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Separation amidst Integration: The Redefining Influence of the European Union on Secessionist Party Policy

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Despite the European Union's hesitancy to support secessionist movements, European integration has inadvertently produced a novel opportunity for these ethno-regionalist political parties to strengthen their causes. Secessionist parties have realized that integration has created a reality where the costs of independence are much lower while the potential benefits of being sovereign in an integrated Europe are greater. In response to this change in structure, secessionist parties in Europe have become much more accepting of Europe than they were previously. This paper looks at the secessionist movements in Catalonia, Scotland, and Bavaria for evidence of pro-European responses to these new incentives.

Introduction

The process of European integration has been perhaps naively heralded by some as the end of national borders. According to this philosophy, statehood is less important and less desirable, and political goals can be accomplished at the European level without independent status. Economic and social policy are not wholly determined by states, EU law increasingly trumps state law, and there are ways for regional parties to achieve their political goals without complete independence. Some have even gone so far as to suggest that the European Union would evolve into a "post-sovereign" utopia of cooperating nations (Laible 2008, 1–2).

Despite this, however, many ethno-regionalist parties in Europe continue to seek to become independent states within the European system. Why do these separatist groups still want statehood given the various non-secession options available for change? Why, if the European Union is supposedly championing a post-sovereign mentality that discourages the creation of new states, are these ethno-regionalist movements directing their efforts towards winning over the European community? True demands for independence would seem to necessarily occur outside of the EU system, especially given the "democratic deficit" of the EU and the relative weakness of European state sovereignty today (De Winter 2001, 4).

I argue that European institutions have unintentionally offered separatist movements a unique opportunity to appeal for sovereignty at the European level. This happens because integration has lowered the cost of secession and increased the potential benefits of statehood. I further argue that European secessionist parties have identified this reality and have responded by changing their policies to be more supportive of European integration.

To test this idea, I used a historical analysis to ask two questions. First, have secessionist parties actually changed their policies over time to become more favorable to European integration? If so, were these changes the result of party leaders recognizing the benefits of European integration?

My analysis looks at the main separatist parties in three separatist regions: Catalonia, Scotland, and Bavaria beginning in 1967 (the year the Merger Treaty united the ECSC, Euratom, and the EEC) and continuing to the present day (2016). I chose these political parties because they once represented the full spectrum of opinion about European integration. While

the Catalan secessionist party *Esquerra Republicana de Catalunya* (ERC) has always generally been in favor of greater European integration, Scottish National Party (SNP) leaders expressed ambivalence or mild hostility toward the idea in the late 1960s and 1970s. Moreover, the Bavarian separatist party *Bayernpartei* (BP) was strongly opposed to centralized European integration and for years campaigned against many of the EU's core values.

In each of my case studies, I looked at how party policy on integration has changed since 1967. Did each ethno-regionalist party in fact alter its policies to become more supportive of European integration? If so, were these changes inspired by an understanding that European integration offers greater benefits to the goal of independence? I found that the secessionist parties in each region did change their policies to become more favorable toward integration and that party leaders' conscious choices to support integration were reflected in both party practice and statements by party leadership.

My argument builds on the work of both De Winter (2001) and Laible (2008), who were among the first to point out that ethno-regionalist parties have become counter-intuitively pro-European. Both propose various forces that incentivize policy changes toward "independence in Europe," with Laible proposing that "choosing self-government in the EU may provide the optimal means for nationalists to maximize sovereignty" (37). This paper builds on their proposed ideas of a causal link between EU structure and party policy by offering a more complete picture of the many incentives that have attracted secessionist parties.

This paper employs the terminology outlined in Dandoy's typology of ethno-regionalist parties (2010), even though some of the works cited in this paper use different terms for the same type of political party (e.g., "nationalist," "regionalist," "minority nationalist"). Furthermore, this paper focuses exclusively on what Dandoy identifies as secessionist ethno-regionalist parties, or in other words, political parties that claim to represent a specific population group and hope to establish an independent state where a sub-national territory currently exists. These parties attempt to change the international community in a way that would eventually require official recognition by other states, "the redefinition of international borders, and the weakening of the host-state," among other things (2010, 210–11).[1]

Finally, it is important to note that this paper does not address the question of whether or not the European Union would actually admit newly independent states as members, either immediately (as some secessionists argue) or after lengthy bilateral negotiations. There is a good deal of disagreement about this topic and the situation currently remains hypothetical. Moreover, the situation of countries such as Iceland, which is in the European Single Market while outside the EU, or Montenegro, which uses the euro as currency without being part of the EU, further complicates any guesses about the ultimate fate of secessionist regions. Instead, this paper focuses solely on how secessionist parties imagine the role of European integration, both before and after an eventual declaration of independence.

Theorizing Strategic Benefits

How can secessionist regions benefit from European integration? What kind of incentives exist that could compel political leaders to change party policy? I have identified a non-exhaustive list of strategic benefits that European integration offers to secessionist movements, both before and after a hypothetical declaration of independence.

One immediate benefit of European integration is that participation at the European level provides legitimacy to secessionist parties, many of which begin as small fringe groups with little regional decision-making power and even less state-level power. As such, winning a seat in the European Parliament (EP) or gaining power within an EU institution allows secessionist parties to gain political visibility (Elias 2009). As De Winter and Cachafeiro point out,

1. In his typology, Dandoy further divides secessionist parties into three categories: independentist, irredentist, and rattachist parties (2010, 206–13). For the purposes of this paper, those distinctions will be ignored, since the goals of each type of party would yield a similar effect on the European international community.

international organizations provide a space where ethno-regionalist parties can interact with each other, publicly advocate for each other's causes, and train to become better politicians in general (2002, 492–94).

De Winter and Cachafeiro also argue that the European Union has created a space where these minor parties can set new agendas far from traditional ideological differences that usually monopolize local- and state-level political discourse. For example, the Latvian Russian Union's sole member of the European Parliament (MEP), Tatjana Ždanoka, argues in Brussels for the rights of Russian minorities, free from the left-right divide that defines most of traditional Latvian politics. This distance provides secessionist parties "the opportunity to overcome traditional ideological differences and the 'old' party families in which some of these parties were and are entrenched" (2002, 496).

European integration also offers the prospect of weaker state systems of governance, which many secessionist parties view as an opportunity to circumvent allegedly "oppressive" national systems. Instead of trying to affect political change at the state level, ethno-regionalist parties can turn instead to European power structures. Dardanelli calls this new-found power a "systemic shift" and declares that the European Union has become a "positive alternative" to secessionist parties interested in guaranteeing their political power (2006, 140). A good example of this can be seen again in the case of Latvian-Russian politician Tatjana Ždanoka, who was banned in 1999 from running for a seat in the Latvian Parliament because of her prior involvement in the Communist Party. Despite this, Ždanoka could still circumvent state-level restrictions by running for a seat in the European Parliament, which she won in 2004 and has held since (Eglitis 2004). If Europe continues to integrate, greater sovereignty and decision-making capability will be taken from the state and given to the European Union, which creates an even greater political incentive for nationalist groups to Europeanize their policy.

Even for movements that lack the immediate possibility of statehood, there is a strong incentive to participate in the European process. Although the EU system is fundamentally comprised of states, it is also a complicated, multidimensional system of decision making with multiple entrance points. Secessionist movements can assert their claims within the European system without renouncing their long-term goal of statehood (Keating 2001b, 152). Similarly, for many of these small groups, the choice to not participate in the European process is simply not an option today. These groups must compete against larger established political parties that do not share their same interests, and even the most Euro-hesitant nationalist groups have accepted the current political reality. As Laible writes:

> [Secessionist] parties accept that they cannot change the EU or reconstruct it along lines that better suit their tastes unless they first achieve self-government. It is the fact that Europe continues to integrate, and not necessarily on terms that they like or that they believe are favorable to their constituents, that ultimately underpins nationalist arguments for immediate self-government (2008, 211).

After independence is achieved, integration also promises several important benefits. First, the European Union lowers the costs of secession by providing a way to ensure the economic survival of the seceding region. Before integration, the economies of many regions were almost entirely subsumed within the larger national economy. Secession for a peripheral economy before the establishment of the European Common Market would have entailed crippling economic isolation for the seceding nation. Moreover, retaliatory tariffs from disgruntled former powers against departed regions would have been equally disastrous (Keating 2001a). Today, however, European integration has reduced the risk of these international tariffs and trade barriers, which has in turn reduced the costs for ethno-regionalist movements to secede (Champliaud 2011, 35). As Jeffrey has written, the "growing economic borderlessness" of Europe has created an opportunity structure where "central governments would not be able within the framework of EU rules to discriminate economically against restive or departed regions" (2009, 644).

De Winter takes this economic hypothesis further when he proposes that the "introduction of the euro solves the problem of monetary transaction costs that a new independent region-state would face," such as creating and defending a new currency during a traumatic period of secession and state-building (2001, 9). Because of this, nationalist parties may reassure their voters that separation would not entail any drastic disruption in the regional economy (Keating 2001a).

The European Union system also makes it more costly for ethno-regionalists to be left out of the main decision-making positions in Brussels. Separatist parties have realized that statehood would result in greater representation at the European Parliament, a part in the rotating European commissioner post, and greater input about economic and political policy. These groups have also come to the bitter realization that small states like Malta or Croatia have more decision-making power simply due to their sovereign status (Gómez-Reino, De Winter, and Lynch 2006, 261).

Finally, the weakening of national borders also helps unify secessionist movements in areas where territory is currently controlled by more than one state. Examples of this may be found throughout Europe: the Basque people in Spain and France, the Hungarian populations in Romania, the Russian minorities in the Baltics, etc. In regions where there is an artificial border dividing an ethnic group, European integration has sparked interest in one day uniting separated regions. The creation of a "borderless" Europe has also facilitated communication and economic growth between divided nations, and ethno-regionalist parties on both sides of a border often coordinate their messages at the local and European levels (Keating 2001b).

Using this non-exhaustive list of incentives, I looked at how policies of the three separatist parties in Catalonia, Scotland, and Bavaria changed between 1967 and 2016. Each party responded differently, expressing varying levels of interest and enthusiasm in different incentives. Despite this, leaders in all three parties eventually grew to accept European integration, arguing that the benefits of "independence in Europe" outweighed the downsides of reduced sovereignty.

Catalonia

Catalonia is an autonomous region comprising the entire northeastern corner of Spain and a small part of southern France. Its capital is Barcelona, the second-largest city in Spain and one of the largest metropolitan areas in Europe. While the region has been considered part of Spain for hundreds of years, a growing independence movement focused on establishing a Catalan state in Europe may bring an end to that association.

The Spanish Civil War remains a particularly harsh memory for many Catalans, because it brought about the end of autonomy for Catalonia and the other minority regions of Spain. The majority of Catalans supported the Loyalists during the war, and the entire Catalan government was executed when fascists conquered the region in 1939. The Franco regime subsequently banned the use of Catalan and other minority languages, which were "Castilianized" in the new Francoist state. In later years, the heavy industrialization of the region brought in thousands of peasants from poorer Spanish regions, effectively diluting Catalan political power (Friend 2012, 95). Following the death of Franco, however, Catalonia's status as an autonomous region in Spain was reestablished, and today the *Generalitat* (Catalonia's government) has limited decision-making capabilities for the region (Champliaud 2011, 19).

Since the death of Franco, Catalan separatism has been spearheaded by the *Esquerra Republicana de Catalunya,* or Republican Left of Catalonia (ERC).[2] As suggested by its name, the party supports left-wing policies and advocates for an independent Republican government in Catalonia (instead of Spain's current constitutional monarchy). The party was originally founded in 1931 and governed the newly formed and short-lived Catalan Republic until its abolition by Franco in 1939. While most of its leadership was killed or executed, the party survived as an underground political movement for decades and was formally reestablished in 1974. For years the party won 8–16 percent of the regional vote during elections and today is a leading member of the ruling pro-independence coalition *Junts pel Sí* (Together for Yes) (Marcet and Argelaguet 1998, 79–80).

2. Catalonia's other main ethno-regionalist party *Convergència i Unió* (CiU) had both a secessionist and decentralist wing but for decades campaigned on the idea of an autonomous Catalan nation within the Spanish state before its dissolution in 2015. It is excluded from this analysis for being a decentralist party for the overwhelming majority of its existence.

While ERC strongly and vocally supports European integration today, this has not always been the case. During the democratization of Spain in the late 1970s, ERC focused instead on opposing the Spanish Constitution (ratified in 1978) and the new Statute of Autonomy (approved by referendum in 1979), asserting that both were inferior to their goal of complete Catalan independence (Argelaguet 2004). Despite this focus on other issues, ERC leaders were the first in the region to view European integration as a positive step forward for Catalan interests. One early ERC publication declared that an independent Catalan state in Europe was in line with "the direction of history" (Argelaguet 2004, 21). Furthermore, at the reorganization of ERC, Heribert Barrera (who would eventually be elected President of the *Generalitat* in 1980) briefly proposed creating an independent Catalonia that would share power with the European Community rather than with Spain. This proposal was largely a fear-based reaction to the oppressive Franco regime rather than a full-fledged strategic plan, since Europe was seen as the only feasible power that would be interested in protecting the Catalan people from further human rights abuses at the hands of the Spanish government (Champliaud 2011, 32).

In the first post-Franco parliamentary elections, ERC won fourteen out of the possible 135 seats. Despite this strong start, however, the 1980s were a period of decline for ERC, as the party was overshadowed by *Convergència i Unió* (CiU), Catalonia's other main ethno-regionalist party. In 1984, ERC lost all but five parliamentary seats, and two years later the party failed to win any representation in the national election to the Spanish Parliament.

During this time of upheaval, party leaders continued to support the idea of some kind of European intervention in Catalonia. Much of this language focused on the economic advantages of Europe. For example, in 1982 Heribert Barrera announced that Europe could provide a source of economic stability and called for "the modernization of our economic structures [as] a necessary condition in order to be competitive in Europe," which would in turn ensure the "survival" of an autonomous Catalonia (Parlament de Catalunya 2010, 104). By 1983, ERC leaders were advocating for Catalonia to join the European Common Market, citing the economic advantages of opening Catalan industry to the larger European continent (Parlament de Catalunya 2010, 51). Spain did eventually accede to the Common Market on 1 January 1986, although the powerless ERC had very little role in that process (Fundació Josep Irla 2012).

That year was one of rebirth for the party thanks to the work of Josep-Lluís Carod-Rovira and Àngel Colom, two ERC members. Following ERC's disastrous performance in the general election that summer, Carod-Rovira and Colom drafted the *Crida Nacional*, a call to reform and re-found the historic ERC. The document was signed by over seventy Catalan leaders and rededicated the party to the goal of independence. Notably, the *Crida Nacional* employed new language which put the party on a new path toward "independence in Europe."

> The idea of a free Catalan country, within a free and solidary Europe of Nations and Peoples, is the idea capable of mobilizing our most energetic: the unsatisfied youth and older generations who believe in a new popular and national dynamic that is impossible to realize under the current legal framework (Fundació Josep Irla 2012, 8).

This language was a major turning point for ERC. On one hand, it recognized that it could tap into a growing demographic of youth who were disillusioned after a decade of Spanish democratic rule. More importantly, the party acknowledged the potential of Europe to become a stable political backdrop for a free Catalan state. At the very least, Europe could be a forum for protecting the rights of nations and peoples, rather than states and national governments. As Carod-Rovira would write the following year, "A person who craves legitimate aspira-

tions such as peace and freedom" could find answers in "the process of national liberation in Europe" (Fundació Josep Irla 2012, 13).

The *Crida Nacional* and subsequent mobilization efforts successfully reinvigorated ERC. Carod-Rovira established a youth wing of the party, which had as one of its founding principles the goal of creating a democratic society that could "only be possible in a free, sovereign and united Catalonia within a Europe of Nations" (Joventuts d'Esquerra Republicana). ERC also joined ethno-regionalists from Galicia and the Basque Country to run in Spain's first European Parliament elections in 1987. ERC's alliance, called "Per l'Europe de les Nacions" (For the Europe of Nations) won an impressive 1.7 percent of the Spanish vote and seated one MEP, who quickly joined the European Free Alliance (EFA) in Brussels. This representation in the European Parliament allowed ERC to advertise their causes abroad and gain legitimacy. For example, shortly after the 1987 election Àngel Colom traveled to Brussels where he coordinated with the EFA and other NGOs to organize the first of many conferences on stateless nations in Western Europe (Fundació Josep Irla 2012, 15).

Over the next few years the party continued to consolidate its role as the main secessionist party in Catalonia, as various smaller pro-independence groups joined the ERC. By 1992, ERC was the third-largest political party in the *Generalitat* and had established branches in Valencia, the Balearic Islands, and French Catalonia. The party also began to expand their understanding of what integration could mean for them, with one ERC leader arguing that full European integration was key to Catalan independence:

> When there is free movement in Europe of people, goods, and capital; . . . when the defense of peace becomes unified with the [European Community], as will inevitably happen; when it will be necessary to have a single currency and a single currency system; when you reach the end of European integration; the Spanish government will no longer have any powers (Palau 2014, 113–15).

The 1990s saw the continued growth of ERC. Although the decade was marked by violent separatist conflicts in the former Soviet Union and the Balkans, ERC continued to win local and regional elections by campaigning for a "Europe of the Peoples," with one leader announcing, "If we [Catalonia] are ready to share sovereignty, it is better to do it with Europe" (Giordano and Roller 2002). Moreover, in 1993 (the year following the ratification of the Maastricht treaty), ERC argued that statehood was necessary for the full realization of their political rights:

> Current states are the only voice present at the United Nations or in important questions like European unity, international conflicts, or European solidarity. Stateless nations, therefore, have no voice regarding the construction of a united Europe . . . the Catalan nation should be added to all European bodies . . . Catalonia must participate on an equal footing with the other nations of the world, in all international forums both governmental (UN, UNESCO, FAO, UNICEF, WHO . . .) and private (international Olympic movement, international sports federations . . .)" (Esquerra Republicana de Catalunya 1993, 28–29).

ERC further emphasized this message of disenfranchisement during the 1999 European Parliamentary elections. Joining with three other ethno-regionalist parties in Spain, ERC argued for a utopian version of the EU where regions like Catalonia would be given the same state-like political power as France or Spain. ERC also pointed out how the current state-based EU system disadvantaged non-sovereign regions: "The size and population of some [EU member states] is lower than that of [Catalonia], so it is impossible to claim that the small size of our people does not allow for the exercise of their collective rights" (Cué 1999).

ERC continued to push their agenda during the 2000s, winning over 16 percent of the regional vote in 2003 and forming a coalition government that controlled the *Generalitat* until 2010. During this time, party leaders maintained their focus on Catalan independence in Europe while campaigning at home and in Brussels for a weaker Spanish state, even arguing that EU institutions like the Committee of the Regions lacked the necessary decision-making power that Catalonia deserved (Esquerra Republicana de Catalunya 2007).

The global recession in 2008 revealed the weakness of the Spanish state and strengthened popular support for secession. ERC leaders such as then-MEP Oriol Junqueras argued that their vision of independence in Europe made economic sense:

> There is a growing body of academic research which supports the assertion that smaller nations are better equipped to deal with economic difficulty in the longer term. This is particularly relevant during this current time of economic difficulty when we see how, for example, the size of the Spanish state has not helped avoid recession. Catalonia is nearly contributing 10 percent of its GDP to Spain each year and yet the state has hugely increased its debt, threatening the euro and euro stability. Catalan independence is clearly in the EU interest" (Borgen 2010, 1,031).

That same year a new initiative was launched aimed at uniting the French and Spanish parts of Catalonia. Since the early 1990s, ERC leaders had toyed with the idea of using European integration to strengthen Catalan ties across the border. In addition to establishing ERC headquarters in French Catalonia, the party also campaigned on the idea that Europe could erase the reality of the border:

> With the exception of Andorra, which boasts its own state, obtaining the independence of the Catalan nation within a United Europe is a fundamental objective. . . . The Catalan nation is currently one of the many stateless nations in Europe where borders do not correspond to reality (Esquerra Republicana de Catalunya 1993, 27–28).

In 2008, ERC leaders such as Josep-Lluis Carod-Rovira spearheaded an initiative to unite Catalonia under one economic initiative, called the Pyrenees-Mediterranean Euroregion. The project, like other Euroregion projects, aims to boost innovation and development in the region. In addition, however, the project is a way for ERC to circumvent Spanish rule and coordinate with French Catalans on mutually beneficial projects. Carod-Rovira made reference to this in the 2008 development plan for the Euroregion, in which he wrote:

> It is by overcoming borders, by solving problems affecting citizens living close to each other on either side of an imaginary political line, that regional cross-border cooperation becomes the living example of what the European construction should be. The European Union has diluted its internal borders and has made regional cooperation an economic priority (Generalitat de Catalunya 2008, ii).

In 2012, CiU won the Catalan Parliamentary elections but lacked enough seats to form a majority government. As a result, CiU entered into a coalition with ERC, which allowed ERC to sponsor a nonbinding referendum on Catalan independence in late 2014. While a majority of Catalans chose not to participate, over 80 percent of voters supported the idea of an independent Catalan state. The ensuing secessionist fervor resulted in the dissolution of CiU, and in 2015, ERC and other Catalan secessionists created the *Junts pel Sí* (Together for Yes) pro-secession coalition, which won the most seats in the 2015 parliamentary election.

In late 2015, the Catalan Parliament passed a secession resolution for complete independence from Spain by 2017. While the Spanish government maintained that secession would be impossible under the Spanish Constitution, Catalan leaders celebrated, with the head of *Junts pel Sí* announcing, "There is a growing cry for Catalonia to not merely be a country, but to be a state, with everything that means" (Wilson 2015).

While the future of Catalan independence is unclear, it is obvious that ERC has realigned their policies to take advantage of the benefits offered by European integration. While the party was never hostile toward Europe, over time party leaders grew to recognize the political and economic incentives of establishing a united Catalan state in an integrated Europe.

Scotland

Unlike the Europhile ERC, in its early years the Scottish National Party was ambivalent or mildly opposed to the idea of European integration. Any resistance exhibited by the party was not the result of direct opposition to the concept but rather a stubborn disapproval of anything

done by Westminster. However, today the party has changed its policy and actively advocates for a sovereign Scottish state within the European Union. The decision to change policy was done very methodically and openly in response to new incentives to cooperate with Brussels, thanks largely to the support of Jim Sillars and other politicians in the 1980s.

The modern Scottish independence movement began as small groups began organizing in the years following WWI (Bodlore-Penlaez 2011, 44). Two of these small political parties—one supporting devolution, the other supporting complete independence—merged in 1934 to form the Scottish National Party (SNP). Initially, the party had very few opinions on political issues; it was nonideological and lacked a clear position on the best form of Scottish government. It also ignored right-left debates and spent most of its efforts explaining why its nationalism was different than that of Hitler or Mussolini. SNP continued to barely exist for several decades, winning few votes and raising little money until the 1960s (Lynch 2013, 1–50).

During this period SNP leaders expressed a kind of general and vague support for some form of European integration. However, SNP opinion turned against British membership in the European Economic Community (EEC) when it became a real prospect. Scottish nationalists in the 1960s opposed European integration on principle, viewing it as an assault by the British government and others on national sovereignty. Furthermore, there was a vague opposition to European integration, because nationalists feared that Scotland would be isolated on the periphery of a new European market (Champliaud 2011, 35). Instead, SNP enviously pointed to the Scandinavian countries in the European Free Trade Association, which all enjoyed a high standard of living outside of the European Community (Keating 2001b, 58; Goldie 2010, 3–17).

The early SNP proposed the idea of two "mother nations" on the island of Great Britain, which were to be linked by an economically interdependent customs union (Bartkus 1999, 190–91). By the early 1970s, SNP leaders extended this vision to include an independent Scotland at the head of an "association of states of the British Isles," which would cooperate over economic and social issues. Most importantly, this customs union would not be linked to the European Community and would allow Scotland to reinterpret its relationship to the continent free of Westminster's influence (Wilson 2009, 47).

The customs union idea gained little support, and in 1975, British citizens held a referendum on continued British membership in EEC, which eventually passed. SNP opposed the referendum on an alleged technicality, stating that it conflicted with the 1707 Treaty of Union. The party spent the year campaigning against the referendum with the slogan, "No voice, no entry" (Hepburn 2009, 193). After achieving independence from Westminster, leaders argued, Scotland could make the decision about EEC membership themselves (Keating 2001b, 58). Of course, despite the opposition to the referendum, SNP leaders were not necessarily opposed to the European Community; rather, they objected to being forced to join the European Community as part of Great Britain (Lynch 2013, 196).

Regardless of SNP efforts, the referendum passed, and SNP leaders were forced to rethink their position in a Europe, which was quickly leaving them behind. Four years later, SNP won their first seat in EP, which was filled by Winnie Ewing (Hepburn 2009, 193). Despite this, the SNP remained ambivalent about cooperating with other regionalist and nationalist groups, which they viewed as not committed enough to the principle of complete independence (Lynch 2006, 248).

The 1980s saw a methodical and purposeful reversal of policy by many SNP leaders towards European integration. The legacy of opposition to the 1975 referendum remained strong among membership of the SNP, and only after great debate did the SNP adopt a tentative pro–European Community position at their 1982 conference (Laible 2008, 106–07). Several factors influenced the change. First, many Scottish separatists viewed Thatcher's Britain as oppressive and stifling, and Europe presented a way around Westminster's restrictions. This was further supported by Winnie Ewing's work in the European Parliament, which granted SNP leaders access to the workings of the EU (Hepburn 2010). Finally, it was the work of SNP party leaders, and especially that of Jim Sillars, that convinced the party to change its stance towards Europe (Lynch 2013, 197–98).

For Sillars, the debate about Scottish independence was no longer "merely an affair between nations on the island of Britain" but rather an issue of importance to all of Europe (1986, 185). Sillars was convinced that it was necessary to have Scotland's voice represented within the European Community. For example, he argued, "As the European Community develops and extends its influence on policy, it is essential that Scotland has a seat at its top table where issues are considered and policy decisions made." Because England had different interests than Scotland, he argued that "it is of first-class importance that the Scots . . . contribute directly to the discussions and take part in the formulation of new structures and policies" (1986, 188–90).

Sillars also argued that active participation in the European Community made political sense. Luxembourg, Ireland, and Denmark all had smaller populations than Scotland, and yet they "have a direct say and vote at the Council of Ministers. They take their turn to chair the Council" (1986, 186–87). At the time, Ireland occupied the Presidency of the Community, influencing and setting the agenda on greater centralization. Why, then, was Scotland hesitant to join these debates? (Sillars 1990).

Furthermore, Sillars believed that Scotland would pay a heavy economic price if it did not actively push for its interests in Europe. Without proper Scottish representation in the decision-making processes of the community, Scottish interests would suffer. He wrote,

> Scotland contributes most to Common Market fish stocks, and oil from Scottish waters will figure largely in any attempt to create a common energy policy. Yet Luxembourg, with a smaller population than Edinburgh, and without either a coastline or an oilfield, will have greater say on these vital Scottish interests than the Scottish people (1986, 186–87).

Most importantly, Sillars emphasized the economic gains the new European Community could provide, because England "takes" 80 percent of Scotland's manufactured goods, "the essence of independence," according to Sillars, was based in the custom union with England (1986, 183–84). Simply leaving the customs union would destroy Scotland's economy; instead, Scotland's independence would be based in the new European market. He said:

> Along with others, I campaigned against entry to the EEC, and many feel our judgment has been vindicated by events . . . Scotland is now as much a part of the European Community as she is a part of the United Kingdom . . . When one repeats the question about the customs union in the context of the European Community, then it becomes quite awesome. The reality is no longer an arrangement between Scotland and England. The customs union is now Europe-wide, embracing twelve states with a total population of around 270 million people" (1986, 185).

This new European customs union could ensure that there could be "no financial, commercial or trading discrimination against a Scottish government and its people in any part of the Community," resulting in "continuity and lack of disruption" to the Scottish economy (Sillars 1986, 186). Sillars' statements echoed those of Gordon Wilson, then-leader of SNP, who argued that "within the common trading umbrella, the move to independence can take place smoothly and easily" (Hepburn 2009, 193–94).

Armed with this analysis of European-Scottish relations, Sillars and other SNP leaders built support within the party for the idea of Scottish membership in the European Community. The change was gradual and painful for the staunchest opponents of Europe, but by 1986, SNP's National Council announced that the Single European Act was compatible with Scottish independence (Laible 2008, 107–08; Lynch 2013, 197–98). By 1988, SNP adopted the slogan of "independence in Europe," announcing its increasing support of Europe to the world (Hepburn 2009, 193–4).

Support for greater European cooperation increased during the 1990s. Winnie Ewing became chairperson of the European Free Alliance in 1991 and thus could better direct advo-

cacy efforts in EP (Lynch 2006, 248). Among SNP activists and members, the idea of independence in Europe continued to gain traction, as in 1990, when the newspaper *Scots Independent* declared that "Scotland's future lies as an independent member of the European Community" ("Scotland's Future"). With the advent of the European Union in 1993, Scottish interests in independence in Europe increased, since independence would mean almost doubling the number of Scottish MEPs in the European Parliament and giving Scotland a turn as head of the commission (Goldie 2010, 13). There were also economic advantages to participating in the European system. In 1994, Ewing's Highlands and Islands constituency qualified for EU development funding (Hepburn 2010, 73–74).

In 1999, the Scottish Parliament was once again convened in the Holyrood area of Edinburgh (Bodlore-Penlaez 2011, 44). This act, while opposed by some who feared the devolution of powers would weaken support for independence, was actually viewed by many party leaders as a vital part of "the process of independence" (Chaney 2014, 472). SNP became the second party at Holyrood after the first devolved elections and enjoyed more support in Holyrood elections than in Westminster elections. Eight years later, SNP formed a minority government in Scotland and was the first party to win a majority at Holyrood in 2011. This was done despite systematic constraints against one party winning a majority of seats. Because of this, SNP scheduled the 2014 independence referendum, which they lost 55 percent to 45 percent (Lynch 2013, 1; Cowell and Castle 2014.)

As in Catalonia, whether or not Scotland will succeed in seceding is currently unknown. However, it is clear that SNP has readjusted their policies because of the political and economic benefits offered by European integration, and current separatist rhetoric staunchly supports the existence of an independent Scottish state in Europe.

Bavaria

As has been shown, both ERC and SNP increased their support for European integration as party leaders identified the various strategic benefits offered by integration, but what about a Eurosceptic party—one whose fundamental principles clash with the "ideology" of European integration? The *Bayernpartei* (BP) in Bavaria offers an interesting view into how European incentives affect small parties opposed to Europe.

Bavaria is the largest state in the Federal Republic of Germany, covering almost one-fifth of the country's total land area. The state is also the second-most populous in Germany, and its capital city Munich is one of the wealthiest cities in the European Union. Bavarian culture is distinct from the culture other parts of Germany and a strong Bavarian identity has evolved since the region was first organized as a duchy in the sixth century.

Politically, Bavarians are much more conservative and Catholic than voters in other parts of Germany. While traditional issues like religion and the right/left divide still influence politics in the region, there is also perpetual debate on Bavaria's semi-autonomous status. The state's ruling party, the Christian Social Union (CSU), has long advocated for greater Bavarian autonomy within a federal German state, and the other major political parties in the state have all been forced to develop a position on how Bavaria should interact with the rest of Germany (Hepburn 2010).

The *Bayernpartei* (Bavaria Party, or BP) is the sole political party in Bavaria to advocate for an independent Bavarian state. The party was organized in 1946 and was one of the most successful parties in post-war Bavaria, winning 20.9 percent of the vote in the 1949 Bundestag election and 17.9 percent of the vote in the 1950 Bavarian Parliament election. Much of this success was the result of stealing massive numbers of voters from CSU, given the fact that the two parties had very similar platforms that emphasized conservative Bavarian values and "anti-Prussian" autonomy (Ford 2007, 285; Hepburn 2008).

Reeling from this unexpected loss of power, CSU launched a strong campaign of internal reform and outreach, which stole the vast majority of BP voters and thrust the party into obscurity. By the 1960s, BP was only capturing 5 percent of the Bavarian vote and was last elected to the Bavarian Parliament in 1962 (Paterson 2014; Hepburn 2010, 103–04). The party floundered at the fringe of Bavarian politics for the next fifteen years, winning less than 1 percent of the Bavarian vote in election after election. Finally, after winning only 0.4 percent of the vote in the 1978 state election, party leaders seriously discussed dissolving the party (Hepburn 2008).

During this period of chaos and obscurity, BP had a fairly negative view of European integration. This had not always been the case. In its early years, immediately following the carnage of WWII, BP supported the idea of an independent Bavaria cooperating within a larger European system. By 1947, BP was proposing the idea of a "United States of Europe" to the American occupiers (Hepburn 2010, 121). Despite this initial support for some kind of cooperation, BP quickly and strongly came to oppose the direction that Europe was taking.

As European integration became more invasive during the 1970s and 1980s, BP actively campaigned on a platform of strengthening regional decision-making power and pushing back European encroachment. In addition to not competing in the first EP elections in 1979, the party continually emphasized its commitment to what it termed as "Bavarian values." BP leaders decried the "foreign ideologies" of pro-Europe German leaders and advocated for an ethnically homogenous Bavaria that could resist being overcome by immigrants and foreigners (Bayernpartei 1993, 80–86; Hepburn 2010, 117).

By the early 1980s, BP had adopted an even stronger Eurosceptic platform, opposing what they viewed as the creation of a multicultural centralized European state that would threaten Bavarian culture and political independence. Interestingly, this policy change occurred while many other ethno-regionalist parties in Europe were turning toward Europe and embracing the benefits of integration. Despite this, BP resisted, speaking out against the European "ideologies" of cultural diversity and free trade. The party also resisted joining the European Free Alliance, instead preferring to create bilateral ties with other Alpine ethno-regionalist parties in South Tyrol and Austria (Hepburn 2010).

By the time the Maastricht Treaty was signed in 1992, BP had stopped pushing so hard to reverse integration. While the party still espoused several radical policies (such as restricting non-Bavarians from voting in elections or promising to expel large numbers of foreigners from an independent Bavarian state), party leadership also began to warm up to the idea of a Bavarian state in Europe. Party leaders, such as Wolfgang Johannes Bekh, recognized that Europe offered distinct advantages in the fight for Bavarian independence that could not be obtained through the "detour" of Bonn or Berlin. The party also began competing in EP elections, winning 0.8 percent of the vote in Bavaria in 1989 (Bayernpartei 1993, 103).

By the 1990s, BP began to advocate for a "Europe of the Regions" and campaigned on slogans like "The Heart of Europe: an independent Bavaria" and "For Europe: Bayernpartei" (Bayernpartei 1993, 126). Despite this espousal of Europe, BP had a very specific vision for EU reform that included the establishment of a regional commissioner post in the European Commission and a Bavarian "representation" in EC that could promote Bavarian interests. These policy changes reflected BP's reluctance to trust Brussels; furthermore, BP General Secretary Hubert Dorn emphasized that the party's plans were simply a "stepping-stone" toward gaining power and independence. By the end of the decade, BP changed their rhetoric again, instead calling for a "Europe of Small States" that would include an independent Bavaria (Hepburn 2010, 122–23).

During the 2000s, BP gradually increased their acceptance of the European Union, even though the EU still reflected the centralized bureaucratic organization that it had so fiercely opposed for years. Part of this decision was made out of desperation: BP had no choice but to accept the EU. In a 2009 EP electoral campaign ad, for example, the party claimed that 80 percent of laws that apply to Bavaria came from Brussels, underlining the importance of putting BP representatives in EP (BP 2009). Similarly, in a statement the party said:

> In its current centralized, bureaucratic and undemocratic form we reject the EU. However, the consequence cannot be that we do not participate in the European elections. This is because the EU exists, whatever we may think of her reality. It determines our lives, every day. Its influence will grow dramatically in the coming years and will threaten more and more of our personal freedoms. Therefore, it is essential that the BP strives to create its own EU mandates, to participate in these decisions, and to be able to control the direction in which we imagine (2014).

BP leaders have also bitterly acknowledged how Bavaria's dependent status restricts its political power. At one point the BP web site listed all the EU member states that are smaller or poorer than Bavaria and yet enjoy greater political power (Hepburn 2010).

There were other strategic reasons why BP became more accepting of European integration. One was a recognition that integration draws power away from Berlin. This realization has become central to the party's independence efforts, even making its way into the party's "Ten Points" statement, which calls the German national level "superfluous" (Bayernpartei 2016). BP party leaders also recognized the political advantages of having an independent Bavarian state in Europe. A major voice for this change was Peter Fendt, former economic spokesman for the party, who explained how the EU could benefit Bavaria:

> Bavaria would have twenty-five members in the European Parliament. . . . Currently Bavaria has eleven members in the European Parliament. More importantly, Bavaria would have a seat and be able to vote in the European Council . . . [as well as] a seat on the Commission and one seat in the European Court of Justice and the Court of First Instance. . . . Moreover, Bavaria as a member state would have a significant voice in European Union policy. The democratic deficit would be reduced significantly for Bavaria" (2007).

Today, BP still campaigns on a platform of a different EU but is much more accepting of integration than it was during the 1970s and 1980s. The party continues to push for a confederal model of EU member states where major issues like defense and foreign policy are handled jointly but (as one BP statement says) regulations such as "the size of European cucumbers" are left up to the individual states (Bayernpartei n.d.). Despite this, official party platforms call for the establishment of "a truly Free State of Bavaria, seceded from Germany and embedded in a European Union formed according to the principle of subsidiarity" (European Free Alliance 2011). Florian Weber, current BP leader, went further by saying, "One of my main political aspirations [is] obtaining an independent Bavarian state within a European confederation. This might initially look a little unusual, but looking at the bare facts . . . it becomes clear how necessary such a step is" (Bayernpartei 2013, 6).

BP also turned to the EU for legitimacy. While the party has yet to win a European election, the party joined EFA in 2008 and now works closely with other ethno-regionalist movements in Brussels and throughout Europe. The party used this cooperation as a way of legitimizing their campaigns, stating in one publication, "Many regionalist parties now work together across Europe. They are united by the idea of a Europe of regions, a truly modern Europe, which consists of smaller sovereign regions." BP also frequently touts their membership in the EFA, with party publications featuring pictures and quotes of party leaders alongside other ethno-regionalist European parties, and pointing out that EFA MEPs also represent BP in Brussels (Bayernpartei 2013).

One important question to ask is why BP turned against integration in the 1980s when so many other ethno-regionalist parties (including SNP) did the opposite. A significant part of this decision can be explained by the existence of CSU, Bavaria's ruling party. Even though CSU espouses greater devolution of powers and not complete independence, both parties have very similar economic and social plans (in comparison, ERC's main competitor in Catalonia is CiU, which espoused right-wing policies different from ERC's leftist agenda). As BP struggled to survive during the 1980s, it was forced to differentiate itself from a much better-funded and better-organized CSU by adopting more radical policies.

Of course, some of BP's skepticism toward Europe is likely due to other factors, such as the inflexibility of leadership. Furthermore, BP remains reluctant to embrace the EU, especially when compared with ERC and SNP. Despite this, it is clear that BP leaders have adapted party policies as they have slowly recognized some of the advantages of integration.

Conclusion

Despite the apparent logical conflict between Europe's independence movements and the growing "post-sovereign" European system, Europe's secessionists have gradually grown to accept the advantages of integration. All three parties in this study recognized the necessity of participating in Europe both before and after independence was achieved. The three parties also have come to the realization that the EU system allows secessionist groups to weaken and circumvent the national state. Other incentives were more or less attractive to each party depending on its situation and ideology: ERC, for example, was eager to embrace the possibility of integration uniting the region, while SNP was more interested in the economic advantages to independence in Europe. While European integration offers a diverse range of incentives to secessionist parties, it is clear that each of the parties in this study became less skeptical of Europe over time.

This systemic change has important ramifications for government leaders and nationalist parties alike. The increase in nationalist power in several regions of Europe means that government leaders must think carefully about new EU policy changes. Secessionist parties may very well determine the future of the European system and, eventually, the meaning of sovereignty in Europe.

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