

We **AFFIRM** resolved: Spain should grant Catalonia its independence.

Our Sole Contention is De-Escalating the Crisis

The fight for independence is deep rooted and being exacerbated by the actions of the Spanish government. Gonzalez of Foreign Policy explains in late December that: **[when] the Catalan government held [an independence referendum] the Spanish government sent masked riot police to raid polling sites and confiscate ballots, [imposed state control over Catalonia] and called for a new “legitimate” election. Against the odds, the pro-independence parties won the Dec. 21 [election] allowing them to keep [an] absolute majority in the Catalan Parliament.**

Minder of New York Times continues that due to their recent election victory: **it is clear that the independence movement is not going away. Spain is staring at a festering, long-term conflict, unfolding in a deeply divided region and driven by emboldened separatists.**

Not only are the separatists emboldened, so is Madrid. Gonzalez of Foreign Policy explains that: **Stirring anti-Catalan feelings has always been a successful electoral strategy for Spanish politicians, so it is hard to imagine them abandoning it now [while Spain’s two major parties are vying for power]. [For this reason,] dialogue between the two sides remains unlikely [and] the most likely scenario for the future is an entrenched conflict.**

Polarization between Spain and Catalonia will grow for **two** reasons:

First, Threatening Catalan Values.

Birnbaum of the Washington Post explains in 2017 that: **With Catalan media outlets under threat and national police using truncheons to break up last month’s independence referendum, many here in Catalonia say that their repressive history is making an ugly return. They point to the no-negotiation stance of Prime Minister Rajoy, who has sought to quell separatism not by persuasion but by force and fear.**

Pretus of the Atlantic furthers in 2017 that: **The government’s muscular response to Catalans’ desire for self-determination could increase the number of [separatists] and their passion, which, in the long run, may further erode stability and lead to violence. This is because [Spain’s response is threatening two of] Catalan’s sacred values, the right to vote for independence and the protection of Catalan identity.**

Second, Political Criminalization.

Faber from the Nation reports on December 29th that: **[Spain] has deployed a McCarthy-style criminalization of [Catalonia’s challenge to Spain]. The leaders of [pro-independence] parties were**

forced to campaign from exile and prison and the number of politicians and civic leaders indicted or under investigation is only rising.

For these **two** reasons, Maestre in the Nation concludes that: **Emotionally and socially something has snapped among an immense majority of the population. The two trains are racing full speed toward a head-on collision [and] there are no incentives for either [side to] change course.**

Granting Catalonia independence and resolving the crisis is critical because uncertainty is killing its economy.

Lister of CNN reports late December: **The turmoil has had a chilling effect on Catalonia's economy, Foreign investment fell by 75% [and] 3,000 companies [have left Catalonia]. [And due to] the uncertainty that lies ahead, [companies won't be] hurrying back to Catalonia.**

The economic harms are also spilling over to Spain. Lindhart of The Banker quantifies this December that: **political tensions over Catalonia and continuing uncertainty “are likely to damage economic sentiment and consumer spending, both in the region and for the Spanish economy as a whole”. [Overall,] economic growth would be cut by almost 60%, more than \$27bn.**

However, granting Catalonia its independence would put both sides on the same page, and allow for a successful settlement. Castells of Johns Hopkins writes in 2014 that: **reaching an amicable outcome (including agreement over the distribution of assets and debts) is decisive for the Spanish economy [prevent] doubts about Spain's financial viability.**

Both Catalonia and Spain would likely negotiate to share debts, and split assets, since they both have a mutual interest in ensuring that any costs of independence would be minimal. This would reassure investors, end the uncertainty, and resolve the crisis.

End the crisis, and affirm.

We **AFFIRM** resolved: Spain should grant Catalonia its independence.

Our Sole Contention is De-Escalating the Crisis

The fight for independence is deep rooted and being exacerbated by the actions of the Spanish government. Gonzalez of Foreign Policy explains in late December that:

Ricard Gonzalez (Foreign Policy). "Catalonia's Crisis Is Just Getting Started." December 27, 2017.

<http://foreignpolicy.com/2017/12/27/catalonias-crisis-is-just-getting-started/>.

Since October, all across Catalonia, the lampposts, bridges, and facades have been decorated with yellow ribbons. It is not a Christmas tradition, but **a show of solidarity with two pro-independence politicians and two well-known activists who have been in pretrial detention for almost two months.** In general, yellow has become the color of resistance in this autonomous region, whose government failed in its attempt to gain independence from Spain last October. And it is this spirit of resistance that explains the results of last week regional elections. Spain's prime minister, Mariano Rajoy, called the regional election after **the Catalan government held its own referendum on independence on Oct. 1.** Madrid declared that referendum, which showed a large pro-independence majority, illegal. **The Spanish government sent masked riot police to raid polling sites and confiscate ballot boxes and later called for a new "legitimate" election.** Rajoy had hoped that a defeat of pro-independence parties in an election sanctioned by Spain's central government would solve the Catalan conflict; he was wrong. **Against the odds, the three pro-independence parties together won the Dec. 21 regional poll** with close to 48 percent of the votes with nearly 80 percent turnout, **allowing them to keep the absolute majority in the Catalan Parliament. These results were a slap in the face to Rajoy.** To add insult to injury, his People's Party nearly disappeared in Catalonia, winning only four seats out of 135. His rivals on the Spanish right, the Ciudadanos party, won 36 seats — a result that would have been unthinkable a few years ago. In the week since the vote, nationalists in the Spanish press have not been kind to Rajoy. They argue that it was a mistake to call for a snap election just hours after suspending Catalan self-rule in late October. However, at that point, Rajoy had no other option. A sustained **suspension of Catalonia's autonomy**, the preferred solution of hardcore Spanish nationalists, could have led to civil strife. **For all his recent faults, the Spanish premier's blunder in fact came much earlier, when he failed to address the Catalan government's grievances, such as unfair fiscal policies or the lack of recognition of Catalan national identity.** For a long time, **Rajoy seemed to buy the so-called souffle theory, which held that the independence movement would grow** but eventually deflate and therefore there was no need to make concessions. Seen in that light, the sudden rise of the movement in 2012 was linked to Spain's recession and would naturally weaken along with an economic recovery. **But the conflict has much deeper roots, and its main trigger was the failed process to expand Catalonia's autonomy a decade ago.** During the discussion of the new autonomy law in mid-2000s, Rajoy's People's Party launched a strong campaign against the law that led to the boycott of Catalan products, infuriating most Catalans. Once the law was passed by both the Catalan and the Spanish parliaments, the Constitutional Court struck down several of its main provisions, such as the article that recognized Catalonia as a "nation." **Once it became evident that the pro-independence movement would not just go away, Rajoy chose to ignore its leaders and let the judicial system deal with any challenge to the authority of the Spanish state. As a result of this policy, the exiled Catalan president, Carles Puigdemont, is now in Brussels, and his vice president, Oriol Junqueras, is in prison. They face possible 30-year prison sentences, despite having never used violence. More than 100 highly regarded Spanish lawyers have stated that the "sedition" and "rebellion" charges against them are baseless, and many Catalans consider them political prisoners. Yet instead of seeking a political solution for what is a political problem, Rajoy has let the conflict fester and treated it as a "law and order" problem. And by**

outsourcing resolution of the Catalan conflict to the judiciary, he now risks losing control of events.

The secessionist leaders are not without blame. The Catalan government's worst mistake was to promote a declaration of independence after a referendum with only a 43 percent turnout. The argument that this percentage would have been higher had the Spanish police not brutally repressed voters does not legitimize such a foolish move. The consequences of the unilateral declaration were easy to predict: No country recognized the new "republic," self-rule was suspended, and Catalan society became more bitterly divided between pro- and anti-independence citizens.

The crisis is only getting entrenched as the Separatist parties won the most recent election. Minder of New York Times reports last December that:

Minder 17 Raphael Minder, 12-22-2017, "Catalonia's Election Yields a Crisis That Is Here to Stay," New York Times, https://www.nytimes.com/2017/12/22/world/europe/catalonia-election-spain.html?_r=1 //DF

He did not engage Catalonia's leadership until it finally declared unilateral independence in October, prompting him to take direct control of the region. Before then, Mr. Rajoy seemed to hope that the problem would eventually fade, along with a Spanish financial crisis that had helped fuel the movement. But after Catalonia's regional election on Thursday, in which separatist parties won a majority of seats in the regional parliament, **it is now clear that the independence movement is not going away. Spain is staring at a festering, long-term conflict, unfolding in a deeply divided region and driven by emboldened separatists** whose demands could now be harder than ever to ignore. "As a minimum, we've won the right to be listened to," Carles Puigdemont, the Catalan leader whom Mr. Rajoy dismissed in October, said at a news conference in Brussels, where he has taken up self-imposed exile. "Whether you like or not the topic, you have to have a dialogue." Mr. Puigdemont called on the prime minister to end his emergency control over Catalonia immediately and allow him to start a new mandate as the region's leader, even as he faces prosecution. He also offered to meet Mr. Rajoy in Brussels or another location outside of Spain. Yet even now Mr. Rajoy seems reluctant to take an approach to the Catalan crisis any different from the one that has pushed Spain nearly to the point of fracturing. On Friday, the prime minister repeated his insistence that he was[is] open to dialogue, but not with Catalan politicians who do not respect Spain's Constitution. Yet that is seemingly whom Catalans have returned to power in the balloting on Thursday. The separatists won 70 of the 135 seats in the regional parliament, narrowly maintaining the majority that they won in 2015. Together they received 47.5 percent of the vote but were bolstered by a proportional representation system that rewards their rural dominance.

Minder of the New York Times explains that Rajoy has benefited politically from an anti-Catalan stance:

Minder 17 Raphael Minder [New York Times Correspondent for Spain and Portugal], 2017, "The Struggle for Catalonia: Rebel Politics in Spain," Hurst & Company Publishers //DF

Despite his success in the rest of Spain, Aznar never won an election outright in Catalonia but, as he himself noted, he still received 23 percent of the Catalan votes in 2000. Since leading the opposition to the statute, however, Spain's Popular Party has pretty much been sidelined from Catalan politics, and now focuses instead on building up its support in other regions. **Under Rajoy, the Popular Party 'decided to stop doing politics in Catalonia,'** Aznar claimed. 'That has been a catastrophic and disastrous tactic.' yet this Catalan disaster has not prevented Rajoy from starting a second term as Spain's prime minister in late 2016. If anything, **Rajoy actively won his re-election by promising to quash any Catalan attempt to break Spain's unity.** In the June 2016 general election, the Popular Party won the most votes across Spain. This was despite the fact that in Catalonia, Rajoy's party won only 460,000 votes, a share of 13 per cent. Joan Tapia, a political columnist, reflected on how different the situation was under Aznar. Even if he was never a champion of Catalonia, he 'at least made an effort' to meet influential Catalans, he said. By contrast, he declared, Rajoy's idea of a perfect evening in Barcelona was dining with officials from his own party. At the time of this writing, in 2017, Rajoy was trying to revive the dialogue with Catalan politicians, in an effort led by his deputy, Soraya Sáenz de Santamaría. But there was no question of discussing an independence referendum in Catalonia, as promised by the Catalan government. Even if Aznar and Rajoy no longer see eye-to-eye, they remain united in their belief that Madrid should not yield any ground to the separatists in Barcelona.

Gonzalez of Foreign Policy reports in late December 2017 that:

Ricard Gonzalez (Foreign Policy). "Catalonia's Crisis Is Just Getting Started." December 27, 2017. <http://foreignpolicy.com/2017/12/27/catalonias-crisis-is-just-getting-started/>.

While this is a positive development that may soothe tensions, **a serious dialogue between the two sides remains unlikely.** To begin with, **the rise of Ciudadanos in opinion polls threatens the hegemony that Rajoy's People's Party has enjoyed within the Spanish right** since the late 1980s, **and this will probably lead to a nationalist bidding war between the two parties.** In fact, Ciudadanos' leader, Albert Rivera, has already accused Rajoy of being too soft on secessionists. **Stirring anti-Catalan feelings has always been a successful electoral strategy for Spanish right-wing politicians, so it is hard to imagine them abandoning it now. The most likely scenario for the foreseeable future is an entrenched conflict. Neither side seems able to "win," and Madrid is rejecting any European Union mediation.** Canada and the United Kingdom have taken an alternative approach. Both countries held self-determination referendums to address similar demands from Quebec and Scotland. And in both cases, the secessionists lost and tensions eventually receded. Canada and the United Kingdom have taken an alternative approach. Both countries held self-determination referendums to address similar demands from Quebec and Scotland. And in both cases, the secessionists lost and tensions eventually receded. Madrid could also win such a vote if it made a few

concessions, such as offering more fiscal and political autonomy to Catalonia. However, **Rajoy has refused to even discuss the conditions under which such a vote could be held, insisting that the law forbids it.** But if the Spanish government took the issue seriously, it would not be so difficult to amend the constitution to allow for it. The other long-term solution would be to turn Spain into a confederation with full recognition of its national minorities. Unlike a referendum, such a shift would not create winners and losers. In private conversations, some pro-independence Catalan politicians say that they could accept it as a compromise. However, Spanish leaders do not seem ready for it; this change would force the Spanish state to rethink the way it has defined itself for the last three centuries. Confederation has worked reasonably well in the past. This was the arrangement between Catalonia and Spain from the marriage of Queen Isabella of Castile and King Ferdinand of Aragon in the late 15th century until the War of Succession in the early 18th century.

Rajoy would lose out politically if he made concessions to the separatists. Minder continues that:

Minder 17 Raphael Minder [New York Times Correspondent for Spain and Portugal], 2017, "The Struggle for Catalonia: Rebel Politics in Spain," Hurst & Company Publishers //DF

Basic goodwill, however, will not be enough to solve the Catalan dispute. While neither side has any incentive to declare open warfare, **the arithmetics of Spain's politics and electorate are also no longer stacked in favor of finding a solution, particularly since both Rajoy and Puigdemont maintain a fragile grip on office. It's an almost impossible situation. Puigdemont and his party have pinned their colors to a separatists coalition that risks implosion if there are any U-turns on secessionism.** Yet according to the columnist Ramoneda, whatever concession Rajoy might now offer to the separatists, the Popular Party could probably hope to gain only a few 'tens of thousands more votes' in Catalonia. By contrast, **a major concession to Catalonia could cost [Rajoy] him 'one or two million votes' in the rest of Spain. It would also destroy his claim to be the flag bearer of Spanish unity.** In that sense, at least, the divorce between the two main conservative forces in Madrid and Barcelona has perhaps reached a point of no return.

Polarization between Spain and Catalonia will only grow for **two** reasons:

First,

Clara Pretus (The Atlantic). "How Spain Misunderstood the Catalan Independence Movement." October 1, 2017. <https://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2017/10/catalan-referendum-spain-independence/541656/>

As researchers at Artis International, an organization of academics and practitioners that conducts field-based research on political conflicts around the world, we sought to study the underlying psychology of the Catalan independence movement to better understand what could strengthen or weaken it. Our study consisted of 24 in-depth ethnographic interviews with leaders of the "independentist" movement, and several dozen more with supporters and non-supporters of independence. In addition, we conducted 68 longitudinal psychometric surveys with independence activists during a non-binding—and thus symbolic—referendum held in 2014 that was not recognized as legitimate by Spain. **The actions of the Spanish government reveal a deep misunderstanding about the psychology of the independence movement. Authorities are attempting to wear down the movement** by denying a vote. Our findings suggested that Madrid's current approach may well backfire: **The government's muscular response to Catalans' desire for self-determination could increase the number of independentists and heighten their passion, which, in the long run, may further erode the stability and reputation of Spain's central government.** Allowing a vote to proceed, meanwhile, could actually strengthen Madrid. The current strain of the Catalan independence movement began under the rule of fascist dictator Francisco Franco, who took over Spain in 1939. Under Franco, the public use of the Catalan language was banned, and all specifically Catalan institutions, such as the Government of Catalonia, were abolished as part of an attempt to end regionalism in Spain. Shortly after Franco's death in 1975, the government reinstated Catalonia's status as an autonomous community within Spain. But a small minority of activists still wanted full independence. The share of those favoring independence began to rise steeply in 2010, from 25 percent to its peak of 57 percent in 2012. The first reason for this rise was likely the 2008 economic crisis. Using government data from 2005 to 2016, we found a very high correlation between support for independence and unemployment in Catalonia. The second reason for this rise was public outrage at the 2010 constitutional court's cutting down of reforms aimed at increasing sovereignty in Catalonia's Statute of Autonomy, its equivalent of a constitution. Both events led many to feel that Catalonia would be better off under self rule. Since then, Madrid has been adamantly opposed to an independence referendum, arguing that it is illegal according to the 1978 Spanish constitution (which mentions the "indissoluble unity of the Spanish Nation"). Since then, the Catalan independence movement has been building. It is driven by strong personal identification with Catalan culture and what social psychologists call sacred values: moral values of the highest significance that, in some cases, people would give their lives for. According to our research, **the top two sacred values motivating the Catalan movement were the right to vote for independence and the protection of Catalan identity. In studies of conflicts around the world, our colleagues have found that threats to sacred values and identities often lead to increased activism and, sometimes, violence.** The denial of a vote is a threat to these values and identity and, most likely, will only further fuel the independence movement. Until recently, many supporters of the referendum have been undecided on the question of independence. However, the denial of the vote by Madrid has outraged some, turning them into pro-independence activists. Denying Catalans their vote may only increase the sense of distrust towards Madrid from Spain's other regions, such as Galicia and Basque country, both of which have had their own independence movements of varying degrees of popularity. Many Spaniards do not have confidence in the country's democratic institutions. For example, the People's Party, the current ruling party, has been implicated in 65 cases of corruption. President Mariano Rajoy has stood by many of those involved, causing many to question their government's interest in the public good.

Second, Criminalization.

Faber from the Nation reports on December 29th that:

Sebastiaan Faber and Bécquer Seguí (The Nation). "Catalonia's Elections Take Spain Back to Square One." December 29, 2017.

<https://www.thenation.com/article/catalonias-elections-take-spain-back-to-square-one/>

The results of the election were a triple failure for Rajoy. His party lost nearly two-thirds of its representatives in the Catalan parliament, while its direct competitor on the right won the election and now has nine times more representatives. The election also failed to produce what the prime minister had hoped for: a loss of the pro-independence majority after their failed bid to proclaim an independent republic. Instead, Catalan voters made clear they wouldn't be intimidated by Rajoy's de facto rule over the region. Turning out in record numbers, they unexpectedly heeded deposed president Carles Puigdemont's call, from his exile in Brussels, to leverage the artificially imposed election and reinstate the government that Rajoy had fired. The campaign also revealed the PP's lack of strategy going into the Catalan elections. "We are running in these elections in order to recover a Catalonia that is stronger, more prosperous, freer, more just, and with a brighter future," read the only document the PP released during the campaign. Catalan voters, it appears, saw through this empty rhetoric. The PP's strategy, instead, has remained at the national level. With Catalan autonomy still revoked, the region is now ruled by a party that won barely more than 4 percent of the vote. (Rajoy has said that he will restore Catalonia's regional autonomy once a government is formed, but his party's rhetoric over the past few months suggests that that is far from a guarantee.) **The PP has deployed what can only be called a McCarthy-style criminalization of any challenge to Spain's territorial makeup. The leaders of two of the three largest parties in Catalonia, the deposed president Puigdemont of PDeCAT and vice president Oriol Junqueras of the ERC, were forced to campaign from exile and prison, respectively. And the number of politicians and civic leaders indicted or under investigation is only rising.** Since September, dozens have been called to testify in a sweeping judicial investigation coordinated by Spain's Supreme Court. The charges they face—rebellion, sedition, and embezzlement—carry up to 30 years in prison. Following the lead of the country's attorney general and the national police, the Court is treating the events leading up to the October 1 referendum and the declaration of independence four weeks later as a giant subversive plot. An extensive police report delivered to the Court on December 15 concluded that the independence movement had systematically encouraged "hatred" of Spain, damaging the country's "dignity" while "deploying a permanent strategy of carefully planned disobedience." The report even named former FC Barcelona manager Pep Guardiola for having read a pro-independence text at a public protest in June. **Investigations so opposed to freedom of speech and freedom of assembly are in keeping with Rajoy's policies. Since becoming PM in 2011, Rajoy most famously curbed civil and constitutional liberties with the 2015 "gag law," which, The New York Times noted, "disturbingly harkens back to the dark days of the Franco regime."** That the judicial system's investigations today complement Rajoy's political strategy is far from coincidental. Whether in the opposition or in the government, the PP has often looked to the courts instead of to the Parliament in order to carry out its political objectives.

Second, National Opposition

In order to discuss greater fiscal autonomy for Catalonia, there must be some level of consensus among the 17 Spanish Regions. Boffey of the Guardian reports last week:

Daniel Boffey, 17, 11-21-2017, Spain 'ready to discuss' greater fiscal autonomy for Catalonia, Guardian,

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/nov/21/spain-ready-to-discuss-greater-fiscal-autonomy-for-catalonia>, 1-7-2018, (NK)

"When there is a government, and this government stays behind the framework of the constitutional order, we will drop 155. As soon as there is a government, whoever the government is," a source said. **A change to the constitution to allow Catalans greater say over their finances would require a referendum, and the Spanish government has stressed that the wealthy region would not be able to turn its back on the rest of the country in any new arrangement. "This government will not go into a fiscal agreement only with one region.** This has got to be a full package," said one source. **"We are ready to talk about the financial responsibility of the whole of Spain and we can talk with the regions but we will have to take into account that 17 regions play a role, and solidarity is a keystone of our constitution."** In polling for the Catalan elections called by Rajoy for 21 December, pro-independence parties are marginally in front with a projected 1.974 million votes to the 1.966m for the unionist parties, Ciudadanos, the Catalan Socialist party and the PP.

Torres of Politico furthers that:

Torres 17 Diego Torres, 11-15-2017, "Spanish regions to Catalonia: Up yours," POLITICO,

<https://www.politico.eu/article/spain-regional-conundrum-catalan-independence/> //DF

Only two other regional presidents — from the Basque Country and Navarre — defend the right to self-determination, but they show little appetite at present to pursue a secessionist agenda of their own. **Among Spaniards at large,** about 39 percent of the population is comfortable with the territorial status quo, according to the latest survey by the Center for Sociological Research, while 28 percent would prefer less or no regional autonomy. **Just 13.4 percent would like to see increased autonomy** and only 10.2 percent favor letting independent-minded areas separate from Spain. Moreover, the only national party to endorse the right to self-determination and side with the Catalan demands for a referendum on secession, the far-left Podemos, has suffered a big drop in support in opinion polls in the past two months, coinciding with the Catalan conflict becoming the Spanish public's second biggest concern after unemployment. The liberal Ciudadanos party, which has long taken a more hawkish stance — for instance, it advocated direct rule as a response to Catalonia's defiant unilateral declaration of independence much

sooner than Rajoy did — has seen its support rise spectacularly in most surveys. Ciudadanos called for direct rule even before the declaration of independence.

For these two reasons, Maestre in the Nation concludes that:

Sebastiaan Faber and Bécquer Seguí (The Nation). “Have Spain and Catalonia Reached a Point of No Return?” 9/26/17.

<https://www.thenation.com/article/have-spain-and-catalonia-reached-a-point-of-no-return/>

According to journalist Antonio Maestre, the result is that Spain is rushing toward the edge of an abyss. The situation, he wrote in La Marea in early September, reminds him of Croatia and Serbia in 1990: “Emotionally and socially **something has snapped among an immense majority of the population.**” **The two trains are racing full speed toward a head-on collision**, his colleague Martínez says, **yet there are no political incentives for either to slow down or change course.** “The Spanish and Catalan right are precisely where they want to be,” he notes. “One is engaged in a non-stop crusade against Catalonia; the other is wallowing in martyrdom.” Those at the helm of the Procés point to the opportunity independence would create to remake democracy itself. “It’s a question of democracy,” Lluç Salellas, brother of Benet and a councilman for the pro-independence CUP in Girona, says. “The people will be able to vote and decide.” One thing is clear: The Spanish state “offers few guarantees to Catalans.” Many inside and outside the CUP believe an independent Catalan Republic is the only hope for progressive change. “I believe in and defend the self-determination of peoples,” filmmaker Eulàlia Comas posted on social media,

Granting Catalonia independence and resolving the crisis is critical for **two** reasons:

First, Conflict.

Powell writing for the New York Review of Books explains this November that:

Jonathan Powell (The New York Review of Books). “How to Solve the Catalan Crisis.” 11/3/17.

<http://www.nybooks.com/daily/2017/11/03/how-to-solve-the-catalan-crisis/>

Yet Europe is not magically immune to the horrifying violence that surrounds it in an arc from Syria to Libya. The continent has been plagued by violent conflicts over the issue of self-determination until very recently. It was only twenty years ago that a long-running war in Northern Ireland ended, eighteen years ago that serious armed conflict in Kosovo ended, and just six years ago that the ETA terrorist campaign in the Basque Country was brought to an end by the Aiete Declaration. None of these bloody European conflicts ended by themselves. They were only brought to an end by political leaders on both sides who were prepared to engage in negotiations, at considerable personal and political risk. **The conflict in Catalonia over self-determination will not end by itself, either. Although it has so far been a largely peaceful dispute, if both sides persist in escalating the dispute, they could turn it into another bloody conflict inside Europe’s borders—with consequences for all of us. In other similar disputes, it has been a short step from heads being broken in the streets in clashes between protesters and police to young, over-enthusiastic partisans responding with violence of their own. Far better to solve the conflict now, before real violence begins, than allow the blood to flow and then try to stop it.** We have experience in stopping such conflicts. The demand for national self-determination is not a new phenomenon. European countries in particular faced it often enough through the half-century of decolonization and they reached negotiated settlements in the end to nearly all the demands for independence. Self-determination is, however, a devilish problem to solve because it involves the clash of two rights: in this case, the right of the Catalan people to govern themselves, assert sovereignty, and run their affairs, and the right of Spain to maintain its national territorial integrity unless a majority of the Spanish people vote—across the country as a whole—to allow Catalonia to leave.

Griffiths of Washington Post furthers that:

Ryan Griffiths (Washington Post). “Kurdistan and Catalonia are voting on independence. Welcome to the age of secession.” 9/23/17.

https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/monkey-cage/wp/2017/09/23/kurdistan-and-catalonia-are-voting-on-independence-heres-what-we-know-about-secessionist-groups/?utm_term=.4e4f74b6ca92

Controversial **referendums on independence are scheduled in** Iraqi Kurdistan on Sept. 25 and the Spanish region of **Catalonia on Oct. 1. Both referendums place these secessionist regions on a collision course with their central governments and the international community, increasing the probability of conflict.** What is the purpose of these referendums, and what is the strategy behind them? Secession occurs when a region within a state breaks away to form its own sovereign state. There were 55 active secessionist movements around the world as of 2011, and an average of 52 movements per year since 1945. Most have failed to achieve their goal of independence, sometimes coming to an agreement with their central government or simply fading away. **Roughly a third have resulted in violence.** Indeed, some claim that secessionism is the chief cause of violence in the world today. As I argue in my recent book, we are truly living in the Age of Secession.

Second, Economic Harms.

Lister of CNN reports that:

Tim Lister (CNN). “Catalan crisis: No mood for compromise after close vote.” December 22, 2017.

<http://www.cnn.com/2017/12/21/europe/catalonia-election-lister-analysis-intl/index.html>

The trouble for Rajoy is that his own Popular Party was hammered -- losing eight of its 11 seats in the Parliament. His goal of lancing the boil of the Catalan separatist movement through these elections has backfired. Party spokesman Rafael Hernando said only that the government and Senate in Madrid remained the most solid guarantee against the forces of independence. The result suggests further uncertainty in a region that accounts for a quarter of Spain's gross domestic product, and possibly months of haggling over the formation of a regional government, with seven parties represented in the Parliament. The pro-independence parties are not exactly a coherent bloc, and if they fail to form a government by April next year there would be yet another election. Forming a majority will be complicated by the fact that several of those elected are either in detention or self-imposed exile. In effect, Rajoy's attempt to resolve the crisis through new elections has only cemented the status quo. But the pro-independence parties will probably think twice before trying an encore in declaring Catalonia's separation from Spain, given the sequence of events that was triggered in October. Additionally, the most radical of the pro-independence parties, the Popular Unity Candidacy (CUP), did very poorly and in winning less than half the popular vote they lack a mandate to declare independence. The upheaval -- the worst constitutional crisis in Spain's four decades as a democracy -- began with the Catalan government holding a referendum on the region's future on October 1, despite it being declared illegal by Spain's Constitutional Court. The vote was marred by violence, with the Civil Guard sent in by Madrid to try to prevent voting. Despite a boycott by most pro-union voters, the separatist parties used the result to push the declaration of independence through Parliament. That led Madrid to dissolve the Catalan government, arrest leading pro-independence politicians and call fresh elections. **The turmoil has had a chilling effect on Catalonia's economy, Foreign investment fell by 75% in the third quarter of this year compared to a year ago. Two of Spain's largest banks -- Caixa and Sabadell -- decided to move their headquarters out of Catalonia -- as did some 3,000 other companies. The latest result, and the uncertainty that lies ahead, won't have them hurrying back to Catalonia.**

Dowsett of Reuters continues in 2017 that:

Sonya Dowsett (Reuters). "Investors see shades of Quebec in Catalonia vote." Published 12/5/17.

<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-spain-politics-catalonia-quebec/investors-see-shades-of-quebec-in-catalonia-vote-idUSKBN1DZ1YE>.

MADRID/MONTREAL (Reuters) - A flight by businesses from Catalonia's independence crisis has drawn comparisons with Quebec, the French-speaking Canadian province that deterred investors with a decades-long independence push. SPONSORED Opinion polls showed support for pro-independence parties at just under 50 percent as campaigning for a Dec. 21 election began on Tuesday, enough to dampen the Madrid government's hopes the vote would end a volatile standoff over secession. **"Carrying on as before means chaos,"** said Jordi Alberich, managing director of Cercle d'Economia, a business association based in the Catalan capital, Barcelona. **"What has happened is tremendously serious and it could get even worse."** **The election** is seen by pro-independence parties as a de-facto referendum on a split from Spain following a banned plebiscite which led to clashes between Spanish police and protesters on Oct 1 and the subsequent dismissal of the Catalan government by Madrid. While it **may** not propel secessionist forces back into regional government, it could **end up sustaining their cause and thereby putting off investors over the longer term.** Almost 3,000 firms have shifted their headquarters outside the region, many to Madrid, mirroring the flight of companies from Quebec's Montreal for Toronto before and after its first referendum in 1980 delivered defeat for independence. The Catalan exodus has so far been administrative rather than physical, with companies effectively shifting domiciles, the 'brass plate' of the business, to avoid legal and tax complications rather than moving staff or operations. They fear secession would leave them outside the euro zone and exposed to the uncertain policies and possible tax grabs of a new republic burdened by the region's existing large debts. **Madrid,** eager for unionist parties to score a clear victory on Dec. 21 and put the crisis to rest, **says the economic impact will be only short term, but there are signs the uncertainty is already affecting longer-term investment decisions.** "If I had been contacted by an American investor asking: 'Should I open a small office in Barcelona?' three or four years ago, I would have said: 'Yes, of course'," said the Spain country head for an international investment bank. "Now I can't say that anymore ... **The pain inflicted by the independence process scares money away.**" He, like other bankers and chief executives, declined to speak publicly because the issue is divisive. Those who speak out for one side or other can become targets of criticism and abuse.

Chislett of the Elcano Royal Institute quantifies that

William Chislett (Associate Analyst, Elcano Royal Institute). "The potential impact of the Catalan crisis on the Spanish economy." 11/8/17.

<http://www.realinstitutoelcano.org/wps/wcm/connect/01e82708-49a4-463c-a65a-a632517a2e80/Commentary-Chislett-Potential-impact-Catalan-crisis-Spanish-economy.pdf?MOD=AJPERES&CACHEID=01e82708-49a4-463c-a65a-a632517a2e80>

The Bank of Spain does not say this, but this scenario assumes that the anti-secessionist parties --the conservative Popular Party, which governs Spain, the Socialists and the centrist Ciudadanos-- could win more seats than the pro-independence parties, an unholy alliance of conservative nationalists (PDeCAT), the more rabidly secessionist Republic Left of Catalonia and the anti-capitalist far-left CUP. **In the worst-case scenario, following a victory by the pro-independence bloc and a continued stand-off with Madrid, up to 60% of the projected growth for 2018 and 2019 could evaporate.** A lot is riding on this election. The pro-independence parties won 72 of the 135 seats in the 2015 election on 47.8% of the vote. Recent polls show these parties narrowly gaining control of the parliament again, but Madrid is hoping that the anti-secessionist parties will galvanise the increasingly vociferous 'silent majority' against independence into voting on a larger scale than previously. The Bank of Spain is currently holding to its GDP growth forecasts of 3.1% this year, 2.5% in 2018 and 2.2% in 2019. **Luis de Guindos, the Economy Minister, has already lowered growth from 2.7% to 2.3% next year. 'A potential heightening, or prolongation, of the political situation might adversely impact the economic outlook and financial stability in Spain', says the Bank of Spain's report. 'Greater uncertainty might dent economic agents' confidence and thereby affect their spending and investment decisions, subsequently exerting a negative impact on economic**

activity and employment’. The report also underscores ‘the political tension in Catalonia and its potential repercussions for funding conditions on the capital markets and for the Spanish economy as a whole’

Lindhart of The Banker quantifies this December that:

Lindhart 17 Stefanie Linhardt, 12-1-2017, "Will Catalonia independence movement dent Spain's economic recovery?," The Banker [Global Economic Forecasting],

<http://ec2-54-72-50-240.eu-west-1.compute.amazonaws.com/World/Western-Europe/Spain/Will-Catalonia-independence-movement-dent-Spain-s-economic-recovery?ct=true> //DF

Several years of economic downturn and three years of growth still leave Spain's gross domestic product (GDP) lagging that of 2008. But recovery and expected economic growth of 3.1% in 2017, according to the International Monetary Fund, could see its economy outpace 2008's GDP this year, both at current and constant prices. This would be a first since the eurozone sovereign debt crisis – but Spain's constitutional crisis and dispute with its strongest region economically, Catalonia, has the potential to spoil the party. The long-brewing differences between the Spanish government and the autonomous community of Catalonia came to a head when Catalan leaders held an independence referendum on October 1, which does not conform with the Spanish constitution. Following the referendum – hailed as a victory by the separatists – prime minister Mariano Rajoy's government was criticised by some for the intervention of, and tactics used by, the police force. A worsening situation Since then, the situation has caused the national government to impose direct rule over the region and call new regional elections for Catalonia on December 21, while some of the separatist political leaders have been imprisoned. "This is a really serious political crisis, the worst Spain has had in 40 years of democracy," says Ángel Talavera, senior eurozone economist at analyst firm Oxford Economics. "There will be an impact on the Catalan economy, for sure. Still, the main question for me is how much of this impact on Catalonia will actually translate into a net impact on Spain." He points to the uncertainty the situation is creating in Catalonia, the companies that have already moved their headquarters, and the expected impact on tourism and investment decisions. Immediate indicators come from investor confidence in bonds by the Spanish sovereign and the country's major companies on the stock market. And Spain's largest companies combined in the IBEX 35 index have been hit. The index lost some 3.25% in value between the beginning of August and November 14 – during the same period the European Euro Stoxx 50 rose by about the same amount. The picture in the bond market is significantly better. "This is the kind of crisis, had it happened in 2012, that would have sent Spain's bond yields rocketing. Now they are barely moving," says Mr Talavera, who adds that the European Central Bank's bond buying programme is making a big difference. Pain in Spain? So contagion in Europe does not seem to be a risk. Still, the Spanish economy could be hit. Catalonia contributes the largest share of any region to Spain's GDP, between 16% and 25% depending on the data source. Catalonia also welcomes the second largest number of tourists of any region in Spain, according to Eurostat, and as its capital Barcelona is an especially popular attraction, there is a risk that some city travellers might instead opt for a city destination outside of Spain. Rating agency Moody's warned at the beginning of November that political tensions over Catalonia and continuing uncertainty "are likely to damage economic sentiment and consumer spending, both in the region and for the Spanish economy as a whole". Moody's now forecasts GDP growth of 2.9% for Spain in 2017 and 2.3% in 2018, a drop of 0.1 percentage points and 0.2 percentage points, respectively. "At least for now, the escalating tensions negate the beneficial impact of a range of more positive recent developments in Spain's financial sector and the economy," says Moody's. Many economists are so far holding fire before significantly changing their growth forecast for Spain. Among them is Mr Talavera, who has only slightly lowered his estimates by 0.1 percentage point to 2.6% for 2018. While the latest available economic indicators cover September, as well as the third quarter of 2017, some initial attention can be drawn to economic survey data. "The first number that made me think that the fourth quarter might be weaker was the services Purchasing Managers Index [PMI] for Spain in October," says Mr Talavera, who adds that a slower fourth quarter could also lead Spain's economy to slow in 2018. The PMI of service companies published on November 6 showed an expansion in business activity, albeit the slowest in Spain since January, movement that diverged meaningfully from the rest of Europe. Survey data from the IHS Markit Spain Business Outlook illustrated a drop in business sentiment in October to the lowest level since mid-2016. Although at 42%, the net balance of companies predicting a rise in activity over the coming year still signals solid confidence among firms, while Spain's manufacturing PMI underlined further growth momentum in October. Worst-case scenario The latest official economic forecast by Spain's central bank, Bank of Spain, published in September predicts 2017 GDP increase of 3.1%, followed by 2.5% in 2018 and 2.2% in 2019. Its next update is scheduled for December 15, six days ahead of Catalonia's regional elections, but the central bank has also released simulations of hypothetical economic scenarios for Spain in its November Financial Stability Report. The worst-case scenario, according to the calculations, amounts to a reduction of Bank of Spain's base case GDP growth figure by more than 2.5 percentage points between the end of 2017 and year-end 2019. This would mean Bank of Spain's base-case economic growth estimates would be cut by almost 60%, more than \$27bn. In a less severe scenario with a temporary

increase in uncertainty, Spain's economic growth in the same period would be reduced by a cumulative 0.3 percentage points. These scenarios are "illustrative and provisional", the central bank cautions, but highlight "the significant economic risks and costs of the situation caused by the independence initiatives in Catalonia", adding that "a prompt return to normal" could mitigate these risks. Still, as experts expect long and protracted negotiations between Catalan leaders and the Spanish government, irrespective of the outcome of the December 21 elections, this leaves plenty of room for further escalation and yet more blows to Spain's economy.

However, Spain granting Catalonia independence would resolve the independence issue, and put both sides on the same page. Castells of Johns Hopkins University writes in 2014:

Castells 14 Antoni Castells [visiting professor at the Johns Hopkins University], 10-29-2014, "Six comments on the economic viability of independence and two preliminary remarks," Comissió d'Economia Catalana, http://www.coleconomistes.cat/pdf/the_economy_of_catalonia.pdf //DF

Neither in Quebec or Scotland, of course, has the referendum process been short or easy or stress-free, but even so these two cases are poles apart from the current situation in Catalonia. And the difference between them has a marked impact, in economic and financial terms, on all the fields we have examined. To start with it has an obvious effect on trade between Catalonia and the rest of Spain. Even if we acknowledge that a border effect may arise, it would never cause such a sharp fall in trade as hostility and boycotts, which have a feedback effect that is harmful to everyone. Secondly, **reaching an amicable outcome (including agreement over the distribution of assets and debts)** is crucial to the reaction of financial markets, as regards both the public and the private sectors. For the Catalan economy this **is nothing less than a matter of survival**. But **it is also decisive for the Spanish economy, because Catalonia is the country's main economic region, and in the event of an acrimonious secession**, it is not far-fetched to think that **serious doubts could arise about Spain's solvency and financial viability**. Finally, a friendly agreement is critical to the issue of the EU and the Eurozone. For, however the treaties are interpreted, **a negotiated agreement would have to include a clear recommendation for Catalonia to remain in the EU and the Eurozone** and this would make it easier for member States to reach a decision. A scenario marked by open conflict and pitched battles, on the other hand, would make it much more difficult for this point, which is vital to Catalonia's interests, to be successfully resolved. In short, economic decisions are always largely determined by expectations about social and political stability, confidence in the institutional framework and the rule of law, and the extent to which creditors can feel sure that debts will be paid and contracts fulfilled. And in a scenario of independence, the way that independence is achieved is of vital relevance to all these factors.

This is critical, as Srivastava of Qrius explains in 2017 that Catalonia would have a prosperous economy as an independent nation: Prashansa Srivastava (Qrius) "The economic impacts and the significance of the Catalan crisis." November 4, 2017. <https://qrius.com/economic-impacts-significance-catalan-crisis/>.

The financial crisis of 2008 exacerbated the economic hardship and further ignited the separatist sentiments. Spain faced an extreme credit crunch, billion-euro bank bailout, skyrocketing unemployment, and spiralling inflation and Catalonia faced the highest budget cuts. Then in 2010, the constitutional court struck down reforms that would have allowed the region to collect its own taxes, increasing the autonomy of Catalonia. The wealthy region felt as if it was propping up the poorer provinces at the expense of its stunted development. Catalan residents represent only 16% of the country's population. However, their contribution is 20% to Spain's taxes, out of which they receive only 14% back for public expenses. The economic viability of independence The Catalan region has long been the industrial heartland of Spain, spearheading the Industrial Revolution. The region has always been ahead of its times, earlier in terms of its maritime power and trade, but recently for finance, services, and multinational companies. Catalonia has the highest GDP out of all the regions in Spain, and at 266 billion euros, constitutes almost one-fifth of the country's economic output. **An independent Catalonia would be a midsize European nation, with Barcelona as its capital. Catalonia would be at the 15th position among EU economies in terms of GDP, above countries such as Portugal and Greece.**

Catalonia also has considerable industrial muscle, lending it international competitiveness in terms of export capacity. Tourism has immense potential to contribute significantly to the Catalan economy. Barcelona ranks as the number four destination for international tourists, only behind the big three European capitals (London, Paris and Rome), with nearly six million visitors. The commitment and long-term presence of the multinational companies that have opted to establish themselves in Catalonia also guarantee continued foreign direct investment to Catalonia and showcases its ability to attract foreign investment. The economic viability of an independent Catalonia is thus not in question. What is in question is its political viability and the economic repercussions of an ugly independence.

However, Hunt of the Daily Express explains in 2017 that:

Thomas Hunt, 12-26, 17, Daily Express, Euro Plummets on Christmas day,

<https://www.express.co.uk/finance/city/896627/euro-EU-crash-dollar-computer-algorithms-Spain-Catalonia>

XTB analyst Joaquín Robles said: "We are perhaps facing the worst scenario for the interests of Spanish investors, since it is most likely that the pro-independence group will return to rule." He added that the search for independence through the legal channels, instead of unilaterally, would "reassure" investors. Moody's believed the electoral result illustrated "the persistent" polarisation of the Catalans and it is "negative" for the economic growth of Spain.

Contention X: Self Governance

Julia Montana (Open Democracy). Catalonia: a cry for understanding and recognition. Published 11/16/17.

<https://www.opendemocracy.net/can-europe-make-it/j-lia-monta/catalonia-cry-for-understanding-and-recognition>.

As well as in all other autonomic regions of Spain, a new Catalan Statute of Autonomy was agreed upon between Spain and Catalonia, and approved by a referendum, coming into force in 2006. Afterwards, the Partido Popular (PP) in Spain filed an objection to the Spanish Constitutional Court which led to serious cuts and amendments to the Statute of Autonomy. Since then, many progressive laws conflicting with the right-wing agenda of the [Popular Party] were rejected by the Spanish government after being approved by the Catalan Parliament: laws against energy poverty, fracking and evictions as well as reforms promoting gender equality, social security, taxation on nuclear energy and banks, and so on. In total, 25 laws approved by the Catalan Parliament did not come into force because they were repealed by the Constitutional Court at the request of Mariano Rajoy's government. The widely-covered police brutality which took place during the referendum of October 1 has, at last, brought home the long-sought international attention to the repression that we experience. We reacted to this violence with peaceful resistance to reclaim our dignity and our rights, and issued numerous calls for dialogue with Spain and for international solidarity.