Explaining Scottish and Catalan Secessionist Mobilization in the Framework of the EU

A Comparative Case Study of Minority Nationalist Mobilization in Scotland, Catalonia, Wales and the Basque Country

Eivind Jerve

Master thesis

University of Bergen

Department of Comparative Politics

Spring 2015

Abstract

The purpose of this thesis is to compare and assess the mobilization processes leading up to the referendum bids for independence in Scotland and Catalonia. Minority nationalist regions have over the latter decades emerged on the European political playing field as influential actors. However, although demands for self-rule widely have been articulated and pursued, mobilization for independence in democratic and forceful manners have been absent. As such, I argue that the processes in Catalonia and Scotland, despite obvious internal differences, are unique. In understanding them, I further hold that they together can be treated within a limited empirical scope inside the encompassing literature on minority nationalism and secessionism. The thesis establishes a novel theoretical framework for understanding democratic secessionist mobilization and applies it on the 'positive' cases of Scotland and Catalonia, together with the 'negative' cases of Wales and the Basque Country, where the outcome of secessionist mobilization has not occurred. The aim is to assess whether common casual mechanisms can be revealed with regards to democratic secessionist mobilization. Hence, it seeks to contribute to the mapping out of a novel theory of the phenomenon. Through a qualitative holistic analysis based on expert interviews and supplemented by secondary source, I find that that the variation of the explanatory factors in each of the cases are too vast for casual inference to be invoked. More broadly, however, I find that the Scottish and Catalan mobilization processes reflect a common dynamic between region and central government. Although it is triggered through divergent factors, I argue that mobilization in both cases have emerged as a consequence of dissatisfaction with statewide parties and state government that accelerates popular democratic support for the independence project.

Table of Contents

List of tables

Table 1: The questions of the proposed Basque- and Catalan referendums.

Table 2: Welsh fiscal strength in 2011. GDP (in PPS per inhabitant) and EU-average compared to Scotland and UK.

Table 3: Catalan fiscal strength in 2011. GDP (in PPS per inhabitant) and EU-average compared to the Basque Country and Spain.

Table 4: Basque identity and support for independence 2005 and 2014.

Table 5: Electoral results of *PNV* and *Bildu* in the Basque Parliament election of 2012.

List of figures

Figure 1: Globalization index for 2012 by continent.

Figure 2: Globalization index 2015: UK and Spain.

Figure 3: Evolution of the *SNP* in Westminster elections in the Scottish constituencies.

Figure 4: Evolution of the *SNP* in Holyrood elections.

Figure 5: Feelings of national identity in Wales and Scotland.

Figure 6: Development from 2010-2014 in preferences on what the political status of Catalonia should be.

Abbreviations

CIU – *Convergència i Unió*

ERC – Esquerra Republicana de Catalunya

ETA – *Euskadi Ta Askatasuna*

EU – *European Union*

MSSD – *Most Similar System Design*

NAFTA – *North American Free Trade Organization*

NATO – *North Atlantic Treaty Organization*

PP – *Partido Popular*

PSOE – *Partido Socialista Obrero Español*

SNP – *Scottish National Party*

UK – *The United Kingdom*

CHAPTER ONE: Introduction

1.1 Background

On September 18th last year, the Scots turned to the ballots to decide their future relationship with the United Kingdom (UK). After an intense lead up which can be depicted as a practical example of participatory democracy drawing in most of the electorate to meetings, debates and discussions in town halls all over Scotland, the process culminated in the 'yes'-side losing by a marginal 45 percent in the referendum. Simultaneously in Catalonia, political actors have for recent years been trying to pave way for referendum on independence. Independence-seekers have been mobilizing fiercely through sharp political rhetoric and massive street rallies, in the battle against an obstructive Madrid-government, and a rigid interpretation of the Spanish constitution. In the Scottish case where an agreement over the formalities was reached with the UK through the Edinburgh-Agreement[1], the referendum was proclaimed to represent *"(…)the strongest threat to state integrity in Western Europe Since World War Two* (Massetti and Schakel 2013: 2)." In Catalonia the process has progressed far less smoothly. Although holding referendum was agreed upon in the Catalan parliament and the date was set to November 9th last year, the Spanish government has throughout the course of events maintained their strict stand – a referendum is unconstitutional and illegal. The Catalans ended up voting in what was rebranded as an 'unofficial poll' to express a political opinion. Although an overwhelmingly majority voted for independence, the turnout was low, and the result regarded as illegitimate and insignificant. By Spanish officials it was depicted as a *"(…) day of political propaganda* (The Guardian 2014a).*"*

With the Scots saying no and with the Spanish government's seemingly successful quelling of the Catalan referendum ambitions, the formal referendum processes can be regarded as having come to an end. However, the secessionist agenda facing the European Union (EU) and its member states is far from settled. On the contrary, it can be argued that it just has begun. Following the 2015 general elections in the UK, the *Scottish National Party* (SNP) –the main political driver of Scottish independence, is on the rise in UK-politics like never before.[2] Whereas in Catalonia, the incumbent nationalist party, *Convergència i Unió*

---

[1] The Edinburgh-Agreement: The Secretary of State for Scotland, Michael Moore, and the Prime Minister of the UK, David Cameron, signed an agreement with Scotland's First Minister, Alex Salmond, which gave the Scottish Parliament the power to hold a referendum on independence (UK Government 2012).
[2] The *SNP* won 56 out of 59 seats in the Scottish constituency (The Telegraph 2015).

(CiU) and its allies, are planning new pathways to independence[3]. Furthermore, similar regions with similar agendas are lurking in the background observing developments closely.

Thus, regarding the unfolding events I hold that it is not solely the mere potential secessionist outcome of the referendums bids that are of interest. I argue that the salience of the secessionist issue and the vast popular support the mobilization processes have managed to attract, from a social scientific perspective is equally intriguing. In other words, it is not secessions per se that this thesis seek to explore, but rather the unified and powerful democratic mobilization the Scots and the Catalans have managed to challenge the state with – a common challenge which itself must be regarded as a victory to minority nationalism.

1.2 The puzzle

My interest in this project, and also the work with it in itself, started at a time when the Scottish referendum debate still was ongoing and the prospect of the Catalan referendum was much more uncertain than at present, where it seems as the Spanish government has succeeded in strangling the plans. My fascination with the topic was first and foremost motivated by two interrelated and puzzling agendas. The first is highly theoretically anchored, and is related to concepts such as *internationalization, globalization*, and economic and political *integration*, which widely is seen as a fundamental challenges to the nation state (Goldmann 2001; Held 1991; Hoffmann 1966), and even by some, seen as processes ultimately making the nation state redundant as the prime political unit of politics (Ohmae 1995; Guéhenno 1995).Thus, assuming that the functions of the nation state is being eroded, and it indeed is becoming obsolete, can the secessionist bids in Scotland and Catalonia fundamentally be regarded as cases putting such hypothesis' to the test? Relatedly, and rather paradoxically, my second puzzlement was more of empirical interest as it relates to the more testable implications of the political demands minority nationalists pose. Again, if the role of the nation state indeed is diminishing, what is then the purpose of forming a new one?

I argue that the mobilization processes in Scotland and Catalonia in the wider literature of *minority nationalism* and *secessionism* qualifies as extremely rare, and thus far unprecedented events, insofar as they play out in a contextual environment new to secessionist bids of this magnitude. This is so for three reasons. First, fundamentally, and in correspondence with the puzzle laid out above; they represent a threat to our normative understanding of the nation state. Leaving the post-communist dissolutions of the Soviet

---

[3] *CiU* have called for early elections in September hoping to secure the secessionist coalition in the Catalan parliament, whereupon a unilateral declaration of independence can be called (EU Observer 2015)

Union, Yugoslavia[4], and Czechoslovakia aside, post-war Europe is yet to experience a region seceding from a nation state. Moreover, aside from the last sixty years of EU-stability, the history of Europe has been one of turmoil which has seen the continuous re-shaping of state constellations. The result is a geopolitical map containing a large assortment of minority nationalist groups. Hence, separatist issues, either they are claims for more autonomy or straight forward secessionism, have a long practice in Europe. However, on the expense of becoming increasingly more decentralized (Hooghe et al. 2010), the modern European nation states have in terms of formal sovereignty until now remained extremely resilient against inside pressures. The Scottish and Catalan mobilization processes, however, are perhaps the clear empirical signs of that this resilience is weakening.

Secondly, secessionism is traditionally associated with violence and often accompanied by ethnic conflict (Brancati 2006: 654). However, in the Scottish and Catalan case, secessionist mobilization is carried out according to the democratic playing rules – on the one hand, it is free of violent connotations, internally, on the other hand, it is free from the threat of military retaliation, externally. Considering the European historical experiences with secessionism, which in most cases are associated with armed conflict and even civil war[5], the success of Scottish and Catalan mobilization is quite remarkable. Even though Dion's (1996: 269-270) declaration that *"(…)secessionists never have managed to split a well-established democracy through a referendum or an electoral victory (Dion 1996: 269-270)"* still is valid today, the forceful mobilization processes of Catalonia and Scotland might foreshadow the disproval of the statement.

Thirdly, on the sidelines carefully observing the Scottish and Catalan developments are political actors representing European regions with similar claims and aims for self-government. These demands are articulated with various degrees of substance and intensity. Many movements do not wish a state on traditional lines at all, but seek other expressions of self-determination (Keating 2001c: 8). However, their basic rationale is fundamentally the same – they seek increased self-determination and recognition. Massetti and Schakel, underscores this by pointing to the *'threating'* nature of regionalist parties;
"The threat posed to the integrity of the state is not only due to regionalist parties'
'threatening capacity' (i.e. their electoral strength) but, in the first place, to their 'threatening

---

[4] This includes the more recent Kosovar case which still has its formal political status widely disputed. For discussion see Tansey (2009) and JIA (2009).
[5] On the 1st of January 1993, in what has later been termed the *'Velvet Divorce'*, Czechoslovakia split into the Czech Republic and Slovakia without any shots being fired or lives being lost in the process. For more, see Hilde (1999) and McLean (2001).

intention' (i.e. their secessionist ideological stance). Therefore, it is crucial to understand why and under which circumstances regionalist parties develop moderate or radical ideologies in regard to self-government claims (Massetti and Schakel 2013: 2)*."*

Moreover, given the fact that the agendas of political parties representing minority nationalist interests prove to be very flexible and are adapted according to contextual factors (Dandoy 2010: 214; De Winter 1998: 208; Massetti and Schakel 2013), the spin-off effects of Scottish and Catalan mobilization are potentially vast. A novel empirical illustration of this point, is the unofficial referendum organized in Venice and the surrounding region in March last year on whether to break away from Italy, which explicitly was inspired by the Scottish and Catalan processes (BBC News 2014d).

Furthermore, by presenting a quick snapshot of the national salience of regional issues and the influence of regional parties across a large variety of countries in Europe, the argument is further reinforced. In Italy, *Lega Nord* has for decades advocated autonomy for the Northern-Italian region of *'Padania'(*Giordano 2000*)*, and at times it has also promoted secessionism (Massetti and Schakel 2013). In the Belgian regions of Flanders and Wallonia regional parties, most prominently the *Volksunie* and *Rassemblement Wallon*, have historically been influential players in shaping the federal framework (Deschouwer 2009). In the German region of Bavaria the territorial cleavage is forcefully held salient by the *Christian Social Union* (Hepburn 2008a). More peripheral examples are Faroe Island where the secessionist discourse emphasizing a formal parting from Denmark in recent years have gained momentum and support (Adler-Nissen 2014). Moreover, the relevance of *Kärntner Wahlgemeinschaft* in the Austrian region of Kärnten, *Svenska Folkepartiet,* in several Finnish mainland regions and Åland, and the *Saami People's List* in the Norwegian region of Finnmark (Massetti and Schakel 2013: 11), further contributes to illustrate the vast diversity of regional articulation and mobilization of political demands. Worth noting is also that in the regions of the Basque Country, Bavaria, the Canary Islands, Catalonia, Eastern Germany, Flanders, Galicia, Lombardy, Quebec, Sardinia, Scotland, South Tyrol, Valle d'Aosta, Veneto, and Wales, regional parties have gained control of sub-state regional governments, either through majority, minority or coalition governments (Hepburn 2009a: 477-488).

1.3 Research Question, research approach and the scope of thesis
With this rather broad perspective as my point of departure, I set out on a quest to describe and more generally interpret the secessionist mobilization processes in Scotland and

Catalonia. On the basis of the puzzle laid out above and the broader implications that derive from it, I pose the following research question:

Compared to minority nationalist regions with similar basic features, what factors explain the successful minority nationalist mobilization for a referendum on secession in Scotland and Catalonia within the political framework of the EU?

Deriving from the research question are three practical considerations that needs to be accounted for. The first relates to the complex theoretical field of which the research project aspires to contribute to. The broader political research field of minority nationalism and secessionism has been covered with lengthy extend. However, although there are certain agreements over which factors that are involved and interplay when speaking about the abovementioned terms, there is established little consensus over to which degree factors affect given outcomes. Thus, there generally lacks a common coherent and systematically way of analyzing secessions (Wood 1981: 107). The varieties of the contextual backdrops in each empirical case respectively, have just seemed too complex for any meaningful causal statements to be drawn. Looking at the literature as whole, it is tempting to simply conclude that various preconditions and conducive circumstances can result in the emergence of secessionist tendencies (Navaratna-Bandara 1995: 11). Nonetheless, driven by the aspiration of explaining a broader phenomenon which I refer to as *democratic secessionist mobilization,* rather than solely offering two separate case-specific presentations, I seek to investigate whether common casual inferences can be drawn on the basis of the cases. However, in so doing, I regard it as imperative to clearly de-limit and define an empirical scope for which my theoretical arguments are relevant. Specifically, and as I thoroughly will establish in the subsequent chapter, this scope implies the EU. More practically, the delimitation also entails constructing a theoretical framework of which my empirical cases can be applied.

Secondly, as reflected in the research question, I regard it as insufficient to base a casual assessment exclusively on the basis of two cases. However, as I argue that Scotland and Catalonia are unique cases and thus are the only cases representing the investigated 'outcome', the empirical leverage is rather scarce. As a means to deal with this I have also introduced two additional cases representing negative 'outcomes' – that is minority nationalist regions where secessionist mobilization not has occurred. The cases which I have selected are Wales and the Basque Country.

Thirdly, derived from the research question is a research design that reflects both a deductive and an inductive dimension. Deductively, the empirical analysis is driven by a

theoretical framework emphasizing certain theoretical expectations. However, the framework itself must be regarded as novel in so far as it is constructed to be applied on cases which I argue reflect a new phenomenon, and that thus far have received little scholarly attention. Therefore I also find it necessary to stress the inductive and explorative nature of the research approach. Whereas the empirical analysis will be guided by some initial agendas established from the existing literature, the explorative dimension of revealing potentially new explanatory variables and mechanism is equally important.

In sum the aims of my research approach can be summed up by following three steps. The first aim is to elaborate a theoretical framework for understanding democratic secessionist mobilization based on the existing literature on secessionism and minority nationalism. Second, I can apply the two 'positive' cases of Scotland and Catalonia and the two 'negative' on the theoretical framework with the aim to assess whether any casual inferences can be made with regards to understanding the phenomenon of *democratic secessionist mobilization*. More practically, this *multiple case study* approach allows me to assess the cases from a holistic perspective by applying a qualitative logic based on a combination of procedures borrowed from the methodological frameworks of *historical explanations* and *process tracing*. Following these frameworks, the empirical data will be gathered from various sources. The bedrock of the data is based on in-depth interviews with experts (academics and journalists). This information will be substantiated by both primary and secondary sources of literature.

With this my thesis aims to contribute to the wider social scientific field of *minority nationalism* and *secessionism* primarily in two ways. First, by narrowing down the scope of a wide-ranging theoretical phenomenon which thus far has proved to be very incoherent, I aim at presenting an analytical framework for understanding *democratic secessionist mobilization* within the EU. Second, by applying two 'positive' and 'two' negative cases on the framework, I aspire to assess whether any general casual inference with regards to the phenomenon as a whole can be drawn, whereupon some initial empirical reflections with regards to a novel theory of *democratic secessionist mobilization*, can be made.

1.4 The dependent variable

As I argue that Scotland and Catalonia are unique cases representing a broader phenomenon of democratic secessionist mobilization I regard it as necessary to give an initial clarification of the independent variable of the analysis. Although this aspect further will be treated in the subsequent chapter, some initial remarks are necessary to be presented already here. The

independent variable is defined as *having put a referendum on secession on the political agenda*. *On the agenda* implies that a political agreement on organizing a referendum has been passed in the regional parliament. Following this I am aware of that similar processes in the formal sense have occurred elsewhere, more specifically in Quebec and the Basque Country. In fact, the Québécois have voted no to independence in referendums on two occasions (Pammett and LeDuc 2001), and is as such relevant to the theoretical framework put forward. However, as I am concerned with the contextual backdrop of the EU and its unique characteristics in terms of economic and political integration, I have omitted the Quebec case from the empirical domain of the thesis. In the Basque country an attempt to put forward a referendum on renegotiating its formal status with Spain was put on the political agenda in 2004, but soon rejected by the Spanish government (Pérez-Nievas 2006: 47-48). At first glance it might thus seem quite similar to the political process in Catalonia. However, as I will elaborate in chapter two, I argue that neither the explicit content of the referendum questions, nor the general dynamics of processes are compatible with qualifying as a positive case.

1.5 Case selection

As noted above, the selection of cases includes the 'positive' cases Scotland and Catalonia, and the 'negative' cases of Wales and the Basque Country. The case selections follows a *Most Similar System Design* (MSSD) where the key principle is to select generally similar cases, but which represent different outcomes. The case selection procedure, does not follow very strict criteria as this would be difficult to apply on a universe of cases generally depicted for its great diversity. I nevertheless argue that the selected cases in the broader sense portray similar pictures. Most prominently is that they are all part of the same opportunity structure of mobilization which the EU offers. Of the more specific internal attributes, the main common characteristics are that that they all have a strong sense of regional identity; that they all have devolved political systems, that they all constituted by fairly small populations, and that they all have influential regionalist parties representing their interests – parties that all have been in some form of government at the region level.

Furthermore, by selecting two 'negative' cases that, respectively, are part of the same overarching national political system as the two 'positive' cases, I argue that the basis for comparison is strengthened.

1.6 Structure of the thesis

Chapter two serve to contextualize and operationalize the phenomenon of democratic

minority nationalist mobilization. First, a conceptual clarification is given on four central aspects the thesis refers to, and I regard as imperative in understanding the phenomenon at hand. These are: (1) *minority nationalism*, (2) *social movement* and the interrelated process of *mobilization*, (3) *secessionism*, and (4) *regionalist parties.* Following this, I elaborate on the dependent variable of the thesis, whereupon a discussion serving to justify its applicability is offered. I thereafter turn to defining and de-limiting the empirical scope of the thesis. This serves as a de-limitation of the broader phenomenon of secessionist processes into the democratic and globalized context of the EU – a nuancing which I regard as imperative prior the assessing the empirical cases. This includes a section on globalization generally, and is followed by a section assessing how these aspects more specifically are reflected in the EU-framework.

In chapter three I represent the analytical framework of which the analysis of the empirical cases is based on. The framework follows six broad agendas which I have further been articulated into theoretical expectations emphasizing the presupposed dynamics of *democratic secessionist mobilization*. Each expectation is followed by a review of the relevant theoretical aspects which constitutes it.

Chapter four present the methodological framework of the thesis. The first emphasis is on a general discussion relating the tradeoffs between qualitative and quantitative research approaches. Thereafter I turn to laying out the methodological research design of the thesis. Towards the end of the chapter I evaluate the quality of the research design, before I close by sketching out its practical application in the analysis.

In chapter five and six the descriptive empirical presentation of the cases are laid out. Chapter five concerns the Scottish secessionist mobilization processes, followed by a comparative assessment of the 'negative' case of Welsh nationalism. Chapter six presents the Catalan and subsequently the Basque case in the same fashion.

In the seventh and final chapter the four cases are first summarized whereupon a theoretical discussion bridging the empirical presentation with the analytical framework follows. This is divided into two parts. Part one assesses the 'negative' cases of Wales and the Basque Country, whereas part two focuses on the 'positive' cases of Scotland and Catalonia. Following this initial case-oriented assessment, a discussion emphasizing the broader implications of the more wide-ranging agenda set out in the introduction of the thesis, is presented.

CHAPTER TWO: Conceptualization, contextualization and the dependent variable

The literature on the interrelated topics of *secessionism* and *minority nationalism* has over the years become extensive. However, the main challenge concerning the topic in general is the lack of coherence. Both with regards to the definition of the concept of *secessionism* itself, and how mobilization by *minority nationalists* should be placed and interpreted in a broader political context the theoretical and empirical implications of a wide field of contributions have been and are highly inconsistent. As summed up by Wood (1981) several decades back;

> *"Despite the vital importance of the outcome of current secessionist attempts for both the wide array of states in which they are occurring and international politics at large, there is at present no coherent, systematic way of analyzing the origins of secession, the conditions which make it succeed or fail, or the consequences of various secessionist strategies or governmental responses* (Wood 1981: 107).*"*

Looking at the various political, cultural, psychological, territorial, ethnic and sociological principles underlying the numerous definitions and analysis' on the matter (Guibernau 1999: 13), practitioners of this social scientific discipline are undoubtedly facing an extremely complex phenomenon. Fundamentally, Wood's stark summary thus stands just as precise today as it did over thirty years ago. No wonder it is tempting to simply conclude that various preconditions and conducive circumstances can result in the emergence of secessionist tendencies (Navaratna-Bandara 1995: 11), and that every case tells nothing more than a separate story. Nevertheless, the quest for understanding the phenomenon and its implications continues. The main lesson to be drawn is perhaps that the empirical scope relating to any assessment of secessionism has to be sufficiently narrowed down in order to reveal causal mechanisms that are validly generalizable to a broader set of cases. The explanatory factors in each case, both in nature and effect, simply seems to be too varied to be applicable across a large population of cases. Context does matter, and I argue that any generalizations referring to secessionism requires a de-limitation to a contextual scope where cases are comparable.

The purpose of this chapter is to give a presentation of the dependent variable and to establish the appropriate empirical scope for my research question. This contextual clarification emphasizing globalization, and more specifically the EU, serves to illustrate the particular, and historical unique, opportunity structure I argue has been opened to minority nations in Europe. Moreover, it helps sketching out the premises for the analytical framework which will be presented in the chapter to follow. First, I will give a clarification of a handful

of central concepts which I refer to throughout the thesis. Thereafter, I will give a definition of the dependent variable which then is followed by an assessment of the logic defining it. This will be followed by an account of the contextual aspects of globalization and the EU. I will in a first section elaborate on how the contextual veil of globalization relates to minority nationalist mobilization more broadly. For many theorists the simultaneous processes of economic and political integration and the flourishing of minority nationalist movements is a puzzling paradox. This is especially relevant within the domain of the EU where the effects of globalization are particularly strong. The second section will thus assess how the mechanisms of globalization more practically affect the EU.

2.1 Conceptual background

In the following section I will emphasize four essential concepts of my study: (1) *minority nationalism*, (2) *social movement* and the interrelated process of *mobilization*, (3) *secessionism*, and (4) *regionalist parties.* These concepts are all in their own sense comprehensive and fuzzy in terms of definable characteristics. The purpose of this conceptual background is to give the reader an account of how key concepts are understood and relate in my thesis.

2.1.1 Minority nationalism

Fundamentally, what this study aims is to shed light on the phenomenon of secessionist mobilization of *minority nations* within a delimited and well-defined empirical context. Being the unit of analysis of the research approach it is imperative to break down this concept of *minority nationalism* so that the reader can get a clear sense of what I am essentially referring to. In doing so it is inescapable to draw the parallel to its mother concept, namely, *nationalism*, and in the next step, when adding the territorial aspect – the *nation state*. These two notions arguably among the most frequently disputed phenomena containing a wide array of underlying dimensions, which numerous scholars throughout history of political science have attempted to shed light on. It is not my purpose to enter this debate. However, in defining minority nationalism it is inevitable to dwell a little bit on the notion of the *nation state* – the primary building blocks of our understanding of contemporary politics – and on the synthesis between *nationalism* and *territory,* which mainly constitutes these building blocks. Basically, it is in the intersection between *nationalism* and *territory* the "problem" of what is referred to as the survival, or the re-emergence of minority nations, derives from.

A common way of understanding the *nation state* is as the product of a process where a center assimilates surrounding peripheries into a shared *territory* and *identity*. Following this

the *nation state* is by many viewed synonymous with *nationalism*. Hobsbawn for example claims that a nation *"(...)is a social entity only insofar as it is related to a certain kind of modern territorial state, 'the nation state', and it is pointless to discuss nation and nationality expect insofar as they both relate to it* (Hobsbawn 1990: 9-10).*"* This understanding is reasonable taking into consideration the *state-centric* perspective which has been dominant for the latter centuries. However, to understand and accept the notion of *minority nations* one has to detach the aspects of sovereign *territory* and *identity* from each other. Following this the minority nation can be defined as *"(...)cultural communities sharing a common past, attached to a clearly demarcated territory, and wishing to decide upon their future which lack a state of their own* (Guibernau 1999: 1).*"* As such, I hold that the *minority nation* essentially contains the same two basic elements as the *nation state*; a dimension of *identity*, and a dimension of *territory*. On the one hand, the idea of identity means *"(...)the existence of communities with bonds of 'blood and belonging' arising from sharing a common homeland, cultural myths, symbols and historical memories, economic resources, and legal-political rights and duties* (Norris 2011: 25-26).*"* On the other hand, the *minority nation* also contains a clear connection to the *territory* dimension. This can be formal in the sense of a territory with clearly set existing outside borders, as the case is with the regions of Scotland, Catalonia and Flanders, for example. It can also be more diffuse, spanning over parts of regions, several regions[6], or even several countries.[7] The main point is that a *minority nation* relates to a perceived sovereign territory that is politically interlocked into a larger territory where they do not feel a sense of belonging. Hence, they are a member of a *nation* or several *nations*, but lack a state of their own and regard the state or states containing them as alien. They thus uphold a different sense of *national identity* (Guibernau 2013: 269). To keep matters clear the territory aspect of *minority nations* will in this paper be treated as being equal to the political sub-units of *regions*.[8]

2.1.1.1 The ethnic- and civic discourse of minority nationalism
In the literature on minority nationalism an important distinction is made between *civic* and *ethnic nationalism*. The civic form of nationalism refers to community ties grounded on *"(...)citizenship within a shared territory and boundaries delineated by the nation state* (Norris 2011: 25)*"*, and *"(...)based upon common values and institutions, and patterns of*

---

[6] The Basque Country is an example of the all three illustrating the complexity of the territorial claims of many minority nations. Basque nationalism in the widest understanding claims the right to the two Spanish regions of the Basque country and Navarre in Spain, in addition to the western part of the region of Aquitaine in France.
[7] Exemplified by the Roma and the Kurds.
[8] The Basque Country refers to the Spanish region.

social interaction (Keating 2001a: 6)*.''* The ethnic form draws on *ethnic particularism* and has its base in more diffuse bonds of language, religion, and ethnicity (Norris 2011: 25). It is the latter this thesis aim to assess. As spelled out by Keating and McGarry (2001): *"There is no doubt that the new conditions of world society give greater legitimacy to nationalisms based on civic rather than ethnic principles* (Keating and McGarry 2001: 6)*.''* The civic sense of nationalism is as such crucial in understanding the forceful mobilization by minority nations we experience today. First emphasized in the works of Guibernau (1999) and Keating (2001a), the civic orientation views minority nationalism as a process of nation building independently and outside the framework of the nation state. Traditionally, minority nationalism has been depicted as being inherently based on ethnic exclusiveness, and hence stands in stark contrast to multiculturalism, which represents the nationalism of modern liberal democracies today. Minority nationalism for long received limited scholarly attention, and the attention it did receive was frugal in terms of significance. Minority nations were consensually depreciated as *'revolts to modernity'* (Lipset 1985), and as *'remnants of the past'* (Hobsbawn 1990). In most cases they originate from a past prior to the emergence of the nation state system where they enjoyed some form of political sovereignty (Guibernau 1999: 2). Moreover, the foundations of these identities thus stems from a time when what Smith (1986) refers to as when *"(…)the core of ethnicity was established.''* Thus, one cannot look past the fact that *minority nationalism* in general has a strong link to some sort of ethnic element.

However, over the last couple decades, as advocates of minority nationalism gradually have established themselves as both reputable and influential political players in most Western European democracies (Hepburn 2009a: 477), the awareness and interest in the academic field has flourished. It is noteworthy that nearly all minority nationalist movements in Western Europe have gone from a doctrine of ethnic particularism to a civic discourse based on territorial nationalism (Keating 2001b: 28). This sort of nationalism is distanced from myths of common ancestry and open for anyone irrespective of birth or ethnic origins, and, *"(…)based upon common values and institutions, and patterns of social interaction* (Keating 2001a: 6)*.''* Moreover, *"(…) minority nations open up the possibility for individuals to play a more active part in the political life of their communities through participation in autonomous institutions. In so doing they contribute to the dynamization of civil society and encourage civil coherence* (Guibernau 1999: 8-9)*.''* This shift has especially been linked to the effects of globalization (see section below). It now seems to be a growing acceptance for the principle that national minorities are entitled to some sort of distinctive political status,

which includes territorial self-government where that is feasible (Kymlicka 2001: 64). Thus, in stark contrast to the past were minority nationalism was judged as representing a primitiveness that in most cases originated in various elements of ethnicity, it has become an important part of understanding the broader political trends of decentralization of power and fragmentation of political territory.

2.1.2 Movements and mobilization

In this thesis I will frequently be referring to the *mobilization* of minority nationalists. The term mobilization is closely linked to the concept of social movements, which in itself is a vast social scientific field. Many would argue that the unit of analysis in my study, minority nations, itself can be defined as a social movement. However, with this in in mind it is important to note that this study is not about social movements per se and can thus not be placed in such a theoretical framework. Rather, with a broader outlook it aims to assess the external factors which set the grounds for minority nationalist mobilization, while also accounting for how these play out in the mobilization process. Hence, the study aspires to explain the entirety of a process and outcome, where *social movements* of course play an inevitable and important part. I stress that this is part of the explanation more than it is what is being explained itself. Nevertheless, a brief clarification of what I mean when referring to movements and mobilization is necessary.

In defining *social movements* Tarrow (2011) draws a parallel to what he refers to as *contentious politics*. This is a broader concept encompassing political conflicts more generally than that of social movements' theory which Tarrow claim is sub-category of *contentious politics*. He understands social movements as specific *"(…)sequences of contentious politics based on underlying social networks, on resonant collective action frames, and on the capacity to maintain sustained challenges against powerful opponents (Tarrow 2011: 7)."* I find the concept of *contentious politics* compelling in theoretically framing the process of movement and mobilization which I am referring to in my thesis. Tarrow explains that *contentious politics* occurs *"(…)when ordinary people – often in alliance with more influential citizens and with changes in public mood – join forces in confrontation with elites, authorities, and opponents (Tarrow 2011: 6)."* Furthermore, social movements have through history often been closely linked to extremism, deprivation and the exertion of violence. Tarrow argues that they are better defined as *"(…)collective challenges, based on common purposes and social solidarities, in sustained interaction with elites, opponents, and authorities (Tarrow 2011: 9)."* This definition embracing a wider interpretation of social

movements emphasizing that they need not, and in most cases are not, extremist or violent in their orientation, is important with regards to the empirical scope of my study. This scope assumes that mobilization by peaceful means in a democratic framework is crucial in legitimizing and broadening the support for a secessionist cause.

2.1.2.1 Understanding mobilization

Mobilization is understood as the most basic feature of social movements. It is through mobilization collective action takes places. Without mobilization, there would be no collective action, and in turn no social movement (Tarrow 2011: 188). Mobilization within in the framework I am suggesting can, echoing the work of McAdam and collaborators (1996), be depicted as a synthesis between *political opportunities*, *mobilizing structures*, and *framing processes*. *Political opportunities* refer to the institutional framework setting the opportunity structure within which the movement can maneuver. *Mobilizing structures* imply the formal and informal collective vehicles through which people engage in collective action within the institutional opportunity structures. It is these two proponents which grant a group a certain potential for action (McAdam et al. 1996: 2-4). *Framing processes* are referred to as the psychological collective aspects that unite people in a social movement in the first place. It is defined as the *"(…)conscious strategic efforts by groups of people to fashion shared understandings of the world and of themselves that legitimate and motivate collective action together in acting collectively in the first place* (McAdam et al. 1996: 6)*."*

Lastly, when a process of mobilization tips over in being a political process is when the former process become manifest. That is when both the group challenging and its counterpart recognize there is a field of contentions; when they perceive opportunities and threats in the processes at hand; when they create or appropriate resources, organizations, and institutions to take advantage of opportunities and handle threats; when challengers engage in collective action to broaden support to impress or threaten authorities and authorities organize to oppose or appease them (Tarrow 2011: 188-189).

2.1.3 Secessionism

In defining secessionism in the broad and general sense it suffices to phrase Wood (1981) who states that secessionism refers "(…)*to a demand for formal withdrawal from a central political authority by a member unit or units on the basis of a claim to independent sovereign status* (Wood 1981: 110)." Moreover, Wood emphasizes that secessionism not should be analyzed as a condition, but is best treated as a process which occurs via different stages. The key is therefore to *"(…)focus on the dynamic interaction and the cumulative effect of a*

number of conditions and developments which may or may not lead to a secessionist outcome (Wood 1981: 109)*.''* The outcome itself has to date never been effectuated in a well-established democracy. A secession can described as fulfilled and successful when a *''(...)withdrawal is accorded recognition by the host state and by other in the international community* (Hechter 1992: 267).

Furthermore, it may be useful to distinguish *secessionism* from *separatism*. While the former is clear-cut in emphasizing a specific goal for a group, the latter term refers to the more general unwillingness of a group or of a region to feel an integral part of the community or of the state of which it belongs. Thus, it implies a political alienation or lack of national identity and loyalty to a host state (Abedin 1989: 223), but the political goals that derives from this alienation covers the whole spectrum of self-determination policies. *Separatism* may thus be expressed through the demands for provincial rights or local or regional autonomy in certain decision spheres. By contrast, a secessionist movement is by definition characterized by claiming and struggling to attain self-sovereignty through independent statehood. The crucial distinction of the two concepts thus lies in the willingness of a group to recognize the sovereignty of the political authority they are part of (Wood 1981: 110).

2.1.3.1 Why secessions are rare

In the words of Hecther (1992); *''(...)land is the pillar of states; it provides tax revenue, a labor force, mineral and other geographically based resources, and it is often vital for defense* (Hechter 1992: 277)*.''* For these reasons states are naturally extremely reluctant to give away parts of their land, and secessions have thus proved to be historically rare events. Cases of successful secessions have in most cases occurred in contexts where the host-state is weakened through some sort of defeat in war.[9] The problem from the secessionist's point of view is that this is a state of emergency. Normally, the seceding part faces a fully functional and powerful counterpart who possesses the resources and a willingness to use them in order to dampen the movement. Secessionist forces can for instance be met and dealt with through accommodational constitutional reforms or through the more adverse means of repression (Hechter 1992: 278). Moreover, leaving aside external constraint, secessions in well-established democracies imply that such the decision within the seceding region is made via a

---

[9] Many new states have been formed as a consequence of fragmentations of multinational empires (for example the Soviet Union and Austria-Hungary) and in the wake of decolonization (Hechter 1992: 277).

decisive election or a referendum – a vote that requires majority support.[10] In a modern society where political preferences are heterogeneous, achieving and maintaining the magic number of 50 percent support is extremely difficult (Dion 1996: 270). Consequentially, Hechter states that secessions in the 'pure' form, *"(…)when a highly effective state permits a secessionist territory to withdraw from its embrace* (Hechter 1992: 277)"*, only have occurred twice. This was when Norway broke away from Sweden in 1905, and when Ireland parted with the UK in 1922. However, even though both cases involved democratic states, it is nonetheless argued that these democracies hardly can be depicted as well-established as the secessions were carried out only few years after the introduction or significant expansion of universal suffrage. Moreover, in the case of Norway and Sweden it can plausibly be argued that it was not a real secessions since the ties between the political entities involved were very loose in the first place (Dion 1996: 269-270). Thus, I argue that Dion's declaration that *"(…)secessionist never managed to split a well-established democracy through a referendum or an electoral victory* (Dion 1996: 270)"*, still is valid today.

2.1.4 Regionalist parties
In the context of advanced democracies in the EU the dominant organization representing minority nationalist identities are political parties, and their strategies are democratic and peaceful (Türsan 1998: 5). In such a framework regional parties can be seen as the hub and catalyst of minority nationalist mobilization, and are therefore a crucial element in understanding the dynamics of secessionist mobilization.

These types of parties have been the subject of numerous definitions. To mention some, they have been labeled as, *peripheral regionalist*, *subnational regionalist*, *peripheral nationalist*, *sub-state nationalist*, *ethnonationalist* and *ethnoregionalist* (Türsan 1998: 5). Under many of the labels lies a clear ethnic link – an assumption that regionalist parties by definition are based on ethnicity. I argue that this no longer can be used as a common denominator, and that influential regionalist parties today represent the *civic nationalism* outlined above. Furthermore, successful and influential regionalist parties function like mainstream parties, however within regions. I will emphasize this point in greater detail in the analytical framework presented below. For now it suffices to state that I have, among a large array of options, chosen the 'ethnicity neutral' term, *regionalist parties,* when referring to the political parties portrayed in this study.

---

[10] A scenario like one which led to the break-up of Czechoslovakia, where the leaders in each camp decided on secession almost conspiratorially, while surveys showed that two-thirds of the population in both regions wanted to keep the country united, is unimaginable in European democracies of today (Dion 1996: 270).

Borrowing from Brancati (2008) *regionalist parties* are defined as *"(…)parties that compete and win votes in only one region of a country (…)[and], tend to focus their agendas on issues affecting only these regions."* Brancati further holds that *"(…) regional parties may participate in national or regional elections so long as they only compete in one region of a country at either level of government"*. Moreover, they *"(…)stand in stark contrast to statewide-parties, which compete and win votes in every region of a country and tend to focus their agendas on issues affecting groups throughout the country* (Brancati 2008: 138)*."*

The core theoretical problem relating to defining *regionalist parties* relates to the complexity of the dimensions of *cleavages* and *issues* that usually are applied when classifying political parties into typologies (Klingemann et al. 1994: 24). There is therefore a lack of a commonly shared definition of what a regionalist party actually is (Dandoy 2010: 197). Referring to *regionalist parties* as one party group is problematic because the parties show a great deal of variation on the above-mentioned dimensions. However, what is agreed upon is that the concept entails two basic denominators; that they operate within in a subnational territorial border, and, that they fundamentally represent and reflect the interests of a certain exclusive group (Türsan 1998: 5). Beyond this, regionalist parties are described as more incongruent in their policy demands than any other party family (Urwin 1983: 227).[11] They also vary a great deal with regards to more traditional cleavages. Portraying where they belong on the basic right-left spectrum for example, De Winter (1998) finds a quite heterogeneous picture. Moreover, it must also be emphasized that regionalist parties are more a lot more flexible than other party families in the sense that the latter are reluctant to altering their main political objectives to large extents, fearing that this may baffle their very identity and disillusion voters. Regionalist parties, on the other hand, are empirically characterized by moving their positions on central issues. The main general characterization for regional parties is their aim for political reorganization of the existing national power structure – a demand for some kind of self-government (De Winter 1998: 204). However, it is empirically impossible to place regionalist parties on any permanent and fixed category of the type, or 'severity', of such claims. Like nationalist movements, regionalist parties, which I argue play the most prominent role as catalyst of the movement, also must be treated dynamically. Their relative importance within a given party system can change quite drastically over time (De Winter 1998: 212). Their party positions and visions for the future of their regions have often

---

[11] Religious affiliations have for example been important for regionalist parties in Northern Ireland, but no so much in other Western-European countries. Language has similarly been a traditional rallying point for regionalist parties in Catalonia, The Basque country and some Italian regions, but is insignificant in most other regions (Müller-Rommel 1998: 19).

moved between categories (i.e. protectionist, autonomist, secessionist) as they tend to adapt their strategy, their ideology, and their discourses depending on contextual factors (Dandoy 2010: 214-215).

2.2 Explaining the dependent variable

The dependent variable of the research approach is defined as *'having put a referendum on seceding on the political agenda'.* Regarding this, a necessary first clarification is between the terms referendum and consultation. While the Scottish vote for secession commonly is referred to as a *referendum*, the terminology used with reference to the Catalan case is a *consultation*. The obvious difference between the notions is that the former is perceived as legitimate and the result thus of direct political significance, while the latter more is a way of formally presenting a popular demand, however, without any direct political implications. The nature of the two terminologies naturally lies in how the central governments in Scotland and Catalonia have responded in the respective mobilization processes. This is a central theme in understanding the two cases and will be treated thoroughly in the analysis. For now it suffices to state that I for practical reasons I refer to both cases as mobilization processes for a referendum.

A second necessary clarification is an elaboration of term *political agenda*. I define this as having reached a formal political agreement on holding a referendum on independence at the sub-governmental level. In Scotland agreements have been reached both on the sub-national and the national level. In Catalonia the matter is thus far only been formally agreed upon in the Catalan parliament and hence figures as the minimum for qualifying. Furthermore, I depict Scotland and Catalonia as unique cases in the sense that they are the only two cases that represent this 'outcome' within the empirical scope of the thesis. In establishing and phrasing this variable several considerations have been made, which I will now elaborate on.

The first point to be stressed relates to the temporal aspect of the processes under consideration. As Geddes (2003) bluntly underlines;

> *"There is no way to test causal arguments if the outcome being explained has not yet happened at the time the study is done. Becoming embroiled in controversies over the causes of something that has not happened is like arguing about what the angels dancing on the head of a pin look like without first having made sure that at least one angel really performs there* (Geddes 2003: 42).*"*

The developments in Scotland and Catalonia are from a social scientist's point of view fresh, and in the Catalan case the outcome of the referendum bid is yet to be seen. Moreover, the two processes have reached very different stages. While the Scots in November 2014 by a small majority voted no to independence, Catalan mobilization is still fueled by the demand for a referendum and the Spanish government's indocility in granting them one. Assessing these two cases in a comparative perspective may to the reader thus seem unwarranted and premature. Therefore, it is important to stress the temporal clarification that it is not the referendum per se I am concerned with, but the processes leading up to them. The outcome I want to explain is thus not the result of the referendums, but the outcome of minority nationalists mobilizing for secession within in a democratic playing field. Relatedly, although I characterize the mobilization processes as mobilizing for secession, it is relevant to note that it is not the outcome of independence itself that is the primary component fueling mobilization. Rather, for Scotland and Catalonia the mere act of holding a referendum is a victory in itself (King 2012: 117). It is the opportunity for the population to decide their own future by themselves that constitutes the basic justification behind this sort of mobilization. Ultimately, it is centered around, and must be pursued via popular vote and the democratic rules of the game – making the concept of referendum an inevitable center-piece of my research question.

It is thus the process leading up to a referendum on secession being put on the political agenda that is my point of focus and that I argue makes a comparative analysis of Scotland and Catalonia warranted. Moreover, I argue that these two cases are very rare in the sense that they represent processes that are new within the empirical scope of the thesis, and therefore also to an extent history as a whole. Democratic mobilization for secession has indeed unfolded earlier. Most notable are the cases of Quebec and The Basque Country, where referendums on the matter in both cases have been pursued. I nevertheless argue that these examples must be distinguished from the ones seen in Scotland and Catalonia.

Regarding Quebec, the case is in the literature frequently referred to as one of the classical cases of successful minority mobilization (Keating 1997). Not only do the processes bear resemblance to the ones in Catalonia and Scotland, but referendums on secession have indeed been carried out twice. Initiated by the Parti Qubecois (PQ) and the Bloc Quebecois (BQ), the first one was held already in 1980, and the second one where the secession camp came extremely close to winning the majority of votes, was held in 1995 (Pammett and LeDuc 2001). These processes were both carried out in a democratic environment initially coherent with the dependent variable identified above. However, the theoretical arguments

presented in this thesis are made within a contextual framework unique within the EU. The case of Quebec is thus irrelevant for my empirical domain and has not been considered in the case selection process. Although Quebec are part of the *North American Free Trade Organization* (NAFTA), an international regime some theorist proclaim to fundamentally have the same basic functions as the EU, there can be no doubt that the EU now has expanded its competences beyond the original goal of securing peace through economic cooperation and now affects the policies and the interdependency of its member states vastly. As such, the EU can validly be characterized as the area in the world where globalization is at its densest. This has opened up for a whole new playing field for minority nationalist regions to maneuver in which predictably involves mechanisms and interactions which hardly is relevant to the Quebec case.

The Basque case of mobilization is well-known for its hostility towards the Spanish government and for its attempts and methods in addressing the question of separatism. The various terror strikes of *Euskadi Ta Askatasuna* (ETA) throughout the end of the last century have received much attention. Less emphasized, however, are the legitimate and democratic routes Basque government officials attempted in pursuing the cause. Not only has there been political agreement in Basque parliament on addressing the independence question, but plans to hold a consultation clarifying the matter have also been proposed. Formally, the process was quite similar in character as in Catalonia. To get the Spanish state to recognize a right of self-determination of the Basques, a plan was in 2002 launched by Basque regional government, constituted by *Basque National Party (PNV)* and *Eusko Alaktasuna (EA)* (Massetti and Schakel 2013: 1). The plan, referred to as the *Ibarretxe-plan*[12], was approved by the regional parliament in late 2004, but rejected by the Spanish parliament the following year (Pérez-Nievas 2006: 47-48). [13] I argue, however, that there are two significant differences making the Basque bid for a referendum much more modest than what is the case for the Catalan and Scottish mobilization processes and thus incompatible with the dependent variable put forward above.

First, the plan was initiated by the Basque regional government, but was mainly a personal initiative from president Ibarretxe. The main motivation behind the plan has been described as being an offer to the terrorist division of Basque nationalism, as a way to silence these forces. Thus, there was no particular popular demand for the initiative. This might

---

[12] The plan was put forward by Basque President Juan José Ibarretxe, of the Partido Nacionalista Vasco (PNV).
[13] The referendum was blocked after the Spanish government asked the Spanish Constitutional Tribunal to review the Basque referendum legislation, and Spain's highest court found that the Autonomous Community of the Basque Country did not have the authority to hold a referendum (Lecours 2011: 278).

explain why the plan quickly fizzled out once it was rejected by Spanish officials. Later Ibarretxe had to end his career as a consequence of what was perceived by the *PNV*-electorate as a political failure.

Second, while the clear goal was achieving a new constitutional settlement (Lecours 2011: 278), what characterized the plan and also *PNV's* jargon when speaking about self-determination in general, was its vagueness on specifics, and especially on the independence question (see table 1).Thus, rather than calling for a secession from Spain, the project has been portrayed as a challenge to the basis of Spanish state sovereignty as outlined in the constitution of 1978 by claiming the right for the Basques' to vote on their relationship with the Spanish state (Keating and Bray 2006: 348).

Table 1: The questions of the proposed Basque- and Catalan referendums

The Basque questions	The Catalan questions
(1) Do you agree to supporting a process of dialogued end to the violence, if ETA previously declares unmistakably their will to end it once and for all? *(2) Do you agree that the Basque parties, without exceptions, start a process of negotiation to reach a democratic agreement about the right to decide of the Basque People, and that the aforementioned agreement will be submitted to referendum before the end of the year 2010?*	*(1) Do you want Catalonia to be a state?* *(2) Do you want that state to be independent?*

The questioning in the Basque referendum was quite indirect in its nature and about supporting inter-party negotiations on the political future of the Basque Country so that a positive vote consequently could have led the Basque government presenting a proposal for constitutional change to the Spanish Government (Lecours 2011: 273 and 278). In the proposed Catalan referendum by contrast, the question phrasing has a clear secessionist agenda. The Basque bid for national recognition has been portrayed as an effort to formulate a 'third way' between secessionism and unionism (Keating and Bray 2006), and must due to its vagueness on the proposed outcome be treated as a case of mobilization for increased self-rule within the Spanish state. [14] On the contrary, although as emphasized above, Catalan mobilization also fundamentally is based on the principle of the right to decide, the question

---

[14] "*the capacity of a regional government to exercise authority autonomously over those who live in the territory (…) [and] refers to the authority of a regional government over those living in the region* (Hooghe et al. 2010: 6 and 13)."

phrasing specially addresses the issue of independence and is as such compatible with what I define as mobilization for secession. Thus, following Wood's definition of secessionism there can be no doubt that the Catalans are mobilizing for a referendum on secession.

2.3 Defining the empirical scope: Globalization and the EU

I define the empirical scope relating to my research question as *nation states* that are members of the EU. In this way the two main motivating dimensions relating to what I want to explain can clearly be limited to a distinct set of cases. First, I am concerned with the puzzling phenomenon of secessionist mobilization within an advanced democratic framework. Although not all EU-members are vulnerable to the forces of minority nationalism, they all can be depicted as being advanced democracies by virtue of qualifying for the membership criteria. Second, on the back of the literature I argue that globalization is an imperative contextual feature and an important premise for explaining successful mobilization of minority nations within this population of cases. Globalization is here defined as *"(…)a process that erodes national boundaries, integrates national economies, cultures, technologies and governance and produces complex relations of mutual interdependence* (Norris 2000: 155)*."* In Europe, the EU integration project has catalyzed and accelerated globalization effects. Consequentially, according to the KOF Index[15], it is here we find the most densely globalized area on the globe (see figure 1). Although the processes of globalization also are relevant for minority nationalism in other parts of the world, it is the contextual dimensions of advanced democracy and of high degrees of globalization in combination that I am concerned with. This thus makes the EU a feasible empirical scope for the arguments put forward in the thesis. The process of integration in Europe is historically unique with regards to both societal intertwining and political institution-building, hence making the challenges globalization brings with it to the nation state and democracy particularly profound (Goldmann 2001: 7-8).

---

[15] The KOF index of globalization is aggregated measure of globalization based on three main dimensions: economic, social, and political. These dimensions refer to actual economic flows, economic restrictions, data on information flows, data on personal contact, and, data on cultural proximity. The index runs on a scale from one to hundred where higher values denote greater globalization. See KOF Index (2012a) for measurement details.

Figure 1: Globalization index for 2012 by continent
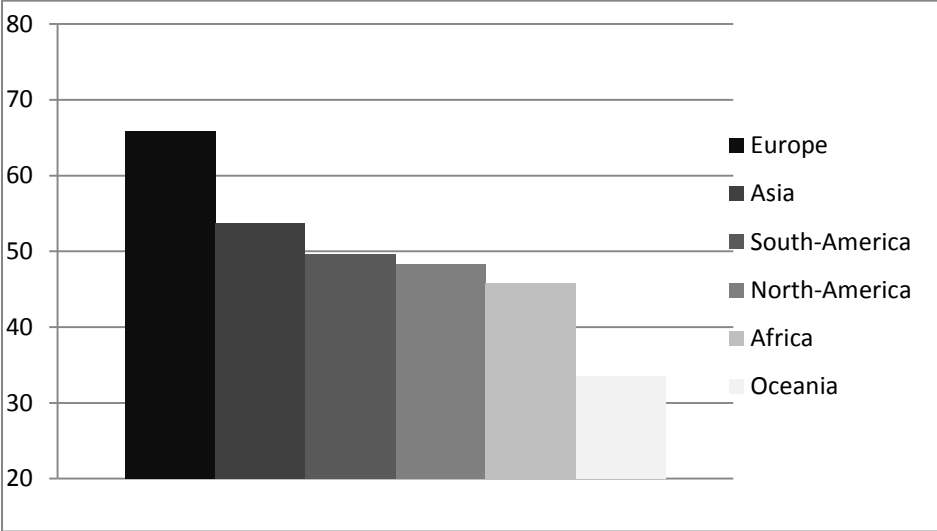
Source: (KOF Index 2012b) *Notes:* The graph is elaborated by the author based on aggregated index data from countries.

However, it is important to note that globalization per se is not treated as an explanatory factor for secessionism regarding the individual cases. This is because the variation within the empirical scope is too small for an explanatory power to be attributed (see figure 2). Instead I refer to globalization, or level of globalization, as a denominator to define the population of my research approach. The point then is that the cases at hand together are subject to high levels of globalization compared to cases outside the population. I argue that this constitutes a specific and independent context that can contribute to understanding one part of the broader phenomenon of secessions.

Figure 2: Globalization index 2015: UK and Spain
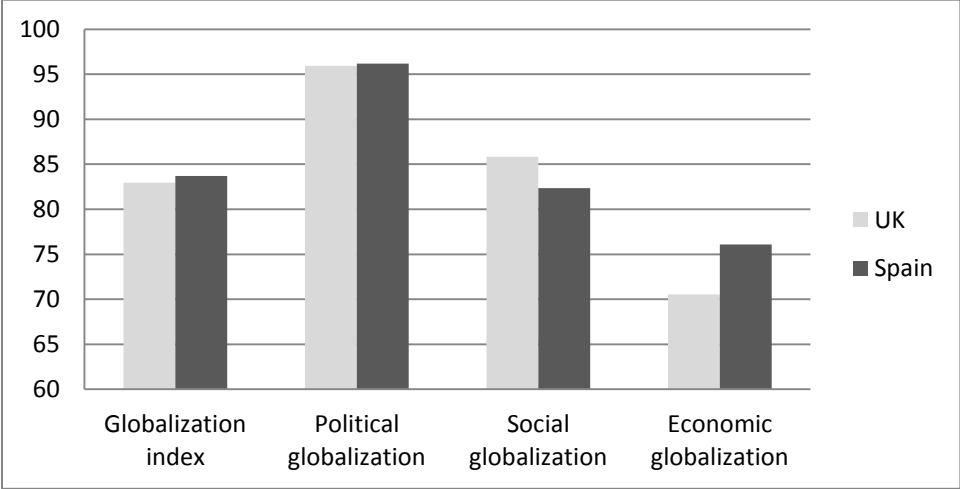
Source: (KOF Index 2015) Notes: The rankings are based on the raw data from 2012.

In the following section I will further elaborate the more specific effects globalization, and more specifically the EU, has on minority nations and the nation states containing them.

2.3.1 The impact of Globalization

The Westphalian state-model implying that states hold absolute sovereignty over their own territory and domestic affairs, has for centuries been the centerpiece for our geopolitical understanding of the world we live in. However, for the last couple of decades the notion of globalization and its' effects has ignited a debate about whether the model is obsolete and in need of theoretical modifications. Thus, it is central to students theorizing the notion of globalization, that it fosters processes which erodes the basis of existence for the nation state as we know it. Looking to the basic components defining the nation state emphasized above: territory and identity, it can be concluded that the literature basically focuses on two types of pressures – one to the national territorial independence, and one to the common identity constituting nationalism (Goldmann 2001: 74). The former refers to the functioning competences of the nation state. Keating portrays these pressures as being caused by an integrating economy and the establishment of regimes in trade, defense and politics, and the institutional decentralization that has been occurring in most contemporary democracies (Keating 2001b: 20). Pressures to national identity are not as straightforward because they come as a consequence of the functional pressures. Economic integration fosters expanding networks of interdependence that span beyond national borders and follow the increasingly rapid movement of ideas, money, goods, services, ecology, and people across country borders (Norris 2011: 25-26). Additionally, due to big business, a wave of 'Americanization' – the spreading of a global American consumer culture – is by some claimed to be eroding local identities (Goldmann 2001: 74; Keating 2001b: 20). Moreover, a more homogenous and a thriving civil society has derived from the deregulation of the economy and the decentralization of politics in nation states, which in turn is disintegrating the common sense of identity and solidarity previously sustained by a more centralized state economically and politically (Keating 2001b: 21).

The diminishment of national identities is in the literature often related to the emergence of cosmopolitan identities. The two are considered to be theoretically oppositional. Contrary to nationalism, cosmopolitanism typically promotes a tolerance for diverse cultural outlooks and practices, values differences among humans rather than similarities, cultural pluralism rather than convergence, and de-emphasizes territorial ties and attachments (Norris 2011: 26). In light of this, the emergence, or re-emergence of minority nationalism is

24

frequently described as an abnormal phenomenon contradicting the expected effects of globalization. Keating and McGarry (2001) disagree, and emphasize that globalization, instead of undermining minority nations, have brought about change that gives them the room and the tools to maneuver. Various international regimes (e.g. EU, NATO, and NAFTA) have helped reduce the risks associated with independence. International law and human rights have created an awareness of basic and common liberties, such as the right of self-determination. The spread of global culture, the state's weakening ability to redistribute resources, and the swift movement of capital and goods, has encourage a response from minority nations who fear the results of these changes. Moreover, technological advancements have equipped them with the tools to effectively communicate and mobilize (McGarry and Keating 2001: 7). As such, the dual processes of the nation state weakening, and of minority nations awakening, are looked upon as two natural effects of the same phenomenon. In fact, the former reinforces the latter. Thus, it is perfectly valid assumption that the decreasing functional nature of the nation state and the advancement of some notion of cosmopolitanism indeed cause thriving minority nations.

The crux of this link lies perhaps in the recognition of that there is a long distance between the rather vague cosmopolitan culture and a cosmopolitan identity. Looking at the EU, where a common identity is absent and where strong local and national identities indeed are the prime proponents stagnating further integration, this point becomes clear. In the subsequent section I will highlight this aspect further by discussing how minority nations relate to the supranational nature of the EU.

2.3.2 The EU and the post-sovereign state

The European integration project has gone a long way beyond its original goal of enforcing peace, security and a common market in Europe (Alesina and Spolaore 2003: 203). European institutions have obtained, in many aspects, attributions that traditionally have been the domain of national governments, forcing states to relinquish powers associated with nation state sovereignty. The transfers of some powers to supranational institutions and the devolvement of others to sub-state units are often characterized as a model of multi-level governance (Marks 1996), where power dispersion between the EU, the member-states, and regions is fluid. In turn, this makes the notion of absolute sovereignty in the traditional sense, understood as the *"(...)right for nation states to enjoy independence of others* (Goldmann 2001: 78)*"*, highly disputable. I identify the four spheres the traditional nation state engages in as spheres of *security*, *economy*, *policy* and *culture*. These spheres are feasible to apply

when unpacking a complex picture of actors and better illustrate the nature of the power dispersion flowing out from the nation state.

The sphere of security can be divided into two dimension of external and domestic affairs. The former is perhaps the single most important element in sustaining a stable state framework. Most powers in this domain have already been transferred to other supranational organizations such as the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and the United Nations (UN). The latter has primarily been a responsibility for the nation state. However, since the 1990s the EU has engaged in the task of expanding its' competences into both of these areas implementing the pillars of *Common Foreign and Security Policy* and *Justice and Home Affairs* into its charters through the Treaty of Maastricht in 1993 (Börzel 2005). [16] Regarding the first, national defense is still primarily a matter of transnational cooperation organized around NATO rather than supranational institutions of the EU. However, the need for common policies on internal security especially due to the principle of the free flow of capital, goods, services and people within in the union has made the latter pillar much more institutionalized. With regards to agendas such as immigration, asylum, criminal prosecution and law enforcements, there now exists a well-established supranational framework (Börzel 2005: 230). Additionally, in a democratic era, where a war between democracies in the predicted future seems very unlikely and any military action is dependent on the blessing of the international community, the necessity for investments in defense is limited compared to some decades ago when the geopolitical climate was far tenser.

Second, we have the economic sphere, the most emphasized and thus perhaps the most important sphere seen in relation with Globalization. This entails global economic integration, the increasing mobility of capital and technology, trade flows, and, the rise of big transnational businesses is eroding the state framework for economic activity. The general argument, is that nation states are having difficulties with managing their insertions into the international trading order, which in turn has contributed to shift the balance between political power and market in favor of the latter (Keating and McGarry 2001: 3). The EU is looked upon as the prime proponent of these developments as it can no longer be seen solely as a framework for international economic cooperation, but has evolved into itself being economic system. Originally started as an economic cooperation scheme between six countries interlocking the coal- and steel industry to make war between the European superpowers technically impossible, the EU has gradually evolved and institutionalized its economic role

---

[16] The structure of pillars was abandoned with the Treaty of Lisbon of 2009.

26

to wide set of functions. Starting with the Treaty of Rome in 1957 a forty-year period followed where the European developed from a simple customs union to a single market for its 28 member-states (Farrows and Grindheim 2003: 60). Fundamentally, the EU-single marked aspires to secure the free movement of capital, goods, service and people without being obstructed by state borders and barriers. The principle is that an EU-citizen can study, live, shop, work and retire in any EU member-state (European Union 2015).

One can look to Ohmae's (1995) seminal work to explain the how these functional mechanisms play out in relation to the role of the nation state. Ohmae introduces the concept of the '*borderless economy'* and neatly argues how this hardly can be compatible with the functioning of the nation state. He illustrates this through pointing to the flows of the four '*I's' – investment*, *industry*, *information technology* and *individual consumers*, which in his view are the components defining the global economy, or in my case, the single marked of the EU. While cross-border *investment* some decades back primarily was from government to government, or from multi-lateral lending agency to government, there is to today no geographical constraints. Because most of the money today crossing borders is private, there is no need for governments being involved at either end. Ohmae argues that the *"(…) the money will go where the good opportunities ar*e." *Industry* is also massively more global in orientation. According to Ohmae, *"(…) the strategies of modern multinational corporations are no longer shaped and conditioned by reasons of states but, rather, by the desire – and the need – to serve attractive markets wherever they exist and to tap attractive pools of resources wherever they sit."* The third I, *information technology*, has greatly facilitated the movement of the two abovementioned I's. It has knocked back the obstacles of cross national participation, cooperation and expansion, and has made it possible for a company to operate in various parts of the world without having to build up business infrastructure in each of the countries where it has a presence. Thus, *"(…) capability can reside in the network and be made available – virtually anywhere – as needed."* As a consequence of these first three *I's*, the last *I – individual consumers*, have widened their orientation scope. With access to information about lifestyles, merchandise and trends all around the world, consumers are prone to buy products independent of their national associations. Ohmae explains that *"(…) consumers increasingly want the best and cheapest products, no matter where they come from."* In sum, he underscores that it is *"(…) the unfettered movement of these I's that makes the role of the nation state as a middleman obsolete* (Ohmae 1995: 2-5).*"*

Third, in the political sphere, here delimited and referred to as the basic institutional framework of a political entity, the supranational features of the EU institutions have clearly

taken a shape resembling the characteristics of a federal state. With the simultaneous challenge of driving further integration and at the same time honor and accommodate the requirements of the now 28 sovereign member-states, the framework has taken a complex and unique form. Two of the main political institutions consist of a bi-cameral structure in the fashion of any democratic country – it has a legislature and an executive branch trough the *European Parliament* and *European Commission*. This is a system where powers are distributed from member state, primarily through common EU-elections, and is designed to be independent of national interests. Furthermore, the bi-cameral framework is counterbalanced by two additional institutions. *The Council of the European Union* is a second half of the legislative body of the EU and represents the governments of the member states. The council meets regularly to assess relevant political topics. The composition of the council varies according to the topic under consideration. If the topic for instance is agriculture, the 28 national ministers who are responsible for this policy area will assemble. *The European Council* is the highest meeting of the *Council of the European Union* and meets four times a year. It is constituted by the heads of state of the member states. Its main function is to outline the main strategic agendas of further European integration (Hix and Høyland 2011: 8-9).

This system is subject to a huge debate concerning where the effective power of the EU lies, and to what extend the EU functions has general democratic entity. For my purpose it suffices to underscore that the political system of the union undoubtedly is transgressing the competencies of the national frameworks which compounds it. Effectively, this implies that member-states, either indirectly by a community peer-pressure, or directly through EU-directives, more or less are forced to implement politics they in many cases would not have done in a non-EU context (Marks et al. 1996; Pollack 1997; Pierson 1996).

An additional and more overarching aspect is the role of the EU as a promoter of democracy and human rights. As Tesón points out, *"(…)it is 'indisputable' that human rights are no longer a matter of exclusive domestic jurisdiction, and even political systems are now considered a matter of lawful international concern insofar as a principle of democracy is today part of international law* (Tesón 1997: 139).*"* Thus, I have above focused on how the EU framework directly impedes the political functions of the nation states. Another perspective is how the democratic political 'culture' of the EU indirectly shapes the political institutions of the member-states. Firstly, member states have to fulfill certain democratic criteria to be part of the union. Secondly, the general democratic playing field to certain degree limits the scope of action of member-states in their domestic affairs because their actions are under the constant surveillance of the international community. This is thus an

aspect limiting the scope of coercive action central governments have in dealing with tensions caused by minority nationalist regions.

Fourth, perhaps mostly as consequence of the upheaval in the economic sphere, changes are also emerging in the cultural sphere. This, however, cannot directly be linked to the EU. Rather it is generally depicted as being a consequence of the process of *'Americanization'.* In Keating's words; *"Americanization may undermine popular cultures and it has succeeded almost in defining mass culture. National governments fight against this trend with greater or lesser success (Keating 2001a: 34)."* An additional aspect affecting the cultural sphere is migration. Multicultural challenges are being created in wake of a significant increase in migration, both within and between states (Keating and McGarry 2001: 3).

Although talks about a new global culture may be exaggerated, there can be no doubt that the globalization of the economy has ignited changes in certain domains of national cultural spheres everywhere including EU-countries. If one assesses EU-influence on the member-state's cultural sphere, however, the question of a whether a common European culture is emerging is far more disputable. EU-integration is frequently described as suffering from a democratic deficit, and that this is the main obstacle for it to make further federalist progress. A main cause for the problem is laid on the strong national identities of the member states. As long as no European identity exists, or a European demos, there can hardly exist a European democracy. The EU has responded to this challenge through launching a number of institutions, programs and bodies with the goal of addressing and promoting the cultural dimension of European integration. The Erasmus program is perhaps the most prominent example. However, compared to the national culture of the member states, these initiatives are of course novel and modest. Whether they in time can contribute to a sense of European identity is yet to be seen. However, for now it must be concluded that the cultural sphere is where the penetration of the EU is weakest.

2.3.2.1 Post-sovereign independence

A puzzling question derives from the simultaneous processes of EU-integration and national minority mobilization. In short, some form of sovereignty is the main motivational factor for a secessionist movement. However, seeking to form a new state might seem paradoxical when globalization is eroding state-functionality and ultimately sovereignty. A natural question is then; if the nation state is becoming ever more redundant, what motivates forming a new state that once it is established will be dependent on the organizations, networks and mechanisms

emphasized above and thus by far will be sovereign in a the definable sense of the word? It is widely recognized that regions escaping dependence from the central state may entail increased dependence on the international market and politics (Keating 2001a: 65). For minority nationalists seeking secession the equation is of course not as simple as that. From their perspective there are two aspects to assess. First, in practical terms it may be questioned how real the functional reductions of nation state competences are in terms of grinding down its role as chief political actor. Although the worldwide trend of political decentralization and economic interdependency in nation states is an empirical fact, it cannot be disputed that nation states still are strongly recognized as the prime legitimate political authority. It is recognition that is the paramount objective of minority nationalists – in first instance by the state, and second by the international community. When based upon democratic principles they seek the recognition of themselves making up a distinct community that has the right to rule itself (Guibernau 1999: 25). In this sense the ultimate token of recognition for a group of people is governing their own state. Second, few progressive minority nations today aspire to state-sovereignty in the classical sense. As I have stated above, they recognize the effects of globalization and use these circumstances to strengthen and promote their cause. As such, it is plausible to presume that civic minority nationalist movements does not seek state sovereignty in the traditional sense, but rather some sort of constrained sovereignty inside a wider structure of authorities. Within the new opportunity structure globalization and the EU offers they are perhaps likely to achieve greater political autonomy within the transnational political institutions as region of a state, than as an independent state of its own.

This was also a trending perception among regional parties during the heydays of European integration – a time when most regional parties generally were depicted as *'europhile'*(Lynch and De Winter 2008: 603-604). A popular term during the 1980s and early 1990s was the *'Europe of the Regions'* which implied a vision of Europe driven by the empowerment of regional sub-units of the member states. Regional actors saw developments such as the building of an internal market, the reform of the European Structural Funds in 1988, several innovations contained in the Maastricht Treaty such as the creation of a Committee of the Regions, access for regional representatives to the Council of Ministers, and the principle of subsidiarity (Elias 2008: 557), as evidence that a new Europe was forming where the regions would be key political components (Hooghe and Marks 1996). However, this all changed during the course of the 1990s due to a change in direction of the integration project which entailed an apparent neglect of regional interest. This is a development which several scholars stress have reverted many regional parties into more euro-skeptical positions

(De Winter et al. 2006; Hepburn 2008b). Hepburn argues that according to differences in domestic institutional factors some regional parties view Europe as an alternative framework to the state for advancing their autonomy, whereas others see integrations as a threat, and pursue to strengthening the state to prevent Europe from infringing their competences (Hepburn 2008b: 552).

Nevertheless, regardless of their positions towards the EU, minority nationalist mobilization does in most cases not imply a push for secession. In the few where it does, it is clear that the cause is framed around a notion of 'post-sovereign' political arrangements which recognizes the limitations to the nation state. Further unraveling why secessionist mobilization yet occurs is thus necessary.

CHAPTER THREE: The analytical framework

The aim of the preceding chapter was to define a delimited empirical scope of which to understand secessionist mobilization. As noted, secessions in well-established democracies are extremely rare events. Although regionalist parties by definition are depicted by their claims for some of increased independence, which also frequently implies the threat of secessions, the challenge of even getting near to majority support for the cause is so immense that serious bids for secessions rarely occur. Probably because the phenomenon is so rare, there exists no theoretical framework that explains the systemic stability of democratic states (Dion 1996: 270). Hence, a general framework that precisely explains successful mobilization in such political contexts is also lacking.

My approach in attempting to construct such a framework has been to scrutinize the general literature on secessionism and apply theoretical perspectives which I consider to be relevant for the empirical context at hand. This work culminates into six empirical expectations of which my analysis can be guided by.

3.1 A theoretical basis for the analytical framework

A practical point of departure is Wood's (1981) influential attempt to deal with the complexity of secessionism, by introducing a general sketch for how the movements representing it should be analyzed. Although his account perhaps is too general to be directly applicable on specific cases and thus stands as convincing assessment of the problem rather than a solution to it, he nevertheless offers compelling insights with regards to how the phenomenon should be approached and which agendas that should be focused upon. Fundamentally, Wood stresses that secessionism should be treated as a process rather than as a condition. This entails that the analysis should *"(…)focus on the dynamic interaction and the cumulative effect of a number of conditions and developments which may or may not lead to a secessionist outcome* (Wood 1981: 109)*."* This argument is fruitful for the research approach presented in this thesis, which seek to explain why secessionist mobilization has succeeded in Scotland and Catalonia whereas it has not gained the same momentum in cases with similar potential. Wood suggests that an analysis on secessionist, or potentially secessionist movements, should focus on five aspects (Wood 1981: 109):

(1)The preconditions of secessions: that is the conditions for which the secessionist alienation emerged in the first place.

(2) *The rise of secessionist movements:* that is how the movement established itself and how the goal of sovereign independence has been pursued. For my purpose this agenda is concerns the factors that have caused the tip-over from an autonomist agenda on to a secessionist path in Scotland and Catalonia.

(3) The response of central government: that is how the state has responded to the secessionist claims, in preventing the movement to gain support and, above all, in maintaining the integrity of the state.

(4)The direct precipitants of secession: that is the confrontational developments between the state and region which lead to the manifested conflict.

(5)The resolution of secessionist crises by armed conflict: it must be noted that this last point is relevant for a contemporary context prior to the proliferation of minority nationalist movements across European democracies and thus does not appear to be directly relevant for my analysis. I argue that the very absence of a potentially armed conflict is an important element of democratic secessions in so far as it contributes to make these movements flourish. Moreover, it is not the resolution, or the outcome, of the process I am concerned with, but how and why the "crisis" arises. Nevertheless, as stated by Wood, the agenda refers to *"(...)domestic and international factors affecting the outcome* (Wood 1981: 109)"*, and can in this sense be applied to the different stakeholders that have interests in affecting the outcome of the process and who for that reason will be directly involved. Most notably this implies the EU as an external actor which has great influence on the debates in Scotland and Catalonia.

Moreover, the explanatory factors examined in assessing secessionism are usually sorted into a *cultural*, *economic* and *political* dimension of minority nationalist mobilization (Keating 2001b:25). It is in between these dimensions my empirical focus will be centered.

3.2 Remote and proximate factors

To fully comprehend minority nationalist movements, and in my case explain why certain movements move on to a path of secessionism, one must examine both the origin of the movement and the nature of its demands. These will of course be intertwined, but one cannot be explained without explaining the other. Building on the agenda of Wood (1981) they key is thus to identify the basis of the movement, and then examine how this interplay with the factors triggering the tip over on the secessionist course. A feasible technique for singling out and structuring variables in this vein, is by introducing and utilizing the concepts of remote

and proximate factors. These concepts are for my purpose extracted from qualitative comparative analysis (QCA) (Ragin 1987). However, it is worth noting that the methodological relationship between QCA and this thesis ends there. Schneider and Wagemann (2006) states that remote factors are referred to as structural, or contextual factors. They are relatively stable over time, and their origin is often also remote on the time and/or space dimension from the outcome to be explained. Remote factors are therefore nearly completely outside the reach of the conscious influence of contemporary actors. Thus, in relationship to the actors, context and historical legacies are treated exogenously. Proximate factors vary over time, and more importantly, are susceptible to changes introduced by actors. They do not originate from the distant past, but are subjects of actions by human agency, if not by human action itself. Moreover, being closer connected in time and space, proximate factors are more closely linked to the outcome being explained (Schneider and Wagemann 2006: 760).

The remote and proximate factors are useful primarily for two purposes. First, clearly distinguishing between structural and triggering factors in this sense is helpful in defining my research approach in comparison to others. In political science it can indeed be very difficult to establish whether essential variables are structural or subject to the direct influence of actors. Political institutions are perhaps the most prominent examples of this. Simply stated, one can claim that policy outcomes are the product of two factors – the preference of the actors involved and the prevailing institutions (Tsebelis 2002: 17). All institutions are at one point a consequence of the actions of actors; however the same institutions can at present be well beyond the reach of contemporary actors. Whether to treat the institutions as proximate or remote will therefore depend on factors such as the research design, the research question or how the dependent variable is framed. Hence, it is possible that institutions are seen as remote factors in one study and are perceived as proximate in another (Schneider and Wagemann 2006: 760).

Second, having sorted out the remote and proximate factors, the premises for the further analysis should be clear, and the clear distinction between the dimensions of origin and outcome should make the task of convincingly explain how they interplay much easier.

3.3 Theoretical expectations

Inspired by the analytical sketch of Wood, the analytical framework presented below emphasizes six agendas which aim to capture the dynamic process of democratic secessionist mobilization; (1) *a strong national identity*, (2) *the viability of the proposed state*, (3) *a*

34

dissatisfaction with the central government, (4) *popular democratic support,* (5) *response of the central government*, and, (6) *the role of the EU*. These have been articulated into preliminary expectations which each contain a theoretical elaboration. The former two expectations can be regarded to reflect the remote factors as outlined above. In that sense they can be looked upon as preconditions that are necessary to be present in order for the proximate factors to emerge. Correspondingly, the latter four expectations reflect the proximate dimension of secessionist mobilization. Expectations number three and four are where the factors which tip over the political discourse to a secessionist path are found. The fifth and sixth expectation is linked to the resolution of the secessionist conflict. However, as my thesis is not concerned with the outcome, these expectations must rather be seen as reflecting the factors that contributes to manifesting the conflict – that is the part of the process where it calls for reactions, both internally by the state, and externally by the international community.

3.3.1 Regional identity

(1) Successful democratic mobilization for secession presupposes that there exists a strong form of regional identity.

The first theoretical expectation relates to the pre-conditions of secessionism emphasized by Wood (1981). Self-evidently this aspect is vital part of minority nationalist mobilization. Without the perception of a collective self, there can be no self-determination, let alone self-government (Jolly 2005). Identity can be defined a as a sense of belonging to a distinct group sharing a set of common values. Exactly what these values are, and what they are based upon, however, has proved more difficult to pin down theoretically, and can vary a great deal from community to community.

What is clear is that that national identity is strongly linked to culture where the two concepts are frequently used interchangeably in the literature. The three main traditional identity markers on the cultural dimension in the literature is *history of independence*, *language*, and *religion*. These three cultural determinants have proven their relevance because they are relatively easy to operationalize on a vague concept. The two former have been described as constituting the 'base model' secessionism (Sorens 2005: 309). Religion, however, has weakened as a relevant political cleavage over the past generations in the advanced democracies of Europe (Dalton 1996: 319). Political demands based on religion have thus naturally also lessened significantly in the political discourse in minority nations. Even in Northern Ireland where the religious backdrop for decades has influenced the

academic debate over regional identity, it has now become the prevailing view that religion only plays a minor part. It is generally thought of as simply a social marker and a symbol of difference that by itself is insignificant for explaining minority nationalist mobilization (Mitchell 2006: 1-2).

The history of independence is often a vital part of the myth that constitutes many minority national identities in the first place. Such historical myths contribute to reinforce minority nationalism by providing it with a clear reference to the combination of identity and territory which I have argued constitutes nationalism. It has also directly been linked with the evolution of *civic nationalism* (Sorens 2005: 309). The idea is that having experience with being a state of its own, and having practiced challenges dealing with and accommodating a plurality of people, constitutes a basis for a civic orientation. However, taking into account a democratic political context where borders are interlocked on the basis of mutual recognition through international law, it is difficult to treat history of independence as a basis for political demands per se. As the political borders of Europe always has been a subject of alternations and modifications, few would today claim that legitimate demands of independence can be made on the back of earlier, and in most cases historically distant, political configurations. Regardless, Scotland and Catalonia both have a history independence which today plays an important part of legitimizing themselves as being nations, and not merely regions.

Language is perhaps the sole most important ingredient of nationalism and most nations are today tied together at least to certain extend by a common language. It is therefore no surprise that language, being closely linked to culture, also is among the strongest predictors of strong minority nationalist identities (Fitjar 2010: 523). Thus, demands on the cultural dimension of minority nationalism have mainly been focused on language, where this is seen as endangered to disappearing or downgraded to low-status uses (Keating 2001b: 25). With reference to the aspect, Catalan identity is arch-typical. Although nationalism in Catalonia is complex, and encompasses a wide range of traditions covering multiple social bases (Keating 2001a: 151), language is indisputably the factor fundamentally constituting the core of its identity today. Especially in the democratic era, following almost 40 years of suppression of Catalan culture and language under the Franco-regime, has the promotion and the restoration of the Catalan language been a main concern in the nation-building project (Guibernau 2013: 374). Thus, a-long-side of a history of independence, language can be depicted as the most important factor in understanding Catalan identity where the struggle for recognition by the Spanish state is an imperative aspect. By carving and clarifying the distinction between 'us' and 'them', it triggers and reinforces the very essence of identity.

In the Scottish case the nation-status has never been contested by the British government, and their status as a nation is formally recognized. They entered the UK as an act of unionism in 1707, and in many respects as a fully functional state. This makes the Scottish case one of the least disputed examples of minority nationalism (Leruez 1983). Striving for recognition has thus never been relevant for the Scottish nationalism. Moreover, and perhaps because of this recognition, language plays a minimal part of Scottish Identity ,where English for long has been the dominant language. Scottish identity is therefore instead frequently linked to a dimension combining social, economic and political aspects. Scottish national identity as such, is grounded in more practical claims about institutions, accountability and policy (Keating 2001a: 221). These are claims that are based in a common perception of being more democratic, oriented towards social solidarity and in general more egalitarian. It thus opposes British identity which is associated with a political conservatism based on individualistic values. Relatedly, the Scots feel politically locked into a system which holds back the potential for Scotland to prosper according to its true values (Keating 2001a: 210, 222). Theoretically then, perhaps Scottish nationalism best is linked to what Wood (1981) refers to as the social pre-conditions of secessionism. He describes this as *"(…) the original circumstances which created social relationships among various territorially-based ethnic groups and the original perception of the roles to be played by each in a society* (Wood 1981: 115-116).*" This social dimension has a clear link to and is reinforced by a history of independence as it often reflects a relationship of segmentation with superordinate/subordinate statues which dates from a past conquest or colonial past (Lieberson 1961). Although Scottish entry into the Union does not represent conquest or colonialism directly, the superordinate/subordinate relationship with the UK-superpower is highly relevant. Thus, there may be latent grievances that later may be nursed when linked to the distribution of public goods that is perceived as unjust, and in turn provide much of the driving force behind later secessionist attempts (Wood 1981: 115-116).

Scottish and Catalan nationalism can thus be traced to quite different basic determinants. What they have in common, obviously, is that they both represent an identity which is clearly different from the British and Spanish, but more importantly that this identity has a broad popular appeal. De Winter introduces the proxy of *feeling of belonging* as an empirical measure of the sentiments representing the cultural dimension of minority nationalism (De Winter 1998: 216). Several surveys have been carried out investigating these sentiments with relation to minority nationalism through surveys based on the *Moreno-*

question[17] where respondents are asked to express their feelings of self-identification on a scale containing relevant categories.[18] Such surveys have led to the academic terms *'dual identity'* or *'compound nationality'* (Moreno 2006: 6) which often are used to describe the nature of national identity in Scotland and Catalonia.[19] Furthermore, this can be linked to the notion of political *demos* in bridging identity with political support for minority nationalist claims. *Demos* can in that respect be understood as the political center of which a community serves its loyalty.

I have in this section drawn attention on the literature of the cultural dimension of minority nationalism. It is in this dimension the factors fundamentally constituting the essence of minority nationalist identity can be found, factors which thus represents the pre-conditions for secessionist mobilization. From this I expect that a strong sense of national identity is a necessary cause for secessionist mobilization and that factors triggering the tip over to a secessionist path can be traced to these origins.

3.3.2 The viability of the independence project

(2) Successful democratic mobilization presupposes that the proposed new state is perceived as viable.

The next issue I will treat as a presupposition to secessionist mobilization is the *perceived viability* of the region as an independent state. Theoretically, the expectation is attached to two dimensions. First, there is the economic dimension; that implies that the region can sustain itself as an independent state. Second, there is the geographical dimension; that implies the territory that is proposing to secede is agreed upon and defined.

3.3.2.1 Economic deprivation of the rich

The 'theory of relative economic deprivation' is a generic term referring to scholarly contributions focusing on economic differences between center and periphery in order to explain minority nationalist mobilization. This is a popular approach within in the field of research on minority – and for good reason. Indeed, it is a central aspect of explaining grievances among minority nations. As pointed out by Alesina and colleagues (1995);

"Fiscal issues in general and redistributive issues in particular are important determinants of decisions concerning secessions, confederations and border re-drawing. In fact, the definition

---

[17] First conducted by Professor Luis Moreno in 1986.
[18] Example of categories for *Moreno-question*: 1.Scottish, not British 2.More Scottish than British 3.Equally Scottish and British 4.More British than Scottish 5.British, not Scottish.
[19] See (Gagnon 2009: 28; Keating 2001a: 160).

of borders and the political mechanisms which lead to fiscal decisions within given borders greatly influences the final distribution of the fiscal burden and of the fiscal benefits (Alesina et al. 1995: 752)*."*

In addition, as Wood (1981) points out that economic disadvantages very often are tied to other preconditions for secessionism, for example ethnicity. Secessionists believe they are being denied their rightful share of materiel benefits by some alien group and that they will gain through secession (Wood 1981: 118).

It was earlier believed that secessionist mobilization is most common among '*backward groups in backward regions'.* These cases are referred to as 'early seceders', in so far as they rapidly conclude that they have little benefit in preserving the undivided state of which they are part of and that they often pursue secession rather shortly after the rejection of the claims they advanced. Secessionism among '*advanced groups in advanced regions'* were on the contrary portrayed as rare. Although they are likely to have economic grievances because they usually generate more income and contribute more revenue to the state than they get back and thus see themselves as subsidizing poorer regions, the benefits of being rich in a state framework at the same time counterweighs these incentives – hence making these instances of secessionism rare (Horowitz 1985: 236 and 249-250). However, more recently and in the context of advanced democracies such claims have been widely criticized. Sorens (2005), for example, turns the table and claims that regions that receive more in expenditures than what they contribute with in taxes are *"poor ground for secessionism,"* because this implies relinquishing subsidies. Conversely, when a region looks upon itself as a 'net loser' within the Union, it is likely to present demands for fiscal autonomy and as a next step possibly secession it these demands are not met (Sorens 2005: 310). The view of rich regions as the most likely seceders can be seen in relation to the deepening of democracy in Europe – referring both to expansion of democratic regimes and the further decentralization of already consolidated democracies over the past decades. Since the ideological political goals in most cases have been reached, or at least have come a lot closer, the focus of minority nationalist actors are rather centered on the catalyst of most politics – namely economy. Or put in another way, when participation has been granted, pursuing prosperity becomes a natural next step.

Sambanis and Milanovic (2014) argue that regional demands for self-determination is dependent on the likely costs of policy autonomy. Their logic is that because self-determination involves the production of costly public goods, richer groups or regions are

more likely to make such demands because they can afford to cover the costs. They find that richer, more populous, and, more resource-endowed regions are more likely to enjoy higher degrees of autonomy. This is because of their relative power compared with other regions in the country gives them the opportunity to advance more credible threats of exiting. Brancati (2014) argues that the advantages of economic integration not are sufficiently uniform across cases nor substantial enough for most regions to provide themselves with the defense structure necessary to sustain an independent state. Her argument implies that secessionist mobilization is reserved to cases with strong independent economies. Thus, resources are important; either they are *human resources* in the form of business or special competences, or natural resources. Both sorts are of significance if they are perceived to be exploited by the central government. While the former relates to exploitation of regional resources in the form of disadvantageous policies hampering regional development, the latter refers to valuable natural resources which minority nationalists perceive to not get a fair share of. The typical example of the latter is the discovery of North Seal-oil in Scottish waters, which boosted nationalism is Scotland as it paved way for the vision of a economically viable independent Scottish state (De Winter 1998: 221). Thus, the probability of secession increases when *'outsiders'* are perceived to extract *'local'* resources without sharing the wealth (Le Billon 2001: 574).

3.3.2.2 Territorially separable unit

Geography is an essential premise for the very existence of minority nationalism, and thus an element with little variation across cases. Generally speaking and in light of fundamental center-periphery theories[20], the crux in presupposing the emergence of minority nationalism lies in the very tension between the center and the periphery. Without some degree of this tension, minority nationalism would simply not exist. It is therefore taken for granted that a national minority operates in some sort of geographical periphery. However, this territorial periphery does not necessarily coincide with formally established and recognized border drawings. Naturally, however, if secession is to be perceived as preferable it must be practically realistic. Looking at various minority nationalist groups in Europe the concurrence between political ideology and goals, and the formal territory in which this is being pursued, is always obvious. Many minority nations' territorial claims cross regional borders, and some cases even national borders. I argue that for a secessionist project to be perceived as territorially viable it necessitates that the project is linked to a separable area which also contains the main part of the potentially secessionist group (Wood 1981: 121). From this it

---

[20] For an introduction of the basic center-periphery theory of Stein Rokkan, see: (Flora et al. 1999).

follows that the secessionist project is based in a common agreement of what the seceding territory in practice is.

3.3.3 Dissatisfaction with state-wide politics

(3) Successful democratic mobilization presupposes a political dissatisfaction with central government and the state-wide parties representing them.

In a modern European democratic context, which depending on the necessity to appease heterogenic tensions, decentralization is practically by definition a characteristic feature. Gurr (2000) identifies two important principles behind what he refers to as *regime of managed ethnic heterogeneity*[21] of which basically all European democracies have implemented. The first is the recognition and active protection of the rights of minority peoples including freedom from discrimination based or race, national origin, language, or religion (Gurr 2000: 277-278). The second principle comes as a consequence of the first; the right of national peoples to exercise some extent of autonomy within the existing state to govern their own affairs. Following these principles it is today widely recognized that by integrating- and responding positively to demands of minorities, secessionist tendencies are best prevented. In practice this is done through some sort of decentralizing or power-sharing arrangement which, at least intuitively, should discourage potentially secessionist groups by making them feel confident of representation and protections of their most vital concerns (Lustick et al. 2004: 209-210). However, scholars have also pointed out that such arrangements have proved to have varying degree of success across countries. This gave leeway for academic terms such as *the paradox of federalization* (Erk and Anderson 2009) or *the empowerment versus accommodation thesis* (Massetti and Schakel 2013), to be born. By decentralizing central governments are strengthening regional parties through granting them the opportunities to win elections in regional legislatures and influence policy. Furthermore, it grants regional parties the potential to increase ethnic conflict by reinforcing regionally based ethnic identities and mobilize to engage in ethnic conflict and secessionism (Brancati 2006: 652-653), or even create and ignite conflict between center and region that might otherwise not exist (Erk and Anderson 2009: 192).

Theoretically, this can be linked to the *territorial cleavage* approach. The core of territorial cleavage theory lies in sociological approaches which explain dissimilarity of party systems derived from territorial cleavages being politicized (Lijphart 1977). Thus, with

---

[21] Used as shorthand for a number of doctrines and practices to mitigate conflict.

41

decentralization territorial cleavages are given the potential for being exploited. Hence, an incentive for parties in the regional arena to deviate their politics from the statewide parties is created. Discontent with statewide policies and parties can thus be expressed (Maddens and Libbrecht 2009). In sum, when regional elections are held in regions with distinctive territorial identities, voters are more likely to disconnect themselves from the national arena and make different choices in the regional arena (Jeffery and Hough 2009). This is especially the case when a distinctive identity is mobilized by a regional party (Dandoy and Schakel 2013: 15), as opposed to regional branch of a statewide party.

The authority exercised by regional government is portrayed to be a key institutional factor capable of influencing regional electorates and regional party strategies (Swenden 2006). In the Scottish and Catalan case where regional authority is relatively powerful the politicization of territorial cleavages and party-competition between statewide parties and regional parties at the regional level is an important element. In the Scottish case, I will in the analysis emphasize the decline of the *Scottish Labour Party* as an imperative factor in explaining the progress of the *SNP*. In the Catalan case, I will show how the secessionist movement above all is derived from a general dissatisfaction with the Spanish government, but also how the performances of the two main statewide parties in Spain, *Partido Popular* (*PP*) and *Partido Socialista Obrero Español* (*PSOE*) in Catalonia can be linked to secessionist movement.

3.3.4 Popular support of the secessionist project

(4) Successful democratic mobilization presupposes an increased popular support for the secessionist project.

Hechter (1992) holds that secession can be thought of as a comprising two elements: first, that the population of the seceding territory must make a collective decision to secede; second, that the government of the host-state must make a collective decision that the net cost of letting the territory go is negative (Hechter 1992: 267). In a democracy, both elements are unlikely to occur. Thus, the two occurring in combination have proved extremely rare. Regarding the first element, few central governments find it feasible to cede a piece of land and will, as in the Catalan case, brand any secessionist attempt as unconstitutional. Furthermore, given that the central government, in fact, is willing to relinquish territory, the element of collective decision implies that a majority of the people within the potentially seceding region votes for it in an election dealing with the issue. As I touched upon in the

preceding chapter rallying that kind of support for the project is extremely difficult and is probably the main reason for why secessions never have occurred in well-established democracies. Dion has theorized the difficulty of attaining the majority support needed to carry out a secessionist project by pointing to the antithetical effects of *fear* and *confidence*. *Fear* he explains as the *"(...) sense among members of a regional group that their cultural, economic or political situation will deteriorate within the existing union."* *Confidence* he describes *"(...) as the sense among the group that it can perform better on its own and that secession is not too risky."* Because high degrees of *fear* and *confidence* are unlikely to exist simultaneously in a modern democracy with a plurality of preferences, he argues that secessions in this context are highly improbable (Dion 1996: 271-272). Thus, because of the contrary effects of fear and confidence, secessionist leaders face an extremely difficult task in advancing and getting broad support for the secessionist cause.

In the case of Scotland and Catalonia support for independence proves persistently stable over the latter decades; hovering around thirty percent in Scotland, and between fifteen and twenty percent in Catalonia. In both cases the issue of independence has of course always been present in the political discourse, but representing a clear minority, and thus not have been a priority on the political agenda. In both cases has increased regional powers within a state framework been the main target for the nationalist camps. In a historical perspective, it is thus not until very recently the figures have shown a sharp increase in support for secession − a support that in both cases came very close to the majority threshold of 50 percent. Thus, a central aim in explaining minority nationalist mobilization is to unpack the factors triggering the substantial jump in popular support. Dion's dichotomy can in these terms be a good theoretical point of departure for doing this.

3.3.4.1 Support-boosting catalysts

From a theoretical perspective it can be concluded that the existence of a strong nationalist minority identity not is sufficient to explain broad support for independence in a democratic playing field. Thus, to boost support some sort of short-term catalysts are likely to be necessary. Such catalysts are of course difficult to pre-specify, as they unfold within an internally unique context. It is such factors Wood refers to as the precipitants of secessionism; that is, the factors accelerating a push to the point of no return – or *"(...)where the secessionist attempt is actually carried out* (Wood 1981: 128).*"* Dion suggests such unusual conditions for example can be; a charismatic and a clever secessionist leadership facing weak and divided pro-union forces, a period of confusion, or the unexpected acrimony of

constitutional negotiations. This can be looked upon as a source of *fear* or *confidence*, either it is cultural, economic or political, that suddenly emerges at the top of the political agenda, to the point that *fear-confidence* antithetical effects are overcome (Dion 1996: 275). It follows from this that popular support for secession must transcend traditional political cleavages and appeal to a broad spectrum of political preferences. In the Catalan case, I expect such catalysts to be of vital importance as Catalan nationalism must be viewed as a response to the lacking recognition from the Spanish central government. As I will show in the analysis, the secessionist mobilization process in Catalonia can be traced to a handful of specific events that represents the 'last straw' in a long lasting state of grievance. These events spurred the nationalist project over from an autonomist trajectory and on to a secessionist pathway.

In the Scottish case, where clear grievances are much less visible and explicit, linking the secessionist mobilization process to critical events is more complicated. As opposed to the Catalan case, where the secessionist movement can be seen as political response to popular demands, the Scottish case is strongly linked to the electoral success of one party – the *SNP*. However, as the analysis will further emphasize, their electoral success did not come because of their secessionist agenda, but rather despite of it. The *SNP* did extraordinarily well as a governing party in Scotland which granted them the opportunity to form a majority government. They then used their favorable political position to put the secessionist issue on the agenda, which in turn kicked-off a debate that increased support for independence quite drastically.

3.3.4.2 Evolution of regional parties

The Scottish case is perhaps then better seen in relation to a theoretical perspective that emphasizes the evolution of regional parties from niche parties to catch-all parties. This implies that regional parties today should have a catch-all profile within its domain in order to be electorally successful, and must then move beyond the terms defining niche parties. Harmel and Svåsand (1993) present three phases for, what they refer to as, '*entrepreneurial issue parties*' on the path from birth to institutionalization. These are the phases of *identification*, *organization*, and *stabilization*. Regional parties have historically often been characterized by the importance of their leadership, spearheaded by a charismatic figure – indeed a typical trademark of niche parties. In fact, most regionalist parties have been led by a single charismatic leader, who often, either solely or amongst others, was the founding father of the party. This is important for the first phase in establishing and effectively communicating the party's message. In phase two, which often implies that the reign of the

charismatic leader is coming to an end, the strong leadership resource might become a problem. The new leadership is often less charismatic and may have different approaches, objectives and tactics which might involve a setback for the party. However, if the party by that time has made it into the second or third phase, and thus is organized and stabilized, it can electorally survive the leadership alternations (De Winter 1998: 222-223). Although Harmel and Svåsand's phases may reflect a general trend in the developments of regional parties all together, there are of course substantial differences in how successful these parties are in playing out this party role. I thus argue that the professionalization and the institutionalization of the *SNP* are particularly significant factors in explaining Scottish secessionist mobilization.

3.3.4.3 Civic nationalism – the issue of immigration

Nearly all nationalist movements have moved from a doctrine of ethnic particularism to a civic discourse based on territorial nationalism which explicitly includes all citizens inhabiting the territory as members of the nation (Keating 2001b: 28). The civic discourse is of course important in broadening the electoral potential for regional parties. An aspect which underscores this point is the issue of immigration. The question of to what extent immigration weakens national identities has been widely covered in academic circles, however, it has been much less emphasized concerning minority national identities. This is somewhat surprising as the issue of immigration should be particularly relevant for such identities given their links to ethnicity. In theory, immigration may be thought of as a direct peril to minority nationalism, as it has the potential to water down the cultural and linguistic basis of national minorities. It may thus upset the historic balances between the regional minority and the majority in the country as a whole, and in turn affect the potential for nationalist mobilization (Banting and Soroka 2012: 157). On the other hand, another theoretical assessment is that, rather than being a peril to regional identity, immigration might contribute to strengthening of the regional culture vis-à-vis the majority culture of the state. Minority nationalities with big flows of foreign immigration might for instance view themselves as cosmopolitan melting pots, and in this way produce an identity opposing the one of the state (Fitjar 2010: 527). The empirical research on the matter underpins the dilemma national minorities' face. Hepburn (2009b) argues that the way regionalist parties use the element of immigration, and link this to their territorial projects, varies substantially from country to country. She points to Catalonia and Scotland, to illustrate that *"(...) some parties have welcomed immigration as a way of boosting their economies and expanding and diversifying national population."* In contrast, in

Bavaria and Northern-Italy the parties have *"(...) rejected immigration as a threat to the labor market, and argue that it will undermine and fragment the national community* (Hepburn 2009b: 22)*."* From this it should be further explored to what extent the accommodation of immigrants plays a part in explaining the increased support for secession in Scotland and Catalonia.

3.3.5. Response of central government

(5) Successful democratic mobilization presupposes a reaction from the central government.

As spelled out by Wood; *"(...)despite propitious preconditions for secession and the successful rise of a secessionist movement, the central government's response will have an important, possibly conclusive effect on the outcome of a secessionist attempt* (Wood 1981: 125)*."* Theoretical accounts generally emphasize that central governments have two basic options in responding to a secessionist threat. One is through coercive repression. The other is through assimilation, which most often implies an attempt to rebuild the state in a manner that more fully recognizes existing plural division trough constitutional reform (Wood 1981: 125-126; Hechter 1992; Lijphart 1977). In a well-established democratic framework the latter is in sense already implemented through devolved political arrangements and coercive repression is hardly an applicable reaction in a democratic context. Moreover, the abovementioned theoretical accounts assess government response with an emphasis on how secessionist conflicts are resolved. From my analytical perspective the question is how the government response affects secessionist mobilization. With regards to this, the Scottish case and the Catalan case are fundamentally different. While the British government reacted in a cooperative fashion which ensured that a referendum settling the conflict was carried out, the Spanish response has, at least from a Catalan perspective, been highly adverse and applying a categorical and rigid interpretation of the Spanish constitution. I will in the analysis argue that both reactions have instigated secessionist demands. In the Scottish case it provided an arena for the secessionist mobilization to flourish. In the Catalan case it further fueled an already tense situation.

3.3.6 Perception of the EU

(6) Successful democratic mobilization presupposes a general perception of the EU as an ally.

Another expectation that needs to be pursued is the role of the EU in shaping the agenda of regional parties. This is important primarily for two reasons. First, the EU as an integration project has greatly influenced the very identity and ideology of regional parties. Second, as emphasized in the previous chapter, the EU represents a political backdrop which regional parties have to relate to and interact with in one way or another in order to be successful in pursuing their goals. What the EU essentially is, or by political actors, the public, and scholars is viewed to be, has shifted substantially over the course of the latter seven decades. Historically, the integration process has reached several milestones, which have transformed the original economic imperatives of the *'European Economic Community'* into a *'European Union'* much more politically focused (Farrows and Grindheim 2003). Theoretically, the academic debate was for long largely centered on the dichotomous camps of *neofunctionalists* and *intergovernmentalists* which sprung out from the initial working of Stanley Hoffman and Ernst Haas. While *neofunctionalism* theorize EU integration as a gradual and self-sustaining process, *intergovernmentalism* emphasize the persistent role of national governments as catalyzers of integration (Pollack 2001: 222). In the wake of this, and as the EU gradually has expanded its competences, these theoretical camps have developed and fragmented into a rather large array of different approaches, [22] which Pollack argues generally has established a new and redefined dichotomy of what he refers to as the rational and constructivist school. [23]

For my purpose it is interesting to assess how these basic views on the EU correspond to the identity of regional parties. Keating (2001c) has argued that the EU first and foremost is an external support system for minority nationalist regions. Nagel (2004) expands on this by stating that the EU-integration itself is of secondary concern to regional parties, and that their success primarily depends on their ability to mobilize at home. The influence of the EU on regions thus varies according to this ability. The EU, then, is more of symbolic value – however an important one. Independence, for example, becomes more attractive if the economic and social costs seem lower inside the EU (Nagel 2004: 75). A basic question is thus whether regional parties view the EU as positive or negative in the sense that it indeed is a process towards something like a *'United states of Europe',* or if it's doomed to remain essentially as nothing more than a refined framework of transnational cooperation. Corollary,

---

[22] Some of the most influential approaches include, Neorealist theory (See Waltz 1979), Liberal Intergovernmentalism (See Moravcsik 1993), Historical Institutionalism (See Pierson 1996), Multi-level Governance theory (See Hooghe and Marks 1996), and Rational-choice institutionalism (See Garrett and Tsebelis 1996).
[23] The former depict *"(…) European institutions as the products of conscious Member State design"*. The latter *"(…)posit a more profound role for EU institutions in socializing and constituting the actors within them* (Pollack 2001: 237)."

it raises the question of whether the EU is looked upon as an ally or an enemy of regional parties – an ally decreasing the necessity for traditional large states, and making smaller more homogenous states more viably, or an another foreign enemy encroaching on local sovereignty and identity (Jolly 2007: 110). This is an important aspect of secessionist mobilization because it sets the terms of what kind of world successfully seceded states expect to enter. As the EU to date never has been faced with the challenge, the empirical evidence relating to how it in fact will respond to a territory of a member state seceding is scarce. In the debates unfolding in Catalonia and Scotland, the EU generally took a passive stance and referred to the matter as a domestic affair up to the respective member states to sort out. However, and rather surprisingly, the European Commission President at the time, Jose Manuel Barroso, in an interview stated that it would be *"(…)extremely difficult, if not impossible* (BBC News 2014c)*"*, for an independent Scotland to join the EU.

Whether Barroso's statements reflect the attitudes of the EU as a political actor is of course difficult to assess, but they nonetheless highlight the practical complexity and uncertainty the electorate in secessionist regions face. It is therefore relevant in the analysis to assess to what extent the perceptions of EU as a positive or negative force affects general support for the secessionist projects.

CHAPTER FOUR: Methodology

The purpose of this study is to explain Scotland's and Catalonia's shift from mobilizing for autonomy within the state framework to secession. This is a complex task containing various research routes and a large array of potential explanation factors. The research design I have chosen, which I believe will best function to achieve the aims set for the thesis, is a multiple case study. In the following chapter I will present the research design in greater detail and elaborate on the underlying justifications and priorities made in choosing this methodological approach. I will also evaluate strengths and weaknesses of the research design.

4.1 The tradeoff between qualitative and quantitative research

Quantitative research approaches are typically praised for having the ability to analyze several variables across numerous cases. Qualitative approaches on the other hand are generally described for their advantages in treating one or a few cases in a thorough and holistic manner. The everlasting and at times heated debate between the two methodological camps is originated in the tradeoff between generalizability and complexity. As Ragin (1987) points out:

> *"The goal of most comparative social science is to produce explanations of macrosocial phenomena that are general but also show an appreciation of complexity. This, generality and complexity often compete with each other, even in a single study. An appreciation of complexity sacrifices generality; an emphasis on generality encourages a neglect of complexity. It is difficult to have both (Ragin 1987: 54)."*

Furthermore, Ragin describes the quantitative approach as predominantly being *variable-oriented*, while the qualitative approach is *case-oriented*. While the former approaches by nature are defined by the utilization of well-established formalized statistical methods, the qualitative methods are far less standardized and rigid in their application. Their research designs can, as opposed to what the predominant view often suggests, be either qualitative or quantitative, or a mix. Furthermore, the case-oriented method tends to be centered on evidence, while the variable-oriented strategy is first and foremost centered on theory (Ragin 1987: 53). This opens up for another distinction between the quantitative and qualitative approach; namely, that the former typically is hypothesis testing and thus deductive in nature, while the latter is hypothesis generating and inductive (Gerring 2007: 39). This is an important distinction regarding the development of my research design, as my approach lies somewhere in between the two. The main chunk of my theoretical framework

builds on an already established literature which gives me the opportunity to test certain underlying empirical expectations. The crux in my research question, however, aims to explore a much less developed landscape concerning the leap from the traditional struggle for some sort of deepened autonomy seen in most cases, to the forceful secessionist mobilization that is being played out in Scotland and Catalonia. I will elaborate further on this point below.

4.2 Choosing the case study approach

A natural starting point in outlining the logic behind the choice of my research design is with the definition of a case study. In the following sections I will elaborate on a couple of definitions of the case study – a methodological approach that has been exposed to enormous critical firepower in methodological debate over the latter decades. On the basis of this understanding of the case study I can progress to the more practical task of outlining my specific research design. Before doing that, however, I will also elaborate on three main reasons of why I believe the case study to be the most suitable methodological path to pursue in answering my research question.

4.2.1 Defining the case study

The case study has been defined in numerous ways up through the history of social science. Many definitions are rather definitions of specific types of case studies rather than definitions of the concept itself. The point of this section is to give a brief account of what a case study as an overarching concept is.

My research design, which I will outline below, builds on two general definitions of the case study. First, Gerring (2007) defines it in the following way; *"the case study approach to research is most usefully defined as an intensive study of a single unit or a small number of units (the cases), for the purpose of understanding a larger class of similar units (a population of cases)* (Gerring 2007: 37)."

The case study is often mistreated as being a subject of a study of solely one unit. However, what Gerring's definition provides is that a case study research design can be comprised of several case studies, and thus an element of cross-case analysis which undoubtedly strengthens the study with regards to generalizing the sample to a larger population.

Yin (2009) defines the case study in two dimension; a dimension of scope and a dimension of technicality. Regarding the first, he states that; *"a case study is an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon in depth and within its real-life context, especially*

when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident (Yin 2009: 18).*"*

This part of the definition is valuable in the sense that it hits the nail on the head in terms of the nature of the topic of my study. Above all, what my study aims to achieve is to contribute to a broader understanding of a contemporary phenomenon which potentially can have vast implications for the way we understand politics. Moreover, precisely because of the complexity between *'phenomenon'* and *'context',* it is my belief that our understanding of the topic, generally is more superficial than what its importance should imply. Proceeding with the technical definition of Yin, he writes that;

> *"The case study inquiry copes with the technically distinctive situation in which there will be many more variables of interest than data points, and as one result relies on multiple sources of evidence, with data needing to converge in a triangulating fashion, and as another result benefits from the prior development of theoretical propositions to guide data collections and analysis* (Yin 2009: 18).*"*

On the path to developing a valid answer to my research question, numerous aspects have to be accounted for and evaluated. While my theoretical framework is built upon previous scholarly work and empirical expectations will derive from this, the decisive part of my project is likely to rest upon the explorative part where surveying multiple sources of empirical evidence will be essential. These less explored routes will, of course, in line with the definition of Yin, be guided by already developed theoretical propositions as these lay the foundation of what aspects that needs to be pursued in addition to already relative solid established explanatory factors.

4.2.2 Opting for the case study

My first task is to explain why I have chosen a qualitative research approach over a quantitative one. This is primarily done for three reasons. The first and obvious reason is, as mentioned above, that my research question entails an essential exploratory element. The theoretical framework I have designed to apply on my cases is anchored in already well established literature, and hypotheses of what affects minority nationalist mobilization. However, the defined outcome I aim to explain – *a referendum on the political agenda being put forward* – I argue is a new phenomenon that has not yet matured sufficiently to attract much attention in academic circles. Hence, the challenge for my approach is to evaluate the relative importance of different explanatory factors and more importantly establish how they

interplay. In addition I will be on the lookout for potentially new explanatory factors. My research design thus has features that are both hypothesis testing and hypothesis generating. I argue that this in itself is reason enough to opt for qualitative means. Without overestimating the innovative aspect of my paper, Gerring is in my view correct in emphasizing that case studies usually is better than quantitative cross-case studies when *"(...) a subject is being encountered for the first time or is being considered in a fundamentally new way."* The fuzzy nature of the research design grants such designs an advantage at the exploratory level because it allows the researcher to pursue a multitude of hypotheses in an *'rough-and-ready'* way (Gerring 2007: 40-41).

Case studies are often by definition portrayed as being methodological qualitative in design. This view is however widely criticized by scholars defending the values of the case studies. Looking at the fact that case studies may indeed also very well be quantitative, or partly quantitative in design, this simply is wrong (Yin 2009: 19). Gerring (2004: 341), for instance, argues that the correct way of understanding the case study as a method is as a *"(...)particular way of defining cases, not a way of analyzing cases or a way of modeling causal relations."* (Gerring 2004: 341). A second reason for my qualitative choice thus needs to be accounted for. Accounting for what drives minority nationalist mobilization has been thoroughly examined in the literature as a whole. However, as I have established in the literature review little coherence can be identified with regards to which factors lead to a certain outcome in assessing minority nationalist mobilization. Evidence proves that the same factors can lead to very different outcomes in similar cases, and therefore that causal relationships are so complex that they cannot be social scientifically absorbed or that the phenomenon is so unpredictable that no causal generalization can be made. Perhaps each case indeed above all is unique. This assumption, however, would be a meaningless point of departure for my project and in fact questioning the purpose of practicing comparative politics at all as an important defining characteristic of good social science is precisely the goal of *'making inference'* (King et al. 1994: 7). Despite the at times blurry and complex theoretical field my research question builds upon, my project nevertheless aspires to draw causal inferences of the phenomena being studied.

It is this theoretical field that constitutes the bedrock of my theoretical framework, and it could probably have been better suited as basis for a theory driven quantitative research approach if my research question did not have the exploratory element. However, precisely because of my research question, I argue that that these rough theoretical waters are far from ideal for a quantitative statistical analysis as identifying the relevant variables and in the next

step operationalizing them would be extremely difficult. Although there is no lack of potential variables being introduced in the literature, their relative importance varies substantially across cases and also within cases. With the outlook towards generalizing my argument to a larger population, the key is to make an assessment of the value of the variables relative to the outcome I want to explain. I have to determine their relative importance singularly. More importantly, this has to be done by also evaluating how they interplay. In addition I have to be on the search of new explanatory factors. In so doing, I thus believe the best chance to find convincing answers is through the thorough and flexible manners of case study research which gives me the possibility to turn and evaluate all the pieces in the puzzle.

The last reason is related to the first. One of the common rationales for conducting a case study is when the case or cases represents something *extreme* or *unique* (Yin 2009: 47). In my study the goal is to explain not so much the rarity of the cases themselves, but the unique outcome from what normally judged as a 'normal' cases. This fact provides me with two incentives for steering clear of quantitative techniques. First, that the cases in the population basically are pretty similar in characteristics. Identifying the decisive mechanisms is thus a matter of revealing relationships between variables that a rigid statistical analysis probably cannot pick up. Second, because there exists only two cases representing the outcome of interest, and the variation on the dependent variable across the population hence is small, a large-N study, even though well specified, would probably not give very clear results.

4.3 Research design: the multiple case study design

In the two previous sections I have focused on the tradeoffs between quantitative and qualitative research approaches, and with the definition of the case study in general. I have argued why I find the case study and qualitative research techniques in particular feasible for the research question I have at hand. I will now part ways with this general discussion, and turn to the specific outline of my research design. Taking advantage of the flexible nature of case study entrepreneurship, I have gathered inspiration and borrowed features from several methodological sub-branches.

First of all I have to highlight that the formal methodological branch of which my research design belongs, is a multiple case study. The multiple case study has occasionally been identified as a separate method distinctive from the case study. This is due to the fact that adding more cases naturally gives the study a comparative dimension. Introducing specific techniques of sampling and analysis, and using terms such as the *comparative case*

method,[24] some scholars have opted for refining the multiple case study as an independent methodological approach. However, the multiple case study and the case study, are probably better seen as being two variants of case study designs. Simply put, a multiple case study usually consists of several holistic cases. Then only substantial difference from the traditional single case study design then, is that several single cases are being treated simultaneously. This is of course much more resource and time-consuming, which makes a well-founded selection of cases particularly important (Yin 2009: 19, 59-60).

4.3.1 Most Similar System Design

In selecting the cases I have opted for a *MSSD*. The reasoning behind the *MSSD*-approach is fairly straightforward as it aims to identify 'intersystemic' differences through the selection of cases with 'intersystemic' similarities. The 'system' in my study is minority nationalist regions. As spelled out by Przeworski and Teune, the logic is that *"(…)common systemic characteristics are conceived of as 'controlled for', whereas intersystemic differences are viewed as explanatory variables. The number of common characteristics sought is maximal and the number of not shared characteristics sought, minimal* (Przeworski and Teune 1970: 33)*."* Assuming that the basis for minority nationalist mobilization in the population of the study are fairly similar, the MSSD provides me the opportunity to follow this logic in order to identify deviating explanatory variables which in the next step can be further looked into.

4.4 Case selection

The reason why I have opted for this design is two-fold. Both reasons are related to an inherent problem case study practitioner's face, namely dealing with case selection bias. Selection bias refers to selection of a case or cases which fits the outcome the researcher wants to explain, not paying attention to all the other cases in the universe which does not. First, I have decided to research both cases corresponding with the defined outcome of the study. Although these two cases obviously also are all the cases in this category, it nevertheless strengthens my project in terms of proposing causal relationships as opposed to if I only investigated one of the cases. A common advice in widening the scope of generalizability regarding case studies is to expand the sample of cases, as long as it does not affect the holistic nature of each case. Applying Scotland and Catalonia as my two main cases, which I refer to as *positive cases*, I consider a manageable task considering time- and resource frame of my project.

---

[24] See Lijphart (1975).

Second, Geddes (2003) emphasizes that without also including a sample of cases which does not represents the outcome, one cannot know whether the explanatory factors identified really vary with the outcome under investigation (Geddes 2003: 91). For dealing with this I have also added a sample of *negative cases* which is constituted by Wales and The Basque Country. Wales and The Basque Country, respectively, are both within the same national political framework as the two main cases and thus figures cases ideal for comparison within the MSSD. This design corresponds to the emphasis of Snyder (2001) and Lijphart (1971), who advances the technique of breaking up the common case unit of countries, and instead focus on regions. This can bring advantages in the study of both *with-in nation* and *between-nation* comparisons. While subnational units within a single country often are good comparable match because of their contextual dimension in terms of their similarity on cultural, historical, ecological, and socioeconomic aspects, the comparison of similar subnational units across countries may be a more powerful strategy for making meaningful causal inferences (Snyder 2001: 96-97).Moreover, it is essential to note that it is the main cases that is the principal point of attention in the study, and thus that the negative cases for practical reasons cannot receive the same amount of attention as the two. The negative cases can thus be labeled as *shadow cases;* which are less intense case studies which serve the purpose of complementing or cross-validating findings derived via the main case studies. To expand on this it is useful to introduce Gerring's (2004) conceptual wrapping of *informal* and *formal* units. He states that *"(...) the formal unit is the unit chosen for intensive analysis – the person, group, organization, country, region, country, or other bounded phenomenon of which the writer has in-depth knowledge. Informal units consist of all other units that are brought into the analysis in a peripheral way. (...) they are always more superficially surveyed than the formal unit under study* (Gerring 2004: 344). However, Gerring also emphasizes that the distinction of formal- and informal units is a matter of degree, and that the more equality of treatment granted to the informal units, the more the project leans toward a cross-unit style of analysis. As I have argued that the negative units in my study are treated as cases in a multiple case study, dubbing them as informal units with peripheral importance will be to discredit their significance in the study. I hence argue that framing them as *shadow cases* is a more precise term.

4.5 Data collection

An imperative characteristic of case studies is that data is collected from multiple sources of evidence (Creswell 2013). This is a major strength in two senses. First, it provides the

researcher with the opportunity to *"(...) address a broad range of historical and behavioral issues* (Yin 2009: 115)."* For my study this is crucial because of the necessity to combine a set of remote factors (contextual factors), which are typically drawn up in previous literature, with proximate factors (triggering factors), which often are less clear cut and to a larger degree are revealed through the scrutiny of alternative sources of evidence. Second, and more importantly, multiple sources of evidence open up for the development of *converging lines of inquiry* where several independent sources of evidence are triangulated, making the findings of the study much more convincing and accurate to the reader (Yin 2009: 115-116).

With this is in my mind, I set out with a broad and flexible perspective in the searching and identification of potential evidence. Generally speaking, these are extracted from two sources; *semi-structured interviews and documentation*, which I will elaborate on in the following two sub-sections.

4.5.1 Interviewing experts – Semi structured interviews

As the most important part of my data collection procedure I have carried out a field work project in Edinburgh and Barcelona where I have conducted a number of interviews with experts on the topic and cases assessed in the thesis. The interviews were carried out in a semi-structured vein where the goal was to accumulate in-depth knowledge about my cases in relation to my research topic. Semi-structural interviews are typically characterized by being organized around a set of predetermined open-ended questions, with additional questions emerging during the course of the conversation (DiCicco-Bloom and Crabtree 2006: 315). A copy of the interview-guide which my interviews were built around can be found in the appendix in the back.

In the literature the term *expert* and *elite* is frequently used interchangeably referring to the same sort of respondent. Although some nuances occasionally are made, the underlying logic in conducting such interviews is more or less the same, and as Littig (2009) states; "*no systematic differences can be determined as far as access to the field and actual interaction in the interview are concerned* (Littig 2009: 106)." Furthermore, Littig states that experts- and elites are distinguished by two key criteria: the knowledge and the power they possess (Littig 2009: 106). While an *elite* arguably also by large is connoted by the power aspect, I chose to use the term *expert* as I perceive this to be a more fitting characterization of the individuals I have interviewed. Meuser and Nagel (2009) supplements the definition of the expert role by emphasizing that it must be understood by the distinction between expert knowledge and common-sense knowledge – that an expert possesses some form of specialized knowledge

which the expert interview is designed to discover. Furthermore, this knowledge is exclusive and highly potential *"(…)because and in so far it is linked with the power of defining the situation* (Meuser and Nagel 2009: 18)." Pfadenhauer (2009) makes a further distinction between the *specialist* and the *expert* that is relevant for my purposes. While the *specialist* has a task-related, well-defined and partial knowledge within a special field, the *expert* knowledge is more of a good overview of the overall knowledge in the relevant field. The *expert* is signified by holding a more comprehensive knowledge and having the capability to solve problems, but also to identify and account for problem causes as well as for solution principles (Pfadenhauer 2009: 82).

Bogner and Menz (2009) suggest a threefold categorization of the purposes an expert interview; *exploratory*, *theory generating* and *systematizing*. The *exploratory* interview serves to provide the researcher to *"(…)establish an initial orientation in a field that is either substantively new or poorly defined* (Bogner and Menz 2009: 46)." This implies that the interviewing is done in an early stage of the research to help identify or clarify a problem for further research. In the *theory generating* interview the respondent is no longer a means by which the researcher can obtain useful information and elucidation of a topic under investigation. Rather he or she is a source of information from which the researcher aims to generate theory through the interpretive generalization of a typology. The goal is an *"(…)analytical reconstruction of the subjective dimension of expert knowledge* (Bogner and Menz 2009: 48)." The *systematizing* interview, where I place my approach, is the most common. This is related to the *exploratory* interview in the sense that it seeks to access the exclusive knowledge of the respondent. However, here the information is gathered as empirical evidence. The interview thus seek to obtain systematic and complete information on 'objective' matters (Bogner and Menz 2009: 47).

This element of the *expert role* is crucial in the underlying reasoning behind my selection of interviewees. Altogether I have interviewed twelve *experts* of whom eight are scholars and four are political journalists; four scholars and two journalists where the interviews were focused on Scotland and with a comparative perspective on Wales , and correspondingly four scholars and two journalists where the center of attention was on Catalonia, and a comparison to The Basque Country. What signifies the scholars is that they all are prominent in their general field of study. Although their specialized field naturally varies somewhat, they are all experts in the sense reflected by Pfadenhauer above; that they have good overview over my field interest and they can contribute to shed light on the problems my research approach poses.

According to DiCicco-Bloom and Crabtree semi-structured interviews are often the sole data source for a qualitative research project (DiCicco-Bloom and Crabtree 2006: 315). Although my aim is to supplement the interviews with other sources of information, the interviews nevertheless serve as the bedrock of my empirical findings. The interviews do not primarily serve to generate empirical knowledge per se, but more importantly to help knit together and understand already 'visible' knowledge in order to reveal complex causal relationships. Hence, as interviewing scholars representing parts of the theoretical framework the study builds on may seemingly be regarded as gathering superfluous information, this is a crucial remark to make. The four journalists I have interviewed serve to nuance the bigger picture. While scholars might restrict their evaluations within theory and formal empirical evidence, and thus be careful in discussing themes which they not have formal knowledge of, journalists are usually more freely spoken and public-minded in their orientation.

4.5.2 Documentation

The documentation dimension of my data collection is relative to the expert interviews of secondary importance, and is in the thesis primarily used to supplement and cross-check evidence derived from the interviews. This hierarchy of sources is reflected in the empirical presentation which predominantly is built on and guided by information gathered through the interviews. Nevertheless, using documents as a source is especially valuable in studies of aspiring to asses developmental dynamics and processes of change over longer time periods (Grønmo 2004: 120). Moreover, they are recommended to be utilized in combination with other sources (Yin 2009: 103). The evidence gathered from documentation is extracted from the following sources: *secondary literature, descriptive statistics,* and, *primary literature* which mainly implies newspaper articles and government documents. Grønmø (2004: 120-121) makes a distinction between documents that are factually based and documents that are based on opinions. The main common characteristic of the documents applied in this thesis is that they are all factually based. As such, I consider them to be valuable supplements to the interviews which inevitably reflect certain degrees of subjectivity.

4.6 Assessing the quality of the research design

In evaluating the quality of empirical social research in general, and thus also for the case study design, four common tests are usually applied. These are the evaluation test of *construct validity*, *internal validity*, *external validity*, and, *reliability* (Yin 2009: 40). In the remainder for this section I will in order briefly presents the four test-components and relatedly give an assessment of my research design.

Construct validity refers to whether the study really investigates, or measures what it claims to do. The concept is linked to the various operational measures in the study. This aspect is arguably particularly important for case studies where the operationalization is far less rigid than in the case of statistical analysis and thus more difficult to evaluate the quality of. It is therefore crucial for case studies that they contain a lucid and thorough assessment of the key concepts in the study. To address this challenge a substantial part of chapter two is devoted to define and explain the most important concepts I utilize in the thesis.

Internal validity regards the causal relationships a study claims to reveal. This test refers to two aspects. First, that the causal relationships indeed are causal, and not affected by other additional variables which the researcher has not considered. Second, that the broader scientific inferences are correct. Regarding the first test, I claim that the holistic aspirations of the case study design and the analytical procedure serves to present me with a broad specter of potential explanatory factors. This extensive investigation basis should grant me the opportunity to single out irrelevant explanations and in the next step reveal the decisive mechanisms at play. Compared to statistical methods, however, the major drawback with my qualitative research design is that it ultimately is dependent on my personal interpretation. As such the 'objective' quality of the findings in the thesis is naturally more difficult to evaluate. Nonetheless, through a thorough empirical presentation and theoretical discussion, I aspire to compensate for this. As a second measure, I will towards the end briefly discuss the potential for rival explanations.

External validity refers to the aspect of generalization. For a case study to be valid to the domain to which the findings can be generalized must be convincingly presented and argued for. I regard this aspect to be particularly important in my research project which aspires to explore and present causal factors on a topic where this previously has proved to be challenging. With this in mind chapter two offers a thorough elaboration of the empirical scope of my thesis. The primary purpose of this is to downscale the scope sufficiently so that a theoretical generalization is warranted. That being said, taking into account the complexity of the agenda put forward, any causal conclusions will naturally have to reflect a certain modesty.

Reliability is about the verifiability of the formal aspects of the study. In Yin's words the aim is that *"(…)if a later investigator followed the same procedures as described by an earlier investigator and conducted the same case study all over again, the later investigator should arrive at the same findings and conclusions* (Yin 2009: 45).*"* The research project should therefore aspire to document the various procedures in a clear and orderly fashion so

that a replica of the study could potentially be done. To deal with this I have attempted to give an accurate account of the underlying logic of my research design and a more practically oriented description of how the design analytically is applied. Furthermore, the data which the thesis is based on is primarily based on interviews. The empirical presentation reflects this through frequent citations to the transcriptions of the interviews.[25] As a means to validate the interviews a list of the respondents with details about the interviews is included as an appendix together with a copy of the interview guide which the interviews were based on.

4.7 Procedure of the analysis

The analytical procedure of the thesis is inspired by two techniques. In the first and broader sense it serves as an *historical explanation. Historical explanations* intend to explain outcomes that have happened, either in the distant past or in the recent past. As such, they are inferences about the causes of specific outcomes in particular cases, and not too concerned with broader generalizations (Mahoney et al. 2009: 116). In understanding the secessionist mobilization processes in Scotland and Catalonia, and in relation to the holistic nature of the case study, I regard it as imperative to investigate the cases from a broad historical perspective. By linking recent triggering (proximate) factors to the contextual and pre-conditional (remote) factors, I hope to give an adequate answer be given to the research question put forward. As such, the analytical procedure also draws on the logic of *process tracing* which can be depicted as an attempt to *"(...)identify the intervening causal process – the causal chain and causal mechanism – between an independent variable (or variables) and the outcome of the dependent variable* (George and Bennett 2005: 206)*."*

More practically speaking my analytical emphasis can be summed in two steps. By comparing the developments of Basque minority nationalism and Catalan minority nationalism, and the Welsh with the Scottish, an explanation of why the Basque and Welsh cause has not taken a secessionist course can be given. Then, by seeing the positive cases of Scotland and Catalonia in relation to each other, provides me with the insights to assess how and to what extend the cases can be explained by common causal factors. Together these two steps should serve as an appropriate basis for drawing some general insights about how democratic secessionist mobilization within the empirical domain of the thesis works.

---

[25] This is done in the following way: respondent number + surname of respondent. Example: (R2 Keating).

CHAPTER FIVE: Empirical presentation of Scotland and Wales in the UK-context

5.1 Scotland: review of Scottish nationalism and the secessionist mobilization process

5.1.1 Scottish national identity and the pre-devolution political dimension

Scottish identity is described as an archetypical civic form of identity being oriented towards social and economic goals (R3 McEwen). In the literature it is frequently argued that Scotland represents a paradigmatic case of *civic* rather than *ethnic* nationalism, insofar as conventional cultural features such as language or religion do not mark Scotland out as particularly distinctive from England (McCrone and Paterson 2002: 54). Keating (R2) points to the fact that in Scotland there lacks historic grievances which often is associated with minority nationalism elsewhere. The language issue has never been salient as Gaelic is spoken only by a tiny proportion of the people. MacMahon (R6) amplifies this point by stating; "*I suppose that historians would say that after the act of union, that Scottish identity survived. Although Scotland became part of the UK, it didn't ever become North-Britain. Although there is not a linguistic culture, there is a strong Scottish identity.*"

Entering the UK as an act of unionism, Scotland from the start had many of the defining characteristics of a state. Convery (R4) points out that this somewhat unusual combination of having separate legal system, but without a separate legislature, made that accommodation of Scottish distinctiveness in to the UK and inevitable issue on the political agenda. Thus, the idea that Scotland is a distinctive historic nation has never been disputed in the British political discourse (R3 McEwen). The traditional Scottish discourse has therefore never been driven by language, culture and a struggle for recognition, but rather by certain historical themes about Scotland being a nation and a self-governing community that embraces political and social values that set them apart from the inhabitants of England, Wales, and Northern Ireland (R2 Keating; King 2012). McEwen (R3) expands on this by saying;

> "*It has for long been focused on economic and social goals, and around resources – natural resources to a certain extent, but just human resources and economic resources. The idea has been that you need maximum self-government in order to address social and economic needs, priorities, goals and potential. So it has been a sort of social and economic basis for a very long time.*"

61

Scotland formally had its national distinctiveness politically represented long before devolution through *Scottish Office* and the *Scottish Secretary* (later Secretary of State for Scotland), which in spite of being offices of central government, implied a symbolic significance of representing Scotland within the UK (Mitchell 2003). The devolution of 1999 entailed a formal transfer of powers to the Scottish parliament that largely were based upon administrative responsibilities that previously had been assigned to the Scottish Office. These included primary legislative power over an range of domestic policies, including health, education, rural affairs, the environment and economic development (McEwen 2013: 256-258).

This political dimension prior to devolution may help explain the fact that independence always has had a relatively broad support among the Scots. According to historical data, support was at about twenty percent when it was first measured in the 1960s. In the 1980s and early 1990s it came up to around thirty percent, where it has remained until the referendum campaign started (R2 Keating; Curtice and Heath 2000).

5.1.2 The mobilization process

The most important component in explaining the secessionist mobilization in Scotland is undoubtedly the *SNP*. The nationalist party has over the latter decades had an extraordinary development from a fringe party to a highly professional and effective mainstream party with broad support throughout Scotland. The evolution climaxed in 2011 when the *SNP* were elected into a majority government in the Scottish Parliament. The party was then in a position where they could initiate a bid for independence which further catalyzed a movement that culminated into the Scottish people rejecting independence by a narrow five percent margin in the referendum of September 18th last year (BBC News 2014b). As Macnab (R5) emphasizes, this was a process no one would have forecasted in advance;

> *"It was a big surprise. You wouldn't thought going into that election that there was going to be a big drive for Scottish independence and that we were about to see something historic here. It didn't feel like that. It looked like Labour would win a again, and then six months later the SNP won a majority and we are all talking about a independence referendum."*

5.1.3 The rise of the SNP

Although the *SNP* has a relatively long history and can be traced back to the 1930s when it became the first party to have Scottish independence as one of its objectives (R2 Keating), its

political influence was throughout the 20th century modest. Figure 3 displays the development of the electoral results of the *SNP* in the UK general elections from 1950-2015 in the Scottish constituencies. Prior to the 2015-elections where their political fortunes astonishingly skyrocketed[26], the graph confirms *SNP's* marginal role in Scottish politics. Macnab (R5) portrays the *SNP* in UK politics in the following way; "*Up to devolution they were nothing. They couldn't win seats up in Westminster. They were sort of a bandwagon. A side show. They maybe had four or five MPs. They were like a guerilla-movement down at Westminster. They couldn't do anything at all.*"

Figure 3: Evolution of the *SNP* in Westminster elections in the Scottish constituencies
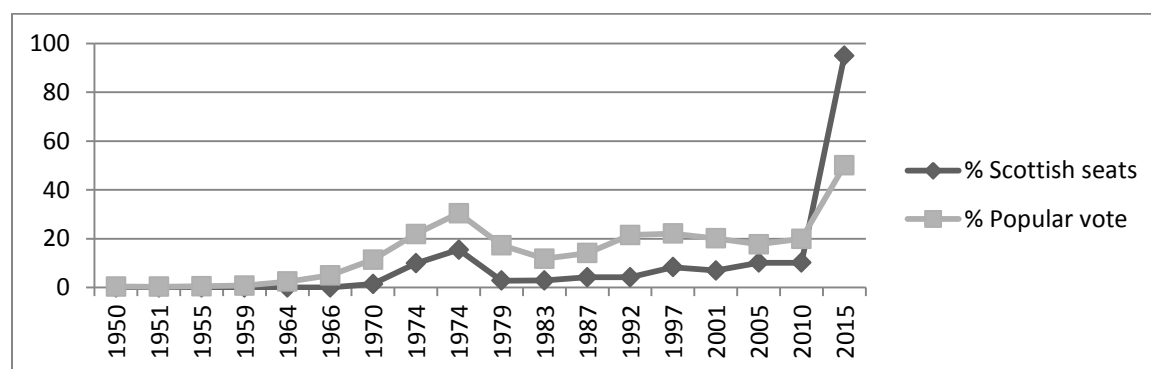
Source: (The Electoral Commission 2015) *Notes:* I have elaborated the graph on the basis of data on election results.

Starting in the 70s the party starts to make some initial political headway. Prior to this though, MacMahon (R6) portrays the *SNP* as by the general public being looked upon as 'a bit of a joke'; "*They were sort of frowned upon – not regarded as serious politicians.*" The boost in the 70s occurred on the back of the discovery of North-Sea oil, whereupon the *SNP* managed to make a good case of the economic argument for independence. Furthermore, a general wave of opposition to the Thatcher-government in the 1980s which emphasized a liberal economic doctrine and a centralized vision of British nationalism further galvanized a national awakening in Scotland and consequentially also an increase in electoral support for the *SNP*. Hepburn (R1) explains that these two contextual aspects also brought The Scottish Labour Party over to the pro-devolution side, together with the *SNP* and the *Liberal Democrats*, which eventually led to the establishment of the Scottish parliament in 1999. By

---

[26] The SNP won 56 out of 59 seats in an election that has been depicted as an *"almost total Labour wipeout"* (The Telegraph 2015)". This represents a new climax of the evolution of the SNP, and might have future consequences for the Scottish independence-question. The development is, however, too recent to be treated in my analysis.

then the *SNP* had used its momentum to develop itself to a much more professional, well-funded and disciplined party (R6 MacMahon).

Once devolution was established, the *SNP* then had a whole new political playing field. It was not any longer a victim of being an insignificant party in the majoritarian first past the post Westminster system. As underscored by Hepburn (R1); "*Suddenly it was the second biggest party within the Scottish parliament arguing on Scottish interests. That really changed the visibility and the electoral fortunes of the SNP.*" Or as spelled out by Macnab (R5); "*The creation of the Scottish parliament gave the SNP a sudden impetus that they never had before.*" Figure 4 shows the development in electoral results for *SNP* in the four Holyrood-elections that have been held thus far. As I will elaborate bellow the latter two, and particularly the 2011-election, are vital in assessing Scotland's secessionist mobilization.

Figure 4: Evolution of the *SNP* in Holyrood elections

Source: (The Electoral Commission 2015) Notes: I have elaborated the graph on the basis of data on election results.

5.1.4 The 2011-Scottish election
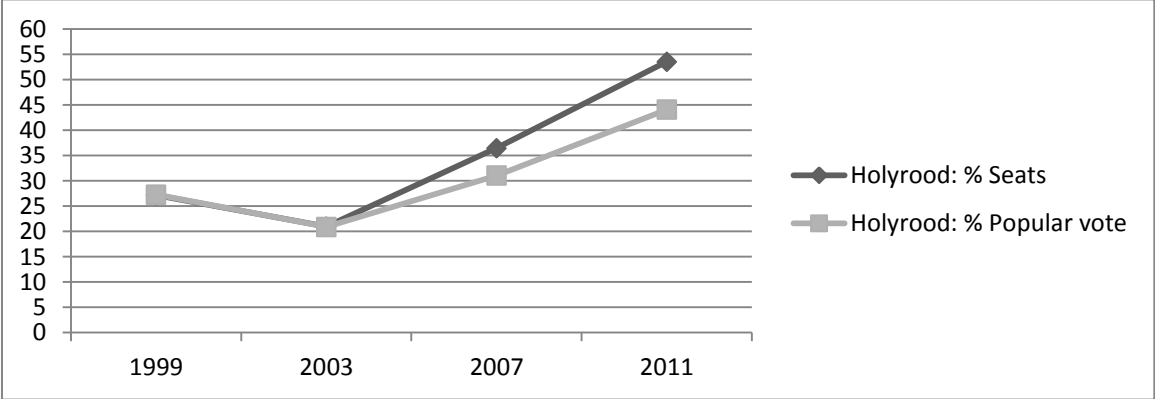
In the Scottish Parliament elections of 1999 and 2003 the *SNP* won substantial chunks of the Scottish vote; 27 percent in 1999 and 21 percent in 2003. It is, however, the 2007-election that is portrayed as the real turning point for the party and thus the first foreshadowing on what would play out about seven years later. In 2007 the *SNP* becomes the biggest party in Scotland with 31 % of the votes, and for the first time wins office in a minority government. The respondents depict the following four years as a term where the *SNP* did a splendid job in governing Scotland. It must also be noted that once in office they, following their manifesto commitment, attempted to put forward a referendum on independence. However, leading a minority coalition government they were not able to generate enough support from the parliament (R1 Hepburn). Coming up to the elections of 2011, they nevertheless could harvest

the rewards of a successful four year spell in office. Winning 44 % of the popular vote, giving them 69 out of 129 seats in the parliament (53%), the *SNP* suddenly led a majority government. This is a crucial event in explaining secessionist mobilization in Scotland. With a majority in the Parliament the *SNP* could unhindered bring the independence-referendum back on the political agenda. In Convery (R4) words; *"The point when it comes on the political agenda and is definitely going to happen, is when the SNP wins a majority in 2011. That's really when it becomes clear that it's definitely going to be a referendum."*

5.1.5 Explaining the electoral success of SNP

The respondents point to two important explanatory factors in understanding *SNP's* surprisingly massive election result of 2011. First they underscore that the popularity of *SNP* cannot be attributed to any general increase in support for independence. Convery (R4) and Hepburn (R1) emphasize that the biggest driver was that the *SNP* were perceived to be a very competent government;

> *"So even amongst people, who primarily identify as British, the SNP won a majority. In no way could the elections in 2007 or 2011 be portrayed as elections were the mains subject was independence. The main issues were valence issues, and the SNP were perceived to be the best at handling them. That's why they won* (R4 Convery)*."*

Hepburn (R1) expands on the argument by saying; *"though support for SNP has gone up, support for independence has not gone up at the same time. Only 35 % of Scots preferred independence. It hadn't really changed much since the 1970s."* As emphasized by Keating (R2), the electoral success can thus be said to have come in spite of their secessionist agenda, and not because of it;

> *"When the SNP won their first minority government in 2007, support for independence was going down. When they won with a majority in 2011, support for independence was going down again. The victory had nothing to do with independence. They gained the victory because they said this is not a vote for independence."*

In addition to being a good governing party, the respondents also set the *SNP's* success in relation to a significant structural factor – the failure of previously significant statewide-parties in Scotland. In general terms, Keating (R2) emphasizes the traditional importance of statewide parties in Scotland;

"Parties in Scotland have historically been amongst the most important brokers between Scotland and the UK. Until the end of the 20th century, these parties, all three of them really, but especially the Labour Party, have been able to play a British line in Scotland, but also look very Scottish. They have been ideological parties at center right and center left, but they have also been territorial brokerage parties, saying that they can get resources for Scotland, recognize Scotland in various ways through administrative devolution and therefore play Scottishness in to Britishness using all the identity arguments as pillars of Britishness. Since devolution they have lost the ability to do that. They have lost the plot somewhere."

The *Scottish Labour Party* was no longer seen as representing the interests of working class Scotland and as not having enough autonomy of the *UK Labour Party*. The success of the *SNP* can thus mainly be explained by the fact that they have overtaken the position Labour previously had in Scotland (R1 Hepburn). Additionally, the *Liberal Democrats* who usually have been relatively strong in Scotland entered an unpopular government coalition at the UK-level and consequentially suffered for that in Scotland (R4 Convery). Lastly, the *Conservative Party* has since devolution gradually declined in Scotland as the social base of their electorate has declined (R2 Keating).

In sum then, the combination of the *SNP* doing a solid job governing Scotland and the set-back of traditionally significant contenders to the party, meant that the *SNP* in 2011 was able to form a majority government.

5.1.6 The Edinburgh-Agreement

Once in majority government, it did not come as a surprise to anyone that there would be a referendum on independence in Scotland (R3 McEwen). Also, from the perspective of the UK-government there was not really ever any resistance against Scotland carrying out the referendum. To many outside observers, the emollient stand from the UK-government was rather surprising, as it contrasts state-reactions generally expected regarding issues challenging state-sovereignty. Through the Edinburgh-Agreement which was a formal agreement between The Secretary of State for Scotland, Michael Moore, the Prime Minister of the UK, David Cameron, and Scotland's First Minister, Alex Salmond, the powers to hold a referendum on independence was transferred from Westminster to the Scottish Parliament, and that the outcome of it would be respected (UK Government 2012). This smooth political process is by the respondents mainly attributed to three factors.

The first is related to the overarching recognition of Scotland as a distinctive nation that always has been apparent in British politics. Convery (R4) thus points out that there always has been an opinion in Westminster that Scotland theoretically has the possibility to secede;

> *"Westminster implicitly accepts that Scotland has the right to secede. This was conceded at a time when Scottish independence was such a remote prospect that it cost nothing to concede. But also in terms of the thinking of the Westminster model and the Westminster way of thinking about the British constitution, there is always the possibility of secession."*

Once the *SNP* had majority for the issue in parliament, the UK-government thus had a moral imperative to address and accommodate these demands; *"ultimately, they have accepted that Scotland has a right to secede, and flowing from that; if you have the right to secede, you have the right to a referendum on it* (R4 Convery)*."*

The second aspect portrayed by the respondents is that, once a referendum was inevitable, it was in the interest of both Scotland and the UK that the referendum had legitimacy – in other words that it would be legal, fair and decisive (R3 McEwen). Macnab (R5) emphasizes that there also without the Edinburgh-Agreement probably would have been a referendum in Scotland. Instead of being faced with the challenges to the legitimacy and formality of an unofficial vote, UK officials rather took the opportunity to partake in outlining the terms in which an official referendum would be carried out. These considerations included the timing of the referendum, that the ballot only included two options (yes and no), and that the British Electoral Commission had a role in oversight (R3 McEwen).

The third factor explaining the Edinburgh-Agreement is depicted as simply being a matter of that the UK-government was confident that the no-camp would win by a clear majority. As emphasized above, there was, looking at the polls or weighing the general political climate, no indications of any increased appetite for independence among the Scottish electorate. According to McEwen (R3); *"they were convinced that 'No' was winning big – Way way bigger than they did. So the political calculation was that this was a political opportunity for them too."* Keating (R2) further elaborates on this by explaining;

> *"Support for independence was at the time less than 30 %, so Cameron thought it was a safe thing to do. They decided to do it because they thought they could gain an easy victory, call the nationalist bluff, discredit them, guarantee the UK, and take the*

question off the agenda for another generation. Their assumption was that
independence not would be viable and that people would be scared and vote no. Had
they known that they would win by 55 % I'm not sure they would have done it."

5.1.7 The referendum debate

The debate and the fierce mobilization that followed the initiation of the referendum being put on the political agenda have surprised the respondents. Prior to the referendum process McEwen (R3) describes that there was a general satisfaction with Scotland's place in the UK; "*people kind of liked devolution. That was clearly the preference of most people; stronger devolution perhaps, but still there was broad satisfaction.*" Keating (R2) explains that with the referendum campaign, however, followed the unleashing of a process that was deeply democratizing; "*whichever side you voted on, you would be involved deeply in a very prolonged debate about the future of the country. From the perspective of the UK-government that was not intended at all.*" McEwen (R3) supplements by saying; "*having the debate generated this large movement that went far beyond the SNP. It wasn't really within their control. Furthermore, it generated an increased demand for independence.*"

Thus, it was not only the *SNP* who campaigned for independence. Hepburn (R2) highlights that the political dimension also included the Green party. More significantly, however, as the debate unfolded wider political and civic groups also latched on to the movement; "*rather than just being a political campaign, it was a very broad social movement in favour of independence.*" Keating (R2) further elaborates on the comprehensive nature of the movement, and how the movement appealed to elements way beyond the realm of nationalists';

> *"The referendum campaign drew in a lot of people who weren't nationalists, but who*
> *supported independence for completely different reasons. Mainly they are on the left,*
> *they are social democrats, they are greens, and they are elements of the far left who*
> *think that in Scotland there will be a different political balance – a different type of*
> *social compromise. So this is an opportunity to do things differently. It includes*
> *sections of the trade union movement, it includes the voluntary sector and it includes*
> *sections of the Labour party."*

5.1.8 The arguments of the debate

The respondents emphasize that the pro-independence movement successfully managed to set the narrative of the public debate (R6 MacMahon). In general terms they depict this narrative

to entail mainly three arguments for an independent Scotland. The first is the equality argument which basically implies that the Scots are people further to the left on the political spectrum; thus a more equal society with a preference towards more welfare spending and higher taxes. The second is the prosperity argument, which implies that Scotland would be better off economically as independent – mainly because the economic potential can be fulfilled due to the access to oil-money. The third is the democratic argument, which entails that Scots would be better off if they could chose the governments they want, and not being marginalized by the rest of the UK who frequently votes the Conservatives into government (R3 McEwen; R4 Convery; R5 Macnab).

It was not until the last couple of months of the campaign that the polls really started to show an increase in support for independence. In the days prior to the vote some polls even displayed the Yes-side marginally ahead (R1 Hepburn). As previously stated above, the final count showed a 55% victory to the unionist side. Regardless, the narrow loss was nonetheless seen as a great victory for the yes-side. As stated by Convery (R4); *"It's been a huge achievement for the SNP to get support for independence from a third to 45 percent."*

5.1.9 The appeal of the Yes-side

In explaining why the Yes-side managed to push the vote for support for independence up from around a third of the population to almost a half, the respondents emphasize the dynamics of the referendum debate. Especially decisive was the positive picture the Yes-campaign managed to portray of an independent Scotland comparative to the No-side. Hepburn (R1) states that; *"the short term explanations for this are the negativity of the no-campaign and its inability to present a very positive portrait of Scotland within the Union; while the Yes-campaign did a very good job at presenting a positive and hopeful case of independent Scotland."* Furthermore, the fact that the main arguments of the debate were completely devoid of nationalist references is also imperative in explaining the success of the pro-independent campaign. McEwen (R3) explains;

> *"Nationalism implies discomfort for some people. What the Yes-camp was quite successful in doing was presenting a case for independence that wasn't on the surface about nationalism. That generated belief in that Scotland is a nation that is distinctive, that has a distinctive set of priorities, and that it should have maximum amount of control over those decisions."*

69

Rather than reflecting nationalism in the traditional sense, independence was rather linked to a particular political project. Hepburn (R1) and Keating (R2) portray this as being a pro-welfare project that ideologically opposed the much more neoliberal British track. Keating elaborates (R2);

> *"The fact is that for the second time in forty years you have a government in London pursuing pretty radical and neo-liberal policies. Much more radical than they looked like when they came to power in 2010. It was radical changes to the welfare state. So people then focused on Scotland as a place where you can express opposition to that. There is probably as much opposition in England, but it can't latch on to anything. Social cleavages don't work anymore. Class doesn't work anymore. The trade unions don't work anymore. So what do you do to mobilize a pro-welfare project? Well, you use territory and the national framework, because that's available. You can then of course wrap it up with a few historical myths about us being naturally egalitarian, which is as true or false as any other kinds of myths. But you wrap it around being about Scotland. Scotland can be different. And you get this broad coalition."*

Hepburn (R1) further summarizes the argument by saying; *"if you are trying to explain the 45 % who voted yes, it had a lot to do with the disillusioned Labour-voters who were very attracted by the very hopeful vision of a more fair and egalitarian Scotland that the Yes-camp were able to present them at the time."*

5.2 Wales: review of Welsh nationalism and the nationalist discourse

Welsh nationalism is portrayed as less developed than Scottish nationalism, and as deliberately following in the footsteps of Scotland (R2 Keating). In a nutshell, this can be historically traced to how Wales entered the British Union. While Scotland entered as an act of unionism, and thus in many respects as a fully functioning state, Wales entered by conquest (R4 Convery). Convery (R4) elaborates on this by pointing out that; *"there exists a legal entity of England and Wales. They had less distinctive institutions."* Thus, Wales have been subjected to more assimilation into the UK-context than Scotland has. This can be illustrated by looking at the feelings of national identity in the two regions (see figure 5). While a majority of the population in both regions expresses a strong regional identity, the proportion of people in Wales who feels no Welsh identity is significantly larger. With regards to nationalism the two cases thus had very different starting points. However, what typifies

Welsh nationalism during the course of the latter centuries, and especially post-devolution in 1999, is rapid nation-building. I will further elaborate this point below.

Figure 5: Feelings of national identity in Wales and Scotland
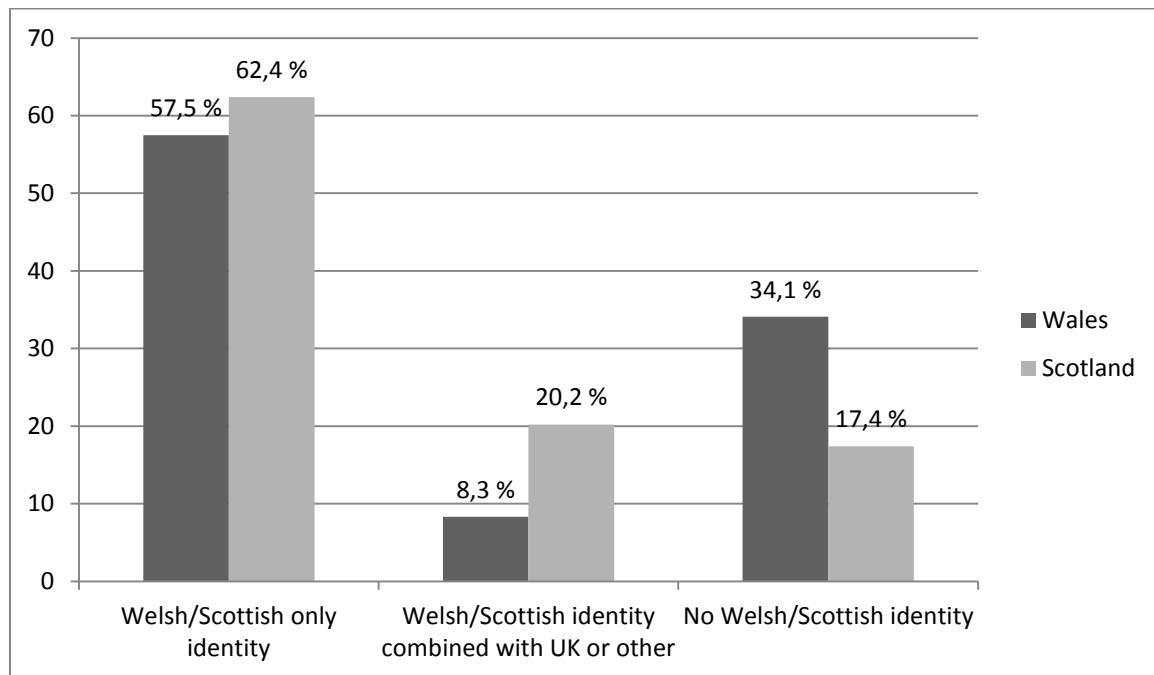
5.2.1 Language – an obstacle to nationalism

Traditionally, one of the main characterizations of the Welsh nationalist discourse is the significance of the language and cultural dimension. This is a feature which makes it quite different in nature compared to the Scottish case, where language never has been a central theme (R1 Hepburn). *Plaid Cymru*, the main political party advocating Welsh nationalist demands today, grew out of language movements. However, contrary to the Catalan case for example, where language is the most important reference point to Catalan identity, language is in the Welsh discourse primarily seen as an obstacle to the promotion of a common nationalism. Primarily Welsh, which only is spoken by a fifth of the population, gave national arguments based on the cultural dimension limited appeal among the majority of the population, and has thus been more dividing than uniting. Keating (R2) elaborates on this point;

> *"Historically it was divided between North-Wales and South-Wales, which was a cultural/linguistic cleavage, with a really considerable significance. And it was divided functionally, because North-Wales looks to Northwest England, and South-Wales looks to Southwest England. It's pretty difficult to get from North-Wales to*

South-Wales, and you can't do it without going through England, so it's a very divided pace. It wasn't a natural unit functionally."

A term used in the literature, is the *Three-Wales model,* which emphasizes that there in Wales existed three distinct political divisions reflecting the broad social and linguistic differences in the region (Scully and Jones 2012: 657). However, Keating (R2) explains that these internal tensions now pretty much have been settled, and that this has contributed to consolidating Wales as a political community.

"There is a kind of agreement. Everybody in Wales just likes the idea of preserving the language. Most of them don't want to learn it, but they are not opposed to the language being present in public places. They compromise. They got their Welsh TV-channels. The middle class people in South-Wales send their children to Welsh-speaking schools because they are better than the English speaking schools. There is not the same fierce language arguments as there were in the 1960s. So that brings Wales together as a political community. They are able to share more in common. Then the agenda is focused on questions about economic development and institution-building which people can share. That is not to say that there still are tensions between North and South-Wales. There is a lot, but it hasn't stopped Wales being built as a political community or the development of Welsh institutions."

5.2.2 Welsh nationalism: a process of nation-building

Both Wales and Scotland attained devolved political arrangements in 1999. The devolution settlements, however, are quite different in terms of how much powers the two sub-national political institutions have and thus resemble a highly asymmetrical British political system. Furthermore, Welsh devolution was even, at least partly, a mechanism to counterweight and limit the potential territorial impact of Scottish devolution, and hence contribution to better integrate Scotland into a reformed UK-state (McEwen 2013: 257). While the Scottish nationalist parliament enjoys quite large degrees of power through a 'reserved powers'-model[27], the Welsh nationalist Assembly is designed oppositely and initially lacked direct primary legislative powers. This asymmetry can thus be seen as a reflection of the maturity of the two national movements. Welsh devolution has always and still remains more limited than the Scottish devolution. Thus, contemporary welsh nationalism has been characterized by its

---

[27] The Scottish parliament has legislative competence over everything which is no explicitly reserved in the agreement (McEwen 2013: 273).

focus on nation-building with Scotland as a point of reference. The political discourse is described by its aspirations of parity with Scotland, seeking a model of devolution on a similar basis (R3 McEwen). Convery (R4) consents with this; "a *lot of arguments in Wales center around; 'we ought to have as much power as Scotland'.*"

In the course of the new millennium devolution has been gradually strengthened. In 2007 *Plaid Cymru* formed a coalition government with the *Welsh Labour Party,* where they expressed an objective to design a better system of devolution (R3 McEwen). Following a referendum in 2011, the Welsh parliament currently has legislative powers in twenty designated fields, including health, education and training, and other wider issues of domestic policy (Wyn Jones and Scully 2012). Nonetheless, Welsh independence in terms of devolved powers is still trailing substantially behind Scottish. The *Regional Authority Index* developed by Hooghe and his colleagues (2010), underscore this. On a scale of self-rule, ranging from 1-15, Scotland scores 13, whereas Wales only scores 8 (see appendix 3 for details).

5.2.3 Catching up with Scotland

Regardless, Welsh political devolution has to a much larger degree been subject to a more positive development since its introduction than the Scottish. Welsh nationalism can thus in this sense be regarded as more prosperous than Scottish, especially after devolution. In McEwen's (R3) words; *"there have been more changes in Wales since the establishment of the national assembly in 1999. There have been more changes in the devolution settlement than there has been in Scotland."*

Convery (R4) explains the dynamics more specifically by emphasizing the Welsh devolution as a complex and ineffective system which needed to be revised.

> *"If you look at the history of devolution in Wales they say that it is this extremely convoluted system of the Wales Assembly having to as permission of the Westminster parliament to legislate on things. It was an extremely complicated system, and Wales they got bogged down in a lot of that. So the job of Plaid Cymru and the other parties was not to talk about independence, but rather to complete the devolution settlement. So I think it's true that they are a step behind in many ways."*

Keating (R2) concurs and further elaborates by describing the Welsh nation-building project as a surprisingly successful story.

"What has happened to Wales is that it has been strengthened institutionally. Institutions have gained legitimacy through to a surprising degree considering the history of the last 40 years. They have come a lot further than Scotland, because they started so far behind. Now devolution has become accepted as part of the Welsh institutional landscape and nation building has continued. Wales has been created as a political community also since the 1880s, but at a much slower pace than Scotland. That has really accelerated since devolution."

5.2.4 The weak secessionist discourse

Because of Wales' preoccupation with nation building and consolidating itself as a political community, secessionism has thus played a marginal role in the national discourse. McEwen (R3) explains;

"Independence has never been an important element of Welsh politics. Even for Plaid Cymru, its objective has never really been expressed as independence in the radical sense. They used to prefer the language of self-government, because they felt it was more ambiguous and they meant something that was linked more to self-government within the UK."

Plaid Cymru is a smaller force in Wales than the *SNP*, *CiU* or the *PNV* are in Scotland, Catalonia and The Basque Country respectively. This can in large parts be explained by the role the *Welsh Labour Party* has succeeded in playing, what McEwen (R3) describes as, a 'small nationalist party'; "*it has been able to use some of the rhetoric of autonomy and self-government to strengthen devolution in Wales.*" Hepburn (R1) thus emphasize that *Plaid Cymru* has had a much stronger rival for the votes than what is the case for the *SNP* in Scotland, where the *Scottish Labour* Party has weakened significantly over the latter years as they have failed to represent the working interests in the Scottish electorate.

"The statewide parties in Wales have also played quite a different role compared to Scotland. In Wales the Welsh Labour Party drew a clear red line between Wales and the rest of the UK in terms of the orientations of the Labour movement which tried to maintain its representation of working class interest much more strongly than the Scottish Labour party."

Furthermore, Keating (R2) also highlights the socioeconomic considerations which also contribute to restrain a secessionist discourse in Wales. Looking at the numbers it is

apparent that Wales is substantially weaker economically than Scotland, both within the UK and EU-framework (see table 2). Regarding this Keating explains that; *"Wales simply wouldn't be economically viable as an independent country. Everybody knows that. The dependency is huge. Wales has never been in that position to say 'we can do without London now because we have the resource to manage more or less on our own'."*

Table 2: Welsh fiscal strength in 2011. GDP (in PPS per inhabitant) and EU-average compared to Scotland and UK.

	Regional gross domestic product (PPS per inhabitant)	Regional gross domestic product (PPS per inhabitant in % of the EU28 average)
Wales	*19,500 **	*75 %*
Scotland	*26,700 **	*103 %*
UK	*29,500*	*113,5 %*
EU-average	*26,000*	*100 %*

Source: (Eurostat 2014a, 2014b, 2014c, 2014d) *Notes:* * the regional GDP in Scotland and Wales are aggregated numbers measured by the author on the basis of smaller regional sub-units displayed by Eurostat.

For these reasons *Plaid Cymru* has historically been quite ambiguous with regards to its position on Welsh independence. Hepburn (H1) describes its position as highly 'post-sovereign' in the sense that it did not consider the sovereign nation state model as a route Welsh self-determination should take. During the course of the last ten to fifteen years, however, the party has explicitly adopted the goal of independence.

> *"It was very much, and still is, in favor of European integration more principally. Much more than the SNP who has used Europe quite instrumentally. Plaid Cymru has always been in favor of a Europe of the regions or a Europe of self-governing regions and has only recently decided to support a stronger form of constitutional change."*

However, as long as *Plaid Cymru* does not have the electoral support to be the agenda-setting force the *SNP* has become in Scotland, it is difficult to assess how real these aspirations of independence are. Convery (R4) describes *Plaid Cymru* political discourse as *"(...) still fudging the question of whether they actually believe in independence. They have a much nuanced view of what independence is."*

5.2.5 Future outlooks

In portraying the future outlooks of Welsh nationalism the experts emphasizes a continued course of nation building concentrated on broadening devolution. If this is a development that can lead to an institutional autonomy on the same terms as Scotland, and subsequently a more salient discourse with regards to secessionism, the viewpoints are more modest. Convery (R4) emphasizes *Labour's* strong position in Wales as the main obstacle to more Welsh autonomy;

> *"I don't see there is any practical reason why Wales shouldn't have a parliament with the same powers as Scotland. I think it's more about political constraints in terms of the Labour Party, particularly Labour MPs in Wales, who are not keen on the Wales Assembly having more power."*

Considering the potential for Wales following Scotland in a secessionist bid, Keating (R2) again stresses the economic aspect; *"they follow whatever Scotland gets, so they are consciously catching up. But they are not following that far because they know it's just not economically viable*. This viewpoint is supported by McEwen (R3) who also stresses the difference of the Welsh context; *"if Scotland had voted yes to independence or votes yes in the future, that doesn't necessarily mean that Wales would want to follow. The debate in Wales has its own dynamic as well."*

CHAPTER SIX: Empirical presentation of Catalonia and the Basque Country in the Spanish context

6.1 Catalonia: review of Catalan nationalism and the secessionist mobilization process

6.1.1 Catalan national identity and the constitutional settlement

Spain has for most of its history been a highly centralized unitary state that has not recognized the regional diversity of the country. It was not until the start of the democratic transition in 1978 that the regions of Spain were politically empowered (Gómez Fortes and Cabeza Perez 2013: 196). Thus, generally speaking Catalan identity is historically anchored in a struggle for recognition within the Spanish framework. More specifically, this struggle is strongly linked to the preservation and promotion of the Catalan language which has been subject to much suppression throughout the history of Spain. The era of Franco's 2nd republic, where Catalan speaking people were harshly repressed and the language was threatened by extinction, is particularly important in understanding the Catalan nationalist discourse of today. Catalan is understood by 95 percent of the population and spoken by 73 percent (Generalitat de Catalunya 2011). It serves as the most important factor in group identity and social cohesion without raising insurmountable obstacles between Catalan population groups. Although proficiency is much lower among the immigration population, strong social incentives to learn it makes it an important vehicle for assimilation and as a Latin-based language its accessibility is high (Keating 2001d: 222). As such, language is looked upon as the key denominator in understanding feelings of cultural distinctiveness of Catalonia, and the aspect whereupon the most important political arguments relating autonomy flows out from. Nagel (R8) underscores this point by saying; *"In Catalonia, the national movement from the start was a language movement, and respect for the language was the main issue. This hasn't changed until very recently."*

In the process of negotiations of the Spanish democratic constitution in 1978, the general focus is described as being on solving four aspects; the religious problem, the agrarian problem, the military problem, and the territorial problem (R7 Liñeira). The latter refers to the accommodation of various regional nationalities in the country. Liñeira (R7) elaborates;

> *"It was about separation of the state and the church; that Spain had a big agrarian population with no access to land and living in very poor conditions; that the military constantly interfered in the political process and doing coup d'état from time to time. These three first problems have mainly been solved during the transition. The*

territorial problem, however, was the most difficult to solve. At the end of the day the constitution does not solve it at all, because it leaves it open to the political process. It's a problem that started in the 19th century and which wasn't solved during the transition."

Catalonia were alongside The Basque country and Navarre granted autonomy almost immediately through a fast and simplified process (Gómez Fortes and Cabeza Perez 2013: 198). Following the first democratic election after Francoism in 1980, *CiU*, led by Jordi Pujol, won incumbency. Once in power, the *CiU* endorsed a nation-building process focused upon the re-establishment of Catalan institutions, the promotion of the Catalan language, and the construction of a novel Catalan identity (Guibernau 2013: 374) Liñeira (R7) elaborates by explaining that the Catalan movements in this period mainly were concerned about the protection of the Catalan language which had been forbidden under Franco, and that this was the main driver in the establishment of the governmental institutions; "*when democracy was established, the main driver is recognition, and the main motivation to have government institutions was to have mechanisms that protected the language, and that even ensured some positive discrimination in favor of Catalan.*"

6.1.2 Seeking recognition and accommodation

In the period of democracy support for independence has historically been fluctuating between 15 and 20 percent (R2 Keating). From 2010 the number starts to escalate dramatically and starts showing a support between 45 and 55 percent (R8 Nagel). Prior to this Catalan nationalism was very much focused on accommodation within Spain. Partal (R9) elaborates;

> *"When the Franco-dictatorship ended there was sort of a pact; that Catalonia will help Spain becoming a full democracy. In the 70s the first thing was to win democracy even if came with a price. Secession was thus not an option. Pro-independenists' were in a great minority. Most of the country respected that the Catalan nation could stay within a democratic and plurinational Spain."*

Looking at the two main regionalist parties of Catalonia, *Esquerra Republicana de Catalunya* (ERC) and *CiU*, they have traditionally both not been oriented towards secessionism. *ERC*, which in terms of traditional nationalist rhetoric's has been the most visible party in the Catalan framework, changed is political ambition towards independence as

late as in in the early 1990s (R2 Keating). *CiU* which historically by far has been the most popular party in Catalonia, and has won six out of eight regional elections held in Catalonia (Gómez Fortes and Cabeza Perez 2013: 200), has up until 2012 been classified as a autonomist party emphasizing decentralization within Spain (Dandoy 2010). However, as I will elaborate below, this changed in 2012 when the party explicitly altered their political goal to include the option of independence.

In sum, Catalan nationalism has for the vast majority of the democratic era been concerned with accommodation within Spain. The salience of the issue of independence has thus been very moderate. The qualitative shift in popular support for independence in Catalonia is by the respondents first and foremost traced to Catalonia's attempt to acquire a new *Statute of autonomy* granting the region a deeper formal recognition, and also increased fiscal powers. This is a process that started in 2003 (R8 Nagel). It catalyzed a chain of events that together ignites and powers the secessionist mobilization process in Catalonia. Figure 6 illustrates this development and shows that support for independence has increased quite dramatically over the years following 2010 as the preferred option of what the political status of Catalonia should have.

Figure 6: Development from 2010-2014 in preferences on what the political status of Catalonia should be.
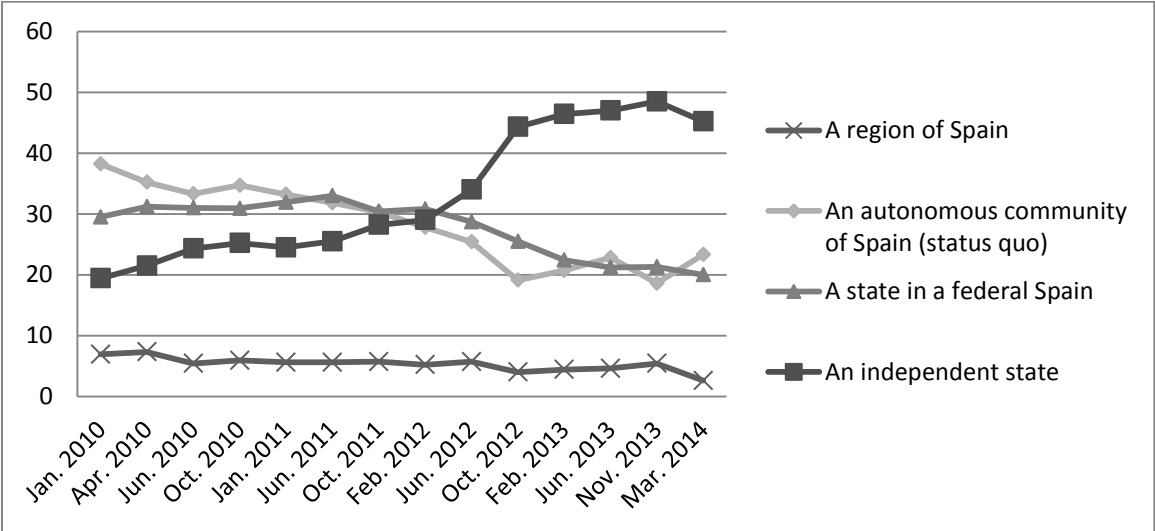
Source: (Generalitat de Catalunya 2015)

From an analytical perspective these chain of events can be narrowed down to three triggering aspects. The first is the proposed Catalan Statute of Autonomy being finally rejected in 2010. The second is the cycle of popular mobilization, which is signified by the various mass demonstrations that derived from the Statute being rejected. The third is the *CiU* changing its political orientation towards independence in 2012, ultimately as a response to

79

the will of the people, whereupon it in the Catalan parliament was agreed to hold a referendum on independence.

6.1.3 The rejected bid for a new Statute of autonomy

The two main parties in Spain contesting at the national level are the *PP* and the *PSOE*. The two parties also compete at the sub-national level through regional affiliation parties. Generally speaking, in the regional political context of Catalonia, the *PP* has the reputation as a supporter of the Spanish national party, and as a defender of a centralized and homogenous state, whereas the *PSOE* has a reputation for advocating a decentralized vision of Spain (Gómez Fortes and Cabeza Perez 2013: 197). Following the Catalan election of 2003 and the Spanish general election of 2004, the *PSOE* were the biggest party in terms of electoral support in both tiers, and held office at the Spanish level. Catalan politicians then saw a window of opportunity to get a new *Statute of Autonomy*. The legal process to implement a new statute is as follows: first it must be accepted in the Catalan parliament; then it needs to be approved in the Spanish parliament and in the Spanish senate. When it has been approved by both chambers of the Spanish government, a final referendum over whether to accept the Statute is held in Catalonia. In 2006, after a languid political process, the Statute-document had been through the scrutiny of the Spanish governmental institutions – its initial content had been considerably watered down. However, this restricted version was nonetheless politically approved by Spain, and subsequently ratified in a Catalan referendum by an overwhelming majority of 78 percent. However, mainly as an initiative by the *PP,* who at the time was in opposition, the Statute was challenged for being unconstitutional whereupon it was sent to the Constitutional Court for revision. Another four years passed as the statute was under deliberation by Constitutional Court. Finally, in 2010 the verdict of the court was ready – the Statute was judged to be unconstitutional and thus widely curtailed (R8 Nagel; R10 Lopez). Lopez further explains that four central aspects were removed from the Statute; the recognition of Catalonia as a 'nation' and not as 'nationality'; a modified economic agreement; a clear outline of Catalonia's political competences; and, protection of the status of the Catalan language. Regarding the latter, Lopez (R10) explains that; *"we wanted it not only to be a right, but a duty for all civil servants, regardless of their origin, to be able to express themselves in Catalan."*

Nagel (R8) emphasizes that with the ruling, the Constitutional Court established a very hard rule in how to interpret the Spanish constitution: *"Especially after the sentence there is really not any leeway of interpretation. That is at least what it seems. And I think it is not*

casual that the Catalan nationalist movement, that had not been separatist, after this sentence changed opinion." Partal (R9) agrees and further sums up the general sentiment in Catalonia with regards to process;

> *"The Statute was greatly amended by the Madrid-government, but even if there was a strong disappointment in the Catalan population about this they voted yes in the referendum. The big surprise came after when the Constitutional Court decided to further amend the Statute. They said no to almost everything. They absolutely blew up the basics of the Statute. That triggered the first big demonstrations for independence, and this is really the beginning of the secessionist process."*

6.1.4 The first demonstrations

The second important factor for understanding the secessionist mobilization process in Catalonia is the various mass protests that have unfolded at various stages in the bid for getting the new Statute of Autonomy. The first significant protests were carried out in the wake of the Spanish government amending the Statute in 2006 (R10 Lopez). As a mechanism of protest there were also informal plebiscites at the local level. This process started in 2009 and spread from village from village before it ended in 2012 (R7 Liñeira; Muñoz and Guinjoan 2010). However, the most important demonstration with relevance for the Catalan independence project is a mass demonstration reacting to the ruling of the Constitutional Court in 2010. This protest clearly marks the change in emphasis in nationalist political discourse – from an autonomist to a secessionist orientation. The Statute of 2006 can in this way be seen as the main political attempt to move the Spanish constitution into a more federalist direction. When this failed, the secessionist option gained momentum (R7 Liñeira). Serrano (R12) explains that a collective perception that Catalonia was unable to reach a sufficient level of self-government within the existing framework took form; *"thus, the only alternative to reach a significant level of self-rule is through independence."* Partal (R9) further elaborates on the popular implications of the 2010-demonstration;

> *"People said; we have for decades been trying to accommodate within Spain. This has proved impossible. We must now find a way to become an independent country, because it is absolutely clear that Spain doesn't want to accept anything coming from Catalonia."*

In 2012 the broad civic movement *Assemblea Nacional Catalana* (ANC) was constituted. This is an organization with ties to *ERC* and *CiU*, but which formally is politically independent (R7 Liñeira). The ANC initiated three vast demonstrations in the course of 2012 to 2014, including the famous 'human chain' in 2013. These three demonstrations are also important in understanding the dynamics of the Catalan debate, which by the respondents is depicted as a grass root movement.

6.1.5 *CiU*'s *change of preference and the 'right to decide'*

The third and final triggering cause is, as outlined above, related to the political standpoint of *CiU*. After the Catalan Statue finally fell apart with the ruling of the Spanish constitutional court, *CiU*, the incumbent party at the time, initiated a redefined goal to instead attain a new fiscal arrangement similar to the Basque 'concierto'. A meeting between Mariano Rajoy and Artur Mas, the respective heads of government in Spain and Catalonia was held in September 2012, but was from a Catalan perspective a massive failure (R7 Liñeira). As a consequence of the failed proposal, and also due to the broad discontent of the general public massively protesting, the *CiU* called for early elections the same year where they campaigned on the promise to deliver a referendum on Catalan independence (Martí 2013). The goal was to exploit the situation to strengthen their position as the main regionalist party in Catalonia (R9 Partal). Nagel (R8) explains that;

> *"CiU, which never had stood for independence, changed their platforms to include a referendum on independence, and therefore, Artur Mas, who stood for autonomy and against independence before, now is leading in a way the campaign to have a referendum on independence."*

In this sense it is important to note that *CiU* did not change their electoral platform to pro-independence. However, as independence gained visibility in the political debate as the only alternative in front of the state putting a very limited outlook of an autonomous Catalonia, there was an agreement between various regionalist parties on the necessity to hold a referendum for the Catalan society to express their preferences (R12 Serrano). This campaign has been popularly branded with the slogan 'the right to decide' (R10 Lopez). The election, however, was not the great success the *CiU* anticipated. An important factor for this, and also a factor in explaining why *CiU* changed their perspective on the self-determination question in the first place, is the political revival of *ERC's* political fortunes, which had been very low in the mid-2000s (R2 Keating). Being a pro-independence party since the early

1990s *ERC* managed to exploit the situation and through the image of being 'the true defenders of independence' achieved a remarkably good election result (Martí 2013: 511). While *CiU* rather surprisingly suffered a set-back loosing 12 seats in the parliament, ERC gained 11 seats, and hence had important agenda-setting powers as a significant opposition party (Reuters 2012). Thus, *CiU*, still the biggest party, attempted to form a coalition government with *ERC*. After negotiations the offer was rejected by *ERC*. Instead a deal was made that kept *ERC* outside government, but guaranteed parliamentary stability and support to the government in crucial votes (Martí 2013: 513-514).Thus, *CiU* now led a government where the main agenda was set to hold a referendum on independence and had majority support for the issue in parliament. Partal (R9) sums up his interpretation of the election result; *"people expressed that they want to go for independence, but that they didn't want CiU alone to lead the process."*

6.1.6 The referendum-process

Throughout the years following 2010, support for independence has figured around 50 percent (R8 Nagel; R2 Keating).[28] Furthermore, after the judgement of the Constitutional court rejecting the statue of autonomy and the Catalan snap elections whereupon there was a majority in the Catalan parliament of regionalist parties opting for a referendum on independence, the *CiU*- led government went to the Spanish government stating they had the legitimacy to be transferred the competences to hold a referendum on independence. The proposal was clearly rejected on the grounds that the Spanish constitution does not permit that. The next and last possible step from a Catalan perspective was then to go by a law of consultation. Hence, the Catalan parliament legislated for a law on holding a non-binding consultation, and agreed that it was to be held the November 9th 2014. The Spanish government reacted by sending the proposal to the constitutional court, who ruled that the law as well as the consultation, was unconstitutional (R8 Nagel). The respondents emphasize that after this the Spanish government in reality has blocked all pathways to any element of Catalan self-determination. This development, of course, further fuels the intensity of the mobilization movement. Capdevila (R11) explains that the process now is at its climax and that any political solution short of independence seems improbable; *"When you have 50, 60, 70 % of the people who have been through the rational process of realizing that it is better to*

---

[28] For instance, the political opinion barometer of the Catalan government in 2014 show that 45, 3 percent prefer for Catalonia to be 'an independent state' (Generalitat de Catalunya 2014a).

split up, it is very difficult to come back. We are now far beyond the point of no return. There
is no going back now."

The consultation was held according to plan the November 9th last year. However, in
formal terms the Catalan government rebranded the vote to being an unofficial poll where
Catalans could express their opinions. As the Constitutional Court order implied a suspension
of all official campaigning and preparations of a referendum, the vote was organized by
volunteers without any formal electoral role (The Guardian 2014b). The results of a vote
showed 80 percent voting yes to independence, but the turnout was reported to only be around
37 percent (El País 2014).

6.1.7 The 'pre-referendum debate'

Due to the fact that the referendum in Catalonia not at any point has been considered as
legitimate, the nature of the debate is of course quite different compared to the Scottish case.
As such, Serrano (R12) refers to the dynamics of the Catalan process as a *'pre-referendum'*
debate. Thus, the debate is depicted to concern the right to hold a referendum, rather than
more practical pros and cons of independence. More specifically, the characteristics of the
debate can be narrowed down to two main aspects; the heterogeneity of the groups supporting
independence, and the of lack practical arguments for and against an independent Catalonia.

6.1.7.1 The broad nature of the independence-seeking coalition

Regarding the first aspect, Keating (R2) explains that;

> *"Catalonia is an extremely heterogeneous coalition. All the way from the center-right*
> *to the far left. There is nothing terribly cohesive about it except the demand for*
> *constitutional change and the demand for independence which would clearly provide*
> *more resources that could be used for all kinds of things."*

Partal (R9) elaborates by highlighting the uniqueness of the Catalan pro-independence
coalition;

> *"In Catalonia we have a coalition supporting the process that goes from the Christian*
> *Democrats to the anti-capitalists. That is unique. Nowhere else in the world has that*
> *happened before. You have CiU which is a coalition of Christian Democrats and*
> *liberal democrats, you have the ERC who are social democrats, you have the Greens*
> *and the former communists, and you have the anti-capitalists."*

84

Furthermore, Capdevila (R11) emphasizes the popular dimension of the Catalan movement and highlights the civic nature of this. In similar veins as the Scottish discourse he explains that the issue of immigration is important in understanding the Catalan demands for self-government; *"There are lots of immigrants who are participating in this process because they see it as a way of being part of a historical moment; we are building a new country, so they see it has an opportunity to integrate themselves quicker and in easier ways."* According to Capdevila (R11), the immigration aspect is especially forceful when regarding the Spanish population of Catalonia;

> *"You'll find lots of people who are not Catalan, but who feel themselves Catalan and feels that Spain is not treating Catalonia well. So they are joining the independence movement. There is an association called 'Sumate' campaigning for an independent state; they are people of Spanish origin and they are Spanish speakers."*

6.1.7.2 The arguments of the debate

Regarding the concrete contents of the discourse relating the referendum, the respondents, as noted above, emphasize that the political climate is too charged and polarized for it to have room for practical arguments to any large extent. However, looking beneath this, some parallels can be drawn to the general arguments dominating the Scottish debate. Most significant is perhaps the fact that the arguments referring to cultural or linguistic distinctiveness also in the Catalan case are minor. More important arguments invoked by supporters of independence is the desire for increased fiscal autonomy and the wish for greater prosperity and freedom (Guibernau 2013: 387) In relation to the latter, Nagel (R8) stresses that, although the traditional culturalist discourse still is present, the most visible arguments are politically motivated in the sense that they emphasize Catalonia as the rightful political demos in competition with the Spanish demos;

> *"The idea of the nation based on language, the cultural nation, and so on, is still around. I'm not saying that. It is in the discourse. However, while before the first thing was always language; the respect for the language and the possibility for survival of the language, this emphasis is not as high anymore. It has gone down in the political discourse, while the other argument; we are the relevant demos, we should have the right to decide on our own and so on, is more important."*

In relation Nagel's argument Lopez (R10) and Partal (R9) explain that they see the Catalan movement basically as a reactive movement and as protest against a dysfunctional Spanish democracy. In the words of Lopez (R10);

> *"Our unity is not based on the Catalan language. Here there are people who speak Spanish and people who speak Catalan. Our unity is the feeling that we are people, and from the Spanish state we are not recognized as we want. It's not a basic and historical right. It's about the democratic right to decide."*

The economic argument for independence is of course linked to Catalonia's second-rate fiscal arrangement compared to the 'conciertos' of The Basque Country and Navarra. The aspect really gained visibility in the Catalan discourse during the finical crisis which hit the Spanish economy hard, and has thus been brought in to the independence discourse (R2 Keating). Looking at the figures, Catalonia is as the Basque country a relative rich region both compared to the rest of Spain and in the EU (see table 3). The crux in the economic argument is that after tax redistribution Catalonia suffers an annual loss of about 8 percent of their GDP (Generalitat de Catalunya 2014b; Guibernau 2013). The argument is frequently referred to as the 'fiscal deficit' of Catalonia. The white paper on Catalan independence spells out that; *"this tax deficit, which seriously hinders Catalan institutions' leeway for action, has prompted an overall loss in competiveness in Catalan society and has triggered tensions in the provision of public services to the people."* (Generalitat de Catalunya 2014b: 11)

Table 3: Catalan fiscal strength in 2011. GDP (in PPS per inhabitant) and EU-average compared to the Basque Country and Spain

	Regional gross domestic product	**Regional gross domestic product (PPS per inhabitant in % of the EU28 average)**
Catalonia	*28,400*	*109 %*
The Basque Country	*32,500*	*125 %*
Spain	*23,000*	*88,6 %*
EU-average	*26,000*	*100 %*

Source: (Eurostat 2014a, 2014b, 2014c, 2014d)

Liñeira (R7) emphasizes that the argument hardly can be described as compounding a proper deliberation on the advantages and disadvantages independence;

"Some have promoted the argument; if we have our own state, we don't have to contribute so much to solidarity. However, up until now this has been the main discussion related to the economic advantages of having an own state. The discussion hasn't evolved very much, because the discussion right now is not about advantages and disadvantages of an own state, but about the right of having a consultation on the future of Catalonia."

6.2 The Basque Country: review of Basque nationalism and the nationalist discourse

In the traditional academic discourse the Basque Country has often been presented as one of the most forceful cases with regards to pursuing independence. Much more so than what is the case in Catalonia where claims in the democratic era generally have been more modest and focused on self-determination within the Spanish state. Parties advocating independence has for long been influential in the Basque political landscape (R9 Partal). Moreover, Basque nationalism has received much attention due to ETA's terrorist agenda throughout the second half of the last century and up to 2011 when the organization declared a final cessation of all violent activity. Subsequently, the organization of ETA and its sympathizers has gone on to advocate its agenda peacefully in the political institutional framework. This development has, however, not been without controversies as their party *Batasuna* was banned as an illegal party by Spanish Supreme Court. Later succeeding parties such as *Sortu* and *Bildu* have also been subject to the same controversy, thus having difficulties competing in Basque elections.[29]

As emphasized in chapter two, political initiatives, which at least in formal terms had resemblances to the ongoing political dispute between the governments of Catalonia and Spain today, was taken in 2002 by officials of the PNV. This process, however, is by the respondents depicted as a 'top-down' political initiative where the main goal was to appease the violent forces of nationalism (R9 Partal; R10 Lopez). The initiative thus lacked the popular democratic support as the case is in Catalonia where the bid for a referendum derives from a demand in the Catalan society (R7 Liñeira).

Thus, secessionist sentiments arguably have a strong presence in the Basque country. However, comparative to the present Catalan situation, demands have never managed to generate the amount of support needed for a forceful mobilization for secession. While Basque identity has proved extremely persistent and strong in the democratic era, support for

---

[29] In 2011 just before the election campaign started the Constitutional Court of Spain lifted the election ban of Bildu and the party was allowed to partake in the parliament elections of 2012.

independence has been a lot more fluctuating. Perhaps having its heyday in 2005, which probably can be explained by sentiments attached to the Spanish government blocking Ibarretxe's referendum bid, the momentum of proponents advocating independence may today seem to have fizzled out a bit (see table 4). Capdevila (R11) sums this up in the following way; *"If you go to the Basque country, you will realize that the vast majority of Basque people feel themselves Basque. They are not Spanish, but they are comfortable enough not to push for independence right now."*

Table 4: Basque identity and support for independence 2005 and 2014

	Basque Identity (Moreno question)	Support for independence
May 2005	*Only Basque: 34 %* *More Basque than Spanish: 34 %*	*37 %*
November 2014	*Only Basque: 33 %* *More Basque than Spanish: 35 %*	*22 %*

Source: (Euskobarometro 2005, 2014)

6.2.1 The traditional characteristics

In describing Basque nationalism historically comparatively to Catalan the respondents describes two discourses based in quite different principles. Partal (R9) describes this in the following way; *"The Basque nationalists you can say were something like the Irish nationalist – very catholic and very conservative. The Catalan nationalism has always been more popular – more left oriented. These differences were very big from the beginning."* A related issue is how the Basque nationalism defines itself in terms of membership and territoriality. Regarding membership, the Basque discourse emphasizes a combination of language and ethnicity (Zabalo 2008). Capdevila (R11) underscores this aspect; *"You cannot be Basque if you want to. You can be there, you can live with them, you can be part of their society, but if you are not Basque you can't be Basque."*

The question of what constitutes Basque territory is also a much more disputed matter in The Basque Country than in Catalonia. Lopez (R10) links this issue to the failure of the Ibarretxe-plan;

> *"In Catalonia the definition of the nation with borders coincides with that of the autonomous community. That is something that happened quite naturally in Catalonia, while it in the Basque country still is an objective for the future. You won't almost find*

anyone who claims that the autonomous community and the Basque nation coincides.
So they could not apply for a referendum, even if it was legal, because you only ask
part of the people. In fact, that was some of the major criticism regarding the
Ibarretxe-plan:"

An additional factor distinguishing Basque nationalism from Catalan is the relevance of the Basque language as an identity marker (R7 Liñeira). In contrast to Catalonia, where the language is imperative, Basque, plays a much smaller role and is spoken by a minority of the people (around 30%). It can thus be compared to the significance of the Welsh language in Wales as being a clear secondary language, and thus more of symbolic value.

6.2.2 The history of violence and the divisions of nationalism

In portraying the difference between Basque and Catalan nationalism in the democratic era the issue of violence reveals itself as the most prominent issue (Horowitz 1985: 231), and is among the respondents depicted as the main factor explaining why democratic secessionist mobilization in the Basque country thus far has been unsuccessful. Serrano (R12) states that; *"Historically, one of the key differences has been the presence of a violent factor."* ETA's violent history of terrorism in pursuing the Basque cause of independence has left considerable scars in the political landscape of the Basque Country. The violent past has hence split Basque nationalism mainly into two political divisions. On the one hand, it is the various parties superseding ETA. These parties, often referred to as the *'patriotic left'* (izquierda abertzale) because of their leftist political ideology combined with a secessionist agenda, have as mentioned been subjects of much controversies because of their alleged affiliations to the ETA. This division can be depicted as somewhat nebulous and unstable in terms of party composition as new parties and coalitions constantly have emerged and superseded each other. On the other hand, the second division is primarily associated with PNV, the main regionalist party in the Basque with long traditions. The PNV is a center-right party advocating less radical nationalist demands. Partal (R10) elaborates on the relationship between the two division;

> *"There are two big divisions – the ones who exercised violence and the ones who*
> *suffered violence. It's very difficult for them to join. One is related to the Basque*
> *national party in power. They are traditionally rightwing and moderates and against*
> *violence. The other follows the ETA's political wing. It is on the leftwing and consists*
> *of people who traditionally supported violence. It is very difficult for them to join*

because if you are a member of the Basque national party you probably know someone who was killed by ETA, and if you are member of Sortu, or the Batasuna-wing, you probably know someone who was tortured or killed by the police."

This can be illustrated by the results in the last Basque parliament elections of 2012 where the two main regional parties both won the votes of a significant proportion of the electorate (see table 5). In addition to the two main nationalist parties, the two main statewide-parties *PP* and *PSOE* traditionally also wins significant numbers of the votes in the regional elections. Political preferences in the Basque Country must therefore be portrayed as quite wide-ranging, both with respect to the territorial cleavage and right-left cleavage.

Table 5: Electoral results of PNV and Bildu in the Basque Parliament election of 2012

Regionalist party	Vote share of regional election
PNV	*34.6 %*
BILDU	*25,0 %*
PSE-EE (PSOE)*	*19,13 %*
PP	*11,73 %*

Source: El País (2012) *Notes: * Partido Socialista de Euskadi – Euskadiko Ezkerra*, is the regional affiliate of the statewide party, *PSOE*.

6.2.3 Basque fiscal autonomy: the 'concierto'

The 'concierto económico' is a special economic agreement the autonomous communities of The Basque Country and Navarre have with the Spanish state. Basically, it is a deal which allows them full control in collecting and spending taxes within their regions. They only pay the central government for certain services (e.g. for defense and the foreign ministry) (Gómez Fortes and Cabeza Perez 2013: 199). This arrangement dates back to the negotiations of the Spanish constitution of 1978 and stems from complex historical circumstances related to The Basque Country's and Navarre's relationship with Spain prior to the democratic transition. For the other autonomous communities, including Catalonia, it is the Spanish central government who controls taxes and decides the distribution of fiscal revenues throughout the country. The 'concierto' thus makes the regional government of the Basque Country a more profitable regime (R8 Nagel).

The respondents emphasize this aspect in comparing the economic grievances in the Basque country and Catalonia. Lopez (R10) says that; "*they don't have the same economic*

problems as in Catalonia. They can't claim a new deal, because they already have the best deal." Partal (R9) supplements this by a link to the financial crisis in Europe, which has affected the Basque Country less relative to Catalonia;

> *"The Basques have a control over there financing that Catalonia don't have. This is a reason why they are not moving towards independence. They don't need so much. They are almost independent today. For instance, if you see the unemployment rate in the Basque country, they are lower than in Spain because they have the instruments to tackle the problems. In Catalonia we don't have those instruments."*

6.2.4 Future outlooks

In a comparative perspective with Catalonia, the main feature characterizing Basque nationalism and its discourse is the salience of the terrorist-issue. This history of violence has contributed to split Basque nationalism into two distinct divisions which of course makes forceful mobilization for nationalist demands more difficult. Demands for independence in the Basque country thus lack a popular dimension. Another central aspect that is brought up by the respondents is the that the Basque Country has substantially more political freedoms, particularly on the fiscal dimension. This is an important issue in dampening cultural grievances. For these reasons the respondents does not believe that similar popular demands can emerge in The Basque Country as in Catalonia in the immediate future. Referring to the special economic agreement, Capdevila (R9) states that; *"They have things that Catalans don't have. This makes it easier for them, and makes independence less vital for their future."* Serrano (R12) agrees and thinks the *'concierto'* can be an important explanatory factor in understanding the relative modest demands for secession; *"the truth is that because the Basque country has a higher level of autonomy maybe that has prevented pro-independence to advance at the same level as it has in Catalonia.* Liñeira (R7) supplements this and states; *"I would say that maybe the sense of lacking recognition is more spread among Catalans than among Basques."*

The respondents also point to the fact that the Basque polity must come to terms with its violent past in order to unite the forces of nationalism. Partal (R9) explains that the political constellations supporting secession in the Basque country is very different from the Catalan picture which draws its supporters from a broad ideological spectrum ranging from Christian democrats to anti-capitalist's; *"it is absolute the contrary in the Basque Country who are very much split. I think they need to clean all the memories of violence before they can do anything."*

91

Lastly, Liñeira (R7) emphasize that Basque nationalists are quite ambivalent to the mobilization process unfolding in Catalonia. He explains that although they principally support the process, it is also a process that may damage Basque autonomy in the long run; *"it's a movement that is challenging the status-quo, and the status-quo doesn't look so bad for the Basque Country."* He grounds this in Basque concerns about the outcome of the Catalan process and the potential for a political settlement short of independence;

> *"They are aware of that maybe at some point the Catalan and the Spanish government will go into bargains for some constitutional change, and maybe that this is something that they are not so comfortable with. If the Catalans were to get some kind of fiscal arrangement similar to the Basque, it is not clear that the Spanish state is very sustainable in the long term. It is not clear that that is a policy that can be spread. Also, there are some concerns by the EU-institutions about the fiscal arrangements that the Basques enjoy. So they don't like very much that these things are being discussed in Catalonia."*

CHAPTER SEVEN: Theoretical discussion and broader outlooks

7.1 The 'negative' cases: Wales and the Basque Country

7.1.1 Case summaries

Welsh minority nationalism is in comparative terms to Scotland much less developed. This is reflected both in terms of a weaker sense national identity and less radical demands for self-government. Internal tensions, particularly the role of the Welsh language, were for long obstacles for Welsh nationalism to prosper. In recent years, however, and particularly after devolution, many of the conflicting aspects have been resolved. Wales has thus gone on to a path of nation-building and is taking the shape of a political community. A reflection of this is the increased powers the Welsh Assembly (parliament) has gained throughout the 2000s. *Welsh Labour* is the most prominent party with regards to the territorial management of Wales, and *Plaid Cymru*, the main regionalist party, has a less significant role. Comparing it with the role of the *SNP* in Scotland, who has overtaken the role statewide-parties had in Scotland, *Plaid Cumry* does not have the same power to influence Welsh demands for self-government. Hence, the Welsh political discourse is largely centered on increased autonomy within the UK-framework. Support for independence and the significance of the issue in the political discourse is thus marginal. From an historical outlook, this can mainly be traced to three factors. First, Wales entered the UK by conquest and was thus from the start deeper integrated into the political entity of the UK than what was the case with Scotland, which joined the UK as an act of unionism. Welsh national distinctiveness has as such to larger extent been assimilated into British nationalism. Moreover, this also limited the functionality of Wales as a political entity. Second, the Welsh language has played a large part in the Welsh national discourse. However, not as a uniting component like in the Catalan case. Rather, the English speaking and Welsh speaking parts of the region have quarreled about what the role of the language should have. This has been a dividing struggle that has hindered Welsh nationalism to progress as a united force. Third, Wales is a relatively poor region within the UK and dependent on fiscal transfers. The economic dependency makes an independent Wales an unviable prospect for the unforeseeable future.

The Basque case, on the other hand, has for long been among the most prominent cases of minority nationalism in Europe. However, Basque secessionism from traditional perspective distinguishes itself from Catalan nationalism in at least two important aspects. First, the Basque language is an important identity marker but is nonetheless of secondary importance in everyday use in competition with Spanish. Second, what the 'Basque nation'

essentially implies, both in terms of territorial extensiveness and national membership, is largely disputed. Traditional romantic visions connote the nationalist discourse to larger extent than the more civic Catalan discourse where territory and membership coincides with the borders of the Autonomous Community. Furthermore, the secessionist profile of the Basque Country has primarily been driven by the agenda set out by the ETA with their terrorist means, which has given the cause much attention both academically and popularly. As a tangible democratic political project, however, Basque secessionism has not been coherently salient. The *Ibarretxe-plan* was an initiative set out by the *PNV*-led Basque government in 2003 to hold a referendum on renegotiating the Basque status within Spain. The Spanish government reacted by blocking the initiative on the grounds that it was unconstitutional. Thus, in strictly formal terms this process has clear resemblances to the Catalan case. However, the initiative, referred to as the *Ibarretxe-plan*, has later been depicted as top-down project led by the Basque regional president of the time. It was primarily motivated by a means to appease the terrorist division of Basque nationalism. Thus, it lacked the popular dimension apparent in the Catalan case and faded of the political agenda soon after the Spanish government had reacted. Furthermore, the *Ibarretxe-plan* may be seen as a reflection of the main problem facing Basque independence-seekers – namely, a split nationalist division. At present the two divisions are reflected through the two national parties, *PNV* and *Bildu* who both had strong elections in 2012, winning 34.6 percent and 25 percent of the votes respectively. While *PNV* represents a mainstream, conservative and more moderate rank of Basque nationalism, *Bildu*, which frequently is linked to ETA, represents a leftist and radical nationalist rank. Due to the violent backdrop there is much antagonism between the two divisions – very simplistically stated, a relationship where the one side represents the executants of violence, whereas the other represents the enforcers of the Spanish law. Aside from a split political national discourse, secessionism is also held in check by a fiscal arrangement which grants the region large freedoms and flexibility in comparison to other autonomous communities.

7.1.2 Theoretical discussion

By linking the empirical presentation of the two negative cases to the analytical framework put forward in chapter three, some inferences with regards to why the secessionist agenda in these two cases not has been able establish itself sufficiently as force for a democratic mobilization process to occur, can be made. Regarding the expectations reflecting remote factors, (1) *strong regional identity* and (2) *viability of a potential independent state*, there are

94

some crucial differences between the positive and the negative cases. Furthermore, by elaborating these differences, natural links can be drawn to why neither (3) *dissatisfaction with statewide parties,* nor *(4) popular support* is sufficiently prominent for the nationalist political discourse to tip over to a democratic secessionist mobilization process. The Welsh and the Basque cases of minority nationalism are hence good supplementary cases in understanding the secessionist mobilization processes in Scotland and Catalonia.

In Wales, regional identity is weaker and less united than in Scotland. That is not to say that there is not a strong Welsh identity. Studies show that the Welsh identity is extensive. However, comparative to Scotland, Wales is significantly more assimilated into the UK-framework both functionally, politically and economically. These factors make Wales unviable as an independent state. With regards to this, the economic situation in the region is particularly important and helps explain why support for independence has not increased although nation-building has progressed significantly. Wales is, in relative terms to the other cases in the study, a poor European region. Looking at the Catalan and the Scottish case, the arguments of economic self-sustainability, and that independence potentially will lead to increased prosperity in the regions, are vital for understanding the secessionist push. The distinct Welsh identity can therefore be assumed to primarily be of symbolic value. Thus, the salience of the independence issue in the political discourse is marginal and support correspondingly very modest. The element of popular support for the secessionist project is therefore missing and it's very difficult for advocates of independence to mobilize. When arguments about independence obviously cannot convincingly be put forward, it is natural that the nation-building project has been politically oriented towards increased autonomy. These demands, however, have largely been articulated by *Welsh Labour,* who as an affiliated statewide party, plays the brokerage role between Wales and the UK. While Scottish nationalism and in turn secessionism mainly is explained by the rise of the *SNP* at the expense of statewide parties in the region, *Welsh Labour* has since devolution by far been the most influential party in the Welsh assembly. There is thus not a particular dissatisfaction with statewide parties or central governmental policies in the Welsh political discourse.

Whereas Wales can be portrayed as representing a novel form of civic minority nationalism, the preconditions for a secessionist movement should in the Basque case be significantly stronger. Basque identity is similarly to the Catalan identity dominant and culturally rooted where language and historical grievances vis-à-vis Spain are important. Moreover, the region is among the richest in Spain. The aspect of the economic viability of a potential independent state is thus unquestionable. However, whereas nation-building in

Catalonia is characterized for its clear civic development, the Basque national identity can still be said to be connoted by more ethnic and romantic sentiments. First, Basque-membership is conditioned by race. In the modern EU-context where the movement of people and immigration is characteristic, this ethnical emphasis is an unfeasible basis for rallying support for independence. Second, territorially, the perception of the Basque area is closely linked to historical myths of prior Basque influence, and does not coincide very well with the Spanish or European border-configurations of today. Because there is no agreement in the modern nationalist discourse of what a Basque state in practice would imply, the territorial viability of a secessionist project is limited. Again, looking at the Catalan case, this point is significant. The scope of Catalan nationalism has also been subjected to different discourses which include various constellations of Catalan speaking regions[30], however, in the secessionist discourse of today, these are insignificant.

Assessing the expectations of *(3) dissatisfaction of statewide parties* and *(4) popular support*, it can regarding the former be noted that dissatisfaction is present, but that it not is as prominent as in the Catalan cause. *PP* and *PSOE* both play important roles in Basque party politics. Moreover, the most popular regional party, *PNV*, has never been promoting independence in any radical sense, but rather been focused on Basque accommodation within the Spanish state. *PNV* can thus be compared to the role *CiU* traditionally has had in the Catalan case. Independence-seeking parties in the Basque country are mainly centered around the left on the political spectrum, and supporting parties that have emerged after the dissolution of ETA. In electoral terms this dimension is quite significant, but the antagonist relationship with the less radical *PNV*-camp hinders a sufficient popular basis for secessionist mobilization to occur. In a scenario where similar catalyst factors as in the Catalan case were to transpire, this could perhaps change – *PNV* would alter its political goal, hence bringing the two nationalist camps closer together. In contrast to the Welsh case, the potential for a democratic secessionist movement in the Basque country is arguably present. However, on the other hand it can be argued that the potential for such catalysts to emerge is rather limited. This has to do with general financial situation in the region and the political freedoms the Basque country already possess – particularly with regards to financial management. In a European environment which for recent years has been marred by recession, the Basque Country, largely because of its flexibility in managing the economy, has been able to steer clear of the worst of it. This can help explain why support for independence has decreased in

---

[30] These include the Spanish regions of Valencia and the Balearic Islands, and also areas in France and Andorra (Enciclopèdia Catalan 2015).

recent years. In light of the Basque Country's comfortable economic position, mobilizing for independence which challenges the status-quo might be deemed as a risky strategy when, after all, the status quo does look quite appealing. It may thus be concluded that the Spanish territorial management of the Basque Country in general has been more successful than that of Catalonia.

7.2 The 'positive' cases: Scotland and Catalonia

7.2.1 Case summaries

Scottish nationalism is portrayed as paradigmatic case of civic nationalism. Primarily this is because cultural and linguistic arguments are marginal in the nationalist discourse. Moreover, the recognition of Scotland as a distinct nation has never been disputed in the UK-context. Scotland entered UK through an act of unionism, and thus in many respects as a fully functional political entity. The discourse of nationalism has therefore for long been centered on the political dimension, and arguments have been rooted in the practical concerns about Scottish accommodation within the UK. Support for independence has always been significant and stable around 30 percent – hence, the preference of a clear minority in the population. However, once the referendum on independence was put on the political agenda, the debate that followed boosted support. This process culminated with the Scots voting no to independence by a marginal 55 percent vote. In assessing the chain of events leading up the narrow no-vote, the single most important explanatory driver is the tremendous development of the *SNP*, a party traditionally committed to Scottish independence, has had over the last decade. It has evolved from a fringe party with marginal influence, to a mainstream party, which has overtaken the role *Scottish Labour* previously had as the main political advocate with regards to territorial management. Gradually, and especially since devolution, the *SNP* has increased its support in the Scottish electorate. It governed Scotland in a minority government from 2007 until 2011 with great success, and reaped the awards for this in the 2011-Scottish elections, winning a landslide victory whereupon they formed a majority government. With a majority in *Holyrood* they could put the independence-referendum on the political agenda. The *Edinburgh-Agreement* with the UK-government made sure that the legal competences for holding the vote were transferred from *Westminster* to *Holyrood*, and that the outcome of the referendum was to be respected by both parts. The reasons for this apparently emollient stand from *Westminster*-officials can be explained mainly by three factors; the informal recognition of Scotland as distinct nation; the unwritten constitution which gave

much flexibility in dealing with the issue; and, that the UK-government was convinced that the no-side would win a comfortable victory, thus settling the issue for the foreseeable future. However, the Yes-campaign was very successful in initiating broad debates across Scotland where a hopeful and viable future for an independent Scotland became the main narrative. The arguments in the narrative can be narrowed down to mainly three aspects; that independence will fulfill Scotland's potential as an essentially more equal society than the bulk of the UK; that an independent Scotland will prosper economically; and, that an independent Scotland will leave democratic decision making to Scotland and not be subjected to the *Westminster*-government.

In Catalonia there has always been a strong sense of regional identity and claims for increased self-government have persistently been high. The nationalist discourse, and especially following the fall of the *Francoism*, has been rooted in cultural and linguistic recognition. Support for independence, however, has in the democratic era been quite modest around 20 percent. Nationalist claims have rather been oriented towards autonomy within the Spanish state. The general idea from a Catalan perspective was to contribute to the initial functioning of Spain after the transition to democracy, and then, gradually push for a federal transformation of the state-framework granting Catalonia increased recognition and political freedoms. The main attempt with regards to this trajectory can be traced to 2003 when an effort to revise the Catalan Statute of Autonomy was made. Several amendments emphasizing national recognition and increased fiscal and political freedoms were suggested. After an extensive and at times heated process ending in 2010, the Spanish government, and ultimately the Spanish *Constitutional Court*, had curtailed the initial proposition so that the changes compared to the already existing statute were very scarce. By the Catalonians, this was considered as an outright rejection of Catalan autonomy and the federalist route was thus regarded as closed. In the wake of the rejection, broad grassroots-movements protesting for the *'the right to decide'*, started emerging. This forced a reaction from the *CiU* who sat in government at the time. As a means to answer the popular demands and as an opportunity to win a massive victory, they called for early elections. The campaign message was clear – a promise to deliver a referendum on independence. As *CiU* earlier never had advocated independence, this was an important step in the secessionist mobilization cycle. The election, however, did not quite go as anticipated for *CiU* who were set back 12 seats in the parliament. On the other hand, *ERC*, the second biggest regionalist party pursuing more radical demands with regards to independence, obtained a massive result, gaining 11 seats. For the first time it became the main opposition party. Thus, with a government seeking an independence-

referendum, and with a majority for the issue in parliament, a law of holding the referendum was passed and the referendum date set to November 9th 2014. The two major statewide parties, *PP* and *PSOE* both opposed the referendum plans, and sent the matter to the *Constitutional Court* to deal with it. The newly passed referendum law and the referendum itself were both judged as unconstitutional. This last stage in the process contributed to a further fuel polarization between the Catalan referendum-movement and the Spanish government. The cries for independence have correspondingly gained added intensity. The formal process ended up in the Catalan government rebranding the referendum to an *'unofficial poll'* carried out by volunteers. The result counted a massive win to the Yes-side. However, the turnout was modest, which underscores the illegitimate nature of the vote.

7.2.2 Theoretical discussion

In theoretically assessing the 'positive' cases of Scotland and Catalonia, they both can say to reflect the theoretical expectations. This is rather unsurprisingly, as the expectations draw on relatively general assumptions. What is more striking is how each factor is based on and activated through quite different empirical explanations. Looking at regional identity in both the cases, the Scottish mainly reflects a social political dimension of minority nationalism, whereas the Catalan predominantly is culturally based. Nevertheless, both discourses have moved on to a trajectory emphasizing nation building based on civic values. Furthermore, both cases, in contrast to the Basque and Welsh, reflect both territorial and economic viability with regards to the independence project. Thus, it can be argued that both cases possess pre-conditions that make them more prone to secessionist mobilization.

The tip over to democratic secessionist mobilization, however, is in the cases characterized by taking significantly different routes. However, I argue that both processes broadly are driven by the same interconnected agendas. Namely, that *dissatisfaction with statewide parties and state government* accelerates *popular support* for independence, whereupon a mobilization process emerges. Moreover, the referendum process in Scotland had legitimacy. Thus, the connected debate was naturally more mature, reflecting practical arguments about the advantages and disadvantages of independence. The "illegitimate" Catalan process, on the other hand, was more of a *'pre-referendum'* debate emphasizing the right of having a legitimate referendum. Therefore it reflected rather unfledged arguments with regards to independence. Nonetheless, the rational core in the arguments does in both cases echo the same basics – economy and decision making. More precisely, they imply that state independence will bring about a fair proximity of political decision making and an

improved economy – domains that currently are being constrained by central governments in London and Madrid. However, the trigger mechanisms – that is the proximate factors – are very different in nature. Moreover, they can largely be said to derive from and be activated through opposite reactions from state governments to the popular demands uniting the respective mobilization movements.

In the Scottish case mobilization started as a consequence of the UK-government's emollient response towards *SNP's* agenda. Prior to the *Edinburgh-Agreement* there was no particular demand for secession. As I have emphasized above, the rise of the *SNP* had nothing to with any increase in Scottish sentiments for independence. However, once the issue of secession was put on the political agenda, the prospect became tangible. In the debate that followed a growing perception of independence as practically viable and feasible materialized. From this, a secessionist momentum emerged and gained strength. Thus, popular mobilization sprung out of an initiative set out by a political party.

The appetite for independence was also in the Catalonia initially modest. As the mobilization cycle also entail a state rejection of a bid for increased autonomy prior the secessionist bid, the chain of proximate factors are in the Catalan case more complex. Nevertheless, it can generally be argued that secessionist mobilization derives from the obstructive response of the state – first with regards to the proposed Statute of Autonomy, then with regards to the referendum. Furthermore, the empirical analysis shows that political initiatives for a referendum were motivated by mobilization from the Catalan people. In other words, the secessionist agenda set out by the political parties was a reaction to popular mobilization from the grassroots.

In sum then, the mobilization processes in the two positive cases are explained by opposite dynamics. In the Scottish case the explanatory factors reflect a *top-down process*, whereas in the Catalan case it can surely be depicted as a *bottom-up process*. This is interesting considering that both cases possess the same outcomes derived from the same overarching theoretical agendas, and that they both in the broad sense build on the same arguments.

7.3 Causal assessment

As I emphasized in the analytical framework, secessionism, and particularly secessionism in a democratic context, is often explained through special catalysts or critical events (Dion 1996: 275; De Winter 1998: 221). Such catalysts must be regarded as historical unprecedented and thus as empirically unreproducible. Considering my empirical findings of the two positive

cases, perhaps the most important reflection to be made, is that the chain of events which I have traced in explaining the advancement of the mobilization processes, are in each of the cases highly complex, contingent and unique. I argue that these empirical explanations are valuable in two ways. First, it serves as a descriptive account of the dynamics of the mobilization processes in the particular cases. As such, it is a contribution to clarify and understand two separate cases of secessionist mobilization. Second, it contributes to shed light on the phenomena of democratic secessionist mobilization which the thesis more broadly aims to explore. However, invoking causal inferences that are commonly valid for the two cases, not to say a broader universe of cases, does seem unwarranted.

Regardless, as emphasized above, I hold that the mobilization processes both are built on the same agendas reflecting a common overarching argumentative dynamic between region and state that ultimately fostered the same outcome. From a methodological theoretical point of view, a compelling assessment is hence to treat the cases as representing a causal relationship of *equifinality*; that is a term used when several different combinations of factors each proves to be causally sufficient for explaining the outcome (Mahoney 2007: 135), or put in Braumoeller's words (Braumoeller 2003: 210) , when, *"(…) similar ends can be achieved via different means"*.

7.4 Summary and broader implications

I will in the following section take a step back and return to the initial puzzle motiving my research project. In the introduction I raised the following research question; *Compared to minority nationalist regions with similar basic features, what factors explain the successful minority nationalist mobilization for a referendum on secession in Scotland and Catalonia within the political framework of the EU?*

In chapter two I assessed the impact globalization and the EU has on the functioning of the nation state. Although depicting the development of the nation state as becoming redundant perhaps is exaggerated, it is warranted to state that its basic functions have been eroded by transnational and supranational mechanisms. As a consequence, a new opportunity structure has arisen for minority nationalism. We have seen a wave of such regions emerging through processes reflecting nation building practices and manifesting themselves as political units demanding self-rule. However, in most cases these demands have not emphasized independence, but rather increased autonomy within a state-framework. This is a logical observation considering the decreasing significance of the traditional nation state composition. What is the point of forming a new state in an environment unhospitable for

state sovereignty? Still, in Scotland and Catalonia the processes have tipped over in forceful mobilization for independent statehood. Essentially, it is this tip-over I have attempted to explain.

Above I have descriptively answered the research question by linking a remote historical basis with more proximate chains of explanatory factors and discussing them in relation to theoretical expectations. On the basis of this, I emphasized that the empirical factors in the positive cases respectively are too unique for any clear causal conclusions to be drawn. With regards to the aim of establishing causality, it is as such difficult to conclude more precisely than, as initially projected , that *"various preconditions and conducive circumstances can result in the emergence of secessionist tendencies* (Navaratna-Bandara 1995: 11).*"* However, I nevertheless argued that some broader implications emphasizing the general dynamic between region and state-government plausibly can be made. This is that *dissatisfaction with statewide parties*, rooted in economic and decision-making arguments, gains sufficient *popular support* in the democratic discourse, whereupon a secessionist mobilization process manifests itself. Further, the cases reveal that secessionist mobilization has derived from two completely opposite central government-responds to minority nationalist demands. This is interesting with respects to the field of territorial management. It underscores the difficulty nation states are presented with in dealing with heterogeneous tensions and highlights that no thumb rule can be applied with regards to how to prevent such movements.

7.4.1 Discussing the role of the EU

There is, however, one theoretical agenda which I in the analysis did not touch upon. That is the agenda reflecting the theoretical expectation about the role of the EU, or more precisely that; *(6) successful democratic mobilization presupposes a general perception of the EU as an ally.* This agenda meant to reflect a broader dimension of democratic secessionist mobilization – namely, the confidence in entering the EU-framework as an independent state implies more sovereignty than the status-quo of staying put as a region of a member state. The reason why I have left this issue aside in the empirical analysis is that the agenda reflects quite ambiguous implications, and hence obliges to be discussed separately. To the degree the EU and the international community more broadly involved itself in the unfolding of the processes in Scotland and Catalonia, the point of views it presented must be regarded as favoring the central governments. Formally, the EU did not have an opinion, nor does it have a legal process for dealing with these challenges. Thus, one would have had to be invented.

Reflecting this, the few public statements that were made regarding the processes insinuated that a region breaking away from member state would not automatically entail EU-inclusion. Moreover, particularly with reference to the Scottish case when opinion polls started to show a 'perilous' figures of support for independence, the international community expressed an opinion that that they preferred that the UK stayed together (R3 McEwen; Walker 2014). However, as highlighted by McEwen (R3), these calls did not seem to have any significant effect on the secessionist momentum;

> *"We had interventions from country after country, saying that they hoped the UK stayed together – stayed strong. From Obama to the Swedish foreign minister, countries big and small talked about why they thought the UK was fine as it is. The interesting thing to note about those interventions is that it appears, as far as we can tell, that they had absolutely no impact what so ever on the decision* (R3 McEwen)*."*

Also in the Catalan case, where the debate has been far less practically oriented, there are also evidence that international 'fear tactics' does not hinder the appetite for independence too much. Polling numbers show that support for independence only drop by 5 percent in a potential scenario of an independent Catalonia on the outside of the EU (BBC News 2014a).

Thus, on the one hand, the opportunity structure and the theoretical politically repositioning the EU offers minority nationalist regions are important in understanding the broader incentives for secessionist mobilization. On the other hand, when confronted with the EU resembling the role of an antagonistic arbiter with regards to the independence project, it does not seem discourage secessionist mobilization. There are two possible interpretation of this apparent ambiguity. One is that independence seekers believe that the challenges of accommodation within the EU will be solved once the EU de facto is presented with the problem. The other is that it reflects a loss in faith in the EU as an advocate of regional interests. The EU itself – as a political unit where minority regions seek influence – is thus not any longer the main motivating factor for independent statehood, and hence cannot be directly linked to the advancement of secessionist mobilization within its domain. On the contrary, it can perhaps plausibly also be argued that it is the perceived demise of the integration project that contributes to fuel the secessionist agenda.

7.5 Conclusion

It may seem like the idea of the traditional nation state has dodged the bullet for this time. The Scots said no when given the opportunity to vote for independence and in Catalonia it seems

as the Madrid-government has managed to quell the referendum bid. However, although the formal referendum processes may be regarded as over, the secessionist agenda is far from settled in either case. In the general elections of the UK this year the *SNP* won a landslide victory winning 56 of 59 of the Scottish seats in the parliament. The detailed interpretations of this I will leave to others, but it can be no doubt that the result figures as a massive declaration of protest against a UK-government on ideological crashing course. Moreover, with the newly re-elected *Conservative-* Prime minister, David Cameron, on the one hand pledging the promise to deliver a state-wide referendum on UK-membership in the EU by the end of 2017 (BBC News 2015), and the Scottish electorate, on the other hand, withholding their much more Euro-enthusiastic sentiment, new secessionist agendas are evidently brewing. Meanwhile in Catalonia, independence seekers are maintaining the secessionist momentum and the polarized tensions are not to diminish any time soon. Recently, Catalan President, Artur Mas, declared a new route to Catalan independence whereupon he called for early elections later this year. The election which initially was not to be held until 2016 has been moved to September, a few weeks before the Spanish general elections. The intention is to take advantage of the nation-wide decreasing support for Spanish prime minster, Mariano Rajoy, and his conservative government. The Catalan secessionist political division claim that they can call for a unilateral declaration of independence for Spain if a majority is won in the parliament (EU Observer 2015).

I have above made the general argument that the mobilization processes in Scotland and Catalonia cases commonly have emerged through the dissatisfaction with statewide parties and state government. This dissatisfaction has been democratically articulated whereupon different, and unique case-specific mechanisms, have accelerate popular support for independence. More research is needed on detangling the mechanisms at play when minority nationalist regions mobilize for independence in the democratic and globalized context of the EU. Scotland and Catalonia thus far stands as the only cases where demands for autonomy have taken the secessionist route in such forceful manners. However, the potential of candidates to follow suit are many. As the processes evolve, the outcomes will revealed themselves and also what the broader repercussions with regards to regions with similar potential will be. Perhaps only if the cases of Scotland and Catalonia in time no longer stand out as rare events, but rather cases reflecting a wider historical trend, can political scientists be presented with sufficient empirical firepower so that a general theoretical framework based in cross-case causal inferences can be established.

References

Abedin, Najmul. 1989. "The Politics of Separatism: Some Reflections and Questions." *The Round Table* 78 (310):223-36.

Adler-Nissen, Rebecca. 2014. "The Faroe Islands: Independence Dreams, Globalist Separatism and the Europeanization of Postcolonial Home Rule." *Cooperation and Conflict*.

Alesina, Alberto F., and Enrico Spolaore. 2003. *The Size of Nations*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press.

Alesina, Alberto, Roberto Perotti, and Enrico Spolaore. 1995. "Together or Separately? Issues on the Costs and Benefits of Political and Fiscal unions." *European Economic Review* 39 (3–4):751-8.

Banting, Keith, and Stuart Soroka. 2012. "Minority Nationalism and immigrant Integration in Canada." *Nations and Nationalism* 18 (1):156-76.

BBC News. *Catalan Independence Push faces Big hurdles* [Online newspaper] 2014a [cited. Available from http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-29154331.

———. *Scotland Decides. Scotland Votes No.* [Online newspaper] 2014b [cited. Available from http://www.bbc.com/news/events/scotland-decides/results.

———. *Scottish independence: Barroso says joining EU would be 'difficult'* [Online newspaper], February 16, 2014 2014c [cited. Available from http://www.bbc.com/news/uk-scotland-scotland-politics-26215963.

———. *Venice Votes in referendum on Splitting from Rome* [Online newspaper], March 16, 2014 2014d [cited. Available from http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-26604044.

———. *A Guide to the UK's planned In-Uut EU Referendum* [Online Newspaper] 2015 [cited. Available from http://www.bbc.com/news/uk-politics-32810887.

Bogner, Alexander, and Wolfgang Menz. 2009. "They Theory-Generating Expert Interview: Epistemological Interest, Forms of Knowledge, Interaction." In *Interviewing Experts*, ed. A. Bogner, B. Littig and W. Menz. Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave, Macmillan.

Brancati, Dawn. 2006. "Decentralization: Fueling the Fire or Dampening the Flames of Ethnic Conflict and Secessionism?" *International Organization* 60 (03):651-85.

———. 2008. "The Origins and Strengths of Regional Parties." *British Journal of Political Science* 38 (01):135-59.

———. 2014. "Another Great Illusion: The Advancement of Separatism through Economic Integration." *Political Science Research and Methods* 2 (01):69-95.

Braumoeller, Bear F. 2003. "Causal Complexity and the Study of Politics." *Political Analysis* 11 (3):209-33.

Börzel, Tanja A. 2005. "Mind the Gap! European Integration between level and Scope." *Journal of European Public Policy* 12 (2):217-36.

Creswell, John W. 2013. *Qualitative Inquiry & Research Design: Choosing among Five Approaches*. Los Angeles: Sage.

Curtice, John, and Anthony Heath. 2000. "Is the English Lion about to Roar? National Identity after Devolution." In *British Social Attitudes. Focusing on Diversity. The 17th Report.*, ed. R. Jowell, J. Curtice, A. Park, K. Thomson, L. Jarvis, C. Bromley and N. Stratford. London: Sage.

Dalton, Russel J. 1996. "Political Cleavages, Issues, and Electoral Change." In *Comparing Democracies: Elections and Voting in Global Perspective*, ed. L. LeDuc, R. G. Niemi and P. Norris. California: Sage.

Dandoy, Règis. 2010. "Ethno-regionalist Parties in Europe: a Typology." *Perspectives on Federalism* 2 (2):194-219.

Dandoy, Règis, and Arjan H. Schakel. 2013. "Introduction: Territoriality of the Vote: A Framework for Analysis." In *Regional and National Elections in Western Europe. Territoriality of the Vote in Thirteen Countries.*, ed. R. Dandoy and A. H. Schakel. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

De Winter, Lieven. 1998. "Conclusion: a Comparative Analysis of the Electoral, Office and Policy Sucess of Ethnoregionalist Parties." In *Regionalist parties in Western Europe*, ed. L. De Winter and H. Türsan. London and New York: Routledge.

De Winter, Lieven , Margarita Gómez-Reino, Peter Lynch, and Beatriz Acha. 2006. *Autonomist Parties in Europe : Identity Politics and the Revival of the Rerritorial Cleavage*. Barcelona: Institut de Ciències Polítiques i Socials.

Deschouwer, Kris. 2009. "The Rise and Fall of the Belgian Regionalist Parties." *Regional & Federal Studies* 19 (4-5):559-77.

DiCicco-Bloom, Barbara, and Benjamin F. Crabtree. 2006. "The qualitative Research Interview." *Medical Education* 40 (4):314-21.

Dion, Stephane. 1996. "Why is Secession Difficult in Well-Established Democracies? Lessons from Quebec." *British Journal of Political Science* 26 (2):269-83.

El País. *Elecciones autonómicas 2012* [Online newspaper] 2012 [cited. Available from http://resultados.elpais.com/elecciones/2012/autonomicas/14/.

———. *1,8 millones de Personas Votan por la Independencia Vatalana en el 9-N* [Online newspaper] 2014 [cited. Available from http://politica.elpais.com/politica/2014/11/09/actualidad/1415542400_466311.html.

Elias, Anwen. 2008. "From Euro-enthusiasm to Euro-scepticism? A Re-evaluation of Minority Nationalist Party Attitudes Towards European Integration." *Regional & Federal Studies* 18 (5):557-81.

Enciclopèdia Catalan. 2015. "The Catalan Countries."

Erk, Jan, and Lawrence Anderson. 2009. "The Paradox of Federalism: Does Self-Rule Accommodate or Exacerbate Ethnic Divisions?" *Regional & Federal Studies* 19 (2):191-202.

EU Observer. *Catalans to Renew Independence Bid with Early Election* [Online newspaper] 2015 [cited. Available from https://euobserver.com/political/127218.

European Union. *One market Without Borders* 2015 [cited. Available from http://europa.eu/pol/singl/index_en.htm.

Eurostat. 2014a. "GDP per capita in PPS."

———. 2014b. "Gross Domestic Product at Market Prices."

———. 2014c. "Regional Gross Domestic Product (PPS per inhabitant in % of the EU28 average) by NUTS 2 Regions."

———. 2014d. "Regional Gross Domestic Product (PPS per inhabitant) by NUTS 2 Regions."

Euskobarometro. 2005. "Euskobarometro. Mayo 2005. Estudio Periodico de la Opinion Publica Vasca.": Universidad del País Vasco.

———. 2014. "Eusko Barometro. Estudio Periódico de la Opinión Pública Vasca. Noviembre 2014.": Universidad del País Vasco.

Farrows, Martyn, and Jan Erik Grindheim. 2003. "From Economic Community to Political Union in Europe." In *Europe and Human Rights. The New Frontiers.*, ed. G. Giliberti, D. Morondo and R. Salinari. Roma: Luca Sossela Editore.

Fitjar, Rune Dahl. 2010. "Explaining Variation in Sub-state Regional Identities in Western Europe." *European Journal of Political Research* 49 (4):522-44.

Flora, Peter, Stein Kuhnle, Derek Urwin, and Stein Rokkan. 1999. *State Formation, Nation-building, and Mass Politics in Europe: the Theory of Stein Rokkan : Based on his Collected Works*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Gagnon, Alain. 2009. *The Case for Multinational Federalism: Beyond the All-encompassing Nation*. Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge.

Garrett, Geoffrey, and George Tsebelis. 1996. "An institutional Critique of Intergovernmentalism." *International Organization* 50 (02):269-99.

Geddes, Barbara. 2003. *Paradigms and Sand Castles. Theory Building and Research Design in Comparative Politics.* Michigan: Then Univeristy of Michigan Press.

Generalitat de Catalunya. 2011. "Statistical Yearbook of Catalonia. Culture, Leisure and Language.   ."

———. 2014a. "Press Report: Political Opinion Barometer 33. 2nd Wave 2014.".

———. 2014b. "White Paper on The National Transition of Catalonia." Barcelona.

———. 2015. "Press Report: Politcal Opinion Barometer 34. 1st Wave 2015.".

George, Alexander L., and Andrew Bennett. 2005. *Case Studies and Theory Development in the Social Sciences*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press.

Gerring, John. 2004. "What Is a Case Study and What Is It Good for?" *American Political Science Review* 98 (02):341-54.

———. 2007. *Case Study Research. Principles and Practices.* New York: Cambridge University Press.

Giordano, Benito. 2000. "Italian regionalism or 'Padanian' Nationalism — the Political Project of the Lega Nord in Italian Politics." *Political Geography* 19 (4):445-71.

Goldmann, Kjell. 2001. *Transforming the European Nation-state: Dynamics of Internationalization*. London: Sage.

Gómez Fortes, Braulio, and laura Cabeza Perez. 2013. "Spain: The Persistence of Territorial Cleavages and Centralism of the Popular Party." In *Regional and National Elections in Western Europe. Territoriality of the Vote in Thirteen Countries.*, ed. R. Dandoy and A. H. Schakel. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Grønmo, Sigmund. 2004. *Samfunnsvitenskapelige Metoder*. Bergen: Fagbokforlaget.

Guéhenno, Jean-Marie. 1995. *The End of the Nation-state*. Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press.

Guibernau, Montserrat. 1999. *Nations without States: Political Communities in a Global Age*. Oxford: Polity.

———. 2013. "Secessionism in Catalonia: After Democracy." *Ethnopolitics* 12 (4):368-93.

Gurr, Ted Robert. 2000. *Peoples Versus States: Minorities at Risk in the New Century*. Washington, D.C.: United States Institute of Peace Press.

Harmel, Robert, and Lars Svåsand. 1993. "Party Leadership and Party institutionalisation: Three Phases of Development." *West European Politics* 16 (2):67-88.

Hechter, Michael. 1992. "The Dynamics of Secession." *Acta Sociologica* 35 (4):267-83.

Held, David. 1991. "Democracy, the Nation-state and the Global System." *Economy and Society* 20 (2):138-72.

Hepburn, Eve. 2008a. "The Neglected Nation: The CSU and the Territorial Cleavage in Bavarian Party Politics." *German Politics* 17 (2):184-202.

———. 2008b. "The Rise and Fall of a 'Europe of the Regions'." *Regional & Federal Studies* 18 (5):537-55.

———. 2009a. "Introduction: Re-conceptualizing Sub-state Mobilization." *Regional & Federal Studies* 19 (4-5):477-99.

———. 2009b. "Regionalist Party Mobilisation on Immigration." *West European Politics* 32 (3):514-35.

Hilde, Paal Sigurd. 1999. "Slovak Nationalism and the Break-up of Czechoslovakia." *Europe-Asia Studies* 51 (4):647-65.

Hix, Simon, and Bjørn Høyland. 2011. *The Political System of the European Union*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Hobsbawn, Erik John. 1990. *Nations and Nationalism since 1780: Programme, Myth, Reality*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Hoffmann, Stanley. 1966. "Obstinate or Obsolete? The Fate of the Nation-State and the Case of Western Europe." *Daedalus* 95 (3):862-915.

Hooghe, Liesbet, and Gary Marks. 1996. ""Europe with the Regions": Channels of Regional Representation in the European Union." *Publius: The Journal of Federalism* 26 (1):73-92.

Hooghe, Liesbet, Gary Marks, and Arjan H. Schakel. 2010. *The Rise of Regional Authority: a comparitive Study of 42 Democracies*. London: Routledge.

Horowitz, Donald L. 1985. *Ethnic Groups in Conflict*. Berkeley, Los Angeles and London: University of California Press.

Jeffery, Charlie, and Dan Hough. 2009. "Understanding Post-Devolution Elections in Scotland and Wales in Comparative Perspective." *Party Politics* 15 (2):219-40.

JIA, Bing Bing. 2009. "The Independence of Kosovo: A Unique Case of Secession?" *Chinese Journal of International Law*.

Jolly, Mette. 2005. "A Demos for the European Union?" *Politics* 25 (1):12-8.

Jolly, Seth Kincaid. 2007. "The Europhile Fringe?: Regionalist Party Support for European Integration." *European Union Politics* 8 (1):109-30.

Keating, Michael. 1997. "Stateless Nation-Building: Quebec, Catalonia and Scotland in the Changing State System." *Nations and Nationalism* 3 (4):689-717.

———. 2001a. *Nations Against the State: the New politics of Nationalism in Quebec, Catalonia, and Scotland*. Basingstoke: Palgrave.

———. 2001b. "Nations Without States: The Accommodation of Nationalism in the new State Order." In *Minority Nationalism and the changing International Order*, ed. M. Keating and J. McGarry. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

———. 2001c. *Plurinational Democracy: Stateless Nations in a Post-sovereignty Era*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

———. 2001d. "Rethinking the Region: Culture, Institutions and Economic Development in Catalonia and Galicia." *European Urban and Regional Studies* 8 (3):217-34.

Keating, Michael, and Zoe Bray. 2006. "Renegotiating Sovereignty: Basque Nationalism and the Rise and Fall of the Ibarretxe Plan." *Ethnopolitics* 5 (4):347-64.

Keating, Michael, and John McGarry. 2001. "Introduction." In *Minority Nationalism and the Changing International Order*, ed. M. Keating and J. McGarry. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

King, Charles. 2012. "Scottish Play: Edinburgh's Quest for independence and the Future of Separatism." *Foreign Affairs* 91 (5):12.

King, Gary, Robert O. Keohane, and Sidney Verba. 1994. *Designing Social Inquiry. Scientific Inference in Qualitative Research.* New Jersey: Princeton University Press.

Klingemann, Hans-Dieter, Richard I. Hofferbert, and Ian Budge. 1994. *Parties, Policies, and Democracy*. Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press.

KOF Index. 2012a. "2015 KOF Index of Globalization - Method of Calculation." KOF Swiss Economic Institute.

———. 2012b. "KOF Index of Globalization. Aggregated Graphs." KOF Swiss Economic Institute.

———. 2015. "2015 KOF Index of Globalization." KOF Swiss Economic Institute.

Kymlicka, Will. 2001. "Immigrant Integration and Minority Nationalism." In *Minority Nationalism and the Changing International Order*, ed. M. Keating and J. McGarry. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Le Billon, Philippe. 2001. "The Political Ecology of War: Natural Resources and Armed Conflicts." *Political Geography* 20 (5):561-84.

Lecours, André. 2011. "Sub-state Nationalism in the Western World: Explaining Continued Appeal." *Ethnopolitics* 11 (3):268-86.

Leruez, Jaques. 1983. *L'Ecosse. Une Nation sans Etat.* Lille: Presses Universitaires de Lille.

Lieberson, Stanley. 1961. "A Societal Theory of Race and Ethnic Relations." *American Sociological Review* 26 (6):902-10.

Lijphart, Arend. 1971. "Comparative Politics and the Comparative Method." *American Political Science Review* 65 (03):682-93.

———. 1975. "II. The Comparable-Cases Strategy in Comparative Research." *Comparative Political Studies* 8 (2):158-77.

———. 1977. *Democracy in Plural Societies: a Comparative Exploration*. New Haven: Yale University Press.

Lipset, Seymour Martin. 1985. "The Revolt against Modernity." In *Consensus and Conflict. Essays in Political Sociology.* New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers.

Littig, Beate. 2009. "Interviewing the Elite - Interviewing Experts: Is There a Difference? ." In *Interviewing Experts*, ed. A. Bogner, B. Littig and W. Menz. Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan.

Lustick, Ian S., Dan Miodownik, and Roy J. Eidelson. 2004. "Secessionism in Multicultural States: Does Sharing Power Prevent or Encourage It?" *American Political Science Review* 98 (02):209-29.

Lynch, Peter, and Lieven De Winter. 2008. "The Shrinking Political Space of Minority Nationalist Parties in an Enlarged Europe of the Regions." *Regional & Federal Studies* 18 (5):583-606.

Maddens, Bart, and Liselotte Libbrecht. 2009. "How Statewide Parties Cope with the Regionalist issue: The Case of Spain; a Directional Approach." In *Territorial Pary Politics in Western Europe*, ed. W. Swenden and B. Maddens. Basingstoke: Palgrave.

Mahoney, James. 2007. "Qualitative Methodology and Comparative Politics." *Comparative Political Studies* 40 (2):122-44.

Mahoney, James, Erin Kimball, and Kendra L. Koivu. 2009. "The Logic of Historical Explanation in the Social Sciences." *Comparative Political Studies* 42 (1):114-46.

Marks, Gary. 1996. *Governance in the European Union*. London: Sage.

Marks, Gary, Liesbet Hooghe, and Kermit Blank. 1996. "European Integration from the 1980s: State-Centric v. Multi-level Governance*." *JCMS: Journal of Common Market Studies* 34 (3):341-78.

Martí, David. 2013. "The 2012 Catalan Election: The First Step Towards Independence?" *Regional & Federal Studies* 23 (4):507-16.

Massetti, Emanuele, and Arjan H. Schakel. 2013. "Between Autonomy and Secession: Decentralization and Regionalist Party Ideological Radicalism." *Party Politics*.

McAdam, Doug, John D. McCarthy, and Mayer N. Zald. 1996. "Introduction: Opportunities, Mobilizing structures, and Framing processes - Toward a Synthetic, Comparative Perspective on Social Movements." In *Comparative Perspectives on Social Movements. Political Opportunities, Mobilizing Structures, and Cultural Framings.*, ed. D. McAdam, J. D. McCarthy and M. N. Zald. New York: Cambridge University Press.

McCrone, David, and Lindsay Paterson. 2002. "The Conundrum of Scottish Independence." *Scottish Affairs* 40 (1):54-75.

McEwen, Nicola. 2013. "The UK Multilevel Elections in an Asymmetrical State." In *Regional and National Elections in Western Europe. Territoriality of the Vote in Thirteen Countries.*, ed. R. Dandoy and A. H. Schakel. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

McGarry, John, and Michael Keating. 2001. *Minority Nationalism and the Changing International Order*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

McLean, Iain. 2001. "Scotland: Towards Quebec - or Slovakia?" *Regional Studies* 35 (7):637-44.

Meuser, Michael, and Ulrike Nagel. 2009. "The Expert Interview and Changes in Knowledge Production." In *Interviewing Experts*, ed. A. Bogner, B. Littig and W. Menz. Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan.

Mitchell, Claire. 2006. *Religion, Identity and Politics in Northern Ireland. Boundaries of Belonging and Belief.* Aldershot: Ashgate.

Mitchell, James. 2003. *Governing Scotland: the Invention of Administrative Devolution*. Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan.

Moravcsik, Andrew. 1993. "Preferences and Power in the European Community: A Liberal Intergovernmentalist Approach." *JCMS: Journal of Common Market Studies* 31 (4):473-524.

Moreno, Luis. 2006. "Scotland, Catalonia, Europeanization and the 'Moreno Question'." *Scottish Affairs* 54 (1):1-21.

Muñoz, Jordi, and Marc Guinjoan. 2010. "Votar Independència. Organització i Participació a les Consultes sobre la Independència." *Eines per a l'esquerra nacional.*, 11-31.

Nagel, Klaus-Jürgen. 2004. "Transcending the National / Asserting the National: How Stateless Nations like Scotland, Wales and Catalonia React to European Integration." *Australian Journal of Politics & History* 50 (1):57-74.

Navaratna-Bandara, Abeysinghe M. 1995. *The management of Ethnic Secessionist Conflict: the Big Neighbour Syndrome*. Aldershot: Dartmouth.

Norris, Pippa. 2000. "Global Governance and Cosmopolitan citizens." In *Governance in a Globalizied World*, ed. J. S. Nye and J. D. Donahue. Washington D.C: Brookings Institution Press.

———. 2011. *Democratic Deficit. Critical Citizens Revisited.* . New York: Cambridge University Press.

Ohmae, Kenichi. 1995. *The End of the Nation State: the Rise of Regional Economies*. New York: Free Press.

Pammett, Jon H., and Lawrence LeDuc. 2001. "Sovereignty, Leadership and Voting in the Quebec Referendums." *Electoral Studies* 20 (2):265-80.

Pérez-Nievas, Santiago. 2006. "The Partido Nacionalista Vasco: Redefining political Goals at the Turn of the Century." In *Autonomist Parties in Europe: Identity, Politics and the Revival of the Territorial Cleavage*, ed. L. De Winter, M. Gomez-Reino and P. Lynch. Barcelona: ICPS.

Pfadenhauer, Michaela. 2009. "At Eye Level: The expert Interview - a Talk between Expert and Quasi-expert." In *Interviewing Experts*, ed. A. Bogner, B. Littig and W. Menz. Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan.

Pierson, Paul. 1996. "The Path to European Integration: A Historical Institutionalist Analysis." *Comparative Political Studies* 29 (2):123-63.

Pollack, Mark A. 1997. "Delegation, Agency, and Agenda Setting in the European Community." *International Organization* 51 (01):99-134.

———. 2001. "International Relations Theory and European Integration." *JCMS: Journal of Common Market Studies* 39 (2):221-44.

Przeworski, Adam, and Henry Teune. 1970. "Research Designs." In *The Logic of Comparative Social Inquiry*. New York: Wiley-Interscience.

Ragin, Charles C. 1987. *The Comparative Method. Moving Beyond Qualatative and Quantative Strategies.* Berkeley: University of California Press.

Reuters. *Separatist Parties Win Catalonia Election in Spain* [Online newspaper] 2012 [cited. Available from http://www.reuters.com/article/2012/11/26/us-spain-catalonia-idUSBRE8AO08S20121126.

Sambanis, Nicholas, and Branko Milanovic. 2014. "Explaining Regional Autonomy Differences in Decentralized Countries." *Comparative Political Studies*.

Schneider, Carsten Q., and Claudius Wagemann. 2006. "Reducing Complexity in Qualitative Comparative Analysis (QCA): Remote and Proximate Factors and the Consolidation of Democracy." *European Journal of Political Research* 45 (5):751-86.

Scottish Government. 2013. "2011 Census: Key Results on Population, Ethnicity, Identity, Language, Religion, Health, Housing and Accommodation in Scotland - Release 2A." National Records of Scotland.

Scully, Roger, and Richard Wyn Jones. 2012. "Still three Wales? Social Location and Electoral Behaviour in Contemporary Wales." *Electoral Studies* 31 (4):656-67.

Smith, Anthony D. 1986. *The Ethnic Origins of Nations*. Oxford: Blackwell.

Snyder, Richard. 2001. "Scaling Down: The Subnational Comparative Method." *Studies in Comparative International Development* 36 (1):93-110.

Sorens, Jason. 2005. "The Cross-Sectional Determinants of Secessionism in Advanced Democracies." *Comparative Political Studies* 38 (3):304-26.

Swenden, Wilfried. 2006. *Federalism and Regionalism in Western Europe: a Comparative and Thematic Analysis*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Tansey, Oisín. 2009. "Kosovo: Independence and Tutelage." *Journal of Democracy* 20 (2):153-66.

Tarrow, Sidney G. 2011. *Power in Movement. Social Movements and Contentious Politics.* 3. ed. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Tesón, Fernando R. 1997. *Humanitarian intervention: an Inquiry Into Law and Morality*. Irvington-On-Hudson, New York: Transnational.

The Electoral Commission. 2015. "Past Elections and Referendums."

The Guardian. *Catalan Independence Poll: What Happens Next?* [Online newspaper] 2014a [cited. Available from http://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/nov/11/catalan-independence-poll-what-happens-next.

———. *Catalonia to Hold Unofficial Poll Instead of Independence Referendum* [Online Newspaper] 2014b [cited. Available from http://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/oct/14/catalonia-calls-off-november-independence-referendum.

The Telegraph. *Scotland Election 2015 Results: SNP Landslide Amid Almost Total Labour wipeout - as it Happened* [Online newspaper] 2015 [cited. Available from http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/politics/SNP/11586534/scottish-election-results-2015-live.html.

Tsebelis, George. 2002. *Veto Players. How Political Institutions Work*. New Jersey: Princeton University Press.

Türsan, Huri. 1998. "Introduction: Ethnoregionalist Parties as Ethnic Entrepreneurs." In *Regionalist Parties In Western Europe*, ed. L. De Winter and H. Türsan. London and New York: Routledge.

UK Government. *Press Release: Referendum Agreement Signed with Scottish government* [Press release], September 10, 2013 2012 [cited. Available from https://www.gov.uk/government/news/prime-minister-and-secretary-of-state-sign-referendum-agreement-with-scottish-government.

Urwin, Derek. 1983. "Harbinger, Fossil or Fleabite? "Regionalism" and the West European Party Mosaic." In *Western European Party Systems*, ed. H. Daakder and P. Mair. London: Sage.

Walker, William. 2014. "International Reactions to the Scottish Referendum." *International Affairs* 90 (4):743-59.

Waltz, Kenneth N. 1979. *Theory of International Politics*. New York: McGraw-Hill.

Welsh Government. 2012. "2011 Census: First Results for Ethnicity, National Identity, and Religion for Wales."

Wood, John R. 1981. "Secession: A Comparative Analytical Framework." *Canadian Journal of Political Science / Revue canadienne de science politique* 14 (1):107-34.

Wyn Jones, Richard, and Roger Scully. 2012. *Wales says Yes: Devolution and the 2011 Welsh Referendum*. Cardiff: University of Wales Press.

Yin, Robert K. 2009. *Case Study Research. Design and Methods*. Vol. 4. Thousand Oaks, California: Sage.

Zabalo, Julen. 2008. "Basque Nationalism's Changing Discourse on the Nation." *Social Identities* 14 (6):795-811.

Appendix 1: Regional autonomy in Scotland and Wales

	Self-Rule (1-15) The authority exercised by a regional government over those who live in the region (sum of institutional depth, policy scope, fiscal autonomy, and representation)	**Policy scope (0-4)** Range of policies for which a regional government is responsible	**Institutional depth (0-3)** Extent to which a regional government is autonomous rather than deconcentrated	**Representation assembly + executive (0-4)** Extent to which a region is endowed with an independent legislature and executive	**Fiscal Autonomy (0-4)** Extent to which a regional government can independently tax its population
Wales	*8*	*2* *Authoritative competencies in at least two areas: economic policy, cultural-educational policy, welfare state policy*	*3* *Non-deconcentrated, general–purpose, administration not subject to central government veto*	*3 (2+1)* *Assembly (2): directly elected assembly* *Executive (1): dual executives appointed by central government and the regional assembly*	*0* *The central government sets base and rate of all regional taxes*
Scotland	*13*	*3* *Authoritative competencies in at least two areas above, and in at least two of the following: residual powers, police, authority over own institutional set-up, local government*	*3* *Non-deconcentrated, general–purpose, administration not subject to central government veto*	*4 (2+2)* *Assembly (2): directly elected assembly* *Executive (2): the regional executive is appointed by a regional assembly or directly elected*	*3* *The regional government sets the rate of at least one major tax: personal income, corporate, value added or sales tax*

Source: (Hooghe et al. 2010)

Appendix 2: List of respondents *(name, tittle, date, place, type and duration of interview)*

Respondent 1 (R1): Eve Hepburn, *Senior Lecturer in politics and international relations at the University of Edinburgh.* Oct 7th 2014, Edinburgh. Personal interview, Duration: 52 min.

Respondent 2 (R2): Michael Keating, *Professor of Politics at University of Aberdeen and Director of ESRC Scottish Centre on Constitutional Change.* Oct 7th 2014, Edinburgh. Personal interview, Duration: 59 min.

Respondent 3 (R3): Nicola McEwen, *Professor of territorial politics at the University of Edinburgh and Associate Director of the ESRC Centre on Constitutional Change.* Oct 8th 2014, Edinburgh. Personal interview, Duration: 55 min.

Respondent 4 (R4): Alan Convery, *Lecturer in Politics at the University of Edinburgh.* Oct 10th 2014, Edinburgh. Personal interview, Duration: 41 min.

Respondent 5 (R5): Scott Macnab, *Political journalist for The Scotsman.* Oct 10th 2014, Edinburgh. Personal interview, Duration: 27 min.

Respondent 6 (R6): Peter MacMahon, *Political editor for ITV Border's.* Oct 10th 2014, Edinburgh. Personal interview, Duration: 54 min.

Respondent 7 (R7): Robert Liñeira, *Research fellow in politics and international relations at the University of Edinburgh.* Oct 9th 20014, Edinburgh. Personal interview, Duration: 56 min.

Respondent 8 (R8): Klaus-Jürgen Nagel, *Professor of in political science at Universitat Pompeu Fabra.* Oct 13th 2014, Barcelona. Personal interview, Duration: 74 min.

Respondent 9 (R9): Vicent Partal, *Journalist and manager of VilaWeb.* Oct 13th 2014, Barcelona. Personal interview, Duration: 83 min.

Respondent 10 (R10): Jaume Lopez, *Adjunct professor in political science.* Oct 14th 2014, Barcelona. Personal interview, Duration: 64 min.

Respondent 11 (R11): Germa Capdevila, *Editor at Revista Esguard.* Oct 15th 2014, Barcelona. Personal interview, Duration: 78 min.

Respondent 12 (R12): Ivan Serrano, *Adjunct professor in political science at Universitat Pompeu Fabra.* Oct 15th 2014, Barcelona, Personal interview, Duration: 57 min.

Appendix 3: Interview guide

- Thank you

- How much time do we have?

- Introduction of my project/ What I want to investigate/ How I define dependent variable

- Structure of the interview
    1. Case-specific: Scotland or Catalonia
    2. External comparison: Scotland vs. Catalonia (possibly Flanders)
    3. Internal comparison: Scotland/Catalonia vs. Wales/Basque Country
    4. The context: Globalization/The EU
    5. Domestic institutional playing field

1. Specifically on the cases

Scotland:

1) I would like to talk about the (short-term) process leading up to the referendum.
    a. When did it get on a path towards secessionism?
    b. If you look at a referendum on secession as the end of a nationalistic mobilization continuum. How will you describe the chain of events leading up to it?
    c. In short, what are the key factors that have paved way?
    d. What are the trigger mechanisms?

2) Historically, what are the factors that constitute Scottish nationalism?

3) Key moment: SNP's election victory 2011. How will you explain this massive victory?
    a. In general, what factors do you pin the electoral performance of SNP on?

4) The Edinburgh-Agreement
    a. Under what circumstances was the Edinburgh-Agreement negotiated?
    b. From the states perspective. What options did British government have?

5) Leading up to the referendum. What have been the Yes-camp's main arguments for secession?
    a. Any new arguments vis-a-vis traditional rhetoric?

6) Theoretically; power-sharing arrangements can either dampen or fuel secessionist movements; what has devolution had to say for Scottish nationalism? (Has devolution fueled Scottish nationalism?)

Catalonia:

1) I would like to talk about the (short-term) process leading up to the referendum.
    a. When did it get on a path towards secessionism?

b. If you look at a referendum on secession as the end of a nationalistic mobilization continuum. How will you describe the chain of events?
c. In short, what are the key factors?
d. What are the trigger mechanisms?

2) Historically, what are the factors that constitute Catalan nationalism?

3) Key moment. 2012: Mass protest in Barcelona → Snap elections →New government. How can this be explained? (Culmination of a process or turning point?)
a. In general, what factors do you pin the electoral performance of CiU on?

4) The central government blocking of the proposed referendum. How has this effected the mobilization?

5) Leading up to the referendum. What have been the Yes-camp's main arguments for secession?
a. Any new arguments vis-à-vis the traditional rhetoric?

6) Theoretically, power-sharing arrangements can either dampen or fuel secessionist movements; what has devolution had to say for Catalan nationalism? (Has devolution fueled Catalan nationalism?)

2. External comparison: Scotland vs. Catalonia

1) In your view, what are the main differences between the processes in Scotland and Catalonia?
a. (Flanders?)

2) I have an impression that Scottish secessionism is driven by 'a wish to take the last step out' (pragmatic/mutual recognition with GB) vs. Catalan secessionism is driven by not being granted enough autonomy and recognition (hostility and frustration with Spain)?
a. Do you agree with this?
b. Would a more generous Spanish state have staggered the mobilization or in Scotland a stricter central-state done the same, or is secessionism and inevitable road in these cases?

3) Considering the two countries democratic history, Is there any difference in the democratic quality of GB and Spain?
a. How has it affected the processes?

3. Internal comparison: Scotland/Catalonia vs. Welsh/Basque case

Wales:

1) How will you compare Welsh and Scottish nationalism?
a. What are the main differences?

2) If the referendum is a measure of national success: Why hasn't the movement in Wales been as successful?
a. Why have there been weaker demands for secessionism in Wales?

      b.   Why has cultural distinctiveness in Wales not expressed itself politically as it has in Scotland?

The Basque Country:

    1) How will you compare Basque and Catalan nationalism?

    2) If the referendum is a measure of success: Why haven't the movements in the Basque country been as successful?
        a.   Why do you think it is the case that Catalans have pushed for a referendum more forcefully than the Basques?
        b.   What explains the difference of outcome on the referendum variable?

4. The context: Globalization and the EU

    1) How has Globalization changed the playfield for regional/secessionist parties in Scotland/Catalonia?

    2) How has the EU affected the mobilization processes in Scotland/Catalonia?
        a.   How has the EU been used actively in the political discourse?

    3) 'Emancipatory nationalism' (Gubiernau 2013) [*]
        a.   Do you agree that Scottish/Catalan secessionism can be regarded as a product of 'Emancipatory nationalism'?

5. The domestic institutional playing field

    1) Are there political institutional arrangements that are more viable for the success of secessionist/regionalist parties?
    2) Is the institutional framework of GB/Spain more viable for secessionist/regionalist parties than institutional frameworks in countries with similar challenges?

Concluding remarks

- Thank you very much for your time.
- Would you mind if I contact you again if I have further questions?
- Can I ask you if you can recommend me anyone else I can talk to regarding these matters?

[*] "(…) a step forward in the deepening of democracy by accepting the principle of consent. (…) nation's right to decide upon its political future by democratic means and (…) includes the right to secession. (…) nation evolving from adolescence to adulthood.