CONTEMPORARY DEMOCRATIC SEPARATIST MOVEMENTS: THE POLITICS OF NEW STATE CREATION BY REFERENDUM

BY

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DISSERTATION

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Abstract

This is a comprehensive analysis of the conditions under which new states have been, and may be, created through exclusively democratic means. Existing literature explains the majority of such cases: those that occurred through the processes of decolonization, or through the break up of post-communist federations. However, we lack a general theory that can account for other such cases, most typified by independence movements in places such as Catalonia, Scotland, and Quebec. This dissertation supplies that theory, as well as empirical analyses of hypotheses derived therefrom, and offers explanations for the actions of states, regions, and voters undergoing such a process. The first chapter introduces the concept of democratic separatism, describes its process, compares it to other mechanisms for new state creation, and investigates the history of the phenomenon. It finds that, outside of decolonization and post-communist federal disintegration, the achievement of internationally-recognized sovereignty through democratic separatism is a rare phenomenon. The second chapter proposes a set of attributes that, when simultaneously present, constitute a sufficient condition for the emergence of successful democratic separatist movements. The third chapter considers the strategic interaction that occurs between a nation-state, and a democratic separatist movement therein. At question is the holding and endorsing of a popular referendum on the question of secession. I propose a framework for how we may interpret the motivations and interests behind certain actions that may be taken by the state or the movement. The concluding fourth chapter focuses on individual voters as the unit of analysis and presents evidence
that regional identity remains a strong correlate for supporting a separatist movement, and that alternatives proposed in extant literature (namely, economic inequality and supranational integration) are not.
To Declan Julius.
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# Table of Contents

List of Tables ........................................................................... x  
List of Figures ........................................................................... xi 

Chapter 1 Democratic Separatism .............................................. 1  
  1.1 Introduction ........................................................................ 1  
  1.2 Flags and Borders ................................................................. 3  
  1.3 The Means of Achieving Independence .............................. 6  
  1.4 Extant Literature ................................................................. 8  
     1.4.1 Secession, and Ethnic Politics .................................. 8  
     1.4.2 Explaining Ethnicity .................................................... 12  
     1.4.3 Explaining and Comparing Separatist Cases ............. 15  
  1.5 Historical Instances of Independence by Referendum .......... 15  
     1.5.1 Decolonization ............................................................. 18  
     1.5.2 Post-communist breakup ............................................ 18  
     1.5.3 Individual Cases ........................................................ 19  
     1.5.4 Analysis of Cases ......................................................... 28  
  1.6 Universe of Contemporary Cases ....................................... 29  
  1.7 Flags Revisited ................................................................. 30  

Chapter 2 The Elements of Regional Identity ......................... 33  
  2.1 Theory: INUS Conditions .................................................. 33  
    2.1.1 Structural Conditions ................................................. 35  
    2.1.2 Institutional Conditions ............................................. 36  
    2.1.3 Contextual Conditions .............................................. 39  
  2.2 Conditions and Cases ....................................................... 42  
    2.2.1 Territory ..................................................................... 42  
    2.2.2 Self-Governance ......................................................... 43  
    2.2.3 External Support ......................................................... 45  
    2.2.4 Distinctive Culture ..................................................... 48  
    2.2.5 History of Statehood .................................................. 50  
    2.2.6 State Nationalism ....................................................... 53  
    2.2.7 Co-incidence of INUS Conditions .............................. 55
# 2.3 Conclusions

61

## Chapter 3  Theory of Separatist Referendums

62

### 3.1 General motivation

62

### 3.2 Preferences

64

#### 3.2.1 Preferences over Outcomes

64

#### 3.2.2 Preferences over Procedures

66

#### 3.2.3 Ordinal Preferences of Democratic Separatists

70

#### 3.2.4 Ordinal Preferences of Two “Types” of States

70

### 3.3 The Elements of the Game

72

### 3.4 Order of moves

76

### 3.5 Forms of the Game

77

#### 3.5.1 Extensive form for state type $a$

77

### 3.6 Analysis

81

## Chapter 4  Why Vote for Secession?

84

### 4.1 Introduction

84

### 4.2 Extant Scholarship on Scotland

85

#### 4.2.1 Identity

86

#### 4.2.2 Inequality

88

#### 4.2.3 Integration

90

### 4.3 Theory: Three Processes

94

### 4.4 Quantitative Analysis: Identity and Inequality

95

#### 4.4.1 Catalonia

95

#### 4.4.2 Scotland

100

#### 4.4.3 Methods

102

#### 4.4.4 Findings and Conclusions

111

References 113
List of Tables

1.1 Instances of Independence via Referendum ........................................ 31
1.2 Examples of Democratic Separatists .................................................. 32
2.1 Exemplars of the INUS Conditions ..................................................... 43
3.1 Ordinal Preferences for Democratic Separatists ................................... 71
3.2 Ordinal Preferences for state type $a$ .................................................. 73
3.3 Ordinal Preferences for state type $\beta$ ................................................. 74
4.1 Theories of Separatism, and Corresponding Expected Observations ....... 95
4.2 Language Choice and Identity in Catalonia ........................................ 97
4.3 Logistic Regression Analyses: Catalonia ............................................. 99
4.4 Constitutional Preference versus Intended Referendum Vote ................. 103
4.5 Logistic Regression Analyses: Referendum DV ................................... 104
4.6 Logistic Regression Analyses: Preference DV ...................................... 105
4.7 Introduction of Interaction Term Between Scottish Identity and Inequality . 106
4.8 Scots Indyref vote with European Variables ....................................... 107
4.9 Scots Indyref vote with European and Control Variables ..................... 108
4.10 Scots Const. Pref. with European Variables ....................................... 109
4.11 Logits: Scots Const. Pref. with EU and control variables ..................... 110
List of Figures

1.1 Atrium floor in the Texas Capitol .................................................. 4
1.2 Municipal emblem of Laredo, Texas ................................................. 5

2.1 South Ossetia (with Georgia and Abkhazia) ................................. 44
2.2 Somaliland ................................................................................. 46
2.3 Vermont, in the United States ....................................................... 49
2.4 Puerto Rico ................................................................................. 51
2.5 Flag of Cuba ............................................................................... 52
2.6 Flag of Puerto Rico ..................................................................... 52
2.7 Flemish Community in Belgium and Europe .................................. 54
2.8 Scotland in the UK and Europe .................................................... 55
2.9 Catalonia in Spain and Europe ...................................................... 58
2.10 Estalada Blava of Catalonia ......................................................... 60
Chapter 1
Democratic Separatism

1.1 Introduction

It is intuitive to view the countries of the world through the myopia of the present moment. Nation-states seem old and stable. It seems reasonable to conceive of a history of, say, China or Italy from many centuries or even millennia in the past. It seems like our distant ancestors were citizens or subjects of some state or another. Perhaps, through a process of migration, they acquired a new nationality. It seems like the global system of nations and states with flags, borders, passports, embassies, armies, navies and the rest has “always been that way.”

However, a casual inspection of any very old map reveals that these impressions are, at best, flawed. Old maps show us that the boundaries have not always stayed put, that the names change, that countries unite and split, are created and destroyed. This is a truer view of the nature of the sovereign, territorial state. It is an institutional arrangement that out-competed others\(^1\) to replace the systems of feudalism, empire, and theocracy (Spruyt 1994).

All sovereign territorial states were created. Some have long histories of sovereignty, others have been created recently. The process of state formation is not merely a matter

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\(^1\) such as city-states and city-leagues
of deep history, but a contemporary one. This project is an extended examination of a particular species of contemporary new state creation. In the chapters that follow, I present a description of this species which I call “democratic separatism.” This is a term that I will use throughout to refer to the creation of new states from within the boundaries of existing states, through exclusively democratic means. As such, it is a form of secession.

The inspiration for this project comes from the observation of two serious attempts to carve new states out of existing European nation-states: Scotland from the United Kingdom, and Catalonia from Spain. The coincidence of these attempts in geographical, temporal, and institutional proximity has drawn the attention of numerous researchers (Keating 2001, Liñeira 2011; Duclos 2015; Muro and Vlaskamp 2016; Cetrà and Harvey 2017, 2019; Elliot 2018, Muro, Vidal, and Vlaskamp 2020). This project contributes to this literature in a few ways: (1) it places democratic separatism into the broader context of new state creation, (2) it examines a wide universe of potential cases, seeking (and identifying) patterns, (3) it considers the motivations of various institutional and individual actors, and (4) it provides a framework for understanding where these movements have been successful, and for predicting where they may arise in future.

The present chapter examines the history of democratic separatism by interrogating the record of new states created through the mechanism of a referendum. I find that nearly all of these instances can best be understood through the lens of extant literature on (a) decolonization (Jansen, et al. 2017) or on (b) the disintegration of communist federations after the Cold War (Leff 1999). The second chapter provides a theory for the set of conditions necessary to precipitate a successful democratic separatist movement, elucidating each condition through a descriptive case study. Chapter 3 presents a formal model of the strategic interaction that occurs between a nation-state and a potential
breakaway region featuring a successful democratic separatist movement. The final chapter, Chapter 4 is a large-N analysis of voter behavior, considering those factors that influence individual voters to support the democratic separatist project or not. My ambition is that this project will provide a platform for bringing disparate, partial portraits of this process into the sharp relief that comes from a distant vantage.²

1.2 Flags and Borders

The Texas State Capitol is a massive structure. It sits on about twenty two acres of high ground, in an imposing position overlooking downtown Austin. A visit to the Capitol building entails an uphill ascent, past numerous large outdoor monuments. Among these are statues and cenotaphs commemorating the Texas Revolution, and the American Civil War. Once inside the building, and entering the main atrium, visitors are met with a large lone-star emblem (Fig. 1.1)³ encircled with the words “Republic of Texas” in reference to the short lived state (1836-1846) that is the source of so much Texas lore. The Republic of Texas emblem is surrounded by five other emblems representing the Spanish and French Empires, Mexico, the Confederate States of America, and the United States of America. These polities are the “six flags over Texas” that testify to a history of contested, and shifting sovereignty.

The “six flags” motif is featured throughout the state of Texas, most familiarly, perhaps, in the name of the Six Flags over Texas theme park in Arlington. The flags are displayed at Texas Welcome Centers near the state’s domestic borders with Arkansas, Louisiana, New Mexico, and Oklahoma. They are featured on the reverse of the Seal

²As Machiavelli (1532) taught, “artists who draw landscapes get down in the valley to study the mountains and go up to the mountains to look down on the valley”.
³Original photograph taken by this author. Austin, Texas, 2015.
of Texas, and in numerous unofficial displays throughout the state. Texas culture cele-
brates this long history of shifting sovereignty, proudly celebrating the shared history of
the “six flags.” The same is true all over the very wide breadth of Texas - except in Laredo.

The city of Laredo sits about 230 miles south of Austin; on the river that marks the
international border between the US and Mexico, and that separates Laredo from its twin
city of Nuevo Laredo in the Mexican state of Tamaulipas. If you were to spend a bit of
time in Laredo (and if you tend to notice political symbols) you may spot a variation on
the "six flags" theme found elsewhere in Texas. In Laredo, there are seven flags displayed
in the city council chambers, on the city’s emblem (Fig. 1.2)\(^4\), and on the masthead of the

\(^4\)City of Laredo http://www.cityoflaredo.com
Laredo Morning Times. Joining the now familiar six flags found in the Texas Capitol, is that of the Republic of the Rio Grande (January-November, 1840), which was later adopted as the city flag of Laredo\textsuperscript{5}.

![Municipal emblem of Laredo, Texas](image)

**Figure 1.2: Municipal emblem of Laredo, Texas**

Similarly to the Republic of Texas, the Republic of the Rio Grande declared its independence from Mexico as a reaction to an assertive central government in Mexico City (among other reasons, including the preservation of slavery\textsuperscript{6}). Mexico’s early independence era was politically tumultuous. Following independence from Spain, Mexico declared itself an empire in 1821, but shortly thereafter the First Mexican Republic was established in 1824 as a constitutional, federal republic. This republic was also short-lived, being replaced by the “centralist” unitary Mexican Republic in 1835. Mexico under the Centralist Republic was awash with regional discontent, as the abundance of separatist movements will attest. Joining the Republics of Texas, and of the Rio Grande, was the Republic of Yucatán, which declared its independence in 1841 and maintained its sovereignty until 1848. Additional attempts at independence came in the form of armed rebellions in

\textsuperscript{5}I am reliably informed that there exists a nine flags display at the Presidio La Bahia, in Goliad, Texas. The flags are those of the USA, CSA, Mexico, Spain, France, and four distinct eras or branches of the movement seeking Texan independence from Mexico.

\textsuperscript{6}Mexico abolished slavery in 1829, but slave owners in Mexican Texas found ways to circumvent the enforcement of abolition (Barr).
Zacatecas (1835), California (1836), New Mexico (1837), Sinaloa (1837), and Tabasco (1839).

1.3 The Means of Achieving Independence

Prior to the twentieth century, armed insurrection was undoubtedly the default method to achieve sovereignty for a region seeking to separate itself from a larger polity, or from the influence of a powerful but distant ruler. Examples abound of instances wherein a state was created out of this sort of war (Tilly). Indeed we can observe in the early decolonization period a great number of new states achieving independence through force of arms. This period begins with the US and Haitian revolutions of the late 18th century, continuing through Spain’s loss of its American colonies the early 19th century, with wars of independence fought in Argentina, Bolivia, Colombia (New Grenada), Chile, Ecuador, Mexico, Peru, Uruguay, and Venezuela. In that sense, Mexico’s multiple armed insurrections of the 1830s-40s reflect a period of instability in which the emergent nation-state established its national territory and asserted control thereof. Mexico’s numerous insurgents represent failed attempts to establish sovereign entities, in an era when success or failure in that endeavor was decided through political violence.

However, the twentieth century, and especially the period following the end of the second world war, saw a great number of new states created peacefully. Most of these new states emerged through the process of decolonization, with a smaller number form-

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7At the conclusion of the World War II, there were five independent states in Africa: Ethiopia, Morocco, Liberia, South Africa, and Egypt. There are now 54 to 56 states in Africa, depending on the definition. Most of these new states declared independence from European colonial powers in the 1950s-1970s.
ing when the Soviet Union\(^8\) and Yugoslavia\(^9\) broke apart at the conclusion of the Cold War. Apart from these seismic events, international borders have remained (mostly) stable.

Not everyone is content with stable borders. Separatist conflicts continue around the globe, with wars ongoing in Syria, Kurdistan, Somalia, Nagorno-Karabakh/Artsakh, the Maghreb, and other locations. However, an alternative, non-violent means of achieving independence has emerged in the post-war world. Through this means of “democratic separatism” aspirant states seek to achieve statehood through popular mandate, usually in the form of a referendum. In recent years, two European cases of democratic separatism captured widespread attention: Scotland and Catalonia.

In this project, I endeavor to account for the phenomenon of democratic separatism from existing nation-states. I seek to understand the Scottish and Catalan secessionist movements; to understand if their geographical, temporal, and institutional proximity is a matter of coincidence, to apply my analysis of these cases to a broader set of observations, and to describe the conditions under which we might expect similar movements in the future. The task at hand, then, is that of explaining the contemporary process of new-state creation through the mechanism of an independence referendum.

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\(^8\)Fifteen new states emerged when the Soviet Union broke apart in 1991. They are: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Estonia, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, Lithuania, Moldova, Russia, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Ukraine, and Uzbekistan.

\(^9\)Yugoslavia fell apart in stages, some of which were violent. Current states that emerged from the former Yugoslavia include Bosnia & Herzegovina, Croatia, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia, and Slovenia. About half of United Nations member states additionally recognize the independence of Kosovo.
1.4 Extant Literature

A series of events in the mid-to-late 1960s first brought scholarly attention to the issue of democratic separatism. In a 1966 by-election, Gwynfor Evans of Plaid Cymru became the first Welsh separatist elected to the British House of Commons. In the following year, Winifred Ewing of the Scottish National Party became her party’s first MP since the Second World War. In 1968, disparate elements in Quebec’s provincial politics coalesced to form the Parti Québécois. By 1969, the British government convened the “Royal Commission on the Constitution”, commonly referred to as the “Kilbrandon Commission” (Wilson 2017). The commission analyzed a number of schemes for the future of Britain, including dissolution of the United Kingdom, and various plans for devolution, federalism, and confederalism. The commission issued its final report in 1973, advocating for the creation of directly-elected, devolved legislatures for Scotland and Wales.

1.4.1 Secession, and Ethnic Politics

As noted by Pavković with Radan (2007), Wood (1981) “was the first to offer a comprehensive theoretical framework for the theory of secession as a social and political phenomenon” (p. 175) Wood’s article argues for the usefulness of a general theory of secession, as opposed to ad hoc explanations for various cases. Wood’s pioneering work has inspired numerous strands of scholarship on secession, across multiple academic disciplines. For instance, legal scholars such as Kohen (2006) and Radan (2012) have sought to summarize the pertinent international law relevant to secession and the recognition of new states, while normative theorists (Buchanan 1997, Wellman 2005) have endeavored to identify those conditions under which a region should be allowed to secede. However,

10Lehning’s 2005 edited volume is a particularly broad survey of normative issues relating to secession.
the present project is within the empirical social science tradition, and seeks to build on
the comparative politics approach that others have found useful in analyzing adjacent
phenomena.\footnote{For example, see Fabry’s 2010 analysis of the history of new-state recognition by existing states, or Mendez and Germann’s 2018 article introducing a new dataset on the broader category of “referendums on sovereignty matters”, which includes referendums on things like the treaties of the European Union, or ratification of the US Constitution by new federal states of the union.}

During the 1970s and 80s, as Sorens (2005) notes, political science literature on secession mainly treated the phenomenon as a particular variety of ethnic nationalism. As such much scholarly output from that era starts from the assumption that the mobilization of voters around separatist movements represented a failure of democratic institutions to respond to group-based, frequently ethnic, needs. Rabushka and Shepsle (1972) formalized the logic driving this assumption when they argued that societies featuring deep ethnic cleavages face particular challenges for the establishment, consolidation, and survival of democratic regimes. Briefly, their “outbidding” thesis predicts that, if political parties develop along ethnic lines, these ethnic parties will compete with one another for state resources in a zero-sum game. Due to (what they saw as) the fixed and immutable nature of ethnic identities, these ethnic parties would either find themselves as permanent winners or permanent losers and would therefore fall short of the democratic ideal of taking a “non-partial approach to the whole” (Sartori 1976, p. 26) since their future electoral prospects would never be in doubt.

Rabushka and Shepsle’s outbidding thesis predicts a snowball effect of extremist politics, with each ethnic group supporting politicians and policies that are less and less acceptable to the other ethnic group or groups. These ethnic cleavages then deepen, becoming political and economic cleavages, becoming social and professional barriers,
and finally becoming the only relevant groupings around which society is organized. Famously, they ask: “... is the resolution of intense but conflicting preferences in the plural society manageable in a democratic framework? We think not” (p. 217). Other scholars took a more optimistic view, most notably Arend Lijphart (1977) whose “consociational” theory suggests that proportional representation systems are a means of giving a voice and role in government to electoral (read: ethnic) minorities, and allowing space for political elites to form coalitions around policy issues that are not based on ethnic groupings. Lijphart noted that Rabushka and Shepsle’s thesis applies most neatly to majoritarian systems, which by definition exclude electoral minorities from power, and as such function to reduce the sense of belonging that members of permanent minorities may feel for the state, and thereby increasing their propensity to seek independence.

If the goal is that of preventing secession, then perhaps more important than the political inclusion of minorities that is possible under a proportional representation system, is the establishment of cross-ethnic ties of common interests. While Lijphart’s consociationalism sees the establishment of such cross-cutting cleavages as a task to be undertaken by political elites, Horowitz (1985, 2002) argues for voting rules such as preferential voting and “second-choice” votes that create incentives for politicians to seek support across ethnic lines, and most importantly outside their own ethnic group. As for empirical evidence that proportional representation can reduce ethnic tensions, researchers find that, among democracies, proportional systems are correlated with lower levels of ethnic conflict (Cohen 1997), and higher levels of democracy (Lijphart 2010), but not with personal attachment to and identification with the state among ethnic minorities (Norris 2008).

Given a more general assumption that ethnic diversity makes for difficult governance,
we see that societies have historically sought to increase ethnic homogeneity through a variety of mechanisms. These include (a) genocide, or the attempted elimination of an ethnic group, (b) expulsion, or the forced migration of an ethnic group, (c) partition, or the creation of a political border between ethnic groups, and (d) assimilation, or the encouragement for one ethnic group to adopt the cultural norms of another. In many liberal democracies of the 21st century, these approaches have fallen out of fashion for normative reasons (Lijphart 1977, Kymlicka 1995).

One strategy for making an ethnically diverse polity more governable is to move away from unitary government into a devolved or federal structure with local authorities given some authority to govern. The thinking behind federal arrangements, as a means of ethnic accommodation, is that national minorities may form local majorities, and that by giving these local majorities control over policy areas of localized salience, their appetite for autonomy might be satiated, making them more content to remain within the multiethnic polity (Lijphart 1999, Stepan 1999). The research on the impact of federalism, as it affects the attachment that citizens feel for the state, yields no consistent empirical findings, despite a wealth of theoretical argumentation. For instance, Lipset (1981) argues that a federal structure that divides the state along ethnic lines may hinder the development of “cross-cutting” affiliations. The argument is well-taken, but the empirical evidence is (so far) not forthcoming (Chandra 2006). Critics of devolution sometimes caution that it may only provide ethnic leaders with “resources that can be mobilized for nationalist ends” (see Chapter 2, H2) and may also “encourage people to think and act according to national categories” (Hechter 2000, 141). But again, empirical studies of federal systems find no consistent effect on state attachment (Amoretti and Bermeo 2004; Forsyth 1989).

Pippa Norris finds a positive correlation between proportional representation and
levels of democracy as measured by both Freedom House and Polity (2008). She explains, “Consociational theory emphasizes that majoritarian systems can work well within homogeneous societies, but that PR elections are particularly important for consolidating democracy in divided societies, and the comparison conducted so far provides preliminary support for this claim” (118). 12

Finally, Elkins and Sides (2007) find no consistent effects for institutional remedies to ills supposed to stem from ethnic pluralism, saying “our results suggest the limits of federalism and proportional representation as remedies in plural societies. There may be good reasons for adopting such systems, but attachment to the state will not inevitably result” (706). Taken as a whole, it seems that we have good theoretical arguments for the ways that democratic institutions should affect relationships between ethnic groups and states, but very little in the way of empirical evidence that those processes function in the observable world.

1.4.2 Explaining Ethnicity

The entire enterprise of constructing democratic institutions to stabilize democracies in the presence of ethnic diversity is based on the assumption that democracies are destabilized because majoritarian institutions (1) make no allowance for sharing power with minorities and (2) produce permanent electoral losers. The logic goes something like this: The relevant ethnic divisions in a society are stable over the long term. Elections contested along ethnic lines, therefore, produce permanent winners and permanent losers due to demographic constraints. The ethnic divisions are thereby politicized, and the democratic

12Norris’s work does not, however, demonstrate a causal direction for the observed correlation. The may be an exogenous factor that both allows for the establishment of proportional representation and that causes low levels of ethnic conflict.
regime is in jeopardy (Rabushka & Shepsle 1972, Horowitz 1985). But what if ethnicity is not set in stone? The logic of ethnic “outbidding” is based on fixed ethnic divisions, but if ethnicity is changeable, if ethnic identity can be activated and de-activated (or, as I argue, it can strengthened and weakened), then the rest of the outbidding mechanism may fail to produce the results that Rabushka and Shepsle expect.

Our understanding of what ethnicity is has fundamentally changed over the last few decades. Prior to Benedict Anderson’s landmark work on “imagined communities” (1983), much of previous scholarship thought about ethnicity in “essential” or “instrumental” terms (Varshney 2006). Although instrumentalism remains a powerful explanatory tool, philosophical ethnic essentialism has been effectively abandoned. Essentialism, sometimes called “primordialism” is the sense that ethnic animosities are rooted in deep history, and therefore are nearly as immutable as are the laws of physics. Geertz argued (1963) that the primordialism of ethnic groups is of greater influence on human behavior than the civic and economic associations that new states and economic systems could create. For Geertz, tribal affiliation trumps economic rationality, or political incentives. The constructivist criticism of this basic idea it is that is simply historically false. Andersen (1983) convincingly argues that “nations” as we think of them are relatively modern inventions, and that human interactions in “deep history” took place on a very small geographic scale, much smaller than that of a modern nation-state. A case in point is Eugen Weber’s (1976) account of how the forces of modernization turned “peasants into Frenchmen” just over a century ago.  

Conceding the philosophical point to constructivism, Van Evera (2001) nevertheless argues for the methodological utility of essentialism when he tells us that “It does not follow, however, that we should drop the assumption of fixed ethnic identity. This is because ethnic identities, while constructed, are hard to reconstruct once they form.” (pg 20). Van Evera further argues that ethnic identities are “hardened” by the achievement of mass literacy and the shared experience of violent conflict: events which are not presently repeated with the frequency that would be required to repaint the ethnic landscape. Therefore, says Van Evera, we can still treat ethnicity as if it were primordial and fixed, even though we know better.
Instrumentalism is the framework through which Rabushka and Shepsle’s “outbidding” thesis functions. According to this view, ethnicity is not an inherent attribute and ethnic attachment does not individually benefit those people who adhere to an ethnic identity. Instrumentalists claim that ethnicity serves as a proxy for “deeper” interests—that is, rational, economic interests. When ethnic cleavages are coterminous with these “deep” interests, the ethnic attachment serves as the instrument to mobilize the interested group, whose true motivation is rational. For political entrepreneurs, ethnicity is a useful tool to be used to gain power, or to extract concessions from the state (Bates 1974, Rabushka and Shepsle 1972). In a sense then, instrumentalists may actually view ethnic attachment as more “fluid” than do constructivists, since instrumentalists expect politicized ethnicity to be switched on and off as it becomes economically advantageous.

Constructivism is “the new conventional wisdom in the field of ethnicity and nationalism” (Varshney 2006, 285). Anderson’s influential book points to the development of the printing press and the availability of books in vernacular languages as the beginning of discursive, linguistic communities that autonomously developed into nations. However, constructivist understandings of the development of ethnic and national identities can also account for “engineered” identities. Laitin (1986) explains that British colonial authorities wanted to discourage a confessional cleavage between Christians and Muslims in Yorubaland, and that they encouraged “Yoruba” identity to great success. The key idea for the present purposes is that Yoruba identity was deliberately fostered and has become stable and politically salient. It seems then, that institutions can be manipulated to produce these effects.

In contrast to Van Evera, in Chapter 2 I will emphasize the notion that ethnic identity is best thought of as a continuous variable, rather than a discrete one.
1.4.3 Explaining and Comparing Separatist Cases

Esman’s (1977) edited volume sought to explain a perceived resurgence of “ethnonationalist conflict” that had been in abeyance since World War II, and to assess the suitability of consociational (Lijphart 1975, 1977) arrangements to address the concerns of ethnic permanent minorities. The volume provided descriptive cases studies of ethnic politics in Western Europe, Canada, and Yugoslavia, but very little in terms of explanation or theory. Similarly, Williams’ (1982) work on secessionist and autonomist movements in advanced democracies and Premdas et al’s (1990) comparable volume focused on the developing world, present admirable collections of descriptive case studies of separatist movements, but not much in the way of theory. Chapter 2 of this dissertation provides that theory.

1.5 Historical Instances of Independence by Referendum

Independence referendums\textsuperscript{14} are a modern phenomenon. There are only three examples that predate the 20th century. It is recorded that Bernardo O’Higgins organized a referendum on his leadership in 1817, during the Chilean War of Independence. However there is limited information available regarding the details of this plebiscite, other than that it occurred, and the vote supported O’Higgins (Collier 1967). In addition, two referendums occurred as a result of the American Colonization Society’s 19th century program of settling free African Americans in Africa, prior to the abolition of slavery in the US. The colony of Liberia held an independence referendum in 1846 (Abasiattai 1992), and the Maryland Colony\textsuperscript{15} did likewise in 1853 (Campbell 1971).

\textsuperscript{14}It is a matter of some consternation that there exist, in the English language, two options to pluralize the word “referendum.” I have eschewed using the Latin plural “referenda,” for the same reason that I collectively refer to Wrigley Field and Fenway Park as “stadiums” rather than “stadia.”

\textsuperscript{15}This confusingly-named polity was annexed by Liberia in 1857, following another referendum and is now known as Maryland County, Liberia. Incidentally, the colony of Mississippi-in-Africa (Huffman 2004)
Apart from these, the earliest clear example is the Norwegian independence referendum of 1905. Instances of new state creation by referendum since then are listed in Table 1.1. Between Norway in 1905 and South Sudan in 2011, there are thirty such cases. This is the novel substantive content of the present chapter: to tabulate and analyze the history of state creation through the mechanism of a popular referendum. In so doing, I propose to determine the frequency of such a phenomenon, in order to place present attempts at democratic separatism into their proper context. It is worth noting at this juncture that the "universe of cases" considered in the present chapter is that of historical instances of the creation of new, widely-recognized states. The following chapter will consider a different set of cases, being the set of movements who have attempted such an attainment of sovereignty.

For many of the cases tabulated in Table 1.1, the referendum was peripheral to a larger process. For instance, in 1991, nine of the Soviet Union’s fifteen constituent republics held independence referendums. However, these took place as the Soviet Union itself was disintegrating. The referendums did not determine whether or not these nine republics were to become independent; that was a forgone conclusion. The referendums only ratified a process that was already underway. Tellingly, the other six Soviet republics did not go through with the formality of a referendum, but all nevertheless became recognized nation-states in short order.

Similarly, the South Sudan independence referendum occurred in 2011, but the Sudanese government agreed in 2006 to hold that referendum as part of a peace agreement was also absorbed by Liberia, without a referendum. Mississippi-in-Africa is now known as Sinoe County, Liberia.
that ended a decades-long conflict: the Sudanese Civil War. The referendum would not (likely) have occurred absent the conflict, and South Sudan would likely still be a part of Sudan. Therefore, instances of referendums on independence held closely after an armed conflict cannot be considered “clean” cases of democratic separatism. It cannot be satisfactorily adjudicated whether the effect of “independence” was caused by the referendum, due to the confounding effects of the proximate conflict.

Finally, the global process of decolonization has produced referendums on questions of independence, but again these were part of that larger process. Between the 1950s and 1970s, four new states in Africa became independent from France following referendums. However, these four were a minority among the nineteen\textsuperscript{16} new African states that declared independence from France during this time.

If we parse out those new states created by European decolonization, or by the breakup of post-communist federal states, then we can see that the successful achievement of sovereign independence, through exclusively democratic means, remains a rare event. Indeed, a close examination of many historical instances will reveal just how rarely democratic separatist movements are successful in achieving independence. In this section, I will relay brief descriptions of each historical instance of a new state created through the mechanism of a referendum. Excluding those states created due to European decolonization, or by post-Cold War breakup of formerly communist states, there are nine such cases. There are only three post-Cold War cases: Eritrea, East Timor, and South Sudan. Many contemporary democratic separatist movements would like to join this list.

1.5.1 Decolonization

Decolonization is the reversal of the process of colonization. The history of European exploration and colonization of large swaths of the globe is well-documented, and familiar enough that I will not offer a grand summary of it here. Suffice it to say, for at least some time between the fifteenth and the twentieth centuries, most of the world came under the authority of one or more European powers, with the Portuguese, Spanish, French, British, Dutch, Belgians, Germans, Italians, Danish, Russians, Swedish, and Ottomans all claiming external territories as colonial possessions. European powers started shedding their colonial possessions, beginning with the independence of the United States in 1776, continuing through the Haitian Revolution, the numerous wars of independence fought against Spain in Latin America, and the collapse of the French and British Empires after the world wars of the first half of the twentieth century.

The defining features of this period of mass state creation were variably well-orchestrated colonial withdrawals and variable levels of violence, along with the emergence of national liberation movements that often consolidated power, which they typically maintained in the newly independent state. The referendums that did figure in these cases were legitimizations of the independence process. The central mechanisms were either conflict or negotiation with colonial powers too weakened by world wars to have viable means of asserting or reasserting control.

1.5.2 Post-communist breakup

A well-known feature of communist ideology is the ambition to spread revolutionary communism globally. In practice, global revolution proved to be guided by Soviet great
power considerations as much as by revolutionary fervor, although the availability of Soviet documentary sources does suggest that the Soviet elite believed its own rhetoric (Blum 1993). As a consequence, the brief (confined to the twentieth century) and opportunistic expansionary period of large-scale communist governance produced major amalgamations and alliances between states and nations governed by communist parties. The communist institutional recipe for ethnic diversity was the ethno-federation, a federal structure defined by ethnic units. The most significant of these was the Soviet Union, which was composed of fifteen\(^\text{17}\) republics. When the Soviet Union collapsed in 1991, these became fifteen new sovereign states, with nine of them holding referendums to formalize that status. A distinct but analogous process occurred when Yugoslavia began to break apart in 1991. Czechoslovakia divided peacefully in the course of 1992. Ultimately, all three ethno-federations broke apart along the lines of the federal sub-units. (Leff 1999, Roeder 2007) As I will discuss further in Chapter 2, this process shares commonalities both with decolonization and the current democratic separatism.

### 1.5.3 Individual Cases

We now turn to the brief litany of nine cases that do not fit neatly under the above headings.

**Norway (1905)**

An explanation of the process by which Norway became independent in 1905 requires a summary of the complex historical linkages between the royal houses of Scandinavia.

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\(^{17}\)The were fifteen Soviet republics as of 1990, before the breakup of the union began with the independence of the three Baltic states of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania. However, there were an additional four former republics as well: the Bukharan People’s Soviet Republic, the Karelo-Finnish Soviet Socialist Republic, the Khorezm People’s Soviet Republic, and the Transcaucasian Socialist Federative Soviet Republic.
Norway first emerged as a unified kingdom sometime around 872 AD. Along with the Kingdoms of Sweden and Denmark, Norway was part of a personal union\textsuperscript{18} known as the Kalmar Union from 1397 to 1523. The Kalmar Union lost Sweden in 1523, leaving a personal union of the Danish and Norwegian crowns. In 1660, these separate kingdoms became a unified state known as Denmark-Norway. In the Treaty of Kiel (1814) Denmark ceded Norway to Sweden. This triggered the Swedish-Norwegian War of 1814, whose result was that Norway regained its independence, as a kingdom in personal union with Sweden.

An ongoing source of tension between the kingdoms was that Sweden controlled the joint foreign affairs and diplomacy apparatus of both states. Following the election of 1905, the Norwegian government passed a law establishing a Norwegian consular corps. This law was vetoed by Oscar II, the king of both countries, prompting the Norwegian government to resign. Oscar refused to accept the resignations, triggering a constitutional crisis. In response, the Norwegian parliament voted (unanimously) to dissolve the personal union, arguing that Oscar’s failure to appoint a new government was effectively an abdication of the Norwegian crown\textsuperscript{19}. The referendum of 1905 was held to confirm the dissolution of the union.

**Iceland (1918)**

Iceland was discovered and settled by Norwegians in the ninth century. It was brought under Norwegian sovereignty in 1262. As a part of Norway, Iceland was also a part of

\textsuperscript{18}Under a personal union, two or more kingdoms remain separate, but share a monarch. This is the current status of the United Kingdom, sharing a monarch with Canada, Australia, New Zealand, Jamaica, Barbados, the Bahamas, Grenada, Papua New Guinea, the Solomon Islands, Tuvalu, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent & the Grenadines, Antigua & Barbuda, Belize, and Saint Kitts & Nevis.

\textsuperscript{19}Norway later invited the second son of Denmark’s crown prince to become the new King of Norway as Haakon VII. Haakon’s grandson, Harald V, is the present king.
the Kalmar Union from 1397 to 1523, the personal union of the Danish and Norwegian crowns until 1660, and the unified state of Denmark-Norway from 1660 to 1814. In the Treaty of Kiel (1814) Denmark ceded Norway to Sweden, but did not include Iceland as a part of the ceded territories. The result was that Norwegian control of Iceland was ended, being replaced by Danish administration. Denmark granted home rule to Iceland 1874. Iceland and Denmark agreed to establishing Icelandic sovereignty as an independent kingdom in personal union with Denmark from 1918. A referendum confirming the arrangement was held in 1918, resulting in Icelandic independence. Iceland later declared itself a republic, in 1944 while Denmark was under Nazi occupation. In a congratulatory letter from King Christian X in occupied Copenhagen, the Danish Crown relinquished its claim to Iceland (Hardarson, Hálfdanarson).

Mongolia (1945)

Mongolian independence in the modern era was a product of international posturing between two neighboring great powers. When the Qing dynasty (which had ruled Mongolia since 1691) fell to the Chinese Revolution of 1911, Mongolia managed to extricate itself from the new Republic of China (ROC) with Russian assistance. In turn, the ROC occupied Mongolia during the upheaval of the 1917 Russian Revolution and ensuing Civil War. The Mongolian People’s Party, founded under ROC occupation and still relevant today, was instrumental in fomenting the 1921 Mongolian Revolution, again with the support of the Red Army. At the Yalta Conference, Josef Stalin could demand from a position of strength that the ROC recognize Mongolian independence (which was already de facto since 1921). Chiang Kai-shek agreed to Stalin’s demand, if the USSR promised not to support People’s Republic of China (PRC) in the Chinese Civil War (Bawden). With

20The modern nation-state of ‘Mongolia’ is sometimes also referred to as ‘Outer Mongolia’, whereas ‘Inner Mongolia’ is an autonomous region of the People’s Republic of China. ‘Inner’ and ‘Outer’ Mongolia may also be referred to collectively as ‘Mongolia’, that is, the homeland of the Mongols.
external powers watching closely, an astonishing 98% turnout approved independence in 1945 without a single negative vote (Radchenko). There is no doubt that the reported results are heavily falsified.

To be fair, historical experts (Liu) agree that genuine mass support for independence lay behind this transparent manipulation, although the PRC remains bitter at what they correctly see as an outcome that would have been impossible without the backing of Soviet power. What reluctance there was, as reported by the delegated observers from the Soviet foreign office, centered on whether the referendum was merely a first step to Soviet annexation, and especially whether the referendum tacitly accepted PRC claims to ‘Inner’ Mongolia21 (Wilson Center).

**Samoa (1961)**

Inhabited by humans for about three thousand years, Samoa had limited contact with the outside world until European and American whalers and missionaries began arriving in the nineteenth century. Commercial interests led Germany, the United Kingdom, and the United States to intervene in Samoa’s internal politics. Samoans fought a pair of civil wars in the late nineteenth century, with the aforementioned great powers supplying arms to their respectively preferred victors. Agreed in Washington, the Tripartite Convention of 1899 divided Samoa into eastern and western groups of islands. The eastern portion is now known as “American Samoa,” an unincorporated territory of the United States. The western islands became a German colony, known as “German Samoa” from 1900-1914. At the beginning of World War I, the government of the United Kingdom asked New Zealand to invade and take control of German Samoa, deeming it a “great and urgent Imperial service” (Smith 1924, p.14). Samoa under New Zealand was particularly hard

21See previous note.
hit by the Influenza Pandemic of 1918, and many blamed the New Zealand government for mismanagement of the crisis (Tomkins). In response, a nonviolent movement known as “Mau” emerged, promoting civil disobedience (Wendt). In 1929, New Zealand police opened fire on a Mau demonstration, killing eight, wounding fifty others, and making Samoan resistance more militant. Ongoing violence in Samoa impacted the election of a Labour government in New Zealand in 1936 (Banivanua Mar). New Zealand continued to administer Samoa under a League of Nations mandate, which became a United Nations mandate after 1947. New Zealand authorized an independence referendum for Samoa in 1961, in which about 85 percent of voters favored independence (Aikman). Samoa joined the Commonwealth in 1970, and was admitted to the UN in 1976.

Malta (1964)

Malta is an archipelago consisting of three inhabited islands and many minor islands. The name “Malta” can refer to the largest and most populous of these islands, or to the sovereign state that consists of all of them. The islands are due south of Sicily, the closest other land, but they are located on the African tectonic plate. Malta has been inhabited since prehistory, passing through the control of numerous civilizations dating back to the Phoenicians. The relevant historical background to explain Malta’s secession referendum begins in 1530, when Charles V of Spain granted control of the islands to the Order of Knights of the Hospital of St John of Jerusalem, otherwise known as the Knights of Malta. Ruled by the knights from 1530, the islands were captured by Napoleon Bonaparte in June 1798, as part of his ill-fated attempt to take control of Egypt. Following the French invasion, the Knights of Malta evacuated the island. Horatio Nelson destroyed most of the French Mediterranean fleet at the Battle of the Nile in August 1798, leaving the French garrison on Malta isolated. The Maltese people revolted against the French in September 1798. In 1799, a Maltese leader named Vincenzo Borg invited one of Nelson’s
deputies, Alexander Ball, to bring the islands under British jurisdiction. The British laid siege to the islands and forced the French out in 1800. A British protectorate from the French capitulation of 1800, Malta became a Crown Colony in 1813. After the Suez Canal opened in 1869, Malta became an important logistical port for the Royal Navy. The route between England and British holdings in India took ships through British-controlled Gibraltar, and on to Malta, en route to the canal. Malta was subjected to a prolonged Axis siege and bombing campaign during World War II, during which the Royal Navy and Royal Air Force were able to defend Malta until the Axis were forced to redeploy the bulk of their Mediterranean assets to North Africa in preparation for the second battle of El Alamein. Malta held a referendum on “integration” into the UK in 1956, which passed. However, integration negotiations between the Maltese and British authorities broke down, due to disagreements relating to finances, legislative representation, and the continued strategic importance of Malta. By the end of 1957, the Maltese legislature had ended the negotiations, and began preparing for independence. In negotiation with the British, the Maltese Assembly drafted a new constitution, under which Malta would become a sovereign state, and presented it to the voters in a 1964 referendum. This referendum also passed, and Malta became independent of the United Kingdom (Dobie).

**Federated States of Micronesia (1983)**

Inhabited for about four thousand years, the islands that later became the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM) were not contacted by outsiders until the sixteenth century. As part of the Spanish East Indies, the islands were a colony of Spain from 1526 to 1899. Reeling from a financial crisis induced by losing the Spanish-American War, Spain sold to the majority of its remaining Pacific possessions to Germany in 1899. Germany placed its new possessions under the administration of German New Guinea. During World War I, German New Guinea was invaded by Australia and Japan. Captured by Japan
in 1914, the islands that would become the FSM were under Japanese occupation until 1919. At the conclusion of that war, they were under the League of Nations “South Seas Mandate” from 1919, and (nominally) until 1947. Japan governed the islands under the mandate. The islands were captured by US forces in 1944, during World War II. Under a UN mandate, the United States administered the territory as part of the “Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands” from 1947 to 1986. The Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands was composed of six districts. Four of these districts ratified a constitution for self-governance in 1979, becoming the Federated States of Micronesia. According to the United States Department of the Interior; Honolulu Field Office:

The Compact of Free Association between the Federated States of Micronesia and the United States was initialed by negotiators in 1980 and signed in 1982. The Compact was approved by the citizens of the FSM in a plebiscite held in 1983. Legislation on the Compact was adopted by the U.S. Congress in 1986 . . . and signed into law on November 13, 1986.

The effect of the Compact was that, upon ratification by Congress, the US recognized FSM sovereignty, and entered into “free association” as described in the Compact.

**Eritrea (1993)**

The area that is now Eritrea has been continuously inhabited for about ten thousand years. It passed through the political control of numerous polities dating back to prehistory. The boundaries of what would become Eritrea were established during the late nineteenth century “Scramble for Africa” when an Italian shipping company purchased the territory from local chiefs. It came under Italian government control in 1889, as Italian Eritrea. Benito Mussolini amalgamated Eritrea with other Italian possessions into Italian East Africa in 1936. The Italians were driven out by British forces in 1941, as a part of the East African Campaign of World War II. The British controlled the area until 1950, when a UN resolution transferred the territory to Ethiopian sovereignty. Armed Eritrean militants
waged a war of independence against Ethiopia that lasted from 1961 to 1991. From 1974 onward, Ethiopia itself was in a state of civil war following a coup d’etat that overthrew the emperor and installed a military junta. Following the defeat of the junta in Eritrea in May 1991, and in Ethiopia itself the following month, both conflicts ended. Ethiopia’s transitional government agreed to allow Eritrea a referendum on independence, which occurred under UN observation in 1993. Over ninety nine percent of votes were cast in favor of independence (Iyob).

East Timor (1999)

As the Eritrean & Ethiopian case indicates, internationally supervised balloting has become a standard part of conflict resolution processes (Collin 2020). East Timor independence is a case-in-point. East Timor is situated in a politically complex archipelago of islands dominated by Indonesia, but partitioned by colonization in ways that also include Papua New Guinea, Brunei, and parts of Malaysia. As a Portuguese colony between 1702 and 1975 (with an interim for Japanese occupation during World War II), East Timor suffered both from an authoritarian “home state” that resisted decolonization longer than the other European powers, and from its sudden effective abandonment as a result of the 1974 “Carnation Revolution” in Portugal. The ensuing political turmoil in Portugal had global repercussions for the remaining Portuguese colonial possessions, including an Indonesian invasion and annexation\textsuperscript{22} of East Timor in December of 1975. Indonesian occupation was resisted by the East Timorese, in a a decades-long guerrilla war.

The brutality of the occupation, with over one hundred thousand conflict-related deaths from fighting, hunger, and disease (Comissão de Acolhimento, Verdade e Recon-\textsuperscript{22}At the time of the Indonesian invasion, East Timor was effectively in a state of civil war between partisan groups, following an August 1975 coup attempt.
ciliação de Timor Leste) won international sympathy for “remedial right” independence (Jones). Only with the 1998 collapse of the dictatorial Suharto regime in Indonesia, however, did the Indonesian state reach out to the UN to supervise an East Timorese referendum: a binary choice\textsuperscript{23} between enhanced autonomy within Indonesia or independence. The East Timorese, overwhelmingly, chose independence, with a vote of almost eighty percent (BBC 1999). Dispute over the propriety and authoritativeness of the referendum procedure by parties on the ground opened the door to further conflict, and led to the deployment of a UN peacekeeping force that stayed in place until 2012.

**South Sudan (2011)**

At the time of this writing, South Sudan is the world’s newest widely-recognized sovereign state. South Sudan declared its independence, from Sudan, in 2011. Sudan itself became independent, from a British and Egyptian condominium, in 1956. The fifty five year period between Sudanese independence in 1956 and South Sudanese independence in 2011 saw two civil wars\textsuperscript{24} totalling thirty four years in duration, in addition to three coups d’état\textsuperscript{25} (Holt & Daly 2011). There did not remain much time for nation-building in independent Sudan. The civil wars were largely contested along a confessional cleavage: with an Islamic north and a Christian/Animist south.

An agreement brokered by an African trade consortium and its donor partners as part of a larger peace agreement led to the independence referendum of 2011, in which the South Sudanese voted overwhelmingly for independence (Carter Center). As in

\textsuperscript{23} Voters were instructed to vote ‘Yes’ to only one of the following questions, and ‘No’ to the other: “Do you accept the proposed special autonomy for East Timor within the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia?” or “Do you reject the proposed special autonomy for East Timor, leading to East Timor’s separation from Indonesia?” (BBC 1999).

\textsuperscript{24} 1955-1972 and 1983-2005

\textsuperscript{25} in 1969, 1985, and 1989
Mongolia decades earlier, however, the validity of strong independence sentiment was not challenged by observers and experts, including the team of international observers led by the Carter Center. The suspiciously high “yes” vote of some ninety nine percent was matched by pre-election polls. Indeed, for many northerners the secession of South Sudan was viewed as a stabilizer for the rest of the country. This projection unfortunately proved true insofar as South Sudan almost immediately became embroiled in new civil conflict in 2013. The referendum, as in East Timor, did not resolve the issues underlying the conflict.

1.5.4 Analysis of Cases

As the preceding descriptions have noted, the referendums held in Mongolia, Eritrea, East Timor, and South Sudan quickly followed periods of political violence, or war, between the separating new state and the extant state from which it sought to separate. As such, these are not instances of democratic separatism, but rather armed revolutions that were ended by referendum. We cannot ascertain whether or not the referendum would have occurred, or independence achieved, in the absence of conflict.

Iceland and Malta were colonies within Europe, precluding their inclusion in Table 1.1 under the heading of decolonization. Samoa and the FSM were under the control of non-European colonial powers, though New Zealand acted as the UK’s proxy in Samoa, and the US came to possess the FSM by capturing it from another non-European colonial power. As such, the independence of Iceland, Samoa, Malta, and the FSM can all be considered special cases of decolonization.

In summary then, apart from Norway, there is no historical precedent for a successful democratic separatist movement that meets the following criteria:
The referendum takes place without being preceded by an armed conflict.

The parties to the referendum (ie. the region and the nation-state) became united other than through communist consolidation.

The separating region was not a colonial possession, and the state from which it separated was not a colonial power, or the proxy or successor of a colonial power.

Despite this dismal record, there presently exist a great number of political movements that seek to establish a new state, from within the boundaries of an existing state, in a purely democratic manner.

1.6 Universe of Contemporary Cases

Having considering the history of the phenomenon of democratic sepeartism, such that it exists, we now turn our attention to the present. Presently observable instances of democratic separatist movements run the gamut from those featuring fringe separatist movements in which perhaps only a few individuals are active separatists, to those in which separatists enjoy support from the majority of the regional populace. It is not immediately clear what the appropriate level of popular support is, above which we should start to think of the separatist movement as a serious political phenomenon worth paying attention to. In Table 1.2, I offer a brief typology of separatist movements, according to their level of support. Suffice it to say: regional separatists operating at or near the “fringe” level likely differ in fundamental ways from those operating at or near the “majority” level, in terms of their short and long term goals, as well as in their strategic calculations. The present research is more concerned with the serious movements towards “majority” end of the spectrum, but I am leaving the lower limit of “seriousness” ill-defined.
1.7 Flags Revisited

Returning briefly to the municipal emblem of Laredo, we can see symbolized centuries of the joining and separating of political units. The thirteen stripes of the US flag represent the joining together of thirteen American colonies in an effort to separate themselves from the Kingdom of Great Britain (which was itself formed by the union between the Kingdoms of England and Scotland in 1707). The stars in the Confederate flag represent the states that joined together in 1861-1865 to separate themselves from the United States. Three stars of the Rio Grande flag represent the states of Coahuila, Nuevo León, and Tamaulipas which the Republic claimed as its national territory. The emblem representing the Spanish Empire is itself an amalgamation of the arms of Castile and León, two medieval Iberian kingdoms which entered into personal union under King Alfonso VII in 1230. The very symbols that states choose to represent themselves are frequently reminders of the fact that the norms that unite some areas under a common jurisdiction, and that separate them from others, are political constructs that are subject to reappraisal and revision.

In the following chapters, I will draw on the history of amalgamation and separation in order to understand how these processes function in advanced democracies in the 21st century.
Table 1.1: Instances of Independence via Referendum

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>New State</th>
<th>Seceded From</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1945</td>
<td>Cambodia</td>
<td>France</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1958</td>
<td>Guinea</td>
<td>France</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1962</td>
<td>Algeria</td>
<td>France</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1970</td>
<td>Bahrain</td>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1974</td>
<td>Comoros</td>
<td>France</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1977</td>
<td>Djibouti</td>
<td>France</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1979</td>
<td>St. Vincent &amp; the Grenadines</td>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Decolonization**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>New State</th>
<th>Seceded From</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>Slovenia</td>
<td>Yugoslavia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1991</td>
<td>Armenia</td>
<td>Soviet Union</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1991</td>
<td>Azerbaijan</td>
<td>Soviet Union</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1991</td>
<td>Croatia</td>
<td>Yugoslavia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1991</td>
<td>Estonia</td>
<td>Soviet Union</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1991</td>
<td>Georgia</td>
<td>Soviet Union</td>
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<tr>
<td>1991</td>
<td>Latvia</td>
<td>Soviet Union</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1991</td>
<td>Lithuania</td>
<td>Soviet Union</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1991</td>
<td>North Macedonia</td>
<td>Yugoslavia</td>
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<tr>
<td>1991</td>
<td>Ukraine</td>
<td>Soviet Union</td>
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<tr>
<td>1991</td>
<td>Turkmenistan</td>
<td>Soviet Union</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1991</td>
<td>Uzbekistan</td>
<td>Soviet Union</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1992</td>
<td>Bosnia &amp; Herzegovina</td>
<td>Yugoslavia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>Montenegro</td>
<td>Serbia &amp; Montenegro</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Post-communist**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>New State</th>
<th>Seceded From</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1905</td>
<td>Norway</td>
<td>Sweden-Norway</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1918</td>
<td>Iceland</td>
<td>Denmark</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1945</td>
<td>Mongolia</td>
<td>China</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1961</td>
<td>Samoa</td>
<td>New Zealand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1964</td>
<td>Malta</td>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1983</td>
<td>Federated States of Micronesia</td>
<td>United States</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1993</td>
<td>Eritrea</td>
<td>Ethiopia</td>
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<tr>
<td>1991</td>
<td>East Timor</td>
<td>Indonesia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>South Sudan</td>
<td>Sudan</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Historical Case Studies**

1For the summary purposes of this table, I am considering a narrow definition of decolonization: non-European territories separating from European colonial powers.

2North Macedonia called itself simply “Macedonia” upon independence in 1991, but due to a dispute with Greece over the name, was admitted to the United Nations as “the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia” in 1993. The dispute was resolved in 2019 when the country renamed itself “North Macedonia.”

3Serbia and Montenegro (2003-2006) was the rump state of the former Yugoslavia.
Table 1.2: Examples of Democratic Separatists

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Definitional Attribute</th>
<th>Example</th>
<th>Popular Support</th>
<th>Legislative Representation</th>
<th>Election</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fringe</td>
<td>basic political organization</td>
<td>Nation of Hawai‘i</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Hawaii legislature 2011</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protest</td>
<td>measurable electoral support</td>
<td>Alaskan Independence Party</td>
<td>1.86%</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Alaska gubernatorial, 2010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relevant</td>
<td>1+ seats, &lt;30%</td>
<td>Parti Québécois</td>
<td>25.38%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>Quebec general, 2014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Viable</td>
<td>&gt;30%, &lt;50%</td>
<td>Nieuw-Vlaamse Alliantie</td>
<td>31.9%</td>
<td>34.7%</td>
<td>Flemish Parliament, 2014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Majority</td>
<td>&gt;50%</td>
<td>Scottish National Party</td>
<td>45.4% (constit.)</td>
<td>53.4%</td>
<td>Scottish Parliament, 2011</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2.1 Theory: INUS Conditions

In this chapter, I work from the premise that there exist multiple, equifinal pathways to the creation of new states. As described in Chapter 1, two of these pathways are decolonization, and the breakup of Communist federations. Note that already we can see a degree of overlap in the way these two pathways are constructed. Several scholars have emphasized the need to view the breakup of the communist bloc as an imperial dissolution. Dmitri Trenin phrased the notion succinctly: “All colonial empires break up. Post-Communist Russia was simply the last one to do so” (2001, 89). James Mayall (1992, 23) concurs. He sees that waves of state creation as the follow-on to decolonization; when decolonization ends, so do waves of state creation. Facing the consequences of Soviet collapse he argues: “The disintegration of the Soviet Union has revealed the extent to which it remained an imperial system in disguise, crumbling like so many before it under the triple impact of overextended power, economic failure, and a loss of faith and intellectual commitment on the part of the ruling establishment”.

Expanding on this theoretical foundation, I explore additional pathways that encompass the current dynamics of state creation and note further suggestive overlapping conditions. In short, I propose a theory of “insufficient but necessary parts of of a condition which is itself unnecessary but sufficient” (Mackie 1965, 247), or “INUS” condi-
tions, which constitute a way of understanding how pathways to state creation may be constructed. The INUS approach has been forwarded in political science as part of the development of qualitative methodology by such scholars as Mahoney and Goertz (2006) and Charles Ragin (1987), with his complex Qualitative Comparative Analysis (QCA) and related fuzzy set QCA approach.

The INUS conditions that I propose are territoriality, self-government, external support, cultural distinctiveness, historic statehood, and a nationalist central state. Taken together, these conditions create the basis for regional identity, which I will argue (in Chapter 4) is a strong correlate for democratic separatism, even as, in different contexts, a complex of these conditions are also valuable in a broader theory of state creation. In this chapter, therefore, I describe a set of conditions that, when simultaneously present, are sufficient to predict a successful secessionist movement.

It bears emphasizing, at this juncture, that the universe of cases under review in this chapter differs from that of the previous chapter. While Chapter 1 parsed through the history of the creation of recognized new states through the mechanism of the referendum, this chapter takes a wider view. In this chapter I will consider the history of secessionist movements and projects, not necessarily democratic, that have exhibited some of the elements of an identity-based case for secession, arguing that the simultaneous presence of the six INUS conditions creates a permissive condition for a successful separatist movement, while any combination of conditions less than the full set of six does not.

What constitutes success? I do not define success in terms of achieving independence. Rather within the democratic context, success can be defined broadly in terms of the logic of Giovanni Sartori’s (1976) work on party systems, as achieving sustained political rele-
vance. Sartori framed this to embrace both governing parties and those with coalitional potential, as well as “blackmail” potential – that is, the capacity to shrink the political space for constructing political coalitions. Determining political relevance for an independence movement cannot be defined in terms of specific cut-off points for parliamentary representation or issue support because the size and influence of secessionist movements will depend in part on the institutional rules, notably electoral rules and the organization of regional and national power, as discussed below.

My approach to examining these hypotheses is that of theoretically-informed case studies that exemplify the hypothesized conditions. Although Fearon and Laitin (2008) offer a case for randomized case studies, I follow their approach in dissecting medium N cases to determine the operation of causal factors.

2.1.1 Structural Conditions

Territoriality\(^1\) is a structural condition that is necessary for the option of seeking independence to exist. Geographically-defined territory has been a definitional attribute of state sovereignty since the Peace of Westphalia in 1648. The Westphalian model of sovereignty has been refined over the centuries, and has been applied globally since it was codified in the Charter of the United Nations (Ch. 1, Sec. 2) at the conclusion of the Second World War. \(^2\)

\(^1\)For a detailed discussion of the necessity of states to possess territory, see Crawford, Ch. 2.

\(^2\)However, there does exist a marginal case of a non-territorial, quasi-sovereign entity participating in the international state system. The Order of Knights of Malta (formally, the “Sovereign Military Hospitalier Order of Saint John of Jerusalem, of Rhodes and of Malta”) has diplomatic relations with over one hundred states and is a permanent observer at the UN despite lacking sovereign territory. The order controls the Palazzo di Malta in Rome, as well as a few other buildings in Italy. Nevertheless, these sites are generally held to be part of Italy’s sovereign territory.
A further description of the sort of territory suitable for secession is warranted. With three exceptions\(^3\) no contemporary sovereign state is entirely enclaved within another, lacking either a maritime border or a land border with a third state. Existing as a landlocked enclave requires a state to rely on the state that surrounds it for access to international markets, for military defense, and for environmental regulation. As such, it is always an incomplete form of sovereignty, of the sort unlikely to be pursued except in the rarest of circumstances.

**Hypothesis 1 (H\(_1\))**: *The secessionist movement lays claim to a particular geographical territory, which would not become an enclave within the borders of another state.*

### 2.1.2 Institutional Conditions

Two institutional conditions are necessary for lowering the start-up costs for the proposed new state, they are (1) institutions of self-government, and (2) external support.

Successful democratic separatist movements arise from within communities that have self-organized into bodies politic. The form of self-government practiced by such communities is varied, but always present. This criterion is most neatly-met when the region seeking independence consists of a component entity of a federation, or of a sub-state tier of government that has been devolved extensive powers within a unitary state. In addition, these communities develop democratic separatist movements only after they have begun to practice democratic politics internally. Such organized political communities may operate with the imprimatur of the sovereign state to which they belong, as with US states, Spanish autonomous communities, or Argentine provinces. However

\(^3\)Lesotho, San Marino, and Vatican City. Two are microstates, having negotiated special relations with Italy. The third, Lesotho, has been enclaved within, and independent of South Africa in various phases of its colonial history. It would be valuable to interrogate just how such entities survived, insofar as it would shed light on the broader question of state creation.
such official sanction is not required. For instance, the Rebel Zapatista Autonomous Municipalities in the Mexican state of Chiapas have practiced a form of self-government under direct democracy since 1994, in open defiance of the authority of the Mexican government (Cleaver 1998, Barmeyer 2009). Such self-government need not be recognized by legitimate authorities in order to produce the effects required to satisfy this condition.

Through the practice of democratic self-government, regions develop political and civil society institutions such as parties, journalistic sources, and activist/advocacy groups that can become the foundation for an organized democratic separatist movement.

Self-governing institutions also provide a basis for legitimacy claims. When an elected subnational legislature votes for independence or organizes an independence referendum, that initiative has greater potential credibility with external actors and its own population than would an informal movement (Leff 1999). Self-governing institutions may also provide an independence movement with a more credible bargaining platform from which to negotiate with the central government.

**Hypothesis 2 (H2):** The secessionist movement’s intended territory corresponds to a region that already practices some form of democratic self-government.

In order to successfully achieve independence, or even to stand a realistic chance at doing so, a region must gain access to the international state system. In the case of an amicable separation (eg. Czechoslovakia), the consensual nature of the process poses no obstacle to either entity maintaining or acquiring international recognition, since there is no aggrieved sovereign state to block such access. However, in cases where the divorce is contested, the separatist region needs help in order to gain a hearing in the international community, due to the strong norm of sovereignty. The international
community recognizes certain circumstances whereby an aspirant nation-state may come to possess a “right” to secession.

International law recognizes a "right of all peoples to self-determination," which includes the right to choose independent statehood. However, international legal practice has interpreted the right narrowly, restricting it to the most unambiguous cases of decolonization. The consensus among legal scholars at this time is that international law does not recognize a right to secede in other circumstances, but that it does not unequivocally prohibit it either (Buchanan 1997, 33).

For present purposes, we are concerned with the circumstances under which a region may appeal to a “remedial right” of secession (Seymour 2007, Jaber 2010, Brando and Morales-Gálvez 2018).

Some of the costs of setting up a new state can be externalized to a third party. This criterion fits most neatly with those groups who anticipate membership in European Union, as the EU performs many of the regulatory and external relations functions that are normally performed by states, particularly in terms of economic regulation. However, there are a number other avenues for external support. This criterion can also be satisfied if the group can expect to function as a client state of a great power upon independence, or by relying on the clout of a diaspora community, or co-ethnics living in another state.

Ultimately, of course, the modern aspirant state can only achieve the desired end state of “established” statehood through broad international recognition (and, normally, UN membership). This is a project that may involve extensive lobbying and, in recent years, a highly visible internet presence (Cleaver 1998).

**Hypothesis 3 (H₃)**: The secessionist movement anticipates external support for its statehood.
2.1.3 Contextual Conditions

Some contextual factors strengthen regional identity, and thereby diminish the group’s loyalty to the parent state. These include cultural distinctiveness, historic nationhood, and a nationalist central state.

A political divorce of the type desired by democratic separatists, by its nature, entails the aspiration of a demos to excise itself from an existing nation-state and to achieve sovereignty. Such a community of citizens, who perceive their interests as shared and their fates as linked, cannot (quickly) be invented out of whole cloth. For this reason, successful democratic separatist movements will arise in those situations where a sense of community identity is already present, normally in the form of distinctive regional culture. Membership in such a community may be determined by reference to “color, language, [or] religion; . . . ‘tribes’, ‘races’, ‘nationalities’, [or] castes” (Horowitz 1985, 53).

Hypothesis 4 (H₄) : The secessionist movement’s intended territory corresponds with that of a distinctive cultural/ethnic group in the region.

Successful democratic separatist movements are able to point to a historic political unit; a sovereign state, or an akin quasi-state (such as a viceroyalty), as a natural antecedent to the new state they aspire to create. A history of dormant statehood or quasi-statehood provides a people with some of the building blocks of national identity: symbols, myths, heroes, and villains. It is not immediately obvious how recently such a political unit would have needed to exist to be useful in creating a sense of contemporary nationhood. Sorens (2005) uses the 1648 Treaty of Westphalia as the cutoff point, before which a history of statehood is unlikely to have an effect. However it is not altogether clear what mechanism could be in play from a centuries-distant, but post-Westphalian, state that
could not equally be suspected to function with regard to a pre-Westphalian state. For instance, the Principality of Wales ceased to exist when it was incorporated into the Kingdom of England by the Laws in Wales Acts of 1535 and 1542. Wales had no form of autonomy until those laws were repealed in 1993 (The (UK) National Archives, online). Nevertheless, the 450 year dormancy of Welsh autonomy did not extinguish Welsh identity, or nationhood. Similarly, the successful nineteenth-century statehood projects in Bulgaria and Serbia (non-democratic projects resolved by international conference) built identity through their historical claims to the Greater Bulgarian and Serbian empires of the 10th and 14th centuries respectively.

In some instances, many surviving institutions of the former state remain in existence. Such is the case of Scotland which, despite the 1707 union of the Scottish and English states, was never integrated into the Kingdom of England, as Wales was. The Kingdoms of Scotland and England merged, into the Kingdom of Great Britain, with many of the separate trappings of the two former kingdoms maintained. To the present, Scotland maintains a separate official church, legal regime (Paquin 2002), and military regiments. In others, these institutions fell into abeyance, some times for centuries, and may have been "restored" in recent decades, as is the case with the Generalitat of Catalonia (Elliott 2018). In still others, the institutions of the former state are extinct, in which case the region will likely fail to satisfy hypothesis H2.

The existence, real or imagined, of a historical precedent for nationhood is a known correlate for the “reawakening” (ie. invention) of a national identity. We know from the study of nationalisms that national origin stories need not stand up to historical scrutiny in order to affect the way that national identities function in contemporary minds (Hobsbawm 1983, Gellner 1983, Anderson 1991, Shnirelman 1995). For instance, when
the crowns of Castille and Aragon were formally unified in the early 18th century, the new state was called *España* (Spain). This name was chosen explicitly as a transliteration of the Latin *Hispania*, a Roman Empire-era name for the Iberian peninsula. What is conveniently left out of this neat connection from *Hispania* to *España* is that Iberia was successively controlled by Visigothic kingdoms, the Emirate of Córdoba, and a number of small, warring kingdoms during the eight centuries of conflict between Muslims and Christians on the peninsula. What is more, *Hispania* included the territory that we now call Portugal (Palacio Atard 2005). It strains credulity to imagine any political continuity survived the thirteen centuries between *Hispania* and *España*, but the idea of *Hispania* was nevertheless useful in creating an origin myth for Spain.

**Hypothesis 5 (H₅)**: The secessionist movement’s intended territory has a history of independent statehood, or quasi-statehood.

Separatist movements will only become successful in those situations wherein the dominant population of the group’s state exhibits indicators of high or increasing nationalism or nativism. Gellner (1983) defined nationalism as a “political principle that holds that the political and national unit should be congruent”. As such, the implication for a minority nation within a plurinational state is that state-level nationalism poses a threat to their continued distinctiveness. While a group with a strong sense of identity may be content to remain in an egalitarian and pluralistic society, it seems unlikely that they would be eager to belong to a society muscularly defined in terms of another identity to which they do not necessarily subscribe strongly.

In this chapter, this issue will be addressed qualitatively, but the measure of national constraint on substate identities could be addressed quantitatively in terms of restrictive
language laws, for example, or more broadly by importing some measures of multi-
culturalism or measures of state discrimination against ethnic minorities from the “All
Minorities at Risk” database (Birnir, et al.).

**Hypothesis 6 (H₆):** *The secessionist movement’s present state exhibits a high or rising level of
nationalism operating at the state level.*

This chapter will expound on these factors and argue that democratic separatist move-
ments exhibiting all of them will be successful, while others will not. In what remains of
this chapter, I interrogate each of these conditions qualitatively, highlighting a case of a
grouping or region with an active or historical separatist movement that lacks (or lacked)
one (or more) of the conditions.

### 2.2 Conditions and Cases

#### 2.2.1 Territory

Despite the present ubiquity of territory amongst successful claimants to sovereignty,
this general rule has a few exceptions that are worth discussing. Pre-Westphalian feudal
systems, for instance, were characterized by a sovereignty that extended in proportion to
sovereign ruler’s ability to project power at a distance, rather than by fixed boundaries⁴.
Such spheres of influence frequently overlapped, and a great deal of the earth’s surface
was not claimed as anyone’s sovereign territory. There exist very few remnants of these
ancient institutions, the aforementioned Knights of Malta being one.

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⁴Complicating the matter even more, feudal rulers frequently had to contend with completing claims to
sovereign authority emanating from ecclesiastical offices.
Table 2.1: Exemplars of the INUS Conditions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Territory</th>
<th>H₂ Support</th>
<th>Culture</th>
<th>History</th>
<th>H₆</th>
</tr>
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H₂: The secessionist movement’s intended territory corresponds to a region that already practices some form of democratic self-government.

H₆: The secessionist movement’s present state exhibits a high or rising level of nationalism operating at the state level.

In contemporary practice, territory is a definitional attribute of a sovereignty. However, there exist examples of substate non-territorial autonomous entities, such as the Sámi in Norway and Maori in New Zealand. Such arrangements typically indicate an attempt by a multi-ethnic state to address the needs of a geographically-dispersed, minority or indigenous ethnolinguistic group (Malloy and Palermo 2015).

### 2.2.2 Self-Governance

The presence of self-governing institutions serves a number of functions for a potentially separatist region. Most significantly, a regional government practicing some level of autonomy in the creation and implementation of policy is one that can be “scaled up” to sovereign statehood by adding competencies. That is, the institutional difference between (a) a sub-national or local government and (b) a sovereign nation-state can be
described in terms of breadth of authority. It requires less to develop a sovereign state
government from an existing sub-national government than would be required to create
a new sovereign state government from nothing.

Secondly, the existence of a regional government spurs the creation of secondary
institutions related to that governments: political parties, journalistic outlets, and advocacy
groups.

**South Ossetia (Georgia)**

![Figure 2.1: South Ossetia (with Georgia and Abkhazia)](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Asia_location_South_Ossetia_(with_Georgia_and_Abkhazia).png)

South Ossetia (Figure 2.1) is a region in the Caucasus, internationally recognized as
part of Georgia. In addition to not recognizing South Ossetian sovereignty, the territory
claimed by South Ossetia is not coterminous with any of Georgia’s administrative divi-
sions. As such, the region lacked a formal structure for self-government at the time of

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6South Ossetian independence is recognized by Russia, Venezuela, Nicaragua, Nauru, and Syria

7The Republic of Georgia is composed of 9 administrative regions, 1 city, and 2 autonomous republics.

8The area claiming independence as South Ossetia corresponds with the territory of the South Ossetian

However, the territory of the former South Ossetian Autonomous Oblast (while still officially part of the Georgian SSR, within the Soviet Union) declared its independence from Georgia in 1990, which was answered by the deployment of armed forces under the command of the Georgian SSR to disarm forces loyal to South Ossetia. The resulting “First South Ossetia War” of 1991-1992 ended in a Russian brokered ceasefire. The peace was short lived, and influenced by other regional conflicts relating to the chaos that followed the collapse of the Soviet Union. Georgian forces reentered South Ossetia in 2004, and again in 2008, resulting in the Russo-Georgian War of August 2008. South Ossetia has remained under the occupation of the Russian military since that time.

As we have seen, the long saga of competing sovereignty claims over South Ossetia has been characterized by violent conflict, much more than by democracy. South Ossetia never had the opportunity to develop a democratic separatist movement. The ambiguous and contested status of South Ossetia is, therefore, an unresolved subplot in the story of the dissolution of the Soviet Union.

2.2.3 External Support

The strong international norms around sovereignty are such that disputes occurring between central governments and regions are, in theory, generally held to be internal matters, and that broad deference should be extended to central governments in resolving

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Autonomous Oblast that existed when Georgia was part of the Soviet Union. The Georgian SSR disbanded the South Ossetian AO in 1990, as the Soviet Union was collapsing.

Russia recognizes South Ossetia as an independent state, citing the precedent of Western recognition of Kosovo after it unilaterally declared independence from Serbia. However, only Nicaragua, Venezuela, Syria, Vanuatu and Nauru have followed suit.
those disputes by imposing their will on wayward regions. However, through the patronage of a strong external ally, a separatist region gains access to a voice in the international community that cannot be silenced by the central government.

**Somaliland (Somalia)**

Somaliland (Figure 2.8\(^{10}\)) is a region in the Horn of Africa, internationally recognized to be a part of Somalia. However, Somaliland has practiced *de facto* sovereign self-governance since the 1991 toppling of the Siad Barre regime in Mogadishu following a disastrous civil war. It has all the trappings of statehood (Kaplan 2008). As British journalist Joshua Keating notes:

> When you are in Somaliland, there is never any question that you are in a real country. After all, the place has all the trappings of countryhood. When I arrived at the airport, a customs officer in a Somaliland uniform checked my Somaliland visa, issued by the Somaliland consulate in Washington DC. At the airport, there was a Somaliland flag. During my visit, I paid Somaliland shillings to drivers of cabs with Somaliland plates who took me to the offices of ministers of the Somaliland government (Keating 2018).

\(^{10}\)Wikimedia Commons (User:Flippiefh)

Yet the international community does not recognize Somaliland.

The territorial demarcation that distinguishes Somaliland from Somalia is a function of colonial divisions and the merger of Italian and British colonial protectorates after the decolonization period, with a brief interlude of independence for former British Somaliland in 1960 before amalgamation into Somalia. That said, the territory is not sharply delineated, for Somaliland claims more than it actually controls.

The broad ethnic category of both Somalia and Somaliland is Somali, but there are hundreds of clans and sub-clans. Clan level cleavages are more salient in Somaliland than in Somalia proper. Both Somalia and Somaliland are overwhelmingly Sunni Muslim, but the Somaliland flag particularly emphasizes that identity, with the shahada emblazoned on the green stripe of the flag.

Notably, Freedom House ranks Somalia an authoritarian “not free” state; in a separate rating, Somaliland warrants a “partly free,” with a “credible” presidential election in 2017 although legislative elections have been repeatedly postponed.

Nonetheless, Somaliland has failed to obtain international recognition from any country and maintains official contacts with only a few. Although it is always possible to invoke the general international default position in favor of existing sovereignties to explain the reluctance to recognize Somaliland, that is insufficient, since the international community has in fact recognized a number of new states in recent decades, including nearby South Sudan (Riegl and Doboš 2014).

A crucial question appears to be a calculation of the possible destabilization effects of
different recognition choices. In the case of Somaliland, the status quo is rather stable. The central Somalia government has not attempted, and perhaps is not capable, of restoring its rule in Somaliland. On the other hand, the rest of Somalia is so precariously unstable, and the horrible legacy of civil war so vivid, that international community fears anything that might cause the country to unravel further. The position of the African Union is a case in point. There have been periodic talks between the foreign ministers of Somalia and Somaliland, as recently as the summer of 2020. The African Union has refused to sit in; the organizational concern is that finalizing a separate state would open a “Pandora’s box” for additional dissatisfied Somali regions, and that that might implode the state entirely (African Union, Peace & Security Council). In addition, the Somalia government, of course, does not accept the secession of Somaliland.

2.2.4 Distinctive Culture

Culture is a foundational element of national or ethnic identity. While it is an essentially contested concept (Gallie 1954), “culture”, by any reasonable definition, refers to a set of social norms or practices that set one group of people apart from another. The existence of a distinctive culture creates a commonality of experiences and expectations from which a group identity may arise.

Vermont (United States)

Vermont, (Figure 2.311) now a federal state in the New England region of the United States, lacked such cultural identity markers. The State of Vermont was a sovereign and

11Wikimedia Commons (User:TUBS)
https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Vermont_in_United_States_(zoom).svg
independent state from its January 15th, 1777 declaration of independence until it was incorporated into the United States in 1791.

And yet Vermont independence is arguably the creation of an accidental state, or as a journalist account has it, a “reluctant republic” (Van de Water 1974). Its independence was less a function of a clear identity distinct from the other colonies challenging British colonial rule than of the ambiguities of how to understand colonial boundaries as constitutive of U.S. statehood and the basis on which such boundary definitions could be made. Existing territorial claims from neighboring New York and New Hampshire complicated questions of accession to the new United States. Shalhope demonstrates the clear democratic initiatives at the local level. Peter Onuf (1981) notes that the survival of Vermont as an independent state was not a clear-cut democratic initiative. Rather, it “was made possible by the inability of the claiming states to enforce their jurisdictional claims.” Onuf thus characterizes Vermont’s resulting anomalous position as a an elite political project without identity underpinnings.

The founders of Vermont had to create a state where no true community had existed. They could not command the communal loyalties of former colonies with distinc-

\textsuperscript{12}Vermont declared independence as the “Republic of New Connecticut” in January 1777. The name “Vermont” was adopted in June 1777 (Shalhope 2019).
tive institutions and political traditions. And even though the state constitution of 1777 incorporated many of the most advanced principles of popular republicanism, Vermont’s leaders were hard pressed to convince the populace that it had a right to govern itself [as an independent state] and that the constitution had any legal force.

Indeed, the fourteen-year period of independence was itself less a function of stalwart independence as of the resistance of New York state in particular to renouncing its territorial claims and approving Vermont’s accession to the union. During the independence interlude, it is interesting that the inscription on Vermont’s coinage in the 1780s was *Stella quarta Decima* (the fourteenth star), and its seal, adopted in 1779, boasted a fourteen-branched pine tree. Both are testimony to aspirations to become part of the United States (Van de Water).

2.2.5 History of Statehood

A history of statehood, real or re-imagined from the materials of a usable past, provides a potential separatist region with symbols of their identity. Former states have flags, seals, mottoes, national anthems, and other symbols that are easily embraced by pro-separatist activists. Through these, the former state provides a shorter intellectual path to conceptualizing the proposed future state: it is not being *created*, it is being *restored*. Furthermore, the circumstances under which the former state lost its sovereignty provide a rational basis upon which new claims to that sovereignty may be based.

**Puerto Rico (United States)**

The case of Puerto Rico exemplifies some key components of a viable secessionist movement. Its inhabitants possess a common group identity *vis-à-vis* a faded independence movement which had its strongest backing a century ago. Lacking is a compelling
Puerto Rico is a large Caribbean island (Figure 2.4\textsuperscript{13}), and has been inhabited by humans for about four thousand years. A number of waves of migration from South America over many centuries produced a complex tapestry of ethnic cleavages on the island, however by about 1000 AD the Taíno culture had come to dominate most of the Greater Antilles, including Puerto Rico. In 1492, the Taíno became the first New World people to encounter Europeans during the Columbian Exchange (Rouse 1992). The pre-colonial power structure, however, appears to have been clan-based and localized, leaving strong cultural resonances but not state-like qualities.

Shortly following the initial contact with Europeans, Puerto Rico was colonized and conquered by the Crown of Castile. The first permanent European settlement on the island was established at Caparra in 1508. The Taíno fought a war of resistance from 1511, capitulating in 1518 (Sued Badillo 2008). By 1513, the Castillian colonial administration

\textsuperscript{13}Wikimedia Commons (User:Milenioscuro) https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Puerto_Rico\(orthographic_projection\).svg
had begun importing enslaved Africans (Denis 2015). Puerto Rico remained a Castillian (and, after the *Nueva Planta* decrees of 1707-16, Spanish) colony until the 1898 Treaty of Paris, when it was ceded to the United States (Coletta 1957).

As of this writing, Puerto Rico remains a "free, associated state" of the United States. Puerto Rico, therefore, has no history of Westphalian sovereignty. As such, Puerto Rican national symbols reflect a history of colonization, and an unrealized aspiration of statehood. For instance, Puerto Rico’s flag (Figure 2.6\(^{14}\)) was adopted by the separatist “Revolutionary Committee of Puerto Rico” in 1895 (Agrelo 2020) drawing its inspiration explicitly from a Cuban flag (Figure 2.5\(^{15}\)), first used by separatist rebels in 1850, and adopted as Cuba’s national flag following independence from the United States in 1902. The similarities are striking, and intentional (Chacón 2017).

Following its annexation by the United States, Puerto Rico did experience a sustained period of independence initiatives. The argument was that Spain’s authority to turn the island over to the United States was illegitimate. Under charismatic leadership, an arm of the independence movement radicalized and militarized in the 1930s, both abandoning and being blocked from democratic politics. The most notable manifestation of the radical moment of independence politics was a 1950 assassination attempt against US President

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\(^{15}\)Wikimedia Commons (User:MapGrid) https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Flag_of_Cuba.svg
Harry Truman. The failed assassination had significant political consequences, ironically ushering in the modern period of diminished political relevance for the independence option (Pantojas García).

First, following on the 1947 congressional action allowing Puerto Rico’s appointed governorship to become an electoral, Truman authorized a plebiscite on status of Puerto Rico for a new constitution and free association with the US mainland. He thus ushered in a sustained period, thus far extending at least through November 2020, of periodic “status referendums” on Puerto Rico’s options. In none of them has the independence option regained its central salience, and indeed, in 2020 independence was not a ballot choice. Moreover, neither of the two major parties in Puerto Rico favors independence.

Luis Muñoz Marín, first elected governor and co-founder of the Popular Democratic Party, launched the party in specific opposition to the radical independence movement. PDP, entirely dominant until the 1960s, favors the status quo. The more recent New Progressive Party advocates US statehood. The left-of-center Puerto Rican Independence Party peaked in electoral support in the early 1950s, though its gubernatorial candidate received a significant protest vote in 2020 after the massive public protests against the incumbent governor’s corruption in 2019.

2.2.6 State Nationalism

Flanders (Belgium)

Flanders is a historic term referring to a region of Europe, the homeland of the Flemish people, presently located mostly in northern Belgium, although parts of historic entities
known as ‘Flanders’ are now within the borders of the Netherlands and France. For present purposes we will use Flanders to refer to the Belgian region known locally as *Vlaams Gewest*. Directly translated into English it means the “Flemish Region.” Flanders (*Vlaams Gewest*) is depicted in Figure 2.7\(^\text{16}\).

Belgium lacks a significant unitary nationalist party against which to mobilize. The last major attempt at fomenting a pan-Belgian nationalist movement was the *National Democratie* party, which was founded in 1985. The party reached its high water mark in 1995 by securing two seats (out of one hundred fifty) in the Belgian Chamber of Representatives (lower house) in 1995 with about two percent of the total vote. The party last contested an election in 2007, winning less than one percent of the vote and zero seats. It folded in 2012.

The dominant parties in Belgium are segmented by ethno-region and have negotiated evolving subnational competencies over decades. Flemish and Walloon parties confront

\(^{16}\)Wikimedia Commons (User:Alphathon)  https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Flemish_Community_in_Belgium_and_Europe.svg
each other rather than the central government as such, and the central government in
turn is more a battleground for this confrontation.

However, the absence of a domineering national government in this case may not
be the determinant factor in state survival. The subnational units gain ever greater
competencies. The subnational identities persist and are re-enforced by linguistically
segmented media systems. Each community mobilizes around grievances against the
other. Cross-community bargaining fails repeatedly, even in forming an inclusive national
government, as is constitutionally mandated. In 2011, Belgium set a record of almost 600
days for cabinet formation and approval. The 2020 government took some 500 days to
be approved. As such, the consistent theme there is deadlock at the national level rather
centrist repression of regional identities.

2.2.7 Co-incidence of INUS Conditions

Scotland (United Kingdom)

Figure 2.8: Scotland in the UK and Europe
The Kingdom of Scotland was created at an indeterminate date in the Middle Ages with a national parliament and monarchy. Scotland’s political linkage with the bordering Kingdom of England has been continuous since 1603 when James VI, King of Scots, ascended the English throne as King James I of England. England and Scotland remained constitutionally separate countries in personal union until 1707, when the Acts of Union created the Kingdom of Great Britain by merging their respective parliaments and crowns. In 1803, the Kingdom of Ireland was added to the union creating the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland. This first UK remained until 1922, when twenty six of Ireland’s thirty two historic counties left the kingdom and formed a republic. Ireland was partitioned, leaving Northern Ireland within the UK.

Despite the union, Scotland (Figure 2.8) maintained many of the trappings of its former statehood. As Paquin (2002) observes, membership in the United Kingdom presented a number of benefits to Scots from the 18th through the 20th centuries. The British Empire of this period was the dominant actor in world political and economic affairs. Most notably, individual (and especially elite) Scots were able, through the empire, to engage in global affairs at a scale that would not have been possible in the context of an independent Scotland. Additionally, union between Scotland and England protected these two Protestant nations from the dominant Catholic powers on the European continent through collective security. A third benefit of the empire was that it did not require Scotland to lose its historic national identity. The small size of the British bureaucracy allowed Scottish civil society to maintain elements of the Scotland’s national autonomy and character. Three important national institutions that remained uniquely Scotland’s were the Presbyterian Church, the Scottish legal system and a system of education distinct

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17 Wikimedia Commons (User:Alphathon)
https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Scotland_in_the_UK_and_Europe.svg
from England.

Moreno (2006) observes that in the 1980s, Scottish self-identification was not correlated to a strong desire for independence, nor was it strongly correlated to support for any particular UK political party. That has since changed, he says, as a reaction to the British nationalist policies pursued by successive Conservative governments. Moreno argues that the effect of the Thatcher administration’s policies was to rebrand British party politics into a national antagonism between England and Scotland, at least in the minds of many Scottish voters. Had Moreno been writing a decade later, he surely would have made the connection between the ascendance of Brexit to the mainstream of Conservative Party politics.

Having secured an overall majority in the Scottish Parliament in 2011, the separatist Scottish National Party called for, and received the consent of the British Government for, an independence referendum. The referendum was held in 2014, with Scots favoring continued membership of the UK by a margin of about fifty five percent in favor of union to forty five percent in favor of independence. Ironically, a major argument in favor of the union came from those claiming that Scotland’s separation from the UK would place it outside of the European Union, with major obstacles\textsuperscript{18} to rejoining. This is ironic, of course, because the UK as a whole voted to leave the EU in 2016, despite the fact that a majority of Scots favored continued EU membership in the Brexit referendum.

Scotland has a defined territory, been self-governing since the 1998 (re)establishment of the Scottish Parliament, anticipates membership in the European Union, contains a

\textsuperscript{18} Applicant states to the European Union require to consent of all existing members to join. It was thought that states such as Spain, with their own separatist challenges, would block Scottish membership as a means of dissuading their own separatists.
distinctive culture and a history of independent statehood, and was recently extricated from the European Union despite voting against the 2015 Brexit referendum. In short, Scotland meets all of the INUS conditions described above.

Catalonia (Spain)

Catalonia (depicted in Figure 2.9\textsuperscript{19}, is a Spanish autonomous community. The regions that are thought of as comprising the historic Catalan homelands\textsuperscript{20} extend beyond the borders of contemporary Catalonia, into other Spanish regions, as well as into France and Andorra. The territory of the “Catalan Countries” is largely coterminous with that of the territory controlled by the Crown of Aragon at the time of the 1469 marriage of Ferdinand II, King of Aragon to Isabella I, Queen of Castile. The personal union of Aragon and Castile remained as such until the Nueva Planta decrees of the early eighteenth century unified Spain as a single state by eliminating legal distinctions between Aragonese and

\begin{figure}
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{E.U-Catalonia.png}
\caption{Catalonia in Spain and Europe}
\end{figure}

\textsuperscript{19}Wikimedia Commons (User:Martí8888) https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:E.U-Catalonia.png

\textsuperscript{20}In the Catalan language, Catalonia is called Catalunya, while the broader “Catalan Countries” are els Països Catalans
Castilian territories, and decreeing that Castilian Spanish would be the sole national language.

The Catalan language was repressed, with varying degrees of zeal, from the time of the *Nueva Planta* decrees until the 1975 death of Spanish dictator Francisco Franco. In addition to relieving the repression of minority languages, Franco’s death and Spain’s subsequent transition to democracy brought sweeping changes to Spanish politics and society. Most significantly for our purposes, democratization led to a reorganization of the state in which, according to the 1978 constitution, Spain was an “indivisible homeland of all Spaniards” but that it “recognizes and guarantees the right to self-government of the nationalities and regions of which it is composed.” The effect of this language was a heterogenous decentralization of the theretofore unitary Spanish state into seventeen “autonomous communities” and two “autonomous cities.” Catalonia regained self-government at that time.

The heterogenous nature of Spanish decentralization underlies the contemporary Catalan separatist movement. Spain’s autonomous communities are not equally autonomous. That is, the range of policy matters under local purview varies between them. Most importantly, the Basque region, *Euskadi*, collects personal and corporate income tax, as well as taxing wealth and capital transfers. No other autonomous community has these powers. In 2006, Catalonia passed a new “statute of autonomy” by referendum, claiming taxation powers broadly similar to those enjoyed by the Basques. Catalonia and the Basque Country are Spain’s wealthiest regions.

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21 In article 2, the constitution states that “La Constitución se fundamenta en la indisoluble unidad de la Nación española, patria común e indivisible de todos los españoles, y reconoce y garantiza el derecho a la autonomía de las nacionalidades y regiones que la integran y la solidaridad entre todas ellas.”
In 2010, Spain’s Constitutional (Supreme) Court struck down most of the 2006 statute, a move which sparked massive popular protests in Barcelona, Catalonia’s capital. Many of the demonstrators, proponents of Catalan independence, display a flag known as the *Estalada Blava*, composed of the historic arms of the Crown of Aragon\(^{22}\), with the addition of a blue triangle containing a star (Fig. 2.10\(^{23}\)). This flag is, intentionally, evocative of the Cuban flag displayed above (as is the Puerto Rican flag). As the last remnants of Spain’s colonial empire to be lost, the symbolism of linking Catalan and Cuban independence is not lost on many.

Successive Spanish and Catalan governments were unable to resolve the dispute over devolved taxation, and eventually support grew for a referendum on independence. In 2015, a separatist coalition won a majority of seats in Catalonia’s parliament, and attempted to negotiate with Madrid on the terms for holding such a referendum. Referring to the “indivisible homeland of all Spaniards” language in the Constitution, the Spanish Government of Mariano Rajoy refused to negotiate terms for the referendum with the Catalan Government, led by Carles Puigdemont. Nevertheless, Puigdemont pushed forward with a referendum in October of 2017, which was met with massive state violence against polling places, voters, and poll workers.

\(^{22}\)Known as the *Senyera*: four red stripes on a field of yellow.

\(^{23}\)Wikimedia Commons (User:Opensofias) https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Estelada_blava.svg
Catalonia’s territory is well-defined as an autonomous community. It has a parliamentary government with considerable autonomy. Catalan separatist leaders anticipate membership in the European Union. Catalans are an ethnolinguistic cultural group, sometimes called a nation, with a long history and a distinctive language. The high water mark (thus far) of the Catalan separatist movement came during the administration of Mariano Rajoy of the Partido Popular, Spain’s major nationalist and conservative party. Like Scotland, the case of Catalonia meets all of the INUS conditions.

### 2.3 Conclusions

The argument in this chapter has been that the set of conditions identified collectively form a sufficient condition for a successful separatist movement. These conditions do not, however, account for every such movement. There is a conspicuous absence from the cases presented here: that of Quebec, and its near-miss independence referendum of 1995. The conditions presented here to not fit neatly with the Quebec story. However, this is not a problem for the claim of INUS sufficiency, after all, I do not claim that these are necessary conditions outside of the INUS framework. The way to interpret these results is to think of them as a set of indicators that observers can look for when evaluating the viability of a particular movement, in terms of this particular pathway to successful separatism.
Chapter 3
Theory of Separatist Referendums

3.1 General motivation

In the previous chapter, we examined a set of conditions that are conducive to the formation of a successful democratic separatist movement. In this chapter, we will take a closer look at the actions available to a state and a separatist region when such a successful movement is already present.

Constituent regions, and colonial possessions, of recognized nation-states have historically sought to achieve their own sovereign independence through a number of mechanisms. These have included armed rebellion (eg. the United States), the unilateral legislative declaration of independence (eg. Rhodesia), and the negotiated treaty (eg. the Czech and Slovak Republics).

There are two democratic mechanisms by which a region may legitimately claim to declare independence from the state to which it belongs. These are the referendum, or direct democracy, and the legislative declaration of independence, or indirect democracy. An emerging norm in the international community dictates that such a regional autonomy movement will only be recognized as democratically legitimate if it is ratified through a popular referendum on the question of independence. Indeed, an examination of the processes by which new states have been created in the period following the Second
World War reveals that, “the referendum ha[s] become . . . an automatic part . . . of the constitutional amendment process” (Tierney 2012, 8).

Below, I model the strategic interaction that occurs between a democratic nation-state, and a constituent region of that state that seeks to become independent through democratic means. The cases motivating my interest in these sorts of interactions are the contemporary separatist movements in Scotland and Catalonia. I note that the British and Spanish states have taken starkly different approaches to managing their respective separatist movements. The UK government allowed (and won) a binding referendum in 2014 on the question of Scottish independence, whereas Spain has heretofore resisted recognizing the legitimacy of any democratic process that might lead to Catalan independence.

A fairly straightforward explanation for these divergent behaviors might be that the UK expected to win the referendum in Scotland, whereas Spain expects to lose a referendum in Catalonia. Generally then, states may oppose regional independence referendums when they fear that a majority of the regional population favors independence, and that such a referendum would be successful. However, I propose an alternative explanation: that some states may oppose regional independence referendums, even if they think that the separatists would lose such a referendum. My models will therefore account for both of these two plausible explanations for a state’s decision to allow or ban a regional independence referendum:

- States rationally assign different values to their probability of winning an independence referendum, leading some to endorse referendums while others ban them.
• States differently evaluate the respective importance of (a) the perception of democratic legitimacy and (b) the recognition of the central state’s sovereign authority.

3.2 Preferences

Before building to a full accounting of possible outcomes of a push for an independence referendum, and ordering the players’ preferences over those outcomes, I will first lay out some basic assumptions about the sorts of cases to which this model may apply. Firstly, the model will describe the interaction between (1) an internationally-recognized sovereign nation-state and (2) a geographical region of that state, internationally-recognized as a constituent part of the state. Axiomatically:

\[ \text{Status Quo (SQ) = Union} \quad (3.1) \]

This definition is motivated by the cases of Catalonia, as a constituent region of Spain; as well as by Scotland, as a constituent region of the United Kingdom. However, the model may be applied generally, to any case in which democratic separatists seek to create a new state from within the boundaries of existing democratic states, through the mechanism of the referendum.

3.2.1 Preferences over Outcomes

Preferences of Separatists

The model purports to represent the strategic interaction that occurs between regions and states, for which some level support exists for the region’s separation from the state, to become a state in its own right. That is, the model describes regions seeking independence.
Recalling the typology of “seriousness” among such movements as presented in Table 1.2, the model will address the more serious movements towards “majority” end of the spectrum, leaving the lower limit of “seriousness” ill-defined.

Among regions featuring “serious” separatist movements (however defined), the model is concerned with actors seeking to act on that preference for independence, and actually issue a declaration of independence. That is, this model assumes that movements advocating separatism are sincere in that advocacy, and that they are not really trying to simply influence policy in the state to which their regions presently belongs by appearing to support independence. I am describing sincere separatists who honestly represent their ambition to create a new state.

\[ Independence = \text{Declaration of Independence (DI)} \]  

(Axioms 3.1, 3.2, and 3.3, imply that these regions seeking to to enact a declaration of independence, because:

\[ DI = Independence > SQ = Union \]  

reduces to:

\[ DI > SQ \]
Preferences of States

Although history provides some examples of an amicable separation by which a nation-state voluntarily loses territory to a new state (thinking here specifically of the Czechoslovak “Velvet Divorce” of 1993), I presume that states usually prefer to maintain their territorial integrity. Axiomatically:

\[ \text{Union} > \text{Independence} \quad (3.6) \]

Recalling Axiom 3.1, we see that most states’ preference is to maintain the status quo. We have thus assumed that regions are the revisionist actors, and states the status quo actors.

3.2.2 Preferences over Procedures

This model is meant to describe democratic separatists, in interaction with democratic states. We may presume that democrats of any stripe, to include democratic separatists, are concerned with democratic legitimacy, at least insofar as to prefer legitimacy over illegitimacy.

\[ \text{Legitimacy} > \text{Illegitimacy} \quad (3.7) \]

While definitions of “democracy” abound, we may be confident that any reasonable definition is concerned with the procedures of government, not just its outcomes. Democratic “legitimacy” is a similarly slippery concept. We might define it in constitutional terms, in that any electoral process governed by known rules can produce results that we accept as “legitimate”, or we may prefer a majoritarian definition, in which any outcome that is favored by the majority is deemed “legitimate.” For the purposes of this model, I
will favor a majoritarian definition, assuming that referendums are generally recognized
as democratically legitimate procedures to reveal a majority popular preference, or indeed
to reveal if that preference is shared only by a minority.

\[
\text{Referendum} = \begin{cases} 
\text{Majority} \\
\text{Minority} 
\end{cases} \quad (3.8)
\]

That is to say, absent a referendum, it is ambiguous whether separatist sentiment is
shared by a majority or a minority. However, a referendum is a legitimate democratic
process to eliminate that ambiguity.

\[
\text{Referendum} \neq \text{Ambiguity} \quad (3.9)
\]

“Ambiguity” here refers to the lack of a referendum result. In practical terms, this
(probably, usually?) means the absence of a referendum, but conceivably it could also
refer to as a result of a referendum with unsatisfactory turnout (Puerto Rico Statehood
2017, Scotland Devolution 1979) or to a three-part referendum whose results lack a clear
interpretation due to the lack of a majority result for any option (Newfoundland, June
1948). As presently formulated, the model takes no account of turnout thresholds that
may arguably constitute a “basement” below which a referendum result may legitimately
be invalidated. Nor does the model consider referendum questions offering voters more
than two options. These additional details may bring the model closer to describing
empirical reality, but they would also certainly complicate the task at hand. I defer their
consideration for the moment, but acknowledge that a future form of this model may
need to take them into account.

Democratic separatists, then, have a single strategy yielding their most preferred
outcome. In order to issue a democratically legitimate declaration of independence, they must first win a popular referendum on the question of independence.

\[ \text{Majority} + DI = \text{Legitimate secession} \quad (3.10) \]

Which implies that states have two strategies to achieve their own first preference:

\[ \text{Minority} + DI = \text{Illegitimate secession} \quad (3.11) \]

\[ \text{Ambiguity} + DI = \text{Illegitimate secession} \quad (3.12) \]

By definition, democratic separatists will not declare independence illegitimately. That is, they will not declare independence absent a majority vote in a referendum. Therefore, we can infer from Axioms 3.1, 3.11 and 3.12 that:

\[ \text{Minority} = \text{Status Quo} = \text{Union} \quad (3.13) \]

\[ \text{Ambiguity} = \text{Status Quo} = \text{Union} \quad (3.14) \]

Revealing the two rational strategies for states: to win legitimate independence referendums or to prevent them from occurring. Empirically, of course, we have recently seen each of these strategies in operation. The UK government permitted, contested, and won the 2015 Scottish independence referendum, whereas the Spanish government used police force to disrupt the 2017 Catalan independence referendum. The puzzle to be resolved then is: under what conditions do states prefer one of these strategies over the other? The model blow will (I hope) shed some light on the matter.
There is yet another matter to consider: not all referendums are equal in terms of perceived legitimacy. Separatists regions may stage a referendum with, or without the state’s endorsement or consent. Indeed there is even a middle-ground option whereby the state accepts the referendum as “advisory” but not binding. We can then order the democratic legitimacy of these referendums as such:

\[ \text{Binding} > \text{Advisory} > \text{Banned} \]  

(3.15)

Here, “binding” referendums are those agreed to by both the region and the state as ones that could legitimate a declaration of independence. “Advisory” referendums are those that the state does not attempt to prevent, but neither does it recognize ex-ante as a mechanism to legitimate a declaration of independence. “Banned” referendums are those that are declared illegal by the state, which takes steps to prevent the vote from occurring. Note that we can presume that a state would only view “binding” referendums as a sufficient condition enabling a legitimate declaration of independence. “Advisory” referendums would only obligate the state to participate in further dialogue with the region, and “banned” referendum results could be dismissed as irrelevant. It is unlikely that separatists movements would share this view. For separatists, the state’s blessing is not a necessary condition to achieve democratic legitimacy (Scottish Government 2019, Ridao 2014, Gouvernement du Québec 2000). So, while a region may seek a binding referendum, a state’s intransigence in authorizing one would not constitute an insurmountable obstacle to legitimacy. That is, depending on the “type” of referendum, there may be a divergence of perception of the referendum’s legitimacy. To wit, a region’s interpretation of the results would be:
\[ DI = \begin{cases} 
\text{Legitimate, if Majority} \\
\text{Illegitimate, if Minority}
\end{cases} \]  

Whereas a state’s interpretation would be:

\[ DI = \begin{cases} 
\text{Legitimate, if Majority and Binding} \\
\text{Illegitimate, if Majority and Advisory or Banned} \\
\text{Illegitimate, if Minority}
\end{cases} \]  

If a state can withhold legitimacy by simply refusing to authorize a binding referendum, then the effect is to nullify the right to revolution (Locke [1689] 1952).

### 3.2.3 Ordinal Preferences of Democratic Separatists

I presume that any political movement seeking to effect the independence of a region from the state to which it belongs, and seeking to do so through exclusively democratic means, places value in the norm of democratic legitimacy, or mandate. As such, I suspect that the ordinal\(^1\) preferences of any such movement proceeds as described in Table 3.1.

### 3.2.4 Ordinal Preferences of Two “Types” of States

Furthermore, I suspect that different states encountering a domestic democratic separatist movement may differently evaluate the relative utility to be derived from the range of options to them available. Some states, say type \( \alpha \), may value the perception of democratic legitimacy over the recognition of the central state’s sovereign authority. That is to say, states of type \( \alpha \) view their own legitimacy as being a derivative of a democratic

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\(^1\)I have been unable to convince myself of the reasonableness of any method for establishing interval payoffs in this game.
Table 3.1: Ordinal Preferences for Democratic Separatists

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ordinal Value</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Region move 1</th>
<th>N-S move</th>
<th>Region move 2</th>
<th>Voter move</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Separatists win a binding referendum, from which they claim the democratic legitimacy to ratify a legislative declaration of independence.</td>
<td>demand</td>
<td>recognize</td>
<td>both</td>
<td>maj</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Separatists win an advisory referendum, from which they claim the democratic legitimacy to ratify a legislative declaration of independence.</td>
<td>demand</td>
<td>allow</td>
<td>both</td>
<td>maj</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Separatists win a banned referendum, from which they claim the democratic legitimacy to ratify a legislative declaration of independence.</td>
<td>demand</td>
<td>ban</td>
<td>both</td>
<td>maj</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>No referendum is held. Nevertheless, the regional legislature ratifies a legislative declaration of independence.</td>
<td>(any)</td>
<td>(any)</td>
<td>dec</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Separatists win a binding referendum, but the regional legislature does not ratify a legislative declaration of independence.</td>
<td>demand</td>
<td>recognize</td>
<td>ref</td>
<td>maj</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Separatists win an advisory referendum, but the regional legislature does not ratify a legislative declaration of independence.</td>
<td>demand</td>
<td>allow</td>
<td>ref</td>
<td>maj</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Separatists win a banned referendum, but the regional legislature does not ratify a legislative declaration of independence.</td>
<td>demand</td>
<td>ban</td>
<td>ref</td>
<td>maj</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>No referendum is held, and the status quo is maintained.</td>
<td>wait</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Separatists lose a banned referendum, and the regional legislature does not ratify a legislative declaration of independence.</td>
<td>demand</td>
<td>ban</td>
<td>ref</td>
<td>min</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Separatists lose an advisory referendum, and the regional legislature does not ratify a legislative declaration of independence.</td>
<td>demand</td>
<td>allow</td>
<td>ref</td>
<td>min</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Separatists lose a binding referendum, and the regional legislature does not ratify a legislative declaration of independence.</td>
<td>demand</td>
<td>recognize</td>
<td>ref</td>
<td>min</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Separatists lose banned referendum. Nevertheless, the regional legislature ratifies a legislative declaration of independence.</td>
<td>demand</td>
<td>ban</td>
<td>both</td>
<td>min</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Separatists lose an advisory referendum. Nevertheless, the regional legislature ratifies a legislative declaration of independence.</td>
<td>demand</td>
<td>allow</td>
<td>both</td>
<td>min</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Separatists lose a binding referendum. Nevertheless, the regional legislature ratifies a legislative declaration of independence.</td>
<td>demand</td>
<td>recognize</td>
<td>both</td>
<td>min</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
mandate. However, other states, say type \( \beta \), value the recognition of the central state’s sovereign authority over the perception of democratic legitimacy. For states of type \( \beta \), constitutional sovereignty precedes popular mandate, and does not derive from it (Keating 2017). As such, these two types of democratic states assign different relative values to the options available to them in encountering a domestic democratic separatist movement.

For states of type \( \alpha \), their ordinal preference proceeds as described in Table 3.2, while for states of type \( \beta \), their ordinal preference proceeds as described in Table 3.3.

### 3.3 The Elements of the Game

In the sections that follow, I present two models of the strategic interaction that occurs between a sovereign nation-state, and a constituent region of that state that seeks to become independent through democratic means. There are some common elements to both models, and I explain them below. Elements of the game include the two players,

- **Player 1**: The nation-state, which we will refer to as “N-S” (eg. Spain or the UK).
- **Player 2**: The region, referred to below as “Region” (eg. Catalonia or Scotland).

The players exist in one of two states of the world, and both are uncertain of which one they are in until it is revealed by a referendum. The states are:

- **maj**: in which a referendum would result in a separatist majority.
- **min**: in which a referendum would result in a separatist minority.

Actions in the game are taken at three sequential time periods, though as we will see, the game can reset itself to the first period. The periods are:

- **T-1**, in which “Region” (Player 2) acts.
Table 3.2: Ordinal Preferences for state type α

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ordinal Value</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Region move 1</th>
<th>N-S move</th>
<th>Region move 2</th>
<th>Voter condition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Separatists lose a binding referendum, and the regional legislature does not ratify a legislative declaration of independence.</td>
<td>demand</td>
<td>recognize</td>
<td>ref</td>
<td>min</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Separatists lose an advisory referendum, and the regional legislature does not ratify a legislative declaration of independence.</td>
<td>demand</td>
<td>allow</td>
<td>ref</td>
<td>min</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Separatists lose a banned referendum, and the regional legislature does not ratify a legislative declaration of independence.</td>
<td>demand</td>
<td>ban</td>
<td>ref</td>
<td>min</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Separatists lose a binding referendum. Nevertheless, the regional legislature ratifies a legislative declaration of independence.</td>
<td>demand</td>
<td>recognize</td>
<td>both</td>
<td>min</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Separatists lose an advisory referendum. Nevertheless, the regional legislature ratifies a legislative declaration of independence.</td>
<td>demand</td>
<td>allow</td>
<td>both</td>
<td>min</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Separatists lose banned referendum. Nevertheless, the regional legislature ratifies a legislative declaration of independence.</td>
<td>demand</td>
<td>ban</td>
<td>both</td>
<td>min</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>No referendum is held, and the status quo is maintained.</td>
<td>wait</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>No referendum is held. Nevertheless, the regional legislature ratifies a legislative declaration of independence.</td>
<td>(any)</td>
<td>(any)</td>
<td>dec</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Separatists win a banned referendum, but the regional legislature does not ratify a legislative declaration of independence.</td>
<td>demand</td>
<td>ban</td>
<td>ref</td>
<td>maj</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Separatists win an advisory referendum, but the regional legislature does not ratify a legislative declaration of independence.</td>
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<td>allow</td>
<td>ref</td>
<td>maj</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Separatists win a binding referendum, but the regional legislature does not ratify a legislative declaration of independence.</td>
<td>demand</td>
<td>recognize</td>
<td>ref</td>
<td>maj</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Separatists win a banned referendum, from which they claim the democratic legitimacy to ratify a legislative declaration of independence.</td>
<td>demand</td>
<td>ban</td>
<td>both</td>
<td>maj</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Separatists win an advisory referendum, from which they claim the democratic legitimacy to ratify a legislative declaration of independence.</td>
<td>demand</td>
<td>allow</td>
<td>both</td>
<td>maj</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Separatists win a binding referendum, from which they claim the democratic legitimacy to ratify a legislative declaration of independence.</td>
<td>demand</td>
<td>recognize</td>
<td>both</td>
<td>maj</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 3.3: Ordinal Preferences for state type $\beta$

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ordinal Value</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Region move 1</th>
<th>N-S move</th>
<th>Region move 2</th>
<th>Voter condition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>No referendum is held, and the status quo is maintained.</td>
<td>wait</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Separatists lose an advisory referendum. Nevertheless, the regional legislature ratifies a legislative declaration of independence.</td>
<td>demand</td>
<td>allow</td>
<td>both</td>
<td>min</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Separatists lose banned referendum. Nevertheless, the regional legislature ratifies a legislative declaration of independence.</td>
<td>demand</td>
<td>ban</td>
<td>both</td>
<td>min</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>No referendum is held. Nevertheless, the regional legislature ratifies a legislative declaration of independence.</td>
<td>(any)</td>
<td>(any)</td>
<td>dec</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Separatists win a banned referendum, but the regional legislature does not ratify a legislative declaration of independence.</td>
<td>demand</td>
<td>ban</td>
<td>ref</td>
<td>maj</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Separatists win a banned referendum, from which they claim the democratic legitimacy to ratify a legislative declaration of independence.</td>
<td>demand</td>
<td>ban</td>
<td>both</td>
<td>maj</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Separatists lose an advisory referendum, and the regional legislature does not ratify a legislative declaration of independence.</td>
<td>demand</td>
<td>allow</td>
<td>ref</td>
<td>min</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td>allow</td>
<td>ref</td>
<td>maj</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Separatists win an advisory referendum, from which they claim the democratic legitimacy to ratify a legislative declaration of independence.</td>
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<td>both</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Separatists lose a banned referendum, and the regional legislature does not ratify a legislative declaration of independence.</td>
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<td>ref</td>
<td>min</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Separatists win a binding referendum, but the regional legislature does not ratify a legislative declaration of independence.</td>
<td>demand</td>
<td>recognize</td>
<td>ref</td>
<td>maj</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Separatists win a binding referendum, from which they claim the democratic legitimacy to ratify a legislative declaration of independence.</td>
<td>demand</td>
<td>recognize</td>
<td>both</td>
<td>maj</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
• T-2, in which “N-S” (Player 1) acts.

• T-3, in which “Region” (Player 2) acts.

“Region” or “Player 2” acts first. Region’s action set at T-1 is:

• *Demand*: a referendum on declaring independence.

• *Wait*: to take the action *Demand* at some later date.

Depending on Region’s choice at T-1, “N-S” or “Player 1” may act next. If Region’s move at T-1 indicates that N-S must take the next move, then we will consider the game to have proceeded to T-2. N-S’s action set at T-2 is:

• *recognize*: recognize an independence referendum as binding

• *allow*: allow an independence referendum as advisory

• *ban*: ban all independence referendums

Regardless of N-S’s moves at T-2, any iteration of the game reaching T-2 will also reach T-3. At T-3, Region must act again. Region’s action set at T-3 is:

• *ref*: stage an independence referendum

• *dec*: declare independence through legislative decree

• *both*: both *ref* and *dec*

• *neither*: neither *ref* nor *dec*

Finally, the game includes the players’ beliefs about the exogenous condition of existing in a world with a separatist majority or minority (ie. *maj* or *min*), the state of this condition is not revealed until or unless a referendum (*Vote*) occurs.
• $i_1$: The probability that Region assigns to existing in $maj$, at time T-1.\(^2\)

• $i_3$: The probability that Region assigns to existing in $maj$, at time T-3.

• $j$: The probability that N-S assigns to existing in $maj$.

### 3.4 Order of moves

The game begins at time T-1. Region acts first, choosing between $Wait$ and $Demand$. If Region plays $Wait$, the game remains at T-1 and starts again. If Region plays $Demand$, the game proceeds to T-2, and N-S plays. N-S must play either $recognize$, $allow$, or $ban$. After any move by N-S, the game proceeds to T-3, in which Region must play again. Region’s moves at T-3 are $ref$, $dec$, $both$, and $neither$. If Region plays $ref$ or $both$ at T-3, a referendum is held, which reveals to both players whether they are in the world $min$ or $maj$, and the game ends. If Region plays $leg$, the game ends. If Region plays $neither$, the game returns to T-1, and starts again.

\(^2\)I presume that a value of $i_1 > 1/2$ implies that Region expects that $i_3 > 1/2$. 
3.5  Forms of the Game

3.5.1  Extensive form for state type $\alpha$

Ignoring the “wait” scenario and possibly infinite iterations gives us:
Simplifying again, since Region only has one T-1 action in the above scenario

Backwards inductions for state type \( \alpha \)

I. T-3 actions. Region (Player 2) chooses from \((\text{ref}, \text{leg}, \text{both}, \text{neither})\):

A. Given \text{recognize}:

i. and given \( i_3 > 1/2 \) [ie. Region believes that it is in \text{min}]:

a. Region (Player 2) prefers \text{leg}.
ii. and given $i_3 < 1/2$ [ie. Region believes that it is in $maj$]:
   a. Region (Player 2) prefers both.

B. Given $allow$:
   i. and given $i_3 > 1/2$:
      a. Region prefers leg.
   ii. and given $i_3 < 1/2$:
      a. Region prefers both.

C. Given $ban$:
   i. and given $i_3 > 1/2$:
      a. Region (Player 2) prefers leg.
   ii. and given $i_3 < 1/2$:
      a. Region prefers both.

II. T-2 actions.

A. If $Demand$, N-S (Player 1) chooses from $(recognize, allow, ban)$. Given $Demand$:
   i. and given $j > 1/2$ [ie. N-S believes that it is in $min$]:
      a. N-S prefers ban, if N-S believes that $i_3 > 1/2$ [ie. N-S believes that $Region$ will believe at T-3 that it is in $min$].
      b. N-S is indifferent between $(recognize, allow, ban)$, if N-S believes that $i_3 < 1/2$ [ie. N-S believes that $Region$ will believe at T-3 that it is in $maj$].
   ii. and given $j < 1/2$ [ie. N-S believes that it is in $maj$]:
      a. N-S prefers recognize, if State believes that $i_3 > 1/2$.
      b. N-S is indifferent between $(recognize, allow, ban)$, if N-S believes that $i < 1/2$. 
B. If _Wait_, Region (Player 2) plays again, as below.

III. T-1 actions. Region (Player 2) chooses from (_Demand_, _Wait_):

A. Region (Player 2) prefers _Demand_ if \( i_1 > \frac{1}{2} \).

B. Region (Player 2) prefers _Wait_ if \( i_1 < \frac{1}{2} \).

i. Payoffs are (8,7) and the game starts again.

**Backwards inductions for state type \( \beta \)**

I. T-3 actions. Region (Player 2) chooses from (_ref_, _leg_, _both_, _neither_):

A. Given _recognize_:

i. and given \( i_3 > \frac{1}{2} \) [ie. Region believes that it is in _min_]:

   a. Region (Player 2) prefers _leg_.

ii. and given \( i_3 < \frac{1}{2} \) [ie. Region believes that it is in _maj_]:

   a. Region (Player 2) prefers _both_.

B. Given _allow_:

i. and given \( i_3 > \frac{1}{2} \):

   a. Region prefers _leg_.

ii. and given \( i_3 < \frac{1}{2} \):

   a. Region prefers _both_.

C. Given _ban_:

i. and given \( i_3 > \frac{1}{2} \):

   a. Region (Player 2) prefers _leg_.

ii. and given \( i_3 < \frac{1}{2} \):
a. Region prefers both.

II. T-2 actions.

A. If Demand, N-S (Player 1) chooses from (recognize, allow, ban). Given Demand:

i. and given $j > 1/2$ [ie. N-S believes that it is in min]:

a. N-S prefers ban, if N-S believes that $i_3 < 1/2$ [ie. N-S believes that Region will believe at T-3 that it is in maj].

b. N-S is indifferent between (recognize, allow, ban) if N-S believes that $i_3 > 1/2$ [ie. N-S believes that Region will believe at T-3 that it is in min].

ii. and given $j < 1/2$ [ie. N-S believes that it is in maj]:

a. N-S prefers ban, if N-S believes that $i > 1/2$.

b. N-S is indifferent between (recognize, allow, ban), if N-S believes that $i < 1/2$.

B. If Wait, Region (Player 2) plays again, as above.

III. T-1 actions. Region (Player 2) chooses from (Demand, Wait):

A. Region (Player 2) prefers Demand if $i_1 > 1/2$.

B. Region (Player 2) prefers Wait if $i_1 < 1/2$.

i. Payoffs are (14,7) and the game starts again.

3.6 Analysis

The key insight from the previous analysis is this: both states type $\alpha$ and $\beta$ should ban an independence referendum if the state believes the separatists would win such a referendum.
However, when states of type states of type $\alpha$ are confronted with the demand for a referendum made by a separatist movement that believes it can win such a referendum, the state should endorse the referendum, provided that the state believes the separatists are in the minority. We have seen such a process empirically in Scotland (BBC 2012). In the lead-up to the 2014 Scottish independence referendum (at T-1), the Scottish National Party (SNP), in control of the Scottish Government, demanded a referendum on independence because their $i_1$ was $> 1/2$. The British government (at T-2) recognized the referendum as binding (ie. they played recognize) because their $j$ was $> 1/2$. The Scots staged a referendum (at T-3) and planned to declare independence because their $i_3$ was again $> 1/2$. As it turns out, the voters informed the two players that they were in min.

Conveniently for present purposes, the second government of Boris Johnson (2019-time of writing) provides a tidy point of contrast. Following the failed Scottish independence referendum of 2014, the United Kingdom as a whole voted to leave the European Union in a 2016 referendum. Though the “leave” vote won a UK-wide majority, the majority in Scotland favored “remain.” Nevertheless, the whole UK did in fact exit from the EU, effective February 1st, 2020. Recent evidence has suggested that the “Brexit” process has strengthened support for Scottish independence (Curtice & Montagu 2020).

Contrarily, states of type $\beta$ should ban all independence referendums - even if they think the separatists are in the minority. We are witnessing this process at present in Catalonia. The Catalan government has repeatedly demanded a referendum (at T-1), because their $i_1$ is $> 1/2$. The Spanish state has (at T-2) banned such a referendum (Reuters 2013), but we cannot infer from this that their $j$ was $< 1/2$. My claim, which I do not empirically demonstrate, is that they would ban a referendum even if their $j$ was $> 1/2$. Incidentally, we have subsequently seen the Catalan government stage (and win)
a banned referendum (Minder 2014) and issue a legislative declaration of independence (Parlament de Catalunya 2015). Nevertheless, the question of Catalan independence remains unresolved. Again in 2017, the Spanish state (acting through the judicial system) banned an independence referendum in Catalonia. Nevertheless, the vote proceeded. This model indicates some avenues for empirical research that may shed light on what is happening in Spain today, and what may be a general process that occurs wherever separatism and democracy collide.

In the aftermath of the 2017 referendum in Catalonia, numerous Catalan politicians and civil society leaders were indicted in Spanish courts on criminal charges related to their participation in organizing and carrying out the referendum. A number of these figures left Spain, seeking asylum elsewhere (and some of these were elected to the European Parliament while in exile). Others were tried and sentenced to prison terms (later pardoned in 2021). The position of the Spanish government has remained unchanged: there is no constitutional route to allowing a referendum on secession. The force of Catalan national aspirations continues to make contact with the immovable object of the Spanish Constitution. With the door to a non-violent resolution seemingly slammed shut, one worries about how the impasse may be resolved. It seems normatively desirable that there should be a peaceful mechanism in place to arbitrate these sorts of situations, and I hope that this analysis provides some utility to those who would advocate for it.
Chapter 4

Why Vote for Secession?

4.1 Introduction

In previous chapters, I have examined the conditions that facilitate a viable separatist movement, and modeled the interactive process by which an agreement to hold a referendum might occur. Here, I turn to an attitudinal analysis of the potential determinants of voter choice in such a referendum. I draw on the cases of Scotland and Catalonia, which are appropriate cases for several reasons. Each is embedded in an democratic context, of whatever quality. In each case a survey of attitudes on independence is not an abstract idea, given viable independence movements supported by major regional political parties and the prospect of a referendum, whether or not it is recognized by the central government. Likewise, these cases are broadly comparable. Both the UK and Spain are composite states containing multiple ethno-linguistic groups. Both are former empires. Until recently, both were members of the European Union.

I first extract the theories proposed in extant literature to explain the relative strength of the Scottish national movement. I next test these hypotheses derived from each of these theoretical explanations. I follow a brief examination of survey data from Catalonia with a more extensive analysis of Scottish attitudes to independence.

Although each region has had an actual referendum with the hypothetical opportunity
to capture behavior and not attitudes, attitudinal data is more comparable. Because the 2017 Catalan referendum was not sanctioned by the central government, those who favored remaining in Spain disproportionately stayed at home. Hence, the turnout in the Catalan case was only 43 percent, with 92 percent voting yes (Govern de Catalunya 2017). By contrast, the tracking polls leading up to the referendum show the public more or less evenly divided between staying and remaining (The Economist 2017). In contrast, the Scottish referendum of 2014 had a turnout rate of nearly 85 percent (BBC 2014), and the recorded results of the referendum were in general agreement with available polling data.

4.2 Extant Scholarship on Scotland

I have found three broad theories present in the extant literature on the contemporary Scottish nationalist movement. I will summarize here:

1. Scottish national identity, which had been subsumed within “Britishness” has reemerged. The separatist movement is an emotional response to an awakened sentimental attachment to this identity.

2. Growing economic inequality in the UK since the Thatcher era has disproportionately affected Scots, who tend to be poorer than the English. The separatist movement is largely motivated by economic rationality, as Scots prefer, and would benefit from, a system of government with a stronger welfare state.

3. European integration has made multi-ethnic unions, like that between England, Scotland, Wales, and (part of) Ireland obsolete. The British “nations” gained certain benefits from union: collective security, access to markets, and international prestige. With the decline of the British Empire and the rise of the European Union, these
goods can be better provided by Europe than by the UK.

4.2.1 Identity

In his 1985 opus *Ethnic Groups in Conflict*, Horowitz treats ethnic identity as a catch-all concept that “easily embraces groups differentiated color, language, and religion; it covers ‘tribes’, ‘races’, ‘nationalities’, and castes” (53). For Horowitz, questions of identity, and especially ethnic identity, are contextually dependent. “Smaller” identities can be nested into “larger” or “wider” identities. Fearon and Laitin (2000) prefer to think of an “ethnic” identity as a “group larger than a family for which membership is reckoned primarily by descent, is conceptually autonomous, and has a conventionally recognized ‘natural history’ as a group” (20). Other scholars such as Chandra (2006) assert that “ethnicity either does not matter or has not been shown to matter in explaining most concepts to which it has been causally linked by comparative political scientists.”

With that in mind, if we regard the “Scots” to be an ethnic group that has, for several centuries, had its collective identity subsumed within a larger “British” identity, then we can see why Paquin (2002) points to the privatization of certain national industries under the Thatcher administration as eroding the notion of “Britishness.” Firms that were once British Steel, British Coal, and British Rail were privatized and no longer bear the moniker “British” as a constant reminder of Scotland’s place within the UK (Paquin 2002, 67). Paquin describes a situation wherein “Europe” has displaced “Britain” as the perceived source of progressive ideas, with the resultant consequence that Scots today proudly call themselves “Europeans” in the way they once called themselves “British” (72). Finally, Paquin predicts that the strengthening division of opinion between the majorities in Scotland and England will require the UK government to govern Scotland in a more consensual manner in order to avoid appearing like an internally-divided polity.
Identity is a particularly difficult concept to measure. One might be skeptical of attempts to quantify it consistently. For help in this area, we can turn to Klaus-Jürgen Nagel, who uses the “Moreno question” in comparing levels of regional identification between Scotland, Wales and Catalonia. In brief the Moreno question\(^1\) asks survey participants to identify their nationality in terms of five categories. In the Scottish case it might ask if the respondent considers herself:

1. Scottish, not British
2. More Scottish than British
3. Equally Scottish and British
4. More British than Scottish
5. British, not Scottish

The same question can be applied (with variation) to any case of complex regional, national or supranational identification, such as Texan/American, Catalan/Spanish, Québécois/Canadian, French/European, etc. The Moreno question has been used extensively in scholarly analyses of identity (see, for instance, Cole 2006, Lago and Montero 2009, Muñoz and Tormos 2014.)

Utilizing the Moreno question, Nagel (2004) finds that nationalist sentiment is stronger in Scotland than in the Wales or Catalonia (58). \(^2\)

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\(^1\) Sometimes called the ‘Linz-Moreno Question’ (Nieves and Diz 2019)

\(^2\) Nagel’s primary contribution to the literature is to differentiate between the EU institutions of the Council of Ministers (the Council) and the European Parliament (EP) and to identify the fact that stateless nations like Scotland can be represented in the EP but not in the Council. To this end, he points out that SNP members of the EP have counter-intuitively defended the Council from encroachment by the EP, which he says clearly indicates that their party’s ambition is for statehood, not sub-state regional autonomy (69).
In a normative piece Preston (2008) argues that “Europe is the new relevant context” and that, in the context of European politics, the British elite fights a “defensive game” of limiting the EU’s influence: a strategy that is not consistent with the Scottish people’s stance on Europe. He describes Scottish nationalism as a “soft nationalism” one that assumes that its proper context will be defined by the “nature of statehood . . . in the 21st century.”(718-722).

In response, Grant’s counter-argument hinges on uncertainty about the future. Grant criticizes Preston for taking a deterministic view that the European project will undoubtedly lead to deepening integration and that all of the benefits that Scotland currently receives from being in the UK can be similarly provided by the EU. Further, Grant argues that the devolved Scottish Parliament can serve as a test laboratory where policy innovations can be assessed before being applied to the UK as a whole, a concept he calls the “California effect,” likening it to a situation where the US state of California innovates on environmental policy that is often later applied to the US as a whole.

4.2.2 Inequality

The Conservatives can form, and have recently formed, a government in the UK parliament by dominating English and Welsh constituencies. They do not need to capture many seats in Scotland. The same cannot so easily be said of Labour. During David Cameron’s first government Labour controlled 41 of Scotland’s 59 constituencies in the UK parliament, whereas the Conservatives had only a single Scottish seat. (BBC 2010). While there is broad consensus in the literature that the national politics of the UK are an important factor influencing Scots’ views on independence and on Europe, the smallest category of opinion is that of those who claim that UK politics are the dominant factor.
Gallagher (2011) frames the question in terms of the left-right party politics of the UK. Gallagher points to the SNP’s plan of keeping a greater share of the revenue from oil recently discovered off Scotland’s North Sea coast as a way of achieving fiscal independence and avoiding “London’s cuts.” This is consistent with the notion that Scots are generally more in favor of social welfare plans than are the English. According to Gallagher there is a “lot of wishful thinking” in the idea that oil revenues would be sufficient to allow an independent Scotland to be simultaneously a low-tax environment and maintain a generous welfare state. He sharply criticizes the SNP for its focus on independence, the merits of which, he says, the “Scottish electorate remains unconvinced” (203-205).

Moreno (2006) observes that in the 1980s, Scottish self-identification, as determined by responses to the Moreno question, was not correlated to a strong desire for independence, nor was it strongly correlated to support for any particular UK political party. That has since changed, he says, as a reaction to the Conservatives’ hostility to Scottish devolution and their hostility to the welfare state (Moreno 2006, 9-10). In a sense then, Moreno argues that to be against the Conservatives is to be for Scotland. That idea, combined with the observation that the Conservatives’ base of support is in England, leads Moreno to conclude that the effect of the Thatcher administration’s policies was to re-brand British party politics into a national antagonism between England and Scotland, at least in the minds of many Scottish voters.

Almost as an afterthought, Moreno describes the EU as an institution with a social model more in line with Scottish preferences. He describes “floors” and “nets” of legal rights and material resources as a common trait within EU member states (Moreno 2006, 15), which makes Scotland more “European” than the UK as a whole. An area for further research might be to apply the Moreno question to Scottish and English samples asking
each whether they are more “British” or “European.” It seems likely that the Scots will consider themselves more European, while the English consider themselves more British.

### 4.2.3 Integration

Scholars have sought to explain the logic of supranational integration by pointing to the ability of regional integration to reduce transaction costs for cross-border trade by internalizing “externalities that cross borders within a group of countries” (Mattli 1999, 12). The logic is that integrated blocs of countries can reduce uncertainty by guaranteeing that certain norms will be uniform within their blocs. The European Union has grown from such a simple free-trade area into something much greater, and perhaps it should be considered a polity in its own right (Rodríguez-Pose 2002).

Hepburn and O’Loughlin (2010) present a comparative analysis of party responses to European integration. They focus on the SNP as well as on Northern Ireland’s Social Democratic and Labour party (SDLP), which they describe as strikingly similar. Both are pro-European, social democratic, nationalist parties, operating in “Celtic” societies within the UK. Hepburn and O’Loughlin conclude that the two parties interpret the future of European integration as being “post-nationalist” (384). Their hypothesis is that both parties have redefined the way they approach their goals (Scottish independence for the SNP, Irish reunification for the SDLP) in light of “opportunities presented by European integration.” They contend that the parties perceive three changes brought on by the EU have caused them to alter their respective national debates: the Common Market opened their respective regions for increased competition, the perceived benefits of independent statehood have diminished, and the openness of the EU has changed their focus from the historic cultural uniqueness of their countries’ native populations to one of representing
all of those who presently inhabit those countries (385). They further contend that the parties are “likely to advocate principles and themes common to those of the EU” but that if their needs are not met by the EU, their response will be to adopt a more Eurosceptic rhetoric. Finally, they conclude that this indicates that their attachment to the European project is tactical (396).

Elisa Roller and Amanda Sloat focus on Scottish elites within the Labour and Conservative camps, rather than the SNP and argue that the rise of Scottish nationalist sentiment can be understood as a situation of (non-SNP) Scottish political elites seeking greater influence at the European level of governance: influence that they correctly perceive as being increased by Scotland having a direct lobbying presence in Brussels (82).

Paolo Dardanelli similarly contends that tactical considerations dominate the SNP’s use of European integration. His thesis is that the SNP endeavored to make independence preferable to the status quo in the minds of Scottish voters and to make use of the British Labour Party’s competition with the Conservatives on the UK level to pursue independence.

Dardanelli posits a “two-level game” where SNP was a “clever player” who identified a move on one “board,” to cause a realignment on another “board” and enabled them to influence the odds in their own favor. Specifically, the SNP introduced an additional question - the national question - into the traditional left versus right spectrum that dominates the competition between the Conservatives and Labour, and further upset the balance by promoting popular support of an independent Scotland within Europe. Since Labour requires Scottish seats to attain a majority in the British national (UK) parliament, they were forced to respond to Scottish concerns (50-54).
Briefly, in 1979 party preference related to the constitutional situation of Scotland were:

**SNP**
- independence → devolution → status quo

**Labour**
- devolution → status quo → independence

**Conservatives**
- status quo → devolution → independence

By 1997, the SNP and Conservatives’ preferences were the same, but Labour had adopted a policy of preferring “independence” to the “status quo” (Dardanelli 2009 57-60). Dardanelli argues that the SNP pursued a campaign of altering public perceptions of Scotland’s place within Europe as the key factor in explaining this reversal in Labour’s position. Specifically, the SNP convinced Scots that independence had become feasible within the context of an integrated Europe. Labour, dependent on Scottish constituencies for its own concerns in the British parliament, were forced to acquiesce to new Scottish preferences. Since Scottish voters return members to both the British and Scottish parliaments, Labour changed its position on the Scottish national question. This adjustment on the Scottish national question was “played” on one level (Scotland) in order to shore up Labour’s own base of support on another level (the UK).

Dardanelli’s explanation satisfactorily accounts for the specific phenomenon of the change of policy preferences within Labour, but is too limited in scope to account for the entire 35 year trend of rising Scottish nationalism. The game theory explanation may indeed be a good description of the tactics and mechanisms of the SNP’s ascent to power, but it does little to account for a broader trend of increasing nationalist sentiment, which
may exist in the Scottish popular psyche.

Dardanelli’s earlier work concludes that the European dimension was the key difference between the results of the 1979 and 1997 referendums. His emphasis differs however in that he argues that there was a large gap between the percentage of Scots who favored devolution in 1979 and those that voted as such in the referendum. He argues that the nationalists’ main task between 1979 and 1997 was not to convince Scots of the need for regional autonomy, but rather to allay their fears of the negative repercussions that might come of devolution, which the SNP accomplished by adopting strong pro-European rhetoric (Dardanelli 2005, 337).

Hamilton (2004) compares Scotland to Wales and Québec. Hamilton claims that there is a perceptible convergence in the nationalist parties of these three regions. (657). He takes this as a strong indicator that all three parties (SNP, Wales’ Plaid Cymru, and Québec’s Bloc/Parti Québécois) are rational actors that are reacting similarly to the same exogenous forces. Substantively, this convergence consists of a support for continental integration and free-market capitalism in such a way that envisions local autonomy, rather than the large nation-state as the best vehicle for regions to “reassert the political over the market.” What Hamilton means by this is that political action is necessary to restrain the “democracy-eroding effects of unregulated market power,” especially in areas of human rights and environmental concerns, and that regions are better equipped than nation-states to respond effectively (662).

Similarly, all three parties compete in elections at multiple levels. SNP and Plaid Cymru compete at three levels: constituent country, UK, and EP; whereas the Parti Québécois competes in the Québec provincial elections while its “sister party” the Bloc
Québecois sits in the Canadian parliament (Hamilton 2002, 664). Hamilton further observes that the nature of federal systems is such that small constituent members receive disproportionately high influence while larger constituent members receive a smaller relative share of power. This means that Scotland rationally seeks to be a small state within the EU rather than part of a large state within the EU because its influence at the European level will be increased (673). Further, Hamilton points to SNP’s commitment that an independent Scotland would seek to enter the Eurozone and participate in the single currency as indicating that their form of “nationalism” is radically different from historical notions of nationalism. It is a policy concerned with the “reconfiguration of sovereignty” in ways that will benefit Scottish citizens.

4.3 Theory: Three Processes

The research that follows will start with theory and proceed to the empirical. Like any good explanatory research in political science, I aspire to tell a plausible story about how the world works. As such, my inspiration for the design borrows from Lave and March ([1975] 1993). Specifically, the authors describe an approach that may be taken when presented with multiple theories that may account for a certain phenomena. A researcher can hypothesize certain other phenomena that they would expect to observe, if each of the given theories were an accurate reflection of the mechanism at work. By checking the expected observations against the real world, they determine which of the theories remains plausible. The approach begins with alternative, but equally plausible stories about how some $X$ leads to $Y$, posits some additional things that should also be true if $X$ is at work, and then checks to see if those alternatives can be detected. In keeping with this approach, I present below a table of some implications of the three models to account
for the growth of separatist groups in Europe, which I can proceed to test empirically:

Table 4.1: Theories of Separatism, and Corresponding Expected Observations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theory</th>
<th>Corresponding Expected Observation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Theory 1</td>
<td>Regional Identity: Positive correlation between strong regional (ie. Scottish) identity, and support for independence.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theory 2</td>
<td>Economic Inequality: Positive correlation between high concern for economic inequality, and support for independence.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theory 3</td>
<td>European Integration: Support for deepening European integration, among elites within separatist camps.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Following the lead of previous scholars, I suspect that both identity and inequality have influenced the rise to prominence of the contemporary Scottish nationalist movement. One need not operate exclusively of the other. Furthermore, I suspect that both mechanisms can operate independently or in conjunction with one another. A Scot needs neither a strong Scottish identity nor a strong awareness of economic inequality to consider voting for Scottish independence. Either will suffice, and the two in interaction are an almost certain recipe for nationalist sentiments.

4.4 Quantitative Analysis: Identity and Inequality

4.4.1 Catalonia

Catalonia Data

The data for the analyses related to Catalonia are drawn from the *Baròmetre d’Opinió Política, 2a onada 2016* (Barometer of Political Opinion, 2nd wave, 2016) conducted by the Centre d’Estudis d’Opinió (Opinion Studies Center), an agency of Catalonia’s regional
government, the Generalitat de Catalunya. Respondents were residents of Catalonia, and could choose to respond to questions in Spanish or in Catalan.

The full survey consists of 1500 observations of 480 variables. I use one of these as a dependent variable. Survey question number P30 asks: “In any case, how do you think this relationship should be? Do you think that Catalonia should be . . . ” Responses were recorded as:

- Una regió d’Espanya (A region of Spain)
- Una comunitat autònoma d’Espanya (An autonomous community of Spain)
- Un estat dins una Espanya federal (A state in a federal Spain)
- Un estat independent (An independent state)
- No ho sap (I don’t know)

Respondents indicating Un estat independent (An independent state) are coded as “1”. All others are coded as “0”, except those respondents indicating a ‘no answer’. The ‘no answer’ responses are dropped from the data for this analysis. This resulted in a loss of twenty observations.

The independent variable for identity is based on survey question number C700: “With which of the following sentences do you feel more identified? I feel . . . ” Responses are structured in the Moreno format, as:

- Nomès espanyol/a (Only Spanish)
- Més espanyol/a que català/ana (More Spanish than Catalan)

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3ie. status quo
- *Tan espanyol/a com català/ana* (Equally Catalan and Spanish)
- *Mès català/ana que espanyol/a* (More Catalan than Spanish)
- *Nomès català/ana* (Only Catalan)
- *No ho sap* (I don’t know)
- *No contesta* (No answer)

Again, I re-coded these responses in two binary ways. The first re-coding groups the first two responses as “High Spanish Identity” and the second groups the fourth and fifth responses as “High Catalan Identity”.

Table 4.2: Language Choice and Identity in Catalonia

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language Preference</th>
<th>Catalan</th>
<th>Spanish</th>
<th>Indifferent</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Only Spanish</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More Spanish than Catalan</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equally Spanish and Catalan</td>
<td>132</td>
<td>346</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>518</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More Catalan than Spanish</td>
<td>239</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>353</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Only Catalan</td>
<td>399</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>428</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t Know</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>21</td>
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<td>No answer</td>
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<td><strong>810</strong></td>
<td><strong>610</strong></td>
<td><strong>80</strong></td>
<td><strong>1500</strong></td>
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</table>

The inclusion of a choice of language for conducting the survey itself, along with a question asking for an ethnic self-identification along a Moreno spectrum allows for an interesting examination of the relationship between language and identity, which I have included as Table 4.2. The table is a cross-tabulation of the chosen language of respondents against their identity. Note that the modal identity of Spanish speakers is “Equally Spanish and Catalan” while the modal identity of Catalan speakers is “Only Catalan.” This would seem to indicate that the choice of using the Catalan language...
signals a regional identity that is stronger than the national identity, whereas the choice of using the Spanish language does not signal a preference for the national identity over the regional.

The independent variable for inequality is based on survey question P2, which asks respondents which current problem facing Catalonia is “most important.” Respondents indicating “Social inequality and poverty” are coded as “1,” all others as “0.”
Table 4.3: Logistic Regression Analyses: Catalonia

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<th>(7)</th>
<th>(8)</th>
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<td>3.728***</td>
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<tr>
<td>Convergència Democràtica de Catalunya</td>
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<td>1.472***</td>
<td>2.390***</td>
<td>2.499***</td>
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<td>(0.377)</td>
<td>(0.339)</td>
<td>(0.337)</td>
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<td>-1.522***</td>
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<td>-1.597***</td>
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<tr>
<td>Esquerra Republicana de Catalunya</td>
<td>2.335***</td>
<td>2.334***</td>
<td>3.364***</td>
<td>3.458***</td>
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<td>(0.353)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Candidatura d’Unitat Popular</td>
<td>2.369***</td>
<td>2.360***</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Junts pel Sí</td>
<td>2.510***</td>
<td>2.513***</td>
<td>3.452***</td>
<td>3.528***</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td>(0.582)</td>
<td>(0.544)</td>
<td>(0.543)</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
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<td>-1.651***</td>
<td>-0.433</td>
<td>-0.545</td>
<td>-2.633***</td>
<td>-2.639***</td>
<td>0.013</td>
<td>-0.142**</td>
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<td>(0.604)</td>
<td>(0.537)</td>
<td>(0.534)</td>
<td>(0.200)</td>
<td>(0.178)</td>
<td>(0.061)</td>
<td>(0.058)</td>
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</table>

Observations: 1,216 1,216 1,216 1,216 1,216 1,216 1,216 1,216
Akaike Inf. Crit.: 843.016 841.228 944.611 1,053.737 1,051.741 1,595.058 1,683.644

Note: ***p<0.01; **p<0.05; *p<0.01
Results for Catalonia Data

Results are summarized below in Table 4.3. A high degree of Catalan identity is correlated with support for Catalan independence, in every specification for which Catalan identity is included as an independent variable. In addition, a high degree of Spanish identity is correlated with opposition to Catalan independence, in every specification for which Catalan identity is not included. Similar to the results from Scotland, these results give strong support to the argument that support for Catalan identity can be inferred from a desire to self-identify as Catalan rather than as Spanish. There is no support here for the argument that economic inequality is a factor in Catalan separatism.

4.4.2 Scotland

Scotland Data

The data for the analyses related to Scotland are drawn from the “Scottish Social Attitudes survey 2013” conducted by the Scottish Centre for Social Research. The full survey consists of 1497 observations of 369 variables.

I use two of these as dependent variables in parallel analyses. This project’s first dependent variable of interest is based on the responses to survey question number 424: “In the referendum, you will be asked, ‘Should Scotland be an independent country?’ If you do vote, will you vote ‘Yes’ or vote ‘No’ - or haven’t you decided yet?” Responses were recorded as:

- Vote Yes

4UK Data Archive Study Number 7519 -Scottish Social Attitudes Survey, 2013: Constitutional Change Data
Respondents not indicating a ‘yes’ or ‘no’ are dropped from the data for this analysis. Due to a large number of dropped cases, I added a second dependent variable, which measures respondents’ “Constitutional Preference” as relates to the future status of Scotland within the United Kingdom. I dropped from the second dependent variable those respondents indicating neither a preference for “independence” nor for “union.” The second dependent variable is useful in that it allows me to complete the analysis with fewer dropped observations, but not entirely satisfying since it asks a related question about political aspiration, but a qualitatively distinct question to that of intended political behavior (ie. voting). Table 4.4 cross-tabulates the two dependent variables for purposes of comparison.

The independent variable for identity is based on survey question number 249: “Which, if any, of the following best describes how you see yourself?” Responses are structured in the Moreno format, as:

- Scottish not British
- More Scottish than British
- Equally Scottish and British
- More British than Scottish
- British not Scottish
• Other description (WRITE IN)
• (None of these)
• (Don’t know)
• (Refusal)

I eliminated those respondents not selecting one of the five Moreno responses, and then re-coded them in two binary ways. The first re-coding groups the first two responses as “High Scottish Identity” and the second groups the fourth and fifth responses as “High British Identity.”

The independent variable for inequality is based on survey question number 264 “Thinking of income levels generally in Britain today, would you say that the gap between those with high incomes and those with low incomes is . . . ”

• ... too large
• about right,
• or, too small?
• (Don’t know)
• (Refusal)

Again, I dropped those observations that did not fit into the first three response categories. Also, I re-coded these responses such that the response “too large” indicates a high salience of inequality while the other two remaining responses do not.

### 4.4.3 Methods

Working with my two datasets, I have estimated several logistic regression models in order determine if there is a correlation between each dependent variable and each of the
Table 4.4: Constitutional Preference versus Intended Referendum Vote

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Referendum Vote</th>
<th>Constitutional Preference</th>
<th>Total</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Independence</td>
<td>Union</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>251</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>627</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undecided</td>
<td>149</td>
<td>259</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
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<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>425</strong></td>
<td><strong>952</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

independent variables indicating identity, inequality, and integration. In addition, I added “age”, “gender”, “social class”, and several indicator variables for the main political parties as controls.

The results of the logit models are presented in Tables 4.3, 4.5, 4.6, 4.8, 4.9, 4.10, and 4.11. Each table considers a single dependent variable, and several permutations of a model containing independent variables for identity, inequality, and integration. Several models also contain a set of control variables.

The first model in each of Tables 4.3, 4.5, and 4.6 considers three independent variables: high Scottish or Catalan identity, high British or Spanish identity, and salience of inequality, plus several controls for age, gender, class, and indicators for each of the major political parties. The second model drops high British or Spanish identity from model one, the third drops high Scottish or Catalan identity, and the fourth drops both. The fifth through eighth models repeat the analysis without the controls.

Tables 4.8, 4.9, 4.10, and 4.11 introduce the integration mechanism to the Scottish data. Tables 4.8 and 4.9 consider the respondents’ intended referendum vote as the dependent variable, while Tables 4.10 and 4.11 consider the respondents’ constitutional preference.
Table 4.5: Logistic Regression Analyses: Referendum DV

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<td>(0.198)</td>
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<tr>
<td>High British Identity</td>
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<td>(0.436)</td>
<td>(0.397)</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salience of Inequality</td>
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<td>-0.148</td>
<td>0.178</td>
<td>0.189</td>
<td>0.293</td>
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<td>(0.290)</td>
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<td>(0.231)</td>
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Note: *p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01
Table 4.6: Logistic Regression Analyses: Preference DV

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<td>Constitutional Preference</td>
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<td>1.176*** (0.151)</td>
<td>1.488*** (0.147)</td>
<td>1.672*** (0.137)</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High Scottish Identity</td>
<td>-0.606* (0.323)</td>
<td>-1.341*** (0.312)</td>
<td>-0.829*** (0.308)</td>
<td>-1.863*** (0.287)</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High British Identity</td>
<td>-0.233 (0.189)</td>
<td>-0.241 (0.189)</td>
<td>-0.184 (0.185)</td>
<td>-0.189 (0.183)</td>
<td>-0.039 (0.168)</td>
<td>-0.023 (0.168)</td>
<td>0.052 (0.160)</td>
<td>0.124 (0.155)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Salience of Inequality</td>
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<td>0.256 (0.168)</td>
<td>0.242 (0.165)</td>
<td>0.315* (0.161)</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
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<td>-0.013*** (0.004)</td>
<td>-0.012*** (0.004)</td>
<td>-0.012*** (0.004)</td>
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<td>-0.150 (0.139)</td>
<td>-0.149 (0.137)</td>
<td>-0.146 (0.135)</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Class</td>
<td>0.234 (0.168)</td>
<td>0.256 (0.168)</td>
<td>0.242 (0.165)</td>
<td>0.315* (0.161)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Labour</td>
<td>-0.489*** (0.174)</td>
<td>-0.483*** (0.174)</td>
<td>-0.527*** (0.170)</td>
<td>-0.490*** (0.167)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Conservative</td>
<td>-1.834*** (0.357)</td>
<td>-1.873*** (0.356)</td>
<td>-1.961*** (0.353)</td>
<td>-2.095*** (0.351)</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liberal Democrat</td>
<td>-1.127*** (0.433)</td>
<td>-1.129*** (0.432)</td>
<td>-1.303*** (0.425)</td>
<td>-1.350*** (0.421)</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>UKIP</td>
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<td>-1.201 (1.083)</td>
<td>-1.073 (1.083)</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>SNP</td>
<td>1.512*** (0.181)</td>
<td>1.512*** (0.181)</td>
<td>1.659*** (0.178)</td>
<td>1.698*** (0.175)</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>-0.544* (0.312)</td>
<td>-0.661** (0.306)</td>
<td>0.116 (0.287)</td>
<td>-0.062 (0.281)</td>
<td>-1.443*** (0.187)</td>
<td>-1.642*** (0.177)</td>
<td>-0.479*** (0.148)</td>
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<td>1,312.666</td>
<td>1,353.367</td>
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Note: *p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01
Table 4.7: Introduction of Interaction Term Between Scottish Identity and Inequality

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<th>Constitutional Preference (2)</th>
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<td>(0.347)</td>
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<td>−0.012***</td>
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<tr>
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<td>(0.559)</td>
<td>(0.357)</td>
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<td>−1.133***</td>
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<td>(0.386)</td>
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<td>1,313.455</td>
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Note: *p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01
### Table 4.8: Scots Indyref vote with European Variables

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<th>(6)</th>
<th>(7)</th>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Vote ‘Yes’ on Scottish independence referendum</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<td>High Scottish Identity</td>
<td>1.947***</td>
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<td></td>
<td>−2.177***</td>
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<td>(0.397)</td>
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<tr>
<td>High Salience of Inequality</td>
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<td>0.055</td>
<td>0.062</td>
<td>0.067</td>
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<td>0.225</td>
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<td>(0.220)</td>
<td>(0.218)</td>
<td>(0.219)</td>
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<td>(0.202)</td>
<td>(0.195)</td>
<td>(0.195)</td>
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<tr>
<td>European Identity</td>
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<td>0.294</td>
<td>0.327</td>
<td>0.327</td>
<td>0.332</td>
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<td>(0.320)</td>
<td>(0.290)</td>
<td>(0.282)</td>
<td>(0.282)</td>
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<td>Ind Scot in EU</td>
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<td>0.042</td>
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<td>−0.093</td>
<td>−0.093</td>
<td>−0.086</td>
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<td>(0.152)</td>
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<td>(0.148)</td>
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<td>−2.171***</td>
<td>−0.796***</td>
<td>−0.748***</td>
<td>−1.021***</td>
<td>−0.946***</td>
<td>−0.796***</td>
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<td>(0.187)</td>
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<td>(0.074)</td>
<td>(0.117)</td>
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**Observations** | 897     | 897     | 897     | 897     | 897     | 897     | 903     | 903     | 903     | 903     |
**Log Likelihood** | −466.968| −467.936| −469.490| −530.705| −531.144| −561.372| −562.871|         |         |         |
**Akaike Inf. Crit.** | 943.936 | 945.872 | 946.980 | 1,069.411| 1,070.287| 1,128.744| 1,128.727| 1,128.727| 1,128.727| 1,128.742|

**Note:**
*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01
Table 4.9: Scots Indyref vote with European and Control Variables

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<td>(0.271)</td>
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<td>(0.425)</td>
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<td>(0.425)</td>
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<td>(0.425)</td>
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Note: *p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01
Table 4.10: Scots Const. Pref. with European Variables

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</tr>
<tr>
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<td>-1.574***</td>
<td>-1.662***</td>
<td>-1.681***</td>
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</tr>
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<td>(0.258)</td>
<td>(0.234)</td>
<td>(0.238)</td>
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<td>(0.519)</td>
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<td>962.300</td>
<td>886.640</td>
<td>961.496</td>
<td>886.686</td>
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*Note:* *p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01
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Observations: 1,386
Log Likelihood: −409.293
Akaike Inf. Crit.: 884.587

Note: *p<0.1;  **p<0.05;  ***p<0.01
### 4.4.4 Findings and Conclusions

#### Results for Scotland Data

Results comparing the *identity* and *inequality* mechanisms are summarized in Tables 4.5 and 4.6. In every specification of these models, ethnic identity is highly statistically significant, and indicates a correlation in the hypothesized direction. In every specification except one (Table 4.5, model 8) inequality is not. The results give strong support to the suggestion that support for Scottish independence is primarily driven by notions of ethnic identity, rather than growing economic inequality.

Results from Tables 4.8, 4.9, 4.10, and 4.11 introduce the *integration* mechanism. As before, Scottish identity is significant in each model in which it is included. British identity is significant when Scottish identity is *not* included. Inequality is not significant in any of the models.

However, there are some curious results for the European variables. In some specifications, European identity is significant, but only at the $p < 0.1$ level. What is surprising though, is that the effect works in the opposite direction of what the *integration* mechanism would suggest. That is, respondents indicating a European identity are, all else being equal, *less* likely to support Scottish independence.

Similarly, and even stronger, are the results for the independent variable indicating whether or not respondents think that a (hypothetical) independent Scotland should be a member of the European Union. In Tables 4.10, and 4.11, this variable is very significant, at the $p < 0.01$ level. Again, however, the effect is in the opposite direction of what the *integration* mechanism would suggest.
Taken together, and recalling that these data are drawn from a survey conducted in 2013, it seems likely that these pro-European British unionists were persuaded by the argument that, were Scotland to separate from the United Kingdom, it would find itself excluded from the EU. It is with no small amount of irony that the subsequent Brexit referendum has turned this logic on its head. Now Scotland finds itself still in the UK, and out of the EU. I suspect that a repetition of this analysis, using data taken after the Brexit results were known would yield drastically different results.

Concluding Remarks

The purpose of this chapter has been to argue, and provide evidence, against the inequality mechanism, which seems to not play a role in the short term. Despite the long-term effects of changing economic circumstances, voters seem not to be thinking about inequality when they decide to support an independence movement. However, future research should compare levels of satisfaction and dissatisfaction with regional, and national governments, as well as with EU-level institutions. Indeed, the process of Brexit produces an opportunity for comparativists to think about the different ways that these regions, and the states to which they still belong, will respond to changing contexts and incentives for seeking statehood.
References


117


