

AMERICAN COVERAGE OF THE CRISIS IN CATALONIA

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TC 660H

Plan II Honors Program

The University of Texas at Austin

May 14, 2018

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Abstract

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Americans accumulate much of their knowledge of current world events through a variety of national news outlets. International news topics command variable attention in American headlines and are dependent on a number of factors including the domestic crisis of the day, perceived importance to the economy, public familiarity with the region, political impact on American interests, direct effect on American citizens or companies abroad and perceived interest of the American public. Given these reasons, American knowledge of foreign affairs is limited. Only when a constitutional crisis in a major European Union nation peaks with violence during a secessionist referendum does the issue make American headlines. On October 1, 2017, the regional government of Catalonia, one of Spain's most influential autonomous communities, held an independence referendum. It was reported that around ninety percent of Catalans who voted said "yes" to independence, but these activists were confronted in the streets by a militarized police force sent by the Spanish national government, which declared the proceedings illegal. While this episode rightfully appeared in the headlines of many major American newspapers, these were some of the first events that exposed many Americans to the idea of Catalan secessionism – a deep-rooted narrative. Cognizant that there are more urgent issues to Americans that certainly deserve their share of media attention, my thesis poses the question "has the American media done a sufficient job covering the movement unfolding in Catalonia?" I examine patterns of news coverage pertaining to the Catalan ordeal and similar cases, and investigate the extent to which Americans are aware of the region of Catalonia itself. Following that, I assess the significance of the Catalan independence movement to American society to determine if its coverage has been sufficient.

Acknowledgements

First, I would like to thank my advisors, Dr. Jorge Pérez and Dr. Alexandra Wettlaufer, whose direction, assistance, and patience helped guide me in completing this thesis. I'd also like to thank all of my professors at UT Austin and Pompeu Fabra University who sparked my curiosity on this subject and many others. Finally, to my family and friends who have always supported me throughout college and life.

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Introduction

Americans accumulate much of their knowledge of current world events through a variety of national news outlets. This grants the most popular and wealthy news companies and their journalists considerable control over the specific content and stories that are consumed by the average citizen. International news topics command variable attention in American headlines and are dependent on a number of factors including the domestic crisis of the day, perceived importance to the economy, public familiarity with the region, political impact on American interests, direct effect on American citizens or companies abroad and perceived interest of the American public—all of this information perhaps being mined and conveyed to the publishers (dependent on ad dollars) by data analytics companies. Given these reasons, American knowledge of foreign affairs is limited. Only when a constitutional crisis in a major European Union nation peaks with violence during a secessionist referendum does the issue make headlines in the US.

On October 1, 2017, the regional government of Catalonia, one of Spain's most influential autonomous communities, held an independence referendum. It was reported that ninety percent of Catalans who voted said "yes" to independence. These activists were confronted in the streets by a militarized police force sent by the Spanish national government, which had declared the proceedings illegal.¹ While this episode rightfully appeared in the headlines of many major American newspapers, these were some of the first events that exposed many Americans to the idea of Catalan secessionism – a deep-rooted narrative. Cognizant that

¹ "Catalan Referendum: Catalonia Has 'won Right to Statehood'," BBC News, October 02, 2017, , accessed November 9, 2017, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-41463719>.

there are more urgent issues to Americans that certainly deserve their share of media attention, my thesis poses the question “has the American media done a sufficient job covering the movement unfolding in Catalonia?” I examined patterns of news coverage pertaining to the Catalan ordeal and similar cases. Further, I investigated the extent to which a group of Americans are aware of the region of Catalonia itself. Following that, I assessed the significance of the Catalan independence movement to American society in an effort to determine if its coverage has been sufficient.

An important component of understanding the arguments of both sides of the conflict and gauging the American news coverage is learning about the progression of the controversy. The first section of this thesis will provide a profile of the region of Catalonia followed by a history of its origins to the most recent proceedings. A comprehensive understanding of the past allows one to appreciate the present and anticipate the future. Following that, my primary research of American news coverage is presented. This consists of an accumulation and analysis of data from recent articles from a variety of the most popular news sources that pertain the Catalan independence movement. For comparison, data obtained in a similar fashion regarding another recent independence movement will be displayed. Baseline surveys from different groups of Americans that gauge their awareness of Catalonia in relation to a similar situation, the Scottish independence referendum of 2014 will be presented and compared. The thesis concludes with a discussion of the reasons this topic warrants coverage and whether the different aspects and themes of movement are significant, “newsworthy”, enough to demand the attention of the American public and international audience. The discussion is comprised of three sections, political controversy, social and humanitarian impacts, and economic and diplomatic relations. A conclusion follows the discussion.

Chapter 1: Background

Demographic Overview

Catalonia is one of seventeen semi-autonomous regions of the Kingdom of Spain. It sits in the northeast corner of the Iberian Peninsula, bound by the Mediterranean Sea to the East, the Pyrenees mountains and France to the North, and the Spanish regions of Aragon and Valencia to the West and South. The residents of Catalonia, around 7.5 million in total, account for 16% of Spain's total population, making it the second most populated region behind Andalusia.² Over 1.6 million people live in Barcelona, the region's capital and home of the Catalan government, but the entire metropolitan area is home to an estimated 5 million people.³ Stated in the Catalan Statute of Autonomy, there are two official languages of the region, Catalan and Spanish. It is estimated that 95% of Catalans are able to understand Catalan, 73% can speak it, and 56% can

² Helena Buffery and Elisenda Marcer, *Historical Dictionary of the Catalans* (Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press, 2011), 105.

³ *Ibid.*, 66

write in Catalan.⁴ Roman Catholicism is the predominant religion as 52.4% of residents identify as such,⁵ but this is significantly lower than the national Spanish rate that ranges from 70-75%.⁶

Economic Overview

In terms of its economic standing, Catalonia ranks first among most prosperous regions of Spain. Its GDP is approximately 223 billion Euros, generating around 20% of the entire Spanish economy.⁷ This is comparable the national economies of Finland and Portugal.⁸ The per capita GDP in purchasing power standards (PPS), with the EU average being 100, is 106.97 in Catalonia, beating the Spanish national average of 92. Employment rates are also greater in Catalonia compared with Spain as a whole with 70.1% of Catalans being employed versus only 63.9% in Spain.⁹

⁴ Census Reveals 73% Speak Catalan in Catalonia, 95% Understand It, 56% Can Write It," *Nationalia*, , accessed December 10, 2017, <https://www.nationalia.info/new/10063/census-reveals-73-speak-catalan-in-catalonia-95-understand-it-56-can-write-it>.

⁵ "Barómetro Sobre La Religiosidad Y Mapa Religioso De Cataluña," *Generalitat De Catalunya*, , accessed December 12, 2017, <http://web.gencat.cat/es/actualitat/detall/Barometre-sobre-la-religiositat-i-Mapa-religios-de-Catalunya>.

⁶ Amber Pariona, "Religion In Spain," *WorldAtlas*, September 22, 2016, , accessed December 12, 2017, <https://www.worldatlas.com/articles/religion-in-spain.html>.

⁷ Sofia Bosch, "Spain's Economy Losing Catalonia Would Be like the US Losing California and Florida Combined," *CNBC*, April 04, 2018, , accessed April 13, 2018, <https://www.cnbc.com/2017/09/21/heres-how-bad-economically-a-spain-catalonia-split-could-really-be.html>.

⁸ Ben Sills and Esteban Duarte | *Bloomberg*, "Analysis | Why Catalonia Still Fights Battle That Divided Spain: QuickTake," *The Washington Post*, December 07, 2017, , accessed January 02, 2018, https://www.washingtonpost.com/business/why-catalonia-still-fights-battle-that-divided-spain-quicktake/2017/12/07/0c50186a-db75-11e7-a241-0848315642d0_story.html?utm_term=.b7ff735545bc.

⁹ Ana De Oliva, "Six Charts on How Catalonia Compares to the Whole of Spain," *Euronews*, September 29, 2017, , accessed January 6, 2018, <http://www.euronews.com/2017/09/29/six-charts-on-how-catalonia-compares-to-the-whole-of-spain>.

The economy of Catalonia benefits from its favorable geographic location with access to the Mediterranean and other southern European markets, as well as the rest of Spain, for trade and business. Nearly 21% of the Catalan GDP is attributed to the industrial sector, the foundation of the economy, with food, chemicals, motor vehicles, energy, and pharma representing the primary industrial modes. There has also been an embracing and advancing of new technologies within Catalonia as its research institutes have shown continual improvement and advancement in areas such as telecommunications and smart logistics.¹⁰ Tourism, comprising 12% of economic output, is especially strong in Catalonia and has been growing steadily.¹¹ In 2017, Barcelona hosted 8.9 million national visitors, ranking the third most visited city in Europe after London and Paris, and twelfth in the world.¹² A major area of concern for the Catalan economy is debt. The regional government's debt as a proportion of GDP currently sits around 35%, more than 10% higher than the national average. This figure has tripled since 2009 and is felt to be in part a consequence of the global financial crisis that devastated Europe, combined with the region's elaborate funding system and political unrest. Borrowing costs have increased as a result, reflected in Catalonia's comparatively weak credit rating.¹³

Political Overview

¹⁰ "Catalonia Facts & Figures | Catalonia Is a Competitive Economy to Invest in," International Trade | Catalan Exports 2016, , accessed January 17, 2018, <http://catalonia.com/catalonia-barcelona/catalonia-barcelona/Catalonia-facts-figures.jsp>.

¹¹ "Catalonia Facts & Figures," Catalonia Is a Competitive Economy to Invest in, , accessed February 04, 2018, <http://catalonia.com/catalonia-barcelona/catalonia-barcelona/Catalonia-facts-figures.jsp>.

¹² Alison Milington, "The 30 Most Visited Cities around the World in 2017," *The Independent*, September 26, 2017, , accessed February 8, 2018, <https://www.independent.co.uk/travel/thirty-most-visited-cities-world-a7967901.html>.

¹³ Valentina Romei, "Catalonia's Economic Strength Fuels Independence Push," *Financial Times*, September 28, 2017, , accessed February 23, 2018, <https://www.ft.com/content/62118282-a35a-11e7-b797-b61809486fe2>.

After the rule of Franco, Spain's current government was set up in 1978 as a parliamentary monarchy regulated by a constitution. The king is the titular head of state while the prime minister is the one who exercises the executive power along with a cabinet composed of deputy prime ministers. The legislative portion, much like the congress and senate in the US, is separated into the Congress of Deputies and the Senate. The judicial portion, like the Supreme Court of the US, is an independent branch and is the highest court in Spain with jurisdiction in all territories. It has the final say in all matters except in constitutional affairs which are overseen by a separate constitutional court. The congress is selected through proportional representation while the senate is comprised of four representatives from each "state." The political system is dominated largely by two parties: the People's Party and the Spanish Socialist Workers Party.¹⁴

Spain is divided into 17 separate autonomous "states" whose regional governments exercise the right to self-government with a parallel structure to that of the nation. As in the nation, each state has its own parliamentary form of government with distinct separation of powers. Spain's central government has progressively decentralized while attempting to transfer the same amount of authority to each community. The devolution though has not been symmetrical, reflecting the unique aspects of each region. The regions more unified in regional culture, language, history have devolved into more self-reliant states with independent police forces—specifically the Basque, Catalonia and Navarre. In addition, these regions have more fiscal autonomy.¹⁵

¹⁴ "The World Factbook: SPAIN," Central Intelligence Agency, April 24, 2018, , accessed January 17, 2018, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/sp.html>.

¹⁵ Derek E. Mix, "Spain and Its Relations with the United States: In Brief," Congressional Research Service, April 19, 2018, accessed April 20, 2018.

Given Catalonia's multiple political parties, the unicameral parliament is elected using the D'Hondt method, allowing for proportional representation of the major constituents. There are 135 elected deputies. It is the majority vote of the deputies that determines the President of the *Generalitat* (this is what government of the two Spanish semi-autonomous regions, Catalonia and Valencia, is called). In this system, the President appoints many positions in the government and has the task of negotiating and forming a coalition. A simple majority of 68/135 is needed to form a coalition.¹⁶

The current King of Spain is Felipe VI, whose titular duties include ratifying laws and being the head of the armed forces (all symbolic in nature as under the constitution the governance of these entities lies with the national parliament). The current Prime Minister of Spain is Mariano Rajoy, whose main function is to work with the leadership of the states to address domestic and foreign policy issues.¹⁷

The current exiled Prime Minister of Catalonia is Carles Puigdemont—he was jailed for twelve days in Germany but was released recently. Spain via the EU has issued a warrant charging him with rebellion, sedition, misuse of public funds in an illegal referendum and an illegal Declaration of Independence. Given the EU bylaws, matters of extradition in such cases are not subject to interpretation—hence the expectation of immediate extradition.¹⁸

¹⁶ "Political Institutions," *Catalonia Votes*, , accessed April 02, 2018, <http://www.cataloniavotes.eu/en/background/about-catalonia/political-institutions/>.

¹⁷ "The World Factbook: SPAIN," Central Intelligence Agency, April 24, 2018, , accessed January 17, 2018, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/sp.html>.

¹⁸ <http://www.bbc.com/news/av/world-europe-43674490/catalonia-ex-leader-carles-puigdemont-calls-for-dialogue>

Historical Overview

Roots

The recorded history of what is modern-day Catalonia begins with the Phoenician and Greek conquest and settlement in the region during the final centuries BC. These civilizations encountered a variety of indigenous tribes, referred to as Celtiberians, comprised of native Iberians and the Celts who had crossed the Pyrenees and settled amongst the natives. The northeast corner of the Iberian Peninsula offered suitable land for agriculture and ports for trading along the Mediterranean coast, as well as a variety of metals to mine. The most notable colony established by the Greeks was Empuries, situated on the Catalan coast near modern-day Costa Brava.¹⁹

Roman occupation of the area came in the 3rd century BC, a result of the 2nd Punic War, in which Rome defeated Carthage. Gradually, the Romans settled the peninsula and contributed infrastructure, law, and the Latin language, the root of Spanish and Catalan. When Caesar Augustus became the first emperor of Rome in 44 AD following the assassination of Caesar, he successfully brought the entirety of the Iberian Peninsula under Roman rule and set up a system of provinces connected by a network of roads. The area that is now Catalonia became the province of Tarraconensi, its capital being Taraco (Tarragona). This province provides the most

¹⁹ Helena Buffery and Elisenda Marcer, *Historical Dictionary of the Catalans* (Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press, 2011, 106)

extensive Roman ruins in Spain, and later held the settlements of Barcino (Barcelona) and Valentia (Valencia). The hardships faced by the Roman empire in the 3rd century AD, resulting from economic instability and internal strife, extended to Hispania and threatened its borders. During the waning stages of the empire, Christianity was introduced to Spain.²⁰

The fall of the Roman Empire was a result of a weakened state and external pressure from Barbarian tribes, most notably the Visigoths headed by King Euric. The Visigoth kings ruled over Catalonia until Muslim tribes of the Umayyad dynasty, known as the Moors, invaded the Iberian peninsula in the 8th century. Though the Muslim inhabitants controlled Spain for several centuries, the northern parts of Al-Andalus, Muslim Spain, were taken by the Franks of the Carolingian Empire in what is known as the Marca Hispania. This was an attempt by Charlemagne to both create a buffer zone between his growing empire and Al-Andalus and re-Christianize the area.²¹

Embryo of Catalonia

The Franks divided the territory of the Hispanic March into nine earldoms, or counties. These counties of northern Spain owed allegiance to the French crown, but by the 10th century, had established considerable political influence over their areas and sought to stray from Frankish authority. The origin of what is now Catalonia is tied to Wilfred the Hairy, the last

²⁰ Peter Pierson, *The History of Spain* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1999), 19-22.

²¹ Helena Buffery and Elisenda Marcer, *Historical Dictionary of the Catalans*, 106.

Count appointed by the Frankish King. He linked the county of Barcelona with other Pyrenean counties in 878, consolidating the territory and redeveloping areas that had suffered from the previous conflicts. These counties also acted as intermediaries between contacts in Al-Andalus and the rest of the Christian world.

The Muslim sack of Barcelona in 985 demonstrated that the Frankish monarchs were not to be trusted as they were unable to provide necessary support, and ties between the Catalonia and the Franks began to wane. Stagnation in terms of conquest and settlement occurred thereafter and a new era of feudalism in the Catalan counties commenced. This transition to feudalism led to political decentralization, depriving the Counts of much influence over their subjects. In the first decade of the 11th century, the Count of Barcelona, Ramon Berenguer I, was able to concentrate enough resources to impose vassalage of the land-owners. This effectively created a Catalan feudal state around the same time that the Duke of Normandy founded the Anglo-Norman state in England.

Union with Aragon

Economic and demographic advancements characterized the following decades and the Counts of Barcelona looked to impose dominance beyond their realm. In 1137, the Count of Barcelona, Ramon Berenguer IV, married Peronella of Aragon, and joined Catalonia with the Crown of Aragon, creating a “confederal union between equals.” This provided Catalonia with an alliance in the area, an essential component of the subsequent conquests of places such as

Muret, Lleida, Tortosa, Majorca, Sicily, and Sardinia. The union also afforded extra support against threats from France, Castile, and Muslims. Although Saragossa remained the political capital of the Crown of Aragon, Barcelona was its most important city due to its strategic commercial position on the Mediterranean and the House of Barcelona seated the majority of monarchs of the kingdom of Aragon. The Catalan language displaced Latin as the primary language of the court in the 13th century, a development spearheaded by James I (the Conqueror).

Throughout this period, the fledgling Catalan parliamentary became an effective system for negotiating with the King of Aragon. The *Corts*, or Catalan parliament, was created around the 13th century when the king called for the representatives of communities, nobles, and religious leaders for discourse. Eventually, laws approved by the *Corts* could not be overturned by the king. Another administrative body, the *Generalitat*, gained esteem in the early 15th century when Ferdinand I of the Castilian Trastamara dynasty took the throne of Aragon. The *Generalitat* evolved from a committee primarily concerned with finances to an executive role in protecting the laws. Thus, the foundation of an organized government was set, giving Catalonia an early sense of identity amongst the ever-changing regimes it interacted with.

During the lower middle ages, adversity struck the region from many angles. Unfavorable harvests combined with the advent of the Black Death in Catalonia in 1348 decimated Catalonia's population and economy. Uprisings of the serfs and the lower classes, who appealed to the King for aid, against the *Corts* and *Generalitat* resulted in a civil war in the late 15th

century. This squandered many of the region's resources which were already in remission from supporting the foreign interests of Aragon.²²

Catalonia as Part of the Spanish Crown

In the midst of the feudal conflicts, King John II's heir, Ferdinand was married to the heiress of the Castilian line, Isabella, in 1469. Though the regional authorities remained in control of their territories, the influence of Catalonia diminished both politically and economically. At the time, focus was shifted from the Mediterranean sea to the Atlantic ocean because of Spanish exploration and colonization in the Americas. This resulted in Castile overtaking Barcelona as the political powerhouse of the Iberian Peninsula, as its central location and low barriers to trade propelled its economy. Catalan laws and culture were preserved throughout the 16th and 17th centuries, but that would not last. During the immense expansion of the Spanish empire, the monarchs became perceptibly centralist in their attempts to raise men and capital to finance Charles V and the Philips' ambitions for the Hapsburg dynasty.²³ The 1640 Revolt of the Catalans ensued. The lasting perceived mistreatment of the poor, rural Catalans combined with disagreement with the central authorities over tax policy spurred this conflict. During this time, the secession of northern Catalan territories to the French and an increased suppression of Catalan institutions occurred, leading to increased tension on all fronts.²⁴

The War of Spanish Succession was initiated at the turn of the 18th century to decide if the Crown of Castile and Aragon should be bequeathed to either the Bourbon successor of Philip

²² Albert Balcells and Geoffrey J. Walker, *Catalan Nationalism: Past and Present* (Houndmills: Palgrave, 2002), 2-10.

²³ Helena Buffery and Elisenda Marcer, *Historical Dictionary of the Catalans*, 107.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 105.

V or the Austrian contender, Charles III. The alliance opposed to Philip V feared that the Spanish regime would become too powerful in both Europe and the Americas. Dissatisfied with the Bourbon actions in the Catalan revolt and a desire for more autonomy to develop commerce, many Catalans within the kingdoms of Aragon felt the need for a regime change and sided with the Austrian claimant. It is important to note that much of the Catalan nobility was still in support of the Philip V. The war concluded with Philip V's troops successfully taking Barcelona on September 11, 1714, a day that is now observed as Catalonia's national day, referred to as the *Diada*. Loss of Catalan autonomy came with the injunction of the Nueva Planta in 1716 which overturned many of the unique laws and customs of Catalonia and surrounding regions. In the following years, the defeated regions were subjected to the Central laws and extreme tax policies of Castile, Catalan language and education became censored, and outrage towards the Spanish occupation ensued.²⁵

Arriving at the Renaixença

The events of the early 18th century proved to be crossroads in the history of Catalonia and the other regions that were influenced by Catalan language and culture. The unity of the Spanish crown spurred the economy of the Catalonia as it opened trading routes to the Americas in the waning years of Spanish imperialism. Traders and businessmen who made the voyage back and forth returned to the Mediterranean coast and invested in Catalonia, bringing some new

²⁵ Albert Balcells and Geoffrey J. Walker, *Catalan Nationalism: Past and Present*, 14-17.

wealth to the area. The major industries that propelled this late 18th century economic revival were cotton (textiles) and slave trade.²⁶

The 19th century proved to be one defined by instability. In 1808, Napoleon Bonaparte attempted to annex northern territories of Spain to his empire, and Catalonia was thus caught in a struggle between two regimes with authoritative ambitions. Then, a chaotic stretch of regime changes spurred by military coups rather than peaceful successions occurred. Five civil wars materialized in Spain between the years 1822 and 1825. The final three are known as the Carlist wars, referring to the supporters of the descendants of Charles, and much fighting took place on Catalan soil. Economically, the developments during this time highlighted a contrast between Catalonia and the rest of Spain. In brief, Catalonia was rare in the scope of Spain in that it was attempting to modernize its industries and economy, but various obstacles slowed this process. Steam engines facilitated industrial growth in many areas of the world but arrived late in Catalonia due to its lack of natural resources and the archaic nature of the rest of Spain, whose main economic outputs remained agricultural and artisanal. Thus, Catalonia was forced to adapt, an example being the use of hydraulic energy to power factories. Also, protectionist measures imposed by the central government hindered the region's opportunities to profit off of trade. This difference in the ambitions in Catalonia and Spain was evident in the weak participation of Catalans in the central government. A liberal state was born in the 1830s and although this enabled some industrialization, Catalans were not inclined to participate. They did not have the proper command of the Spanish language necessary to interact with the parliament in a time when skilled oratory was acknowledged. In addition, Catalans took pride in their industriousness

²⁶ Helena Buffery and Elisenda Marcer, *Historical Dictionary of the Catalans*, 107.

and improvisational abilities and viewed careers in politics inferior to those in commerce and production. These factors contributed to a renewed sense of regional pride.²⁷

In an era known as the *Renaixença*, the aspiration to revive a separate culture and identity combined with the interest in Romantic concepts spreading throughout Europe resulted in the recovery of the Catalan language as a functioning literary tool. This movement was not limited to the Catalan capital -- Pancatalanism, or the collective identity of Catalan people ranging from Valencia, the Balearic Islands, and eventually the northern territories was strengthened. The foundations of modern Catalan culture and status are said to have emerged during this time.

Themes that constituted this recovery of the Catalan identity include literature, increased political discourse, and labor movements.²⁸ The most important aspects of the new emphasis on Catalan literature are known as the *Jocs Florals* and Four Great Chronicles. *Jocs Florals*, also known as the Floral Games, were literary festivals held in Barcelona for the main purpose of inspiring the next generation of writers, who spoke and were educated in Castilian primarily, to explore the Catalan language. The Chronicles, comprised of testimonies of James I, Peter III, Bernat Desclot, and Ramon Munatar, were seen as the four pillars for the rejuvenation of Catalan culture. They were not unique to this area, however, as German Romantic ideas had been spreading throughout Europe, leading to the adoption of epic poems by many cultures to explore regional identities.²⁹

Catalonia in the 20th Century

²⁷ Albert Balcells and Geoffrey J. Walker, *Catalan Nationalism: Past and Present*, 17-19.

²⁸ Helena Buffery and Elisenda Marcer, *Historical Dictionary of the Catalans*, 107-108.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 22.

Transitioning to the 20th century, the Spanish central state remained relatively weak and its relationship with Catalonia was further strained in 1898 when the United States took control of the essential Spanish colonies of the Philippines, Puerto Rico, and Cuba. The loss of these colonies was devastating to the wealthy business class in Catalonia that had relied on them for exports. This shifted power in Catalonia to the professional middle class that had desired more control from Spain over their region, and they were successful in gaining autonomy intermittently in the early decades of the 20th century. This was spurred by an insurgence of Catalan political parties that fought for protection of Catalan laws and more general control for the regional government. Between the Primo de Rivera dictatorship, lasting from 1923 to 1930, that oppressed Catalonia, and the beginning of Spanish Civil War in 1936, Catalonia experienced a brief period autonomy (the *Generalitat* was restored) and cultural growth that started under the Second Spanish Republic in 1932. Four years later, a nationalist military coup started the Spanish Civil War which ended with the dictatorship of General Francisco Franco.

The Franco regime lasted until around the time his death in 1975. It was characterized by an attempt at creating a single Spanish identity, thus denying other identities within Spain's borders. Catalonia was a victim of this cultural genocide, as its institutions and language were severely persecuted. The repression in those early years of the Franco regime are often invoked today by older Catalan secessionists who fear the dwindling of Catalan identity. Around the year 1950, the dictatorship relaxed its cultural oppression and movements in Catalonia.

Though there was an evolution in Spain from dictatorship to democracy in the 1970s following Franco's death, the political scene remained turbulent as leaders of the Franco regime

still had notable influence. The new Spanish Constitution of 1978 led to a degree of decentralization and the regions of Spain were granted statutes of autonomy of varying degrees. The Basque Country and Navarre, two other regions with distinct identities, were granted full control over taxation while Catalonia was left out. This perceived unfairness was an important part of the demand for an updated statute of autonomy that Catalonia campaigned for in the early 21st century. The Catalan economy was generally strong in the latter years of the 20th century and a defining event for the region was the hosting of the 1992 summer Olympics in Barcelona.³⁰

Rise of Secessionism

The financial crisis that plagued the world around 2008 had a significant effect on the drive for independence in Catalonia. From the end of the Franco regime and turn to democracy in Spain in the 1970s, there had been a desire to expand regional powers, but Catalonia was undeniably considered a non-secessionist state. This continued through the early 1990s, as there was still not a single member of the Catalan regional parliament openly in favor of leaving Spain. As late as 1999, a Catalan party in support of secession did not even receive 10% of the vote in the regional elections, so at the turn of the century, there was no reason to believe that there would soon be a strong political movement demanding independence. At that time, the Basque conflict was still receiving the majority of attention regarding the “Spanish national

³⁰ "A Brief History of Catalan Nationalism," *Foreign Affairs*, October 27, 2017, , accessed March 02, 2018, <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/spain/2017-10-18/brief-history-catalan-nationalism>.

question” of how to create a successful nation in the midst of the plurality of national identities within its borders.

Although there was no political evidence in the 90s and early 2000s that Catalonia would be pursuing a split from Spain, underlying tensions in society began to slowly reveal themselves. As in various other places in Europe, the political system was disrupted as there were more legitimate challengers to the dominant parties. Younger generations, reaching the voting age and becoming more politically active, were less loyal to the traditional nationalists and social democrats in Catalonia. The credit and property boom of the mid 1990s veiled the impending doom of the middle class that would become visible during the economic crisis, though there was already discontent within the poorer industrial sector. However, young Catalans were struggling to sustain sufficient employment and access affordable housing, leading to somewhat of a generational rift before the crisis.

In Spain, a rise of a new strain of nationalism was emerging, spurred by the younger generation immune from scars from the Franco-regime. Concurrently, Barcelona was losing ground to Madrid in terms of economic and political success. This would ultimately prove to be a root of the looming clash with Catalan nationalism. The conservative Popular Party (PP) that had vast control over Spanish politics from 1996-2004 attempted to overcome the ambiguities of the constitutional and territorial agreements of the late 1970s. Many Catalans preferred a Spanish model of “asymmetrical federalism” that opposed the goal of re-centralization held by Spanish nationalists. Improving Spanish national unity became the priority of the conservative party, as evidenced by a giant Spanish flag placed in the middle of Madrid during José María Aznar’s second administration from 2000-2004. As a response, political leaders in Catalonia, in the years

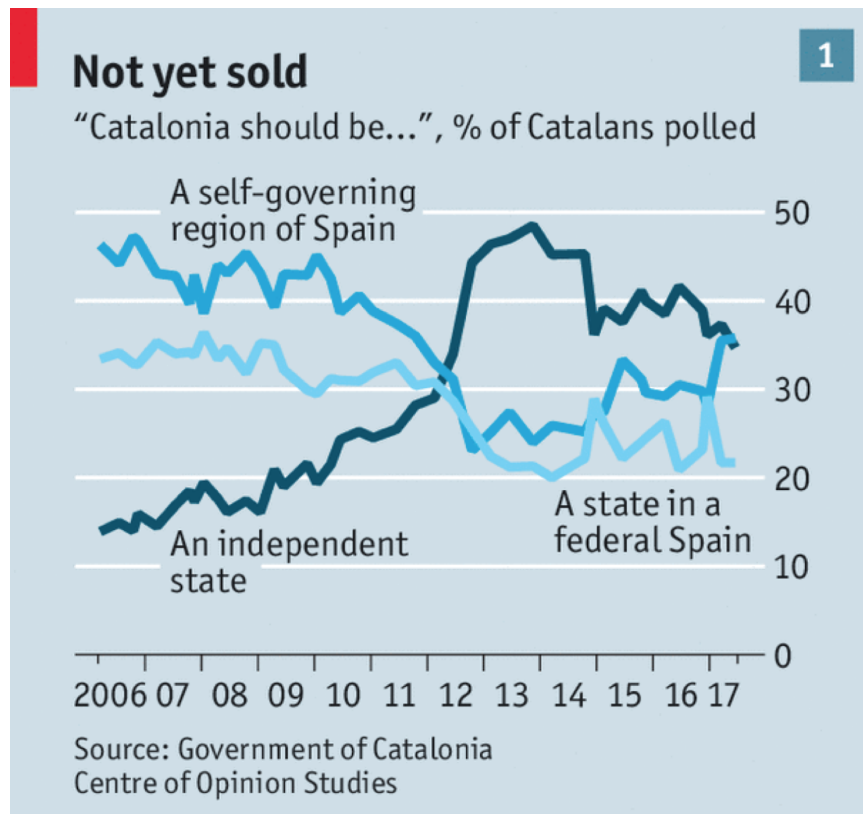
2003-2006, set out to update the 1979 Catalan Statute of Autonomy.³¹ The authors of the initial draft of the Statute of Autonomy demanded an increase in financial and judicial control for Catalonia and for it to be classified as a “nation.” The PP and pro-Spanish media in Madrid interpreted these demands as unconstitutional and a threat to the unity of Spain, and coordinated petitions against the statute throughout the country. A revised edition was approved by the Congress of Deputies in March 2006 that mostly invalidated the financial claims. In a referendum held in Catalonia in June 2006, the new Statute of Autonomy was approved by 73.2% of voters, which came into effect in August. Concurrently, the PP sent an appeal to the Constitutional Court claiming that several aspects were illegal, namely the classification of Catalonia as a nation.

After nearly four years of deliberation, the Constitutional Court ruled that the most of the statute was lawful, but a number of articles were deemed unconstitutional and 41 articles were ordered to be reinterpreted.³² The significance of this ruling was that the Court allowed for Catalonia to be referred to as a “nation” in acknowledgement of its history and identity, but it would have no legitimacy under the constitution. Over a million Catalan people responded with a mass demonstration in the streets of Barcelona claiming, “We are a people and we decide.” This protest in July 2010 was not yet a clear indicator of the turn towards independence, but rather an initial pronouncement of “the right to decide” concept. This decision also united several Catalan parties against the perceived encroachment of Madrid in Catalan affairs. These parties include the center-right nationalists of the *Convergència i Unió* (CiU), the Catalan Socialists (PSC) and the Catalan Greens.

³¹ Dr. Andrew Dowling, "Spain and the Catalan Crisis," December 11, 2017, accessed January 18, 2018, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sgkK7AVw55c>.

³² Rob Page, U.K. Parliament, Debate on Possible Independence of Catalonia: Key Issues, SN06933, November 3, 2017, accessed March 13, 2018.

Following the unrest tied to the decision of the Court, support for an independent Catalonia flourished. In 2005, less than 14% favored independence.



Economist.com

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The desire for an independent Catalonia increased substantially starting in 2010 and it is estimated that by 2015, support had reached anywhere from 48-50%. By this time, pro-independent political mechanisms and social movements had become a dominant force for change. On Catalonia's national day, September 11, huge displays have taken place in Barcelona

³³ "Not Sold Yet," digital image, Catalonia Prepares to Vote on Secession, September 23, 2017, accessed April 2, 2018, <https://www.economist.com/news/europe/21729433-discontents-and-divisions-behind-illegal-referendum-catalonia-prepares-vote-secession>.

and beyond in every year since 2011. These exhibitions to address the grievances tied to historical treatment and the perceived lack of political and economic autonomy are amongst the most massive that modern Europe has ever experienced.

From where did these increasingly strong sentiments arise? Andrew Dowling, among other scholars, argue, “The economic crisis has given impetus to forms of nationalist mobilisation with Scotland, Catalonia and Flanders experiencing secessionist pressures. Catalonia has been the epicentre of Spain’s crisis.”³⁴ When the effects economic crisis began to be felt in Catalonia, panic ensued and the response was to blame Spain in light of the limited macro-economic control of Catalonia. The Catalan middle socioeconomic class became especially fervent in their frustrations and demands, as the assurance of future financial stability was threatened. Although unemployment, which has hovered around 20% in Spain since the 1980s, has been comparatively high in Spain, the bulk of this fell on lower earning industrial workers and young people. The unemployment rate in Catalonia, however, was more positive than the rest of Spain, but ascended from 6% in 2006 to 24% in 2011. Arguments concerning fiscal mistreatment of Catalonia range from the tight control of the economy by Madrid to the deficit that Catalonia pays in taxes against what it receives from the state in return. Approximately 80% of regional funding is decided by the central government. This led to the economic downturn impacting Catalonia, a rich region, in generally the same way as it did the poorer regions in the south. The wealthy region indisputably sends more in taxes to Madrid than what it receives, but the degree of this deficit is highly contentious. Independence supporters claim that the deficit lies anywhere from 8-10% while opponents estimate it at 4-5% and argue that their adversaries do not account for the indirect infrastructure developments and such. It is

³⁴ Andrew Dowling, *The Rise of Catalan Independence: Spain's Territorial Crisis* (London: Routledge, 2018), 1.

important to consider though, that wealthy states around the globe, California for example, are net-negative in terms of tax distribution – this is not uncommon.

The demographics of the independence movement point heavily at the middle class with language and identity issues taking a central role. Those with familial ties to Catalonia were strongly in favor of independence and outsiders were generally opposed. The lower working class, a demographic that consists of a substantial number of immigrants, and the wealthiest class are far less in favor of independence than the middle class. While the middle class, made up of small business owners and the self-employed, has experienced instability, the wealthiest of Catalonia is not interested in political strife that could move major corporations out of Catalonia and obstruct relations with the EU and the other EU nations. Thus, Dowling has described the movement as a “political expression of middle-class discontents.” The rise of the Catalan national identity and the tendency to “protect one’s own” in turbulent times are the defining characteristics of the movement towards secession.³⁵

Recent Referendums

Following the turmoil of the 2010 Court ruling, an election was held in Catalonia in 2012 to try to add vigor to the independence drive. The CiU remained the largest party but lost ground to the Catalan Republican Left party. A new Spanish government was formed in 2011 and

³⁵ Dr. Andrew Dowling, "*Spain and the Catalan Crisis*," December 11, 2017, accessed January 18, 2018, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sgkK7AVw55c>

Mariano Rajoy of the PP was elected as Prime Minister. When Rajoy, who was recognized as anti-Catalan, took office, support for independence hovered around 23%, but by the end of his first administration in 2015, that number had increased to anywhere from 45-50%. In 2014, CiU leader and President of the *Generalitat* signed a decree calling for an independence referendum to take place. This was not supported by the conservative party of Spain and was deemed unconstitutional by the Constitutional Court. However, the referendum plan was given a different name and the survey was conducted in November 2014. The ballot contained two questions: “do you want Catalonia to become a state?” and “do you want that state to be independent?” and although more than 80% responded “yes” to both questions, the turnout was a mere 40%. Disagreement over the arrangement of the referendum caused a rift in the CiU, the majority coalition. While the *Convergència*, the greater portion of the CiU, and its then leader Artur Mas wanted to keep striving for Catalonia to be an independent state, the other part, *Unió*, desired increased powers for Catalonia, but still supported a Spanish confederation. These parties officially split in 2015.

Later in 2015, a set of elections to form a new *Generalitat* was held. The Together for Yes (referring to secession) coalition was formed by the *Convergència* and the Republican left. This new entity added the CUP – ‘Popular Unity Candidacy,’ a collection of pro-independence groups whose previous focus had been on municipal elections, and together, these parties won an absolute majority.

In March of 2017, the Spanish national government banned Artur Mas, former Catalan president, from holding public office. However, in June, the standing Catalan President, Carles Puigdemont called for a new independence referendum that would take place on October 1, 2017, and if it was successful, a new Catalan republic would be formed within 48 hours

regardless of the number of ballots cast. That was met with opposition from the Spanish government. In September, complying with the central authorities in Madrid who legally challenged the referendum, The Constitutional Court agreed to suspend ballots. Later that month, the Spanish police force arrested twelve Catalan officials who played a role in organizing the referendum. Fines were also administered to 22 members of the Catalan electoral board for their failure to recognize the Court's suspension of the vote.³⁶

In the days preceding the October 1 referendum, the Spanish government asserted that it would block the vote, but Catalan officials vowed to proceed. Schools in Catalonia, the primary polling stations, were occupied by supporters of independence and the Police issued an ultimatum stating they must leave by the morning of the vote. The referendum occurred on October 1 and chaos ensued when national police used force to combat citizens around the polling stations. Catalan officials proclaimed that on a 42% turnout, 90% voted "yes" for independence. The legitimacy of these statistics were questioned, however, with claims that people voted multiple times and there were ballots cast before the official voting period began. Two days after the referendum, Puigdemont asserted that Catalonia would soon declare independence after the votes had been verified.³⁷ That same day, October 3, the Spanish monarch, King Felipe VI, declared in a televised speech that, "They have tried to break the unity of Spain and its national sovereignty, which is the right of all Spaniards to democratically decide

³⁶ Rob Page, U.K. Parliament, Debate on Possible Independence of Catalonia: Key Issues, SN06933, November 3, 2017, accessed March 13, 2018.

³⁷ "Catalan Referendum: Catalonia Has 'won Right to Statehood'," *BBC News*, October 02, 2017, , accessed March 14, 2018, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-41463719>.

their lives together,” and “Their irresponsible conduct could even jeopardize the economic and social stability of Catalonia and all of Spain.”³⁸

One day before, Carles Puigdemont, the Catalan regional president, would play the Slovenian option (a negotiation tactic used in the early 1990s during the Slovakia/Croatia/Yugoslavia conflict that allowed a delay in the independence declared while productive negotiations took place), although he was warned by a representative from Spain’s ruling People’s Party not to pursue such a strategy.³⁹

Less than twenty-four hours later, Barcelona’s mayor, Ada Colau, also made an attempt to divert Puigdemont from an outright declaration of independence while stating that the intent should be to defuse tensions. Finally, Donald Tusk, the EU Council president also made his plea: “Today, I ask you to respect, in your intentions the constitutional order and not to announce a decision that would make dialogue impossible.”⁴⁰

Despite the pleas and warnings, Puigdemont gave a speech on October 10, 2017 in which he asked for a mandate to declare Catalonia an independent state while immediately proposing the mandate be suspended for a period of a few months, with the hopes that productive talks could be held with Madrid (the Slovenian option). Puigdemont added that he was confident that the conflict could be resolved with dialogue but perhaps European mediation might be helpful. Immediately thereafter, Madrid asked for clarification on whether Catalonia had declared independence while notifying the Catalans that Article 155 of the Spanish Constitution would be

³⁸ Sam Jones, "King Felipe: Catalonia's Authorities Have 'scorned' All Spaniards with Referendum," *The Guardian*, October 04, 2017, , accessed March 16, 2018, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/oct/03/king-felipe-catalan-authorities-have-scorned-all-spaniards-with-referendum>.

³⁹ "What Catalonia's Suspended Declaration of Independence Means for Catalonia and Spain," *LSE EUROPP*, October 20, 2017, , accessed April 4, 2018, <http://blogs.lse.ac.uk/europpblog/2017/10/11/what-catalonias-suspended-declaration-of-independence-means-for-catalonia-and-spain/>.

⁴⁰ "The Parliament Magazine," MEPs Urge Dialogue in Catalonia Crisis, , accessed April 5, 2018, <https://www.theparliamentmagazine.eu/articles/news/meps-urge-dialogue-catalonia-crisis>.

invoked, effectively dissolving the regional government.⁴¹ This article allows the central government to take control of a regional one if the regional body was acting in a way potentially harming Spain as a whole.⁴² That said, time was given to allow Puigdemont a way to restate the mandate without declaring independence. Choosing to ignore the multiple warnings, the Catalan parliament voted for independence and, as promised the Spanish central government, after a supportive senatorial vote, invoked Article 155 on October 28, 2017. This invocation dissolved the Catalan regional government and took control of the regional police. Mirroring the events surrounding the independence declaration 83 years prior, Puigdemont and his regional ministers fled to Brussels in an effort to avoid arrest on charges of rebellion and to seek European support. France and other members of the EU had strongly encouraged dialogue and a peaceful resolution up until this point and had not encouraged Puigdemont's declaration in any fashion.⁴³

The Catalan declaration of independence was formally annulled by the Spanish Constitutional courts on November 8, 2017.⁴⁴

⁴¹ Quique García, "Puigdemont Declares Independence for Catalonia but Suspends It in Search of Dialogue," *EL PAÍS*, October 11, 2017, , accessed April 5, 2018, https://elpais.com/elpais/2017/10/10/inenglish/1507620922_401849.html.

⁴² Amanda Erickson, "Analysis | The Future of Catalonia May Well Hinge on an 84-word Section of the 1978 Spanish Constitution," *The Washington Post*, October 27, 2017, , accessed March 26, 2018, https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/worldviews/wp/2017/10/27/why-does-spains-article-155-exist-and-what-does-it-actually-say/?utm_term=.2e076f5c1793.

⁴³ Sam Jones, "Catalan Leaders Facing Rebellion Charges Flee to Belgium," *The Guardian*, October 31, 2017, , accessed April 14, 2018, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/oct/30/spanish-prosecutor-calls-for-rebellion-charges-against-catalan-leaders>.

⁴⁴ "Spain's Constitutional Court Annuls Catalan Declaration Of...," *Reuters*, November 08, 2017, , accessed December 6, 2018, <https://ca.reuters.com/article/topNews/idCAKBN1D81SN-OCATP>.

Chapter 2: Research

Introduction to Research and Methodology

This chapter consists of graphs showing the volume of articles published by three American news sources about the two independence movements and survey results that gauged awareness of the 2017 Catalan independence referendum and the 2014 Scottish independence referendum. The purpose of this research was to investigate how much exposure these movements received in the news and find out if a group of Americans were aware of the independence movements.

The graphs show the number of articles posted about the Catalan and Scottish independence movements during the time leading up to the referendums (August 1, 2014 is the start date) until February 1, 2015 in the Catalan case because of the timing of this thesis. The graphs on Scotland reflect articles posted from a year before the referendum to a month. After the Scottish referendum, there was virtually no coverage in the US because Brexit took precedence. The news sources used were *CNN*, *The New York Times*, and *The Wall Street Journal*. These were selected because they are among the most read US news sources that do not utilize the wire services, such as the *Associated Press* and *Reuters*, for international stories. Articles selected were primarily concerned with events and commentary about the independence movements. News briefs that mentioned the independence movements but also other topics were not included.

The survey serves as a supplement to the graphs showing trends of coverage of the independence movements. The results of the surveys do not reflect the general American population. However the intention was not to gain a perfect sample of American knowledge of foreign affairs, but to detect if select groups of people were receptive of news about these independence movements.

There were two general groups that took the survey. The first group consisted of high school seniors in Advanced Placement (AP) classes and Pre-AP classes at a large public high school in San Antonio, Texas. The survey was taken on paper by every single kid in each class so there is no response bias in the results. These individuals did not receive any outside assistance when taking the survey. The second group took the survey online and is a mix of college students of various from the University of Texas at Austin, the University of Florida, the University of Indiana at Bloomington, the University of California at Davis, and parents of UT Austin students. These surveys were posted on Facebook in university class pages and the official UT Austin parents Facebook page, so a response bias is present despite the subjects not knowing the survey topic until they entered the survey website, surveymonkey.com. These results showed that not many college students participated, so around 70% of responses were from the parent page.

Comparing Catalonia and Scotland

In comparing the secession movements in Scotland and Catalonia, the simple answer is that both similarities and differences exist between the two. It is useful to understand these before and effort is made to extrapolate any implications. Scotland, an area of approximately 30,000 square miles, contains 8.3% of the United Kingdom's (UK) population of 66 million people and it is a net beneficiary of federal taxation. Scotland makes up less than 7% of the GDP of the UK, but its GDP per capita beats the U.K. average.⁴⁵ In comparison, Catalonia is only about 12,400 square miles but, as mentioned, makes up 16% of Spain's overall population. Catalonia is one of 17 autonomous regions in Spain. Catalonia makes up approximately 20% of Spain's GDP.⁴⁶ While the U.K. has no formal constitution, Spain has a written constitution that was ratified in 1978 with 88.5 % support of the population. Both regions have their own democratically elected parliaments, but only the Scots have control of their taxation.

Scotland became part of the UK in a union in 1707 as the result of royal lineage succession. Catalonia, on the other hand, became part of Spain in the War of Spanish Succession, 1702-1714, as a conquered people. Further, the Spanish Civil War and Franco's subsequent rule further stripped the Catalans of their cultural biases until his passing in 1975.

The Catalans and the Scots both have their own languages and dialects which significantly contribute to uniting the population. Both regions are rich in academic endeavors and have a strong representation by the university communities. Both independence movements garnered about 50% support and solidified in the years following the world financial crisis of

⁴⁵ "Scotland in Numbers," *BBC News*, November 25, 2013, , accessed February 26, 2018, <http://www.bbc.com/news/uk-scotland-24866266>.

⁴⁶ Statistical Institute of Catalonia, "Idescat. Statistical Institute of Catalonia. Homepage," Idescat. Institut D'Estadística De Catalunya. Pàgina Principal, , accessed March 09, 2018, <https://www.idescat.cat/?lang=en>.

2008.⁴⁷ The Catalan youth unemployment rate was 40% in 2012,⁴⁸ and the youth unemployment rate in Scotland was around 20% in 2010.⁴⁹ These years were selected because they were four years ahead of the respective referendums.

One of the major differences between the independence movements is that the U.K. Prime Minister ultimately embraced the vote and campaigned against the Scottish independence movement. The campaign was centered around the theme of “Better Together.” The important point was that the vote of the people involved in the debate was respected, and the vote resulted in continued union with no backlash. The Spanish government, on the other hand, declared the Catalan referendum unconstitutional. One of the implications for Spain, comprised of 17 regions, was that allowing one to determine its own fate and secede (especially given the economic impact of this region) could lead to further compromise of the union. This was not an issue in the Scottish movement.

The attention paid to these movements has been quite variable. The United States’ strongest ally has been the U.K., and the US has a vested interest in the UK maintains a strong unified entity. The larger the U.K. is, the more international influence it will have.⁵⁰ Not to be lost in the conversation is that the North Sea is home to the nuclear arsenal which likely would have had to be moved in the event of Scotland obtaining independence. In addition, the interest in the rich Northern sea oil base cannot be ignored. Something to be considered is the timing of

⁴⁷ Sam Shedden, "Scotland and Catalonia Compared: Economy | Politics | History," News, October 01, 2015, , accessed March 9, 2018, <https://www.scotsman.com/news/politics/general-election/scotland-and-catalonia-compared-economy-politics-history-1-3904695>.

⁴⁸ "Unemployment Rate in Catalonia 2006-2016 | Statistics," Statista, , accessed March 10, 2018, <https://www.statista.com/statistics/327007/yearly-unemployment-rate-in-catalonia-by-age-group/>.

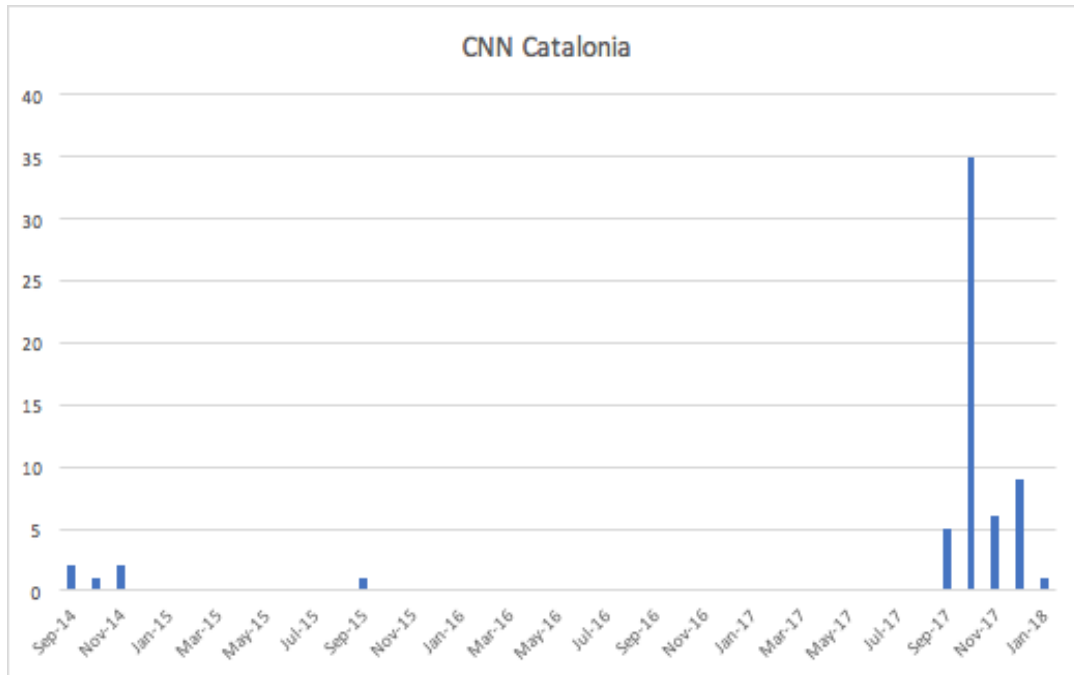
⁴⁹ Administrator, "SB 12-20 Youth Unemployment: Policy," Getting Involved : Scottish Parliament, December 04, 2012, , accessed April 2, 2018, <http://www.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/49310.aspx>.

⁵⁰ "Scottish Government 'respects Catalan Position'," *BBC News*, October 27, 2017, , accessed March 25, 2018, <http://www.bbc.com/news/uk-scotland-scotland-politics-41781241>.

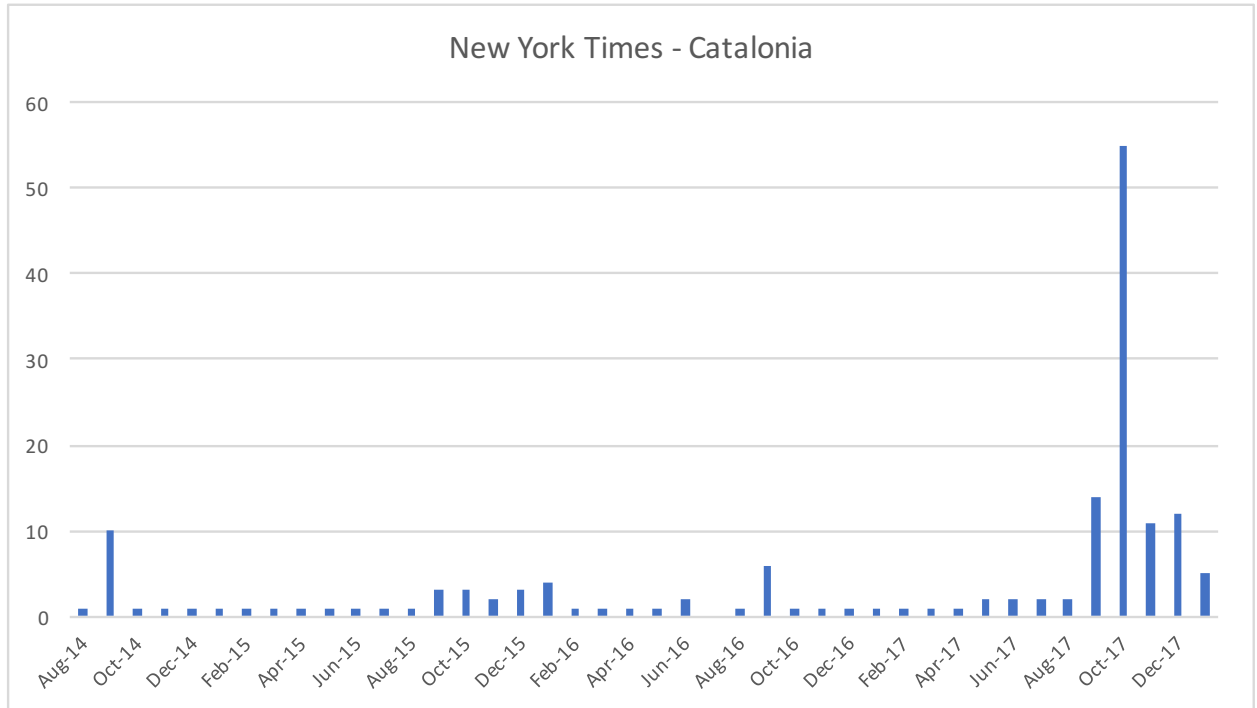
the oil prices and the independence movement. While the economies were beginning to be compromised in 2008, oil prices were on a serious rise with many oil nations considering these prices to be on a one way trajectory up—this has obviously been changed with the dramatic decrease in prices as a result of fracking and many further discoveries.⁵¹

⁵¹ Gavin McCrone, "North Sea Oil Is Key to an Independent Scotland | Gavin McCrone," *The Guardian*, March 11, 2014, , accessed April 1, 2018, <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2014/mar/11/north-sea-oil-independent-scotland-economy-revenue>.

News Coverage Graphs

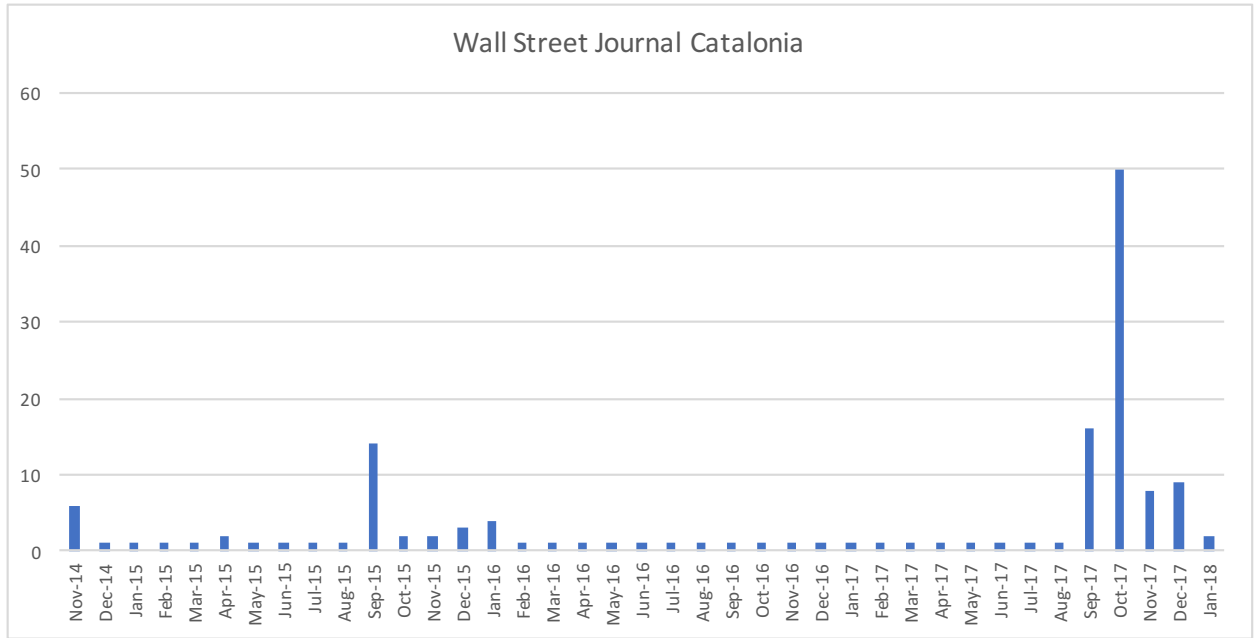


Tally's for CNN Catalonia Articles	
Jan-18	1
Dec-17	9
Nov-17	6
Oct-17	35
Sep-17	5
Sep-15	1
Nov-14	2
Oct-14	1
Sep-14	2
	62



NYT - Catalonia	
Jan-18	5
Dec-17	12
Nov-17	11
Oct-17	55
Sep-17	14
Aug-17	2
Jul-17	2
Jun-17	2
May-17	2
Apr-17	1
Mar-17	1
Feb-17	1
Jan-17	1
Dec-16	1
Nov-16	1
Oct-16	1
Sep-16	6
Aug-16	1
Jun-16	2
May-16	1
Apr-16	1

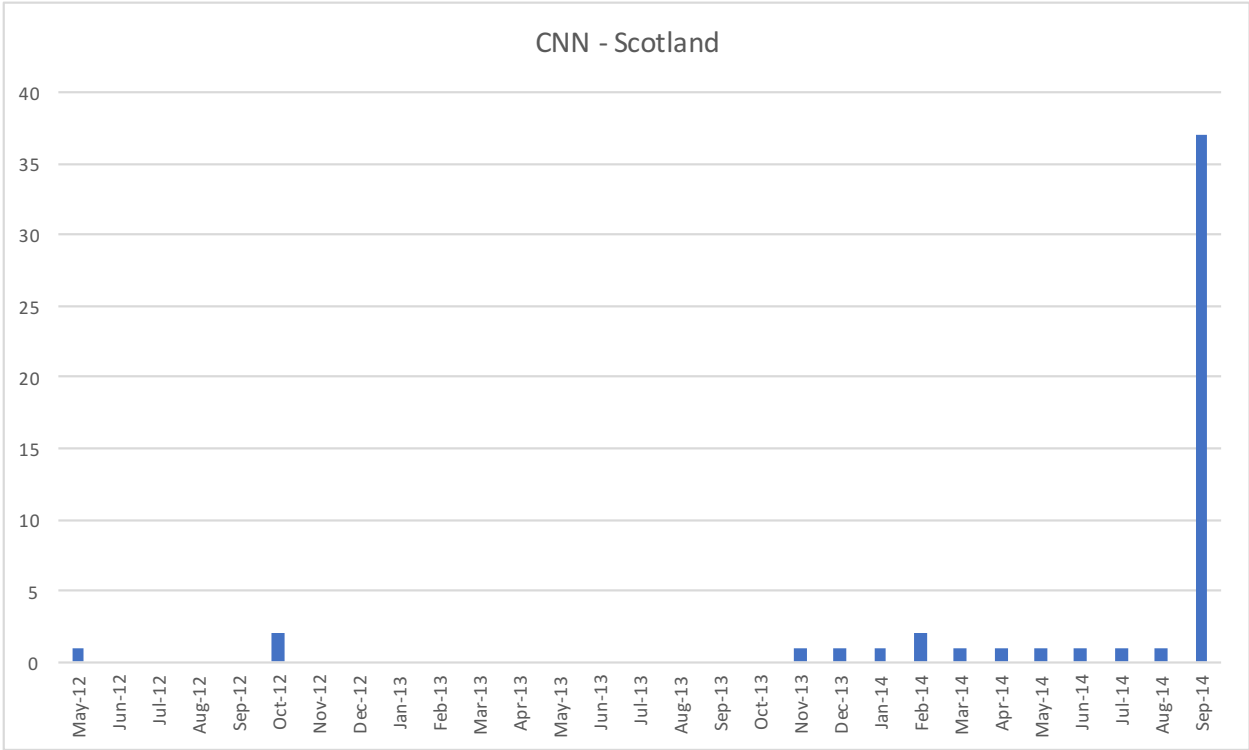
Mar-16	1
Feb-16	1
Jan-16	4
Dec-15	3
Nov-15	2
Oct-15	3
Sep-15	3
Aug-15	1
Jul-15	1
Jun-15	1
May-15	1
Apr-15	1
Mar-15	1
Feb-15	1
Jan-15	1
Dec-14	1
Nov-14	1
Oct-14	1
Sep-14	10
Aug-14	1
	162



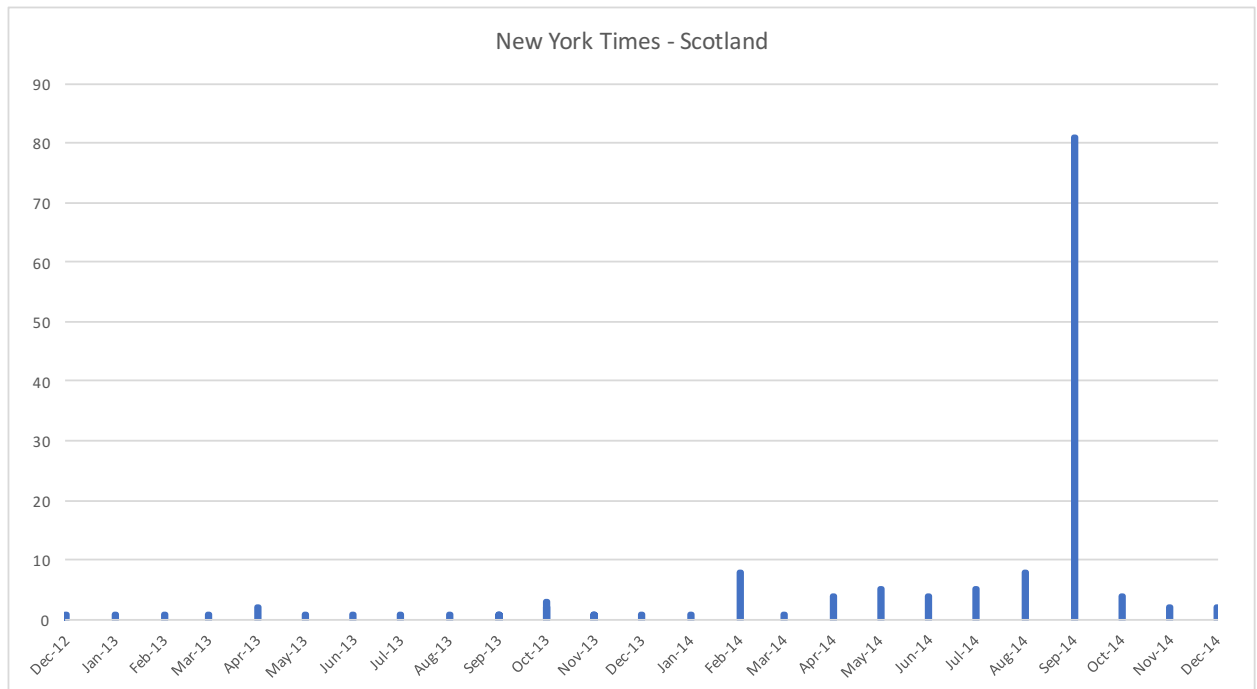
Tally's for WSJ Catalonia

Jan-18	2
Dec-17	9
Nov-17	8
Oct-17	50
Sep-17	16
Aug-17	1
Jul-17	1
Jun-17	1
May-17	1
Apr-17	1
Mar-17	1
Feb-17	1
Jan-17	1
Dec-16	1
Nov-16	1
Oct-16	1
Sep-16	1
Aug-16	1
Jul-16	1
Jun-16	1
May-16	1
Apr-16	1
Mar-16	1
Feb-16	1
Jan-16	4
Dec-15	3

Nov-15	2
Oct-15	2
Sep-15	14
Aug-15	1
Jul-15	1
Jun-15	1
May-15	1
Apr-15	2
Mar-15	1
Feb-15	1
Jan-15	1
Dec-14	1
Nov-14	6
	145

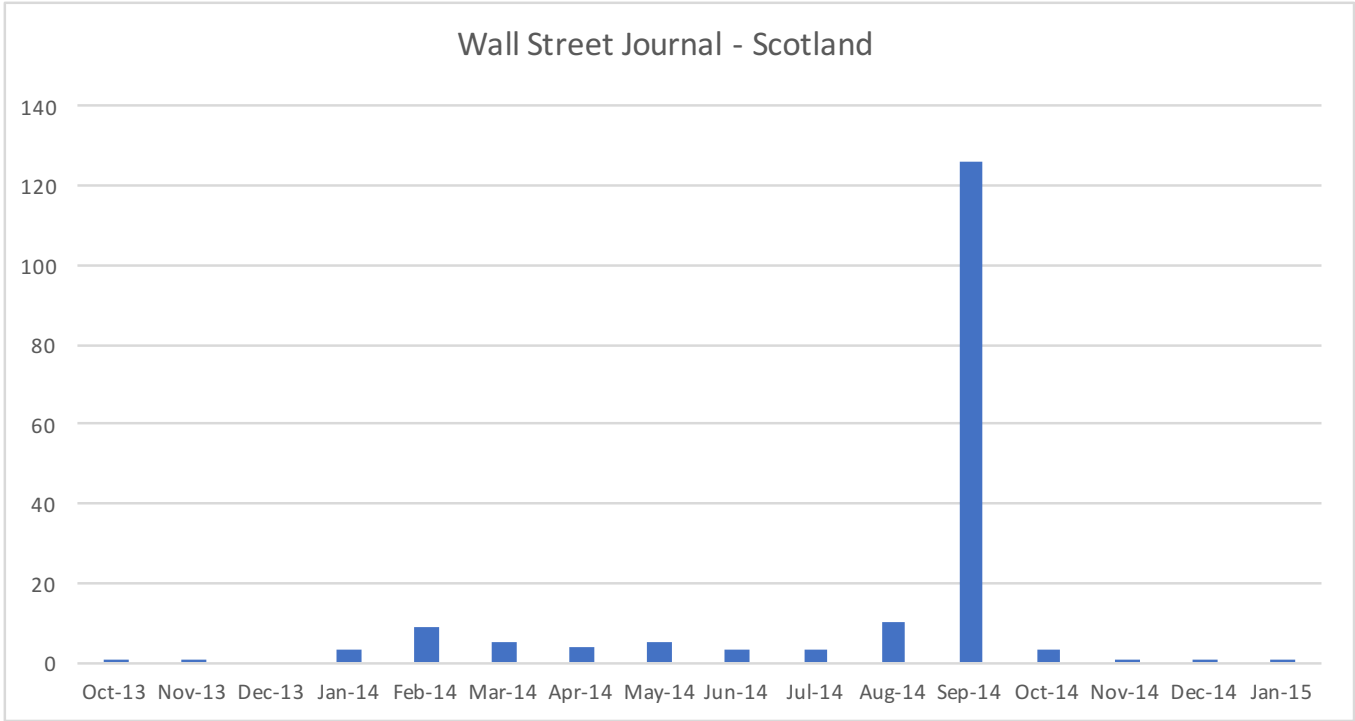


Sep-14	37
Aug-14	1
Jul-14	1
Jun-14	1
May-14	1
Apr-14	1
Mar-14	1
Feb-14	2
Jan-14	1
Dec-13	1
Nov-13	1
Oct-12	2
May-12	1
	51



NYT - Scotland	
Dec-14	2
Nov-14	2
Oct-14	4
Sep-14	81
Aug-14	8
Jul-14	5
Jun-14	4
May-14	5
Apr-14	4
Mar-14	1
Feb-14	8
Jan-14	1
Dec-13	1
Nov-13	1
Oct-13	2

Sep-13	1
Aug-13	1
Jul-13	1
Jun-13	1
May-13	1
Apr-13	2
Mar-13	1
Feb-13	1
Jan-13	1
Dec-12	1
Nov-13	1
Oct-13	3
Sep-13	1
	145



WSJ - Scotland	
Jan-15	1
Dec-14	1
Nov-14	1
Oct-14	3
Sep-14	126
Aug-14	10
Jul-14	3
Jun-14	3
May-14	5
Apr-14	4
Mar-14	5
Feb-14	9
Jan-14	3
Dec-13	0
Nov-13	1
Oct-13	1
	176

Survey Template and Results

1) From what country did Catalonia attempt to separate?

3) What city the capital of Catalonia?

2) What country did Scotland attempt to separate?

4) What city the capital of Scotland?

*for the following two questions, 0 indicates never (least); 7 indicates daily (most)

5) How often do you consume news related to the United States?

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

6) How often do you consume news related to the rest of the world?

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

*for the following two questions, 0 indicates no knowledge (least); 7 indicates knowing the main ideas and some important details (most)

7) Rate your awareness of the recent Catalan independence movement

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

8) Rate your awareness of the 2014 Scottish independence referendum

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

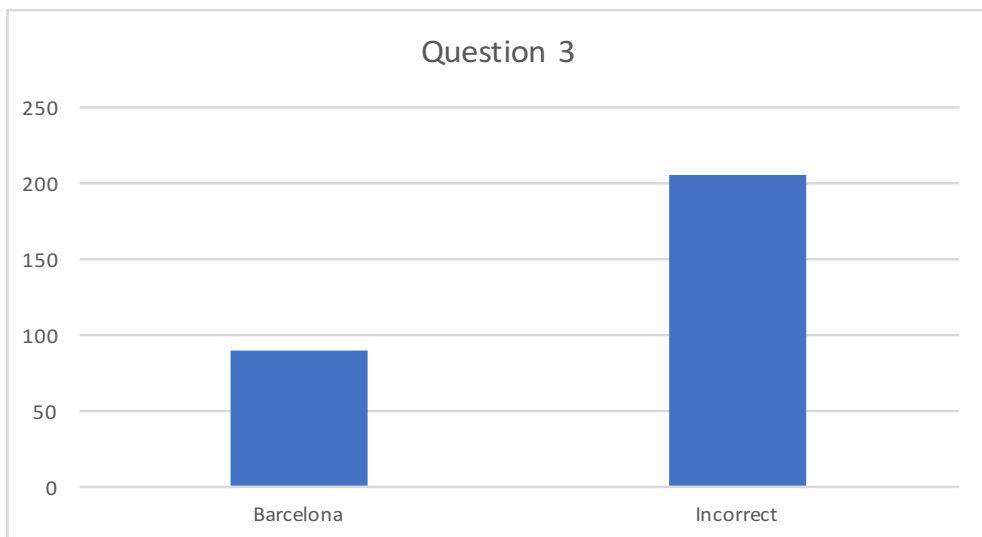
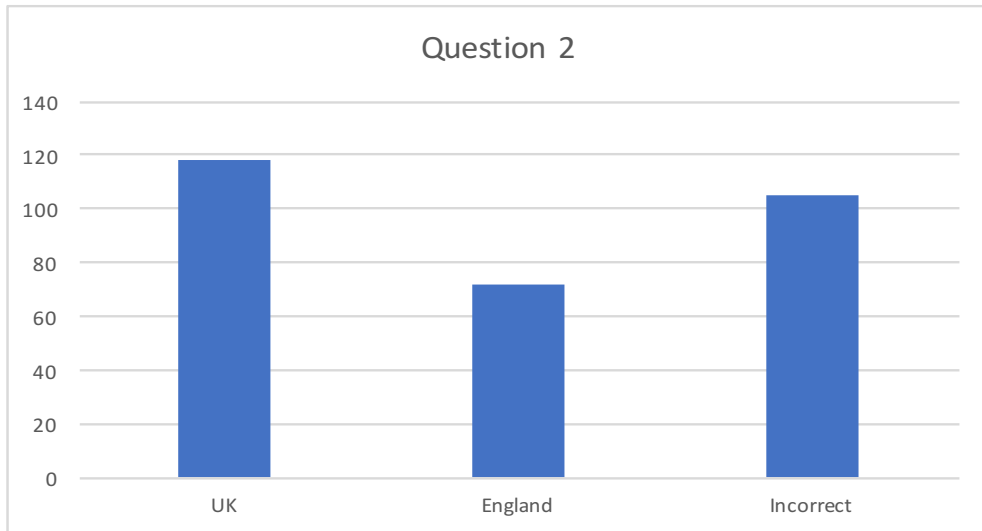
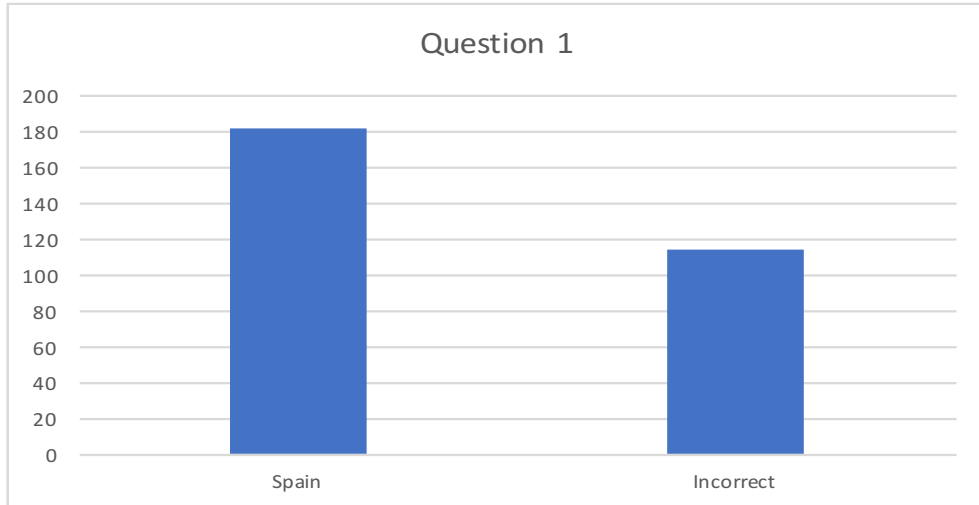
9) If you have an opinion on the subject, should Catalonia be independent?

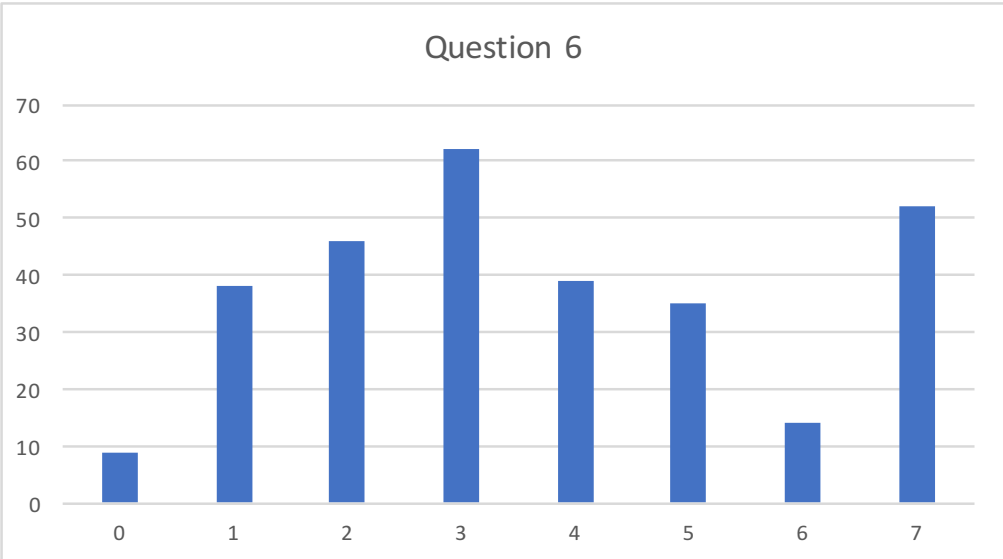
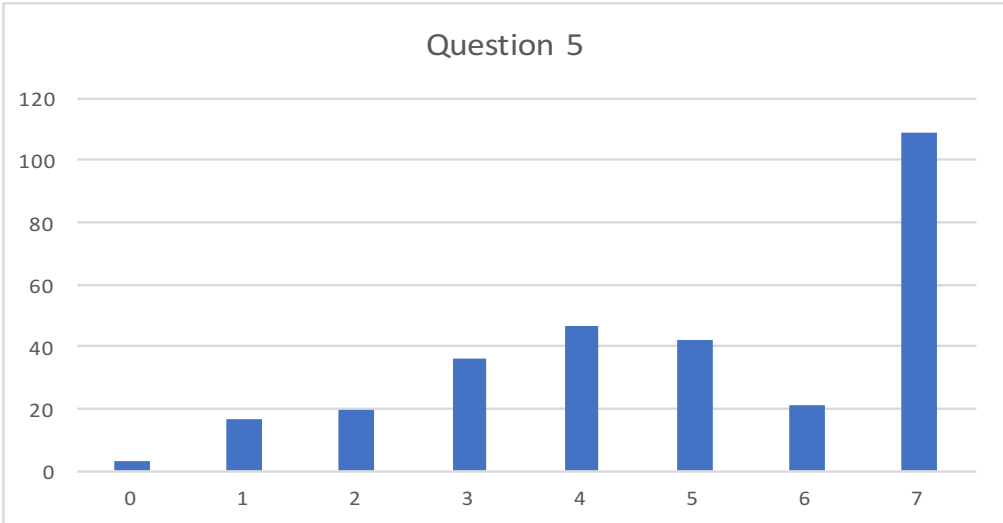
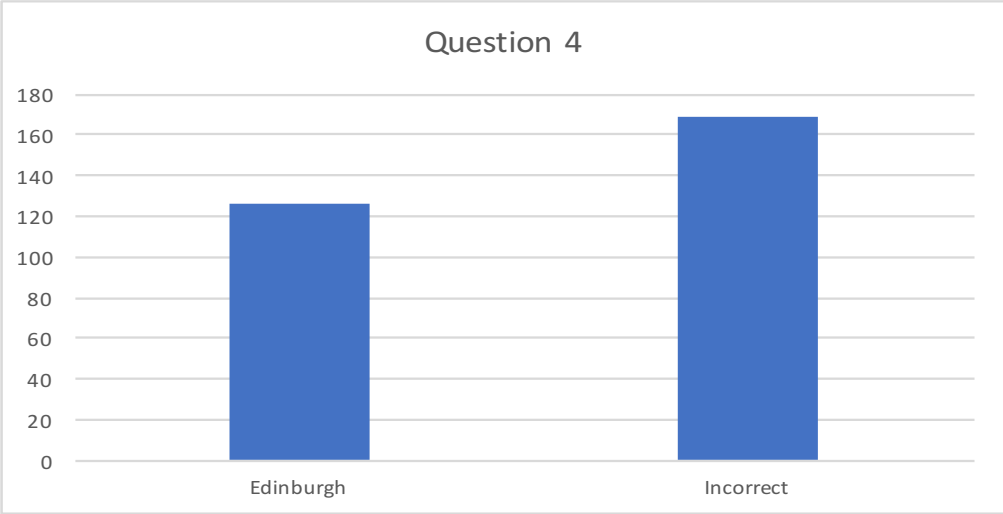
___ I don't have an opinion

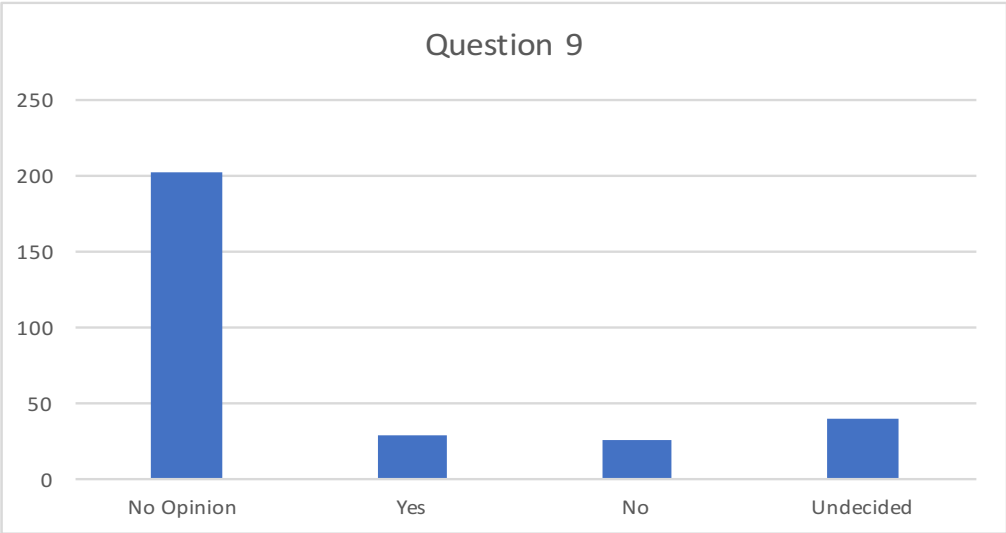
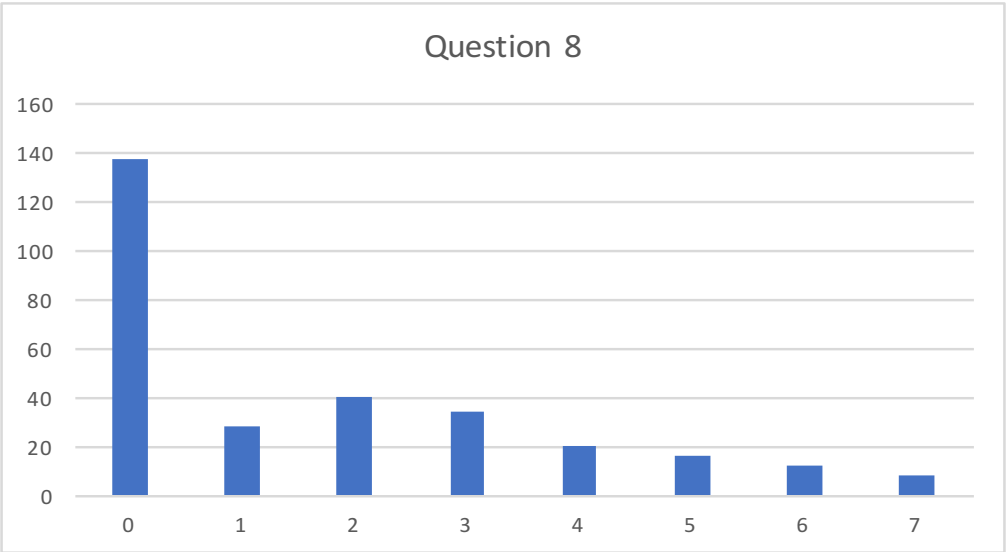
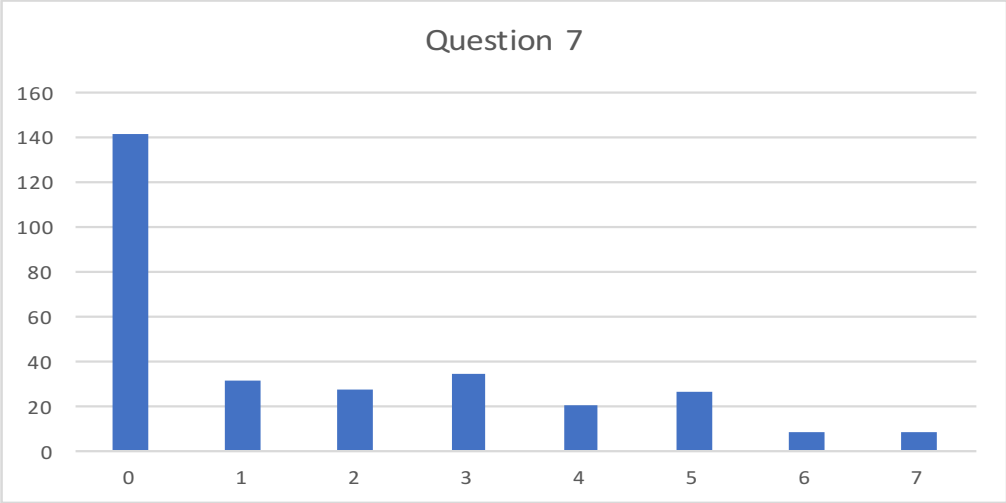
___ yes

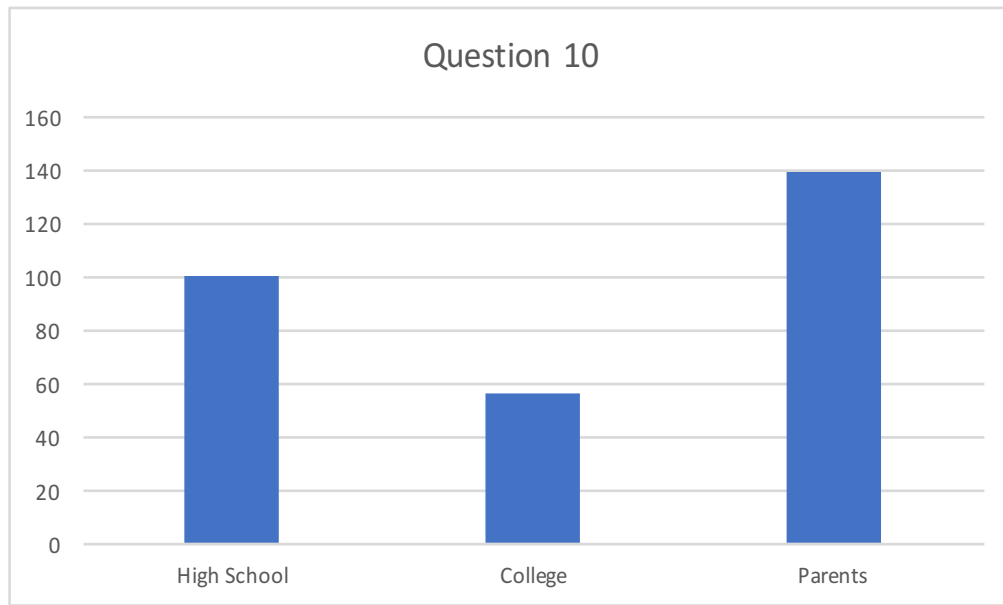
___ no

___ undecided









Discussion of Research Results

The graphs show that there was hardly any coverage in the months before and after the referendums, but considerable spikes in articles published in the days surrounding them. This indicates that people that did not receive much context at all, and they only would have been exposed to the events if they were paying close attention to the news in the midst of the voting and reactions. Coverage of the Scottish case after the referendum was virtually nonexistent because it was a legal vote and Brexit, an arguably much more significant event, dominated news concerning the United Kingdom. Catalonia continued to receive some coverage because of the takeover of the regional government, the declaration of independence, the new regional elections, and the Catalan leaders' legal situations. If either of these movements were to have been successful, the American press would probably have continued to cover the aftermath and

the steps toward complete sovereignty. In the Catalan case, since Madrid was so strongly opposed considering the illegality of regions seceding in Spain, the likelihood of Catalonia transitioning smoothly as an independent nation into the EU was very small to begin with. This could explain the lack of American coverage and analysis leading up to the October 1 referendum, and the American press' focus on events such as the police confrontations and exiled Catalan leaders. Internal political strife in a country that does not have a very strong economic relationship with the US is not usually a priority for the American media.

The survey results indicate that there was a general lack of knowledge and awareness in these groups about the independence movements, as predicted. This suggests that the news either did not reach this audience or that the audience was not inclined to read stories about the political situations in these countries. Unless these individuals were particularly interested in world politics, headlines from an unfamiliar region of Spain and a small part of the U.K. would have probably gone unnoticed. This survey, as emphasized, was not an indicator of the average American's awareness of these independence movements. It merely a way to confirm my hypothesis that people around me had not been educated about these independence movements, and was not a significant part of my process of evaluating if these events received enough coverage relative to their importance.

Chapter 3: Discussion

Introduction

The goal of this chapter is to determine if the Catalan crisis is worthy of becoming a major news story in the US. To do this, the political legitimacy of the movement itself and international commentary, social impacts, and economic and diplomatic reverberations must be considered. In this chapter, I discuss the critical facets of these categories as they relate to the independence movement, and assess their significance to the American public.

Political Controversy

According to the Spanish constitution, holding an independence referendum is illegal. In this sense, the Catalan regional government and its leaders broke multiple federal laws, first in staging the referendum, and then in its declaration of Catalonia as an independent nation. After the referendum, the Spanish government invoked Article 155, the “nuclear option,” of the constitution. Never used before until the Catalonia case, here is the entirety of Article 155 translated to English:

If a self-governing community does not fulfill the obligations imposed upon it by the Constitution or other laws, or acts in a way that is seriously prejudicial to the general interest of Spain, the government, after having lodged a complaint with the president of the self-governing community and failed to receive satisfaction therefore, may, following approval granted by the overall majority of the senate, take all measures necessary to compel the community to meet said obligations, or to protect the above mentioned general interest.⁵²

Spanish Prime Minister Mariano Rajoy announced that the takeover of the Catalan regional government was a measure to restore “normal political circumstances” in advance of the new Catalan elections that were held on December 21. This was, unsurprisingly, met with much backlash as Catalan supporters insisted that Article 155 is vague, contains ambiguities, and is unfair considering this is the first time it was ever executed. Several Catalan leaders, including President Puigdemont, fled the country because if they remained in Spain, as some leaders did, they would be arrested and tried for treason.⁵³

The counter argument against the supposed illegality of the independence vote and possible secession stems from the concept of a people's “Right to Decide” among fundamental democratic principles. The Catalan government commissioned a group of international experts to produce a report weighing different aspects of the legitimacy of the drive for political self-determination and the staging of a referendum. Their final recommendation was,

⁵² Amanda Erickson, "Analysis | The Future of Catalonia May Well Hinge on an 84-word Section of the 1978 Spanish Constitution," *The Washington Post*, October 27, 2017, , accessed April 8, 2018, https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/worldviews/wp/2017/10/27/why-does-spains-article-155-exist-and-what-does-it-actually-say/?utm_term=.1b536a6a0bfc.

⁵³ Rafa Perez Bel, "Article 155 Will Eliminate Full Democracy in Catalonia," October 25, 2017, , accessed February 18, 2018, <https://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/opinion/article-155-eliminate-full-democracy-catalonia-171024100144889.html>.

...the exploration of an earned sovereignty negotiating process within the framework of the EU. This would imply involvement by EU institutions; we consider it possible in the perspective of a negotiation within the EU, fully implying Spain in seeking for Catalonia a constrained sovereignty solution, as a full member of the EU.

The arrival at this proposal was the culmination of several compounding judgments made by the panel. A summary follows;

First, they note the “deteriorating political relationship” that has characterized Spanish-Catalan relations, particularly in recent years when the “Spanish government has gradually renounced the accommodation of Catalan territorial demands.” Since 2010 when the ruling on the updated Statute of Autonomy occurred, support has massively shifted from “asking for the maintenance of the current ‘status quo’ to demands of ‘political independence,’ irrespective of people’s age.” In terms of the “Right to Decide,” the experts concluded that this is basic democratic principle especially given that the Spanish government has continuously denied requests of the Catalan government. This is supported by an interpretation of international law and EU conventions. According to the experts’ judgment of international law standards, “there is no international legal prohibition barring a sub-state entity from deciding its political destiny by assessing the will of its people.” On top of that, “EU member states have recognized many former sub-state entities that assessed their people’s political will and decided to pursue independence.” This holds for states that were both acting with and without consent of their national governments, so accordingly, the “EU recognizes the Right to Decide.”

The next portion of the panel’s conclusions focuses on the lack of a “supreme constitutional interpreter” and the importance of practical, logical discussion amongst members

of a democratic society with a living constitution. Because an omniscient, omnipotent judge does not exist, “What is crucial in a constitutional state that is faithful to the ambitions of constitutionalism is the ongoing dialogue about, and engagement with, constitutional values and principles.” Spain declaring the Catalan independence proceedings illegal is thus a denial of peaceful, productive dialogue. Negotiation is necessary in instances when two legitimate political entities are in conflict, and “in a modern democratic State, rule of law and democratic legitimacy need to be reconciled and cannot in the long term remain opposed.” This is why, with consideration that the national laws are technically being violated, the denial of “The Right to Decide” does not align with a “genuine liberal democracy.” These experts believe that in this case, the self-determination referendum is the “only path left for Catalonia’s Authorities,” thus arriving at the final conclusion stated above.⁵⁴

Since, as discussed, there are opposing viewpoints concerning the validity of the “Right to Decide” and right to secede within Spain, it is necessary to consider the positions of world leaders and other outside authoritative figures beginning with Europe. On October 27, 2017, Donald Tusk, President of the European Council, tweeted, “For EU nothing changes. Spain remains our only interlocutor. I hope the Spanish government favours force of argument, not argument of force.”⁵⁵ The EU has communicated that in the event of Catalonia achieving independence from Spain, it would not automatically become an EU member state. It would have to apply for EU membership and unanimous support from all current EU states, including Spain, would be required.

⁵⁴ Paul R. Williams et al., “The Legitimacy of Catalonia’s Exercise of Its Right to Decide,” *SSRN Electronic Journal*, 2017, , doi:10.2139/ssrn.3078292.

⁵⁵ “Catalan Independence Declaration Changes Nothing for EU, Says Tusk,” *Reuters*, October 27, 2017, , accessed March 04, 2018, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-spain-politics-catalonia-tusk/catalan-independence-declaration-changes-nothing-for-eu-says-tusk-idUSKBN1CW220>.

Many other responses from key Europeans mirrored that of Tusk. The current French President, Emmanuel Macron stated, "There is a rule of law in Spain with constitutional rules. Mariano Rajoy wants these rules to be respected and he has my full support."⁵⁶ British Prime Minister Theresa May remarked, "We believe that people should be abiding by the rule of law and uphold the Spanish constitution."⁵⁷ A spokesperson of German Chancellor Angela Merkel said "The (German) federal government does not recognize such an independence declaration," and added "We hope that those involved will use all available opportunities for dialogue and de-escalation."⁵⁸ The response from Scotland, however, was more sympathetic towards Catalonia. In a statement, Fiona Hyslop, Scotland's external affairs minister stated:

We understand and respect the position of the Catalan Government. While Spain has the right to oppose independence, the people of Catalonia must have the ability to determine their own future. Today's Declaration of Independence came about only after repeated calls for dialogue were refused... The European Union has a political and moral responsibility to support dialogue to identify how the situation can be resolved peacefully and democratically.⁵⁹

⁵⁶ "France's Macron Expresses Full Support to Spanish PM over Catalonia...," *Reuters*, October 27, 2017, , accessed March 14, 2018, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-spain-politics-catalonia-france/frances-macron-expresses-full-support-to-spanish-pm-over-catalonia-crisis-idUSKBN1CW2F0>.

⁵⁷ "May Sides with Madrid in Catalonia Stand-off," *Reuters*, October 20, 2017, , accessed March 14, 2018, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-spain-politics-catalonia-may/may-sides-with-madrid-in-catalonia-stand-off-idUSKBN1CP18I>.

⁵⁸ "Germany Refuses to Recognize Catalonia Independence Move," *Reuters*, October 27, 2017, , accessed March 15, 2018, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-spain-politics-catalonia-germany/germany-refuses-to-recognize-catalonia-independence-move-idUSKBN1CW196>.

⁵⁹ "Scottish Devolved Government Says Respects Catalan Independence...," *Reuters*, October 27, 2017, , accessed March 16, 2018, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-spain-politics-catalonia-scotland/scottish-devolved-government-says-respects-catalonian-independence-position-idUSKBN1CW2H6>.

Russian President Vladimir Putin reacted differently. He viewed the reaction from the UN as hypocritical, citing Kosovo's recent declaration of independence from Serbia. He remarked,

According to some of our colleagues there are true freedom fighters and there are separatists who cannot defend their own rights, even through democratic mechanisms... This is the most poignant example of double standards and they pose a great risk for the stable development of Europe and other continents.

Given the notoriously unpredictable nature of Russia and the fact that Madrid directly accused Russia of using social media to promote Catalonia around the time of the referendum, Putin's statement should be met with much skepticism.⁶⁰ The United States backed Spanish unity, as both former president Barack Obama and current president Donald Trump have communicated. The only official response from the US State department, which came after the Catalan regional elections of October 27, reads, "Catalonia is an integral part of Spain, and the United States supports the Spanish government's constitutional measures to keep Spain strong and united."⁶¹ When Prime Minister Rajoy visited with President Trump in Washington, D.C. about a week before the referendum, President Trump commented:

I think the people of Catalonia have been talking about this for a long time. But I bet you if you had accurate numbers and accurate polling, you'd find that they love their country, they love Spain, and they wouldn't leave. So I'm just for united Spain.

⁶⁰ Emma Anderson, "Putin Accuses EU of 'double Standards' on Catalonia and Kosovo," *POLITICO*, October 19, 2017, , accessed March 17, 2018, <https://www.politico.eu/article/vladimir-putin-catalonia-accuses-eu-of-double-standards-on-catalonia-and-kosovo/>.

⁶¹ "U.S. Backs Spanish Efforts to Block Break-away by Catalonia," *Reuters*, October 27, 2017, , accessed March 18, 2018, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-spain-politics-catalonia-usa/u-s-backs-spanish-efforts-to-block-break-away-by-catalonia-idUSKBN1CW280>.

I speak as the President of the United States, as somebody that has great respect for your President, and also has really great respect for your country. I really think the people of Catalonia would stay with Spain. I think it would be foolish not to. Because you're talking about staying with a truly great, beautiful, and very historic country.⁶²

Other than those remarks, however, there has been a dearth of commentary from American leaders on the Catalan independence movement.

In summary of the political aspect of the independence movement, there is a provocative debate concerning the legality of the referendum and possible secession, and the rest of the world has not had very much involvement in trying to mediate the conflict. The world and its political mechanisms, both small and large-scale, change rapidly and it is difficult to make conclusive decisions about such an issue when considering similar events and their very different contexts. The consensus among world leaders is that this is an internal issue in Spain, but there was no excuse for violence to occur during a peaceful vote. “Dialogue” was a word that nearly all world leaders included in their statements regarding Catalan secessionism. Considering this, unless the relationship between Catalonia and Spain devolves further, it is unlikely that the rest of the world will interject. If Catalonia were to eventually gain independence, its status as a member of the EU would be the next question and that, as mentioned, would be problematic. Thus, the American coverage of the independence movement rightfully peaked during the critical month of

⁶² David Frum, "Catalan Nationalism Means More European Division," *The Atlantic*, September 30, 2017, , accessed March 13, 2018, <https://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2017/09/trump-spain-catalonia-referendum-independence/541572/>.

October when there was violence, a highly contentious referendum, and a declaration of independence.

Social Impacts

This section will consider aspects of the independence drive relating to social and humanitarian issues. It will include a discussion about the police interactions with Catalan activists, the consistent, massive displays of Catalan pride, and the importance of Catalan nationalism that could affect other strands of nationalism and independence drives in Europe and around the world.

On the day of the referendum, reports that police used violence against voters grabbed headlines around the world. According to the Human Rights Watch, Spanish police used batons to strike unarmed and non-threatening protesters. Kartik Raj, a Western Europe Researcher at Human Rights Watch, commented, “Our detailed investigation into three cases found that national police and Civil Guard officers used excessive force on October 1 in Catalonia.” Numerous photos and videos posted to social media documented these acts, and some of this media was used in news reports around the world. It was estimated by Catalonia’s Health Department that there were 893 reported injuries, although only a small fraction required hospitalization and there were no fatalities. Of that total, 384 occurred in the greater Barcelona area and 150 occurred in and around the city of Girona. It was also reported by Spain’s Ministry

of the Interior that 19 national police and 14 Civil Guards were harmed and required urgent care.⁶³

However, Spain's foreign minister, Alfonso Dastis, made several statements attempting to alleviate negative perceptions of the police actions and dismiss the many of the images of police brutality that surfaced on the internet. Regarding the violence, he stated, "If there was any use of force, it was a limited one, prompted by the fact that the law and order agencies were prevented from discharging the orders of the courts."⁶⁴ Dastis' remarks on the internet images included, "Many of those pictures have proven to be fake pictures," but he later qualified that statement remarking that, "I am not saying that all are fake pictures, but some of them are and there have been a lot of alternative facts and fake news."⁶⁵ It is difficult to judge where the absolute truth lies in this situation, but there is no denying that there was a great amount of animosity from both sides in the days surrounding the vote.

In analyzing other social impacts of the push towards Catalan independence, an aspect that can't be ignored is the enormous public displays of Catalan pride. Consistently on the Diada, September 11, Catalonia's national day, vast numbers of people take to the streets of Barcelona and elsewhere to celebrate their identity. Recently, as in the years since the ruling on the updated Statute of Autonomy, these rallies have become colossal and as much political statements as cultural. The 2017 Diada was one of vast significance. The president of the Catalan National Assembly (ANC), Jordi Sanchez, said that "The Diada is a historic day of self-affirmation and

⁶³ "Spain: Police Used Excessive Force in Catalonia," *Human Rights Watch*, October 12, 2017, , accessed March 21, 2018, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2017/10/12/spain-police-used-excessive-force-catalonia>.

⁶⁴ "Spain: Police Used Excessive Force in Catalonia," *Human Rights Watch*, October 12, 2017, , accessed March 21, 2018, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2017/10/12/spain-police-used-excessive-force-catalonia>.

⁶⁵ Sam Jones, "Catalonia Weighs up Declaration of Independence," *The Guardian*, October 22, 2017, , accessed March 21, 2018, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/oct/22/spain-calls-on-catalans-to-respect-decision-to-impose-direct-rule>.

expression; it's about the symbolic remembering of the freedoms that were lost 300 years ago," and described the most recent one as a "day when you can show your unequivocal support for a future that's different from the past and the present." On September 11, 2017, it was reported by city police that around one million people gathered in Barcelona as one of the largest public rallies in modern European history. It is important to note that the participants at this rally held a one minute period of silence to commemorate the victims of the terrorist attack that killed 16 in a heavily populated area of Barcelona, a significant event that also demanded the attention of the world.⁶⁶

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⁶⁶ Sam Jones, "Catalans to Celebrate Their National Day with Independence Protests," *The Guardian*, September 10, 2017, , accessed March 23, 2018, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/sep/10/catalans-celebrate-national-day-independence-protests>.

⁶⁷ Sam Jones, "One Million Catalans March for Independence on Region's National Day," *The Guardian*, September 11, 2017, , accessed March 23, 2018, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/sep/11/catalonia-barcelona-independence-national-day-diada#img-1>.

Above is an image, courtesy of The Guardian, that shows the streets of Barcelona on the most recent Diada. The prominent yellow color seen in the crowds is from the *Estelada*, the Catalan secessionist flags, that is the primary symbol of the independence movement. Confirmed by personal experience, these flags are ubiquitous in Catalonia and easily outnumber Spanish national flags in the Catalonia. Another key symbol of the independence movement is a flag that contains a text bubble with the letters “Si,” or “Yes” to independence. These are also found hanging from many balconies in Barcelona and beyond, capturing the attention of many visitors who might not be familiar with the political state of the region.

These unceasing displays of Catalan pride and identity are not only significant for the situation in Spain. There are numerous other pro-independence movements occurring in Europe and beyond, though many lack the flare of the Catalan affair and have not yet mustered enough support and organization to legitimately present a challenge their parent states. Such cases include Scotland, sections of Northern Italy, the Flanders region of Belgium, the Corsica region of France, and the Basque region of Spain must be included. This recent crescendo of nationalism in Europe has concerned those who want the European Union to remain intact and undivided. The European Commission president, Jean-Claude Juncker remarked, "[The EU] doesn't need any more cracks, more splits.... We shouldn't insert ourselves into what is an internal debate for Spain, but I wouldn't want the European Union to consist of 95 member states in the future." Commenting on this idea, Sebastian Balfour, a London School of Economics and Political Science emeritus professor of contemporary Spanish studies, said the, "response of European governments to the events in Spain reflects a certain degree of insecurity among them about fragmentations [and] the idea that once one of these regions is independent, then this will start a stampede." Given that Catalonia remains a part of Spain to this day, there haven't been

many developments in those mentioned regions aside from speculation in Scotland about planning another referendum. This was primarily a response to the Scottish rejection of Brexit (a 24-point margin) but the scenes from the Catalan referendum undoubtedly caught the attention of Scottish independence supporters.⁶⁸

Although secessionism in the United States is rarely a serious topic and has not gained much political traction, it was estimated in 2014 that around a quarter of Americans want their state to secede. Like in Catalonia, supporters of independence in Texas and California, two geographically and economically large states, cite overpaying the federal government and right to self-determination as key reasons for wanting independence or at least referendums. However, it is argued that these situations are not comparable given recent history and the fact that Catalonia has its own distinct language. Texas was indeed an independent republic from 1836 to 1846 (before the Civil War), but H.W. Brands, Professor at UT Austin claims that the modern Texas independence movement is “mostly symbolic,” unlike the Catalan case, and resonates mainly with people who oppose big government -- a line of reasoning used by many secessionists in different countries since increasing globalization has become a perceived threat to local identities.⁶⁹ Texas has not struggled with a dictatorship in the past century that oppressed regional identity and tried to unify the country through homogenization of vastly different regions.

⁶⁸ Molly Hennessy-Fiske, "Catalonia Crisis Encourages Separatists, but Could It Fracture Europe?" *Los Angeles Times*, October 30, 2017, , accessed March 26, 2018, <http://www.latimes.com/world/europe/la-fg-catalonia-europe-20171030-story.html>.

⁶⁹ Lucia Benavides, "How the Catalan Independence Movement Has Inspired Texan Secessionists," *Texas Monthly*, November 09, 2017, , accessed March 29, 2018, <https://www.texasmonthly.com/article/catalan-independence-texas-secession/>.

Among the three categories discussed in this chapter, the social impact is arguably the most deserving of American coverage. According to the Economist Intelligence Unit's Democracy Index, both the USA and Spain are considered to be between "flawed" democracies and "full" democracies. From 2016 to 2017, the US was rated a consistent 7.98/10 and Spain dropped from an 8.3 rating in 2016 to 8.08 in 2017. For perspective, in 2017, Britain received a 8.53 rating, France a 7.8, Italy a 7.98, and Germany a 8.61.⁷⁰ Massive protests and episodes of violence involving state police and citizens, then, should not be received lightly in a country (the USA) that is of similar political status. Not to argue that there should have been intervention on the part of the USA, but the lack of commentary from US leaders in the aftermath of the contested referendum might be enough to raise concern from the American public about how its leaders address social and political conflicts in highly-developed nations. On the other hand, a non-interventionist approach to foreign relations, an attitude shared by many Americans and politicians, could justify the scarcity of American interruption. Perhaps previous administrations in the US would have had different stances on the issues in Spain and that would have led to more awareness and stronger opinions from the American public, but that is difficult to judge. President Trump's firm support of a united Spain, and a lack of discourse from other US politicians likely affected the amount of coverage the Catalan crisis received within the United States. Since the Catalan independence drive was unsuccessful in the short run, the media attention paid to its narrative dropped suddenly.

⁷⁰ "The Economist Intelligence Unit's Democracy Index," *The Economist*, , accessed March 29, 2018, <https://infographics.economist.com/2018/DemocracyIndex/>.

Economic and Diplomatic Relations

The economic and diplomatic effects of the independence movement will be discussed in this section with an emphasis on its relevance to the United States' economy. An overview of relations between Spain and the US is necessary to build context. Following that, an analysis of the relative importance of the Catalan situation will be presented that considers both direct and indirect economic consequences.

Spain and the USA share a “mutually beneficial” relationship. Spain has been a member of NATO (The North Atlantic Treaty Organization) since 1982 and a member of the EU (European Union) since 1986, both significant organizations to the United States in terms of diplomacy and economic relations. The Spanish language is also a significant aspect of this relationship, as Spain has proven to strongly influence other Spanish-speaking countries. Many of these Spanish-speaking countries are geographically very close to the United States and many people from those countries immigrate to the US.⁷¹ In 2016, it was estimated that the United States is home to 58 million Hispanic people which is approximately 18% of the population.⁷²

⁷¹ Derek E. Mix, "Spain and Its Relations with the United States: In Brief," Congressional Research Service, April 19, 2018, , accessed April 20, 2018.

⁷² Antonio Flores, "How the U.S. Hispanic Population Is Changing," *Pew Research Center*, September 18, 2017, , accessed April 2, 2018, <http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2017/09/18/how-the-u-s-hispanic-population-is-changing/>.

Defense and counterterrorism are defining features of Spain-US relations. Spain sits at a strategic point with access to both Europe and Northern Africa and the US has used this to its advantage. After World War II and in the midst of the Franco regime, the US sought to make agreements with the Spain to establish a military presence in the Iberian Peninsula to counter communist threats and, in return, offer economic and military aid to help modernize the isolated country.⁷³ In 1953, leaders negotiated the Madrid Pact that included several compromises from both sides. The US obtained access to several military bases in Spain that it could utilize only after consultation with Spain unless the Soviet Union was the instigator. Spain received arguably outdated military supplies and economic grants. The monetary aid and altering of Franco's isolationist economic policies proved to be a stimulant to Spain's economy and beneficial in the long run as it gained access to foreign investment, trade, and mass produced products.⁷⁴ Meanwhile, the United States military has remained present in Spain and this has helped it facilitate several overseas conflicts, notably the Gulf War. Shortly after Spain became a member of NATO, the agreements of 1953 were updated and have continued to evolve. An airbase at Morón that the United States has access to under the bilateral Agreement on Defense Cooperation has been a vital means of US military transportation to and from the Middle East.⁷⁵

Spain is the fourth largest economy in the Eurozone, excluding Russia. Its economy has been one of the strongest performers in the EU since the financial crisis. This is significant because the EU combined is one of the largest trading partners for the US in terms of imports and exports. However, though the United States and Spain have strong ties in many areas, they

⁷³ "Spain," U.S. Department of State, January 24, 2018, , accessed February 16, 2018, <https://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/2878.htm>.

⁷⁴ Boris Nikolaj Liedtke, "International Relations between the U.S. and Spain 1945-53 Economics, Ideology and Compromise," PhD diss., London School of Economics and Political Sciences, 1996, abstract in.

⁷⁵ Derek E. Mix, "Spain and Its Relations with the United States: In Brief," Congressional Research Service, April 19, 2018, , accessed April 20, 2018.

are not very reliant on each other economically. In 2017, the US exported around 11 billion US dollars of goods and services to Spain and imported only 15 billion dollars. This only is 0.05% of the GDP of the United States. Spain is not even in the top 20 US trading partners in the world, and it is barely in the top 10 European countries.⁷⁶ Even if Spain were to have suffered economically from the events in Catalonia, it would have hardly affected the United States. But Spain's economy ended 2017 with net growth despite the political unrest, adding to the insignificance of the Catalan situation.⁷⁷ Given that, the coverage of the Catalan crisis in the United States probably was not concerned with the economic consequences.

The less direct economic effects of the independence movement should also be considered to provide a more extensive analysis of Spain and Catalonia's relative importance to the US, first with an examination of stock market reactions to the events surrounding the October referendum, and then with look at Catalonia's economic situation. Spanish stocks reacted mostly negatively in times of uncertainty (the referendum itself, the declaration of independence, and then when separatist parties performed well in the new regional elections), and positively when Spain imposed direct control.⁷⁸ The net effect of the political unrest in Catalonia to the Spanish economy has been negative. The Eurozone markets as a whole, in contrast, experienced some volatility in the midst of the events but was not affected as much as Spain in the larger picture. Basically, Spain was outperforming Europe until the vote and then underperformed as the following chart indicates.

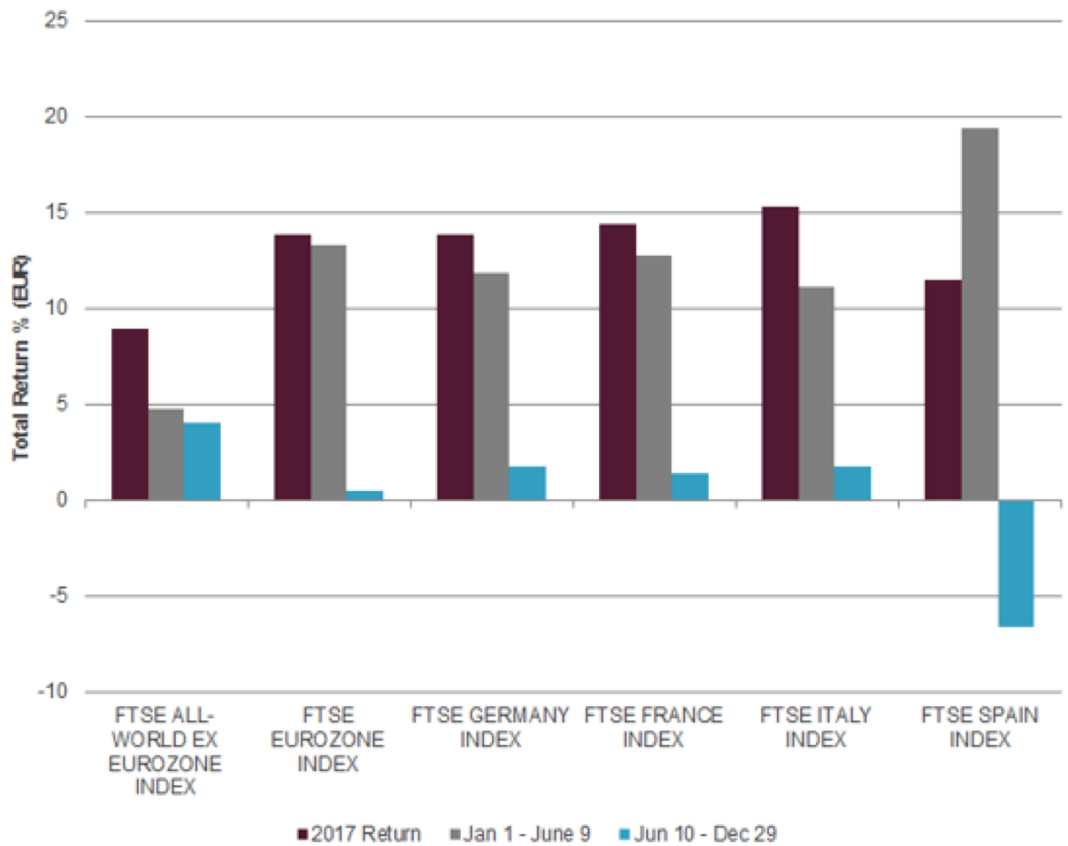
⁷⁶ Foreign Trade Data Dissemination Branch, "Foreign Trade: Data," U.S. Census Bureau, April 21, 2009, , accessed April 7, 2018, <https://www.census.gov/foreign-trade/statistics/highlights/top/top1712yr.html#total>.

⁷⁷ "Data for European Union, Spain ," GDP Growth (annual %) | Data, , accessed March 8, 2018, <https://data.worldbank.org/?locations=EU-ES>.

⁷⁸ "Catalan Declaration of Independence Hits Stock Markets, Bonds, Euro," *Reuters*, October 27, 2017, , accessed April 3, 2018, <https://www.reuters.com/article/spain-politics-catalonia-markets/catalan-declaration-of-independence-hits-stock-markets-bonds-euro-idUSL8N1N257F>.

Total returns to the FTSE All-World ex Eurozone, Eurozone, Germany, France and Spain Indexes

Calendar year 2017; January 1 to June 9, 2017; June 10 to December 29, 2017. All returns in EUR.



Source: FTSE Russell. Past performance is no guarantee of future results. Please see the end for important legal disclosures.

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The broader economic community, thus, was not confident that Catalonia would be successful in separating. At the end of October, 2017, Claus Vistesén, chief Eurozone economist at Pantheon Macroeconomics commented, "Markets deem it unlikely that Catalonia will go full

⁷⁹ FTSE Russell Equity FTSE Russell.cls-1 {fill:#024999}; "Catalonian Independence And The Stock Market," *Seeking Alpha*, January 16, 2018, accessed April 8, 2018, <https://seekingalpha.com/article/4137660-catalonian-independence-stock-market>.

rogue and try to engineer some kind of hard break from Spain. After all, they don't have the support of government structure to do that."⁸⁰

The economy of Catalonia itself shouldn't be completely ignored in this analysis for future considerations. Close to 3,000 businesses left Catalonia in the time of the referendum due, with a large portion of those relocating to Madrid. This was clearly harmful to the Catalan economy and was largely a result of uncertainty looking ahead.⁸¹ Despite this, Catalonia, unless there are new, drastic developments, is not expected to decline in the business sphere. Earlier in 2017, a Financial Times subsidiary, the fDi, ranked Catalonia first for best places for foreign investment in south Europe for 2018-2019, considering economic potential, human capital, profitability, connectivity, and business climate.⁸² Joan Aregio, Catalan Secretary of Enterprise and Competitiveness, commented, "Catalonia has a privileged geostrategic position, a solid industrial base, an economy that is open to the world and highly innovative."⁸³ The United States, although it has very limited ties to the region aside from military presence, can't completely ignore the potential of Catalonia, especially given its rich research and entrepreneurial culture.

⁸⁰ Silvia Amaro, "3 Major Reasons Why Markets Don't Care about Spain's Catalan Crisis," *CNBC*, October 30, 2017, , accessed April 5, 2018, <https://www.cnbc.com/2017/10/30/3-major-reasons-why-markets-dont-care-about-spains-catalan-crisis.html>.

⁸¹ Amanda Erickson, "Since Catalonia's Independence Vote, 2,700 Businesses Have Moved Their Headquarters," *The Washington Post*, November 30, 2017, , accessed April 04, 2018, https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/worldviews/wp/2017/11/30/since-catalonias-independence-vote-2700-businesses-have-moved-their-headquarters/?utm_term=.d4f36b731c1a.

⁸² FDi Intelligence, "FDI's European Cities and Regions of the Future 2018/19 – FDI Strategy (Regions)," *FDI - FDIIntelligence.com*, , accessed April 8, 2018, <https://www.fdiintelligence.com/Locations/Europe/fDi-s-European-Cities-and-Regions-of-the-Future-2018-19-FDI-Strategy-Regions>.

⁸³ "The Financial Times Group Recognises Catalonia as the Best Southern European Region for Investment for 2018 and 2019," International Trade | Catalan Exports 2016, , accessed April 9, 2018, http://catalonia.com/newsletter_news/news/2018/financial-times-recognises-catalonia.jsp.

Conclusion

The purpose of this thesis was to weigh the significance of the Catalan independence movement to the American public and determine if the American media gave it a fair amount of coverage. It was shown in the news article graphs that, while there were considerable spikes in articles published during the months of both the Catalan and Scottish referendums, there was not much attention paid to them before and after the voting. This trend is consistent with how Dr. Andrew Dowling has described Catalan secessionism as a whole: “The movement has demonstrated an obsession with timing for dramatic breakthroughs, which it has been repeatedly unable to fulfill.”⁸⁴ Among the reasons why the happenings in Catalonia should have garnered attention from a broader audience are the potential human rights violations in a highly developed country and the effect it could have had on other independence movements around the world, especially given the uncertain future of the European Union’s political condition. However, a lack of attention from US media is fathomable due to Spain’s relatively small economic relationship with the US and the absence of international support for an independent Catalonia. The October 1 referendum followed by the declaration of independence, the takeover of Catalonia by the Spanish government, and exile of Catalan leaders was a chronicle that, according to experts, was almost certainly not going to end with Catalonia as a sovereign state and member of the EU. This makes it difficult to justify this story as being a critical episode that should have captured and retained the attention of the average American.

⁸⁴ Andrew Dowling, *The Rise of Catalan Independence: Spain's Territorial Crisis* (London: Routledge, 2018), 161-162.

Writer's Note

I chose this topic because I experienced several independence rallies in Barcelona nearly three months before the October referendum. Prior to my study abroad orientation in the spring of 2017, I had never heard of the Catalan independence movement even though I considered myself acquainted with most major world news stories. Every night at dinner with my host mom in Barcelona we would have heated debates about politics, and her favorite thing to say was that the US is a “pathetic country” and that we are only concerned with ourselves. She would repeatedly call attention to how evenly distributed Spanish news was in terms of covering all parts of the world, and I would argue that America is such a huge country that we have enough issues of our own. But in hindsight, I was just acting defensively. In an increasingly globalized world, it is important to learn about key events, such as the Catalan independence movement, because knowing what is happening in other parts of the world gives us a perspective of each other's ways of life and cultural differences. We can use this knowledge to enhance our relationships with the goal of improving the quality of life for all people.

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Biography

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