Catalonia, An (Unhappy) State Within a State
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Abstract

The main purpose of this paper is to argue for Catalonian autonomy and separation from Spain in the wake of the intensifying Catalan nationalist movement. The Catalonians already attained cultural and language autonomy, but now strive for complete political autonomy without interference from Spain. This study identifies the need for autonomy and the benefits it would present from a political, cultural, and economic standpoint. The study goes on to explore the possibility of integration of Catalonia into Europe as a new state if Spain were to grant autonomy. The study concludes that separation is the only reasonable course of action in this specific case and the Spanish government should grant autonomy.

Introduction

Spain has seventeen regions, but could the country *possibly* be on the verge of losing one? Catalonia, one of the most powerful regions in Spain, continues its centuries old fight for autonomy in Spain and demands change now more than ever. The Catalan people have their own distinct language and culture that separates and isolates itself from the rest of the Spanish state. They also have their own governmental structures and have established some foreign relations. In the northeastern corner of Spain, Catalonia prides itself on its unwavering and ever-growing sense of nationalism and wants complete self-determination to be grated from the Spanish state. As a result, political culture plays a large part in strengthening their sense of nationalism and their endeavors for autonomy. The people of Catalonia elected into power a nationalist government that reflects their strong views. This government pushes a nationalist agenda and puts pressure on the central government in Madrid to make their views known. The Basque Country, another region in Spain, also has high nationalism, but Catalans have a more "rational" (Lluch, 2010, p. 337) and focused movement for nationalism; so the case is made that Catalonia has a stronger chance of achieving these goals than their Basque Country counterpart.

Each region in Spain can write their own Statute of Autonomy declaring itself an autonomous community, but the region still remains under Spanish rule. The Catalans enacted their Statute of Autonomy in 1979, one year after ratification of the Spanish Constitution. The rush to establish their autonomy stemmed from the Franco regime that had just fallen in Spain. The Franco regime imposed cultural and political control over the Catalans, leading to a "resurgent and transformed nationalist movement" (De La Calle, 2008, 726). The Statute of Autonomy protected their rights, culture, and language; and also providing Catalonia with the

right to self-govern. Catalans, however, do not believe this is enough and have resorted to the use

of violent protests in the past two years (2011-2012) to demonstrate their strong opinion. The

people have become restless for change that has not come from the Spanish government. The

struggle for full autonomy has created increasingly hostile relations between Spain and

Catalonia. Yet, Spain continues to disregard the regional aspirations, too consumed with its own

failing economy and management of the other sixteen regions.

Culture rights became a foremost focus in political science due to the age of

globalization; leading to the establishments of the European Court of Human Rights and the

release of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (Lane & Errson, 2005, p. 1-

12). The interest has shifted towards protecting language and culture and establishing paths of

self-determination for minority groups (Lane & Ersson, 2005, p. 1-12). This phenomenon

established the necessity of this study of Catalan independence. Building from the theoretical and

cultural research on this topic, this study lays out the need for autonomy, as well as how

Catalonia can achieve this and become a thriving state in Europe. Set up into three parts, the

study discusses: 1. Why Catalans need independence, 2. How it will benefit both the Spanish

state and Catalonia, and finally 3. The prospects and challenges of gaining autonomy. The

proposition of Catalan autonomy has several benefits, politically and culturally. This study

argues that separation from Spain will create significant and greatly needed stability in both

Spain and Catalonia.

If strong convictions of nationalism continue to persist in the Spanish region of

Catalonia, then the only sensible and responsible course of action will be to grant Catalonia full

autonomy. In the near future, Spain must decide how it will both address and resolve the issue of

Catalan nationalism or grant autonomy to this region. This study argues that the first suggestion is no longer a valid option, and therefore must rely on the latter.

Literature Review

Political culture in Catalonia fuels sentiments of nationalism throughout this Spanish region. The Constitution passed in 1978 followed by the Statute of Autonomy passed in 1979 declared Catalonia more or less autonomous, but not a nation. As a result, hostility towards the Spanish Crown has reached extreme levels since the passing of this Statute and these strong feelings of nationalism for Catalonia will continue to rise to an overwhelming degree. As the thesis states, separation from Spain and gaining nationhood is the only solution. The literature on the subject of separatism and nationalism, specifically that of the Spanish region of Catalonia, covers four main areas: research about culture and identity of the people, nationalism and its affects, an analysis of current governmental agencies and politics, and a theoretical discussion of culture and politics. These four topics help frame the basis for the main argument that concludes complete Catalan autonomy should be granted.

Theoretical Discussion

The Spanish Constitution of 1978 declares Spain to be a Parliamentary Monarchy that stands for political and cultural pluralism (Spanish Constitution, 1978). The country also has a focus on "the indissoluble unity of the Spanish Nation" (Spanish Constitution, 1978), which appears to many to be a contradictory principle. Ferran Requejo describes this problem in an article, stating that Plurinational countries "encourage cultural and national homogenization" (Requejo, 2010, p. 149) which can lead to treating minority nations unjustly. So, while Spain encourages pluralism, it also wants the regions to remain loyal to the Crown, therefore control must be sustained. This clashes with Catalonia's extremely high sense of pride in their culture

and their wishes for autonomy. This clash is nothing new to the Spanish state, as it experienced nationalist movements from Portugal in the 1640's (Anastacio, 2009, p. 199-214). Another problem that Plurinational states can foster is the instability in governments with large coalition party majorities, such as Spain (Roskin, Cord, Medeiros, & Jones, 2012, 240). Roskin et al. (2012) provide an introduction to the theories of political science in the textbook; their analysis of government types and the interactions between branches of government with political parties will be beneficial to this research.

Further, Requejo maps out Catalonia's road to self-government, but that comes with major limitations. The limitations center around a compromise over the word "nation" in the Statute of Autonomy, which was written to accompany the Constitution. The compromise caused a large resurgence in Catalan nationalism, which the author ties back to the fundamental problem of Plurinational societies: neglecting minority groups during the "nation-building and state-building processes" (Requejo, 2010, p. 149). He concludes that Plurinational states tend to have more problems due to the constant struggle between wanting to promote heterogeneity and necessary homogenization to survive (Requejo, 2010). Requejo discusses the common occurrence in Plurinational states in which "groups that are socio-economically dominant in a territory can at the same time be dominated themselves" (p. 151). This occurrence is the case in Catalonia. The article, however, does not discuss the benefits of a Plurinational society, only the downfalls. More research on this topic would be beneficial to this research paper.

Another theoretical source breaks from discussing the functionality of states to discussing politics and culture, and their close relation with one another. Jan-Erik Lane and Svante Ersson (2008) discuss this in their book "Culture and Politics: A Comparative Approach," and highlights the paradigm shift over the last 20 years into research of culture as politics moves into the

"period of globalization" (p. 6). Through their definition of culture, "the identity of one kind of social group," (Lane & Ersson, 2008, p. 3) they discuss the purpose of culture and how it interacts with politics. This applies to Catalonia where they have their own distinct culture and language that serves as their identity. Building on this theory of identities, Enric Martinez-Herrera and Thomas J. Miley (2010) conducted research on Catalan identification with either the Spanish state or Catalonia. While their findings showed citizens identify about as equally Catalan as Spanish, a distinction was made about what identity with the Spanish state actually means (Martinez-Herrera & Miley, 2010, p. 25). A large percentage (30 percent) identifies Spain as "a state of nationalities/autonomies," instead of as "my country" or "a nation I feel a member of" (Martinez-Herrera & Miley, 2010, p. 26). This distinction between Spain acting as a political state your region lies within in contrast to being a sense of pride ('my country') reinforces how Catalans actually feel towards the State. In an attempt to control their identity and self-determination, Spain has "suppressed…the right of the citizens of Catalonia to freely determine their future as a people" (Martinez-Herrera & Miley, 2010, p. 26) and encouraged them to identify with the Spanish state instead.

Culture and Identity

This section builds off of previously established examinations of culture and identity in this review. Jordi Muñoz and Marc Guinjoan (2013) utilize the referendums of 2009 and 2011 in order to express culture in Catalonia. The referendum asked if citizens believed "the Catalan nation should become an independent, democratic, and social state within the European Union" (Munoz & Guinjoan, 2013, p. 45). These referendums polled 77 percent of the Catalan population about their feelings towards secession from Spain. The Arenys de Munt referendum got a lot of attention because 96 percent of the people voted 'yes' to secession (Muñoz &

Guinjoan, 2013, p. 45). However, it is not the same in all municipalities of the region and there are varying levels of support. A table provides an average of the results of the referendums showing 91.7 percent of citizens in favor of Catalan as a nation (Muñoz & Guinjoan, 2013, p. 45). Andrew Dowling (2009) also addressed these referendums in his article in the context of nationalistic favor from certain political parties, something Muñoz and Guinjoan's article fails to do (p. 197). The main purpose of analyzing the referendums is the increased understanding of political culture it provides. The authors analyze the effects of these referendums and how they reflect the people of this region.

A comparison was made between the Basque country, another Spanish region, and Catalonia in Luis De La Calle and Thomas J. Miley's (2008) article about assimilation of the populations. Assimilation plays a key part in the formulation and subsequent development of political culture and national identity. Comparing Catalonia with the Basque region makes perfect sense because both regions have extremely high nationalism and long histories of wanting autonomy. The authors argue that the Basque people are more assimilated, meaning culturally homogenous, than the Catalan (De La Calle & Miley, 2008, p. 727-728). This may be because of the huge influx of immigrants to the Catalan region over the last decade, siting "high economic development and urbanization" (De La Calle & Miley, 2008, p. 711) as the reason for immigration. But, just being more assimilated may mean nothing in the long run.

Nationalism

Culture is "the identity of one kind of social group" (Lane & Errson, 2005, p. 3); whereas nationalism is an ideology that stems from "organized endeavors to achieve all the attributes of a fully fledged 'nation'" (Lluch, 2010, p. 337). Nationalism and culture have a lot in common, but they are separated in this review of the literature because nationalism represents a political

ideology, something much stronger than a shared culture. Nationalism is a reflection and

demonstration of a cultural identity. The nationalism in Catalonia has evolved over time,

especially with the "re-founding of the ERC [Republican Left of Catalonia Party] in Catalonia

during the period of 1986-1989" (Lluch, 2010, p. 340), which pushes a more forceful nationalist

policy. A distinct characteristic analyzed by Lluch states that historically, Catalonia has been

known for its rational and less radical nationalism, but this has evolved to be more radicalized as

of late (Lluch, 2010, p. 337). Minder (2012) reports of the increase of demonstrations and

protest of the Spanish government's policies, saying, "no one could recall such a large gathering

in Catalonia." This news article addresses the issue of increasingly nationalistic ideology in the

region. Lluch calls attention to the causes of this rise, but completely omits the answer to this

critical question: what does this mean for the future?

The government in place in Catalonia pushes a nationalist agenda that contradicts the

Spanish Crown's definition of state defined earlier in this review. The Catalan government's

main goal is promoting and preserving national identity in the region (Villaroya, 2012, p. 36).

They accomplish this through promoting "folk and traditional cultures" and teaching Catalan as

the primary language for social communication (Villaroya, 2012, p. 38). De La Calle and Miley

(2008) discuss an interesting phenomena concerning immigration to this region (p. 712-717).

Records indicate that over half of the population is now immigrants, but the large number of

these immigrants supports the nationalist policies and the push for total autonomy. The article

clearly demonstrates a level of support for this agenda against the Spanish Crown, even though

cultures remain different (De La Calle & Miley, 2008). This article moves away from solely

focusing on language and cultural similarities to focus on a political culture that may be more

important in accomplishing Catalonia's long-term goals.

Analysis of Current Governmental Practices and Politics

As stated earlier, Andrew Dowling provides a narrowed focus on the most recent political

parties in Catalonia and their response to nationalism. Political parties help shape and reflect

political culture, so analyzing them is paramount in understanding political culture. The main

parties are the Convergence and Union (CiU), the Socialists' Party of Catalonia (PSC), and the

ERC party mentioned earlier. Dowling (2009) declares that the CiU party contributed to the rise

of radical nationalism when it became a sort of catchall party; after which the party "suffered for

its support for the Spanish right" (p. 188). Catalonian political culture changed drastically after

that and became "increasingly fragment[ed]" (Dowling, 2009, p. 185). The CiU lost power and

the ERC gained majority rule because of their more nationalist platform. Dowling (2009) goes

on to describe the Catalan political system, which now pushes the agenda for Spanish separatism

(p. 196-197).

Another article describes the governmental practices in Catalonia and the ongoing focus

on urban renewal. This article entitled "The Challenges of Urban Renewal. Ten Lessons from the

Catalan Experience" describes Catalonia's programs for economic development (Nel-lo, 2010).

The programs, beginning in 2004, spanned "117 neighborhoods inhabited by over 900,000

people…funded equally by both the regional government (Generalitat) and the respective

municipalities" (Nel-lo, 2010, p. 686). Nel-lo (2010) describes the affects of these programs as

lessening the large gap in income distribution, as well as raising the standard of living (p. 688).

This public financial investment worked to vocationally grow the people in this region through

job training and health education, among other things (Nel-lo, 2010, 694). This article helps

demonstrate the development of Catalonia without the help of Spain and will facilitate in the

argument for a successful Catalan state if autonomy were to be granted.

Jofre-Monsey (2009) analyzes the Catalonian economy, especially the industrial growth in the region. Many useful tables describing the breakdown of industry and economy in Catalonia can be found in the article (Jofre-Monsey, 2009, p. 579-588). However, the most current data in this article dates to 2003 and no other academic source could be located with the recent data. The lack of an economical examination for Catalonia is a major gap in the literature for this region. However, examining the data presented in Jofre-Monsey's (2009) article will be beneficial in determining the growth of industry and can be supplemented and backed up with Nel-lo's (2010) article on urban development. Furthering the economic examination, Spain's current economic situation presents a concrete reason for Catalan independence. The recession in Spain since 2008, which has resulted in cuts "on education, health services and public sector workers…and [increased] austerity measures." (Mir, 2012). Mir also makes the case that Catalonia would be economically better off without Spanish control, due to their growing economy (Mir, 2012).

The final piece of literature to be discussed is the most important for this research paper. Borgen (2010) compares Kosovo to Catalonia as an example of a nation that successfully separated from its mother country. This will be necessary for determining the possibilities and challenges of independence. Overall, the major gap in this literature is the lack of a solution concluded by any of the authors. They write about the problem of culture and identity and how nationalism is radicalizing, but offer no advice or analysis as to what should happen. The main task of this paper will be to resolve the gap in the literature concerning the argument for separation of Catalonia and Spain. While Borgen's comparison between Catalonia and Kosovo represents a step in the right direction, more work must be done to solve this issue. Many articles

analyze political culture and identity in Catalonia, so this paper will focus more upon why independence would be beneficial for all parties involved.

Main Argument

Autonomy has been granted to Catalonia; yet the Catalan people still push for more. This is because autonomy for the Catalonian people means more than just self-government for their region; the autonomy they seek is "free[dom] from external interference in…pursuit of its political, economic, and social goals" (Borgen, 2010, p. 9). While many factors contribute to this issue, a major factor articulated in this research is political culture, established far back in the region's history. This essay provides an argument, presumably the first, for Catalan freedom broken down into three sections: why autonomy is necessary, demonstrating the benefits to be gained if autonomy were to be put into effect, and discussing the barriers to be overcome in the independence initiative.

The Need For Autonomy

Many aspects play into why Catalonia pushes for, and more importantly *needs,* autonomy from the Spanish state. Firstly, Catalonia's history shows centuries of fighting with Spain over the rights and recognition of self-government. Native Catalans, as well as immigrants, stand for political sovereignty, which has been a deeply rooted characteristic and long lasting phenomenon (De La Calle & Miley, 2008, p. 9). As a result, nationalism has taken the front seat of other issues, leading to an increase in violent protest and the Catalan people's demand change for the region (Minder, 2012). Typically, Catalan's "renounce the use of violence to promote their goals" (Lluch, 2010, pg. 4), but have recently begun to act against their emphasis on the "democratic process" (Lluch, 2010, p. 4) to stress their serious need for autonomy. Their political culture has become increasingly violent, indicating the growing need for independence from

their mother country. Now they seek independence in an ever-growing number. The referendums of 2009 and 2011 indicate this by showing an increase in the support for an 'independent state' by fifteen percent and a ten percent decrease in support for remaining an 'autonomous community' or a "state in federal Spain" (Muñoz & Guinjoan, 2010, pg. 5). The referendums indicate that the region has come to realize they no longer need the Spanish state, which is why independence will benefit them. The Catalan people will no longer have need for the very violence they detest and will therefore stabilize the region.

Building on the argument for stopping the violence is another factor that contributes to the mounting need for autonomy: the growing protest from one of Spain's strongest regions, which displays a lack of control and lack of solidarity in support of the central state. This is proven by Spain's reluctance in allowing the "definition of Catalonia as a nation" (Requejo, 2010, p. 14) because they believed it would weaken the state's unanimity. The Spanish state exerts control over the region, even though it declares its right to self-govern. This precise exertion of power is what Catalans seek to expel from their region by supporting independence. Therefore, instead of increasing austerity, independence should be granted instead of continuing actions that simply further nationalistic ideology in Catalonia.

Further, there is a need for political stability in both the region and Spain, which necessitates the granting of autonomy in the Catalan region. Since the ratification of their Constitution in 1978, Spain has transformed into a Plurinational state. Requejo (2010) says that usually in such states "citizens are united through a common acceptance of a series of 'principles of justice,' and not through issues of national, cultural or historical identity" (p. 5). But what happens when this is not the case, such as with the citizens in Catalonia? Their national identity hinders them from being cohesive members of the Spanish state. Evidence of this can be seen

through the examination of political parties. Traditionally, the Catalonia's regional parties (CiU

or ERC) have received more support in comparison with national parties (Lane & Ersson, 2005).

In the late 1980's, the Catalan people voted out the long-standing majority party, the CiU, due to

their weaker nationalist platform in comparison with the ERC, which serves as proof of their

unwavering and increasingly nationalistic mindset (Dowling, 2009). This directly contradicts

Requejo's statement, signifying that Catalonia represents a special case. It also negatively

impacts the Spanish state as a whole, due to the fact that the ERC's platform directly conflicts

with the objective stated in the Spanish Constitution that the state is "based on the indissoluble

unity" (Spanish Constitution, 1978). Catalonia does not stand for the unity of Spain and their

political parties reflect this in their platforms. The political parties then integrate into the state

political system, complicating the need for a majority. Coalitions must then form to create a

majority in this Plurinational state, which weaken the stability of the entire government (Roskin

et al., 2012, p. 240). The regional political parties lead to fragmentation that hinders policy-

making and provokes in-fighting within coalition parties (Roskin et al., 2012, p. 240). A solution

to this problem would be eliminating the parties with the opposing ideology against the Spanish

state (now, the ERC) to create a more stable state.

Benefits of Autonomy for the Catalan State

Catalonia is a strong and economically sound region that is fully capable of functioning

and succeeding as a state, free from Spanish control. Their economy is highly diversified and

relies on industry; primarily on the manufacture and distribution of goods for exportation (Jofre-

Monseny, 2009, pg. 5). Jofre-Monsey (2009) indicates in their article that metal production and

motor vehicle production account for the largest portion of their economy, as well as the

production of textiles (p. 5). Despite their growing and thriving economy, the Spanish state

mandates that "Catalans pay between $15 to $20 billion more in taxes than they get back…in

[the form of] social services or infrastructure" (Mir, 2012). Since the economic crisis hit Spain in

2008, the state has been unrelentingly demanding of these taxes. Yet, even with the mandate of

funds, Catalonia remains economically strong as the central state deteriorates. From this, it can

be concluded that separation would economically benefit their already strong economy through

reinvestment and expansion of their industrial production.

Expanding on the economic benefits of separation, the Catalan state, beginning in 2004,

pursued legislation funded by their government and its municipalities focusing on programs of

urban renewal for their region. Oriol Nel-lo explores this topic and found that in result of the

enactment of such legislative programs, "there has been a considerable improvement in the

standards of living in most districts and cities" (Nel-lo, 2010, p. 4) and significantly lessened the

income distribution. The programs have bolstered immigration, growing the population by one

million persons (from 6.2 million to 7.2 million) since 1996 into the region; which has in turn

stimulated the economy and resulted in "prevailing market conditions" (Nel-lo, 2010, p. 5). The

Catalan government responded to the number of individuals immigrating responsibly by

enforcing their new urban renewal programs. The investment of 1.15 billion euros resulted in a

strong economy that raised living standards, while also stimulating the economy and

"stimulating private investments" (Nel-lo, 2010, p. 11). In addition to strengthening the

economy, it strengthened the citizens through work training programs and education to

distinguish them against other regions' citizens (Nel-lo, 2010, p. 13). The Catalan government

invests in its region to promote prosperity, which the Spanish state is incapable of providing in

their current economic state. The Spanish state provides no economic benefits that Catalonia is

not capable of providing themselves. Separation from Spain would benefit Catalonia through the

use of tax money to reinvest in the government and economy. With separation, Catalonia could better allocate those funds to benefit their new, growing state and expand their governmental programs to strengthen their entire population.

The Catalan political benefits of separation are innumerable, but this research focuses on the unity independence will bring to the Catalan people and government. Catalonians have exhausted so much time and energy fighting to maintain their rights and once autonomy has been granted they will be able to unify their state. Once separated, and the Catalonians will be part of a more cohesive state without need for nationalist uprisings. They have already begun this unification process through the Language and Social Cohesion Plan of 2004 to help with integrating immigrants and non-natives into the Catalan society (Villaroya, 2012, pg. 12). This plan, however, was not exclusionary, but promoted unity through the use of the Catalan language. This program was successful, as is shown in the autonomy referendums discussed previously, where natives and non-natives support autonomy on a high level. As a result, this social cohesion will only increase once the Catalan people have their own state and their cultural fight will be put to rest.

After solving the problem of autonomy, the Catalan government can expend their energy in more useful avenues such as strengthening their foreign relations and expanding their power. The Catalan government has developed its own foreign relations and "foreign policy since its restoration in 1977" (Villaroya, 2012, pg. 11). Previously, that has been banned, but they are currently allowed a minimal amount of foreign trade and alliance, as approved by the central state. Through the Stature of Autonomy, the Spanish government reserves control over the relations between Catalonia and "the rest of Spain, the European Union, and the rest of the world" (Villaroya, 2012 pg. 11). This policy hinders, but does not prevent the region from

establishing significant relations, yet they still manage to create relationships with other countries. Their nationalistic ideology does not discourage expansion into the global system; instead they encourage it through their foreign relations. If autonomy was granted, they could strengthen the existing foreign relations and form new strategic ones that would create a powerful state.

Benefits of Autonomy on the Spanish State

While separation mostly benefits the Catalan region, Spain's benefits are not to be overlooked. When political autonomy has been granted, the Spanish crown will be more unified without the separatists. The nationalist ideology of Catalonia has increased over time; so naive wishes that the Catalan separatists will settle down will be detrimental to the functionality of the Spanish state. By ridding the system of these separatists, they can focus on unifying their state. Spain must refocus on the identity of their people for a source of power. The Catalan people identify more strongly with their region than with Spain (Martinez-Herrera & Miley, 2010). Martinez-Herrera and Miley (2010), who discuss this phenomenon, declare that because of this, "centralism decreased from forty-three percent in 1976 to nine percent in 2005" (pg. 14). Centralism is important in building and maintaining a strong, unified state as expressed in the Constitution. The only option for them is to allow Catalonia to form its own state and have total self-government. Spain will benefit from this because a significant portion of the population against the Crown will no longer need to be appeased. It can focus more closely on the remaining 16 regions and building a centralized state with a strong Spanish identity, as the nation did in the 1600's after Portugal succeeded itself from the Spanish state (Anastacio, 2009, p. 212). After Portugal declared independence, Spain was war-torn and had to reestablish stability and control over its regions, which it succeeded in doing.

Gaining Autonomy & Possible Ramifications

The region of Catalonia is a strong and economically sound region that is fully capable of functioning and succeeding as a state, once independent, though the road to get there will be challenging. A major obstacle comes in the form of the Constitution. The Constitution states that it requires "solidarity between [the regions]" (Spanish Constitution, 1978) and the state, and recognizes the Statues of Autonomy in accordance with Spanish Law. When independence is gained, the Constitution needs to be amended to rework the foundational argument for a unified state. The problem then presents itself, how does the Spanish state secure its other regions? To answer this question, De La Calle & Miley (2008) state that the Basque Country and Catalonia are the only two regions with extremely high national identity, which indicates that other regions remain more loyal to the central government (p. 2). It can be assumed, therefore, that Catalan independence will not create a snowball effect and lead to the deterioration of the Spanish state as a whole. Even the Basque country differs from Catalonia, in that the Basque has the historical tendency of a radical nationalist movement and relying more on violence in comparison (Lluch, 2010, p. 2). The Catalans approach autonomy in a more rational manner and have resorted to violence as a last ditch effort (Lluch, 2010, p. 2). This indicates that Catalonia may be more likely to gain autonomy than the Basque because they have a rational and focused movement that has become more demanding of an answer from Spain.

Catalonia can learn important things from Kosovo, who declared independence from Serbia in 2008. When Kosovo gained independence, it created a "diplomatic firestorm" (Borgen, 2010, p. 1001) and arguments about the implications this decision had on international relations. The main problem was that "international law as it currently stands does not spell out all the implications of the rights to self-determination" (Borgen, 2010, p. 1004). The matter went to the

International Court of Justice (ICJ), where they discussed the matter and decided that Kosovo

had not broken any international laws in its declaration and retained the right to form a nation in

Europe, stating "declarations of independence are primarily domestic affairs" (Borgen, 2010, p.

1007). This ruling on Kosovo provides Catalonia the legal background to gaining independence

from Spain. A contributing factor to Kosovo's successful declaration of nationhood was helped

by The European Free Alliance, which is "a coalition of national independence parties in the

European Parliaments" (Borgen, 2010, 1002). Catalonia's party, the ERC, is already a member

of this Alliance, so gaining their favor and support for their efforts should come with little effort.

While Kosovo received backlash from states, these mostly came from countries battling their

own separatist movements (Borgen, 2010, p. 1018). So while the ICJ cannot mandate that

Kosovo be recognized as a nation, most countries within Europe do and will not infringe upon

their rights and this recognition will continue to grow. Catalonia can use this to their advantage,

and over time will gain acceptance by the European countries. By relying on integration into the

European Union, Catalonians can expedite their recognition. Following in Kosovo's footsteps,

bringing their case in front of the ICJ should be the first step and once their declaration is found

legal, they can focus on expanding their power and continental recognition as a new, powerful

state.

Considerations for Further Research

Supplementing the gaps in the literature is the first step in furthering research on this

topic, mainly providing current economic data on Catalonia. Also, while Borgen's article

addresses the topic some, further research should be conducted on how Catalonia specifically can

be integrated into the European Union. This research provided some information into how

Catalonian independence could catapult Spain into a disassembled state; however, with the

current capacity for research specific data and projections could not be made. Future research may broach that topic more effectively than was capable in this analysis. It should also be noted that the issue of Catalonian independence cannot be solved overnight and new complicating issues arise every day to affect the likelihood of full autonomy.

Conclusion

Change will be immensely beneficial for the region of Catalonia, as well as Spain. Catalonia has long been protective of their rights of auto-determination, culture, and language. Nationalism has bolstered up a lot of attention and support recently, pushing the agenda against the Spanish government. Looking at the trends in nationalism, this study concludes that the nationalist movement in Catalonia will not subside over time; but will persist and strengthen over time. The political environment in Spain will only become more fragmented, due to the occurrence of smaller parties with differing agendas such as the ERC, the governing party in Catalonia presently. Politically, Spain will experience stability due to separation and the removal of the ERC. Catalonia will experience the same stability and will no longer have outside pressure from the Spanish state over its affairs. Furthermore, Catalonia will not need to resort to violence and protest since their goal has been met. Another factor contributing to the need for autonomy is the identity of the Catalan people; they identify more strongly and loyally with their own region (Martinez-Herrera & Miley, 2010, pg. 26), demonstrating how Spain has failed to achieve unity in its peoples. As stated earlier, the Constitution stresses unity and solidarity among all regions, but unsuccessfully quelled the nationalist movement in Catalonia.

By looking at the issue of Catalan independence from a political, economic, and cultural standpoint, the benefits of separation become extremely apparent. Catalonia will strengthen its already growing economic output and further its foreign affairs, transforming the region into a

strong, viable state. Bringing their case in front of the ICJ will be the necessary preliminary step to be taken by Catalonia in the wake of their declaration of independence from Spain. Following behind Kosovo's success will only prove successful for Catalonia. Integration into the European Union and acceptance by other states will follow, once they have the legality of their declaration approved.

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