

Will catalonia's independence fuel other secessionist movements in europe?

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Throughout its history, Europe had consisted of warring states fighting for land and the right to be recognized as Independent entities. They are all channeled by the pride in the feeling of being bound together by a common national identity. Very recently, the region of Catalonia voted to secede from Spain in a referendum in which Catalonians overwhelmingly chose independence. This was no clean election. Despite an overwhelming majority of Catalans supporting independence, the Spanish government has aggressively prevented this referendum from occurring. Madrid refuses to recognize the results of this referendum, citing Article 155 of the Spanish Constitution as justification to increase involvement, now that Catalonia has actually declared independence.

Catalonia is most definitely not the first region to declare its independence on that basis of a common national identity, nor it will be last. As when one looks deeper into the surface, various succession and independent movements have existed throughout Europe for centuries, continuing to this day. Perhaps by acting as a living, modern example, Catalonia's independence will be a trigger for some of these movements to finally come to fruition. The European Union, Great Britain and the United States have all expressed support for Spain's effort to assert control over Catalonia, However, Scotland has expresses support for Catalonia's movement for independence. Fiona Hyslop, the external affairs secretary, commenting on Catalonia's independence stated: " We understand and respect the position of the Catalan government", and that the people of Catalonia " must have the ability to determine their own future.

" She never officially recognized Catalonia as a nation, but expressed support and approval. Perhaps, Scotland is hopeful that this secessionist movement could also lead to Scotland's independence, especially considering that Scotland's Prime Minister Nicola Sturgeon also plans to hold a referendum for Scottish independence around the next year. The fracture of Catalonia from Spain only gives greater focus to the various nationalist groups across Europe who also desire greater autonomy from their respective central governments. Catalonia For hundreds of years the region of Catalonia has had its own language and sense of cultural identity, and is constantly battling with Spain for its independence. Never actually winning independence, Catalonia finally gained some autonomy in 1932, when it declared itself " the Catalan Republic.

" However in 1939, all the tables turned as fascist Francisco Franco rose to power as the leader of Spain, repressing Catalan culture and nationalistic identity, purging hundreds of thousands of Catalans. Franco's repression of Catalonia rekindled the fire for independence in the hearts of Catalans as not one of them was left unaffected by his oppressive regime. Regaining its autonomy, after Franco's downfall, Catalonia has become the wealthiest region in Spain. A highly industrialized region with an active tourist industry, Catalonia alone consists of 20 percent of Spain's GDP. No longer desiring Madrid to have control over its wealth, Catalonia Scotland The movement for Scottish independence, like Catalonia, is also propelled by economics. Scotland, with vast amounts of oil and natural gas reserves, possesses great wealth.

Led by the left-wing Scottish National Party, the Scottish National Party aspires to be like the democratic socialist Scandinavian nations. Scotland implements left-wing programs that often many British taxpayers have to finance. However, London intrudes on its sovereignty by limiting implementation of such socialist programs, especially in Parliament, where despite overrepresentation, Scotland is still not nearly as highly represented as England. In 2014, a referendum on Scottish independence took place, which failed as 55% of voters voted "no" for independence. During the 'Brexit' vote in 2016, a/the majority of the UK voted for leaving the European Union; however, a/the majority of Scots voted for staying in the EU.

This what fueled the hopes for Scottish Prime Minister Nicola Sturgeon's plan for a new independence referendum in 2018, as being the leader of the Scottish National Party, she aspires to form an independent Scotland which would be a part of the EU. Perhaps, the presence of an independent Catalonia is what will cause Scotland finally break its shackles from the United Kingdom. Lombardy and Veneto In Italy, the wealthy northern regions of Lombardy and Veneto are also fighting for greater sovereignty from the Italian government. Formally reunified only 156 years ago, Italy to this day remains a fractured nation, shaped primarily by regional identity alone. Various Italian regions already enjoy some autonomy from the central government, which gives them greater say in regional decisions and power to control intervention of the central government. In 2014 Veneto held a non-binding referendum in which an overwhelming majority, 89 percent of voters chose "Yes" for independence.

However, being non-binding, this referendum was merely a poll with no impact. Recently, perhaps motivated by Catalonia's referendum only weeks prior, Lombardy and Veneto also held referendums in which citizens requested Rome for greater autonomy. In both regions, a desire for independence cried loudly, as over 95% of the voters in Lombardy voted for autonomy and 98% in Veneto. Economics is also a major reason for desiring autonomy. Lombardy, home to fashion and finance capital Milan, and Veneto, home to industrial capital Trieste, together represent 30 percent of Italy's GDP. These wealthy northern regions desire autonomy primarily because they dislike the fact that their taxes primarily go to support the far poorer southern regions in Italy, and not in their own regions.

By gaining autonomy, these regions would have greater control over their own tax revenue, which these regions would then use to benefit their own regions. Unlike Catalonia or Scotland, Lombardy and Veneto have no desire for independence, merely autonomy. As a result, this election was not seen as revolutionary or threatening, permitted by the Italian Constitution. Will Catalonia begin the fire of independence throughout Europe? Perhaps only the future will tell. The world will watch independent Catalonia's each and every step as a new nation in order to determine whether independence is truly a plausible option in the 21st century.

Today we live in a revolutionary era of mass cultural diffusion and diversity, where the idea of being bound by a common nationalist identity may seem unnecessary.