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*The  
Importance of  
Identity and  
Independence:  
The Costs and  
Benefits of  
Secession to  
Autonomous  
Regions*

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*Honors Thesis*

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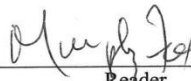
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*The Importance of Identity and Independence: The Costs and Benefits of Secession to Autonomous Regions*

Autonomous regions that are successful economically, culturally, and politically from their host country exist throughout Europe. Some of these regions have gained high levels of autonomy but still entertain the thought of secession, provoking the question; why do these regions find it necessary to be independent? Despite their regional success, secession or full independence is not always plausible or possible for these regions. In order to understand the costs and benefits of statehood, this paper will evaluate the costs and benefits of secession to these regions through an economic, political, legal, and cultural standpoint; discovering if the benefits of statehood outweigh the costs to these autonomous regions.

The paper will focus on Catalonia in Spain and compare its autonomous situation to two similar case studies of Flanders in Belgium and Scotland in Great Britain to evaluate if secession in these regions is attainable. This evaluation will be done by analyzing *Peripheral nationalism*, the qualifications for secession, statehood, international recognition and EU membership, along with weighing the costs and benefits of secession. How these factors can help or hinder Catalonia's movement toward independence as well as Flanders and Scotland's. The paper discusses and examines the qualifications of sovereignty, economic stability, political autonomy, and cultural distinction to understand if secession is possible for these regions as well as meeting criteria to legally warrant or justify secession by the academic community. By examining and evaluating these qualifications the paper intends to discover and clearly understand if secession is more beneficial or costly to these autonomous regions.

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## Chapter 1: Introduction

While living in Barcelona, Spain, this last summer, an historical event occurred, the World Cup, a worldwide football tournament. In Europe, football (soccer) is a large part of the culture, making it the most important sport and the most nationally watched event. Spain's team dominated the World Cup, going to finals and winning the World Cup for the first time in history. Following the Spanish team's progress in World Cup throughout the summer, shined light on an underlying political event that was also occurring in Spain, the political struggle of autonomy and potential secession of the Catalanian region.

The Spanish world cup team consisted of Spain's top native players. Seven of the players on the national team, five of which were born in Catalonia also play on the Barcelona's Club team during regular season.<sup>1</sup> During the World Cup finals, one would expect to see thousands of people, patriotism, national pride, and celebration for Spain's victory. In an article by *The Guardian*, speculated the victory will "bring back a degree of Spanish unity."<sup>2</sup> What a foreigner may not expect to see was Spanish flags hung from buildings, defaced and painted over with black letters spelling out CAT, a word symbolizing the autonomy of Catalonia.

Catalonia's growing autonomy has fueled more self-sufficient government bodies and organizations within the region. This striving towards further autonomy has been embedded into Catalanian society for generations. As Josep Desquen argues, "Many

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<sup>1</sup> Kirchick, James. "A Reaction from the Streets of Catalonia." *The New Republic*, July 13, 2010.

<sup>2</sup> Editorial. "After the World Cup: Spain United." *The Guardian*, July 13, 2010.

Catalans do not consider themselves Spanish but exclusively Catalan.”<sup>3</sup> These political differences and tensions were made clear during the World Cup finals. Seeing these tensions motivated further research concerning the underlying reasons causing and creating differences between Catalonia and Spain (Madrid).

The differences between Catalonia and Spain manifest themselves politically, economically, linguistically, and culturally. These differences have caused political and economic tensions, created conflicts, and have been the basis of oppression by ruling officials. However, throughout Catalonia’s existence, the region has successfully protected, preserved, and promoted its cultural identity, which continues to be one of the strongest factors striving for autonomy in the region.

Cultural identity has the strength to unite a region, but does it have the strength and ability needed to advocate statehood through secession? To evaluate this question, first the evaluation of Catalonia’s current regional situation is needed to discover if secession is possible. This will be methodologically done by comparing Catalonia’s current autonomous situation to two similar case studies, Flanders and Scotland, to evaluate if secession in Catalonia as well as the other two similar regions is plausible and possible. This evaluation will be done by analyzing *Peripheral nationalism*, the qualifications for secession, statehood, and EU membership, along with weighing the costs and benefits of secession for each region. Examining these factors and how they can help or hinder Catalonia’s movement toward statehood. The question that will be asked is: why do these regions find it necessary to be independent?

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<sup>3</sup> Desquen, Josep, “Europe’s Stateless Nations in the Era of Globalization: The Case for Catalonia’s Secession From Spain.” John Hopkins University *The Bologna Center Journal of International Affairs*. 2003

## Chapter 2: Literature Review

### Nationalism and Culture

Understanding the movement toward regional autonomy is sometimes difficult, especially by citizens in countries where nationalism is a connecting factor between people. The Merriam-Webster Dictionary definition for nationalism is, “the loyalty and devotion to national interests, unity, and independence.”<sup>4</sup> However, this does not answer the question, *what is nationalism?* To comprehend what nationalism is, understanding what creates nationalism is crucial. According to Richard Payne and Jamal Nassar, “nationalism is a state of mind or feeling based on the belonging to a nation.”<sup>5</sup> Nationalism has the ability to create bonds between people, through territory, ethnicity, religion, language, and culture. As described by Payne and Nassar, “the concept of a nation is more dependent on a *feeling* of identity rather than on legal qualifications.”<sup>6</sup> The most significant factors to the “bonds of nationalism” are common territory, language, culture, and enemies.<sup>7</sup> These bonds provide a sense of identity or belonging that connects people through the feeling of nationalism.

Nationalism cannot be molded into a single category, according to Michael Hechter. Hechter states, “Nationalism is collective action designed to render the boundaries of the nation congruent with those of its governance unit.”<sup>8</sup> These types of nationalism are categorized as *State-building*, *Peripheral*, *Irredentist*, and *Unification*

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<sup>5</sup> Payne, Richard J., and Jamal R. Nassar. *Politics and Culture in the Developing World*. Pearson, 2010. 68

<sup>6</sup> “Ibid.” 10

<sup>7</sup> “Ibid.” 68-69

<sup>8</sup> Hechter, Michael. *Containing Nationalism*. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2000. 15

*nationalism. Peripheral nationalism*, “occurs when a culturally distinctive territory resists incorporation into an expanding state, or attempts to secede and set up its own government.”<sup>9</sup>

Another type of nationalism according to Hechter, is *State-Building nationalism*, which, is “embodied in the attempt to assimilate or incorporate culturally distinctive territories in a given state. It is the result of the conscious efforts of central rulers to make a multicultural population culturally homogeneous.”<sup>10</sup> This is achieved through imitating the main or ruling culture in culturally diverse populations. *State-Building nationalism* leads to the annihilation of diverse cultures in the society, which are considered “inferior” to the ruling cultural beliefs.<sup>11</sup>

The third form of nationalism is *Irredentist nationalism* which is the extension of pre-existing boundaries of a state, accomplished through the incorporation of “territories of an adjacent state occupied principally by co-nationals.” Finally the fourth type is *Unification nationalism*, which is the “merger of a politically divided but culturally homogenous territory into one state.”<sup>12</sup> This type of nationalism has the ability to “render cultural and governance boundaries congruent.”<sup>13</sup>

Hechter’s concept of *Peripheral nationalism*, which describes the importance of cultural identity and self-governance, provides a means to understand Catalonia’s (as well as Scotland’s and Flanders’) movements toward autonomy and independence can be seen through. This type of nationalism contributes to the understanding of Catalonia’s regional

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<sup>9</sup> Hechter, Michael. *Containing Nationalism*. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2000. 17

<sup>10</sup> “Ibid.” 15

<sup>11</sup> “Ibid.” 15

<sup>12</sup> “Ibid.” 17

<sup>13</sup> “Ibid.” 17



nationalism, but also the foundations behind the political movements that continue to move Catalonia forward toward independence.

Harmon Zeigler demonstrates how nationalism embeds itself into people, stating that nationalism is a more “recent state of mind.”<sup>14</sup> He concludes, that nationalism is a powerful and compelling idea that also has a psychological power over the minds of people who unite under the idea.<sup>15</sup> When nationalism can be clearly identified, the “feelings” or bonds of nationalism allow for a foundation to be built by the people bonded by them.

Zeigler makes the argument that culture is a major factor when looking at the power of nationalism.<sup>16</sup> Payne and Nassar categorize culture as a collection of customs, beliefs, traditions, values, ideas, and habits all shared among a group of people.<sup>17</sup> These factors closely intertwine with nationalism, or as Zeigler argues, “Nationalism stresses the legitimacy of a unique culture, a way of looking at life that is peculiar to a nation. Nationalism is a homogenous state of mind in which an individual’s primary loyalty is not to a region, a social class, a religion, or a tribe but to the nation.”<sup>18</sup> Nationalism has the ability to unite people through culture; however, culture has distinct factors uniting people that do not apply to nationalism.

Though culture and nationalism are different in their roles among populations, nationalism has the ability to govern. John A. Hall argues against the idea of nationalism,

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<sup>14</sup> Zeigler, Harmon. *The Political community: A Comparative Introduction to Political Systems and Society*. New York: Longman,1990. 42

<sup>15</sup> “Ibid.” 42

<sup>16</sup> “Ibid.” 42

<sup>17</sup> Payne, Richard J., and Jamal R. Nassar. *Politics and Culture in the Developing World*. Pearson, 2010. 8

<sup>18</sup> Zeigler, Harmon. *The Political community: A Comparative Introduction to Political Systems and Society*. New York: Longman,1990. Pg.43

stating, “That people should share a culture and be ruled only by someone co-cultured with themselves,” which he believes is an out-dated concept.<sup>19</sup> This idea makes the culture of a specific group of people seem less important to the overall spectrum of a country. Even though these specific cultures allowed for national identity and traditions to form, nationalism seems to diminish an individual culture to make way for the nation’s ideals, resembling Hechter’s idea of *state-building nationalism*.<sup>20</sup> This could potentially diminish the importance and distinction of culture.

John Hall argues that nationalism can flourish with the collapse of empires. Empires such as Rome, Sparta, and even Athens had the ability to rule over multiple cultures and territories of people through military force.<sup>21</sup> These city-states attained control through conquering different territories that posed a threat to their sovereignty, but were not unified as a people or nation. People continued to retain their individual culture and ideals, thus nationalism did not exist.

Similar to Hall’s ancient territories, modern day examples of independent territories as a part of an overall nation, according to Greer, are Scotland, Northern Ireland, Catalonia, Flanders, and the Basque country. These regions have made significant advances toward independence and identity through the mobilization of nationalists.<sup>22</sup> So far the success does not lay in these regions’ abilities to create nation-states, but independent functioning regional governments. According to Margaret Moore,

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<sup>19</sup> Hall, John A. *Nationalism, Classified, and Explained*. ed. Sukumar Periwal, *Notions of Nationalism*. Central European University Press, 1995.10

<sup>20</sup> Hechter, Michael. *Containing Nationalism*. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2000. 15

<sup>21</sup> Hall, John A. *Nationalism, Classified, and Explained*. ed. Sukumar Periwal, *Notions of Nationalism*. Central European University Press, 1995. 9

<sup>22</sup> Greer, Scott L. *Nationalism and Self-Government: The Politics of Autonomy in Scotland and Catalonia*. SUNY Press, 2008. 2

“minority nationalism can convincingly be seen as a particular response to global restructuring of the economy.”<sup>23</sup> Further, if these regions cannot successfully adapt to nation-states, they still “have a role to play in the context of regional economic associations and military defense pacts.”<sup>24</sup>

Greer states, “Most people in a society are not concerned about their national identity.”<sup>25</sup> He points out that the regions of Flanders, Catalonia, and Scotland are societies, not just “nations.”<sup>26</sup> These are regions where cultural identities do not dissolve because of borders, becoming a muddled nationalism malleable to their nation.

### **Qualifications for becoming a State**

Peripheral nationalism displays the importance of self governance, independence, and cultural identity, reasons which promote autonomous and secession movements. These factors are important when addressing reasons to secede, but specific factors or qualifications are required in becoming a state. Payne and Nassar point out the basic criteria for sovereignty and recognition as a state. The five elements of statehood are recognition by other states, the establishment of a government body, a population of certain size, land, and sovereignty.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> Moore, Margaret. *Globalization, Cosmopolitanism, and Minority Nationalism*. Edited by Michael Keating and John McGarry in *Minority Nationalism and the Changing International Order*. University Press US, 2001. 48

<sup>24</sup> “Ibid.” 48

<sup>25</sup> Greer, Scott L. *Nationalism and Self-Government: The Politics of Autonomy in Scotland and Catalonia*. SUNY Press, 2008. 2

<sup>26</sup> “Ibid.” 2

<sup>27</sup> Payne, Richard J., and Jamal R. Nassar. *Politics and Culture in the Developing World*. Pearson, 2010. 9-10

Recognition by other states is crucial when establishing a state.<sup>28</sup> Recognition by the international community leads to stronger trade relations, possible membership in the European Union (EU), and participation in international organizations, such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF). Recognition and participation in these international organizations provide advantages politically and economically to a state. A strong government has advantages when establishing a legitimate status in the international community. Without government stability, becoming a successful state is limited. A strong government provides control and protection over its state, providing stability and sovereignty on a national and international level. Sovereignty allows for a state to be in control of its own policies, people, government, and land. Being under the control of another power is not a state, but a colony. These basic elements are essential to the foundation of a state.

### **Recognition and Benefits of the EU**

Recognition is crucial in becoming a state, especially by the EU and its member states. Meeting EU qualifications to become a member state could have a greater influence toward the possibility at pursuing secession. These qualifications consist of strong government, economic stability, and cultural identity. The EU provides many benefits for its member states, providing an institution modeling a continental democratic union. Benefits also include access to the “single market” which “ensures the free

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<sup>28</sup> Payne, Richard J., and Jamal R. Nassar. *Politics and Culture in the Developing World*. Pearson, 2010. 9-10

movement of people, goods, services, and capital.”<sup>29</sup> Admittance is based on qualifications set by EU standards.

These economic and political requirements are specified in the Copenhagen Conditions, which were ratified during the 1993 Copenhagen Council.<sup>30</sup> The council recognized that an increasing number of nations would apply for E.U. membership in the future. Evaluation for the initiation process would occur when the applying nation could meet the set requirements. These requirements were meticulously designed to protect current member states economies against economically inept applying countries. These requirements also applied to political protection. Once an applicant becomes a member state, the state is required to adopt the *Acquis Communautaire*, a sizable document concerning the legislation of the EU.<sup>31</sup> The document summarizes,

Membership requires that the candidate country has achieved stability of institutions guaranteeing democracy, the rule of law, human rights and respect for and protection of minorities, the existence of a functioning market economy as well as the capacity to cope with competitive pressure and market forces within the Union. Membership presupposes the candidate’s ability to take on the obligations

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<sup>29</sup> European Union. Wikipedia, [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/European\\_Union](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/European_Union). Accessed Dec. 2010. European Commission. "The EU Single Market: Fewer barriers, more "The EU Single Market: Fewer barriers, more opportunities". Europa web portal. [http://ec.europa.eu/internal\\_market/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/internal_market/index_en.htm).

<sup>30</sup> Nugent, Neill. *The Government and Politics of the European Union 6<sup>th</sup> edition*. Duke University Press, 2006. 59

<sup>31</sup> Laughland, John. “Independence for Flanders: Good for Democracy, Good for Europe.” *The Brussels Journal*, 29, Nov. 2007.

of membership including adherence to the aims of political, economic and monetary union (European Council, 1993: 12).<sup>32</sup>

By signing this document the member state grants, the EU specified monitoring control over the member state to ensure economic and population protection. This monitoring provides protection to other EU member states that could be economically or politically harmed by the poor decisions of other nation(s).

Being recognized by the EU would provide many needed benefits to Catalonia, especially if it were to secede from Spain. Is secession and statehood possible for Catalonia? Examining previously successful secession movements that also embraced the importance of equality and culture in their similar regions, can help understand if secession is possible for Catalonia (as well as for Flanders and Scotland). According to Aleksandar Pavkovic and Peter Radan, secession is possible for independent regions trying to preserve their culture and obtain full independence. Examples of preservation of culture through secession movements in independent regions are seen through the success of secession by Norway, Slovakia, and Iceland.<sup>33</sup> In each of these cases, the region was different from their nation and the “majority population by their language, and cultural characteristics and were recognized within the legal system of the host state, as a separate national group.”<sup>34</sup> These differences created inequality between the region and the

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<sup>32</sup> European Council 1993. Quoted in Nugent, Neill. *The Government and Politics of the European Union 6<sup>th</sup> edition*. Duke University Press, 2006. 59

<sup>33</sup> Pavkovic, Aleksandar, and Peter Radan, *Creating New States: Theory and Practice of Secession*. England: Ashgate Publishing Ltd., 2007. 90

<sup>34</sup> “Ibid.” 90

majority population and politics, creating the demand for secession.<sup>35</sup> Are culture and inequality the only factors that qualify for secession movements?

### **Qualifications, Costs, and Benefits of Secession**

Along with qualifications to becoming a state, there are qualifications for secession. According to Wayne Norman, as long as secession can be identified by just cause, then it can be morally justified. He states, “According to the just-cause theories, a group has a right to secede if and only if it has just cause. Just-cause theories are the most plausible candidates for justifying secession institutions in constitutional and international law.”<sup>36</sup> Preserving a cultural minority is significant and “just cause” to advocate secession. Pavkovic and Radan point out that Norway and Slovakia, “justified their attempts at secession both as a remedy for an injustice and as an expression of the desire of their national group to achieve control over their own affairs.”<sup>37</sup> They point out the main objective was not for “more political power or autonomy but for the recognition by the majority group of their equal political status and its codification within constitutional framework.”<sup>38</sup> These inequalities led to movements toward secession that were successful.

According to Viva Ona Bartkus, secession becomes an option when the region’s central government is unable to efficiently provide for the region. She states, “Once the government has failed in its duties to its citizens, it has forfeited the right to command

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<sup>35</sup> “Ibid.” 90

<sup>36</sup> Norman, Wayne. *The Ethics of Secession as the Regulation of Secession*. Edited by Margaret Moore. *National Self-Determination and Secession*. Oxford University Press US, 1998. 50

<sup>37</sup> Pavkovic, Aleksandar, and Peter Radan, *Creating New States: Theory and Practice of Secession*. England: Ashgate Publishing Ltd., 2007. 91

<sup>38</sup> “Ibid.” 90

their obedience.”<sup>39</sup> These inabilities by a central governments lead regions to move toward secession. There are also the costs to regions if secession is not possible. Barkus demonstrates that the costs of not seceding are “Sacrifice, seizure, or dispossession of economic opportunities, political rights, autonomy, or cultural heritage, and can escalate into political repression and systematic violence.”<sup>40</sup>

According to Bartkus, there are four conditions for a “secession crisis” to occur, that a region needs to meet: “distinct community, territory, leaders, and discontent.”<sup>41</sup> These qualifications provide the framework for secession. Pavkovic and Radan outline similar elements to secession. These elements are “bounded territory within the existing state, population within the territory, and a political movement targeting (and supported by) that population which: has proclaimed independence of a new state based on that territory, and has attempted to gain recognition of that independence by other states and international organizations.”<sup>42</sup>

Secession is not just a political movement, but it can be a legal process as well. Wayne Norman touches on this process by relating secession to the legal process of divorce. Norman states, “First, secession just is a legal matter, the way divorce is.”<sup>43</sup> Norman describes, “ There is a difference between secession and merely having political autonomy, including a sort of *de facto* independence from central authorities, analogous to conjugal separation, that many substate territorial entities have carved out for

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<sup>39</sup> Bartkus, Viva Ona. *The Dynamic of Secession*, Cambridge University Press. 1999. 22

<sup>40</sup> “Ibid.” 24

<sup>41</sup> Bartkus, Viva Ona. *The Dynamic of Secession*, Cambridge University Press. 1999. 22

<sup>42</sup> Pavkovic, Aleksandar, and Peter Radan, *Creating New States: Theory and Practice of Secession*. England: Ashgate Publishing Ltd., 2007. 33

<sup>43</sup> Norman, Wayne. *The Ethics of Secession as the Regulation of Secession*. Edited by Margaret Moore. *National Self-Determination and Secession*. Oxford University Press US, 1998. 49



themselves (or with the help of others) in countries.”<sup>44</sup> This “divorce” between the central government and a regional government is a “change in legal status within the constitutional law of its former state.”<sup>45</sup> This legal process is similar to divorce: it takes time and is by no means a quick process.

The timing of secession depends of four variables according to Bartkus. These variables are “the benefits of continued membership in the larger political entity, the costs of such membership, the costs of secession, and the benefits of secession.”<sup>46</sup> Pavkovic and Radan outline that the benefits of secession for these regions are the “resolution of grievances and end of political contention.”<sup>47</sup> Ending grievances and political tension would benefit the people and politics in both the seceding region and the “host nation.” Benefits can “enhance political control by secessionist population, control over policies affecting the regions interests, and economic benefits.”<sup>48</sup>

As Michael Keating states in *Stateless Nation-Building*, “leaders of stateless nations will concentrate on the conditions for maintaining and developing their culture, on building institutions and the capacity for self government in civil society, and on developing an economic model that permits a degree of autonomy in the global trading

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<sup>44</sup> Norman, Wayne. *The Ethics of Secession as the Regulation of Secession*. Edited by Margaret Mooore. *National Self-Determination and Secession*. Oxford University Press US, 1998. 49

<sup>45</sup> Norman, Wayne. *The Ethics of Secession as the Regulation of Secession*. Edited by Margaret Mooore. *National Self-Determination and Secession*. Oxford University Press US, 1998. 49

<sup>46</sup> Bartkus, Viva Ona. *The Dynamic of Secession*, Cambridge University Press. 1999. 18

<sup>47</sup> Pavkovic, Aleksandar, and Peter Radan, *Creating New States: Theory and Practice of Secession*. England: Ashgate Publishing Ltd., 2007. 243

<sup>48</sup> “Ibid.” 243

order.<sup>49</sup> Focusing on these features, a society can become independent from a nation. All of these benefits to the seceding state could have the ability to outweigh the costs.

However, addressing and overcoming the costs of secession is vital for full independence. Bartkus addresses these costs as variables in the timing of secession. The costs of membership to a larger political entity would be measured by the amount of political power the region holds within the larger political entity. This depends on if the current state of political power is enough to address and pass policies directly affecting the region. Granting this the case, secession could be more costly than beneficial to the political power of the region. However, the amount of political power may be limited, causing important issues to the region to go unnoticed or not fully addressed making secession more beneficial. Although, the costs of secession could outweigh the benefits if political power and economic stability within the region is not enough to obtain and provide independence and sovereignty.

### **Chapter 3: Catalonia**

#### **Background**

Barcelona is one of the largest cities in Spain. Catalonia is inhabited by approximately seven million people, which makes up 16% of Spain's total population.<sup>50</sup> Historically Catalonia has been an economically successful area since before the unity of Spain as a nation in 1492.<sup>51</sup> Catalonia currently is the economically wealthiest region in

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<sup>49</sup> Keating, Michael, John McGarry. *Minority Nationalism and the Changing International Order: Stateless Nation-Building*. Oxford University Press US, 2001. 38

<sup>50</sup> OECD. *OECD Reviews of Regional Innovation: Catalonia, Spain*. OECD Publishing, 2010.

<sup>51</sup> U.S. Department of State. *Spain*. <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/2878.htm>. (accessed October 24, 2010).

Spain, contributing 19% of Spain's GDP.<sup>52</sup> Apart from Catalonia's historically separate culture and language, it also has its own set of politics different from those of Spain.

Politics in Catalonia are dominated by the Catalan nationalist party, *Convergència i Unió* (CiU), and *Esquerra Republicana* (ERC) a separatist party. For a long time, the two parties have been working towards a politically autonomous Catalonia.<sup>53</sup>

Before one can understand the current attitude toward an autonomous Catalonia, a brief overview of Catalonia's history is crucial in understanding Catalonian ideologies favoring independence and autonomy. This politically autonomous area has experienced movements and efforts to be recognized as an independent region since the seventeenth century when Catalonia declared its independence in 1640. Catalan nationalism continued to thrive even after Catalonia was reclaimed in 1652 by the Spanish Crown.<sup>54</sup> The fight for independence continued during the eighteenth century with the Spanish War of Succession, when Catalonia placed its support in the "Habsburg pretender," the losing candidate to the Spanish throne.<sup>55</sup> This loss led to the banning of the Catalan language and dissolving all Catalan institutions.<sup>56</sup> This oppression of the Catalan infrastructure and culture would later be matched during Francisco Franco's regime.

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<sup>52</sup> OECD. *OECD Reviews of Regional Innovation: Catalonia, Spain*. OECD Publishing, 2010.

<sup>53</sup> Hargreaves, John E.R. *Freedom for Catalonia?: Catalan Nationalism, Spanish Identity, and the Barcelona Olympic Games*. Cambridge University Press, 2000.

<sup>54</sup> Guillermo Encarnación, Omar. *Spanish Politics: Democracy after Dictatorship*. Polity, 2008. 100.

<sup>55</sup> Desquen, Josep, "Europe's Stateless Nations in the Era of Globalization: The Case for Catalonia's Secession From Spain." John Hopkins University *The Bologna Center Journal of International Affairs*. 2003

<sup>56</sup> Desquen, Josep, "Europe's Stateless Nations in the Era of Globalization: The Case for Catalonia's Secession From Spain." John Hopkins University *The Bologna Center Journal of International Affairs*. 2003

Catalonia later became an area rich with political elites, gaining strength in the Spanish government. Catalonia largely contributed to Spain's development through its "industrial and commercial infrastructure."<sup>57</sup> Between 1840 and 1880 a strong sense of nationalism was formed throughout Catalonia. This was largely due to the reintroduction of the Catalan culture, otherwise known as *Renaixença*.<sup>58</sup> Through this movement politics and culture in Catalonia became popular and powerful, which led to its association with "social mobility," strengthening Catalan Nationalism.<sup>59</sup>

Separatist movements achieved heightened success in Catalan in 1876, which resulted in Catalan autonomy in 1932.<sup>60</sup> With the Spanish Nationalist's victory during the Spanish Civil War in 1939, autonomy was later withdrawn.<sup>61</sup> The Spanish Civil War introduced the rule of Francisco Franco whose repressive government policies and human rights violations pulsed throughout Spain, especially in Catalonia. Franco's policies prohibited the use of the Catalan language in order to deny the "Catalan identity and cultural expression."<sup>62</sup> This effort to exterminate Catalan nationalism failed after the arrival of democracy in the late twentieth century. Catalonian culture, society, politics, and language would flourish again.

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<sup>57</sup> Guillermo Encarnacion, Omar. *Spanish Politics: Democracy after Dictatorship*. Polity, 2008. 100.

<sup>58</sup> Guillermo Encarnacion, Omar. *Spanish Politics: Democracy after Dictatorship*. Polity, 2008. 100.

<sup>59</sup> Guillermo Encarnacion, Omar. *Spanish Politics: Democracy after Dictatorship*. Polity, 2008. 100.

<sup>60</sup> *Encyclopedia Britannica*, 15th ed., s.v. "Catalonia," 2008.

<sup>61</sup> *Encyclopedia Britannica*, 15th ed., s.v. "Catalonia," 2008.

<sup>62</sup> Desquen, Josep, "Europe's Stateless Nations in the Era of Globalization: The Case for Catalonia's Secession From Spain." John Hopkins University *The Bologna Center Journal of International Affairs*. 2003

Historically, Catalan politics have worked toward movements concerning autonomy, which lead Catalonia, to put forth a statute for autonomy.<sup>63</sup> This statute was revised in 2005 to ensure that “it fit in with the Spanish constitution.”<sup>64</sup> Though this revised statute was approved on March 30, 2006, it was rejected by Spain’s Constitutional Court on July 10, 2010, on the basis of “constitutionality.” The court’s decision denied fourteen articles within the statute, claiming the statutes “totally or partially unconstitutional.”<sup>65</sup> The court’s decision to deny these articles was seen as an injustice to the Catalan people who protested the decision.<sup>66</sup> The unconstitutional articles denied according to Dick Nichols,

included the eventual decentralizing of the legal system, establishment of a permanent Council of Statute Guarantee with the power to rule on disputes, limitations of the ability of the national state to adopt legislation overriding local powers, and establishment of a financial system that would oblige richer parts of Spain like Catalonia to help fund development elsewhere, but on a transparent and equitable basis.<sup>67</sup>

The constitutional court’s decision demonstrates Madrid’s concern regarding Catalonia gaining too much economic power, by allowing more fiscal control over its own

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<sup>63</sup> Desquen, Josep, “Europe’s Stateless Nations in the Era of Globalization: The Case for Catalonia’s Secession From Spain.” John Hopkins University *The Bologna Center Journal of International Affairs*. 2003

<sup>64</sup> Nichols, Dick. “Why Catalonia Stood Up on July 10”. *Link International Journal of Socialist Renewal*. 12, July 2010.

<sup>65</sup> Nichols, Dick. “Why Catalonia Stood Up on July 10”. *Link International Journal of Socialist Renewal*. 12, July 2010.

<sup>66</sup> Nichols, Dick. “Why Catalonia Stood Up on July 10”. *Link International Journal of Socialist Renewal*. 12, July 2010.

<sup>67</sup> Nichols, Dick. “Why Catalonia Stood Up on July 10”. *Link International Journal of Socialist Renewal*. 12, July 2010.

economy as defined in the denied articles statutes.<sup>68</sup> This could potentially result in fiscal turmoil for Spain, which is in bad fiscal standing with the EU.<sup>69</sup>

According to Guillaume Fonkenell, this has resulted because “the Spanish government decided to run big budget deficits that have been funded with big borrowings, but the more the debt increases, the closer this approach is to coming to an end.”<sup>70</sup> Bad economic decisions such as these on the behalf of a member state (Spain) provoke evaluation and scrutiny by the E.U. This evaluation and oversight by the E.U. could lead to a revoked membership, creating serious concerns and consequences for the state’s economic wellbeing. These poor fiscal decisions have led to the Spanish government relying on the economic success of Catalonia to make up short comings in taxes, creating economic tensions between Catalonia and Spain’s central government.<sup>71</sup>

Both Dick Nichols and James Kirchick report on the enormity of the protest which was attended by over one million people on July 10, 2010.<sup>72</sup> Nichols considers this “one of the biggest demonstrations since the end of the Franco dictatorship.” The demonstration was more than Catalan citizens; it was attended by over 500 organizations, including “parties that make up 88% of the Catalan Parliament, Catalan Trade union

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<sup>68</sup> Nichols, Dick. “Why Catalonia Stood Up on July 10”. *Link International Journal of Socialist Renewal*. 12, July 2010.

<sup>69</sup> Gjelten, Tom. “Spain’s European Identity Shaken by Debt Crisis.” *NPR*, 10, Nov. 2010.

<sup>70</sup> Guillaume, Fonkenell. Quoted in Sam Jones, “Contagion Fears Over ‘To Biff to Bail’ Spain.” *Fiscal Times*. 17, Nov. 2010

<sup>71</sup> Desquen, Josep, “Europe’s Stateless Nations in the Era of Globalization: The Case for Catalonia’s Secession From Spain.” John Hopkins University *The Bologna Center Journal of International Affairs*. 2003

<sup>72</sup> Kirchick, James. “A Reaction from the Streets of Catalonia.” *The New Republic*, July 13, 2010.

organizations large and small, the Peasants Union, and migrant, community, and cultural organizations.”<sup>73</sup>

Protests are not the only movements people in Catalonia have participated in to voice their desire to be recognized as an autonomous region. During December 2009 an early vote for Catalanian Independence was conducted with the hope that the success and support would lead in the direction of appearing on a “formal ballot.” The leading organizer of the early vote, Alfons Lopez Tema, states, “More and more people think we have no room in the Spanish house, so we need a house of our own.”<sup>74</sup> However, polls supporting Catalanian independence dropped from 94% to 92% according to the *Spanish Vida*. The article points out that the 92% only represents the 300,000 people, out of a population of seven million who came to vote.<sup>75</sup> Even with the two percent drop and the low voting turn out, there is clear support for an autonomous Catalonia seen through the continual political progress, protests, and polls.

### **Catalan Autonomy**

Understanding the factors that make Catalonia different from Spain is important in evaluating if secession is possible for the region. In regions with diverse cultures and deep rooted movements toward autonomy, integration of these cultures to the host nation can be difficult, especially after decades of oppression from the ruling government, as seen in Catalonia (as well as Scotland). These events have the ability to stunt state-

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<sup>73</sup> Nichols, Dick. “Why Catalonia Stood Up on July 10”. *Link International Journal of Socialist Renewal*. 12, July 2010.

<sup>74</sup> Rainsford, Sarah. “Catalonia Votes on Independence from Spain.” *BBC News*, Catalonia. 12, Dec. 2009.

<sup>75</sup> Spanish News, “Catalan Independence Movement ‘Losing Steam.’” *Spanish Vida*, (last accessed 10, November 2010).

building nationalism for the nation, and promote regional nationalism in areas rich in culture, different from the rest of the nation.

David Dunkerley recognizes these issues when he addresses strategies to “promote healthy civic culture and social integration within a country,” as discussed in the European Commission Report of 1999. He claims the lack of these strategies has the ability to “contribute to the strengthening of nationalist cleavages within a society.”<sup>76</sup> The European Commission Report of 1999 recognizes different strategies to deter this nationalist strengthening through balancing “state language and the protection of minority language rights,” but also recognizes the difficulties these governments face when integrating these strategies.<sup>77</sup>

Josep Desquen argues that these accomplishments are only achieved through “vigorous language policy and hefty funding.”<sup>78</sup> Preservation of the Catalan language is seen in Catalonia where a large amount of media is provided in both Spanish and Catalan by significant funding to satisfy both languages spoken in the region. But Catalan still remains a “weaker” language within “bilingual” communities.<sup>79</sup>

For Catalonia, becoming an independent state is a legal matter. Secession allows for regions to gain control over factors and policies they are limited by when still under the control of their host nation. Control over regional affairs is important concerning

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<sup>76</sup> Dunkerley, David. *Changing Europe: Identities, Nations, and Citizens*. Psychology Press, 2002. 60

<sup>77</sup> Dunkerley, David. *Changing Europe: Identities, Nations, and Citizens*. Psychology Press, 2002. 60

<sup>78</sup> Desquen, Josep, “Europe’s Stateless Nations in the Era of Globalization: The Case for Catalonia’s Secession From Spain.” John Hopkins University *The Bologna Center Journal of International Affairs*. 2003

<sup>79</sup> Desquen, Josep, “Europe’s Stateless Nations in the Era of Globalization: The Case for Catalonia’s Secession From Spain.” John Hopkins University *The Bologna Center Journal of International Affairs*. 2003



specific issues within the region. Regional autonomy in Spain is outlined in the Ley Organica de Armonizacion del Proceso Autonomico in 1982.<sup>80</sup> This document laid out the jurisdiction that autonomous regions obtain. Some of these jurisdictions include, “local civil law; control of land, waters, agriculture, and private property within the region; housing; social welfare; roads; highways; internal commerce and industry (with some exceptions); and culture.”<sup>81</sup> These jurisdictions are also outlined in the Spanish Constitution.<sup>82</sup> All of these jurisdictions are important to the infrastructure and development to the region, but does not grant full governance over important affairs concerning the region.

The jurisdictions not under the governance of regional autonomy are controlled by Spain’s central government. Some of these jurisdictions are “immigration, foreign relations, national defense and military affairs, international trade, monetary regulations, administration of justice, and coordination of general economic planning.”<sup>83</sup> All of these factors are important to a state’s sovereignty. The sovereignty of a state depends on its ability to manage these factors successfully, which could possibly create costs for a region moving toward secession.

If Catalonia possessed a strong military it would have the ability to secede from Spain by force. Catalonia’s lack of military poses a potentially large cost to becoming independent, especially in the aspect of protection against rebel groups and foreign

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<sup>80</sup> Hannum, Hurst. *Autonomy, Sovereignty, Self-Determination*, University of Pennsylvania Press, 1996. 270

<sup>81</sup> Hannum, Hurst. *Autonomy, Sovereignty, Self-Determination*, University of Pennsylvania Press, 1996. 270

<sup>82</sup> The Spanish Congress of Deputies and the Senate, *The Spanish Constitution*, (Spain, Madrid, 1978), article 148

<sup>83</sup> The Spanish Congress of Deputies and the Senate, *The Spanish Constitution*, (Spain, Madrid, 1978), article 149(1)

invasion. Bartkus argues security has its benefits to the state and citizens stating, “Security benefit of membership manifest themselves in the state’s maintenance of internal order so as to protect citizens from violence at each other’s hands and in its guarantee of defense from the aggression of foreign powers.”<sup>84</sup> Membership to a larger nation provides more direct and powerful protection creating a cost to a seceding region.

Although security is beneficial, it is not necessary. With the protection provided by international organizations, modern states do not necessarily need to have a military of their own to successfully be sovereign. This is due to the modern security provided through the international community as pointed out by Bartkus. She states, “Due to the arrangements of collective security in Western Europe and North America, it is less crucial for each state to provide its own military defense.”<sup>85</sup> With sovereignty, the government provides protection, but protection is not solely the responsibility of the state’s government. As Pavkovic and Radan point out, the new state has, “as of right, military protection from U.N. or other states.”<sup>86</sup> The military costs of secession depend on the response time, effectiveness, and protection provided by the UN or other states military forces. However, this cost is a factor weighed by recognition, largely depending on if the seceding region is recognized and supported by surrounding nations and/or is a member state within the E.U. Since E.U. membership for Catalonia is uncertain along with international recognition and support, military is a potential cost to secession.

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<sup>84</sup> Bartkus, Viva Ona. *The Dynamic of Secession*, Cambridge University Press. 1999. 33

<sup>85</sup> Bartkus, Viva Ona. *The Dynamic of Secession*, Cambridge University Press. 1999. 23

<sup>86</sup> Pavkovic, Aleksandar, and Peter Radan, *Creating New States: Theory and Practice of Secession*. England: Ashgate Publishing Ltd., 2007. 242

Even if statehood is achievable, there is no guarantee of recognition from the international community, a necessity to national survival.<sup>87</sup> For Catalonia, international recognition towards sovereignty develops an obstacle that could hinder Catalonia's political and economical progression after gaining statehood, especially recognition from EU nations that are home to similar autonomous regions. Bartkus acknowledges this obstacle by identifying how the "International community can cause hardship for the community seeking secession by withholding the economic and political privileges associated with sovereign statehood."<sup>88</sup> These obstacles could become large costs to the region outweighing the benefits of secession.

### **Economic Success and Stability**

Since Catalonia flourishes economically in development and in industry, can Catalonia survive economically independent from Spain? Are these economic factors viable enough for a secession movement? Catalonia has typically favored "private initiative" which has allowed it to be economically rich and successful, as well as contributing "one third of all industrial production and exports" of Spain.<sup>89</sup> Catalonia's GDP contribution comes to about 204 billion Euros, closely equating it to countries such as Norway and Portugal.<sup>90</sup>

This economic success has and continues to contribute to a level of economic independence instead of a dependency on Spain. The tasks of tax collection,

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<sup>87</sup> Pavkovic, Aleksandar, and Peter Radan, *Creating New States: Theory and Practice of Secession*. England: Ashgate Publishing Ltd., 2007. 90

<sup>88</sup> Bartkus, Viva Ona. *The Dynamic of Secession*, Cambridge University Press. 1999. 25

<sup>89</sup> Desquen, Josep, "Europe's Stateless Nations in the Era of Globalization: The Case for Catalonia's Secession From Spain." John Hopkins University *The Bologna Center Journal of International Affairs*. 2003

<sup>90</sup> OECD. *OECD Reviews of Regional Innovation: Catalonia, Spain*. OECD Publishing, 2010. 53

redistribution, and fiscal balance are controlled by Spain's central government (Madrid). Madrid's fiscal control has led to an inequality in the redistribution of funds to Catalonia, known as a fiscal imbalance.<sup>91</sup> Catalonia "contributes about twenty-five percent of Spain's total taxes."<sup>92</sup> This means the amount of money Catalonia contributes to Spain has led to a deficit in the amount Catalonia would receive back, leading to economic inequality to the region.

This "imbalance" from lack of redistribution to Catalonia is "7.5% and 10% of Catalonia's GDP," making the deficit, "between about 6.7 billion and about 9 billion or around 1,240 Euros annually per capita."<sup>93</sup> According to Josep Desquen, "this is by far the largest fiscal imbalance among its E.U. peers."<sup>94</sup> Similar regions that have similar contributions to their central government experience "fiscal surplus," such as Flanders in Belgium who allocates a considerable amount of money to the poorer Walloon region.<sup>95</sup> With these large contributions to Spain's total economy, if Catalonia received equal fiscal redistribution back, it *would* be significant to their economy.

Catalonia is economically controlled by Spain which has created an economic struggle from fiscal inequality. Sala-i-Martin puts this burden into perspective as he

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<sup>91</sup> Desquen, Josep, "Europe's Stateless Nations in the Era of Globalization: The Case for Catalonia's Secession From Spain." John Hopkins University *The Bologna Center Journal of International Affairs*. 2003

<sup>92</sup> Desquen, Josep, "Europe's Stateless Nations in the Era of Globalization: The Case for Catalonia's Secession From Spain." John Hopkins University *The Bologna Center Journal of International Affairs*. 2003

<sup>93</sup> Desquen, Josep, "Europe's Stateless Nations in the Era of Globalization: The Case for Catalonia's Secession From Spain." John Hopkins University *The Bologna Center Journal of International Affairs*. 2003

<sup>94</sup> Desquen, Josep, "Europe's Stateless Nations in the Era of Globalization: The Case for Catalonia's Secession From Spain." John Hopkins University *The Bologna Center Journal of International Affairs*. 2003

<sup>95</sup> *Preparing for Flemish Independence*. [members.multimania.nl/vlaamssiteje/english.htm](http://members.multimania.nl/vlaamssiteje/english.htm). (Last accessed September 2010.)

states, “The fiscal imbalance is the major challenge facing the Catalan economy for its development in the next 25 years.”<sup>96</sup> Over time this burden can have negative effects on Catalonia’s economy and development. This excessive tax burden in Catalan society will eventually lead to a “less competitive” region resulting in declining levels of investment which has a diminishing effect on the overall infrastructure.<sup>97</sup> These effects can develop tension between citizens and government resulting in declining levels of support as seen in Catalonia toward Madrid.<sup>98</sup> If pulled too tight, these tensions have the possibility of breaking. Breaking could potentially lead to an increase in support for political groups favoring secession as well as an economically independent Catalonia.

Are these current costs and fiscal imbalances to Catalan society enough to justify a secession movement? Could Catalonia economically thrive as an independent nation? As Josep Desquen points out, “A fully independent Catalonia would not have to pay taxes to Madrid that are invested elsewhere. Instead, it could invest them to the benefit of Catalonia.”<sup>99</sup> He argues that without Spain, Catalonia could economically function as an independent region. Desquen’s analysis provides several arguments for how “solidarity” would be successful in Catalonia. First, he argues that Catalonia’s economic health cannot be “compromised” more than Spain has already managed to accomplish. Second,

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<sup>96</sup> Martin, Sala-i. Quoted in Josep Desquen, *Europe’s Stateless Nations in the Era of Globalization: The Case for Catalonia’s Secession From Spain*. John Hopkins University *The Bologna Center Journal of International Affairs*. 2003

<sup>97</sup> Desquen, Josep, “Europe’s Stateless Nations in the Era of Globalization: The Case for Catalonia’s Secession From Spain.” John Hopkins University *The Bologna Center Journal of International Affairs*. 2003

<sup>98</sup> Spanish News, “Catalan Independence Movement ‘Losing Steam.’” *Spanish Vida*, (last accessed 10, November 2010).

<sup>99</sup> Desquen, Josep, “Europe’s Stateless Nations in the Era of Globalization: The Case for Catalonia’s Secession From Spain.” John Hopkins University *The Bologna Center Journal of International Affairs*. 2003

Catalonia's size would not hinder its "economic sustainability."<sup>100</sup> Desquen defends this argument by measuring GDP per capita in the world's ten richest countries, finding that eight of the ten have "populations equal or lower to Catalonia's," proving that size really does not matter.<sup>101</sup>

Although some qualifications to becoming a nation are vital, an important factor when evaluating Catalonia's ability to thrive independently as a state is stability and growth through trade (exporting). Catalonia would need to depend on its ability to have stable trade relations with other countries. According to Greer, "the more exposed to the international economy a region is, the more it should demand as a strong regional government and get it; increase in exposure to the global economy should increase the odds of any region becoming assertive."<sup>102</sup> Greer points out, this could develop resistance to state control over the region due to the region's "position in the international economy," demonstrating an "increasingly open economy" for the region.<sup>103</sup> This also could create more regional frustration toward the state, making regions more favorable to full control over the region's economy. Developing a position within the international community can help increase international support. As Greer points out, Catalonia is ambitious in obtaining an international position. Catalonia has an established office in Brussels. These offices or "commercial embassies" are for the purpose of keeping track

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<sup>100</sup> Desquen, Josep, "Europe's Stateless Nations in the Era of Globalization: The Case for Catalonia's Secession From Spain." John Hopkins University *The Bologna Center Journal of International Affairs*. 2003

<sup>101</sup> Desquen, Josep, "Europe's Stateless Nations in the Era of Globalization: The Case for Catalonia's Secession From Spain." John Hopkins University, *The Bologna Center Journal of International Affairs*. 2003

<sup>102</sup> Greer, Scott L. *Nationalism and Self-Government: The Politics of Autonomy in Scotland and Catalonia*. SUNY Press, 2008. 30

<sup>103</sup> "Ibid."30

of the EU's activities<sup>104</sup> He states, Catalonia participates "in EU discussions because of the depth of research and policy advice they can contribute."<sup>105</sup> Through the development of Catalonia's international position, concerns toward international trade in the case of secession could be viewed as limited.

However, issues concerning domestic trade create a more "personal" issue in the case of secession. If Catalonia seceded from Spain, would Spain still trade with Catalonia? Spain is currently the largest contributor to Catalonia's trade market, making Catalonia dependent on Spain for trade exports.<sup>106</sup> Secession could lead to a Spanish boycott toward the purchasing of Catalonian goods.

Historically, embargoes have been placed on smaller countries by their main exporter due to political discrepancies as seen between Cuba and the United States. This relationship could be classified under Michael Hechter's Theory of Regional Underdevelopment. Hechter's theory examines and explains, "the role of cultural differences in explaining the underdevelopment of peripheral regions within nation states argues that, net of their true economic viability, peripheral regions suffer undercapitalization."<sup>107</sup> Hechter states, "This is because core investors are prejudiced against investing in peripheral areas."<sup>108</sup> However, Greer argues against Catalonia's

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<sup>104</sup> "Ibid."30

<sup>105</sup> "Ibid."30

<sup>106</sup> Desquen, Josep, "Europe's Stateless Nations in the Era of Globalization: The Case for Catalonia's Secession From Spain." John Hopkins University *The Bologna Center Journal of International Affairs*. 2003

<sup>107</sup> Cohn, Samuel. Michael Hechter's Theory of Regional Underdevelopment: A Test Using Victorian Railways, *American Sociological Review*, Vol. 47, No. 4, Aug. 1982. 477

<sup>108</sup> Cohn, Samuel. Michael Hechter's Theory of Regional Underdevelopment: A Test Using Victorian Railways, *American Sociological Review*, Vol. 47, No. 4, Aug. 1982. 477

situation qualifying under Hechter's Theory. Greer evaluates the effect of political economy has on territorial political change, explaining this through the factor of "overdevelopment and underdevelopment."<sup>109</sup> He states, "Catalonia is unquestionable overdeveloped relative to Spain..."<sup>110</sup> Catalonia's overdevelopment as stated by Greer, eliminates it from Hechter's theory. In conclusion, political discrepancies with Spain could have negative effects on Catalonia's trade, potentially creating an obstacle if seceded, however quality of Catalan goods could continue their demand within Spain.

#### **Chapter 4: Case Studies**

Trying to understand Catalonia's situation and effectively evaluate the benefits and costs of secession, it is useful to examine similar regions in Europe supporting movements toward independence, such as Flanders in Belgium and Scotland in Great Britain to see if they would benefit from these movements. According to Josep Desquen citizens in the areas of Flanders, Scotland, and Catalonia view themselves as part of an independent nation, not as part of the nation in which their region is located.<sup>111</sup> These regions have their own sustainable economy, culture identity, individual language, and self-governing politics separate from the country in which they are a part.<sup>112</sup> These

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<sup>109</sup> Greer, Scott L. *Nationalism and Self-Government: The Politics of Autonomy in Scotland and Catalonia*. SUNY Press, 2008. 20

<sup>110</sup> Greer, Scott L. *Nationalism and Self-Government: The Politics of Autonomy in Scotland and Catalonia*. SUNY Press, 2008. 92

<sup>111</sup> Desquen, Josep, "Europe's Stateless Nations in the Era of Globalization: The Case for Catalonia's Secession From Spain." John Hopkins University *The Bologna Center Journal of International Affairs*. 2003;

<sup>112</sup> Desquen, Josep, "Europe's Stateless Nations in the Era of Globalization: The Case for Catalonia's Secession From Spain." John Hopkins University *The Bologna Center Journal of International Affairs*. 2003;  
*Preparing for Flemish Independence. members.multimania.nl/vlaamssiteje/english.htm*. (Last accessed September 2010.);



factors have previously led European regions to move toward secession to achieve self-governing and independence, such as Norway and Slovakia.<sup>113</sup> Comparing Scotland's regional situation to Catalonia's is important in order to provide comparison and analysis on the costs and benefits of secession for these regions, to discover if secession is a viable option for these similar regions.

## **Scotland**

Scotland has historically endured an unfavorable political fight. As Scott Greer argues, the “kill-or-be-killed geopolitical” atmosphere Scotland endured during early Europe caused it to become part of the British Empire.<sup>114</sup> This led to the signing of the Act of Union in 1707 between Scotland and England giving “birth to Great Britain.”<sup>115</sup> Though this act has bonded Scotland and England for over 300 years, Scotland has been independently successful in institutional development which has contributed to its self-governing, strong church, economic development and growth through oil reserves, and social programs.<sup>116</sup> Throughout history, the Scottish Church has created its own identity and made changes to promote EU integration.<sup>117</sup>

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Greer, Scott L. *Nationalism and Self-Government: The Politics of Autonomy in Scotland and Catalonia*. SUNY Press, 2008. 92

<sup>113</sup> Pavkovic, Aleksandar, and Peter Radan, *Creating New States: Theory and Practice of Secession*. England: Ashgate Publishing Ltd., 2007. 90

<sup>114</sup> Greer, Scott L. *Nationalism and Self-Government: The Politics of Autonomy in Scotland and Catalonia*. SUNY Press, 2008. 18

<sup>115</sup> Kelbie, Paul. “The Big Question: What Would Happen if Scotland Achieved its Independence.” *The Independent UK*, 16, Jan. 2007

<sup>116</sup> Greer, Scott L. *Nationalism and Self-Government: The Politics of Autonomy in Scotland and Catalonia*. SUNY Press, 2008. 92

<sup>117</sup> Dardanelli, Paolo. *Between Two Unions: Europeanisation and Scottish Devolution*. Manchester University Press, 2005. 47

During the 1975 Referendum concerning E.U. membership for Scotland, the Scottish Church “did not take a clear position.”<sup>118</sup> After the referendum, the Church increased its support towards the EU. According to Paolo Dardanelli, “its [Church] support for a direct election of the European Parliament was seen as a bold exercise of franchise beyond the state level and a welcome step toward the democratization of the EU.”<sup>119</sup> The Church’s increased support could have the ability to rally and increase support throughout Scotland for EU integration as a member state. This could potentially increase movements toward independence such as secession from Great Britain. According to Greer, distinct religion as seen in Scotland could provide as an incentive toward increasing national sentiment.<sup>120</sup> This could have an effect on increasing support throughout Scotland for secession.

If secession were possible for Scotland, would Scotland survive as an independent state? According to Paul Kelbie, “Culturally, there would be little change as the Queen would remain as monarch, just as she does in other members of the Commonwealth, while Scotland has always had its own legal, educational and religious institutions.”<sup>121</sup>

Circumstances within Scotland are financially similar to Catalonia, even though both are regionally autonomous in government; the central government in Great Britain still has maintained control over tax revenue, which makes economic self-reliance nearly

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<sup>118</sup> “Ibid.” 47

<sup>119</sup> Dardanelli, Paolo. *Between Two Unions: Europeanisation and Scottish Devolution*. Manchester University Press, 2005. 47

<sup>120</sup> Greer, Scott L. *Nationalism and Self-Government: The Politics of Autonomy in Scotland and Catalonia*. SUNY Press, 2008. 30

<sup>121</sup> Kelbie, Paul. “The Big Question: What Would Happen if Scotland Achieved its Independence.” *The Independent UK*, 16, Jan. 2007

impossible.<sup>122</sup> According to Greer, Scotland is a large oil exporter, which contributes to “high currency,” combined with the introduction of the Euro, which would “ease economic integration.” These two factors are seen as benefits encouraging arguments for independence.<sup>123</sup> Scotland’s oil reserves would economically provide for its population if Scotland were to secede and become an independent nation.<sup>124</sup> But the costs to independence could be greater than the benefits. Looking back to Wayne Norman’s concept of “divorce,” realistically Great Britain would not idly hand over oil reserves in the North Sea due to their economic worth<sup>125</sup> which could create a problem for Scotland’s economic independence. This could potentially be a cost to Scotland if it was to secede.

After looking at the similar problems concerning economic independence for Scotland, it is clear that Scotland’s situation is comparable to Catalonia’s. Both regions would see benefits but also face obstacles that could create large costs to their secession movements. Further, comparing Flanders to Catalonia will also provide further analysis in discovering if secession is possible. Scotland and Catalonia are similar to Flanders which favors independence but must overcome economic obstacles to reach it.

## **Flanders**

Flanders is one of three regions in Belgium located in the northern section of the country. This Dutch speaking region contains 60% of the country’s total population,

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<sup>122</sup> Greer, Scott L. *Nationalism and Self-Government: The Politics of Autonomy in Scotland and Catalonia*. SUNY Press, 2008. 24

<sup>123</sup> Greer, Scott L. *Nationalism and Self-Government: The Politics of Autonomy in Scotland and Catalonia*. SUNY Press, 2008. 92

<sup>124</sup> Kelbie, Paul. “The Big Question: What Would Happen if Scotland Achieved its Independence.” *The Independent UK*, 16, Jan. 2007

<sup>125</sup> Greer, Scott L. *Nationalism and Self-Government: The Politics of Autonomy in Scotland and Catalonia*. SUNY Press, 2008. 92

contains the Brussels-Capital Region within its borders, and it is also the wealthiest of the three regions.<sup>126</sup>

Belgium is not a unitary state controlled by one central government; it is a semi-federal state giving political power to the separate regions within Belgium.<sup>127</sup> Belgium still has “federal powers” which can cause complications in the terms of secession through the legal process.<sup>128</sup> Despite this circumstance, both regions have separate governmental and parliamentary powers with the exception of Flanders which merged the two,<sup>129</sup> functioning as their own state for all intents and purposes. Similar to Catalonia, language plays a large dividing factor between the two regions. The two main spoken languages in Belgium are French and Dutch creating a language barrier problem which works against the three regions. The result is tensions in the regions’ relationship.<sup>130</sup>

Economically, Flanders has the capability of being independent from Belgium. Flanders is the wealthiest region in Belgium; it is responsible for 80% of total exports.<sup>131</sup> Just as Spain’s central government redistributes Catalonia’s wealth to poorer regions, Belgium practices similar policies with Flanders’ wealth. Belgium allocates eleven billion Euros of Flanders’ wealth to Walloon, the poorer region, each year.<sup>132</sup> This is a significant amount of reallocated wealth away from Flanders’ economy making complete control over government fiscal policies favorable.

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<sup>126</sup> CQ Researcher. *Global Issues*. Pine Forge Press, 2009. 260

<sup>127</sup> *Preparing for*

*Flemish Independence*. [members.multimania.nl/vlaamssiteje/english.htm](http://members.multimania.nl/vlaamssiteje/english.htm). (Last accessed September 2010.)

<sup>128</sup> “Ibid.”

<sup>129</sup> “Ibid.”

<sup>130</sup> “Ibid.”

<sup>131</sup> “Ibid.”

<sup>132</sup> “Ibid.”

According to Michael Keating, Brussels remains an obstacle in the transition to independence for Flanders.<sup>133</sup> Breaking up the country in which the capital of the EU is located could have some negative repercussions on the effectiveness of the EU. This issue is addressed by John Laughland, who states, “The break-up of Belgium would show that the fault-line which is at the heart of the European project runs right through the EU’s capital. That fault-line is the contradiction between democracy and supranationalism.”<sup>134</sup> This has the implication that even if it is more democratically favorable for Flanders to become an independent state, it would not be beneficial for the EU or its capital.

However, potential statehood for Flanders can come at a large cost. Flanders’ and Belgium’s “divorce” will include significant compromises. As stated by Diodato, “There needs to be a two-thirds majority in Parliament which the Flemish cannot reach without Walloon support.”<sup>135</sup> This fact makes compromises by Flanders inevitable. This has created a political dependency on Walloon for Flanders, making obstacles of separation similar to those of Catalonia’s. In order for Catalonia to legally divorce Spain, the legal issues will have to be worked out with Spain’s central government. This could potentially create a problem, especially if Spain and Walloon would fiscally lose in result of a divorce.

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<sup>133</sup> Keating, Michael, John McGarry. *Minority Nationalism and the Changing International Order: Unpacking Sovereignty*. Oxford University Press US, 2001. 35

<sup>134</sup> Laughland, John. “Independence for Flanders: Good for Democracy, Good for Europe.” *The Brussels Journal*, 29, Nov. 2007.

<sup>135</sup> Diodato, Michael. “A Belgian Waffle: Flemish Unrest and Secessionism.” *Harvard International Review*. 2008.

According to Michael Diodato, “The Walloons have demanded that a corridor through Flemish territory to Flanders be included in any partition.”<sup>136</sup> Not having complete control of a state’s territory could lead to significant problems down the road. Next, Diodato brings attention to Belgium’s debt which is around \$432 billion dollars, almost equaling its GDP. Consequently, Diodato argues that this fiscal problem “[w]ould require a divided Flanders and Wallonia to somehow share debt payments.”<sup>137</sup> Fiscally this would be a large burden on Flanders, and also on Wallonia’s unstable economy, which could prove to be economically impossible. The costs of this fiscal burden could potentially outweigh the benefits of independence, largely due to fiscal debt despite a successful secession or not.

Transition would be mainly seen economically and politically. Each state has its own self-governing policies and politics independent of one another. As discussed by Paolo Dardanelli, “Europeanization has the potential to deeply influence the politics of regional self-government in the EU states and that, under certain conditions, its influence is positive, i.e. it tends to strengthen the demand for self-government.”<sup>138</sup> Dardanelli points out this is dependent on “elite political actors” who have the ability of influencing the regional levels through the trickle down effect.<sup>139</sup>

If secession proves legally and fiscally possible, these regions may continue to face the obstacle of lack of recognition by the international community. Becoming part of

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<sup>136</sup> Diodato, Michael. “A Belgian Waffle: Flemish Unrest and Secessionism.” *Harvard International Review*. 2008.

<sup>137</sup> Diodato, Michael. “A Belgian Waffle: Flemish Unrest and Secessionism.” *Harvard International Review*. 2008

<sup>138</sup> Dardanelli, Paolo. *Between Two Unions: Europeanisation and Scottish Devolution*. Manchester University Press, 2005. 154

<sup>139</sup> “Ibid.”154

the EU is economically and politically beneficial for countries in Europe due to its benefits as previously stated.

### **Meeting EU Qualifications**

Meeting EU qualifications could be the silver lining to secession and statehood for these regions. However, separation from a nation does not guarantee entrance into the EU. Due to this uncertainty, do benefits of secession outweigh the costs of *not* becoming an EU member state?

For these three regions, EU membership could pose as a large obstacle to achieving statehood. Beside the basic EU qualifications, acceptance and approval is needed by other EU member states. According to Michael Keating, “There would certainly be opposition from the other member states to secessionist nations seeking independent representation in EU institutions.”<sup>140</sup> Keating elaborates on the notion of Scotland being allowed into the EU, which is a possibility, but not without objection from the English or Spanish governments. This objection is largely derived from the inclination toward secession it might cause in other nationalist regions throughout Europe.<sup>141</sup> Objection by other nations with similar autonomous regions could potentially hinder the possibility of EU membership for Catalonia.

Catalonia, as well as Flanders and Scotland, have the potential to meet the criteria to become states, as well as the qualifications needed to become member states in the EU. Flanders has successfully gained political autonomy with Belgium’s “devolution of

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<sup>140</sup> Keating, Michael, John McGarry. *Minority Nationalism and the Changing International Order: Nations without States*. Oxford University Press US, 2001.90

<sup>141</sup> “Ibid.”33

powers” to its regions.<sup>142</sup> Michael Keating predicts that Flanders’ steps in moving towards a single currency would have the possibility of dissolving Belgium.<sup>143</sup> This movement could result in Flanders’ separation from Belgium.

According to Dardanelli, the EU’s policy toward regional integration has become “increasingly associated with the idea of a ‘Europe of the Regions’ and the Principle of Subsidiarity.”<sup>144</sup> This focuses on regional governments obtaining a “pre-eminent position” within the EU’s system consisting of several layers. The object of obtaining this would be “distribution of power and competences within the latter would reflect preference for the lowest level position.”<sup>145</sup> This has the possibility of helping the region’s politics and status in the international community. This idea could increase support and recognition from the international community, strengthening the possibility of statehood.

## **Chapter 5: Europeanization**

### **Analysis**

There are many costs and benefits to becoming a state. For Catalonia these costs and benefits have the ability to hinder or help the secession process. Internationally, there are obstacles that Catalonia will face to gain acceptance, recognition, and possible EU membership. Domestically there are political and fiscal obstacles that Catalonia must overcome in order to gain independence. Despite these obstacles, Catalonia also has fiscal, cultural, development, and political benefits that have the potential to outweigh

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<sup>142</sup> Keating, Michael, John McGarry. *Minority Nationalism and the Changing International Order: Unpacking Sovereignty*. Oxford University Press US, 2001. 34

<sup>143</sup> “Ibid.”32

<sup>144</sup> Dardanelli, Paolo. *Between Two Unions: Europeanisation and Scottish Devolution*. Manchester University Press, 2005. 142

<sup>145</sup> “Ibid.”142



and overcome the costs of secession. Evaluating and weighing these costs and benefits is vital for Catalonia before continuing any movements toward secession.

There are many arguments and theories explaining that autonomous regions should be allowed to separate legally from their nation on the basis of cultural identity, economic development, and self-governing politics. As a result of this research, the conclusion is that regional nationalism (in Catalonia) has the ability to gain full autonomy and succeed in secession. Although it is possible that regional nationalism is not enough. By weighing the costs and benefits of independence for these regions, it is clear that there are many costs involved with becoming a state. Some of these costs may be difficult for Catalonia (as well as Flanders and Scotland) to overcome. Even with the possibility of legally seceding, overcoming these costs could hinder successful statehood for these regions.

Seen through Hechter's *Peripheral nationalism*, cultural identity in these autonomous regions has created an infrastructure surrounding independence as a result of historical progress. This progress, despite expanding over hundreds of years and overcoming inequality and oppression, has survived, developing into an autonomous force recognized by its host nation. This progress will not be silenced or restrained by simple autonomy but by statehood. Catalonia (as well as Flanders and Scotland) has and continues to make significant steps towards statehood. However, costs, oppression and lack of necessary political power have so far hindered Catalonia's independent status. Catalonia continues working towards overcoming inequalities, economic development, and strengthening political bodies in attempts to move toward independence. These

factors also protect and preserve Catalonia's cultural identity. However, there are still costs to becoming a state that Catalonia must overcome.

### **Conclusion**

After evaluating research, coming to the conclusion that, legally, secession is possible for Catalonia. However, successful sovereignty and international recognition is questionable. Economic stability, international recognition, and limited military are potential costs that need to be addressed. These costs could hinder successful statehood for Catalonia. Even with these clear costs for Catalonia, cultural preservation and identity, along with economic control, are strong enough benefits to overcome the costs. These benefits will continue to fuel Catalonia's autonomy and will allow for future statehood.

### **Suggestions for Further Research**

Understanding the basic qualification, costs, and benefits of becoming a state is important to evaluate the success of secession for autonomous regions (Catalonia). Further research to evaluate other factors affecting the success of statehood for Catalonia could provide more information regarding Catalonia's current status. Research focusing on the current economic status of Spain may allow for more evaluation and information on the economy's effects surrounding statehood. Spain's decreasing economic stability has made it a focal point for the EU's evaluation of member states.<sup>146</sup> This could potentially lead to negative consequences for Catalonia, especially if Spain's economy does not turn around. Structural weakening has the possibility of hindering secession. Referring to the time period of the late nineties, Bartkus states, "neither Spain nor Canada

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<sup>146</sup> Gjelten, Tom. "Spain's European Identity Shaken by Debt Crisis." *NPR*, 10, Nov. 2010.

appear to suffer from recent structural weakening, so that costs of secession have not been reduced.”<sup>147</sup> This could have been true in previous years where structural weakening was not a large issue, but it could potentially be a problem today.

Research focusing on currency and its effects may also help in evaluating costs of secession for Catalonia. Currency could be a potential cost or deterrent to Catalonia’s independence. Spain currently uses the Euro which is the main currency in most EU member states. The Euro is directly tied to the EU and its member states making it an economic bond to other member states economies.<sup>148</sup> If Catalonia could secede from Spain, finding a stable currency will be difficult if Catalonia is not accepted into the EU.

Political regional parties can also become a focal point of further research in evaluating the success of statehood for Catalonia. How will political power be distributed in Catalonia if it seceded from Spain? Will there be one dominating political party or will all parties be equal? Will this distribution or lack of distribution create tensions among Catalonia’s political parties? What will these political effects have on Catalonia’s independence? Focusing on these questions concerning political power could provide more of an insight to Catalonia’s politics.

Further research focusing on why Catalonia (as well as Flanders and Scotland) has not already received statehood could be beneficial to understanding additional costs and benefits of secession. Are these regions’ current economic and political status so different from previous years that statehood is more possible now? Has Europe evolved in a way that regional acceptance as a state and EU membership are more possible today

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<sup>147</sup> Bartkus, Viva Ona. *The Dynamic of Secession*, Cambridge University Press. 1999. 23

<sup>148</sup> Dardanelli, Paolo. *Between Two Unions: Europeanisation and Scottish Devolution*. Manchester University Press, 2005. 141

than previous years? Focusing on these questions could help in continuing research on the costs, benefits, and success of secession not covered in this paper.

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