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**DIFFERENTIATING PRO-INDEPENDENCE MOVEMENTS IN  
CATALONIA AND GALICIA: A CONTEMPORARY VIEW**

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## **ABSTRACT**

Europe is a continent known of states where borders run according to ethnic or civic nationalities. Some of the most prominent secessionist movements that have been studied extensively, however, prove that sovereign states seemingly carrying a single national identity can incorporate several sub-state nationalities with distinct identities. This is the case in Spain, where three regions – Basque Country, Catalonia and Galicia are considered to be ‘historic nationalities’ carrying non-Castilian identities. Considering the recent surge of pro-independence tendencies in Catalonia, this research work aims to uncover the factors that have influenced the region’s secessionist endeavours. In order to observe these factors more efficiently, it is useful to incorporate another case study of a region where secessionist aims have stayed modest but which would, at the same time, still qualify as a culturally distinct region. The accompanying research object is Galicia in Spain. The paper’s theoretical framework is bound by explanatory theory of secessionism, which enables to specifically name the factors causing secessionist movements amongst any distinct nationalities. The research method used is discourse analysis. The empirical fraction of the paper incorporates methods of historiography, statistical analysis and process tracing. The factors influencing secessionist movements the most can be divided into three: cultural, economic and political. In case of Catalonia and Galicia, the latter two proved to be most relevant. Catalonia’s affluent economic stance and perceivably unfair fiscal policies imposed by Spain’s central government accompanied by latter’s reluctance to facilitate Catalan political demands, have put Catalans into position where they believe that the region would be better off independent. In Galicia, the relative economic modesty and dependency on funding from central government, as well as rather little frustrations with central policy makers have held back the surge of Galician nationalist feelings.

**Keywords:** secession, nationalism, independence, Catalonia, Galicia, Spain

## INTRODUCTION

There are numerous separatist sub-national movements around the world: some of them are pursuing more autonomy within the borders of a sovereign state, the others' aim is to gain full independence from a governing state, and few that seek to unite their territory of residence with areas of a neighbouring country. Europe is a breeding ground for most prominent cases of pro-independence movements in the XXI century. Inherently multi-ethnic states such as the United Kingdom (UK), Spain, Belgium and France each have witnessed events of separatism throughout their recent histories. In Europe, there have been a few examples of recognized secessions, such as the Baltics and Eastern European countries seceding from the Soviet Union during or after its collapse, and the dissolutions of Yugoslavia, Czechoslovakia and Serbia and Montenegro. In most cases, however, secessionist movements are undesirable, especially because of their disruptive nature. Arguably, some of the most prominent cases of such are the Scottish, Flemish, Basque and Catalan pro-independence movements, and the latter will be discussed at length in this research work.

The Catalan independence movement has gained significant momentum within the past decade, shifting its main goal from advocating for more autonomy to demanding complete independence from Spain. This has simultaneously alarmed and encouraged policy makers all around the globe. Events in Catalonia are constantly covered by international media outlets, which speculate about the possible implications to similar secessionist movements elsewhere; and discuss Catalonia as either a leading case for transforming existing political system or an illustration of Europe's (and especially the European Union's) fragmentation. Not surprisingly, the Kingdom of Spain's central authorities are strongly opposed to Catalan independentism-linked endeavours fearing similar aspirations amongst the country's other 16 autonomous communities. Although there are several small-scale independence movements in other regions of Spain, none of them takes a measure of those of Catalan and Basque secessionist groups. Galicia, located in the northwest corner of Iberian Peninsula is one of such examples. It is one of the distinguished nationalities (along Catalans and Basques), which has its own language and cultural heritage separate from Castilian one. It has multiple preconditions for a thriving independence

movement; however this is not the case today. The reason might rely in less prosperous economy of Galicia, different historical experiences, cultural influences or a combination of all three.

Catalonia's independentism has been researched extensively, especially in the latest period (Guibernau 2013; Serrano 2013; Muñoz and Tormos 2015), whereas significantly less attention has been paid to Galicia's secessionist potential. Given that the paper aims to uncover a set of factors shaping the existence or non-existence of secessionist movements in multinational states, it is useful to establish a comparative study of two sub-state regions, keeping in mind to choose one where pro-independence movement has gained ground and another where it is non-evident. Spain, together with its minority nations of Catalonia and Galicia accordingly, offers an academically justified opportunity for such research, especially as the two are rarely compared in detail.

The paper is divided into three chapters, which involve different qualitative research methods. The first chapter is centred on the theory of secessionism and attempts to set up the paper's theoretical framework as well as detect the main factors that enable us to measure a pro-independence movement in a country. Pavkovic and Radan (2007, 171) distinguish three approaches that are implemented in studies of secession: explanatory, normative and legal. Plenty of scholarly work evolves around normative and legal aspects of secessionism, debating on interpretation of the concept of self-determination, Remedial Right Only and Primary Right theories. This research work employs a combination of observational and explanatory approaches in order to determine the causes of secession, leaving aside a possible moral cluster that is usually associated with debates on such or similar subjects. The chosen research method is discourse analysis through which this paper demonstrates relevant theoretical standpoints and basic paradigms found by international academia on the subject. More specifically, this research work's theoretical framework relies on works of Horowitz (1981), Woods (1981), Sorens (2012) and some others.

The second chapter develops a context of Catalonia and Galicia. Through statistical and historical overview, it is possible to create an empirical base for further analysis. Finally, the third chapter will place the empirical findings into the theoretical framework specified. Statistical data such as public opinion polls, economic indicators and electoral outcomes, accompanied by empirical observations will be discussed at length and used in order to develop

a causal link between the secession-promoting variables and real-life outcomes in Catalonia and Galicia.

# **1. EXPLANATORY THEORY OF SECESSIONISM**

The terms ‘secession’ and ‘secessionism’ in this work are being used interchangeably with terms ‘separatism’ and ‘regionalism’, however the main theoretical framework exclusively revolves around theory of secessionism. Pavkovic and Radan (2007, 171) write that there are three main approaches to the study of secessionism – explanatory, normative and legal. While normative and legal approaches treat the moral and legal rights of secession, explanatory theory of secessionism aims to lay out the reasons why secessionist movements do or do not gain ground in a society. Latter approach is considered more suitable for solving the research problem of this paper.

## **1.1. Definition of secessionism**

There is no common agreement on the definition of the term ‘secession(ism)’ and there are various ways scholars have interpreted it. Crawford (2006, 375) defines it as an attempt to create a state “(...) by the use of threat of force without the consent of the former sovereign”. Oxford Dictionaries underscore that secession is “the action of withdrawing formally from membership of a federation or body, especially a political state”. Wood (1981, 111) defines secession as “(...) an instance of political *disintegration*, wherein political actors in one or more subsystems withdraw their loyalties, expectations, and political activities from a jurisdictional centre and focus them on centre of their own.”

The term “secessionist” in this work, like in few others (Sorens 2012, Horowitz 1981), includes movements, which either advocate for autonomy within an existing state (without separating from that state), endeavour complete independence with the intention of establishing a new sovereign power on a given territory, or aim to join parts of one state’s territory with that of another state. Latter is known as irredentism and is either carried out by states (Spain’s desire to



reunite Gibraltar to its territory, Irish nationalist claim for the territory of Northern Ireland) or minority people (Armenians of Nagorno-Karabakh region in Azerbaijan wish to reunite the region with the Armenian state). Horowitz (1981, 169) emphasises the changeable and tactical nature of secessionist demands: independence movements might accept the offer for greater autonomy, omitting their more radical aspirations, or initially autonomist groups might adopt a strictly pro-independence stance. This shows the necessity to take into account all movements that possess the preconditions for becoming an independentist, even when the sentiments have not been evident in the past.

## **1.2. Sub-state nationalism**

Pavkovic and Radan (2007, 17) write that in the past two centuries, almost all secessions and attempts of secession were referring to some kind of nationalist justifications. The notions of 'nation' and 'nationalism' are often present in secessionist discussions. Guibernau (2013, 368) defines nation as group of people who consciously form a community on a demarcated territory, share common culture, past and project for the future, as well as claim the right to rule themselves. Nation-building in minority communities is often times a direct response to majority nation-building in the host state as it is fighting to maintain or rebuild its own national identity, different from the majority nation's (Kymlicka 2001, 28). Sub-state nationalists frequently use language, common myths and traditions to distinguish themselves from majority communities.

## **1.3. Factors causing secessionism**

The factors that shape the dynamics of secessionist movements can roughly be divided into three categories: cultural, economic and political. Cultural implications include factors such as language, history, traditions and religion. Economic factors like relative wealth of a sub-state region; fiscal policy and globalisation of world economy are common drivers of secessionist movements in advanced democracies. Political grievances of secessionist movements can be lack

of representation in central institutions, unfavourable or even discriminative political stances taken by central policy makers, or decrease in legitimacy of central powers.

Cultural distinctiveness is perhaps the most common nominator of secessionist movements. When a group inhabiting a portion of a state's territory is culturally distinct from the majority population of that state, then a prerequisite for secessionist surge is created. Sorens (2012, 6) phrases this phenomenon in following way: all peoples who are territorially concentrated and share understanding of common origins, such as language, independent history or political ideology, are potentially secessionist. Language is one of the basic markers of identity. If a minority group fears that a governing majority group, either by discrimination or repression, is endangering their distinct language, it would make sense that they advocate for secessionism. Pavkovic and Radan (2007, 48) phrase it as discrimination in distribution of cultural resources, which occurs when the host state fails to give equal status to minority languages in communicational and educational networks. History as another cultural variable can cause cleavages in a society, especially when a territorial claim is involved. If a minority group on a state's territory shares a different history from the host population, the tendency is that they find the existing administrative division unfair (or view it even as an occupation). Contrasting traditions and religions find less reflection within modern sub-state nationalities. Ethnic or civic-nationalist grievances can create alienation from central state and they have a strong position in secessionist agendas. Although cultural distinction can set a precondition for secessionist surge, not all minority groups with a strong identity seek secession. Similarly, there are secessionist groups that do not campaign their national identity, but rather emphasise other factors. Internal or external sovereignty is more appealing to larger group of people, when economic or political benefits are involved (Sorens 2012, 19).

Horowitz (1981, 171-191) demonstrates four different paths to secession. He argues that backward groups in backward regions and backward groups in advanced regions tend to have low threshold for secession and therefore these groups are most likely to secede early in the state-building process. On contrary, advanced groups in both advanced and backwards regions have high tolerance to ethnic and political discrimination and are less eager to secede. This explains why most secessionist movements originate from developing countries. Horowitz (1981, 192) also concludes that advanced groups tend to take the economic and political consequences of secession into more serious consideration. Regions in democratic states that enjoy relative affluence compared to other regions of a state are usually in position where they

have to pay more taxes. However, when a region pays more in taxes than it receives in expenditures, it might demand for corrections in fiscal policy or even secession when the demands are not met (Sorens 2012, 32). Relatively poorer regions within a democratic state are more reluctant to advocate for independence due to subsidies received from central funds. Without this support, the regions' viability is questionable.

Economic integration, set off by globalisation, has widely been considered as a motivation for secessionism. Alesina and Spolaore (2003, 82) write that the process of economic integration has run in parallel to political disintegration (and rise of independent countries). Sub-state regions often desire more decision-making powers within international organisations when they feel underrepresented by their central governments. This could explain the situation where some secessionist movements, such as in Scotland and Catalonia, maintain their desire of belonging to the European Union (EU) as an independent nation. Brancati (2014, 70) argues that while economic integration can motivate some regions to turn to secessionism, it does not have a general effect to such tendencies as many regions do not benefit much from economic integration or if they do, the benefits do not outweigh the costs. Economic integration can therefore be a contributory aspect of secessionism, but it is hardly a cause of it.

Political factors of secessionism have to do with the relationship between the central state and the sub-state region. Regions might have limited access to central political power, which in turn can mean preclusive or harmful policies forced upon minorities (Horowitz 1981, 192). This usually translates to desire for more extensive self-governance. Similarly, if political ideology of a minority region clashes with the one cultivated by central regime, alienation from central state is inevitable. A good example of that would be when a multinational state advocates centralisation and unification, which might mean forcing majority identity on minority peoples. In that case, the central regime does not acknowledge the existence of minority nationalities on the state's territory and can take hostile measures against secessionist attempts. If the central authorities decide to accommodate secessionist claims, granting autonomy or higher levels of self-government to already existing autonomies, secessionist grievances might cease to exist. If the opposite happens and autonomist promises are not carried out, even greater resentment might arise (Sorens 2012, 40). This is exemplified by autonomist movements, which turn to full independence if their demands are constantly ignored.

## **2. SPAIN AND AUTONOMOUS COMMUNITIES OF CATALONIA AND GALICIA**

Despite being a unitary state, Kingdom of Spain has implemented an extensive decentralised structure. This has made it possible for regions that make up the Spanish state to have more self-governing powers. The new framework, introduced in the 1980s, was welcomed by people of Catalonia and Galicia, two of the three ‘historic nationalities’ of Spain. This brought along series of freedoms that were suppressed during the dictatorship of General Francisco Franco, such as ability to re-incorporate regional languages into administrative and social conduct or have their own decision-making apparatus. Embracing national identity has been a vital point in both Catalan and Galician nationalist movements from very early on. In Catalonia, nationalist sentiment has steadily gained more support and has culminated recently with the pro-independence endeavours. In Galicia the nationalist ideas have always been exchanged in smaller circles and have become rather modest in the past decade.

### **2.1. Spain – A Country of Autonomies**

Spain is a unitary state with a federalist character. It comprises of 17 Autonomous Communities (ACs), each of which enjoys high levels of internal self-government. Such decentralised model is a result of attempts to modernise Spanish state in the end of 1970s and in 1980s. After a long period of strict authoritarian rule under Francisco Franco, Spain was eager to abandon its conservative-isolationist legacy and start a new chapter as a democratic state. Spanish nationalism, as it was manifested during the Franco era, acquired bad reputation during the transformation to democracy. With the proposition of decentralisation, it was necessary to reply to the long neglected demands of historically distinctive regions within Spain – Basque Country, Catalonia and Galicia. As a result, model of autonomous communities was created and applied to all regions of Spain. The Spanish constitution, approved in 1978, was a great shift in Spain’s

political ideology, but at the same time an illustration of controversies that existed between political elites from opposing sides. It emphasises the unitary and indivisible nature of Spanish state, but at the same time recognises nationalities and regions within it (Spanish Constitution 1978, Article 2). The difference between nation and nationality has not been clarified in the constitutional text, but the meaning of ‘nationality’ has later on been reduced to indicate cultural and linguistic community, short of sovereignty (Núñez 2010, 723).

The three ‘historical nationalities’ that had reached agreements for autonomy already during the Second Spanish Republic, but were taken away the chance to realise self-governance under Franco’s regime, were granted it immediately after adopting Statutes of Autonomy. Other regions, which had not had any previous experience of self-governance, had to wait five years before their statuses as an Autonomous Communities were consolidated. Andalucía, as an exception, was able to take an accelerated route, similar to Basque Country, Catalonia and Galicia (Schrijver 2006, 88). Although mentioned regions had a seeming advantage in the beginning of the decentralisation process, other regions gained equal level of self-governance by the end of it. ‘Harmonisation’ has not been well accepted by Basque and Catalan nationalists, as it diminishes the special necessities of distinct sub-national groups within the country.

Today, all AC’s enjoy similar level of self-governance. They have large legislative and executive powers, including having a say over local education, industry, social services, healthcare, infrastructure, culture and even territorial distribution within their borders. The central state holds the responsibility of general regulatory processes, foreign relations (including international trade), general legislation, fiscal policy and several other matters. Although all ACs have harmonised powers, the matters regarding fiscal policy tend to be asymmetrical. Namely, unlike other communities, Basque Country and Navarre are governed by an Economic Agreement, which gives the regions full control over their taxation (Paluzie 2014, 24). Rest of the regions must transfer their tax revenues to the central government, which then redistributes the funds according to its own discretion, usually from richer regions to the poorer ones.

## 2.2. Catalonia

### 2.2.1. History of Catalan nationalism

Dowling (2012, 10) differentiates between three phases of Catalan nationalism: spreading of linguistic, cultural and historical characteristics through scholarly initiatives in 1830-1870, emergence of nationalist activists from 1870 to 1898, and finally emergence of a mass movement since 1898. The first phase was initiated through *Renaixença*, a Catalan cultural and literary movement that followed other European cultural movements during the Romantic period. Early Catalanists made references to the time when Catalonia was a powerful region within the Crown of Aragon. It was considered to be a pre-industrial Golden Age, where economy and culture flourished and Catalan language was at the core of this success (*Ibid.*, 11). When the Crown of Aragon was dissolved after Spanish War of Succession and subsequent centralization of Castile took place, formerly rather autonomous institutions of Catalonia were dismissed and Catalan cultural privileges were suppressed. *Renaixença* aimed to raise the cultural awareness and to re-establish the role of Catalan language as the central marker of Catalan identity.

Industrialisation in the XIX century enabled Catalonia to become one of Spain's most developed regions. When Catalans realised that the rest of Spain was lacking behind in modernisation and economic growth, they advocated for more liberties for regional organisation. Catalanist Union (*Unió Catalanista*), comprising of nationalist associations, was leading the politicisation of nationalism through formulating initial Catalan nationalist demands, including prioritisation of Catalan language in education (*Ibid.*, 14). 'Catalanism' became increasingly fascinated with the idea of federalism. The demands, however, ruled out secessionist endeavours and further confirmed Spain's exclusive authority over Catalonia.

In the beginning of XX century, a Catalanist political party, *Lliga Regionalista* attained political power in Catalonia. Under the leadership of the party, Catalan nationalism was institutionalized. Commonwealth of Catalonia (*Mancomunitat*) was established in 1914 in order to consolidate higher levels of self-government, which in practice turned out to be rather symbolic. Due to the lack of actual juridical powers, Catalanist demands for more self-government continued to persist. Commonwealth ceased to exist when political power in Spain shifted, and Miguel Primo

de Rivera seized power. After nearly a decade of dictatorship and suppression of sub-nationalist sentiments, Catalan nationalists received another opportunity to claim more regional autonomy. By the Second Spanish Republic (1931-1939), grievances for more self-government had deepened. Republican Left of Catalonia (ERC), a left-wing nationalist party, created in 1931, assumed the dominative role in local politics. ERC was advocating for federalist structure of Spain. Although, Catalonia had gained extensive autonomous rights within the Spanish Republic when the first Statute of Autonomy of Catalonia was approved in 1932, Lluís Companys, leader of ERC, proclaimed 'Catalan State' within the Spanish Federal Republic in 1934 (*Ibid.*, 27). The attempt was condemned by Spanish central government and autonomy of Catalonia was suspended. The autonomous government of Catalonia was abolished in 1939 along with the Republic of Spain. Power was seized by Francisco Franco, who ruled Spain until his death in 1975. During the dictatorship Catalonia was yet to witness the most difficult testing of its cultural survival. In Franco's vision, sub-state nationalisms were to be eradicated for the sake of Spain's unity. This translated into continuous suppression of Catalan identity.

During the Franco's dictatorship, Catalan language was completely banned from all areas of public life. Furthermore, wide campaigns of spreading Spanish language took place all around the region. The goal was to oust Catalan culture and rebuild local identity. The survival of Catalan culture was also threatened by the rise of Spanish-speaking migrants from other areas of Spain between 1960 and 1970. Workers from rural regions of Spain were drawn to Catalonia in hope of better employment opportunities. However, Catalonia did not become a divided society as expected. Greer (2016, 619) attributes this outcome to the fact that the two organisations that dominated Catalan social and political spheres – communists from the Unified Socialist Party of Catalonia (PSUC) and nationalists from the Democratic Convergence of Catalonia (CDC) – were both Catalanists, and, therefore, there was no room left for any opposition. This made it possible for Catalonia's nationalist demands to have stronger presence during transformation to democracy.

After Franco's dictatorship Catalan nationalism revived through the reestablishment of Catalan government, *Generalitat* and adoption of the Statute of Autonomy of Catalonia. First parliamentary elections of Autonomous Community of Catalonia were held in 1980 and resulted in the victory of Catalan nationalist coalition Convergence and Union (CiU), which has obtained majority of seats in local parliament until 2003. It has historically advocated for greater devolution within Spain without any reference to independentist endeavours. ERC's programme

at the time was modest and Catalonia's independence was a remote aspiration. As Lluçh (2014, 58-59) writes, ERC even decided to collaborate with the CiU until 1987 (when its leadership changed). Under the leadership of Àngel Colom, the party completely shifted its ideology and adopted an independentist stance. The success of that change was manifested already in the next regional elections in 1992 where ERC almost doubled the number of seats in the local parliament. (Generalitat de Catalunya, *Resultats electorals* 1988; 1992). Catalonia's political elite with the exception of ERC and few radical parties maintained that the desired structure for Catalonia was extensive autonomy within the Spanish state, and not a separate state. Significant shift in Catalanism has occurred in the past two decades and due to the changes in the relationship with central government of Spain.

### **2.2.2. From autonomy to independence?**

The end of 1990s and the first years of 2000s demonstrated mutual understandings between Catalan and Spanish governments. CiU cooperated extensively with Spain's central governments, whether it was the socialist government from 1993 to 1996 (led by Spanish Socialist Worker's Party, PSOE) or the conservative right-wing government from 1996 to 2004 (led by Popular Party, PP). It was also well represented in the Spanish central powerhouse. The seeming pro-PP stance weakened CiU's electoral position and in 2003 the Socialists' Party of Catalonia, PSC (local sub-division of PSOE) took office, leaving CiU into the opposition. ERC joined PSC and Initiative for Catalonia Greens (ICV) to form a tripartite coalition.

While the pro-independence movements have been small and insignificant in the past, the XXI century has shown a rapid growth of secessionist sentiment within Catalonia. According to Guibernau (2013, 381) one of the political factors that catalysed secessionist thoughts in Catalonia was the Prime Minister José María Aznar's government in Madrid (2000 to 2004), where previous sympathetic acknowledgement of Catalan demands was replaced with much more conservative and unitary politics. Aznar's party, The Popular Party (PP), has from then on formed politics that go against further devolution of powers to Autonomous Communities. These politics have created frustrations within Catalan society.



Centre d'Estudis d'Opinió (CEO) conducts regular opinion polls amongst people living in Catalonia. Polls conducted in 2005, 2010 and 2012 indicate the public response to political changes in those years. Replies to the question 'How would you describe political situation in Spain?' (per cent) are indicated in *Figure 1*.

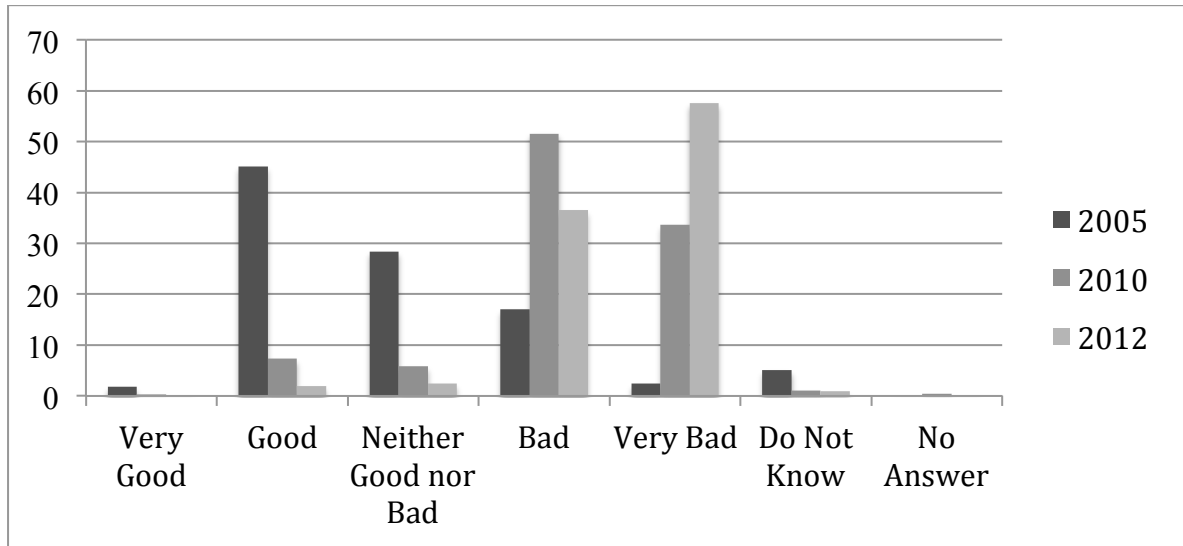


Figure 1. Catalan Political Barometer (BOP) responses to the question 'How would you describe the current political situation in Spain?' in 2005, 2010, 2012 (per cent)  
 Source: CEO (2005, 2010, 2012)

Also, when asked about the preferred administrative relationship between Catalonia and Spain, number of people seeing Catalonia as an independent state has risen from 2005 to 2012. *Figure 2* indicates the poll results of 2005, 2010 and 2012 (per cent).

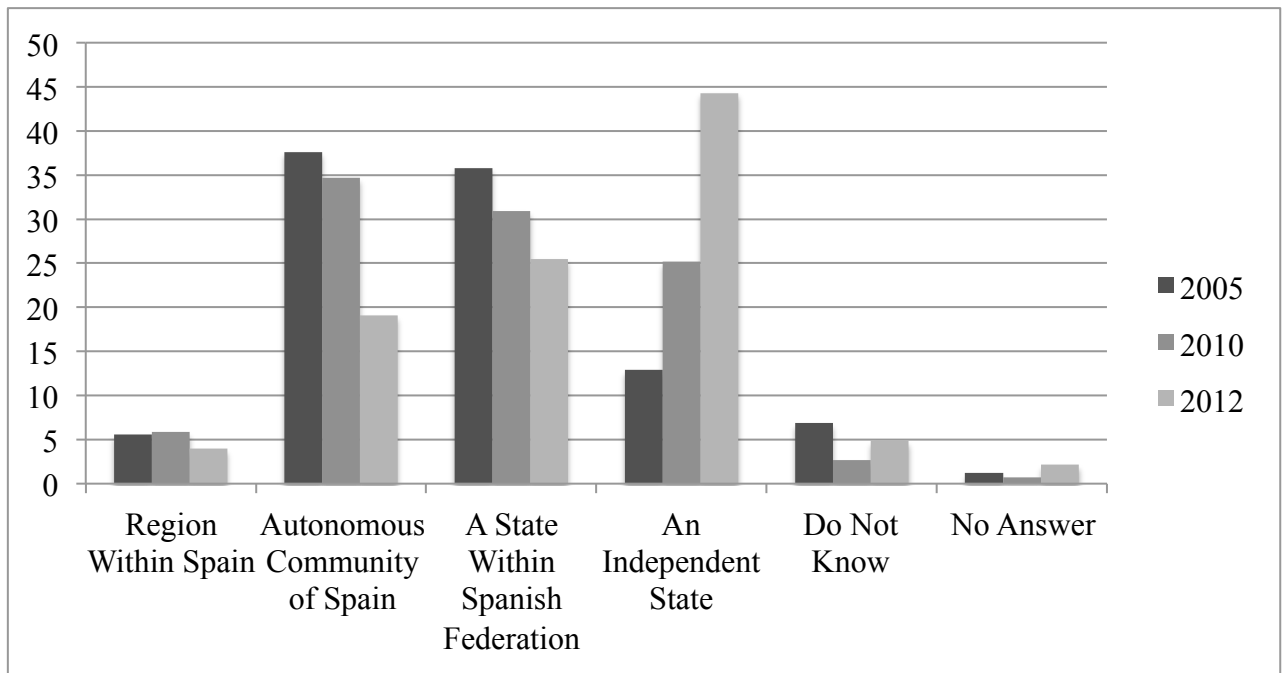


Figure 2. Catalan Political Barometer (BOP) responses to the question 'In relation to Spain, Catalonia should be...?' (per cent)  
 Source: CEO (2005, 2010, 2012)

Although Aznar's government could be considered the catalyst of growing dissatisfaction with central rule, the effects did not manifest immediately. As the polls indicate, in 2005, independence for Catalonia was not a desired option. Political situation in Spain was considered to be satisfying or even good. This could, however, be related to the power shift in local and central government. Both the socialist coalition (PSC-ERC-ICV) in Catalonia and PSOE in central government conveyed the promise of change. The initiative for renewing Statute of Autonomy of Catalonia (adopted in 1979) was perhaps the most prominent cue in Catalan socialist's campaign.

The initial ovations, however, were soon enough replaced with discontentment and frustrations as the process of adopting the new Statute was accompanied by multiple setbacks. Firstly, the internal disagreements within Catalonia's government prolonged the drafting of the document. Once the new Statute was formulated and sent to central parliament in Madrid, the latter made multiple amendments cutting down a great proportion of the proposals prior to passing it. Despite being a diluted version of the initial document, the Statute was still ratified in a referendum by Catalan citizens. The People's Party, having increasingly advocated for re-centralisation of Spain, found that the new Statute would give Catalonia freedoms that could

threaten the unity of the Spanish state. Therefore the PP challenged the Statute in the Spanish Constitutional Court. In 2010, four years after the Statute was passed in a referendum, the Court ruled that many points in the presented Statute were non-compliant with the Spanish constitution and were therefore not to be implemented or had to be reinterpreted. For example, the Statute proclaimed Catalan to be the preferred language on the territory of Catalonia. The Court, however, found that as Spanish is the only official language of the state and Catalan should not have any preference over it. Other points that were challenged concerned creating an autonomous juridical institution and having more extensive fiscal autonomy. When comparing public opinion polls of 2005 and 2010, it can be seen that support for independence grew rapidly and political situation in Spain was viewed as deteriorating.

Between 2009 and 2011, 18,8 per cent of Catalonia's citizens gathered together to cast their vote in multiple symbolically organised referendums across Catalonia (Perales-García 2014, 111). This was a call for action provoked by civil society, not by political parties. Dissatisfaction with the political inaction of Catalan parties promoted the rise of grass root civic organisations, most prominent of which is the Catalan National Assembly (ANC) established in 2012. The objective of ANC was to promote Catalan Independence. Six months from its formation, on Catalan National Day on 11 September 2012, ANC organised a mass demonstration in the streets of Barcelona. The demonstration turned out to be the biggest one in Catalan history, as 1,5 million people joined the event. In general, Catalan political elite witnessed the success of the demonstration, but was still hopeful that Spanish central government would facilitate their demands for more autonomy, and were reluctant to join the pro-independence sentiments. However, when Madrid refused to negotiate a fiscal pact and once again rejected all ideas of more autonomous Catalonia, Catalonia's president saw the necessity to convoke snap elections (Forcadell Luís 2014, 16). Before the new elections, the promise of holding a referendum on self-determination in 2014 was added to the political agenda of CiU, which was formerly promoting devolution within Spain rather than federalism or independence. When looking at the opinion polls of 2012, the heightened support for independence amongst Catalan people was visible, as were the frustrations with central politics.

In 2014, *Generalitat* set out to hold a referendum. For the referendum to be legal, it was necessary to get the support of the Spanish Parliament. The support was not granted so later that year Catalan Parliament passed a law in local parliament that would allow for the referendum to take place. The central government immediately challenged the law in the Constitutional Court

and as a result the law was suspended (Martí, Cetrà 2016, 108). The referendum, taking place against the authorisation of central government, turned out to be symbolic and non-binding. Once again, early elections in Catalonia were announced. Catalan politics had by this time further polarised and there was a much clearer distinction between pro-independence parties and anti-independence parties. This polarisation broke apart the CiU since one of its constituents – Democratic Convergence of Catalonia (CDC) was pro-independence while the other constituent – Democratic Union of Catalonia (UDC) was divided. CDC as a pro-independence force united with ERC and two other like-minded parties – Democrats of Catalonia (DC) and the Left Movement (MES) to form a new coalition *Junts pel Sí* (JxS). Another pro-independence party Popular Unity Candidacy (CUP) decided to run their candidacy separately. Clearly non-secessionist parties were the local branches of PP and Citizens (C's) while Catalan Socialist party PSC-PSOE was against independence but supported the right for holding a referendum.

In 2016, Carles Puigdemont took office as President of Catalonia. Soon after he announced a referendum on sovereignty to be held in October 2017. In September 2017, Catalan Parliament passed a law, which would legitimise declaration of an independent Catalan republic should the people support independence. Central authorities immediately suspended the law and deemed Catalan parliament's initiatives to be illegal and unconstitutional. The Catalan parliament decided to go through with the referendum anyway. As a result, Spanish government ordered central police forces to disrupt the referendum by eliminating ballot boxes and restricting access to polling stations. Wherever voters showed resistance, police introduced violent measures. Anti-independence supporters largely boycotted the referendum so the turnout was very low. Although the result was overwhelmingly pro-independence, it must be taken into consideration that more than half of the population did not participate.

Nevertheless, Catalan President was determined to announce sovereignty. His initial idea, however, was to give one last opportunity for central government to enter into negotiations. Once the pro-independence fraction of public grew restless about the Parliament's inability to keep up with its promises, and central government's refusal to negotiate, independence was declared on 27 October. Central government reacted immediately and dismissed Catalan government and suspended the autonomy. Catalan leaders were arrested while president Puigdemont went into exile. Central government also announced new elections for December. Despite central government's hopes, independentists retained majority in the parliament. The election results, however, showed the reduction in votes and loyalties. When considering the

vote, less than half of Catalonia’s population desire independence. Opinion poll conducted in 2017 indicated that only 37,4 per cent considered themselves as Catalan nationalists, while 60 per cent replied that they do not consider themselves as Catalan nationalists (CIS 2017).

When comparing opinion survey replies to the question ‘Do you want Catalonia to become an independent State?’ (see *Table 1*), it can be seen that opinions from 2015 until 2017 vary slightly without indicating a sudden increase or decrease in preferences. The 2018 data, however, shows a nearly 10 per cent decline in support for independence when compared to the end of 2017. This could be attributed to changing attitudes towards local Catalan government, whose declaration of independence seemed hasty and not well-reasoned to many.

Table 1. Catalan Political Barometer (BOP) replies to the question ‘Do you want Catalonia to become an independent State?’ (per cent)

	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Does not know</b>	<b>Does not answer</b>
2015	46,7	47,8	5,8	1,3
2016	44,9	45,1	7	2,9
2017	48,7	43,6	6,5	1,3
2018	40,8	53,9	3	2,3

Source: CEO (2015, 2016, 2017, 2018)

### **2.2.3. Catalonia’s Economy**

Prior to the industrialisation in the XIX century, Catalonia was mainly an agricultural economy, as the rest of Spain. The industrial revolution, however, had a big influence on Catalonia, as it urged local entrepreneurs to take an opportunity in manufacturing and using its waterways for trade. Industrialisation symbolised modernisation and economic prosperity of Catalonia while rest of Spain was still mostly agrarian and at times expressing backwardness. Catalan cities, Barcelona at forefront, became the industrial hubs that could compete with other prosperous European cities. Catalonia and Basque country both have traditionally been considered as the leaders of Spain’s economy.

According to National Statistics Institute or INE (2016) Catalonia with its GDP per capita ranks fourth amongst the 16 Autonomous Communities. It attracted around 13 per cent of foreign direct investments in 2017 and is today generating one fifth of Spain's total GDP (in the first quarter of 2017 Catalonia's GDP in market prices amounted to 19,2 per cent of total Spanish GDP). Unemployment in Catalonia was steadily increasing from the fourth quarter of 2008 and was highest in the first quarter of 2013 when it amounted to 24,45 per cent. In 2017, however, the unemployment rate marked its lowest since the beginning of financial crisis in 2008 and is now around 13 per cent, which is lower than the Spain's average (INE 2002-2017). The average yearly salary in Catalonia ranks fourth highest in Spain, exceeding the national average. General economic indicators show that Catalonia is not only one of the most affluent regions in Spain, but also highly competitive on EU level (Eurostat 2015).

The fiscal redistribution scheme, however, has proven to be a source of long-term dissatisfaction amongst Catalans who desire same level of fiscal freedom as Basque Country and Navarre already have. Various Catalan governments have advocated for a pact that would provide more fiscal autonomy in the region. So far, all the attempts have been vain. The common belief now is that Catalonia would be economically better off as an independent state.

Muro and Vlaskamp (2016, 1115-1138) conducted a survey experiment aiming to uncover how different prospects of EU membership influenced secessionist tendencies in Catalonia. When introduced a positive scenario (possible inclusion to the EU after gaining independence), respondents proved to be highly receptive of the idea of secession. When introduced a negative scenario (possible exclusion from EU without the prospect of future inclusion) the outcome, however, was not as extreme as suggested in the hypothesis. Respondents were already aware of the possible negative implications of secession and had taken it into account. Another finding was that preferences for secession were rather fixed amongst those who expressed higher degrees of Catalan nationalism. Responses amongst those with dual identity fluctuated more.

## 2.3. Galicia

### 2.3.1. Galician nationalism and political environment

Galicia is one of the ‘historic nationalities’ of Spain, alongside with Basque Country and Catalonia. Although not being as striking as nationalist movements in latter two, Galicia has had a history of regionalist resistance (Schrijver 2006, 120). ‘Galicianism’, similarly to ‘Catalanism’ is an ideology, which implies that Galician region has a separate cultural identity from that of other regions in Spain. What distinguishes Galicia from other regions is its myth of Celtic roots and their historic influences to language and traditions. Celtic roots were recaptured by literary and cultural revival in XIX century *Rexurdimento*, a small-scale version of Catalan *Renaixença*. Schrijver (2006) however notes that although there are a few cultural elements from Celtic origin, Galician language does not bare similarities to other Celtic languages, but is instead similar to Portuguese. Historic connectedness to Portugal has also been one of the cornerstones of Galician self-awareness and advocated by several nationalist groups in history. Early promotion of Galician identity took a form of regionalism, a milder version of nationalism. First regionalist political organisations like Galician Regionalist Association (ARG), Galician League and Galician Solidarity (SG) were created in the turn of the XX century (*Ibid.*, 121). However, the organisations dissolved rather fast as they were unable to attract a larger following. More nationalism-oriented organisation that also had a political programme was Brotherhood of the Language (*Irmandades de Fala*) founded in 1916.

During the Second Spanish Republic, Galician regionalists and nationalists joined forces to form a single political party – Galicianist Party (PG), which intended to abandon elitism that characterised former organisations, and create a larger member base (*Ibid.*,122). Prior to the beginning of Spanish Civil War, Galician nationalists managed to draft a Statute of Autonomy, which Basque Country and Catalonia had already adopted. Galician Statute was passed in a referendum but was not realised due to the breakout of war. Galicianism weakened significantly during Franco’s regime, which proved detrimental to all nationalist endeavours within Spain. Although Galician nationalism re-emerged in 1960s and several parties were formed, it was unable to establish political representation in Madrid by the time the transition to democracy began, but due to the pressure that Catalan and Basque nationalist put onto Spanish government, Galicia was also able to gain the status of a ‘historic nationality’ (*Ibid.*,124). A Statute for Autonomy of Galicia was adopted in 1981.

In 1982, Galician Nationalist Bloc (BNG), a political coalition of several nationalist parties that would lead Galician nationalism during the following decades, was established. BNG's programme has been modified across time- from demands for self-determination and sovereignty to higher competences and recognition for Galicia within Spanish state (*Ibid.*,152). BNG was initially an advocator against unification processes of Europe. According to BNG's former spokesperson Xose Manuel Beiras's words (as cited by Elisabeth Nash 1996) European Union policies have damaging effects on productive sectors that Galicia is dependent on, such as shipbuilding, fishing, farming and small industry. Later on, the strategy shifted to seeing European Community as a framework for regions having a voice within centralised states (Schrijver 2006, 154-155).

BNG has been the third political force in Galician Parliament since the founding. The other two are the Galician sections of central PP and PSOE, PPdeG and PSdeG-PSOE accordingly. PPdeG has been the leading figure of Galician politics since the transformation to democracy and has won the local elections persistently. The electoral success might be attributed to the slight deviation from the programme of PP, as PPdeG represented a more regionalist approach in Galicia by promoting Galician language, culture and self-awareness (*Ibid.*, 159). PSdeG, however, had in the beginning difficulties establishing a more considerate regionalist programme, as the dominant fracture of the party was anti-regionalist. After 1997 regional elections, when Galician nationalists' beat PSdeG, the latter shifted its policies towards deeper appreciation of Galicianism and even federalism of Spain. (*Ibid.*,163) In the regional parliamentary elections, BNG showed steady rise up until 2001 elections, where it lost seats first time since 1985 (Xunta Electoral, 1985-2001).

In 2012, a new nationalist force in Galicia emerged. Anova is a BNG splinter coalition led by Xosé Manuel Beiras, former leader of BNG. In the regional elections of 2012 Anova joined United Left coalition (EU) to form Galician Left Alternative (AGE), which advocates for self-determination for Galician people (Warf, Ferras 2015, 264). The federalist coalition surpassed BNG and won 9 parliamentary seats. However Anova, similarly to BNG, has not been able to impact the local politics to a larger extent. In case of Galicia, it can be seen that all main electoral powers have a political programme that includes regionalism and Galician identity. This is quite different from Catalonia's case, where regional PP's branch has usually had very modest results.



### 2.3.2. Maintaining the *Status Quo*

In the light of events in Catalonia, Galician nationalists have remained modest in promoting self-governance for Galicia. Currently there is no common desire to follow the footsteps of Catalonia. Figure 3 represents the public opinion polls conducted in Galicia from 2005 to 2016. These indicate that the support for independence has remained marginal while support for *status quo* is prevalent (see *Figure 3*).

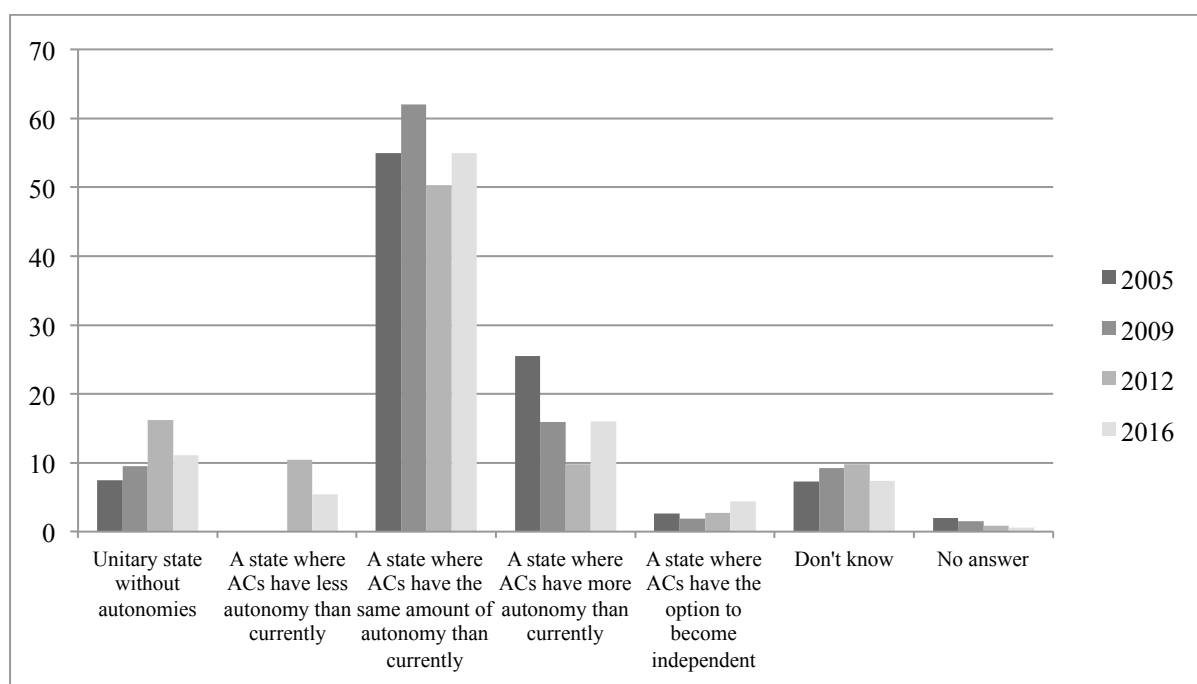


Figure 3. Studies on Galicia. Responses to the question ‘Which alternative formula of territorial organization of the State of Spain do you agree most with?’ (per cent)  
Source: Centro Investigaciones Sociológicas (CIS) (2005, 2009, 2012, 2016)

The 2016 public opinion poll was conducted after regional elections indicated the continuous support for PPdeG, while BNG ranked fourth (after newcomer En Marea and PSdeG). In addition, when asked whether the respondents considered themselves Galician nationalists, 70, 2 per cent chose the option ‘No’ (CIS 2016).

### 2.3.3. Galicia’s economy

Galicia is historically an agrarian region dependent on traditional industries, fishing as the largest one. The economic viability has at times been restricted by its peripheral geography and poorly

developed infrastructure (including lack of roads, ports and telecommunication) (Keating 2001, 226). Contrary to XIX century developments in Catalonia and Basque Country, Galicia did not witness industrialisation and economic upsurge. Historically Galicia has also been a region with large emigration that simultaneously derived from and contributed to economic decline.

Inaccessibility is a major obstacle to Galicia's contemporary economic development, although investments have been made to build highways and ports that support fishing industry, maritime tourism and sea trade (Hulbert 2012, 6). There are also inequalities between coastal and inland territories, latter being less developed and more rural. Economic prosperity is concentrated in the coastal cities and industrial hubs. Today Galicia ranks as the ninth economy of Spain in terms of GDP per capita. In the first quarter of 2017 Galicia's GDP accounted for 5, 2 per cent of Spain's total GDP (INE, 2016-2017). The average salary of 20,624 euro per year stays below the Spain's average salary of 23,106 euro (INE 2015). Similarly to Catalonia the unemployment in Galicia was highest during years of financial crisis, but is now in decline. In 2017 Galicia attracted 2,1 per cent of foreign direct investments in Spain.

### **3. SECESSIONISM IN CALATONIA AND GALICIA**

Secessionist movements in Catalonia and Galicia take very different dimensions. While there is a strong and progressive independence movement in Catalonia, Galician nationalists are keeping a fairly low profile. The attitudes towards self-government amongst public also differ greatly as in Galicia only a very small part of population thinks that the region would be better off as independent. The reasons for such differences between the two regions rely in their history, politics and economic situation.

#### **3.1. National identity**

Distinct language, culture and history are important prerequisites for a secessionist movement to be viable. In Catalonia and Galicia, language is an important marker of a distinct identity. Catalan and Galician, accordingly, are spoken widely and find use in education, media and on local institutional level. Both languages have witnessed decadence and revival throughout the history, especially during the times of rise of Spanish unitary sentiment or occasional decentralisation. Language has played an important role in the nationalist movements of Catalonia and Galicia since XIX century when cultural revival initiatives emerged in both regions. *Renaixença* in Catalonia and *Rexurdimento* in Galicia aimed to raise the awareness of their respective languages through literary works. During the Franco era, local languages were banned and Spanish was established as the sole language for communication all around Spain. The use of Catalan and Galician languages was restricted to the premises of one's home or to private spheres only. Despite witnessing large scale repression, both languages managed to survive the difficult times. During the restoration of democracy since 1976, local languages were reinstated and received an official status with the Statutes of Autonomy. Preservation of language (and culture) is perhaps the most relevant aim in Galicia's nationalist movement today. A substantial tendency of Galician nationalists is to emphasise the affiliation of Galician

language and cultural traditions with those of Portuguese. This is an indication of Galician irredentist potential. Catalanists on the other hand, have moved beyond the linguistic matters and are emphasising other grievances in their pro-independence campaigns.

Common independent history is another reference point in secessionist discussion. Sub-state nationalities often times make a distinction between their own history and that of the host state. In many cases the minority people, especially those aiming for secession, see that their territory was included into the central state’s territory unfairly and that the latter has no legitimacy over it. According to Catalan nationalists Catalonia, belonging historically to Crown of Aragon and enjoying high degree of autonomy at the time, was included to Crown of Castile by force. Galicia on the other hand was incorporated into Crown of Castile already in XV century and was not able to exercise statehood similar to that of Catalonia. Although having a strong ethnic and cultural identity, Galicia lacks a historic institutional base (Máiz, Losada 1999). This might be one of the reasons that Galician nationalism is weaker than Catalan one.

Both *Figure 4* and *Figure 5* summarise the replies to the question ‘Which of the following phrases do you identify yourself with the most?’ raised in opinion polls in Galicia and Catalonia in 2016 and 2017 respectively. It can be seen that in case of Catalonia the respondents gravitate more towards Catalan identity rather than Spanish one. Most respondents from Galicia consider themselves to be equally Spanish and Galician.

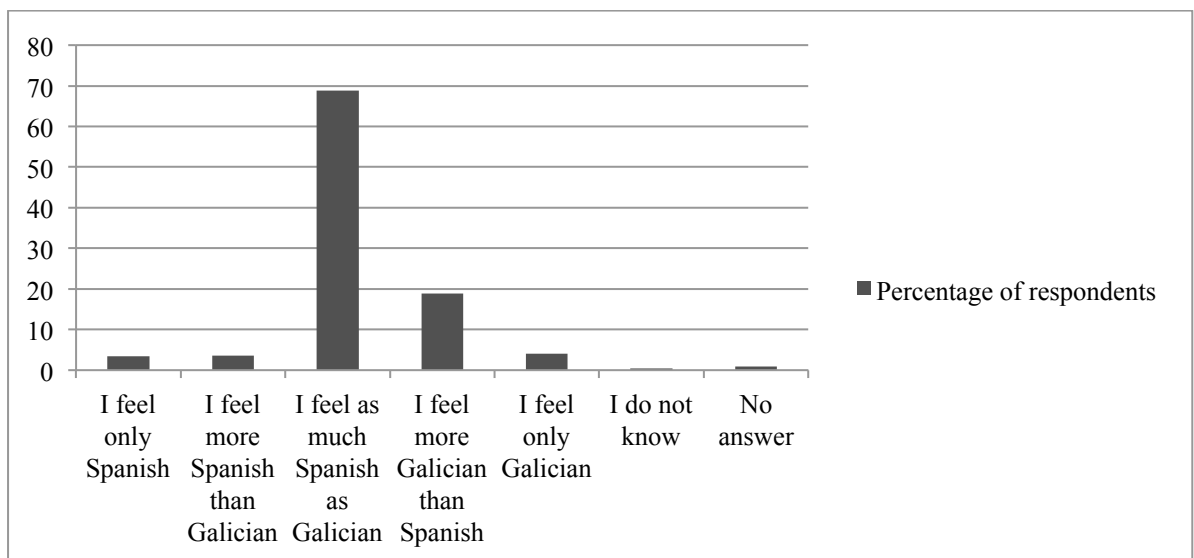


Figure 4. Replies to the question ‘Which of the following phrases do you identify yourself with the most?’ in public opinion poll conducted in Galicia in 2016.

Source: Centro Investigaciones Sociológicas (CIS) (2016)

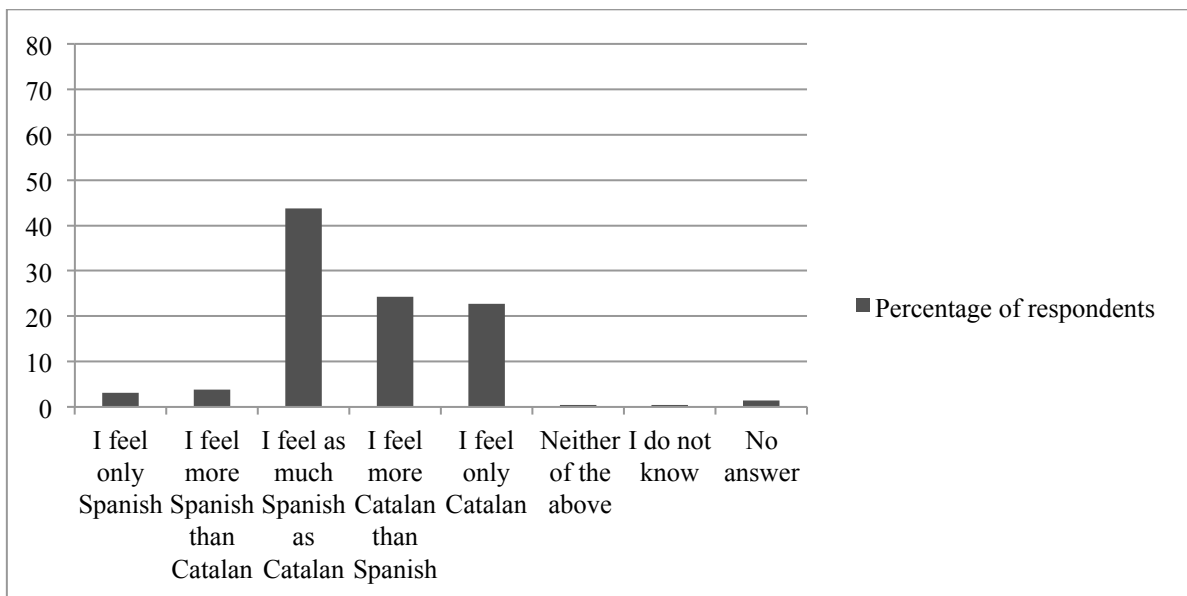


Figure 5. Replies to the question ‘Which of the following phrases do you identify yourself with the most?’ in public opinion poll conducted in Catalonia in 2017.

Source: Centro Investigaciones Sociológicas (CIS) (2016)

### 3.2. Economic implications

The economic realities of Catalonia and Galicia differ to a great extent. According to economic indicators, Catalonia, compared to Galicia is a relatively affluent region. It becomes evident when comparing the average salaries to regional consumer price indexes. While the average salary in Catalonia is much higher than in Galicia (according to INE statistics from 2015 the difference is around 3700 Euros annually), the consumer price index is almost equal (102 659 in Catalonia and 102 175 in Galicia, INE 2018). This means that purchasing power of Galician people tends to be lower. Also, the regional GDP per capita in Catalonia exceeds the national average while in Galicia it stays below it. Nevertheless, Galicia cannot be considered a poor community in the context of Spain. Although Galicia does not catch up with the richest ACs of Spain, such as Madrid, Basque Country, Navarre and Catalonia and it was historically an agrarian economy where industrialisation took place as late as in the XX century, the region is doing well compared to several other communities in Spain, which stand out for extremely high unemployment rates, low purchasing power and low levels of industrialisation.

Spain has a progressive taxation system, which means that communities with higher income pay higher taxes. The general idea is to distribute wealth from better-off regions to poorer ones. *Figure 6* illustrates fiscal balances per capita for each AC in 2014. A negative relative balance means that the region pays more tax per inhabitant than the average or that it receives less investment and funding by the state. High fiscal surplus however represents a high inflow of central funds and investments and less tax contributions to the state budget. The data reveals that Galicia is extensively subsidised by the Spanish state while Catalonia is in fiscal deficit. Another phenomenon that is indicated on the graph is that although Basque Country and Navarre are known to be highly affluent communities, there is fiscal surplus not deficit as for other wealthy communities. This can be contributed to the special taxations rights the two communities enjoy.

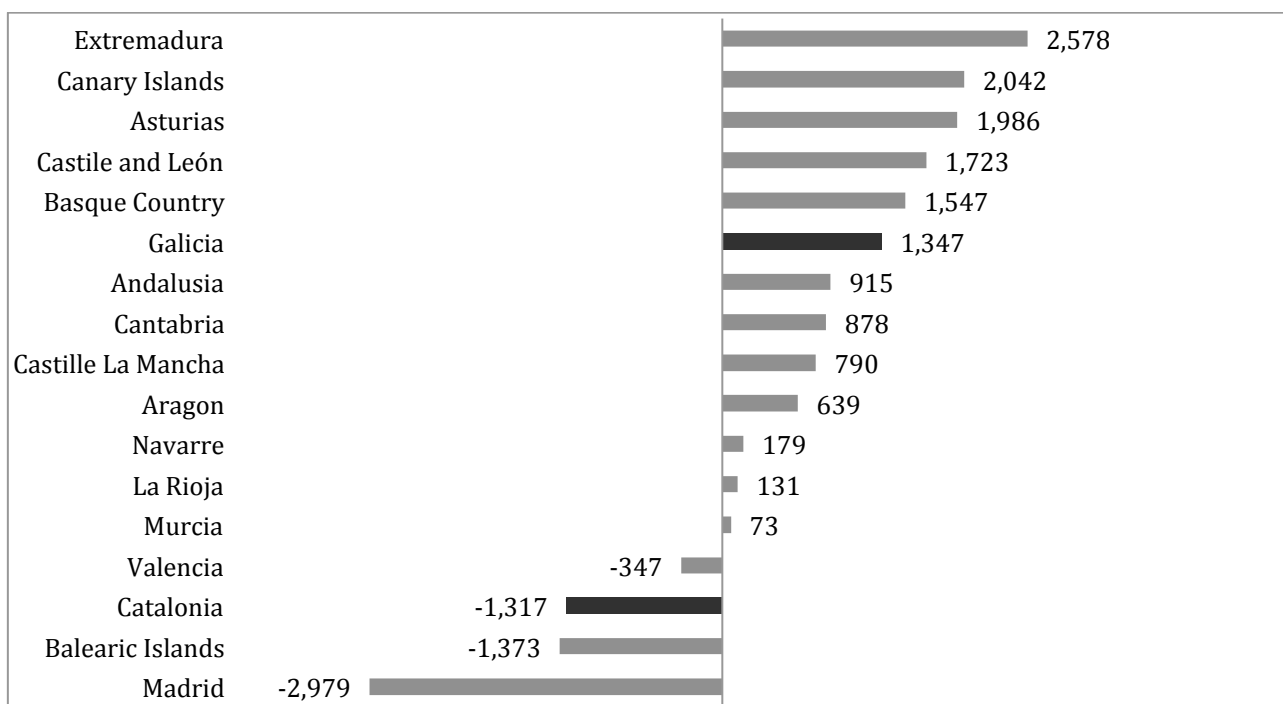


Figure 6. Fiscal balance per capita for each Autonomous Community of Spain in relative terms, 2014 (EUR)

Source: Ministry of Finance and Public Function, 2017

Although official data (provided by Ministry of Finance and Public Function) regarding fiscal balance for ACs is available only for 2011, 2012, 2013 and 2014, according to Catalan government's own data, the fiscal deficit has always persisted (Generalitat de Catalunya, 2010). However it must be noted that there have not been major fluctuations of fiscal deficit throughout the past two decades as it has maintained a similar proportion. Persistent economic grievances

are contributing greatly to the now popular understanding that Catalonia would be better off as an independent state. Although economic factors are not the direct cause for pro-independence sentiment, as grievances have existed for decades, it certainly has encouraged a large part of local population to see independence as the only way out. In Galicia the discussion about independence is close to non-existent as economic safeguards provided by the central government are good enough reason for desiring *status quo*.

### **3.3. Political environment**

Spain is a country where nationalist and even secessionist political parties are legal and acknowledged. They have been enabled access to power in the political centre in Spain and in the EU institutions. In current Spanish parliament, the Congress of Deputies, Catalan secessionist coalition ERC-CatSi holds 9 seats out of total 350. Although Galician nationalist party BNG did not obtain any seats in 2016 elections, it has managed to obtain them in the past.

In case of Catalan secessionism, the issue is not the lack of representation in the centre, rather the resistance of the central government to enter into dialogue over Catalan demands. Presumably, the People's Party, not being able to establish its stance in regional elections, perceives Catalonia's political environment as hostile towards its own centralisation aims. Similarly, Catalans see the political influence of the People's Party as detrimental to their freedoms as a distinctive community within Spain. The relatively sudden and growing support for Catalonia's independence has been driven by consecutive frustrations with central government in Madrid. The two main sources for such discontentment are the unwillingness of the central government to acknowledge Catalonia as a separate nation and the reluctance to provide Catalonia the right to manage its own fiscal policies.

In Galicia, there are few concerns regarding central government's policies, especially when it comes to economic sustainability of Galicia and Spain itself. However, Galicians have been on good terms with central government and no continuous large-scale frustrations can be perceived. Considering the three distinct nationalities of Spain, Galicia has been the only one where non-state-wide parties, especially nationalist ones, have not had any remarkable influence (Pallarés

2007, 111). The most influential nationalist party in Galicia, BNG, advocates a rather pragmatic nationalist stance and avoids any gravitation towards independentism. PPdeG has been the leading political party of Galicia for the past two decades and its popularity seems to be persistent. This is an indication that voters are satisfied with current political environment and level of powers devolved to the AC.



## CONCLUSION

The objective of this paper was to uncover and then observe possible reasons why previously rather modest secessionist movement of Catalonia has taken a sudden turn towards pro-independence, while in Galicia, also a culturally distinctive region within Spain, the secessionist endeavours have always stayed reserved. While Catalonia's case has been researched extensively, remarkably less academic work touches upon Galicia's separatist potential. This paper aimed to set up a comparative study of both regions to examine in parallel the factors that encourage or discourage proliferation of secessionist movements. The assumption was that the relative economic affluence, different historical experiences, cultural distinctiveness or a combination of all three determine the dimension of local pro-independence movements. In order to set up a relevant framework to study this phenomenon, explanatory theory of secessionism was chosen. Unlike normative and legal approaches to secessionism, explanatory approach aims to clarify why secessionist movements gain ground at first place. Within a secessionist theory-driven framework, a range of factors that influence the existence or non-existence of secessionist movements can be roughly divided into three: cultural, economic and political.

Cultural factors such as language, independent history, traditions and religion make up national identity which is an inseparable element in most secessionist tendencies. However, the existence of common identity is not the driving force of secessionism in both Catalonia and Galicia. Both minority nationalities embrace cultural distinctiveness and many of their interests lie in preserving local language and historic myths. In Catalonia, the most recent pro-independence sentiment has not been motivated by the cultural heritage of Catalans being threatened, but by other relevant factors. In Galicia, where people are also loyal to their local language and traditions, there exist no pro-independence endeavours. The cultural factors can be seen as instruments to carry on secessionist idea, but in these two cases it is hardly the trigger for secessionist mobilisation.

Economic factors of secessionism examined were the relative wealth of the regions and influences of fiscal policy. The secessionist movements in advanced democracies tend to rise from relatively wealthier regions. Catalonia is one of the most affluent regions of Spain. The economic success has raised beliefs that Catalonia's economy would be better off when Catalonia became independent. Another reason to support the idea is the frustrations over fiscal policies of Spanish central government. The community is paying more in taxes than it receives in expenditure and is in constant fiscal deficit. This fiscal inequality has prompted Catalans to demand similar taxation rights that Basque Country and Navarre currently enjoy. However, the fiscal deficit has persisted since the beginning of Spain's transition to democracy and it is only until now that frustrations have developed into demands for independence. Economic factors have played a great role in Catalonia's secessionist movement and have been a guarantee for larger public mobilisation, but they were not the sole reason for Catalonia's recent turn towards independentism. Galicia on the other hand, as an economically modest region, is the receiver of subsidies. The fiscal balance of Galicia is positive, meaning that it receives more in government spending than it pays in taxes. This economic dependency is probably the reason why Galicians do not favour independence for their region.

Political factors that influence viability of secessionist movements are lack of representation on national level, discriminative stances of central government and decrease in legitimacy of central policy-makers. First of these factors did not occur in the case studies of Catalonia and Galicia as regional parties have throughout times been represented in Spanish parliament and have not been discriminated. In case of Catalonia, the determinative factor, which has steered region's politics towards pro-independence is the reluctance of central government to meet Catalans' demands for more extensive self-government, especially the ability to oversee their own fiscal dealings. Continuous opposition and resistance to enter into negotiations expressed by central government have decreased Spain's legitimacy and created an image in Catalans' eyes that independence is the last resort for receiving fair treatment. In Galicia certain contentment with *status quo* can be witnessed. There have not been any major discrepancies between Galicians and central government of Spain. To add, Galicia is one of the stronghold of Spanish conservatism as for decades the most preferred party in the region has been a local branch of People's Party.

It can be concluded that factors that matter the most in the emergence or non-existence of secessionist and especially pro-independence movements in Catalonia and Galicia are economic and political. Future research could more closely concentrate on the political factors of

secessionism. For example, it could be analysed how nation-wide and sub-national parties in Catalonia and Galicia communicate their views to the public and how does it shape the electoral outcome. Another option would be to apply the established theoretical framework to another multinational state and explore whether similar conclusions can be made.

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