Further, the opposition to this kind of arguments is troubling, as being against rights claims is being against democratic principles. In sum, this paper sheds light on how Catalan independentist conflict re-positions political subjects in the national imaginary, and in the symbolic field of citizenship.

Over the past decade, the rise of nationalisms in Western countries has been especially visible and extolled by far-right parties, and often expressed in the form of independentist movements. Since their modern origins, nations are highly contested communities, difficult to define, and serving diverse political purposes (see Anderson, 1983; Gellner, 1983). Simultaneously, nations are present in everyday lives, in banal expressions (e.g., “we-they” distinctions), and symbols (e.g., monuments or flags in institutional buildings) that reproduce who “we” are in a nationally organised world (Billig, 1995; Skey & Antonsich, 2017). A historically situated approach concerned with the current and specific mobilisations of nationalism acknowledges the varied and contextual character of contemporary politics of nationhood (Antonsich, 2020). Independentist movements offer an ideal scenario to study how discourses about the nation are politically flagged, strategically mobilised, and banally reproduced.

However, claiming for secession not only means overtly discussing the limits and the political form of the imagined community of the nation (Anderson, 1983); it also and importantly implies reshaping the political community of citizens (Hennebry-Leung & Bonacina-Pugh, 2019; Kymlicka, 2020). The quest for an independent state problematises the cohesive function of citizenship belonging, weakening the bonds with the larger national community, and questioning its very “nature, authority, and permanence” (Kymlicka, 2020, p. 344). Furthermore, independentist movements open a debate about what would citizenship mean in the new seceded nation-state (Hennebry-Leung & Bonacina-Pugh, 2019). In that vein, secessionist conflicts can be broached as a process that redefines the political boundaries of citizenship beyond habitual nationalist frames. We argue that understanding the current Catalan independentist conflict, popularly known as *el Procés* [the process], as a citizenship movement, sheds light on the construction and mobilisation of national and non-national categories in ideologically distinctive and innovative ways.

In this paper, we explore lay arguments about Catalan independence to analyse how ordinary people construct this secessionist conflict. Attending to everyday meaning-making practices enables understanding how broader socio-political contexts are *part of* and *constituted by* lived experiences (Andreouli & Figgou, 2019; Billig, 1991). Specifically, a rhetorical psychological approach has shown how lay talk offers novel and varied ways of constructing citizenship (Andreouli, 2019), political options (Andreouli et al., 2020; Billig, 1991), and national identities (Billig, 1995; Calhoun, 2017; McNicholl et al., 2019). Drawing on this tradition, we conducted thirty open-ended interviews and a focus group

with Catalan residents that held different positions towards secession, analysing how nationhood and citizenship nest into each other to warrant opposing political positions and aspirations.

The Catalan Procés

Whilst formally part of the Spanish state, Catalonia presents a distinct nation-building process from the very consolidation of modern European nation states. Throughout the Spanish history, there are synergies and coexistences between Catalonia and Spain, but also conflicts and tensions. Catalan nationalism and claims for independence have been an integral part throughout this history. More recently, Catalan independentism has taken the form of what is called “*el Procés*”.

In 2012, Catalonia was governed by a right-nationalist party, *Convergència i Unió* [Convergence and Union], that rapidly changed its agenda to an independentist position related both to the Catalan-ethnic national belonging of their representatives and the state of political uncertainty derived from the 2008 global crisis (Barrio & Rodríguez-Teruel, 2017). A right conservative party, *Partido Popular* [Popular Party], was the ruling party in Spain defending a centralist state-model. This institutional conjuncture created discomfort in Catalonia, especially because of the attempts to recentralise the power by the Spanish State, leading to the rejection of the Catalan Statute of Autonomy in 2010. However, other factors such as a long-lasting tradition of a Catalan national identity or the consequences of the global economic crisis cannot be neglected as catalysed the rising of independentism (Dowling, 2017).

This multifactorial situation enabled the emergence of varied and often conflicting versions of the independentist movement, all of them sharing the use of national-cultural discourses as well as varied interpretations of populism (Ruiz Casado, 2020). This provoked structural tensions both within the Catalan government (Miró, 2021) and in the broader political functioning of the Spanish state as a whole (Dowling, 2017). During the following years of successive mobilisations, Catalanist¹ discourses notably shifted toward more democracy-related frames of nationhood, at the expense of ethnic or cultural conceptions (Clua i Fainé, 2014; della Porta & Portos, 2021), even encouraging the paradoxical inclusion of Spanish identity within the Catalan independentist political project (Aramburu, 2020).

The celebration of a Referendum about Catalan independence on October 1st, 2017, which was not authorised by the Spanish state, intensified the discursive framing of the movement in democratic and emancipatory terms against oppression and for political freedom (della Porta & Portos, 2021). Therefore, *el Procés* may be understood as a nationalist movement embedded in, and enacted through, citizenship constructions in ways that (re)construct Catalan and Spanish political communities. In the following section, we outline the paper’s approach to citizenship using a rhetorical perspective emanating in social psychology.

Citizenship as an Everyday Practice: A Rhetorical Psychological Perspective

A conceptual distinction may be drawn between citizenship as a legal status that signals a nation-state belonging and citizenship as a practice by which lay social actors engage with political matters in everyday life (Andreouli, 2019). While the former conception takes citizenship as a *product* of the nation state, the latest understands it as something that people *do* assuming an actor-oriented perspective on citizenship that puts citizen actions in the centre of political analysis.

Citizenship may be then understood as a set of practices where people *become* members of the political community (Isin, 2009). Isin’s (2009) works particularly evidence that there are multiple and distinct ways of *acting* citizenship. He introduces the notions of “active” and “activist” citizenship to refer to different ways of “doing” citizenship that can be performed by different social actors to reproduce or transform instituted practices and to modify the symbolic and material boundaries of citizenship. Approaching citizenship as an everyday practice brings to the fore the idea that lay social actors have an active role in maintaining or modifying broader socio-political dynamics (Andreouli & Figgou, 2019).

1) Catalanism is understood in this paper as the political defence of Catalan language, culture, and traditions in institutional settings and in everyday activities.

It is in this practice-centred perspective where recent studies in social psychology have made a relevant contribution (Andreouli, 2019). Specifically focusing on the linguistic practices by which citizenship is constructed in everyday life, social psychological studies illuminated its plural, negotiated, and contested character (Condor, 2011; Sapountzis & Xenitidou, 2018; Stevenson et al., 2015). Mostly drawing on a rhetorical perspective, this bulk of studies understand citizenship as a constructive, active, and collective process where political communities emerge with both exclusionary (Di Masso, 2012; Stevenson et al., 2015) and cohesive consequences (Stevenson & Sagherian-Dickey, 2018). It is precisely the focus on citizenship practices which enables discussing its contested character and its discursive-rhetorical dimension (Barnes et al., 2004; Condor, 2011).

From this rhetorical psychological perspective, everyday talk is embedded in historically established ideological traditions (e.g., republican or royalist), which provide the discursive basis for the “thinking society”, enabling citizens to have their own “private” opinion to argue for or against a given topic in public debates that are relevant to sustain or to challenge the social order (Billig, 1991). Ideology is then understood as “lived”, as a set of culturally available ideas and beliefs, often expressed in the form of common-sense notions (e.g., “every nation has the right to be free”) deployed in everyday discourse in ways that legitimize or challenge the status quo, as speakers build a strong position to warrant their voice or to persuade others. Consequently, ideologies are always contradictory and dilemmatic (e.g., “people must be free, but freedom must have limits”), pushing people to make complex rhetorical manoeuvres to navigate the flow of argumentation and counter-argumentation (Billig, 1991). Citizenship may be then understood as a *lived practice* by which lay actors engage with political matters (Andreouli, 2019).

The mobilising character of citizenship practices and its psychological implications are discussed, for example, in Di Masso’s (2012) study on lay constructions of citizenship identity, status and entitlements as people enact and contest normative behaviours in public spaces, i.e., the “natural” arena of citizenship. In that vein, citizenship practices might reproduce state and conventional constructions of what a citizen should be or, conversely, challenge these assumptions (Andreouli, 2019). Citizenship practices may contest the status quo and the rules that govern one political community. As we argue in this paper, those both different citizenship constructions coexist and conflict in secessionist movements as *el Procés* reinforcing or challenging the symbolic and normative boundaries of belonging to the (national-)political community.

Rhetorical Articulations of Citizenship and Nationhood

Citizenship is also performed when common-sense assumptions are discursively mobilised through varied ideological traditions that accomplish different rhetorical functions (Andreouli & Figgou, 2019; Sapountzis & Xenitidou, 2018), such as excluding immigrant people from citizenship rights because of their lack of (national-)cultural knowledge (Kadianaki & Andreouli, 2017). Central to the rationale of this article is the idea that citizenship matters often carry national connotations that, far from being suppressed in the name of political rights and memberships, are often submerged and ideologically re-organised through the language of citizenship.

For this reason, we may not overlook that independence is tied up with nationhood as the pragmatic and programmatic goal of secession is the constitution of a new state whose institutional scope meets both the territorial limits and the psychological boundaries of the national *imagined community* (Anderson, 1983). This demand reflects the traditional political principle of nationalism according to which each nation is represented by its own state (Gellner, 1983).

From a social-psychological view, nations are not essences or natural characters but political constructions that serve to different agendas (Reicher & Hopkins, 2001) and can be claimed and enacted through different discourses (see McNicholl et al., 2019; Wallwork & Dixon, 2004). However, explicit nationalist assertions may be seen as illegitimate political demands in a cosmopolitan and global world (Calhoun, 2017), provoking distinct and apparently non-national expressions of national identities (Billig, 1995; McNicholl et al., 2019; Wallwork & Dixon, 2004). This enables a distinction between “hot” national understandings (hereafter, “political nationalism”), where the nation is overtly claimed, and banal understandings, defined by their routine, unattended character, and their *mindlessness* (Billig, 1995).

Focusing on banal nationalism implies observing how the nation is (re)produced in mundane daily practices (i.e., sports competitions, flags in institutional buildings or deictic expressions as “we-they” “here-there” to refer distinct national communities) that silently remember us that we belong to a particular nation in an (inter)nationally organized

world (Billig, 1995). These practices are assumed as “natural” and “non-political” ways of being, contrary to “hot” national claims (McNicholl et al., 2019). Recent work in the field of “everyday nationhood” has shown the coexistence of nuanced and varied understandings of the nation, challenging monolithic explanations that treat nationalism as an extreme right-wing ideology (Antonsich, 2020; Skey & Antonsich, 2017).

Particularly, in secessionist conflicts, banal expressions of the nation may become evolve to “hot” nationalist claims becoming publicly discussed and debated topics (Fox, 2017). That is, nations are *politicised* in secessionism without implying that banal constructions become absent. Further, this politicisation of the nation also provokes the emergence of a repairing work to restore the “banal” national order (Fox, 2017). This latter dynamic can be understood as an attempt to *de-politicise* the independentist public debate and return to a “placid” and taken-for-granted (inter)national world. In sum, secessionist conflicts offer a complex discursive dynamic of national constructions that should be analysed in its specificity attending to how nations are “differently mobilised by different people in different contexts and for different purposes” (Antonsich, 2020, p. 1235).

The versatility and multiplicity of national meaning-constructions imply attending to the apparently “non-national” discourses by which the nation is claimed (Wallwork & Dixon, 2004). In secessionist movements, citizenship constructions seem to play a crucial role as independence can be claimed as a right of the citizens to create their own separate institutions (self-determination right) (Kymlicka, 2020) and as secession implies the construction of a new field of citizenship in the brand new nation-state (Hennebry-Leung & Bonacina-Pugh, 2019). For all this, we argue that the study of struggles for independence in consolidated liberal democracies allows for a deeper understanding of the ideological “osmosis” between nationhood and citizenship, as the demand for a separated nation-state for a people’s distinctive nation also implies an ideological re-articulation of citizenship practices.

Method

Data Collection and Participants

The aim of this study was to understand how (anti-)secessionist everyday claims are discursively navigated in *el Procés*. Thirty open-ended interviews and one focus group were conducted in three moments, all after the celebration of the non-authorized secession Referendum that took place on October 1st 2017: April-June 2019 (5 pilot-interviews); December 2019-March 2020 (20 interviews); September 2020-February 2021 (5 interviews and an on-line focus group with 5 participants). These periods correspond to different moments and intensities of Catalan independentism: during the broadcasting of the trial of Catalan independentist leaders, after the court’s convicting verdict, and after the systemic burst of the Covid-19 pandemic, respectively.

While the interview was the main data-gathering method, the focus group had two purposes. First, validating and enriching the analytical insights obtained in the interviews; and second, setting the scene for an open discussion triggering a rich exchange of arguments between a variety of political positions in relation to the *Procés*. However, with the start of the Covid-19 pandemic we could only conduct one focus group. Therefore, we did not include an analysis of its interactional features and decided to analyse its content and rhetorical features as we did with the interviews.

Participants were selected following maximum diversity criteria (Flick, 2009) to capture a broad spectrum of positions on the topic. Our participants lived in different Catalan cities or towns, they were born in Catalonia or in other Spanish regions or countries, they presented themselves as having different political ideologies (i.e., right-left), and different degrees of practical engagement with the independence movement (i.e., marching, voting, etc.). Age, gender, preferred language, and socioeconomic and sociocultural backgrounds were also diverse. The focus group included participants who agree with the idea of a Referendum on self-determination but had different opinions about Catalan independence about *el Procés* as a movement². See the Appendix for a table with this characterisation.

To ensure the diversity of the sample, we recruited participants through a snowball strategy (Flick, 2009), starting with a message sent to close contacts of the first author. Participants were selected depending on their reported political

2) In Catalonia being in favour of a Referendum for Catalan independence is a wide position that includes different sensibilities about secession.

preferences and demographic characteristics. The first author, a female native Catalan speaker and native Spanish speaker, conducted all interviews and the focus group adapting her language use to the participants' preferences.

We followed Brinkmann's (2017) suggestions to create a distended comfortable ambience, giving a central role to active listening and promoting that people could speak comfortably about *el Procés*. The interviewer took a comprehensive role, requiring participants to provide a rich, genuine, and deep account of their lived experience and their opinions on the topic. Most of the interviews took place in natural daily spaces such as cafés, parks, or participants' homes and lasted an average of 61 minutes. Three interviews and the focus group were online due to Covid-19 restrictions. Interviews guides (see [Supplementary Materials](#)) were designed based on theoretical questions and salient aspects of the conflict at that time. Participants were asked, for example, about their experience of *el Procés*, about their participation (or not) in protests, and about their views and bonds with Catalonia and Spain.

All data was audio-recorded and subsequently transcribed using a simple version of Jefferson's (2004) annotation suggestions as we adopted a discursive-rhetorical perspective which requires a narrower selection of transcript conventions to bring into analytic focus the main linguistic manoeuvres from the view of epistemic construction, social action, rhetorical orientation, and variability (Potter, 1996). Pauses, hesitations, repetitions, and emphasis were marked (see [Supplementary Materials](#)).

Analytic Approach

The analysis followed the principles of a discursive-rhetorical approach (Billig, 1991; Di Masso, 2012; Potter, 1996; Wallwork & Dixon, 2004). This analytic framework pays close attention to the constructive properties of language (i.e. how discourse creates the meaning of the object), its action-orientation (i.e. what it's actually *done* when talking, such as blaming, managing stake, etc.), its variability across the textual data (e.g., contradiction, nuance, etc.), and its accountability dimensions (i.e., what it says about the speaker's identity and how he/she is oriented towards what is going on in the conversation). A specific emphasis to language rhetorical organisation and ideological implications was also analysed. That is, how arguments are designed to support and undermine conflicting positions and how the ebb and flow of argumentation channels broader ideological traditions. A discursive-rhetorical analysis is particularly suitable for understanding the politicised context of Catalan independentism, as it posits that any argument is located in a public controversy where at least two sides can be defended and oppose each other (Billig, 1991).

Our analysis aimed to produce a map of broad rhetorical patterns mobilised through pro/anti-independence claims. To do so, we examined the content and rhetorical strategies arguing in favour of Catalan or Spanish political projects and their broader ideological orientations. A first analytic overview allowed us to detect that the most prominent arguments were rich and dense in rights-based topics and themes, embedding citizenship rhetoric in national argumentation and vice versa. We selected the most illustrative extracts in which these topics were discursively constructed and rhetorically dealt with. Extracts were translated into English after analysing them in their original Spanish or Catalan form, making sure that the translations conveyed the original sense in a way that made the analytical claims remain valid and coherent. The selected extracts were those that best illustrate the analytical highlights.

In a second stage of the analysis, we examined the particular ways in which claims for/against independence reinforce or contest traditional nation-state citizenship conceptions. This was in line with our theoretical position that ideology contains "the seeds of its own critique" (i.e., it is dilemmatic, Billig, 1991, p. 26), and that in periods of political uncertainty around an issue (e.g., independence), lay political rationalities may become de-anchored from established patterns of political common-sense and transform in often unpredictable ways (Andreouli et al., 2020). In this second phase of the analysis, the three coauthors discussed and validated the discursive interpretations of the extracts, following an iterative process of collective analysis to triangulate the data interpretations.

Analysis

Our analysis is divided in two parts. The first one shows how (anti-)independentist arguments are channelled through citizenship constructions. The second one analyses those arguments in which national identities are overtly debated.

Claiming and Contesting (National) Citizenship

Participants in our study recurrently deployed citizenship constructions in ways that relied on nationalist assumptions, but they also mobilised citizenship claims to contest the validity of national categorisations. This section illustrates how civic and ethnocultural nationalist poles are constructed or challenged in citizenship constructions that advance independentist demands.

According to the rhetorical psychology perspective (Billig, 1991), an argumentative utterance includes two opposed positions. In Catalan independence rhetoric, opposing constructions of “the Spanish” and “the Catalan” identities are discursively articulated via different citizenship understandings. [Extract 1](#) illustrates the opposition between these two *national citizenship* constructions.

Extract 1

Democratic Citizenship vs. Nationalist Citizenship

1 Paula: Spain comes from where it comes from, it comes from a dictatorship, Spanish state's
 2 political culture is narrow so the way the Spanish government acts to maintain its power and
 3 win the elections and so on, is by saying that you're the most Spanish and not saying it's
 4 politics or whatever. So that's only showing that I'm...

5 **Interviewer: Do you think this has always been the case or has it been emphasized in**
 6 **recent years? I'm referring to the idea that Spanish parties are claiming themselves as**
 7 **the most Spanish ones.**

8 Paula: No. It has increased, because this was already giving votes, this has always been
 9 giving votes, it has always happened. When someone, more or less, stands up to them and
 10 says “hey, watch out that we want...”, they say that you want to break this [Spain]. This gives
 11 more votes and leads to parties such as VOX [far-right party] getting political
 12 representation and the result is that the PSOE [centre-left party], the PP [centre-
 13 right party] shift to the right, and what happens is that those holding an extreme position
 14 provoke that those discourses we could understand as “central”, shift to the right and towards
 15 a Spanish patriotism. Therefore, surely it is, I'm not saying, I'm not legitimating, eh, I say what
 16 I think has happened.

17 **Interviewer: No. You are not saying that is good.**

18 Paula: No, and it was not because we wanted to break with the others. I am not saying that,
 19 because it is a right that we have and therefore we can try to aspire to have our own
 20 state. Then, if this has consequences in a country that has the democratic culture that it has
 21 and that grounds its political force solely and uniquely in that, only in the nation and the unity,
 22 well, that's what happens: positions collapse.

In this interview extract, different but rhetorically complementary ways of constructing Spanish political culture can be identified. First, Paula introduces the idea that Spain is linked with its dictatorial past (Line 1), and this makes its political culture “narrow” and centred in maintaining the government's power (Line 2-3). Spanish political culture is constructed as an example of what Billig (1995) refers to as “hot nationalism”.

When the interviewer asks if this Spanish legacy has intensified in “recent years”, Paula acknowledges an increase (Line 8), but she also depicts it as an eternal trait of Spanishness by repeatedly extrematising it (i.e., “always”, Lines 8-9) (Potter, 1996). In her argument, this characterization of Spanish political culture is what has caused reluctance to Catalan independence, fuelling right-wing ideologies within Spanish political parties (Lines 10-15).

By contrast, Catalan independence is presented as a legitimate political claim and independentist demands are depicted as an assertion of democratic values (Line 19). Paula frames the independentist movement as an act of citizenship (Line 19), rather than a nationalist claim. She concludes by reiterating the point that the response of the Spanish state is emanating from a non-democratic and regressive understanding of the nation.

These nationally-centred and regressive constructions of Spanish political culture in Catalan independentist rhetoric are strongly connected by implication (Durrheim et al., 2009) with Spanish nationalism. On the one hand, the Spanish

democratic state was re-built during the democratic transition (late '70s and early '80s) in a way that maintained significant institutional and ideological continuities with the dictatorial Francoist regime, through its national symbols (e.g., flag), its economic and legal structures, and its Constitution (Bernat & White, 2020). On the other hand, in fact, Francoist culture blurred the difference between national signs and Francoist connotations in formal politics (Hernández Burgos, 2021). Currently, in Catalonia, these national citizenship constructions are cultural common places (Billig, 1991). Constructing Spanish political and cultural citizenry as national-Francoist rhetorically warrants the opposing argument that Catalan independence is a legitimate political demand that has no basis on backward-looking ethnic-cultural motivations.

Hence, in [Extract 1](#), Paula constructs Catalan independence demands as a right (Line 19), simultaneously depicting a civic version of citizenship that opposes the ethnonational and undemocratic Spanish citizenship. Traditional ethno-cultural and civic-nationalist imaginaries are attached to different national projects, Spanish and Catalan respectively, legitimising civic claims over ethno-cultural conceptions (especially as they are closely related to undemocratic principles) and supporting Catalan-independentist positionings. One must also note that Paula constructs Spanish citizenship as a *fact* (something that people have) while Catalan citizenship is presented as something that is *done* (right-claiming actions) illustrating its transformative and forward looking potential.

This right-claiming rhetoric is also contributing to the construction of a Catalan *national* identity. Paula's account includes banal nationalist deictic, such as the "we-they" distinction (Billig, 1995; Fox, 2017), positing a difference between Catalan and Spanish people. The utterance "We can aspire to have *our* own state" (Line 19-20) represents Catalans, before being a political subject, as being a national category different from the Spanish one. However, there is no explicit cultural or ethnic characterisation of Catalan people. Independence is claimed via a de-nationalised discourse in which civic (Catalan) understandings contest ethnocultural (Spanish) characterisations.

[Extract 2](#) illustrates in more detail how secession can be claimed using citizenship constructions that oppose ethno-cultural conceptions within Catalan independentism itself.

Extract 2

Transformative vs. Patriotic Independentism

-
- 1 Eduard: Given that *el Procés* is a crosscutting civic movement, eh, you can find there's a lot
 2 and different ideological options among pro-independence people. So, we can add
 3 sovereignists, yes? As you can be in favour of a Referendum, but you would vote "no" in that
 4 Referendum. Well, I understand that, I understand the independence of Catalonia as an
 5 option, let's say, to implement transformative and radical public policies in a real and
 6 pragmatic way, to get rid of the Spanish state show. But I don't understand it as a kind of
 7 emotional or patriotic option, you know? Or even a matter of identity. In fact, I don't really
 8 agree with such positions.
- 9 **Interviewer: Do you think that, well, in some sense, it has been defending your option?
 10 Or do you think it's really more an expression of the other position**
- 11 Eduard: I think that my option is a minority and is concentrated, if we talk about formal
 12 politics, in the positions of the CUP [a far-left pro-independence party]. Maybe even in some
 13 percentage of the pro-independence movement that votes for the *Comuns* [Commons, a
 14 leftist party that supports the right to self-determination but not independence]. But these are
 15 minority options.
-

In this interview extract, Eduard depicts *el Procés* as an ideologically crosscutting movement that contains different political projects, ranging from sovereignist defence of the referendum to demanding independence for manifold purposes (Lines 1-4). Eduard sides with a transformative understanding of independence, linking independentism to the implementation of "transformative and radical public policies" (Lines 5-6). Using a rhetorical contrast (Potter, 1996), Eduard also constructs another independentist project related to emotional, patriotic, and identity-based understandings, with which he disagrees. Independentism is then constructed as a project that can lead to the creation of a civic community (what he constructs as a minority position within the independence movement – Lines 11-15) or an

ethno-cultural one (that he describes as the majoritarian option among independents). Thereby, Eduard shows how both political poles of nationalism are defensible in the *Procés*. He also uses those civic arguments to criticise the political functioning of the Spanish state, which is described as a “show” (Line 6), empty of political substance and impeding transformative politics.

Furthermore, this transformative version of independence is constructed as a left-wing project as Eduard locates their supporters in parties of the left: the CUP (a far-left pro-independence party) and the *Comuns* (a leftist party that supports the right to self-determination but not independence). De-nationalised understandings of Catalan independence are ideologically stressed in that extract, opposed to cultural nationalist understandings both *inside* and *outside* secessionist claims. [Extract 2](#) shows how nations may be mobilised in very distinct forms, enabling commitments to progressive politics ([Antonsich, 2020](#); [Calhoun, 2017](#)).

However, de-nationalised citizenship discourse does not necessarily mean a rejection of an ethnic-cultural conception of the nation. [Extract 3](#) illustrates that there is a close interpenetration between de-nationalised civic independentist claims and constructions of Catalan ethno-cultural identity.

Extract 3

Claiming Catalanity Through Citizenship Practices

1 Marcel: We must be nice people, and we must, must understand your Spanish feeling or
 2 your Majorcan feeling, and that's all! Sooo, then I feel Catalan, and I want to be Catalan and I
 3 want to get divorced from Spain! That clear! But I mustn't hide myself, nor be afraid of saying
 4 that, like any other, and for this reason we defend the ballot boxes, right? Because we're
 5 democratic, we vote! I mean [he inspires], it's really difficult to sustain the position of the
 6 Spanish government and Spain whoooo use a perverteeee justiceeee as they are using
 7 it. Or it's really difficult to sustain this! I mean, only repression and no, no, in the round table,
 8 they have to reach the conclusion that they have to let us vote.

In Marcel's interview, he presents himself as a tolerant person respecting different national feelings (Spanish, Majorcan, or Catalan). The language of feelings to legitimise nationalist claims is a common feature in nationalist discourses ([Gellner, 1983](#); [Kadianaki et al., 2018](#)). In this account, the metaphor of divorce (Line 3) both captures the familiar idea of an emotional rupture and the common-sense notion that when an intimate relationship does not work, breaking up is a normal thing to do. This introduces a moral connotation in the argument for supporting Catalan independence, drawing a rhetorical continuity between respecting one's feelings in the private sphere and being fair in the political arena: secession as a form of political divorce (a failed relationship) is grounded on inviolable feelings. Thus, Marcel is not only accounting for his ideological positioning using a rhetoric of civic values and rights (i.e., what it is just, what should be naturally respected, voting); he is also enacting his national identity as a matter of unalienable sentiments.

National feelings are interesting accounts as they do not need to be justified and they are difficult to challenge because they are inner, private, and unknown to others ([Verkuyten & DeWolf, 2002](#)). Spain is then presented as intolerant and oppressive *because* it is not being sensitive to differing national feelings and their “natural” political aspirations. Marcel claims that he must not hide nor be afraid of his feelings, suggesting that, in fact, he is being almost forced to do that because voting for independence is officially not permitted (Lines 3-5). By depicting Spain as not accepting the basic fact that different national feelings exist, the Catalan independentist movement is legitimised on the moral grounds of a political repression of the right to feel Catalan and to materialise this feeling in the form of a Catalan state.

Marcel's account conveys citizenship matters in the form of rights recognised by the state, but these rights are grounded on feelings of national belonging. Marcel discursively “makes” his national identity by defending a democratic process of election, as he “wants to be Catalan” (Lines 2). Being Catalan necessarily implicates the act of voting: national identity is ontologically constructed here as the outcome of a civic achievement and a democratic right (the right to be oneself). This discourse blurs the boundaries between nationhood (as a matter of culture, tradition, and other ethnic identity markers) and citizenship practices (as a matter of rights recognised and safeguarded by states). This argument

for Catalan independence links up citizenship and feelings of national belonging in a rhetorical relation that makes citizenship the essence of the recognition of national belonging, and vice versa.

The rhetorical use of citizenship constructions to oppose a nationalist project is also found in arguments *against* Catalan independence. In [Extract 4](#), Juan is responding to an interview question about the possible differences between Catalan elections and the Referendum for independence:

Extract 4

Contesting National Categories Through Citizenship Constructions

1 Juan: One thing is voting in a real democratic election and another one is voting in a
 2 referendum that cannot be held. It can be called by following a democratic process which it's
 3 actually democratic, it begins with the reform of the Constitution, and, and it cannot be called
 4 a Referendum carelessly where a part of the country decides to secede from the other when
 5 the Spanish national sovereignty belongs to all Spaniards. Then, Catalan territory is as much
 6 the property of a born and bred Catalan as it's for an Andalusian who has never set a foot in
 7 Catalonia. I've never been in Andalusia, and I consider it as much mine as any other
 8 Andalusians'. And... And, that's why I don't see it the same way, because they are denying a
 9 right to the rest of Spaniards.

Juan constructs a difference between ordinary elections and the self-determination referendum by reference to their legal status (Lines 1-2). The Referendum for independence is illegal, whereas “real” national elections meet legal democratic standards. Juan is warranting the *nationalist* defence of Spain's unity on the grounds of the *legal* compliance with the rights of *all* Spanish people as citizens of a united Spain, rather than on the symbolic grounds of an ethnocultural notion of Spanishness. However, this civic reformulation of nationalist claims can only be rhetorically effective precisely because Spanish nationhood is banally taken for granted as the only (national) source of political legitimacy, political agency and, most of all, legality.

Juan's version of Spanishness is that of a supranational category that transcends any internal regional division (Lines 4-7). Therefore, the illegitimacy attributed to Catalan independentist claims given their lack of legal acceptance, is grounded not on the breach of legality per se, but on the banal assumption that the legitimate legality is the *Spanish* one: the illegality of voting for independence depends on the denial or not of the democratic right of all the nationals (Spaniards) to decide about one of Spain's territories (Catalonia), according to a legal frame that is applied to all (Spanish) citizens (of the Spanish nation, *including* Catalans).

The latter reveals a paradoxical functioning of citizenship. Citizenship acts have the potential to modify who fully belongs to a given political community not only by expanding rights (Isin, 2009), but also by constraining them (i.e., impeding voting for independence as a form of ensuring Spanish membership). In this sense, civic constructions of nationhood in a secessionist conflict may serve to essentialise (Kadianaki & Andreouli, 2017) who has right to make rights claims, excluding those people who may formally belong to the established nation-state but who do not recognise the national unity of the state.

As a final remark, one must note that Juan's construction of Spain as the politically overarching social category and the hegemonic source of national belonging, inoculates him against possible accusations of nationalism (Gibson & Hamilton, 2011): by invoking legal respect to Spain's democratic constitution (Line 3), he actually de-nationalises his opposition to the Catalan conflict as a Spaniard (Pinho dos Santos, 2021), whilst reinforcing the hegemonic construction of Spanishness as the overarching national category.

Redrawing Nationhood: The (De)Politicisation of National Identities

So far, we have shown that citizenship rhetoric in the Catalan independentist movement both overcomes and reproduces nationalist assumptions, by re-signifying them in terms of civic rights, demands and actions. In this section, the focus

is on how national identities are re-drawn and overtly debated through invoking its banal or hot character (Billig, 1995; Fox, 2017).

Extract 5 shows the tension between banal conceptions of Catalan national traditions and its hot nationalist forms. The interviewed participant gives the example of the *castells* – a collective celebration of people joining to build human towers – who have actively taken part in independentist demonstrations and events (see Vaczi, 2016).

Extract 5

Catalan Traditions and Secession

1 Eloi: Apart from the fact that a *colla casteller*, obviously, a part of making *castells* that is our
 2 task, in latest years the issue has moved, has moved a little, a little from making *castells*,
 3 they have always been made, we have made lots of *castells* but, of course, then there has
 4 been an involvement with the political issues, *la colla*. I also find it quite logic and normal, eh!
 5 That involvement. However, mmm, eh, I don't know if it has to do one thing with the other or
 6 not, making *castells* and going with politics, but it's true that there are sections, mmm, some
 7 groups who say that a *colla casteller* cannot involve, should not be involved in these issues
 8 because our task is making *castells* and all other things, are, eh, they are secondary, so
 9 there is no misunderstanding. It's true that, superficially, that there has been a bit of division.

Eloi talks about his involvement in one of the biggest *colles castelleres* – groups of people that build human towers – of Catalonia, who has been actively participating in different independentist demonstrations. At the beginning of the extract (Lines 1-4), *castells* are constructed as a banal cultural practice that is also enacted to support independence demands. Eloi constructs this political shift as something “logic and normal”, something that should almost be taken for granted.

However, he starts hesitating about the adequacy of this overt politicisation of *castells* (Lines 5-6), rhetorically navigating a sensitive topic (Potter, 1996). Eloi recognises (“it's true that”) that there are “sectors” who do not agree with the support of *castellers* to independence (Line 7). The possibility that *castells* channel political demands is dilemmatic because it creates a divide within independentism: must Catalan cultural cornerstones become “hot” political symbols? This extract shows that politically flagging national traditions in secessionism is open to controversy and contestation.

Extract 6 more clearly illustrates an explicit denial of the politicisation of Catalan culture to support the independence movement.

Extract 6

Depoliticising National Symbols

1 Guillermo: A national day means celebrating the day of la *Senyera* [Catalan flag] and not the
 2 day of independentism. And they have taken this as their own. The *Segadors* anthem [the
 3 Catalan anthem]! It is like, they have taken it! It's Catalonia's anthem, make no mistake, I
 4 don't know what you are saying. That is, I don't know which movie you are playing in your
 5 head [contemptuous tone] it's like, I don't know, eeeeh, they want to take own-, ownership of
 6 things, you know? And you say, let's see, what happens to those who don't think as you?
 7 Can't, can't I go to *castellers*? I cannot, eeh, go to 11th September, the National day. If the,
 8 the *Segadors* anthem, if you sing it, it is as if you were independentist [gesture of rejection].
 9 They have taken ownership of everything.

10 **Interviewer: In that sense, have you changed some of these practices? (...)**

11 Guillermo: No. Let's see, I've never been a person who went to National days, but I liked, for
 12 example, mmm, my *Senyera*! Saying that I'm Catalan. I lived in Madrid five years and I didn't
 13 have, “the Catalan, the Catalan”, I didn't have any problem, now when they ask “where are
 14 you from?”, “From Barcelona”, I don't say Catalan, “From Barcelona”. No, no, I don't want to
 15 be stigmatised with independentism. I'm from Barcelona.

In an interview context, Guillermo constructs the use of Catalan cultural icons (the National day, the human-towers) and identity symbols (the Senyera-flag, the anthem) in the independence movement as an ideological appropriation. This appropriation is presented as an illogical, even foolish, independentist strategy (Lines 3-5), as something abnormal (Potter, 1996), suggesting that national symbols are “naturally” non-political. Guillermo further argues that this appropriation of Catalan national symbols for political goals excludes non-independentist Catalans from the imagined community of the Catalan nation (as if they were less Catalan), deterring them from partaking in cultural events. His account is an attempt to de-politicise and re-banalise Catalan cultural traditions suggesting there was a pre-existing placid coexistence between Catalan tradition/identity and Spanishness (in their taken-for-granted and banal forms) before independentism grew.

When Guillermo is asked about his own attachment to those Catalan traditions, he reveals that he did not actually participate in Catalan traditions before independentism grew (Lines 11-12), but he invokes his national identification (liking *his* Senyera, saying *he is* Catalan, Line 12). This identification is “troubled” (Wetherell, 1998) by the emergence of independentism and its illegitimate appropriation of Catalan symbols and traditions. Guillermo exposes a shift in his territorial identification due to *el Procés*: he used to say that he was Catalan when he travelled to Spain but now, he has to say that he is from Barcelona (Lines 13-15) to avoid being “stigmatised with independentism”. The overtly political mobilisation of national symbols and practices in secessionist conflicts re-articulates national identifications. This re-articulation can be constructed as an illegitimate act of taking ownership of Catalanity. Which, in turn, is only possible if nations are previously constructed in banal and non-political understandings.

In contrast to the previous extracts in this section, the next extracts show how some participants overtly politicised the ethnocultural dimensions of national identity.

Extract 7

Politicising Ethnonational Identities

-
- 1 Marcel: That people who want, that want us to be Spain, mmm, they have to be very clear
 2 about it, eh! Because, I want to say, it's being unmasked, that is, ts, and, and the country that
 3 they are getting, that is, they have to be, bff! Ts, they are clear about it, that's, I know an old
 4 woman, for example, who comes here [to his music school] to clean, [inspires] and she tells
 5 me she voted unionist but her children didn't! [inspires] But, of course, these people vote
 6 unionist because, because, she has her family there!
- 7 **Interviewer: Sure.**
- 8 Marcel: And, there is an intimate feeling for there, and sure! Ts, I also know people who have
 9 family thereee and for that [reason] they don't, don't, don't vote for independence! [inspires]
 10 It's hard for them to stop being Spanish as they have their roots there! They are from
 11 Malaga, they are from Asturias [other Spanish regions], they are from, right? But, well! Eeeh,
 12 their children, mmm, they change, well that's the hope!
-

Extract 7 shows how national feelings can be constructed in ethnic terms (born/ancestry), either attached to political independentist or unionist identities. Marcel (also quoted in Extract 3) explains non-independentism as an expression of a Spanish ethnic attachment (Lines 5-6). He refers to having family or being born in Spain as *the* reason for not voting for independence. In his argument, there is a naturalisation of political identities rooted in a nativist conception of national belonging.

As a rhetorical implication of this line of argument, the solution to the opposition to independence is expecting that the Catalan born children may change and vote for independence as they would not have their parents' territorial and emotional bonds with Spain (Line 12). Indeed, for Marcel this possibility of change is a source of hope: bringing these Catalan born people into the independence movement is desirable.

Constructing this ethnic-emotional-ideological association between Spanishness and unionism enables a construction of the unionist option as an affective one, not a political one. By implication (Durrheim et al., 2009), it assumes that any other anti-independence argument is difficult to sustain or is not sufficiently clear (Lines 1-3).

As we have shown, *el Procés* and the call for an independence Referendum foreground independentist and unionist positions, provoking an explicit politicisation of national identities. At the same time, the meanings of these politically loaded national identities are hotly contested. [Extract 8](#) reflects those polarised associations and their contestation.

Extract 8

Re-Articulating Nationalism in the Left-Right Axis

1 Aria: Catalan nationalism, to the fact that, well, I don't think that it should be like that, but it's
 2 like, it attaches to the left-, you can be a leftist if you are independentist. Instead, the idea of
 3 being a leftist and not being independentist, well, it's like you sometimes feel like related to,
 4 to the fascist, right? Let's say, I don't feel it at all! [Laughs]. But, but I think that exists that
 5 idea. In Catalonia regarding those who are not independentist, the thing of "Okey, it's
 6 Spanish it's fascist".
 7 **Interviewer: Sure.**
 8 Aria: And I don't think so. And then I think this also, there are moments when I feel
 9 uncomfortable.

In Aria's interview extract, she argues that there is a fundamental alliance between well-established ideological positions (left-right, progressive-fascist) and support or opposition to Catalan independence (Lines 2, 5-6), and she positions herself out of this schema (Line 4). Aria alludes to a common representation of Catalan nationalism according to which being left-wing means that one also supports independence (Line 2), and, in turn, being independentist suggests that one is also a leftist. When national identity comes to the fore, it is associated with right-left positions.

Aria's account politicises national identities by locating them in the right-left ideological axis and indirectly contests the cultural assumption of the historical connection between Francoism and Spanish nationalism ([Hernández Burgos, 2021](#)), which equates Francoism to Spanishness and pro-independence with democratic values. This imaginary is countered when Aria defines herself as non-independentist leftist (Lines 4). At the end of the extract, she underlines the Spanish national-Francoist relation (Line 5-6) and her disagreeing with it (Line 8-9).

National identities can therefore work as the trigger for the ideological construction of opposing political orientations: being Spanish involves the suspicion of being right-winged and intolerant, whilst being Catalan carries the connotation of being a leftist and pro-independence citizen. National categories are saturated with opposing ideological projects that are troubling (c.f. [Wetherell, 1998](#)) for those who, like Aria, while feeling Spanish or Catalan, do not identify themselves with those prescribed ideological positions. Polarised political contexts left some positions outside the debate as they do not tune with dominant political articulations ([Andreouli et al., 2020](#)). In sum, when secessionism overtly politicises national identities, it also re-articulates the right-left ideological axis.

Conclusions

Current secessionist movements in European countries are ideologically complex phenomena that illustrate how contemporary nations are politically claimed and re-enacted as related to citizenship matters. Focusing on lay talk, this paper aimed to understand how ordinary people argue for/against Catalan independence. Drawing on the idea that citizenship and nationhood are categories that are re-constructed, negotiated and contested in secessionist movements ([Hennebry-Leung & Bonacina-Pugh, 2019](#)), we conducted a discursive-rhetorical analysis of thirty open-ended interviews and one focus group with Catalan residents that held different positions towards independence.

Results show that secessionist and anti-secessionist arguments encompass citizenship and national meanings that interweave in subtle and versatile ways, re-positioning political subjects in the national imaginary, and in the symbolic field of citizenship. While pro-independence talk constructs citizenship as the right to decide on the secession of Catalonia, anti-independentism articulates its speech on the basis of a shared (Spanish) belonging to the political community where all members have the same rights. In that sense, we see how pro-independence arguments construct

citizenship as a right claiming act, whereas anti-independentist signify it as a legal status that prescribes and limits the legitimate processes of making claims. Therefore, in the Catalan secessionist context we can observe the rhetorical opposition between transformative and conventional citizenship understandings (Andreouli, 2019).

However, this does not mean that transformative constructions of citizenship are nationally empty. Our findings extend the emerging idea in the literature that secessionism is related to citizenship as much as to national social categories (Hennebry-Leung & Bonacina-Pugh, 2019; Kymlicka, 2020). Using a rhetorical-psychological perspective, this paper showed how pro- and anti-secessionist arguments reshape the symbolic boundaries of the political community of national “insiders” and “outsiders” in ways that rely on taken-for-granted citizenship assumptions, both to support and to undermine secessionist aspirations. We have also shown how these nationally informed ways of enacting citizenship abandon, re-signify or endorse traditional ethnic and cultural inflections of the nation.

This way of arguing about secessionism foregrounds a metonymic logic of nation-claiming (Di Masso et al., 2014; Wallwork & Dixon, 2004), whereby citizenship constructions and rights claims overlap and become almost figurative replacements for national categories and overt nationalist demands. In turn, metonymic formulations of the nation effectively work to re-signify the meaning of the nation itself, inaugurating novel forms of making politics beyond the classic ethnic-civic divide. The metonymic rhetoric is ideologically effective in national citizenship debates because foregrounding rights claims, instead of strengthening potentially controversial ethno-cultural demands (which can lead to accusations of prejudice and xenophobia), warrants a legitimate position for the person who talks (Di Masso et al., 2014). In doing so, (anti-)independence claims are un-problematically grounded in taken-for-granted citizenship rights and entitlements, and not contested national characters or belongings. Beyond the varied ways of constructing nations (McNicholl et al., 2019), this article shows how national rights may be claimed through different de-nationalised citizenship discourses.

Our results also manifest that explicit constructions of national identities, traditions and practices have a significant role in arguments for/against independence. Secession implies breaching the limits of banal nation constructions (Fox, 2017), flagging taken-for-granted national clues that remind people who they (nationally) are. In this respect, this article shows how “troubling” (Wetherell, 1998) national identifications might be for those who do not defend the secessionist project: framed as a struggle to exert basic democratic rights in the metonymic frame of citizenship, they may expose themselves to lack recognition as national insiders/proper democrats.

Furthermore, when national identities are explicitly politicised in secessionism, right-left ideological identities are reshaped. In lay constructions of *el Procés*, while Spanishness is understood as right-wing, independentist-Catalanism is culturally constructed in the left, provoking contestation and identity troubles in those people who do not fit in this double characterisation. This suggests that when nationalist aspirations become *hotly* contested topics in the public debate, they re-organise right-left political identifications, unveiling that there is an association between national identities and political projects (Reicher & Hopkins, 2001).

Overall, this article provides a situated socio-psychological understanding of the complex ideological dynamics of secessionist conflicts and the role of citizenship and nationhood in lay discourse. Nonetheless, two limitations must be acknowledged. First, our findings are embedded not only in a specific context (the rise of independentism in Catalonia and the opposition of the Spanish government to allow a self-determination referendum), but also in a particular moment (two years after the celebration of a non-authorised referendum). Therefore, direct generalisation to other secessionist phenomena is not plausible. Second, interviews were the main strategy to collect data, which implies a particular type of interaction (interviewer-participant) in which there is no confrontation of different views but a quiet comfortable space to present participants’ arguments on independence. What extracts show is one-to-one interactions that offer fewer possibilities and less challenging discursive space to illustrate debate and contestation.

Despite these limitations, this paper provides a historically situated understanding of our contemporary political and psychological world of nations. Therefore, we conclude that approaching current secessionism through a careful examination of citizenship lay discourses enables a richer understanding of how contemporary nations are represented, performed, and mobilised in different political processes, contexts and by different people.

Funding: This work was supported by the Secretary of Universities and Research of the Catalan Government [Generalitat de Catalunya] and European Social Fund (grant number 2021FI_B2 0026).

Acknowledgments: The authors have no support to report.

Competing Interests: The authors have declared that no competing interests exist.

Ethics Statement: The study received ethical approval from the University of Barcelona (IRB00003099). All participants received information about its aims before signing a consent form. Voluntarily, confidentiality, and anonymity were ensured.

Supplementary Materials

The Supplementary Materials include the following items (for access see [Index of Supplementary Materials](#) below):

- Guides used to conduct the interviews and the focus group.
- Jefferson's transcription symbols used.
- Original Spanish or Catalan version of the extracts presented.

Index of Supplementary Materials

Pradillo-Caimari, C., Di Masso Tarditti, A., & Andreouli, E. (2023). *Supplementary materials to "On (national) citizenship and (de)politicised nations: Everyday discourses about the Catalan secessionist movement"* [Interview guides, transcription signs, and transcripts]. *PsychOpen GOLD*. <https://doi.org/10.23668/psycharchives.12848>

References

- Anderson, B. (1983). *Comunidades imaginadas*. Fondo de Cultura Económica.
- Andreouli, E. (2019). Social psychology and citizenship: A critical perspective. *Social and Personality Psychology Compass*, 13(2), Article e12432. <https://doi.org/10.1111/spc3.12432>
- Andreouli, E., & Figgou, L. (2019). Critical social psychology of politics. In K. C. O'Doherty & D. Hodgetts (Eds.), *The SAGE handbook of applied social psychology* (pp. 148–165). SAGE.
- Andreouli, E., Greenland, K., & Figgou, L. (2020). Lay discourses about Brexit and prejudice: "Ideological creativity" and its limits in Brexit debates. *European Journal of Social Psychology*, 50(2), 309–322. <https://doi.org/10.1002/ejsp.2625>
- Antonsich, M. (2020). Everyday nation in times of rising nationalism. *Sociology*, 54(6), 1230–1237. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0038038520930178>
- Aramburu, M. (2020). The unmaking and remaking of an ethnic boundary: Working-class Castilian speakers in Catalonia and the paradoxes of the independence movement. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 46(11), 2387–2406. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1369183X.2018.1543019>
- Barnes, R., Auburn, T., & Lea, S. (2004). Citizenship in practice. *British Journal of Social Psychology*, 43(2), 187–206. <https://doi.org/10.1348/0144666041501705>
- Barrio, A., & Rodríguez-Teruel, J. (2017). Reducing the gap between leaders and voters? Elite polarization, outbidding competition, and the rise of secessionism in Catalonia. *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 40(10), 1776–1794. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01419870.2016.1213400>
- Bernat, I., & White, D. (2020). Postfascism in Spain: The struggle for Catalonia. *Critical Sociology*, 46(4-5), 761–776. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0896920519867132>
- Billig, M. (1991). *Ideology and opinions*. SAGE.
- Billig, M. (1995). *Banal nationalism*. SAGE.
- Brinkmann, S. (2017). The interview. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *The SAGE handbook of qualitative research* (5th ed., pp. 997–1038). SAGE.

- Calhoun, C. (2017). The rhetoric of nationalism. In M. Skey & M. Antonsich (Eds.), *Everyday nationhood* (pp. 17–30). Palgrave Macmillan.
- Clua i Fainé, M. (2014). Identidad y política en Cataluña: el auge del independentismo en el nacionalismo catalán actual. *Quaderns de l'Institut Català d'Antropologia*, 19(2), 79–99.
- Condor, S. (2011). Towards a social psychology of citizenship? Introduction to the Special Issue. *Journal of Community and Applied Social Psychology*, 21(3), 193–201. <https://doi.org/10.1002/casp.1089>
- della Porta, D., & Portos, M. (2021). A bourgeois story? The class basis of Catalan independentism. *Territory, Politics, Governance*, 9(3), 391–411. <https://doi.org/10.1080/21622671.2020.1737208>
- Di Masso, A. (2012). Grounding citizenship: Toward a political psychology of public space. *Political Psychology*, 33(1), 123–143. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9221.2011.00866.x>
- Di Masso, A., Castrechini, A., & Valera, S. (2014). Displacing xeno-racism: The discursive legitimization of native supremacy through everyday accounts of “urban insecurity.” *Discourse and Society*, 25(3), 341–361. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0957926513519531>
- Dowling, A. (2017). *The rise of Catalan independence: Spain's territorial crisis*. Routledge.
- Durrheim, K., Hook, D., & Riggs, D. W. (2009). Race and racism. In D. Fox, I. Prilleltensky, & S. Austin (Eds.), *Critical psychology: An introduction* (2nd ed., pp. 197–214). SAGE.
- Flick, U. (2009). *An introduction to qualitative research* (4th ed.). SAGE.
- Fox, J. E. (2017). The edges of the nation: A research agenda for uncovering the taken-for-granted foundations of everyday nationhood. *Nations and Nationalism*, 23(1), 26–47. <https://doi.org/10.1111/nana.12269>
- Gellner, E. (1983). *Nations and nationalism*. Cornell University Press.
- Gibson, S., & Hamilton, L. (2011). The rhetorical construction of polity membership: Identity, culture and citizenship in young people's discussions of immigration in Northern England. *Journal of Community and Applied Social Psychology*, 21(3), 228–242. <https://doi.org/10.1002/casp.1087>
- Hennebry-Leung, M., & Bonacina-Pugh, F. (2019). The emergence of ‘citizenship’ in popular discourse: The case of Scotland. *Citizenship Studies*, 23(8), 831–852. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13621025.2019.1645812>
- Hernández Burgos, C. (2021). Nationalisation, banal nationalism and everyday nationhood in a dictatorship: The Franco regime in Spain. *Nations and Nationalism*, 27(3), 690–704. <https://doi.org/10.1111/nana.12621>
- Inin, E. F. (2009). Citizenship in flux: The figure of the activist citizen. *Subjectivity*, 29(1), 367–388. <https://doi.org/10.1057/sub.2009.25>
- Jefferson, G. (2004). Glossary of transcript symbols with an introduction. In G. Lerner (Ed.), *Conversation analysis: Studies from the first generation* (pp. 13–31). Benjamins.
- Kadianaki, I., & Andreouli, E. (2017). Essentialism in social representations of citizenship: An analysis of Greeks' and migrants' discourse. *Political Psychology*, 38(5), 833–848. <https://doi.org/10.1111/pops.12271>
- Kadianaki, I., Andreouli, E., & Carretero, M. (2018). Using national history to construct the boundaries of citizenship: An analysis of Greek citizens' discourse about immigrants' rights. *Qualitative Psychology*, 5(1), 172–187. <https://doi.org/10.1037/qup0000087>
- Kymlicka, W. (2020). Citizenship, communities, and identity in Canada. In J. Bickerton & A. Gagnon (Eds.), *Canadian politics* (7th ed., pp. 327–348). University of Toronto Press.
- McNicholl, K., Stevenson, C., & Garry, J. (2019). How the “Northern Irish” national identity is understood and used by young people and politicians. *Political Psychology*, 40(3), 487–505. <https://doi.org/10.1111/pops.12523>
- Miró, J. (2021). The tensions of populism in power: A discursive-theoretical analysis of the Catalan secessionist push (2006–2017). *Distinktion*, 22(1), 1–22. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1600910X.2020.1765824>
- Pinho dos Santos, R. (2021). Spanish constitutionalism in Catalonia: An anthropology of civic nationalism. *Nations and Nationalism*, 27(2), 427–448. <https://doi.org/10.1111/nana.12699>
- Potter, J. (1996). *Representing reality: Discourse, rhetoric and social construction*. SAGE.
- Reicher, S., & Hopkins, N. (2001). *Self and nation*. SAGE.
- Ruiz Casado, J. A. (2020). Articulations of populism and nationalism: The case of the Catalan independence movement. *European Politics and Society*, 21(5), 554–569. <https://doi.org/10.1080/23745118.2019.1686945>
- Sapountzis, A., & Xenitidou, M. (2018). Criteria of citizenship and social inclusion in immigrants' discourse in Greece. *Qualitative Psychology*, 5(1), 155–171. <https://doi.org/10.1037/qup0000094>
- Skey, M., & Antonsich, M. (Eds.). (2017). *Everyday nationhood: Theorising, culture, identity and belonging after banal nationalism*. Palgrave Macmillan.

- Stevenson, C., Dixon, J., Hopkins, N., & Luyt, R. (2015). The social psychology of citizenship, participation and social exclusion: Introduction to the Special Thematic Section. *Journal of Social and Political Psychology, 3*(2), 1–19. <https://doi.org/10.5964/jspp.v3i2.579>
- Stevenson, C., & Sagherian-Dickey, T. (2018). Territoriality and migration in a divided society: Lay theories of citizenship and place in Northern Ireland. *Qualitative Psychology, 5*(1), 135–154. <https://doi.org/10.1037/qup0000072>
- Vaczi, M. (2016). Catalonia's human towers: Nationalism, associational culture, and the politics of performance. *American Ethnologist, 43*(2), 353–368. <https://doi.org/10.1111/amet.12310>
- Verkuyten, M., & DeWolf, A. (2002). Being, feeling and doing: Discourses and ethnic self-definitions among minority group members. *Culture & Psychology, 8*(4), 371–399. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1354067X0284001>
- Wallwork, J., & Dixon, J. A. (2004). Foxes, green fields and Britishness: On the rhetorical construction of place and national identity. *British Journal of Social Psychology, 43*(1), 21–39. <https://doi.org/10.1348/014466604322915962>
- Wetherell, M. (1998). Positioning and interpretative repertoires: Conversation analysis and post-structuralism in dialogue. *Discourse and Society, 9*(3), 387–412. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0957926598009003005>

Appendix

Table A.1

Interview Participants

Participant (gender-age)	For/against independence	Political ideology	Residency (Town/City + Catalan Region)	Birthplace (Catalonia, Spain, other)	Educational level	Interview language
Paula (F-43)	For	Far-left	Town-Barcelona	Catalonia	University	Catalan
Eduard (M-28)	For	Far-left	City-Barcelona	Catalonia	University	Catalan
Marcel (M-49)	For	Left	Town-Barcelona	Catalonia	University	Catalan
Juan (M-24)	Against	Right	Town-Tarragona	Spain	VT ^a	Spanish
Eloi (M-54)	n/a	n/a	Town-Barcelona	Catalonia	Elementary	Catalan
Guillermo (M-39)	Against	Right	City-Barcelona	Catalonia	VT	Catalan
Aria (F-27)	Against	Far-left	City-Barcelona	Catalonia	University	Catalan and Spanish
M-56	For	Left	Town-Girona	Catalonia	VT	Catalan
M-23	Against	Right	Town-Barcelona	Catalonia	University	Catalan
F-22	For	Left	City-Barcelona	Catalonia	University	Catalan
M-35	For	Left	City-Lleida	Catalonia	University	Catalan
F-26	Against	Right	City-Barcelona	Catalonia	University	Spanish
F-64	For	Left	Town-Tarragona	Catalonia	High-school	Catalan
F-59	n/a	Left	City-Lleida	Catalonia	University	Catalan
F-52	For	Left	Town-Girona	Catalonia	VT	Catalan
M-24	For	Left	Town-Lleida	Catalonia	University	Catalan
M-64	For	Left	Town-Girona	Spain	VT	Catalan
F-77	For	n/a	City-Barcelona	Catalonia	VT	Catalan
F-66	For	Far-left	City-Barcelona	Catalonia	University	Catalan
F-53	For	Far-left	City-Barcelona	Chile	High-school	Spanish
M-26	For	Left	Town-Barcelona	Catalonia	VT	Catalan
M-26	Against	Right	City-Barcelona	Catalonia	VT	Spanish
M-18	n/a	Far-left	City-Barcelona	Catalonia	High-school	Catalan
M-24	n/a	Far-left	City-Barcelona	Catalonia	University	Catalan
F-25	n/a	Left	Town-Barcelona	Russia	University	Spanish
F-27	n/a	n/a	City-Barcelona	Catalonia	VT	Spanish
M-23	For	Left	Girona	Catalonia	VT	Catalan
M-91	Against	Left	City-Barcelona	Spain	Elementary	Spanish and Catalan
M-60	Against	Right	Town-Tarragona	Spain	VT	Spanish

^aVT = Vocational Training.

Table A.2*Focus Group Participants*

Participant (gender-age)	For/against independence	Political ideology	Residency (Town/City + Catalan Region)	Birthplace (Catalonia, Spain, other)	Interview language
F-22	For	Left	City-Barcelona	Catalonia	Catalan
F-40/50	Against	Left	City-Barcelona	Italy	Catalan
F-55	For	Right	Town-Tarragona	Spain	Catalan
M-60/70	For	n/a	Town-Barcelona	Catalonia	Catalan
M-25/30	Against	Far-Left	City-Barcelona	Catalonia	Catalan