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THE PURSUIT OF INDEPENDENCE IN CATALONIA AND SCOTLAND: TOWARDS A NEW FORM OF CIVIC NATIONALISM IN EUROPE?

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Abstract

Territorial politics and the prospect of minority nationalist secession have assumed renewed prominence in Europe in recent years, centring on the relationships between Scotland and the United Kingdom and between Catalonia and Spain. For both cases, 2014 proved a momentous year, with Scotland holding a binding referendum on independence in September, and Catalonia holding a non-binding (and disputed) consultation vote in November. This paper explores the recent push for independence in these two contexts, employing frame analysis to assess how the pro-independence movements in Scotland and Catalonia conceptualize and articulate the ideas of nationhood, collective identity, and self-determination. It specifically explores the various political cleavages that these movements draw on in promoting the idea of autonomy or independence, and how these movements have positioned themselves within a changing European political environment. The paper demonstrates that, for both pro-independence movements, territorial politics and the idea of independence serve as vehicle for articulating traditional centre-periphery grievances and for promoting policies that reflect the needs and demands of the Scottish and Catalan communities. At the same time, both movements put forward a form of civic nationalist discourse that advocates democratic renewal and civic engagement.

Introduction

The latter half of 2014 saw the resurgence of a form of territorial politics that felt eerily familiar, and yet new in its magnitude and political aspiration. In recent decades, Spain and the United Kingdom have undergone processes of political devolution designed to accommodate the self-government ambitions of their Catalan and Scottish minority nations, while also attempting to preserve the territorial integrity of the Spanish and British states. In spite of widely-held expectations that devolution and self-government would satisfy the political ambitions of Scottish and Catalan nationalists, nationalist-led governments in Scotland and Catalonia have recently held votes on independence from the U.K. and Spain respectively. A binding referendum took place in Scotland on September 18, 2014, and a non-binding (and disputed) consultation vote took place in Catalonia on November 9, 2014.[1] The Scottish referendum resulted in a 55.3 per cent "No" victory for the unionist side in the referendum debate, while the Catalan vote resulted in a 80.8 per cent "Yes-Yes" victory for the pro-independence side[2]. Both referendums sparked widespread public engagement, and in the Scottish case, encouraged a level of participation that is widely absent in regular electoral politics.[3]

How are we to understand the renewed vigour with which key actors in party politics and civil society in Catalonia and Scotland have recently pushed for a referendum on independence? Are we witnessing yet another wave of political mobilization on behalf of 'minority nations' (Keating 2000) whose claims for greater autonomy have historically been deeply ingrained in the political fabric of many European nation-states? Can the push for independence in Catalonia and Scotland simply be interpreted as a momentary revival of long-lasting centre-periphery conflicts, or as a new dimension in how this form of territorial politics plays out in contemporary Europe?

In order to address these questions, this article investigates how notions of nationhood and collective identity are portrayed in the Scottish and Catalan contexts by their respective pro-independence movements. At the very core of any nationalist aspiration is the notion of a distinct political community defined by a shared sense of identity that is distinct from and in tension with those who are perceived to endanger the self-determination of this community. Here, we are confronted with a somewhat paradoxical situation with a view to how the minority nationalist cause is promoted in contemporary Western European societies. For decades, scholars in the modernization theory tradition have told us that the traditional political cleavage driven by competing ethnic or cultural loyalties is losing its relevance in terms of how these loyalties shape

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[1] Scots voted "yes" or "no" to the question "Should Scotland be an independent country?", while their Catalan counterparts voted "yes" or "no" on a two-part question, "Do you want Catalonia to become a State?" as well as "Do you want this State to be independent?"

[2] Results in the Catalan vote were "Yes-Yes" 80.8 percent; "Yes-No" (those of in favour of Catalan statehood within Spain) 10.1 per cent; "No" (those opposed to Catalan statehood and independence) 4.5 per cent; and the remainder consisted of "Yes-Blank", "Blank" and "Other" responses. The high support for independence is partly attributable to the widespread abstention by Catalan voters opposed to independence, many of whom regarded the vote as illegal and illegitimate, a view shared by the Spanish government and Catalan political parties opposed to independence (we address the subjects of legality and voter abstention further below).

[3] The 84.5% voter turnout in the Scottish referendum set a record for voter turnout in any election held in the United Kingdom since 1918.

modes of belonging and political preferences (Deutsch 1966). To remain socially and politically relevant, a collective identity is critically dependent on its continuous symbolic affirmation in public discourse in order to remain meaningful in how the assigned community members perceive social and political reality (Gellner 1983).

This perspective informs our second set of research questions: What kind of political cleavages do these movements respond to in promoting the idea of autonomy or independence? How do present-day minority nationalist movements situate themselves in the changing environment in which notions of nationhood and sovereignty are shaped against the background of the European integration process?

The recent referendums in Catalonia and Scotland provide an analytical focus to assess the aspirations and modes of reproducing a meaningful collective identity for minority nationalism in contemporary Europe. The independence campaigns in both regions allow us to shed light on the political cleavages articulated in this form of territorial politics. Based on a frame analysis of these campaigns in Catalonia and Scotland, we intend to contribute to the debate on the changing nature of regionalism and minority nationalism in Europe. Our working hypothesis is that traditional notions of minority nationalism in (Western) Europe possibly miss some of the key factors that are driving successful political mobilization on the ground.

The article begins with a discussion of territorial politics, its role as a conceptual framework for our analysis of the referendums in Catalonia and Scotland, and its place within the wider academic literature. Our particular interest is directed at the way in which minority nationalists advocate for greater autonomy, if not independence, in light of the changing nature of borders and identities in Europe. In a second step, we situate the respective referendums in the wider political and institutional context in which they were organized. In the conclusion, we will come back to a broader assessment of the minority nationalism present in Catalonia and Scotland.

The persistence of territorial politics in the 21st century

The resurgence of political movements such as the ones in Catalonia and Scotland represents a challenge when it comes to explaining the driving forces behind such regionalist or nationalist aspirations in contemporary Europe. This form of territorial politics advocating independence for a small nation seems to be at odds with the very way in which the European continent has developed over past decades. The process of European integration has enhanced cross-border mobility and allowed for a transfer of policy responsibilities to the trans-national level in a way that has undermined the notion of the nation-state as the sole territorial container for political authority and societal integration. National borders are decreasingly the only legitimate demarcations for political community and governance structures. In such a world, proponents of minority nationalism appear to reproduce the obsolete logic of the nation-state and its reliance on the congruence between (national) culture, territory, and political representation (Berezin and Schain 2003). In their political struggles, national minorities depend on the sovereigntist discourse and the related plea for self-governance. In this respect, the claims of national minorities replicate forms of political legitimacy and institutional practices that were historically established by traditional nation-states from whose dominance these same minorities claim to

have suffered. Somewhat paradoxically then, the solutions promoted by national minorities are strongly committed to and conceptually molded by the logic of the Westphalian state system. Another puzzle of regionalist or nationalist politics, as noted by Anderson (1991), is that their claims portray the community in question as eternally given and equipped with incontestable rights. The quest for self-determination is justified by referring to this supposedly unchangeable 'essence' of a people or ethno-cultural group. The reference to the ethno-cultural core (Connor 1994, Muller 2008) still constitutes much of the attraction of nationalist movements. It is against this background that regionalist claims have traditionally been dismissed from a modernist perspective. Most prominently, Karl Deutsch (1966) predicted that national states would invariably extend their control over their peripheries and gradually deprive regions of the socio-economic and political-cultural foundation of sovereigntist claims. This statist teleology has instilled a considerable degree of – normatively driven – skepticism regarding the prospects and legitimacy of minority nationalism. Seymour Martin Lipset's dictum that such sub-state forms of territorial politics are indicative of vain 'revolts against modernity' still reverberates in scholarly and public discourse.

Yet, minority nationalism has not withered away in the wake of 'modernization' (Rokkan and Urwin 1983). Indeed, the manifest persistence of territorial politics has produced competing scholarly approaches: instead of portraying such political movements as anomalies of modern society, the resurgence of regionalist and minority nationalist aspirations are interpreted as an integral part of the territorial reconfiguration of Europe. Traditional notions of spatial-territorial scale are changing in profound ways (Brenner 2004), allowing the regions to play a more prominent role in generating meaning and loyalty at the sub-state level (Jessop, Brenner, and Jones 2008). In the 1990s, scholars may have gone too far in predicting the end of the nation-state or the dawn of a post-Westphalian and post-national era (Appadurai 1996, Ohmae 1995, Strange 1996). Still, these daring interpretations accurately indicated a shift in Europe's governance system that has had a profound effect on the context within which the concerns of regions are articulated.

The literature on the 'new regionalism' (Keating 1998; for a good overview, see Keating 2008) emerged in the 1990s, linking this form of territorial politics to the structural changes of the state and the changing nature of borders and modes of governance in Europe. In a nutshell, the emerging system of multi-level governance in Europe has created institutional spaces for regions both as administrative units and as entities that can sustain viable forms of collective identities (Kahler and Walter 2006). One critical dimension in this respect has been to explore the link between the political aspirations of regions and the process of European integration (Hooghe 1995; Jones and Keating 1995; Keating 2004). Although some of the far-reaching expectations associated with the establishment of the Committee of the Regions in 1994 have not materialized, European integration has opened opportunities for regions in terms of pursuing their territorially-defined interests and cultivating their collective identities (Hepburn 2008).

However, given the fact that the centre-periphery conflict has produced remarkably different outcomes across Europe, such broad structural explanations need to be complemented with a more specific sense of the political dynamics involved in political mobilization on behalf of the region (Hepburn 2009). What are the particular circumstances under which this type of territorial politics is able to command such mobilizing force? Who are the actors that assign meaning to the region and its identity as a primary reference point for defining loyalties and interests? Our

article focuses on the political dimension of the conflicts under investigation. We seek to shed light on the specific political opportunities[4] that the nationalist movements in Catalonia and Scotland have been able to exploit. Analytically, we focus on the framing strategies of the main proponents of the independence campaign, identifying the key arguments that have been put forward in support of the nationalist cause.[5] In the first step, we briefly describe the political-institutional context for the referendums and the main proponents involved before we come to the analysis of the dominant frames in their respective campaigns.

The political-institutional context for the referendums in Catalonia and Scotland

The decision of certain political and civil society actors in Catalonia and Scotland in recent years to employ a referendum to secure independence is significant both in terms of the stability of the wider Spanish and British states and their success (or inability) at accommodating the ambitions of Scottish and Catalan nationalism, and in terms of the political strategies of the Scottish and Catalan pro-independence movements.

The first issue speaks to broader questions regarding strategies for maintaining the stability of multinational polities. Is it more effective to accede to the demands of minority nationalists for greater autonomy and political recognition in the interests of preserving the unity of the larger multinational polity (to the point of accepting asymmetrical federal or confederal political arrangements), or is it better to refuse minority nationalist demands on the grounds that greater decentralization will only encourage aspirations for secession? This question has provoked considerable academic debate in recent years among scholars of multinational polities. Will Kymlicka (2005, 138) describes this conundrum as the "paradox of multinational federalism," in that the political autonomy available to national minorities under a federal system can have an unpredictable effect on their desire for secession.[6] He notes that on the one hand, federalism "provides national minorities with a workable alternative to secession" by granting them a degree of self-government over their own affairs, but on the other hand, the autonomy it bestows has the potential "to reinforce the belief that the group is able and rightfully entitled to secede and exercise full sovereignty" (ibid.). Wayne Norman (2001) articulates a similar point when he explains the unforeseen challenges of officially recognizing a minority nation within a larger multinational state (including the minority nation's right to self-determination). He argues that recognizing a minority nation "might make the members of the group feel more at home in a state that no longer pretends that they do not exist," but that it also "might strengthen the national identity of the members of that group, and thereby weaken their attachment to the larger state," thus encouraging secession (Norman 2001, 93). Michael Keating (2001b) agrees that accommodating minority nationalist demands can have unforeseen consequences, but cautions

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[4] We operate with the concept of political opportunity structures which, according to Tarrow (1998), can be understood as "consistent – but not necessarily formal or permanent – dimensions of the political struggle that encourage people to engage in contentious politics".

[5] Methodologically the analysis draws on discourse analysis in the tradition developed in social movement research: Gamson and Wolfsfeld (1993); Koopmans and Statham (1999).

[6] While Kymlicka referred to multinational federal states, his argument could also apply to multinational devolved unitary states such as the United Kingdom and Spain, in which opponents of political devolution have characterized greater autonomy for Scotland and Catalonia as merely a stepping-stone on the path to their eventual independence.

that the prospect of it leading to secession is not as likely. Rather, he contends that recognizing a minority nation's right to self-determination will not necessarily lead to that nation seceding from its larger multinational polity, as "the costs of secession militate strongly against this," and argues "that secession is more likely in conditions in which the right to self-determination is denied, thus forcing nationalists into more extreme postures" (Keating 2001b, 61).

This choice between accommodating or resisting the self-government and recognition demands of minority nationalists has underlined the British and Spanish debates surrounding political devolution in recent decades, and reappeared in discussions over granting the Scottish and Catalan governments the necessary powers to hold referendums on independence. The British strategy of agreeing to negotiate with the Scottish National Party through the Edinburgh Agreement over granting Scotland the authority to hold an independence referendum, agreeing to abide by the result of the vote, and promising the Scottish people greater devolution in return for voting "No" and remaining within the United Kingdom, appears to reflect a more open strategy to minority nationalist accommodation. The British government appears to recognize and affirm Scotland's national status and right of self-determination, and has attempted to prevent Scotland from declaring independence by granting it greater political autonomy within the British state. Indeed, it is a fascinating question (yet one beyond the scope of this article) to inquire whether, since the initiation of devolution in the UK under the government of Tony Blair, there has been a gradual build-up of Scottish government competence and institutional capacity that has allowed for a push for a referendum.[7] Keating, Cairney, and Hepburn (2009) have portrayed Scotland as the most developed 'territorial policy community' in the United Kingdom, with an expanding set of legislative powers addressed at the subnational level. This has created opportunities for interest formation and articulation that, as we will show in a moment, have contributed to the push for independence by the nationalists.

Like the U.K., Spain has undergone a process of regional devolution over the past three decades designed in part to respond to the self-government aspirations of minority nationalist regions such as Catalonia. Unlike the U.K., however, the position of the Spanish government on granting Catalonia the authority to hold a referendum on independence has been decidedly negative. The different positions of the British and Spanish governments relate in part to the different constitutional contexts in the United Kingdom and Spain. The Scottish referendum process benefitted from the flexibility of the U.K.'s unwritten constitution in which a simple parliamentary majority in Westminster is able to alter the devolved powers that Scotland exercises, including granting Scotland the authority to hold a referendum on independence. The Catalan referendum process, by comparison, has proven more complicated, due to the language of Spain's written constitution, which has served as the foundation for the Spanish government's opposition to a Catalan referendum. In particular, the Spanish government contends that, under constitutional law, a constituent unit of Spain such as Catalonia does not have the sovereign authority to vote on seceding from Spain, as the sovereignty to make such a decision resides with

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[7] Cairney (2014) describes the gradual territorialisation of interest representation in Scotland and how devolution has allowed distinct policy preferences to be nurtured.

the people of Spain as a whole.[8] As the Spanish Prime Minister, Mariano Rajoy, argued on September 29, 2014:

> Sovereignty lies with the Spanish people as a whole, and one part of the people may not take decisions on what affects all of them. The Spanish Constitution is based on the indissoluble unity of the Spanish nation, and thus any attempt to dissolve it is radically contrary to the Constitution. (La Moncloa 2014a)

The Spanish government's interpretation of the Constitution (one that has been endorsed at different times by the Spanish parliament and the Spanish Constitutional Court), is rejected by the Catalan government and the main supporters of Catalan independence. In their view, the debate over the right to vote on independence is "more a political than a legal one," and argues that Catalonia has attempted various legal measures to gain the authority to hold a referendum that were subsequently blocked or "excluded" by Madrid (Catalonia Votes 2014f).[9]

The first initiative came on January 16, 2014, when the Catalan parliament made a formal petition to the Spanish parliament – one modeled after the Edinburgh Agreement – in which they requested that Madrid transfer to Catalonia the legal authority to hold a referendum on independence. The Spanish parliament subsequently voted against this request on April 8.[10] The second initiative came on September 19, 2014, when the Catalan parliament passed the Law on Non-Binding Popular Consultations to serve as the legal foundation for the referendum vote, followed by President Mas signing a decree on September 27, calling for a referendum vote for November 9. In response, on September 29, the Spanish government issued an appeal against both measures in the Spanish Constitutional Court, arguing that they were unconstitutional. The Constitutional Court agreed to hear the appeal, leading to the temporary suspension of both measures. President Mas attempted to circumvent this legal hurdle on October 14 by calling for a non-binding consultation vote through a "public participatory process" (Catalonia Votes 2014g). Due to the Constitutional Court's legal injunction, however, the Catalan voting process on November 9 had to be carried out by volunteers. Voter turnout consisted of 2.3 million voters out of over 5 million potential voters, in which it was assumed there was large-scale abstention from Catalan voters opposed to independence (the process was also publically boycotted by Catalan parties that opposed independence) (BBC News 2014). The Catalan President, Artur Mas, described the vote as a significant achievement and justification to hold a formal binding referendum on independence in the future, while the Spanish government refused to recognize

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[8] The Spanish government invokes Article 1.2 of the 1978 Constitution in this argument, which states that "[n]ational sovereignty is vested in the Spanish people, from whom emanate the powers of the State." They also justify their opposition to the Catalan referendum by invoking Article 2, which states (in part) that "The Constitution is based on the indissoluble unity of the Spanish nation, the common and indivisible country of all Spaniards," and Article 149.1(xxxii), which grants the Spanish state "exclusive competence" in terms of providing "authorisation for popular consultations through the holding of referendums" (Kingdom of Spain 1978).

[9] Catalonia Votes (2014f) contends that "[f]rom the joint application of the principles of rule of law and democracy – enshrined in the Spanish Constitution and international and European Union law –, there are up to five different legal ways for the referendum to be held," but are unclear on their website as to what exactly constitutes these "five different legal ways."

[10] During the parliamentary debate, Prime Minister Rajoy argued the Catalan request was unconstitutional in that the powers over holding referendums are under the "exclusive" authority of the Spanish state and cannot be transferred to other levels of government, and that the purpose of the referendum conflicted with the Constitution's commitment to the sovereignty of the Spanish people (La Moncloa, 2014b).

the outcome, as well as questioned the vote's constitutional legality and credibility (ibid.). On November 21, Spain's State Prosecutor began to seek criminal charges against President Mas, along with the Catalan Vice-President and the Minister of Education, on the grounds of "disobedience, perverting the course of justice, misuse of public funds and abuse of power" due to their leading roles in the referendum vote (Catalonia Votes 2014g). In spite of Madrid's legal efforts, the Mas government announced its intention on January 14, 2015 to hold early parliamentary elections in Catalonia (set for September 27, 2015) that will act as a "de facto independence referendum," arguing that "[t]he Spanish Government has blocked all other alternatives of holding a specific vote so far" (Catalonia Votes 2014g).

The second significant issue arising from the decision of the Catalan and Scottish pro-independence movements to employ a referendum to secure independence relates to questions of political strategy. Both movements are drawing on an older democratic/dialogical secessionist tradition (best exemplified by Quebec), in which a polity attempts to secure independence through popular referendum and intergovernmental negotiation, as opposed to a unilateral declaration of independence and/or armed conflict. Similarly, both movements have articulated a "qualified" form of independence rather than absolute sovereignty, in which the Scottish and Catalan governments are promising that an "independent" Scotland and Catalonia would potentially maintain significant political and economic ties to their former states, as well as immediately become members of the European Union. There are similarities between these visions of Scottish and Catalan independence "within Europe" and Quebec's past attempts at securing political "sovereignty" while maintaining an economic and monetary union with the rest of Canada, as well as membership within the North American Free Trade Agreement. Many minority nationalists regard this form of "qualified independence" as a more palatable political solution among larger sections of the electorate, in particular among those who otherwise may be uncomfortable with voting for independence.

Finally, complicating the strategies of both the wider British and Spanish states at preserving their territorial integrity as well as the strategies of the Scottish and Catalan pro-independence movements has been the changing economic and fiscal circumstances in the UK and Spain since the 2008 economic crisis. The austerity measures and public spending cuts introduced by Prime Minister David Cameron's Conservative-Liberal Democrat coalition government since their election in 2010 proved widely unpopular in Scotland (as well as other parts of the United Kingdom). One key issue at the centre of the debate leading up to the referendum was whether Scotland would be able to afford the expansive welfare state provisions promised by the Yes campaign. More broadly, the economic viability of an independent Scotland proved to be a matter of fierce contestation. In this context, Scottish nationalists referred to the revenues from North Sea oil as a critical tool to create a more prosperous independent country (depicted in stark contrast to the social costs of the socio-economic crisis that has affected the UK in recent years).

Similarly, in Spain, the austerity measures introduced by the Partido Popular government of Prime Minister Mariano Rajoy provoked widespread protests across the country, including in Catalonia. Tensions were also exacerbated by the efforts of the Catalan government of Artur Mas at securing a new fiscal agreement (*pacte fiscal*) for the region from Madrid, one that would grant Catalan institutions the authority "to levy all taxes in Catalonia and also to reduce the indirect money transfers from Catalan tax-payers to other Spanish regions" (Martí 2013, 508). The *pacte fiscal* built on the long-held assertion among Catalan nationalists that a fiscal

imbalance exists between Catalonia and the rest of Spain, in which they argue that, as one of the wealthiest regions in Spain, Catalonia gives more money to the rest of Spain through tax revenue than it receives in return through central government funding and services. It also reflected the view of the Catalan government (with the support of several major opposition parties) that Catalonia required greater fiscal autonomy if the region was to respond effectively to the rising unemployment and deficit levels it had experienced since the beginning of the economic downturn. In September 2012, a major meeting took place between Mas and Rajoy in which Rajoy rejected the Catalan demands articulated in the *pacte fiscal* and Mas in turn rejected Madrid's counter-offer of reforming Spain's existing system of fiscal re-distribution (Martí 2013, 509). The following sections will discuss how these failed negotiations (along with other recent intergovernmental disputes between Catalonia and Madrid) have served as a reference point for the mobilization of pro-independence sentiment in Catalonia in recent years.

Supporters of independence in the Catalan and Scottish context

Supporters of independence consist of a broad coalition of political and civil society actors. The main political parties backing independence in the Catalan parliament are the centre-right nationalist governing party, Convergència i Unió (CiU), and two left-wing nationalist opposition parties, Esquerra Republicana de Catalunya (ERC) and Candidatures d'Unitat Popular (CUP). Until recently, the CiU as a whole had been circumspect in its ultimate political ambitions for Catalonia relative to the rest of Spain. The party traditionally avoided explicit statements about independence, and for much of its history was seen as an "autonomist" party, committed to securing national recognition for Catalonia and maximizing its political autonomy within the Spanish state rather than outside of it (see Keating 2001a, Martí 2013). Esquerra Republicana de Catalunya, in contrast, has promoted Catalan independence since the early 1990s, and while the party was a marginal force in the years immediately following the restoration of Catalan self-government, it has grown in prominence over the past decade, and is now the second-largest party in the Catalan parliament. In contrast, the CUP is a newcomer to the Catalan parliament, having won three seats in the 2012 election, and is committed to the goals of "independence and democratic regeneration" for Catalonia (Martí 2013, 513). On the periphery of the pro-independence side[11] is the Iniciativa per Catalunya Verds – Esquerra Unida i Alternativa (ICV-EUiA), a left-wing and ecologist coalition that supports Catalonia's "right to decide" on its national future, but whose leaders have refused to commit publically on whether they support independence.

The main impetus for the growth in secessionist sentiment in Catalonia, however, has not come from Catalan political parties, but from Catalan civil society organizations. The Assemblea Nacional Catalana in particular has been a major leader in mobilizing the Catalan public in favour of independence. Born out of broader Catalan nationalist frustration with the Spanish state in the wake of the 2010 Constitutional Tribunal ruling on Catalonia's 2006 Statute of Autonomy, the Assemblea Nacional Catalana has been instrumental in organizing large-scale annual demonstrations in favour of independence on September 11th, Catalonia's "Diada Nacional." The work of the Assemblea has been supported by older Catalan nationalist civil society

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[11] Elements of the centre-left Partit dels Socialistes de Catalunya (PSC) have also endorsed Catalonia's "right to decide," but the party has remained internally divided on the issue.

organizations like Òmnium Cultural, which was a prominent actor in the development of Catalonia's Language Normalization Laws. Finally, an important advocate for Catalonia's "right to decide" on independence at the international level has been the Public Diplomacy Council of Catalonia, which developed a multi-lingual website entitled "Catalonia Votes," designed to educate the wider world on the issues at stake in the Catalan independence debate, as well as to provide a forum for the various political and civil society advocates of independence to make their case to an international audience.

The drive for Scottish independence also relies on a similarly broad coalition of actors from both civil society and the political elite. Yet, stronger than in Catalonia, the leadership and organizational drive for the referendum came from the Scottish National Party (SNP) under the leadership of Alex Salmond. In the 2011 Scottish parliamentary election, the SNP gained a majority, which it interpreted as a mandate to hold an independence referendum. With Alex Salmond as the First Minister, the SNP launched a broad mobilizing campaign designed to engage civil society. In its efforts, the SNP found allies in other parties and non-party proponents of independence (most notably the Scottish Independence Convention, a broad-based centre-left umbrella organization promoting the referendum) and high-profile artists, actors, and intellectuals. The organization that had run the campaign since 2012, "Yes Scotland," was, at its core, an alliance of the governing SNP, the Scottish Green Party, and the Scottish Socialist Party. Blair Jenkins, former Director of Broadcasting at Scottish Television (STV), ran "Yes Scotland" and served as its chief executive. Regardless of this broad coalition, the SNP was clearly the driving force behind the referendum; its organizational (and ideological) commitment to independence put it into a widely-accepted leadership role.

Framing the vision of an independent nation

Independence and the referendum process for achieving independence have been framed and justified by Catalan and Scottish actors in a multitude of ways, drawing on: 1) historic grievances, national identity, and the plea for independence; 2) democratic renewal and the right to national self-determination; 3) pursuing distinct policy priorities and preserving 'national traits' and 'values;' 4) national unity and the internal diversity of the minority nation; and, 5) the relationship between the quest for independence and European integration. These diverse frames are not exclusive, but rather repeatedly intersect and inform one another, creating an overall complex pro-independence/self-determination discourse that is grounded in Catalan and Scottish history and national distinctiveness, but also coupled with a sense of the region's growing diversity and its interconnected future within Europe and the wider world.

1) **Historic grievances, national identity, and the plea for independence**

Much of the official and popular discourse in Catalonia surrounding independence frames the region's relationship with Spain in negative terms, in which Spain is conceptualized as an obstacle to Catalonia's nationalist and self-government ambitions in recent years, as well as a fiscal/financial drain on Catalonia's wealth. The first criticism relates to the perception of growing opposition and resistance by Spanish institutions and political actors in recent years to Catalan efforts at securing greater national recognition and political autonomy within the Spanish state. The second criticism relates to the perception cited above that Catalonia suffers a fiscal imbalance within the Spanish state, and leads to the conclusion among some pro-independence

advocates that Catalonia would be better off fiscally and economically if it were to secede from the rest of Spain.[12]

The Spanish political order is frequently conceptualized in Catalan discourse as having initially offered the potential for Catalonia to pursue greater self-government and national recognition. Indeed, Catalonia has been at the forefront of the devolution process that has taken place in Spain since the passage of the 1978 Constitution and the creation of the present Spanish system of regional government, known as the State of Autonomies. Over the decades, the region successfully secured greater political authority in a range of policy areas and, like the Scots, gradually developed its institutional capacity for self-government, which in turn encouraged its leaders to push for even greater autonomy and national recognition within Spain. The most recent effort at securing greater devolution came in 2006 when the region successfully negotiated a revised version of its Statute of Autonomy[13] with the Spanish government. The new statute increased the region's jurisdictional powers in a range of policy areas, and at one point recognized Catalonia as a "nation" within Spain (though this language surrounding Catalan nationhood was later amended at the insistence of Spanish legislators). The revised Statute of Autonomy was approved by the Spanish parliament and, subsequently, by the Catalan electorate in a referendum in 2006, but its passage prompted a backlash from the political right in Spain, who condemned the statute as divisive and secessionist, eventually leading to a constitutional court challenge and a controversial ruling in 2010 that further limited the scope and meaning of the statute.

The CiU articulates a narrative regarding the earlier openness of the Spanish political system to Catalonia's self-government aspirations in their platform for the 2012 Catalan parliamentary election, in which they describe Catalonia's past efforts at securing greater autonomy since Spain's transition to democracy in the 1970s:

> [F]or more than three decades, Convergència i Unió and a good part of political Catalanism has worked to get the most self-government possible for Catalonia and at the same time to search for a viable place within the Spanish state. A place that allows Catalonia to feel comfortable, that permits it to remain feeling what it was and is: a nation with a strong history behind it, in the context of a state that recognizes plurality. (CiU 2012, 9)

Nonetheless, according to this narrative, the potential of the Spanish state has remained unrealized in terms of fulfilling the aspirations of the Catalans and other national minorities in Spain. Catalonia Votes (2014g), for instance, notes that Spain has undergone extensive economic and social modernization since the restoration of democracy, but that the country "has not fully accommodated its internal diversity into its political setup," to the detriment of Catalonia. Furthermore, the present-day Spanish state is conceptualized as resistant or hostile to the self-

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[12] This argument has parallels with the Flemish and Northern Italian contexts, in which nationalist/regionalist parties justify secession on the grounds that the rest of the country is a drain on their resources.

[13] Under the Spanish State of Autonomies system of regional government, each of the 17 autonomous communities were required to negotiate a "Statute of Autonomy" with the Spanish government, outlining the new regional government's institutions and the powers and policy responsibilities that these institutions exercised. Catalonia negotiated its original Statute of Autonomy in 1979, and its re-negotiated 2006 Statute in turn prompted several other autonomous communities to revise their statutes as well, in part, to match the jurisdictional gains the Catalans had made.

determination aspirations of its Catalan citizens, a hostility that has grown more pronounced in recent years.[14] As the CiU (n.d.) argue, in spite of recent Catalan efforts to reform the Spanish political framework to make it more amenable to their needs, "[t]he attitude of the Spanish state has been systematically to reject all the proposals made by Catalonia for dialogue and to reach agreements." The party further contends that Spain's system of regional government, the State of Autonomies, has gradually transformed into a "symmetric, homogeneous" framework that is inimical to Catalonia's national aspirations (CiU 2012, 10).

Pro-independence advocates cite several recent events as being indicative of Spain's increasing resistance or hostility towards Catalonia's self-government aspirations. These include the Spanish Constitutional Court's 2010 ruling on Catalonia's reformed Statute of Autonomy, the Spanish government's refusal in 2012 to endorse Catalonia's proposed *pacte fiscal*, recent Spanish political challenges to Catalonia's education system and language laws, and the Spanish government's refusal to negotiate with Catalonia over the necessary powers to hold a referendum on independence (see Catalonia Votes 2014g, CiU 2012, ERC 2012, ICV-EUiA 2012). Of these events, the 2010 Constitutional Court ruling is often cited as the most egregious, and the starting point for Catalonia's pro-independence turn in recent years. Catalonia Votes (2014g), for instance, contends that Catalonia's reformed Statute of Autonomy was approved democratically by Catalan citizens in a referendum, as well as by the Spanish Parliament, only for it to be "drastically altered by a controversial court ruling." The CiU (2012, 10) similarly characterize the Constitutional Court ruling as a politicized act that "ignored the majority will of the Catalan people for more self-government expressed in the referendum," as well as "showed that there was no desire to deepen the constitutional pact and to evolve the Spanish State towards a plurinational state." Instead, the ruling indicated that "Spain wants to remain a state with a single nation," and that, for Catalans, "[t]his was a point of no return" in their relationship with the rest of Spain (ibid.). The ICV-EUiA (2012, 130) also characterize the Constitutional Court ruling as a significant turning point, arguing that it "demonstrated that Catalonia's aspirations for more political power, for more capacity in its economic resources and for more national recognition, have no place in the current constitutional framework."

The pro-independence advocates contend that, in response to this growing resistance on the part of the Spanish state, the Catalan people have no choice but to pursue independence, as, in their view, Spain has become unresponsive and unsympathetic to Catalan concerns.[15] The ERC (2012, 6) argue that the "process of national emancipation has accelerated" in the wake of the Constitutional Court ruling on the Catalan Statute of Autonomy and in response to popular demonstrations on the streets of Catalonia. The leader of the ERC, Oriol Junqueras, further attributes growing Catalan demand for a referendum on the grounds that "we don't feel

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[14] The recent opposition of the Spanish state to Catalan demands is regarded by some as being symptomatic of a larger historical pattern of Spanish domination and disrespect towards Catalonia. The CiU (2012, 10) contend that the actions of the Spanish state are "not new" and that "sadly, this is the response that political Catalanism has always found when it has tried to get a place in Spain that respects the right of Catalonia to arrange its own identity," adding that "this response is independent of the eras, of the political systems and the governments that have been at the forefront of the state."

[15] The CiU are perhaps the clearest example of this attitude, justifying their recent turn from supporting Catalan autonomy within Spain to independence from Spain on what they regard as the obstinacy of the Spanish state towards Catalonia's political ambitions and demands in recent years.

represented by the Spanish government" (Catalonia Votes 2014d). The CiU (n.d.) similarly note how Catalans have "[f]or years [...] sought to fit our identity within the Spanish state," only to realize "that with the present tools we cannot serve the hopes of the people in this country" and that, therefore, "[t]he logical evolution of Catalanism is to raise the objective of our own state." According to the CiU (2012, 10), the recent actions of the Spanish government towards Catalonia have given Catalans a clear choice to "either renounce our commitment for greater recognition and greater levels of self-government [...] or initiate a new stage."

A profound sense of alienation from the country's key political decision-making is also driving the centre-periphery conflict in Scotland. When the SNP launched the campaign for a referendum on independence in 2011, it started with a drive to collect over one million signatures for the "Yes declaration." The text of this 'declaration' provides a good sense of the grievances mobilized and nurtured during the campaign:

> I believe it is fundamentally better for us all, if decisions about Scotland's future are taken by the people who care most about Scotland, that is, by the people of Scotland.
>
> Being independent means Scotland's future will be in Scotland's hands.
>
> There is no doubt that Scotland has great potential. We are blessed with talent, resources and creativity. We have the opportunity to make our nation a better place to live, for this and future generations. We can build a greener, fairer and more prosperous society that is stronger and more successful than it is today. (BBC News 2012)

At the very core of the plea for independence is the notion that Scotland's integration into the United Kingdom does not allow for a proper pursuit of what is deemed to be the - prospective - "great potential" of Scotland as an independent country. This point speaks to an historically-rooted sense of inferiority of Scots towards Great Britain. Even in the speeches and declarations of pro-independence proponents, there is a recognition of the historic achievements of Great Britain, some of which they promise to protect and nurture within an independent Scotland (indeed, the "Better Together" campaign mocked Scottish nationalists' idea of combining the 'best of two worlds' and that relatively little would change in terms of some of the British traditions, including allegiance to the Monarchy).[16]

Throughout the 1990s, Scotland benefited considerably from devolution that the Labour Party under Tony Blair initiated in order to address the sense of an inadequate representation of Scottish interests in the Westminster system. The rationale of transferring competence in key policy areas to the then-newly-established Scottish Parliament at Holyrood was to allow for a greater sense of political ownership over political decisions affecting the region. Yet, arguably, one can contend that, as some critics feared, devolution has fueled the appetite and provided resources to pursue an even greater degree of home-rule.

In his speeches, Alex Salmond repeatedly characterizes independence as "not just as an end in itself." In the political framing strategy of the "Yes Campaign," the goal of independence is intimately tied to the 'aspirations' of the Scottish people and the 'unfulfilled potential' of a truly self-ruling Scotland. The SNP 2011 election manifesto that put the plea for independence at its

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[16] Salmond spoke about six unions forming the UK, of which an independent Scotland would keep five: the currency, monarchy, society, Europe and defence.

core provides a good sense of how the resulting campaign leading up to the 2014 vote is justified. The manifesto speaks of a:

> culture of independence, a culture of responsibility and confidence across our nation. In our approach to government this will see more power devolved to local communities and greater involvement for people in the decisions that most affect the place they live. This theme of empowerment for our communities runs like a thread through our policy platform. (SNP 2011, 5)

The framing focuses on issues of 'empowerment' and 'involvement of the people' – thus, on issues genuinely related to the current democratic decision-making process – rather than an explicitly-declared Scottish collective identity and associated historic grievances. Commentators such as Charles King (2012) contrast the "kilt-and-bagpipes version of Scottishness" with one that is essentially grounded in social and political values (see more on this point in the next section). The focus of the nationalist campaign is hardly on any ethno-cultural differences or even historic grievances [17]; even the collective memory of a supposedly glorious past as promoted by Scottish nationalists well into the 1970s has largely ended. In its place, the framing of the pro-independence cause is driven by the demand for proper political institutions and claims of self-governance. Scottish nationalists are extremely careful when it comes to exploiting the simple 'Us' versus 'Them' binary employed in traditional nationalist reasoning. Moreover, the rationale for doing so can be found in a peculiar social reality when it comes to defining modes of collective belonging and identity. According to a study conducted by Carman, Johns, and Mitchell (2014), most voters in Scotland would describe their identity as a mix of Scottish and British elements. While there is a strong recognition of an independent sense of being Scottish, it is not primarily defined as non-British. Indeed, the 2006 British and Scottish Social Attitudes Survey found that symbols of British culture are similarly endorsed in England and in Scotland (most prominently those of democracy, the monarchy, and a sense of fair play).

2) Democratic renewal and the right to national self-determination

Often, the question of independence is downplayed in Catalan political discourse in favour of the question of Catalonia's "dret de decidir" ("right to decide"), in which Catalonia is characterized as a nation with legitimate political concerns and where "it is for the Catalan people to decide its preferred form of government, either within or outside Spain" (Martí 2013, 510). Past examples of democratic self-determination referendums from around the world are cited as justification and precedent for Catalonia's "right to decide." The ERC leader, Oriol Junqueras, argues that Catalans "want to vote and decide on the future of our country as every democratic society does" (Catalonia Votes 2014d). Supporters of independence frequently invoke the example of Scotland's referendum (and the willingness of the British government to devolve the necessary authority to hold the vote and to abide by the result) and cite it as a model for Spain and Catalonia to follow.[18]

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[17] In terms of references to history, it is remarkable that historic grievances since the vote for a merger between England and Scotland in 1707 do not figure prominently in the framing of the Yes campaign. Virtually no reference is made to the historic predecessors of the fight for independence, such as the Highland clans, the Scottish Free Church Movement, or the Glasgow dockworkers in the post-war period.

[18] Catalonia Votes (2014e) provides a section on their webpage entitled "They also did it," in which they compare Catalonia's situation with 20th and 21st century examples of self-determination referendums, including those of Scotland, Quebec, Iceland, and Norway.

The argument that Catalonia has the "right to decide" draws broader support than the subject of independence itself, whereby a large majority of Catalans endorse the idea that Catalonia should at least be able to decide on the subject of independence through democratic consultation (Martí 2013, 510). Consequently, during the 2012 Catalan parliamentary election, the "right to decide" was endorsed by a mixture of "sovereigntist" (CiU; ERC; CUP) and "federalist" parties (ICV-EUiA; elements of the PSC), while the subject of independence was downplayed by many of these same parties (ibid.).

Catalonia's right to decide and its possible independence from Spain are justified as an expression of democracy and self-determination, as articulated in the opening section of Catalonia's Declaration of Sovereignty passed by the Catalan Parliament in 2013:

> Catalonia, throughout its history, has democratically expressed its commitment to self-government, in order to strive for more progress, welfare and the equal opportunities for all its citizens, and to reinforce its own culture and its own collective identity. (Generalitat de Catalunya 2013b)

Democratic freedom and national self-determination therefore serve as the two guiding normative frames behind this discourse. Regarding the first point, proponents frequently frame the subjects of "independence" or of "national transition" as a healthy and necessary exercise in democratic renewal. Catalonia Votes argues that the freedom to vote on independence is the only logical and truly democratic response to what has taken place between Catalonia and Spain in recent years:

> A referendum on self-determination is necessary to reset the relationship between Catalonia and Spain. It is the popular demand of more than 80% of Catalans in opinion polls, and of a clear majority of members of the Catalan parliament. (Catalonia Votes 2014g)

This argument that it is the "will" of the Catalan people to vote appears repeatedly in the political discourse, along with the idea that the right to decide is a fundamentally democratic exercise. Carme Forcadell, the President of the Assemblea Nacional Catalana, argues that a referendum on self-determination is justified "[b]ecause the majority of the Catalan people want to vote to decide our future," that "[t]here are a lot of reasons, but this is the most important" (Catalonia Votes 2014c). Muriel Casals, President of Òmnium Cultural, similarly attests that "[w]e want to decide our political future" and that "[v]oting is the democratic way to solve conflicts" (ibid.). The Catalan President, Artur Mas, notes that "there is a larger majority of the Catalan people who want to vote," as demonstrated by the large pro-independence demonstrations in Barcelona since 2010, and argues, "[n]ow it's time to let these people vote" (Catalonia Votes 2014b). His party, the CiU, similarly contend in their 2012 platform that:

> The people of Catalonia, diverse and plural, are no longer a spectator of reality but a protagonist of change. Catalonia has the right to decide its future and it is time to exercise this right. After thirty years, it is the moment to choose. (CiU 2012, 12)

The ERC (2012, 6) similarly characterize the push for a referendum on independence as "[a] radically democratic proposal based on the right to decide, a proposal that places popular sovereignty at the centre of social and national construction." Finally, David Companyon, an EUiA parliamentarian, argues that Catalan efforts to bring about a referendum "is based above all on the power of the people" (Catalonia Votes 2014d). He cites the example of the recent

large-scale demonstrations as evidence that a referendum is the democratic will of the Catalans, and argues that "[m]ore than two million people" have marched in the streets in recent years and "demand[ed] that their voice be the one to define [Catalonia's] relationship with the other parts of Spain and Europe via the ballot box" (ibid.).

Building on this argument, Catalan political discourse frequently frames the push for a referendum and independence as a by-product of grassroots/popular mobilization in which civil society organizations have taken the leading role (as opposed to being initiated by Catalan nationalist parties or government elites). Catalonia Votes (2014a) argues that "[t]he Catalan social movement working to achieve the fulfilment of the right to self-determination is a broad and inclusive, peaceful movement," one that is "[i]ndependent of political parties" and instead "is led by civil society through organized groups and individual actions." Pro-independence groups like the Assemblea Nacional Catalana (n.d.) similarly describe themselves as broad-based and inclusive, composed of thousands of devoted volunteers bound together by a shared commitment to "the independence of the Catalan nation by democratic and peaceful means".

The principle of national self-determination serves as the other major normative justification for Catalonia's right to decide on independence from Spain. Catalonia Votes (2014g) contends that a referendum vote is necessary in part by stressing Catalonia's national particularity, noting that "Catalonia has always had a distinct culture and language and a strong desire for self-government." The CiU emphasize the longevity of the Catalan nation in their justifications for both the right to decide and independence. Their leader and Catalan President, Artur Mas, relates Catalonia's desire for a referendum to its lengthy national history and distinct political and legal traditions, stating that:

> We want to vote because Catalonia is a nation. As a matter of fact, Catalonia is one of the oldest nations of Europe. Catalonia has one of the oldest parliaments in the world, with its own culture, its own language, its own identity, its own civil law. (Catalonia Votes 2014b)

The CiU (n.d.) similarly contend, "Catalonia is a thousand-year-old nation" and not simply a recent political invention or a by-product of the present system of regional self-government in Spain.[19] Its 2012 election platform emphasizes that Catalonia is "[a] nation that has not ever renounced its inherent rights as a people, or the right to self-determination, and has always desired the highest levels of self-government" (CiU 2012, 9). In terms of other parties, an ICV spokesperson, Dolors Camats, similarly justifies the desire of the Catalans to hold a referendum by stressing their desire to preserve their national distinctiveness, stating that Catalans want to vote "[b]ecause we are a people, we are a community, and we are a nation", and that "[w]e were and we want to be [a nation] in the future" (Catalonia Votes 2014d)

The 'right to choose' also plays a key role in the arguments mobilized by the Yes campaign in Scotland. The claim that Scotland is unable to articulate its interests and values is couched in two framing strategies. The first strategy links the issue of Scottish independence with a general feeling of disengagement from mainstream politics. The Yes campaign portrays people in Scotland as marginalized and voiceless, and it accuses the UK Westminster system of being the

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[19] In spite of this reference to the age and history of the Catalan nation, the CiU (2012, 9) does not treat it as some sort of backward-looking and reactionary entity, instead equating the evolution of the Catalan nation within Spain over the past 150 years with "modernity, progress, and democracy."

root cause of this marginalization. With this strategy, the Yes campaign seeks to relate to a broader sense of alienation from mainstream politics and political institutions. In this narrative, Scottish independence is depicted as a fundamental decision on the rules under which citizens engage politically and 'have a say' in the collective fate of the community.

The second framing strategy is more narrowly focused on the British political system. For Scottish nationalists, British politics suffers from a structural underrepresentation of Scottish interests in London. Repeatedly, the Yes campaign has pointed to the fact that, in post-war Britain, Scotland has regularly lived under UK governments for which it has not voted, and the SNP could claim that it is highly unlikely that it will be able to represent Scottish interests in any future UK government. The current political configuration in Westminster, in which only one of the 304 Conservative MPs comes from Scotland, also serves as an example of Scottish under-representation and disconnect from the U.K government. Again, the Yes campaign depicts London rule as a form of suffocating conservatism. The central reference point in the Yes campaign is Scotland's alienation from Tory-governed England and the claim that only far-reaching self-government can put an end to 'foreign rule' resulting from Scotland's peripheral role in the Westminster system.

3) Pursuing distinct policy priorities and preserving 'national values and traits'

Pro-independence discourse in Catalonia frequently frames the vision of independence in a forward-looking manner, focusing on the potential of what independence could mean for Catalonia and the freedom it could provide Catalans in shaping their own future. The Assemblea Nacional de Catalunya (n.d.) stresses that they "want independence for dignity, for democratic regeneration and for social justice," adding that, for Catalonia, "[i]ndependence is a real opportunity for collective and individual improvement." The ERC leader, Oriol Junqueras, articulated a similar sentiment when he argued that Catalans want a self-determination referendum in order to have the freedom and power to shape their future, stating "we are working in order to solve our political, economic, and social problems with more and more democracy, and to do it we need the best tools – the tools of a State" (Catalonia Votes 2014 d). The ERC (2012, 6) similarly emphasize the creative possibilities of independence, stating that "Catalonia has the opportunity to constitute the first state of the twenty-first century: a state based on social, environmental and economic sustainability." The party portrays the present push towards a referendum as a unique opportunity for Catalonia:

> The opportunity to construct a new country; the opportunity of the Catalan people to be the protagonists of our own history; the opportunity to place politics at the centre of public debate; the opportunity to construct a society based on social justice and equality; the opportunity to reaffirm our commitment with democracy, with peace, and with Europe. (Ibid.)

The ICV spokesperson, Dolors Camats, also stresses that the referendum means more than having the freedom to vote on independence, and is instead about having the freedom to shape the future of Catalonia in accordance with its own policy priorities and values, stating that:

> [T]his referendum is also about deciding everything, on everything, not only on being a state, on being a country, on being a nation, but also to decide about the society that we want to be, about the social state, the welfare state, and the kind of society that we want to be. (Catalonia Votes 2014d)

The ICV-EUiA 2012 platform similarly groups the right to decide within a broader vision of promoting social equality and environmental stewardship. It is presented as part of three "dilemmas" facing Catalonia regarding major decisions on whether "to redistribute or to cut" in terms of wealth and social services, "to transform or to conserve" in terms of the existing political structures, and the "freedom to decide or recentralization" in terms of Catalonia's future status within Spain (ICV-EUiA 2012, 5). Regarding the last decision, the party strongly affirms that "[t]he next Catalan legislature should be able to decide with freedom and without limits" on Catalonia's future relationship with Spain, adding that "[w]e, from our sovereignty as a people, decide the future" (ibid.).

Independence is also presented as a way of preserving particular traits of Catalan society that are regarded by nationalists as historic, valued, and potentially threatened within the context of the Spanish state, of which the Catalan language is the most prominent. Muriel Casals of Òmnium Cultural argued that a referendum is justified in terms of both protecting Catalan distinctiveness and serving broader European cultural purposes, stating, "[w]e want to assure our culture and our language because this is the way to contribute to European diversity" (Catalonia Votes 2014c). The CiU appeals both to the idea of preserving what is distinct about Catalonia and to having the freedom to shape a new future for the region within their 2012 platform, stating that:

> Catalonia has the right to decide its future and it is time to exercise this right. After thirty years, it is the moment to choose. It is time that Catalonia takes its own path [...] that will allow us to make our own decisions, which should allow us to live according to our own possibilities [...] It is the freedom to develop our nation-building project, which has as its pillars economic progress and social cohesion, with the preservation of our welfare state. A path that should allow us to show us as we are and to project our identity, our culture and our language. (CiU 2012, 12)

The narrative that the SNP and the Yes campaign have embarked on focuses on the dynamic of electoral and party politics in Great Britain. According to their reading of recent British history, the legacy of Margaret Thatcher has pushed the UK's major parties so far to the right that the more progressive Scottish society and political elite feel alienated from the rest of Britain. The Thatcher years are vividly depicted as an onslaught against the progressive values of Scotland and the achievements of the post-war British welfare state (pensions, medical care, public housing, higher education, etc.). The former Prime Minister has become the epitome of "non-Scottishness." Again, Thatcher is not depicted as the ethno-cultural other, but as the representative of a way of organizing the political community that is deemed alien to values widely held in Scotland.

These sentiments are primarily directed at the British Conservatives, but include the Labour Party. During the referendum campaign, Labour was depicted as a party firmly rooted in the Westminster system that translated British priorities into the Scottish context without proper sensitivities to regional needs. The fact that all three mainstream British parties joined in the Better Together campaign helped to paint a picture of British parties as being hostile to Scottish home-rule, regardless of their ideological perspectives. In addition, the rise of UKIP (the UK Independence Party, a populist anti-immigration, anti-EU party) during the campaign gave additional arguments to the pro-independence advocates to depict the goal of a 'fair and harmonious society' as being increasingly incompatible with the direction of British politics.

Scottish nationalists have made the protection of welfare state provisions the cornerstone of their campaigns. These frames resonated strongly with the Scottish electorate: they could vividly paint a contrast between Scotland and the rest of the UK (and in particular, England). However, in its campaign, the pro-independence camp faced the challenge of having to reconcile its commitment to expansive welfare state provisions with its separate commitment to keeping an independent Scotland economically competitive in a globalizing world. Clearly, the reliance on revenues from natural resource extraction (most notably North Sea oil) was a critical element in this regard. The Yes Scotland campaign claimed that an independent Scotland would be 'one of the wealthiest nations in Europe' due in part to oil revenue.

4) National unity and the internal diversity of the minority nation

The idea of independence is frequently juxtaposed with the internal diversity of Catalan society, both in relation to the varied political attitudes surrounding the question of self-determination, and in terms of the growing social/cultural/linguistic diversity within Catalan society. Several actors present the right to decide and securing independence as an opportunity to foster social cohesion within Catalonia. The Assemblea Nacional Catalana (2014), for instance, articulates a vision of an independent Catalonia that will be "a country for everyone," arguing that "the independence of Catalonia is an inclusive project, that permits us to build, together, a new country." The Assemblea's commitment to inclusiveness and to a common project of nation-building also recognizes the existence of segments of the population who are opposed to or undecided on the issue of independence. They accordingly pledge "to consolidate and expand the social majority in favour of the independence of Catalonia" as a way to "guarantee us social cohesion in the future" (ibid.). They also commit to reaching Catalan voters who remain "undecided" or "unconvinced" about Catalan independence, and emphasize the need to expand their work in "metropolitan areas of Catalonia and the neighbourhoods of large and mid-sized cities, where there are now more undecided people" (ibid.). This final statement appears to be an implicit recognition of the greater social and linguistic diversity within urban parts of Catalonia, particularly in Barcelona, where larger numbers of Spanish speakers live and where affinity with Spain is stronger.

The Assemblea Nacional Catalana are not alone in this sentiment regarding the need for social unity and cohesion, in that the CiU, ERC, and ICV-EUiA all emphasize the need to build a broad "social majority" in favour of either the "right to decide" or in favour of independence (see CiU 2012, ERC 2014, ICV-EUiA 2012). Catalan President Artur Mas similarly framed the referendum on independence as the foundation for a broader national project that will encompass all Catalans, stating that "we want to vote because we have the strong will to build a collective future for 7.5 million Catalans" (Catalonia Votes 2014b). Mas contended that the desire for a referendum transcends differences within Catalan society, in which he explained that "Catalonia is a sort of melting pot, 70% of our people have a non-Catalan origin, and all these people, all this country, all this nation, for all these reasons, want to vote" (ibid.).

In Scotland, the Yes campaign embarked on an approach to immigration and governing diversity that is explicitly open and multicultural in spirit, again setting it apart from the current government at Westminster. The British nationalist course of the Cameron government (driven by the rise of UKIP) and its increasingly exclusionary stance toward immigration has opened a political opportunity for Scottish nationalists to give substance to their claim to represent a more

open, compassionate, and fairer approach to social inclusion. This openness not only extended to EU and "third country" nationals, but also to those who moved to Scotland from other parts of the United Kingdom, all of whom were encouraged to join the Scottish independence movement. The pro-independence campaign depicted itself as socially diverse, emphasizing shared values that bound its diverse supporters together and de-emphasizing exclusionary sentiments regarding Scottish national identity. On many of the pamphlets used in the campaign, immigrants and minorities of a non-European background are prominently featured. Similarly, regulated immigration was described as a key element of the economic policy for an independent Scotland.

5) The relationship between the quest for independence and European integration

As shown in several of the above statements, Europe frequently features prominently in Catalan pro-independence discourse and in the vision of an independent Catalonia. Catalonia is often presented as an historic nation within Europe that desires its national distinctiveness to be recognized and represented at the European level. The CiU (2012, 12) explicitly situate their vision of Catalan independence within the context of the EU, stressing that "[w]e want to construct a large social majority so that Catalonia can have its own state within the European framework, as Catalonia has the aspiration to be a normal people among the countries and nations of the world". The ERC (2012, 6) similarly articulate a vision of a Catalan "state federated with the European Union." Catalan nationalists have also challenged suggestions that the region would be expelled from the European Union if it voted to secede from Spain. The Spanish government and certain EU officials have contended that if a constituent unit secedes from an EU member state, the terms of the EU treaties no longer apply to the seceding unit, which would then have to apply for official membership along the same lines as other EU applicant states. In response, the CiU-led government has described the threat of Catalonia's expulsion from the Union as a scare tactic on the part of the Spanish government, designed to deter Catalans from voting for independence (Generalitat de Catalunya 2013a). Furthermore, the ERC (2013) has stated that there are no formal rules regarding secession from an EU member state, and contend that it would be in the economic and political interests of the both the EU and Spain to keep Catalonia in the European Union.

Similarly, the Yes Campaign in Scotland portrays Scottish independence as fully compatible with and in harmony with the spirit of European integration. As in Catalonia, one of the major controversial issues of the British debate was whether Scotland would be allowed to stay in the EU or whether, after independence, it would need to reapply and exist in an extended period of uncertainty regarding its status with the EU. The pro-independence movement countered this argument with a staunchly pro-European stand which, given the Euroscepticism of the British Conservative Party and the rise of UKIP, was meant to give further substance to the need for greater self-rule. Somewhat ironically, the pro-EU course of the SNP and most of the supporters of the pro-independence campaign was able to fuel the plea for national independence, with "Yes" campaigners arguing that independence offered the only way for Scotland to remain in the European Union in light of the British government's recent commitment to hold a referendum on the UK's membership.

Conclusions: towards a new form of territorial politics in Europe?

The 2014 referendum campaigns for independence in Catalonia and Scotland show distinct features that reflect their particular national contexts and the grievances with their respective national centres. Yet at the same time, there are comparable elements in the framing strategies that allow for some rather tentative reflections on the kind of minority nationalism and visions of nationhood present in both contexts.

The Catalan political discourse surrounding independence is multi-faceted, complex and occasionally contradictory as it tries to bridge a plurality of actors seeking independence, as well as a plurality of motivations. On one level, it is more accurate to refer to this discourse as being motivated by the "right to decide," or the right to hold a referendum on independence, rather than by independence itself. Nonetheless, questions and concerns regarding independence underline the entire public discussion surrounding the "right to decide," in particular, questions regarding the political and economic implications of Catalan independence. The Scottish pro-independence campaign was driven by very similar concerns: the plea for self-governance itself, in which the quest for proper political institutions to reflect the interest of the Scottish people took precedence over detailed accounts of what independence would entail and how an independent Scotland would be different from the rest of the UK.

The subject of historical grievance appears more prominently in the Catalan case than in that of Scotland, whereby arguments regarding the failure of the post-transition Spanish political order to live up to its initial promise regarding Catalan self-government, or its increasing resistance to Catalan political aspirations, are cited as justifications for pursuing independence (or, at the very least, voting on independence). The ideas of "betrayal" or "hostility" appear frequently in this discourse, in which Spain is conceptualized as having broken past commitments to the Catalan people or having become increasingly intolerant to the political aspirations of the Catalans. The Catalans, according to this argument, have no choice but to "take their own path" or to "construct a new home" for themselves, as they can no longer consider Spain to be their home without sacrificing their long-held nationalist aspirations.

Nonetheless, it is incorrect to characterize Catalan independence discourse as entirely negative or focused on what they perceive as the failings of the Spanish state. Much of the language surrounding both the right to decide and independence is grounded in normative justifications and positive visions of what the future could bring for Catalonia. Proponents of the right to decide and of independence frame these issues as exercises in democratic freedom and national self-determination that the rest of the world should respect, and which have the potential to include the entire Catalan population within a broader "regenerative" public debate. Similarly, for left-wing proponents (in particular, the ERC and ICV-EUiA), the debate surrounding the right to decide and independence is conceptualized as an opportunity for a much broader discussion on the future direction of Catalan society, one where the subjects of socio-economic equality and ecological stewardship are of equal importance with the subject of national self-determination. Further, pro-independence advocates emphasize that their goal is not to create an insular and isolated Catalonia. Rather, the idea of national self-determination within the context of a broader interconnected world underlies the arguments of several of the major actors, in particular the goal of Catalan independence within the European Union framework.

In a comparable way, the SNP and Yes Scotland campaign embarked on a strategy of differentiating Scotland from the rest of the UK that downplayed a distinct culturally- or ethnically-coded identity and instead focused on civic and political values. The political cleavages that the Scottish pro-independence campaign addressed were those related to the perceived lack of democratic self-governance and a vision of the Scottish national community that, with its focus on a fairer, ecologically-responsible society, were depicted in stark contrast to the current priorities of the British government. Clearly, the overall political environment proved to be extremely receptive to such a framing strategy. British mainstream parties have moved to the (neo-liberal) right over the past decades (including New Labour), and the austerity measures implemented in the wake of the financial-economic crisis threatened to compromise an agenda directed at social justice and equality (on the role of the recent economic crisis in this respect, see: Gómez Fortes and Cabeza Pérez 2013). Along these lines, King (2012) describes the SNP and pro-independence ideology as "a postmodern species of nationalism" that is "multicultural, social-democratic, and pro-European." The attribution 'post-modern' refers to the fact that the party has dropped many of those ideological tools that in the past have been the bread and butter of nationalist movements, namely the strong reliance on a culturally-based collective identity and a resulting Us-versus-Them binary as its crucial mobilizing tool. While, in both cases, we clearly witnessed forms of traditional nationalist rhetoric based on an exclusionary, identity-based approach, ultimately, these voices were marginal in the public discourse leading up to the referendums in Catalonia and Scotland.

The analysis of the framing strategies in the Catalan and Scottish referendum campaigns suggests that much of the political attraction and popularity of the yes-vote can be attributed to a civic vision of national community and a call for democratic governance. Territorial politics in these cases appear to be vehicles for articulating political grievances that are only partly caused by the traditional centre-periphery conflict. At the very core of both campaigns for national independence was the notion of territorial politics as an instrument for fostering democratic renewal and promoting policies that reflect more accurately the needs of the affected community. In this respect, the two nationalist movements under investigation have been effective in bringing the regionalist plea for independence into close alignment with broader issues of contemporary politics, most notably alienation from mainstream party politics, as well as concerns about democratic governance, civic engagement, and social inequality (in this respect, we concur with Cairney (2014) who speaks of a "territorialisation of interest representation"). Keating and Harvey (2014) make a compelling argument that "globalization and European integration have encouraged the re-emergence of a new 'civic' nationalism within established nation-states." What both campaigns surely have achieved is reinvigorating political debate and participation. In many respects, both referendum campaigns were examples of a fundamental debate about the nature of political community, its key values, and its visions for the future.

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