

THE 2017 CATALAN INDEPENDENCE REFERENDUM: AN INTERPLAY
BETWEEN POLITICAL ELITES AND CIVIL SOCIETY

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Approval of the Graduate School of Social Sciences

Prof. Dr. Sadettin Kirazcı
Director (Acting)

I certify that this thesis satisfies all the requirements as a thesis for the degree of Master of Science.

Prof. Dr. Ayşe Ayata
Head of Department

This is to certify that we have read this thesis and that in our opinion it is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a thesis for the degree of Master of Science.

Prof. Dr. Pınar Köksal
Supervisor

Examining Committee Members

Prof. Dr. Ayşe Ceylan Tokluoğlu (METU, SOC) _____

Prof. Dr. Pınar Köksal (METU, ADM) _____

Assist. Prof. Dr. Şebnem Yardımcı-Geyikçi (Hacettepe Uni., SBKY) _____

I hereby declare that all information in this document has been obtained and presented in accordance with academic rules and ethical conduct. I also declare that, as required by these rules and conduct, I have fully cited and referenced all material and results that are not original to this work.

Name, Last name : Seren Ergan

Signature :

ABSTRACT

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Ergan, Seren

M.Sc., Department of Political Science and Public Administration

Supervisor: Prof. Dr. Pınar Köksal

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This thesis explores the role of the Catalan political elites and the two most prominent Catalan civil society organizations, *Assemblea Nacional Catalana* – ANC (Catalan National Assembly) and *Òmnium Cultural* (All Cultural) on the transformation of the Catalan national movement that experienced a turning point in 2017 with an unofficial Catalan independence referendum. To that end, the historical background of the relations between Catalonia and Spain as well as the speeches of two Catalan presidents, Artur Mas and Carles Puigdemont are analysed by also looking at some of the relevant quantitative data which show the support for independence. This study argues that the speeches of the political elites had a significant impact on the shift of the Catalan national movement from a pro-autonomy stance to a pro-independence one. With the instrumentalisation of cultural/linguistic, economic and political/institutional arguments, the Catalan political elites led to the mobilization of the civil society thanks to the active role played by the above-mentioned civil society organizations. As a result of this active role, the Catalan independence referendum had serious consequences such as strict divisions in the Catalan society, suspension of the

autonomy of Catalonia, and the imprisonment of the Catalan politicians and the leaders of the civil society organizations. Since the international actors were not in favour of the Catalan independence, the Catalan independence movement could not maintain its momentum. For the Catalan national movement to achieve its objectives without being worse off, ending the contentious relationship with Spain via an open dialogue is essential.

Keywords: Catalonia, Nationalism, Secession, Political Elites, Civil Society

ÖZ

2017 KATALAN BAĞIMSIZLIK REFERANDUMU: SİYASİ ELİTLER VE SİVİL TOPLUM ARASINDAKİ KARŞILIKLI ETKİLEŞİM

Ergan, Seren

Yüksek Lisans, Siyaset Bilimi ve Kamu Yönetimi Bölümü

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Bu tez, 2017 yılında resmi olmayan bir bağımsızlık referandumuyla bir dönüm noktasını yaşayan Katalan milliyetçi hareketinin dönüşümünde Katalan siyasi elitlerinin ve önde gelen iki Katalan sivil toplum örgütü olan Katalan Ulusal Meclisi ve *Omnium Cultural*'nın rolünü araştırmaktadır. Bu amaçla, Katalunya ve İspanya arasındaki ilişkilerin tarihsel arka planı da göz önüne alınarak, iki Katalan hükümet başkanı, Artur Mas ve Carles Puigdemont'un konuşmaları bağımsızlığa olan desteği gösteren ilgili nitel veriler yardımıyla analiz edilmiştir. Bu çalışma, siyasi elitlerin konuşmalarının, Katalan ulusal hareketinin özerklik yanlısı duruşundan bağımsızlık yanlısı bir duruşa geçişü üzerinde önemli bir etkisi olduğunu savunmaktadır. Kültürel/dilsel, ekonomik ve politik/kurumsal tartışmaların araçsallaştırılmasıyla, Katalan siyasi elitleri yukarıda belirtilen sivil toplum örgütlerinin oynadığı aktif rol sayesinde sivil toplumun harekete geçmesine neden olmuştur. Sonuç olarak, Katalan bağımsızlık referandumu, Katalan toplumunda sert bölünmeler, Katalunya özerkliğinin askiya alınması ve Katalan politikacıların ve sivil toplum örgütü liderlerinin hapsedilmesi gibi ciddi sonuçlara yol açmıştır. Uluslararası aktörler de Katalan bağımsızlığını desteklemediği için Katalan

bağımsızlık hareketi ivmesini koruyamamıştır. Katalan ulusal hareketinin amaçlarına zararlı çıkmadan ulaşabilmesi için, İspanya ile arasındaki çekişmeli ilişkisine açık bir diyalog yoluyla son vermek esastır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Katalonya, Milliyetçilik, Ayrılma, Siyasi Elitler, Sivil Toplum

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

1-O	1 Octubre (1 October)
ANC	Assemblea Nacional Catalana (Catalan National Assembly)
CDC	Convergència Democràtica de Catalunya (Democratic Convergence of Catalonia)
CEO	Centre d'Estudis d'Opinio (Opinion Studies Centre)
CiU	Convergència i Unió (Convergence and Union)
ERC	Esquerra Republicana de Catalunya (Republican Left of Catalonia)
EU	European Union
ICV	Iniciativa per Catalunya Verds (Initiative for Catalonia Greens)
IDESTAT	Institut d'Estadística de Catalunya (Statistics Institute of Catalonia)
INE	Instituto Nacional de Estadística (National Statistics Institute)
LNL	Llei de Normalització Lingüística (Law of Linguistic Normalization)
LOAPA	Ley Orgánica para la Armonización del Proceso Autonómico (Organic Law for the Harmonization of the Autonomous Process)
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
OECD	Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
OHCHR	United Nations Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner
PP	Partido Popular (Popular Party)
PQ	Parti Québécois (Quebec Party)
PSC	Partit dels Socialistes de Catalunya (Socialist Party of Catalonia)
SCC	Societat Civil Catalana (Catalan Civil Society)
SCO	Shanghai Cooperation Organization
SNP	Scottish National Party
UDC	Unió Democràtica de Catalunya (Democratic Union of Catalonia)
UK	United Kingdom

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1. The Scope of the Thesis & Argument

This thesis aims to explore the role played by the Catalan political elites and the two most prominent Catalan civil society organizations, *Assemblea Nacional Catalana* – ANC (Catalan National Assembly) and *Òmnium Cultural* (All Cultural)¹, in analysing the transformation of the Catalan national movement, which has shifted its discourse from an autonomist position to a pro-independence and secessionist one, focusing on the period from 2006 to 2018, particularly on the October 1, 2017 Catalan independence referendum. By considering the long historical background of the Catalan-Spanish relations, it investigates the influence of the Catalan political elites and civil society organizations on this shift, which eventually led to the unofficial independence referendum to secede from Spain. The study will specifically attempt to answer the following main research question: What have been the historical reasons that resulted in this radical shift and today's pro-independence position supported by the Catalan political elites and the ANC and *Òmnium Cultural*? In the specific case of Catalonia, the Catalan political elites and these two prominent civil society organizations operationalized the cultural/linguistic, economic and political/institutional dimensions to support their arguments regarding the Catalan national movement. The thesis will also look at the relationship of the Catalan elites and civil society organizations with the Spanish Government that exacerbated the conflict and the society's reaction to this contentious relationship. In that sense, as will be further elaborated later on, unlike the literature on the Catalan national movement

¹ Although the direct translation of the organization *Òmnium Cultural* into neither English nor Spanish can be found on any source, the word “Òmnium” comes from Latin and means “all”.

and independence this study argues that the interplay between political elites and civil society organizations had shaped the course of events leading up to the 1 October 2017 referendum.

Recent decades have witnessed a trend of radicalization in the demands of minority nations in some of the Western democratic countries such as the United Kingdom (UK), Canada, and Spain. All of these multinational states have decentralized administrative structures and contain more than one national group within their own territorial organizations. Therefore, the demands made by the minority nations to extend the scope of decentralization within their territories had an impact on domestic politics in these countries regarding political rights. In the case of the UK, one of the minority nations who have a distinct identity and culture is the Scottish nation in Scotland. During the 1970s, Scottish nationalism was politically awakened by the Scottish National Party – SNP. At that time, based on the newly discovered oil revenues in the North Sea, Scottish nationalists pursued the goal of being an economically self-sufficient, independent state (Connolly, 2013: 60). Although the first attempt of devolution came from the Labour Party in 1979, it failed due to insufficient support. However, the devolution process was maintained in the 1990s, this time “enthusiastically backed” by Scottish voters (Connolly, 2013: 61). Support for the devolution increased, resulting in the strong support for the SNP in the 2007 Scottish parliamentary election and enabled the party to form a SNP-led minority government. After the victory of the SNP in the 2011 elections; i.e. winning the majority of the seats in the Scottish parliament, the radicalization of the Scottish nationalism manifested itself clearly with the decision on holding an independence referendum in 2014, thanks to the agreement reached between the central and regional governments; respectively, British and Scottish governments. However, the referendum resulted in 55.3% of the population saying “No” to independence.²

² Scottish Parliament Information Centre. (2014). Retrieved October 10, 2018, from http://www.parliament.scot/ResearchBriefingsAndFactSheets/Scottish_Independence_Referendum_2014_Results.pdf

Canada experienced a similar radicalization during the 1960s with the process of “Quiet Revolution” in Quebec. Quebec is a part of Canada in which the Quebec nation, which speaks French and has a different identity and culture than the rest of Canadians, resides. A movement of a political, social, and economic change initiated by the Quebec governments “resulted in a redefinition of the Quebec nation” (Lecours, 2018: 8). In 1968, the emergence of the *Parti Québécois* (PQ) brought about an agenda of secession from Canada with the promise of holding a referendum, which could take place in 1980. The result was negative for the secessionist side with only 40.4% of the voters saying “Yes” to independence (Lecours, 2018: 7). After the first referendum the support for the PQ did not decrease, rather it increased up to 49% of the votes (Lecours, 2018: 9). Negotiations on the demands of the Quebec nation continued after the first referendum, and in 1987 “Meech Lake Accord” was signed, which “recognized Quebec as a special community” (Zhang, 2016: 221). However, since this agreement did not satisfy the pro-secessionists, a second referendum was held in 1995. This referendum, too, could not achieve enough support with 49.4% “Yes” votes (Lecours, 2018: 11). Because of the threat of another referendum and in order to curb these challenges, the central government adopted a legislation in 2000, which introduced the condition of approval of the central government before any referendum on independence could be held (Zhang, 2016: 221).

As another multinational state, Spain too, has always been challenged by its national minorities, and it still continues to experience such challenges coming from these groups. Because of its failure to accomplish a “linguistic-cultural and emotional integration” from the beginning, Juan J. Linz accepted Spain as a failed nation-state of Western Europe (1973: 99). Because of the fact that in Spain there are several national minorities, which historically have their own linguistic and cultural identities different from a Spanish identity, the country has never been able to unify its population in terms of language, culture, and history. Thirty years later, Linz seems to have maintained his view on Spain’s failure to become a nation-state: “In the Spanish case, like that of quite a few other countries, would-be nation builders who sought to create a unique shared sense of identity based on language, history and culture following the French

model, ultimately failed” (2004: 15). Because of this continuous disunity and dissensus between the central and regional governments of Spain, recently the country has undergone the most radical challenge to its unity presented by the Catalans who also have historically distinct characteristics than other Spaniards.

To understand the reason behind the failure of the formation of a nation-state in Spain and the challenges coming from the country’s national minorities, it is crucial to indicate that Spain is comprised of seventeen autonomous communities, all of which have their own self-government institutions.³ Among these autonomous communities, Catalonia has distinctive characteristics such as language and culture, and with the 1978 Spanish Constitution, it was recognized as a ‘historical nationality’.⁴ Catalonia is a historic region which includes four provinces (Barcelona, Tarragona, Lleida, Girona), occupying the north-eastern corner and the French border of Spain. The region has a coastline with the Mediterranean Sea. The most well-known of the four provinces and its capital Barcelona is the second largest city of Spain, after Madrid. Being the second most populated community, the first being Andalusia, Catalonia constitutes 16% of the total population of Spain with its 7.5 million inhabitants. In the region, Catalan is spoken alongside with the Castilian (the official language of Spain) as one of the two official languages of the region. While Catalan is spoken by 73.16% of the population, it can be understood by 95.12% of its inhabitants.⁵ However, the Catalan language is spoken not only in Catalonia, but also in several other regions such as Valencia, the Balearic Islands, and Andorra. In fact, because of this commonality

³ Among these autonomous communities, three of them were accepted as “historical nationality” (Catalonia, the Basque Country, Galicia) in 1978. They gained their autonomous status via fast route whereas other regions, most of whom do not have a sense of national identity, can obtain full autonomy by passing through slow route.

⁴ The term “historical nationality” is used in the literature on Catalonia by various authors (Guibernau 2006; Keating 2009; Olivieri 2005 etc.) to indicate the nationalities that have historically distinct cultural characteristics. Other historical nationalities are the Basque Country and Galicia.

⁵ IDESCAT. (2013). Retrieved August 14, 2018, from
<https://www.idescat.cat/indicadors/?id=anuals&n=10363&lang=en>

in their languages, these regions are sometimes referred as *Paisos Catalans* (Catalan Countries).

Regarding the administrative structure of the region, Catalonia was established as an autonomous community in 1979 with a statute of autonomy which secures and guarantees self-government competences to the region. This statute contains 223 articles on the structure of the *Generalitat* (the Catalan government), and it functions as the main founding text including information about the self-government institutions of Catalonia (its legislative, executive and judicial powers), rules and regulations on the functioning of the institutions of the *Generalitat*, as well as the rights and obligations of the citizens of Catalonia. According to this statute, Catalonia's historical rights, which include the *Generalitat*'s authorization of civil law, language, culture, education and the institutional system, have been recognized by the Spanish Constitution.⁶ Besides, in the statute, Catalan language's official status in Catalonia alongside the Castilian is guaranteed.⁷ Catalonia's own national symbols such as the flag, the national holiday and the anthem are also included in the statute.⁸ Thanks to the system of *Estado de las Autonomías* (State of Autonomies) in Spain, Catalonia and other autonomous communities have wide range of competences. For example, Catalonia has its local police force, *Mossos d'Esquadra*, regarding the matters of public security in the Catalan territory.⁹

Economically, according to the data of *Institut d'Estadística de Catalunya – IDESCAT* (Statistics Institute of Catalonia), Catalonia produces approximately 20% of the GDP

⁶ Article 5 of the Organic Act 6/2006 of the 19th July, on the Reform of the Statute of Autonomy of Catalonia. Historical rights. Retrieved August 14, 2018, from <https://www.parlament.cat/document/cataleg/150259.pdf>

⁷ Article 6 – Catalonia's own language and official languages

⁸ Article 8 – The symbols of Catalonia

⁹ Article 164 – Public Security

of Spain.¹⁰ The data of *Instituto Nacional de Estadística* – INE (National Statistics Institute) shows that among the other autonomous communities, it maintains its position as the most industrialized region of Spain.¹¹ In short, Catalonia occupies a unique and significant position in Spain. With its cultural and administrative rights granted by the statute of autonomy, with its economically advanced position in the country, and with a consolidated strong peripheral identity which is different from the Spanish national identity, the Catalan national movement found a conducive environment to develop under the process of Catalan nation-building.

As will be elaborated in the second chapter of the study, the Catalan national movement has been studied by its cultural/linguistic, economic and political/institutional dimensions. For the scholars who focus on the cultural/linguistic dimension¹², the Catalan language, as the most expressive element of the Catalan culture, is the core element of the Catalan national movement. It played an effective role as a boundary-mechanism to differentiate the Catalan identity from the rest of the Iberian Peninsula. Being the oldest and the most important element of group identity and uniqueness of the Catalan nation, the Catalan language creates a strong sense of unity and identity among the Catalans. Besides the language, other elements of the Catalan culture such as symbols, myths, and rituals helped to consolidate the sense of common identity, and then, its national movement. Catalan culture includes elements such as the Catalan flag (*Senyera*), myths and legends arising from the symbols, the Catalan national anthem (*Els Segadors*), national holidays, commemorations and monuments, the Catalan national dance (the *Sardana*) and the Catalan traditional hat (the *Barretina*). The Catalan language and culture, as the creators of the Catalan

¹⁰ Catalonia produces this 20% share of the total GDP of Spain mainly through industry, tourism, innovation, and foreign trade. IDESCAT. (2018). Retrieved August 14, 2018, from <https://www.idescat.cat/pub/?id=aec&n=245&lang=en>

¹¹ INE. (2018). Anuario Estadística de España. Retrieved August 14, 2018, from http://www.ine.es/prodyser/pubweb/anuario18/anu18_13indus.pdf

¹² Beramendi (1999), Cattini (2015), Colomer (2006), Conversi (1990; 2000), Hoffmann (1999), Keating (2001), Muro & Quiroga (2004) etc.

national movement, became salient when the confrontation with the Castilian language and culture took place in an antagonistic way, beginning from the 16th century. In short, cultural/linguistic dimension of the Catalan national movement emphasizes the importance of culture and language in the salience of the Catalan national identity and movement, and restricting measures taken by the Spanish government turned out to be as its catalyst.

The scholars who focus on the economic dimension¹³ emphasize the significant role of the economy in the radicalization of the Catalan national movement, especially after the 2008 economic crisis. However, most of the time, as a peripheral region, Catalonia has been economically the most developed and most industrialized part of Spain, contrary to the backward peripheral regions of Europe. Therefore, historically, during the fall of the Spanish Empire, economic grievances caused by the Castilian rule started to exacerbate the Catalan national movement and transformed it from regionalism into nationalism. After the transition to democracy, the system of State of Autonomies required the wealthier regions to subsidize the poorer regions. Especially after the 2008 crisis, Catalonia has started to suffer from a fiscal deficit and imbalance due to the fiscal policy of the Spanish government which contributes less as compared to how much it receives from Catalonia. The direct influence of the economy on the lives of the people has been crucially effective in their political orientations and anti or pro-independence positions. Due to this dissatisfaction with the economy, changing preferences of the Catalan society eventually reflected on the development of the Catalan national movement, and the rise of the recent struggle for independence. In the literature, economic dimension of the Catalan national movement stresses the economically dominant and exploitative character of the Spanish government by emphasizing the growing fiscal deficit.

¹³ Barrio & Rodriguez-Teruel (2016), Beramendi (1999), Boylan (2015), Burg (2015), Castells (2013), Guibernau (2013), Molina & Quiroga (2017), Moreno & Arriba & Serrano (2007), Muñoz & Tormos (2014), Muro & Quiroga (2004), Serrano (2013) etc.

According to the scholars who focus on the political/institutional dimension¹⁴, the Catalan national movement has flourished due to the political structure of Spain; i.e. the constitutional design of the country. Spanish Constitution not only did allow the historical nationalities and other regions to gain political autonomy, but also aimed to protect territorial integrity with different degrees of political autonomy given to these communities. However, this aim of territorial integrity requires the consolidation of the Spanish nation by means of centralization policies. As a result, tensions and problems between central and regional governments, especially governments of historical nationalities, have emerged due to the contradictory design of the constitution. Therefore, both centralization policies of the central government and political autonomy granted to the autonomous communities affected the increasing momentum of the Catalan national movement. Moreover, certain institutions such as political parties and civil society organizations had significant roles in the transformation of the Catalan national movement. Particularly, the decisions of the Spanish government, the Catalan government, Spanish and Catalan political parties, and the Constitutional Court had a deep influence on the movement. Continuous conflicts between centralist parties of Spain and regional nationalist parties of Catalonia promoted the development of the Catalan national movement, especially in the last decades. In addition, mass demonstrations organized by the two civil society organizations, ANC and *Òmnium Cultural*, as reactions to the political decisions of the institutions carry great significance in exacerbating the Catalan national movement. Although the literature on the political/institutional dimension mostly focuses on the insufficiency of Spain's decentralized system and of the Spanish institutions' inability to take impartial decisions on the matters related to Catalonia, it includes political elites as influential factors for the movement.

Both political elites and the leaders of civil society organizations have significantly contributed to the conflict. It is crucial to indicate that discourses of the Spanish and

¹⁴ Balfour (2005), Barrio & Rodriguez-Teruel (2016), Casanas Adam & Rocher (2014), Colomer (2017), Crameri (2015), Guibernau (2013), Magone (2009), Martinez-Herrera & Miley (2010), Muñoz & Tormos (2014), Requejo (2010), Serrano (2013) etc.

Catalan political elites also include these three dimensions whenever they are suitable for developing their arguments. While cultural concerns are seen to have been dominant in the justification of the movement in its earlier times to achieve political autonomy, recently, economic dimension seems to dominate the struggle with the incorporation of cultural and political concerns. As a result, those elites contribute to the acceleration of the Catalan national movement by creating an environment of dissensus.

Evidence of this changing nature of the movement is that the Catalan society is also affected by these various factors, contexts, and circumstances as a result of which the Catalan national movement changed its direction. However, this influence is not unilateral; rather the discourse and ability of political and civil society elites directing the movement towards certain ends also depend on the public opinion. The well-being and satisfaction of citizens have an impact on their feeling of belongingness to their region or country. This in turn affects the context in which the movement develops and citizens' preferences for more autonomy or secession. For example, after 1978, there was a dominant trend of expressing a "dual identity" among the society, meaning that citizens were likely to claim that they have both peripheral identity and national identity. However, in Catalonia, the proportion of those having a dual identity steadily decreased under the influence of the crises and developments of the time (Serrano, 2013: 528). Thus, sense of national identity, which fosters the momentum of the national movement, is also open to transformation. This transformation is realized depending on the relations between the society and political elites, the central and regional governments, and civil society organizations.

Beginning from the mid-2000s, contentious politics in Spain became the most intricate and unsolved problem in the country, and transformation of the Catalan national movement reached a peak point. On the one hand, the Catalan nation, which has made serious progress in its nation-building process but still lacking a state, seems to have reached to a level of serious dissatisfaction due to the historical grievances caused by the Spanish authorities and pushes the limits to extend its authority on the territory. On

the other hand, the Spanish “state of nations”¹⁵ resists to the demands aiming more decentralization to maintain its territorial unity. Under this complex framework, this thesis aims to show how the uncompromising discourses of political elites that became effective with the instrumentalization of different dimensions, caused a big chaos in Spain, and how these discourses led to increasing radicalization of the trajectory of the Catalan national movement. The pro-independent movement took a clear “secessionist” stance with the independence referendum on October 1, 2017 (the 1-O Referendum, as is commonly referred in Catalonia), which resulted in a stalemate in right from the beginning.

1.2. The Significance of the Topic

There are several factors which make the Catalan national movement unique both within the context of Spain and other similar cases of democratic Western countries. Firstly, in studies of nationalism, the Catalan national movement has always been given as one of the most important examples among its counterparts with its determination to maintain a non-violent characteristic and achieve its demands in a democratic manner (Crameri, 2015: 12). Compared to Basque Country’s pro-independence terrorist group ETA, the Catalan movement maintained its non-violent character, although it got more and more radicalized over the years. Still, what is surprising is that the movement has transformed itself in terms of its goals due to the changes in international and domestic contexts; i.e. respectively, rising trend of radicalism in national movements and conflicts arising from the centralized policies of the Madrid government.

Secondly, when the Catalan national movement is compared to the Basque independence movement, it is possible to argue that since ETA has been dissolved, the Catalan secessionism became the most salient pro-independence movement in Spain (Olivieri, 2015: 2). Especially with the radicalization of the Catalan demands over the

¹⁵ This is a general term which is used in Spain indicating the existence of several different nations living together within the boundaries of one state.

course of years, tensions and disagreements with the central government seem to be one of the most pressing issues in the country. Moreover, the Catalan national movement seems to be the most long-standing struggle that comes from sub-state nationalisms in Spain.

Thirdly, civil society in Catalan national movement has played a unique role because of its significant contribution to the development of this movement even in the times when the political wing was deprived of political power by the Spanish government. After the process of reformed statute which introduced further changes to the Catalan Statute of Autonomy emphasizing the people of Catalonia as a separate nation and the 2008 economic crisis, disappointment caused by the political parties led to the rise of civil society (Crameri, 2014: 26). *Òmnium Cultural* is the oldest organization that was founded during the Franco dictatorship with the aim of promoting the Catalan language and culture. However, from 2009, it became a pro-independence organization. ANC, founded in 2012, is committed to the promotion of necessary conditions for Catalonia to become an independent state.

Fourthly, the independence referendum that took place in Catalonia was different than the other practices in other Western countries. In the UK and Canadian cases, the referendums were held with the consent of the central governments. On the contrary, 1 October 2017 referendum was held although the Spanish authorities did not allow the referendum, resulting in violent clashes between the Spanish police force and the Catalans.

Finally, the movement also has an international aspect since it may trigger other potential minority nations in the European Union to seek independence. Just like the Catalan national movement was inspired by the Scottish independence referendum in 2014, other national minorities in Spain or in other European countries may be activated by this attempt of self-determination. As a result of the possibility of this domino effect, the European Union can face a threat of further disintegration, a development which might have an international impact.

1.3. Theoretical Framework

For the purposes of this thesis and to grasp the complexity and dynamic nature of the Catalan national movement, Anthony D. Smith's ethno-symbolism and Miroslav Hroch's three-stage model are used as the most relevant theories. With the incorporation of these two theories that explain the nature of national movements, nation formation process of the Catalan nation will be analysed and the question of how political and civil society elites have used different dimensions that affect the evolution of the Catalan national movement will be answered.

Anthony Smith (2009: 29) defines the nation as “a named and self-defining human community whose members cultivate shared memories, symbols, myths, traditions, and values, inhabit and are attached to historic territories or ‘homelands’, create and disseminate a distinctive public culture, and observe shared customs and standardized laws”. To understand the process of formation of nations and national movements, Smith also adopted the term ethno-symbolism focusing on the importance of cultural elements such as language, myth, memory, value, ritual, and tradition. Various combinations of these elements not only shape social structures and cultures but also play a significant role in defining and legitimating the relations of different groups and institutions by creating a common consciousness even in periods of crisis and change. Also, these cultural elements enable each nation to have a “distinctive symbolic repertoire” including language, customs, and institutions differentiating them from other similar communities through the social boundary-making process by creating a division between us and them (Smith, 2009: 25). In addition, shared memories, values, rituals, and traditions, for Smith, ensure “a sense of continuity with past generations of the community” by the acceptance of collective symbols like flag, anthem, national holiday to create and maintain communal bonds and sense of national identity (2009: 25). It is also important to mention that although ethno-symbolism focuses more on such symbolic features of nations, it does not disregard the economic, social and political dimensions in understanding the nations.

Ethno-symbolism, contrary to the modernist approach which sees the nation as a modern phenomenon, emphasizes the “*double historicity* of nations: [that is] their embeddedness in very specific historical contexts and situations, and their rootedness in the memories and traditions of their members” (Smith, 2009: 30). The emergence of nations has been realized over a long time through the development and combination of particular social and symbolic processes, and related activities of members of the nation also help to create these social and symbolic conditions and to maintain the national community (Smith, 2009: 30). Smith also argues that the significance of the historicity and the relation between past and present shows itself in the need for a “guidance for the present generation through a return to earlier ‘golden ages’ of the nation’s history” (2009: 36). Again, contrary to the modernist approach, as an ethno-symbolist, Smith supports the idea that there is an “interplay between elite proposals and majority responses” in projects on formation of nations; that is, there is a need for elites to reshape their ideas and symbols in order to attract masses and create “mass resonance” (2009: 31). Therefore, elites need to pay attention to the public culture to understand the ideas of different strata of the population, as well as “the reciprocal influence of elites and non-elites on the shaping of the nation” (Smith, 2009: 32). In this process, artists also play an important role to spread a sense of national community by contributing to the cultural accumulation.

Regarding national movements, Smith also focuses on some key concepts such as autonomy, unity, identity, authenticity, the homeland, dignity, continuity, and destiny. Members of a national community believe that they have a unique, historical identity with which they feel dignified. This distinctive identity is the basis of a common will and a common destiny on a particular homeland on which they may create a national movement. Even though some of the motifs of nationalisms might change from one national movement to another or from one period to another, these themes “serve to demarcate ‘nationalist’ from other kinds of ideological movement[s]” (Smith, 2009: 63). In addition to these themes, national movements are also activated by the existing situation. Nationalists who animate national movements rediscover the past of their community and help to regenerate the sense of national identity of their present

community; thus, as Smith calls them, they become “political archaeologists” (2009: 65). Smith also indicates that in regenerating the community as a nation, intellectuals as “cultural entrepreneurs” contribute to the process with the support of state and its agencies, or of the people (2009: 70).

As compared to Smith, Miroslav Hroch offers a more systematic perspective with his three-stage model in analysing national movements in the process of becoming a full nation. For Hroch, nations are described by a combination of several types of relationships such as economic, linguistic, historical, and political; however, two undeniable characteristics of nations are the connection among their members shaped by an intense communication and common fate, and the perception of members on their status as equal citizens (2015: 7). For him, the process of nationalities to become nations take place in three different situations and among three groups: nationalities who had no ruling class of their own and who had been dominated under the domination of foreign rulers; nationalities who were able to form a historical and ethnic unit without political independence; and nationalities who once had a literary language of their own which was seriously oppressed and not allowed to be used by the dominant political groups (Hroch, 1985: 9). These national movements, for Hroch, have several common preconditions and instruments, similar to the ones Smith suggested: history (importance of the past), language and ethnicity (importance of communication and cultural unity), modernisation (school system, literacy, social structure), conflict of interest (arising from “us and them” distinction), and emotions and identity (to provide the sense of unity) (2015: 20). However, focusing on the operationalization of these elements by agents; i.e. members of a group, Hroch also states that “‘national’ movements came into being as soon as several members of an ethnic group ... decided to spread national awareness and offer a new national identity”, and that the focus here is mostly on cultural, linguistic and social objectives to which political demands might later be added (2015: 28).

Pointing out that demands made by various national movements may have different timings, Hroch further suggested that there is a need “to distinguish between the

relative importance of linguistic, social or political demands during the different phases of national movement” (2007: 68). Therefore, his “three-stage model” that shows these phases and the development of national movements for a full national existence is portrayed as follows:

Phase A: where a small group of intellectuals devoted themselves to scholarly enquiry into the language, history, traditional culture and so on, of the non-dominant ethnic group;

Phase B: new ranges of activists emerged, who now began to agitate for their compatriots to join the project of creating a fully-fledged nation;

Phase C: where a majority of the population responded to the patriotic call and formed a mass movement; during this Phase C, the full social structure of the nation would usually come into being, and political differentiation begin to emerge (2007: 68).

Within this general framework, Hroch gave a specific importance to language, the core value for most nationalities. For national movements to achieve their goals and to become a full nation, Hroch explains five stages of the linguistic programmes “which emerged gradually and cumulatively, that is to say that intensifying demands did not cancel out previous ones but usually integrated them into the new programme, even if sometimes in a modified form” (2007: 74). These five stages are the celebration and defence of language, language planning and codification, the intellectualization of the national language, introduction of the language into the schools and the realization of the full equality of languages. In the first stage, “all arguments were used to support its [the language’s] claim to be accepted into the family of high languages – its aesthetic value, its ability to express all manner of feelings or convey information, its historical merits” (2007: 75). The second stage aimed at a process of linguistic organization, popularization, and standardization through grammar books and dictionaries so that the national group of this language can distinguish itself from the others. Next stage was accomplished through the development of literary activity including journals, poetry, translations from foreign languages, folk-songs, writing of theatre pieces and stories and tales, and the scientific literature. The fourth stage demanded the nationalization of schools either through the permission of state

authorities for the instruction in or learning of mother tongue of that national group or through schools to which parents can prefer to send their children for instruction in their mother tongue. In this stage, the linguistic programme changes its character and “enter into the field of politics” (2007: 80). Last stage is the most advanced one in the linguistic programmes since “national leaders were asked for the introduction of their language into the administration, courts of justice, the postal system, the railways, trade and politics” (2007: 80). For Hroch, in case of success of this stage, the equal use of languages in the territory of the emerging small nation could also be demanded. With this model, the role of language in the foundation of national identity, national consciousness, and national traditions, and the place of language among the system of values in national movements become obvious (2007: 96).

Besides the importance of language for the national movements, Hroch emphasizes the significant role played by specific activities of groups and individuals in the spread of national awareness and divides these national activities into three: “the use of history to activate the nation, the role of linguistic and cultural demands and activities, and the role of nationally relevant conflicts of interest, including the competition for political power” (2015: 98). For Hroch, “‘having one’s own history’ meant existing as an indisputable entity in a historical continuity, and this concept did not originate in modernization”, which shows signs for a pre-modern and feudal mentality (2015: 135). Therefore, backing their arguments with the status of “having one’s own history”; i.e. being “historically legitimate”, leaders of the national movement consolidate the justification for their objectives. About the leaders, Hroch argues that the leadership of national movements is primarily occupied by “the best-educated members of the non-dominant ethnic group”; however, to find financial resources for the cultural promotion and national agitation “what proved more important was the correlation between entrepreneurial cycles and middle classes participating in phase B and the structure of the movement’s programme” (2015: 103). Although the power struggles were listed among the national activities of these actors, Hroch emphasizes that “it would be oversimplification if all conflicts arising from national movements were immediately and unreservedly ranked as power struggles” (2015: 116). For him, most

of the national movements had primarily cultural, linguistic, and social goals – in phase A and B. Only after these leaders gain a monopoly of influence within the movement thanks to the promotion and achievement of these goals, the formulation of political demands comes next. As a result, a situation of conflict escalates “whenever the political programme of a given national movement was extended to include demands that the members (more precisely, leaders) of the forming nation be allowed to make decisions about their own affairs more or less independently of the central authority of the state” (2015: 118). Therefore, for Hroch too, the role of leaders of the national movement is essential because when the conflict between the political elites intensifies, nationalist escalation of political rhetoric comes as a consequence (2015: 119).

In line with these two theories, this thesis aims to account for the dynamics of the Catalan national movement and the role of political elites and two main civil society organizations (*Assemblea Nacional Catalana* and *Òmnium Cultural*) in accelerating this movement using various elements of nation formation in different contexts. By looking into the cultural/linguistic, economic and political/institutional dimensions of the Catalan national movement within a conceptual framework that utilizes Smith’s ethno-symbolism and Hroch’s three-stage model, the study aims to contribute to the literature by providing a new perspective to the movement in terms of the role of elites and two civil society organizations on the 1-O Referendum.

1.4. Outline & Methodology

This thesis is composed of five main chapters including the Introduction. The second chapter examines the historical background of the Catalan national movement by highlighting the most influential events in the transformation of this movement. Here, the focus will be on the cultural/linguistic, economic and political/institutional dimensions of the Catalan national movement. The third chapter explores how the Catalan political elites have used these three dimensions and contributed to the shift of the Catalan national movement from an autonomist to a pro-independence stance. The chapter also focuses on the impact of the two most prominent Catalan civil society

organizations (*Assemblea Nacional Catalana* and *Òmnium Cultural*) on this process. In the fourth chapter, the 1-O Referendum is analysed in terms of the developments leading up to this major turning point of the Catalan-Spanish relations. The chapter also looks at the reactions of the Catalan society to this referendum including the attitudes of those supporting and opposing independence. The Conclusion provides a brief summary of the thesis and offers some analytical comments and discusses the results of the research within the theoretical framework offered in this chapter.

In this thesis, mainly qualitative analysis will be used although some reference will be made to quantitative data. A case study research is conducted with a historical perspective having an impact on a recent turning point in the history of Catalonia (the 1-O Referendum). As my primary sources, I will explore the official documents such as the Spanish Constitution, the Catalan Statute of Autonomy, related laws, and declarations. In addition, I will also explore the news related to the referendum so that necessary contexts and details can be clarified. To add a quantitative dimension to my study, I will use the relevant data on the progress of pro-independence tendency of the society provided by *Centre d'Estudis d'Opinio* – CEO (Opinion Studies Centre). Additionally, to determine the influence of political elites on the movement, I will analyse some of the speeches they gave during the important and heated times.

CHAPTER II

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF CATALAN-SPANISH RELATIONS

In this chapter, historical background of Catalonia and its relations with Spain will be explained by pointing out the important events and details in order to explore the emergence and development of the Catalan national movement. The aim of the chapter is to show how the accumulation of the historical circumstances and events contributed to the transformation of the movement. Beginning from the period before the Spanish Empire, Catalonia's position under the rule of the empire and after its fall will be examined. Especially focusing on the cultural/linguistic, economic and political/institutional dimensions of the movement, and important processes that Catalonia went through are crucial for understanding today's tension.

2.1. Catalonia before the Spanish Empire

History of Catalonia can be traced back to the 8th century; that is, to its occupation by Muslims. After its liberation from Muslims by Carolingian France in 801, Catalan counties were founded in the Pyrenean region as a barrier against the Muslims (Agustí, 2014: 34).¹⁶ In the 9th century, under the Carolingian Empire, each Catalan district had a count whose appointments were made by the crown, and who had strong local positions (Payne, 1973: 86). Being the counts of the most powerful house, counts of the House of Barcelona ruled most of the Catalan counties which they had de facto autonomy.¹⁷ As the Catalan counties were more autonomous than other parts of the kingdom, the bases of de facto Catalan independence started to grow due to the weak

¹⁶ This Christian frontier known as “*Marca Hispánica*” (Hispanic March) functioned as a barrier between the Muslims of Al-Andalus (Muslim Spain) and the Carolingian Empire.

¹⁷ According to Oxford Dictionary, the definition of “house” is as following: “a noble, royal, or wealthy family or lineage; a dynasty”.

royal power of the crown; however, this tendency did not evolve into a will of de jure independence (Payne, 1973: 87). Although the counts stayed away from claiming the title of king until the end of the 10th century, “it became common for the count of Barcelona to refer himself as count ‘by the grace of God,’” similar to the case seen in the French monarchy (Payne, 1973: 87). In 988, the Count of Barcelona rejected feudal allegiance to the Carolingian Empire (Keating, 2001: 141). At the beginning of the 11th century, House of Barcelona gained strength and many expeditions were made for the expansion of the Catalan principalities which strengthened the Catalan maritime power, and Catalonia became “a Mediterranean empire” (Castells, 2010: 46). In addition, as “the first compilation of feudal law” in Western Europe, codification of Catalan law and practice was achieved in this era (Payne, 1973: 87).

In 1137, with the pledge of marriage of the heiress of the Kingdom of Aragon to the Count of Barcelona instead of the Castilian ruler which dominated the Kingdom of Aragon, the unification of Catalonia and Aragon led to the creation of the Crown of Aragon.¹⁸ With this unification, powers of the Crown of Aragon were to be exercised and the crown was to be inherited by the Count of Barcelona. Under this unification, while military and diplomatic position of both states would be guaranteed, each state would “preserve its own laws, institutions and autonomy undiminished” constituting a confederacy (Payne, 1973: 92). The Catalan language became the language of the Aragon dynasty and the courts, and remained so during the Middle Ages (Payne, 1973: 107). Toward the end of the 13th century, as the Catalan expansion continued, Catalonia experienced a demographic and economic growth, and became an important principality (Balcells, 1996: 3). In the 14th century, economic expansion took place with the transformation of Catalan towns into manufacturing centres and “practically only exporters of finished goods in any volume in the Hispanic peninsula” (Payne, 1973: 103). There were also significant developments in areas such as astronomy, mathematics, and navigation, making Catalonia far ahead of most European countries

¹⁸ Before becoming an independent kingdom in 1035, Aragon was a Carolingian feudal county. After the union with the Principality of Catalonia, the Crown of Aragon also included the following territories: Valencia, Majorca, the Balearic Islands, Sicily, Malta, Naples and Sardinia.

(Payne, 1973: 103). Institutionally, medieval Catalonia developed “the most effective parliament of any realm in western Europe” (Payne, 1973: 105).

After the imperial and economic expansion of the Crown of Aragon during the 13th and 14th centuries; however, a period of decline started. This decline resulted in the Crown of Aragon’s request for military assistance from the Crown of Castile.¹⁹ With the marriage of Queen Isabel of Castile and King Fernando of Aragon in 1469, the two kingdoms merged into a confederation which would eventually evolved into the Spanish Empire. Thus, as a political entity, sovereignty of Catalonia ended, and direct relations of Catalonia with the Castilian rule began in this period (Castells, 2010: 47).

2.2. Catalonia under the Rule of the Spanish Empire

The newly merged kingdom was likely to be dominated by the Castile since its population was five times larger than the Aragon (Dowling, 2013: 2). However, an important feature of this confederation was that both kingdoms were able to retain their own institutions and culture. Thus, until the 18th century, Catalonia preserved its own institutions. In this period, it could also pass its own laws and collected its own taxes. Furthermore, it was not under the military obligation of contributing to the monarch’s defence effort, unless Catalonia was threatened with an outside attack (Keating, 2001: 141). In addition, Catalonia was ruled by a viceroy from its own capital city of Barcelona rather than a royal governor or crown minister, while the King was ruling the Crown of Castile. Despite such mutual acceptance in the confederacy; however, from the 17th century onwards, many ups and downs would be observed in the Catalan-Spanish relations, which eventually led to the emergence of a Catalan national consciousness, and then to the Catalan national movement. Some historians suggest that as early as the 17th century, there emerged “a defensive form of patriotism in Catalonia” (Balcells, 1996: 13).

¹⁹ The Crown of Castile emerged with the union of the Kingdom of Castile (before, Castile was a county of the Kingdom of León) and the Kingdom of León in 1230. It was composed of various territories: Andalusia, Old Castile, New Castile, León, Asturias, Murcia, Extremadura, the Canary Islands, Galicia, the Basque Country and Navarre.

During the 17th century, when Castile started to weaken and was in need of the support from the Crown of Aragon against its struggle with France for the domination of Europe, Catalonia showed a resistance (Balcells, 1996, p.13). Similarly, in 1640, a revolt which was headed by the *Generalitat* (referring to The General Council of representatives at that time) erupted due to the will of the Spanish Empire to reduce the autonomy of Catalonia and to centralize the state (Keating, 2001: 142). To get help from France, Catalonia had to submit to the French King, and it declared independence from the King of Spain (Balcells, 1996: 13). In 1652, Catalonia was defeated, and it lost northern counties to France as well as one-fifth of its population (Dowling, 2013, p.2). This defeat; however, gave birth to the emergence of the national anthem of Catalonia: *Els Segadors* (The Reapers).²⁰ As a final point, it needs to be mentioned that the resistance displayed by Catalonia would create feelings of suspicion and animosity on the Spanish side, a development which would result in the first stage of repression of Spanish rule over Catalans.

2.2.1. The First Stage of Repression: Decrees of *Nueva Planta* (New Foundation)

The first stage of Catalan repression by the Spanish rule began with the War of Spanish Succession (1702-1713). When the throne of Spain was under the risk of having no heirs, the king of Spain, Charles II wanted to leave the throne to the grandson of Louis XIV of France, Philip V, from the House of Bourbon instead of his other closest heirs from the Austrian Habsburg Empire. Therefore, the War of Spanish Succession broke out between the Spanish-French alliance and the Habsburg Empire. In this war, the Catalans took the side of the enemy of Spain; i.e. the Habsburg Empire, due to their resentment towards the Spanish Empire. However, the war resulted in the defeat of the Habsburg Empire, so the Catalans. Philip V became the new king of Spain, and he started to apply the centralization policies of France in Spain. Catalonia continued to resist Philip V until Barcelona's surrender to the Spanish and French troops on

²⁰ *Els Segadors* was a popular song during the time of the 1640 revolt. By the end of the 19th century, the song started to be used by the Catalan nationalist organizations, especially in the commemorations of September 11, 1714. Thus, it became the national anthem at the end of the 19th century.

September 11, 1714. This day is commemorated as the national day of Catalonia (*La Diada*)²¹, being the first such day in the Iberian Peninsula (Cattini, 2015: 451).

Centralization policies of the King Philip V were realized by different decrees for the territories of the Crown of Aragon. Decrees of *Nueva Planta* (1707-1716) aimed at a profound political and administrative transformation and a unitary and centralized structure for a modernized Spain. Decrees were issued to create a common sense of unity for being Spanish (Bonell Colmenero, 2010: 16). However, this effort for unity was at the expense of the peculiarities of other territories such as Catalonia, Valencia, and Mallorca. Decrees of *Nueva Planta* started a period of repression for these regions because of their infidelity to Philip V in the War of Spanish Succession. This repression took place in institutional, economic, cultural and linguistic spheres, whereas Catalan civil law and compulsory military service remained untouched. All Catalan institutions were abolished and replaced. All Catalan universities were closed except the University of Cervera which had been loyal to the Bourbon King during the war (Agustí, 2014: 104). Most importantly, the use of Catalan language was prohibited, and the Castilian language was introduced in administration. Moreover, it was now necessary to get the permission of the Council of Castile to print books and documents, with the exception of the University of Cervera which could print its own books (Günzberg Moll, 2004: 293). Economically, Catalonia became “overburdened by taxation” (Balcells, 1996: 16). However, in the last quarter of the 18th century, particularly Catalonia experienced an industrial and economic growth after the promulgation of free trade system which allowed the beginning of the overseas trade with America (Fisher, 1997: 147). For Catalonia, the period from 1730 to 1790 was marked by prosperity and demographic growth which would later initiate a period of economic structure different from the rest of Spain (Laitin, 1994: 9). In the long term, the period of *Nueva Planta* led to the increase in the “public awareness of the

²¹ About the national day, the 129th President of Catalonia, Artur Mas states the following in his 2011 *La Diada* speech: “Some believe that, with *Diada*, the Catalans commemorate a defeat, defeat of September 11, 1714. However, it is just the contrary: we commemorate the spirit of overcoming that has allowed us to maintain alive our identity, our language, our culture, our soul, our nation.”

boundaries between languages” and the emergence of a counter-hegemonic movement by the Catalans (Laitin, 1994: 21).

2.2.2. Catalanism as a Cultural Movement: The *Renaixença* (Rebirth)

Once the first stage of repression ended, the beginning of 1800s witnessed another war between Spain and France: Peninsular War, or War of Independence (1808-1814). Napoleon compelled the Spanish King to abdicate the throne which he claimed for his brother but he faced with an immediate reaction from all over Spain resulting in the defeat of French troops. During the war, in the year 1812, the first Spanish Constitution was promulgated in Cadiz which “recognized Spain as a national, constitutional, parliamentarian and Catholic body” (Muro & Quiroga, 2005: 12). This understanding was rejected by those who advocated “a decentralised Spain where regions would maintain their medieval privileges” including the Catalans and the people from the Basque region (Muro & Quiroga, 2004: 21). This confrontation led to a civil war (1833-1840) known as the First Carlist War resulting in the defeat of the advocates of a decentralized Spain. After the war, a new moderate discourse emerged which emphasized the role of Castile in the formation of Spain. This discourse would generate a reaction among some Catalan intellectuals (Muro & Quiroga, 2004: 22).

Between c.1840-c.1880, a cultural movement known as the *Renaixença* emerged for the promotion of the Catalan language. In addition, the aim of this movement was to reconstruct the ideal medieval past of Catalonia. During this period, first newspapers in Catalan were published, first congresses about the Catalan language were organized, and political organizations with ideas of decentralization were created (Utrera Dominguez, 2014: 43). The *Renaixença* was influential in areas such as poetry, music, theatre, painting, and sculpture. Poetry was the dominant one with its focus on Catalan history (Conversi, 2000: 16). With the aim of re-establishing the prestige of the Catalan language, a poetry contest known as the *Jocs Florals* (Floral Games) was reorganized in 1859 (Conversi, 2000: 14). Although the movement was basically shaped by the Catalan intelligentsia, it also appealed to the rural society, bringing together the two groups for the “celebration of the beauty of the nationhood” (Conversi, 2000: 15).

Evolving from a cultural movement, the *Renaixença* led to the emergence of a regionalist discourse focusing on “the idea of recovering Catalonia’s distinct stature” and national spirit (Conversi, 2000: 13).

2.2.3. The Emergence of the Catalan Political Movement

In the late 19th century, accompanied by the great appeal of the *Renaixença*, Catalanism started to take a political form. The first work which explicitly showed the way of the transition from regionalism to nationalism through a federal structure was published by Valentí Almirall in 1886. In his work, Almirall highlighted the important aspects of the Catalan identity and defended the Catalan economic interests (Conversi, 2000: 16). Before that, in 1880, Almirall had also published the first daily newspaper in Catalan, the *Diari Català* (Daily Catalan). He had also founded the first political organization, *Centre Català* (Catalan Centre), in 1882. The Catalanist Congress organized by this organization passed several laws including “the co-official status of Catalan (alongside Castilian), economic protectionism, and a central government for Catalonia” (Conversi, 2000: 19). One of the most important actions that Almirall took was the *Memorial de Greuges*²² (Report of Grievances), a text which became the symbol of the creation of “a broad front representing several sectors and interests” (Conversi, 2000: 18). In essence, political Catalanism united under “the memory of lost freedom of Catalonia and the desire to strengthen a renewed ethnic identity under the guidance of the cultural revival” (Conversi, 2000: 18). These initiatives created anger and a counter-reaction in Madrid (Dowling, 2013: 14). In order to deal with this counter-reaction a new political organization, *Unió Catalanista* (Catalanist Union) was founded in 1891. One year later, a document known as *Bases de Manresa*²³ (Manresa Bases) was approved in order to determine a Catalanist agenda. One of the most important articles of this document emphasized the importance of the Catalan

²² *Memorial de Greuges* (Memorial in defense of the moral and material interests of Catalonia) is the document “signed by a committee of businessmen, industrialists, intellectuals, professionals, artists, workers’ delegates and literary figures” (Conversi, 2000: 18). In 1885, it was presented to the King.

²³ *Bases de Manresa* (Manresa Bases) was a constitution-like document that formulated the first nationalist demands of Catalanism.

language and declared that this language will be “the only one with official status that can be used in Catalonia and in the relations between this region and the central power” (Dowling, 2013: 14).

The Catalan political movement was also triggered by the developments which took place in the rest of Spain. Beginning from the 1830s, the process of a centralized state-building, which was inspired by the model of France gained momentum in Spain. In the economic sphere, the unification of the tax system, the foundation of the Bank of Spain, and the creation of a national currency at the expense of the Catalan currency were realized. In addition, a national flag was adopted; the Penal Code was passed, and the Civil Guards (national police force) was created (Muro & Quiroga, 2004: 21). Furthermore, Castilian became the official language and a system of mass education in which there was “no rights to languages other than Castilian” was created (Dowling, 2013: 13). This was a new political discourse, emphasizing republican nationalism and regional diversity within a federal state (Muro & Quiroga, 2004: 22). In 1873, republicans came to power and founded the First Republic. However, it was a short-lived federal state which ended with the restoration of the dynasty (becoming constitutional monarchy) in 1874. Regional identities that flourished and found a suitable environment to develop under the First Republic, gained a momentum as a result of the centralist policies of the state in the period of Restoration (1875-1923).²⁴

2.3. Catalonia during the Fall of the Spanish Empire: *El Desastre* (The Disaster)

The rise of regional identities was substantially encouraged by the major event that caused the fall of the Spanish Empire in 1898: the loss of the last colonies of the Spanish Empire in Cuba, the Philippines and Puerto Rico. Commonly referred as the Disaster, this defeat had a big impact on the nationalities issue of Spain. Catalonia was particularly disadvantaged because of the defeat since 60 per cent of its exports were realized with Cuba (Conversi, 2000: 25). The loss was linked to Spain’s “ineffective

²⁴ Restoration period started after the First Republic finalized and the monarchy was restored. This period aimed to reestablish the monarchy with centralist policies which promoted the official Spanish nationalism and patriotism.

and undemocratic political system” and it resulted in the “transformation of the main regionalisms into non-Spanish nationalisms” (including Catalonia) that had an anti-Spanish character (Beramendi, 1999: 88). In order to account for this failure, intellectuals and elites of Spain started the Regenerationist movement, which aimed to find remedies to this decline by means of modernization. The Regenerationist movement had also centralist tendencies highlighting “the centrality of Castile in the formation of the nation” and the importance of Castilian as the national language (Muro & Quiroga, 2005: 16). It also criticised the peripheral nationalisms as the main challenge to the centralist system and sought to solve this national problem. Therefore, similar to the case in the previous centralist attempt on the part of the Spanish Empire, it generated counter-reactions coming especially from the peripheral nationalisms of Catalonia, the Basque Country and Galicia.

2.3.1. Transformation of the Catalan Political Movement into Nationalism

Parallel to the Regenerationist movement, in Catalonia regionalism transformed into nationalism with the support of the Catalan bourgeoisie who had stayed close to Spanish authorities until this time. Due to the economically disadvantaged position of the Catalan bourgeoisie which emerged as a result of the Disaster, they started to defend “their interests and aspirations through a different legitimizing referent (the Catalan nation) and its political movement (the nationalism of the *Lliga*)” (Beramendi, 1999: 90). In 1901, a political organization and party called *Lliga Regionalista de Catalunya* (Regionalist League of Catalonia) was founded with a nationalist, though not separatist, agenda. It aimed to “modernise Spain via a decentralized and more democratic state-framework in which Catalonia was to have a binational and bilingual system” (Muro & Quiroga, 2004: 25). In general, *Lliga* was an organization which represented the conservative strata of the society and bourgeois classes. As Catalanism started to spread among different social groups, the movement became insufficient to provide unity (Beramendi, 1999: 91).

Therefore, various other civic, cultural and political organizations, such as choral and *sardana* dancing groups, worker’s unions, nationalist associations and other political

parties were founded (Balcells, 1996: 52). Moreover, Catalan nationalism was divided into moderates (*Lliga*) and radicals; i.e. republican and left-wing nationalists, who “openly appealed for independence” (Muro & Quiroga, 2004: 25). To ease the tensions and to unite the powers of four provinces of Catalonia, the *Mancomunitat* (the Commonwealth) was formed in 1914. It was “the first institutional expression of Catalanism” and an administrative self-government body consisting of the representatives of the provinces of Catalonia (Dowling, 2013: 19). The *Mancomunitat* had great significance for the Catalanists since they see it as a “pre-state institution” (Balcells, 1996: 70). It also contributed to the revival of the Catalan language by means of education, promoted the Catalan culture, and helped to establish various Catalan economic and cultural institutions (Keating, 2001: 145).

2.3.2. The Second Stage of Repression: Primo de Rivera Dictatorship (1923-1930)

Catalan politics had also been affected by certain international dynamics such as the World War I and the Russian Revolution in 1917. The *Mancomunitat* had to deal with the anarcho-syndicalist upheavals inspired by the Russian Revolution. Encouraged by the results of the World War I, especially the end of monarchies and the emergence of new independent states, three main peripheral nationalisms in Spain (Catalan, Basque and Galician) contributed to the emergence of the “Triple Alliance” in 1923. The aim of this alliance was to advocate the independence of Catalonia, the Basque Country and Galicia against the Spanish State (De La Granja Sainz, 2000: 154). However, this development of peripheral nationalisms led to a counter-reaction from much Spanish nationalist movement and resulted in the establishment of the dictatorship of Primo de Rivera.

This dictatorship, triggered by the separatist threats and an organized working class defended and imposed “a monarchist ultra-Catholic idea of the nation, in which religion, the Castilian language and the common imperial past represented essences of the Spanish people” (Muro & Quiroga, 2005: 17). To that end, centralist policies to repress political parties and political institutions and to impose a Spanish nationalist

education were implemented. The *Mancomunitat* was suppressed in 1924, resulting in the failure of the first generation of political Catalanism (Payne, 1971: 31). The public use of the Catalan language and flag were prohibited. Catalan organizations were abolished. In the schools, a national curriculum was imposed (Conversi, 2000: 36). The aim was to create a centralist and corporatist Spanish State in which social classes and peripheral identities come together under a national ideal. The dictatorship attempted “to deprive peripheral nationalists of their cultural appeal” with the imposition of pro-Castilian linguistic policies (Muro & Quiroga, 2005: 17). However, the dictatorship had the opposite effect on peripheral nationalisms and organized labour, resulting in the intensification of their activities and widening of their support base.

2.4. Acquisitions of Catalonia with the Second Republic until the Civil War

The fall of the authoritarian regime of Primo de Rivera resulted in an alignment among Spanish republicans, socialists and left-wing Catalan nationalists aiming to establish a democratic republic in which Catalans would be provided autonomy (Dowling, 2013: 22). Democratic republic was to be identified with republicanism and home rule for peripheral nations. The Second Republic which was created as a result of this alliance attempted “to follow a middle road between the old centralism and a federal system” by the creation of a so-called “integral state” (Beramendi, 1996: 93). With the 1931 Constitution, such a decentralised state was designed to solve the problem of peripheral nationalisms (Muro & Quiroga, 2004: 26). This constitution defined Spain not only as unified in historical, linguistic and cultural terms but also acknowledged the existence of peripheral cultures and their home-rule statutes.

In 1932, Catalonia obtained its first Statute of Autonomy and the Catalan government (the *Generalitat*) was created. The statute granted co-official status to the Catalan language alongside with the Castilian. It also gave the *Generalitat* “exclusive jurisdiction over legislation concerning Catalan civil law and local and internal administration” (Balcells, 1996: 96). In the field of education; however, the *Generalitat*’s authority was not granted even though it was stated in the draft statute,

and the education system was put under the jurisdiction of the Spanish State (Balcells, 1996: 98). Despite the failure in the field of education, through mass communication channels and expansion of published books, the Catalan language and culture were kept alive (Balcells, 1996: 99).

Whereas the republican years helped to soften the radicalism of peripheral nationalisms, it also led to their rise and socialization in the society as a result of the recognition of regional identities and the permission given by the Spanish State for self-government institutions (Beramendi, 1996: 93). For example, in 1933, another political association called *Galeuzca*²⁵ was established as a continuation of the “Triple Alliance”, with the goals of consolidation of autonomy of Catalonia and approval of the statutes of Basque Country and Galicia (De La Granja Sainz, 2000: 158). Although the new “integral” state did not meet the needs of peripheral nationalisms, it created an environment of mutual but conflictive coexistence between Spanish nationalism and peripheral nationalisms (Beramendi, 1996: 93).

2.5. The Spanish Civil War (1936-1939) and the Franco Period

The democratic environment of the Second Republic did not last long and in 1936, the Spanish Civil War erupted as a result of a military rebellion against the Republic. According to an expert, the military revolted against the threat of socialism, anarchism and separatism because “Spain had become a free, open, and democratic country ... permitting maximal expression and mobilization in a society” (Payne, 1987: 87). Increasing mobilization of various groups in Spain led to nationalist and authoritarian counter-reactions. Therefore, Spain was divided into two poles: the republicans and the nationalists (supporters of Franco). Although the republicans were united to cope with their opponent, the nationalists were backed by Hitler and Mussolini. For the consolidation of his leadership, Franco also took the support of the Church that described the war as a “crusade” (Guibernau, 2004: 35). After three years, in 1939, the

²⁵ The name *Galeuzca* is the combination of the first syllables of Galicia, Euzkadi (Basque Country) and Catalonia.

result was the victory of Francoists, causing an extensive social destruction with hundreds of thousands of dead and wounded people (Conversi, 2000: 41).

2.5.1. The Third Stage of Repression: The Franco Dictatorship (1939-1975)

The Franco regime was a turning point for the Catalan national movement as it was the period in which the harshest measures against the Catalan nation were taken. As soon as the Civil War ended and Franco consolidated his power, a process of nationalization started in social, political and economic spheres. Culture, language, education, media, courts, and bureaucracy were some examples where Franco's nationalization policies with repressive measures were put to effect. Francoist regime aimed at the homogenization of language and culture in Spain; therefore, there was no space for alternative languages and cultures to flourish. Aiming to achieve national unity, the Francoist regime targeted especially Catalonia and the Basque Country, for the purpose of the assimilation of these territories' specific characteristics such as culture, language, history and political institutions.

In Catalonia, the Catalan language was banned, and instead, the Castilian language was imposed. Even as a spoken language in workplaces the Catalan was forbidden, and the ones who spoke it were punished with dismissal. The Castilian was introduced as the "*idioma del imperio*" (language of the empire), and noticeboards stating "Speak the language of the empire" were placed in Catalan public places (Conversi, 2000: 112). Catalan names of all public places, streets and plazas were changed into Castilian.²⁶ Catalan family names were adjusted to Castilian and Catalan first names were banned (McRoberts, 2001: 41). In the field of education, the regime allowed only the Castilian as the medium of introduction. Teachers suspected to have pro-Catalanist tendencies were removed from their jobs or sent to other regions, and replaced by the ones who are loyal to the regime and who have no knowledge of the Catalan language and culture (Conversi, 2000: 112; McRoberts, 2001: 41). Subjects on the Catalan

²⁶ The *Biblioteca de Catalunya* (Catalan Library) was changed into *Biblioteca Central* (Central Library) (Dowling, 2013: 38). The *Plaça de Catalunya* (Catalonia Square) was renamed as *Plaza del Ejercito Español* (Spanish Army Square) (footnote no.11 in Conversi, 2000: 111).

culture in the University of Barcelona, and practice of the Catalan culture were also banned. All publications in Catalan were either burnt or buried. The national dance, the *sardana*, and Catalan songs were also prohibited (Conversi, 2000: 112). Therefore, the Catalan language and culture were limited to the private sphere, mostly the family. In this period, narrating Catalan tales, families played an important role in keeping their national identity alive (Quiroga, 2014: 690).

Catalan institutions were also severely affected by the Franco dictatorship. The regime abolished Catalan Statute of Autonomy and Catalonia's political institutions including the *Generalitat*. While the republican Catalan leaders were exiled, as a symbolically important event the President of the *Generalitat*, Lluis Companys was executed. All political parties and unions were prohibited (Tortella, 2017: 172). Moreover, national symbols such as the flag (the *senyera*) and the Catalan national anthem (*Els Segadors*) were banned.

In the media, Franco started a propaganda through all newspapers by obligating them to include the inscription “One Motherland, One State, One *Caudillo* (Leader)” on their front pages (Guibernau, 2004: 35). In 1938, a Press Law which authorized the state for the control and suspension of any kind of publications without the possibility of an appeal was enacted (Gunther, Montero & Wert, 2000: 31). The law implied censorship on all the publications and even advertising. The regime used media to consolidate its power and to make propaganda.

2.5.2. The Revival of the Catalan National Movement under Franco Dictatorship

During the 1940s, the Catalan language started to be revived though in a slow manner. The repression of the regime was slightly diminished, and limited cultural activities such as printing of a few classical works, theatre in Catalan and concerts of Catalan choirs were permitted (Conversi, 2000: 115). In this period, Catalan language and history classes of *Institut d'Estudis Catalans* (Institute of Catalan Studies) were secretly given to a limited number of people (Guibernau, 2004: 57). Beginning from

the 1950s and reaching its peak in the 1960s, the Catalan linguistic and cultural revival was supported by the foundation of cultural, educational, civic organizations and clandestine political parties (Balcells, 1996: 145). In 1959, a Catalan magazine published in Catalan language, *Serra d'Or* (Golden Mountain) was founded (Dowling, 2013: 64). In 1961, *Òmnium Cultural* was established for the diffusion of culture but it was closed down in 1963 due to its campaigns in favour of the public use of the Catalan language (Balcells, 1996: 149). In 1967, it was legally recognized and allowed to maintain its activities (Guibernau, 2004: 57). In addition, a cultural movement called *Nova Cançó* (New Song) which aimed to restore the Catalan language by singing the Catalan versions of songs and creating songs of the works of Catalan poets, emerged (Balcells, 1996: 146).

Catalan nationalist revival also showed itself in public space. In addition to “symbolic actions” including “painting graffiti, displaying flags and … floral tributes where once stood monuments dedicated to illustrious or heroic Catalans that the regime had demolished”, there were also “interference actions” aimed to attract the attention of the participants of a public event to the situation of Catalonia (Guibernau, 2004: 56). Besides these actions, grassroots movements and public demonstrations started to take place. On September 11, 1964, the first street demonstration, the celebration of *Diada* (Catalan national holiday), was realized after the Civil War (Conversi, 2000: 122). It was celebrated “on the site where the statue of Rafael de Casanova, “a hero of the siege of Barcelona” had stood before it was removed (Balcells, 1996: 148). In addition, mass movements including international youth and student movements emerged (Balcells, 1996: 157). In universities there were demands for “the creation of chairs of Catalan language and culture within the university … and amnesty for political prisoners and exiles” (Guibernau, 2004: 61).

Until the 1970s, the Catalan opposition to the Franco regime was not unified, except for one point: linguistic rights. All of the political parties, associations and unions were unanimous on their demand for linguistic rights, and thus, also the demand for political autonomy to realize these rights (Conversi, 2000: 124). Thanks to this unanimous

emphasis in culture, a peaceful nationalist revival was created. However, this fragmentation was again accompanied by an increasing repression which created a need for creating a unified organization. In 1971, as a clandestine organization, *Assemblea de Catalunya* (Assembly of Catalonia) was founded by 300 people who represented various political, social and professional sectors of Catalonia (Guibernau, 2004: 66). This organization aimed to achieve three goals: amnesty for political prisoners, liberty of expression and re-establishment of the 1932 Statute of Autonomy (Conversi, 2000: 136).

The last years of Franco were named as the “agony of Francoism” because of the efforts of the regime to limit various activities and to increase executions due to the sense of insecurity (Dowling, 2013: 96). In addition, an increasing flow of migrants to Catalonia continued, since the regime wanted to Castilianize the region with the migrants who cannot speak any language but Castilian. At the same time; however, these years also witnessed the moderation in the regime’s policies. For example, the General Education Law stated the significance of incorporating characteristics of regions and the “cultivation of native languages” in teaching (Dowling, 2013: 97). Moreover, the Catalan Poetry Festival and re-organization of the games of *Joc Florals* were permitted (Dowling, 2013: 101). The Catalan flag was allowed to fly from the *Generalitat* building in Barcelona (Dowling, 2013: 106). The father of Catalan nationalism, Jordi Pujol, began to create a new political formation for Catalanism which aimed more autonomy and emphasized a separate Catalan identity that was backed by a regional political party. In 1975, with the death of Francisco Franco, Franco dictatorship ended, and the process of transition to democracy began.

2.6. Transition to Democracy

After the death of Franco, the King immediately declared general amnesty for political prisoners and exiles (Conversi, 2000: 142). Unified and democratic opposition to the regime compelled the Spanish political authorities to find a solution to the Catalan and Basque problems. The King appointed Adolfo Suárez, as the leader of the cabinet, who provided a political atmosphere for a fast and smooth transition to democracy

(Vincent, 2007: 212). The Law of Political Reform that regulated the process of democracy was accepted by a national referendum, approved by the 69% of the electorate in Catalonia (Conversi, 2000: 142). In 1977, the first democratic general elections were held. Same year, with one million participants, the biggest celebration of the national day of Catalonia, the *Diada*, in post-war Europe took place, raising the demands for “freedom, amnesty and statute of autonomy” (Conversi, 2000: 142). As a result, the central government saw the need for a change in the centralist state system, and a committee that consisted of different political views was founded to negotiate and reach a consensus on the draft of a new constitution. The most difficult task was forming “a fragile ‘consensus’ on the articles directly related to the ‘national question’” (Martinez-Herrera & Miley, 2010: 8). In December 1978, the draft was submitted to the citizens in a referendum and it was accepted with 87% of votes (Martinez-Herrera & Miley, 2010: 11).

2.6.1. Acquisitions of Catalonia with the 1978 Spanish Constitution

After the repressive and complex period that began with the Civil War, the 1978 Constitution brought a democratic system and a compromise which brought “competing ideas of Spain” together (Vincent, 2007: 220). A system of “State of Autonomies”, in which Spain is divided into autonomous communities, was created. The new system intended to provide symbolic recognition of the objectives of the peripheral nationalisms and their institutional structure for the accommodation of their objectives (Martinez-Herrera & Miley, 2010: 8). However, the formula to put this intention into practice was ambiguous due to the intention to preserve the territorial integrity of Spain. For example, Article 2 of the constitution stated the following:

The Constitution is based on the indissoluble unity of the Spanish nation, the common and indivisible country of all Spaniards; it recognises and guarantees the right to autonomy of the nationalities and regions of which it is composed, and the solidarity amongst them all.²⁷

²⁷ Article 2 of the 1978 Spanish Constitution. Unity of the Nation and the right to autonomy. Retrieved August 14, 2018, from <https://www.boe.es/legislacion/documentos/ConstitucionINGLES.pdf>

The constitution reserved the term “nation” only for the Spanish, whereas the other communities in Catalonia, the Basque Country and Galicia were regarded as “historic nationalities” (Muro & Quiroga, 2005: 20). These historic regions gained autonomy with a fast route through which the right of autonomy “was clearly granted in the constitution”, whereas the others had to follow a slow route to gain autonomy (Vincent, 2007: 220). Although the constitution did not give a clear definition of autonomy, it included language rights, right to self-government and some symbolic rights such as having one’s own flag. With the article 3, other Spanish languages, including the Catalan, are recognized as official languages in their autonomous communities, alongside the Castilian; i.e. official language of the state. Article 4 states that autonomous communities can recognize and use their own flags regulated by the statutes. The constitution also provided a loyal framework so as the autonomous communities would have various competences ranging from having their own institutions to promotion of their own culture and development of their own economies. In 1979, the Statute of Autonomy of Catalonia, the fundamental text that was based on the constitution and that regulated the competences of regional autonomy in detail was approved. It included not only “Catalonia’s territory, history, culture, language, symbols and a shared future project”, but also the collective identity of Catalans as a differentiated community (Guibernau, 2004: 79). Thus, with the period of transition to democracy, Catalonia regained its autonomous status after several decades.

2.6.2. The Process of Normalization and Nation-Building

After the transition to democracy was completed in legal terms, in 1980, the first regional elections took place in Catalonia in which the coalition party of Jordi Pujol, CiU (*Convergència i Unió* – Convergence and Union) gained a victory.²⁸ However, during the transition period there was a very week harmony among the autonomous

²⁸ CiU is a Catalan nationalist electoral alliance consisting of two parties: CDC (*Convergència Democràtica de Catalunya* – Democratic Convergence of Catalonia) and UDC (*Unió Democràtica de Catalunya* - Democratic Union of Catalonia).

communities. Therefore, in 1982, central government passed the *Ley Orgánica para la Armonización del Proceso Autonómico* – LOAPA (Organic Law for the Harmonization of the Autonomous Process) which introduced new centralist policies for this harmonization that would eventually equalize the conditions of autonomous communities (Guibernau, 2004: 80). With LOAPA, all autonomous communities were allowed to have their own parliament and decision-making process; however, it has been suggested that the hidden aim of the law was “to curtail the powers of the two main autonomous communities, Catalonia and Euskadi [the Basque Country], by standardising the political power and representation of each region” (Conversi, 2000: 146). This law also limited the exclusive competence areas of autonomous communities putting these areas under the control of the central government (Balcells, 1996: 179). This threat against Catalonia’s self-government and the objective of “harmonization and uniformization” caused reactions which resulted in a huge demonstration held in Barcelona (Lluch, 2014: 57). In Catalonia and the Basque Country, this law was also challenged on the basis of its unconstitutionality, and the Spanish Constitutional Court agreed on the unconstitutionality of the law. After this attempt, a process of normalization and nation-building started in Catalonia.

The normalization and nation-building process focused mostly on the language policies. In 1983, the Catalan Parliament passed the *Llei de Normalització Lingüística* (Law of Linguistic Normalization – LNL) which regulated the necessary steps to be taken by the Catalan government to promote the use of the Catalan language and increasing its domain in Catalonia. The law made the Catalan language as the medium of instruction in primary schools so that the students could become proficient in both languages (Catalan and Castilian), although Castilian students were not restricted from taking their education in their own language in primary schools (Miley, 2007: 20). As a result, by 1985, 40% of the public schools were normalized; that is, “use of Catalan in all subjects except the teaching of the Castilian language” was guaranteed (Laitin, 1989: 9). This programme of normalization was also applied as an “immersion programme” to immigrant children and re-training programme for teachers so that they could be included into the Catalan nationality (Laitin, 1989: 9). By the 1988, historical

and geographical curriculum had already “acquired strong Catalanist overtones” (Molina & Quiroga, 2017: 5). This newly created educational institutionalization was the key for the Catalanisation and re-Catalanisation so that the most dramatic events of the Catalan history (Franco period and migration flow) could be reversed (Dowling, 2013: 128).

Besides the education, there were other means for the normalization and nation-building process of Catalonia (Newman, 2015: 288). Especially the Catalan media was used for the nationalization of the citizens. The Catalan government “funded TV channels, radio stations and newspapers to promote the Catalan language and Catalanist narratives in the public sphere” (Molina & Quiroga, 2017: 5). By the late 1990s, almost one third of the newspapers were in Catalan. For the radio, “a quota of 50 per cent Catalan content” was imposed (Dowling, 2013: 138). Sports clubs also played a significant part in the nationalization of the Catalan citizens. Especially, F.C. Barcelona was associated with the Catalan identity and Catalonia. It was funded privately “but it also received significant sums of money from TV3 [Catalan TV channel], the Catalan public television, and the wholehearted support of the Catalan government” (Molina & Quiroga, 2017: 5). The Barcelona Olympic Games held in 1992 was also used as an arena of promoting Catalan nationalism. Throughout the whole event, the Catalan flag and the Spanish flag flew together at the top of the stadium. The Catalan language was among the four official languages of the Games. In fact, the King welcomed the crowd in Catalan in his opening speech (Hargreaves, 2000: 100). During the opening ceremony, the Catalan national anthem was sung and the national dance was performed, accompanied by a Catalan song (Hargreaves, 2000: 102).

In addition to the use of the Catalan in the media and public campaigns, it was also imposed on civil servants. The LNL stated that “The Executive Council of the *Generalitat*, via the Public Administration School, have to guarantee the teaching of Catalan to all the civil servants and personnel in the Administration of the *Generalitat*

and the local corporations of Catalonia".²⁹ Moreover, in 1998, *Llei de Política Lingüística* (Law of Linguistic Policy), the updated and extended version of the LNL, was passed by the Catalan Parliament. Article 11 of this law brought the requirement of having a sufficient and appropriate knowledge of both languages (Catalan and Spanish) in verbal and written communication while carrying out their duties.³⁰ This law also aimed to promote "the normal use of Catalan in administration, education, mass media, cultural industries and in the socio-economic world" in an extensive way.³¹ This Catalan-dominant language policy was accepted by most Castilian speakers because with the knowledge of Catalan it was possible to find good public sector jobs and realize upward social mobility (Miley, 2013: 13). Although the normalization process faced an opposition from the Spanish political parties claiming that this policy "marginalizes Spanish", these complaints proved to be unsuccessful because it was possible to live in Catalonia by speaking Spanish, except the areas that made the Catalan compulsory; i.e. education and civil service (Newman, 2015: 289).

The results of the language normalization process were remarkable. The number of schools that offered their curriculum in Catalan increased. "Public notices, street names, menus, bank cheques, entrance tickets" were either exclusively or bilingually Catalan. There were three daily papers in Catalan; there were numerous Catalan TV channels and local radio stations. Theatre, cinema and written publications flourished in Catalan (Mar-Molinero, 1994: 109). In short, with these two laws, the citizens were pushed to use Catalan in all spheres of life (both private and public). The only

²⁹ Article 24 of the *Llei 7/1983, de 18 d'Abril, de Normalització Lingüística a Catalunya* (Law 7/1983, of 18 April, of Linguistic Normalization of Catalonia). Retrieved August 14, 2018, from http://llengua.gencat.cat/web/.content/documents/legislacio/llei_de_politica_linguistica/arxius/lleinl83.pdf

³⁰ Article 11. Act No. 1, of 7th January 1998 on Linguistic Policy. Retrieved August 14, 2018, from http://llengua.gencat.cat/ca/serveis/legislacio_i_drets_linguistics/llei_de_politica_linguistica/llei_1_1998_de_7_de_gener_de_politica_linguistica/

³¹ Article 1. Act No. 1, of 7th January 1998 on Linguistic Policy. Retrieved August 14, 2018, from http://llengua.gencat.cat/ca/serveis/legislacio_i_drets_linguistics/llei_de_politica_linguistica/llei_1_1998_de_7_de_gener_de_politica_linguistica/

exception was the use of Catalan in the universities as the language of instruction (Tortella, 2017: 212).

In general, Catalan normalization and nation building process functioned effectively. However, during this time as compared to the other autonomous communities, Catalonia received the largest number of immigrants. Therefore, it had to meet increasing demands for transportation, schooling and health care, and it needed sufficient resources not to disrupt the progress of normalization and nation building process (Dowling, 2013: 144). The negative impact of immigration on the economy, Spain's membership to the European Economic Community in 1986 and “the transfer of funds from Brussels to the comparatively poorer areas of Spain” resulted in a general dissatisfaction (Dowling, 2013: 144). Moreover, after 1987, Catalonia started to experience an economic decline and a fiscal deficit, as it received less public funds from Madrid. Eventually, during the 1990s, “Spain robs us” argument developed by the Catalan nationalist political party *Esquerra Republicana de Catalunya* (Republican Left of Catalonia – ERC) became popular and though little resonance, it revived after the 2008 economic crisis (Dowling, 2017: 90).

In 1998, the nationalist parties of Catalonia, the Basque Country and Galicia signed the Barcelona Declaration to “reaffirm their will to achieve political goals” which clearly went beyond the 1978 Constitution (Núñez, 2001: 727). Due to their dissatisfaction with the Spanish State and its way of dealing with the national question, in the declaration, they demanded a multilingual, multicultural and multinational state; i.e. the recognition of the three nationalities as nations (Guibernau, 2002: 17). However, after 2000, having an absolute majority in the parliament, the main Spanish nationalist party *Partido Popular* (Popular Party – PP) attempted to recentralize certain powers that had been given to communities, in the fields of education and use of language in order to promote uniformity (Requejo, 2010: 158). In this period, serious confrontations between the central government and the regional governments (especially the Catalan government) emerged mostly because Madrid interpreted Basque and Catalan nationalisms as “internal enemies” (Dowling, 2017: 90).

2.7. Conclusion

Looking back at centuries of history of Catalonia and its more recent relation with the Spanish State, it is possible to come up with several main deductions about the development of the Catalan national movement and its radicalized demands. As the most general inference, it can be said that Catalan-Spanish relations progressed within an action-reaction paradigm from the very beginning of their history. After every period of repression and centralization, Catalans showed a reaction focusing on the characteristics of the Catalan identity that differentiated it from the Spanish identity. In addition, Catalans also benefited from the periods of decentralization and freedom in consolidating their identity and developing their struggle for national existence against the Spanish State. Policies of centralization and assimilation suddenly introduced created immediate reactions on the part of the Catalan nation which eventually resulted in its consolidation. These reactions were triggered and spread by certain members of the Catalan nation; i.e. cultural and political elites. In earlier periods of the Catalan national movement, by creating an awareness through several activities that focused on cultural, linguistic and social objectives, cultural elites played a significant role on the creation and diffusion of a Catalan identity. Later, as the need for political representation emerged, political elites came to the scene in order to call the Catalans for a project to create a fully-fledged nation. Through creating political organizations and trying to take part in politics with the aim of cultural, linguistic, and national recognition, these political elites helped to consolidate the Catalan national movement which eventually developed and radicalized its demands towards more autonomy. Once these elites gained the sufficient influence to unite and mobilize the masses, political demands started to flourish.

It is also important to keep in mind that it is impossible to think about the initiatives of the Catalan elites without the policies of the Spanish government which were formulated by the Spanish elites. As these initiatives and policies affected each other reciprocally, it can be said that the Catalan national movement was historically shaped by the following factors without disregarding the relationship with the Spanish State:

the promotion of language and culture by the intellectuals; the construction of a full nation by the activists; and insistence on achieving more cultural, political and economic autonomy for Catalonia by the political actors. Moreover, experiencing periods of repression and centralization by the Spanish government led to the creation of a historical repertoire for the future elites to use in their arguments in order to mobilize the Catalan society and to gather them under their objectives. In addition, the stories of survival from such hardships also perpetuated the memory of the golden ages of Catalonia for the elites and their arguments. Recently, domination of the political actors on the Catalan national movement significantly affected the radicalization of its demands. The role of these political actors and their discourses on the way to 1 October referendum will be elaborated in the next chapter.

CHAPTER III

THE PATH TOWARDS THE CATALAN INDEPENDENCE REFERENDUM

The change and development of the Catalan national movement was shaped not only by the existing contexts but also by the discourses of the prominent political actors. After giving a contextual background (2006-2010) in which the pro-independence shift took place, this chapter will explore the discourses of two Catalan presidents, Artur Mas (2010-2015) and Carles Puigdemont (2016-2018), in terms of their content and objectives on the direction of the Catalan national movement. With their speeches, these two political actors played a key role in the path towards the Catalan independence referendum by making references to certain concepts that emphasized the characteristics of the Catalan nation.³²

3.1. Shift Towards Pro-independence: Contextual Framework (2006-2010)

Recentralization tendency of the *Partido Popular* (Popular Party – PP) government and its rising “Catalanofobia” triggered the upcoming dissatisfaction with the Spanish State and formed the basis of the increase in support for greater autonomy among the Catalan society (Elias, 2015: 94). This support reflected itself with a decrease in the votes of the CiU (*Convergència i Unió* – Convergence and Union) due to the preference of the party for receiving legislative support from the PP, rather than the other Catalan nationalist party *Esquerra Republicana de Catalunya* (Republican Left of Catalonia – ERC). This preference was not favoured by the Catalan society and

³² The reason why these two elites were chosen is that they were the most influential actors especially during the radicalizing political process in Catalonia. They also have been able to keep their own parties compact in terms of the issue of Catalan independence. Therefore, their speeches can be said to represent their parties. Although there are other political elites from other Catalan and Spanish political parties with their own views on the issue, this study concentrates on these two Catalan presidents.

brought the end of the CiU's 23 years of leadership in the 2003 regional elections. A coalition of *Partit dels Socialistes de Catalunya* (Socialist Party of Catalonia – PSC), *Iniciativa per Catalunya Verds* (Initiative for Catalonia Greens – ICV) and ERC came to power with the aim of reforming the Statute of Autonomy.³³ The objectives of the modified statute were primarily more self-government, a better recognition of the history and identity of Catalonia and a more proportionate fiscal system. Except the PP, the reform of this statute was supported by all Catalan political parties.

In accordance with the common objectives of the reform supporters, the proposed draft of the statute included controversial references. For example, it stated that “Catalonia is a nation” and regulated autonomous taxation similar to the one in the Basque Country. Besides these controversial references, it also created widespread tensions throughout the country due to its concurrence with the semi-independence plan of the Basque Country, which was seen as a threat to the unity of Spain (Dowling, 2013: 142). Therefore, to be accepted by both the Catalan Parliament and the Spanish Congress and the Senate, reform process had to be realized with negotiation, which eventually was the case. As a result of a series of negotiations, the reference of Catalonia as a nation was carried to the preamble of the text, and reference of the right to freely determine the future of Catalonia was completely removed. Approved by both parliaments, the reformed version was very different from the first draft at the time of its being proposed to the Catalan citizens. For this reason, paradoxically, alongside with the PP, the final version was not supported by the ERC, on the grounds that the statute was significantly changed as a result of the negotiations. Whereas the ERC campaigned against the new statute as it opted for more autonomy and even for secession, the PP collected four millions of signatures from all over Spain against the Catalan Statute in defense of a “single Spanish nation” (Colomer, 2017: 11). After the approval of the new statute in 2006 referendum with 73.9% of votes in favour, the PP put forward another plan with which it challenged 187 of 245 articles of the statute

³³ Among these political parties, the PSC is a leftist-nationalist/federalist, the ICV is a leftist-federalist, and the ERC is a leftist-nationalist/separatist party.

before the Spanish Constitutional Court (Casanas Adam & Rocher, 2014: 53). Similarly, it is important to point out that the opposition of the PP to the Catalan reformed statute was the only case as it did not react other statutes that included similar statements (Dowling, 2013: 149).

While the process of decision-making of the Constitutional Court was continuing, the economic crisis erupted in 2008. Within the context of economic crisis, the fiscal imbalance between Madrid and Catalonia resulted in a significant increase to the disadvantage of the Catalans redirecting them to the idea of fiscal sovereignty (Dowling, 2014: 229). Together with the expanding fiscal deficit, unemployment in Catalonia also increased from 6.5% to 17.7% between 2006 and 2010.³⁴ Economic crisis led to the change of Catalonia's economic status from being a "creditor region" to an "indebted region" (Dowling, 2014: 229). In addition to the increasing rate of unemployment, insufficient economic growth (especially when compared to Madrid) and severe public cuts in the infrastructure formed the basis of the dissatisfaction of the Catalans. At the end of 2007, as a sign of this discontent, a mass demonstration was organized in Barcelona against these cuts (Argelaguet, 2014: 115). All in all, economic grievances brought by the Spain's fiscal model and economic crisis led to the rise of the support for independence.

The Constitutional Court completed the decision-making process in 2010 declaring the unconstitutionality of 14 articles and "constitutionally compatible interpretation" of 27 of other challenged provisions, providing that they were not unconstitutional insofar as they were construed in the way stated by the Court" (Casanas Adam & Rocher, 2014: 53). Fundamental among those 14 articles were the ones referring to the Catalan language as the "preferred" language in education, communication and administration, and regulating the removal of the financial obligation to provide support to other autonomous communities. In addition, the provision referring Catalonia as a nation was declared to be legally ineffective, consolidating the recognition of the Spanish

³⁴ IDESCAT (2018). Retrieved February 21, 2019, from
<https://www.idescat.cat/pub/?id=aec&n=318&lang=en>

nation as the only nation in Spain. With this decision, the result of the referendum on the reformed statute determined by the Catalans was also challenged and partially annulled. Therefore, after the President of the *Generalitat*, José Montilla, called for a massive demonstration to support the statute as a response to the Court's decision (which was seen as a “progressive humiliation” regarding the will of the Catalans), one of the biggest demonstrations in Europe was held in July 2010 (Dowling, 2017: 96). Organized by *Òmnium Cultural* and supported by all Catalan parties (except the PP and pro-Spanish *Ciutadans*) and other civil society groups, the demonstration gathered more than one million people in the streets of Barcelona under the motto “We are a nation. We decide.”. The decision of the Constitutional Court, therefore, has become a turning point in terms of the transformation of the Catalan national movement which was shaped by the political actors, especially the leadership of the CiU who emerged victorious in the 2010 elections. The increasing role of political actors also triggered the rise in the activities of civil society organizations which acted together with the politicians.

3.2. Analysing the Discourses

The following part of this chapter will analyse the discourses of the two presidents of the *Generalitat* in terms of their content, objectives and change over the course of years, if there are any, under four categories: identity, unity and dignity; continuity and destiny; autonomy; authenticity and homeland. As mentioned above, the role of political actors had a major impact on the strengthening of the Catalan national movement as well as the two most prominent civil society organizations, ANC and *Òmnium Cultural*.³⁵

³⁵ These organizations and their activities in the development of the Catalan national movement and the independence referendum are analyzed in the next chapter.

3.2.1. The Presidency of Artur Mas (2010-2016)

Artur Mas was the 129th President of the *Generalitat* (2010-2016) and the leader of the CDC (2003-2016). Having a significant role in the negotiations on the reformed statute with the Madrid government, Artur Mas has been one of the most influential political figures of the Catalan history. After he became the President of the *Generalitat* in the 2010 regional elections, as the leader of a Catalan nationalist party and the President, Artur Mas can be said to have led the pro-independence movement during his presidency by appealing to the Catalans with his discourse. The content of his speeches and how this content changed have a significant effect on the support of independence in the Catalan society and on the relations with the Madrid government.

3.2.1.1. Identity, Unity and Dignity

During his presidency, Artur Mas frequently emphasized the Catalan identity with reference to its difference with the Spanish. Stressing the “us and them” distinction by primarily focusing on the differences in the history, culture and language, he helped to create a sense of unity and put an emphasis on a common culture shared by the Catalans. Pointing out the positive characteristics attributed to the Catalan people, Catalonia as a country, and the Catalan identity as a whole, sense of dignity and pride was also underlined. To this end, Artur Mas employed different discursive strategies and used various arguments in his discourses. These three key concepts (identity, unity and dignity) were dominantly seen to be used in those arguments regarding the Catalonia-Spain relations and the conflicts arising from them.

As the basis of the discourse analysis of Artur Mas’ speeches, it is important to begin with a general analysis at the lexical level. In all of the speeches made during his term of office, the reflections on the differentiation between Catalonia and Spain can primarily be seen by looking at the use of the words. In his speeches, Spain was mentioned as *el estado* (the state), while Catalonia was separated from this state as a different entity. This distinction not only comes from Spain’s administrative system

which includes seventeen autonomous communities, but also from the sense of difference in Catalonia as a separate country from Spain. While Artur Mas mentioned Spain as “the state”, he referred Catalonia as *país* (the country) and *nación* (the nation). Thus, he acknowledged the existence of the Catalan nation different from the Spanish nation, confirming the opinions on Spain as a multinational country, not a single nation. Additionally, the word *nuestra/o* (our) was frequently used with Catalonia itself and the features of the Catalan nation such as culture, language and history (our country/nation/language etc). By using the personal pronoun (our), “us and them” distinction which separates Catalonia and Spain was continuously reproduced in his discourses.

In the speeches of Mas, the Catalan identity was discursively constructed by stressing the importance of language and culture as the central components. In his first speech for the investiture for presidency, he emphasized the definitive character of language and culture for the “ancient” Catalan identity (2010a). About language, Mas said that “the language is at the centre of gravity of the national personality of Catalonia” (2011a). In the same speech, he emphasized the centrality of the culture for the Catalan identity by stating the following:

The Catalan culture is the basis of our identity and the key for understanding the realities of our times. It is about who we are, what we want to be and what country we want to form. It implies memories, symbols, rights, institutions, the language and values, and allows us to explain the ties that build the community. The culture, in that sense, is the basic substratum for constructing the civic project of the country.³⁶

Apart from the centrality of language and culture, Mas defended these elements of the Catalan identity against the threats coming from the state and the crisis arising between Catalonia and the state. Especially after the Constitutional Court’s decision on the statute, pointing out the uncertainties, threats, incomprehension and hostility towards the collective personality and cultural and linguistic identity of Catalonia (2010a) and

³⁶ Unless otherwise indicated, all primary sources in Catalan and Spanish are translated into English by the author.

the “homogenizing absolutism [of state] … which aimed to annihilate our identity, our language” (2014a), Mas demanded respect from the state by saying the following: “Catalonia wants to see its identity, its institutions, its culture, its rights and its language respected.” (2011b).

Emphasis on unity is another significant part of Artur Mas’ speeches. Although most of his speeches contained an emphasis on unity, speeches in which he mentioned the concept of unity overlapped with the periods of crisis with the Spanish State. Unity was either underlined by stressing that “every one of us is a little part, but very important, of the mosaic of our country” (2012a) or by showing the political and social consensus on controversial issues such as the demand for a fiscal pact that would give Catalonia autonomy in economic affairs (2011a) or linguistic immersion programme (2011c).³⁷ It is important to mention that this unity is an inclusive type; that is, it does not discriminate on the basis of ancestry. In his 2014 *La Diada* speech, Mas said that “Native Catalans, adopted Catalans, and new Catalans coming from other places – whatever the case- are all protagonists in the present and future of Catalonia” (2014a). Therefore, by employing a unifying language, Mas contributed to the sense of “we”ness consolidating the Catalan identity which was capable of uniting the Catalans under common objectives such as independence. The same year when a mass demonstration took place, Mas also highlighted “how fundamental the call for unity is” in order to convey the message of the Catalans to the Spanish State and the world (2014b).³⁸ Unity was given as the formula for the national success (2014c). The construction of a country, independent from its structure and political status, was tied to the togetherness of all Catalans without exception (2013a). Since unity was seen as

³⁷ Fiscal pact was recommended in the 2006 reform of the Statute of Autonomy but the relevant article was removed. However, insistence on the topic continued for years and still continues to be the basis of arguments of the Catalan national movement.

³⁸ In 2014, the national day of Catalonia was celebrated by hundreds of thousands of people forming a “V” meaning “vote” on 9th of November that year. Known as 9-N, a self-determination referendum (but later renamed as process of citizen participation) was tried to be held to ask the Catalans whether they want Catalonia to be a state, and if yes, whether it should be independent or not. Despite of the efforts of Spanish State to block the process, it took place as a non-binding consultation.

the source of legitimacy for the actions of the Catalan government, Mas stressed the importance of achieving unity, not majority (2015a).

In Mas' speeches, the sense of dignity and pride stemming from various sources was mostly reflected through positive-self presentation and comparison strategies. Having the strength for overcoming the difficulties and achieving long-time survival of the Catalan identity constituted one of these sources. Mas said that "This is a country that is perfectly capable of not only facing difficulties but also overcoming them ... Tell me any country in Europe that has been capable of overcoming so many things in its history." (2011d). Making a comparison with other European countries, he put Catalonia aside as a strong country. Frequently reminding the relevant economic data, Artur Mas emphasized the economic potential of Catalonia to be self-sufficient and compared Catalonia with Spain and other countries of Europe in explaining its potential. "Catalonia exports more than its neighbours, if you compare Catalan growth rate of exports with our neighbours, especially with Spain, France and Italy or other countries of European Union (except Germany that grows little more than us), growth rate of Catalan export is one of the highest in the EU, doubling the second one in Spain; i.e. Madrid." (2015b). In addition, historical possession of positive European values such as being democratic, peaceful, respectful etc. as a society can be listed among these sources of dignity and pride. In his speech of *Via Lliure* (Free Way) in 2015, he praised Catalonia by stating the following: "As the President of Catalonia, I feel deeply proud of this country that we have, of its people, its civic spirit, its civility, its capacity of mobilization, its love of democracy, its compromise with liberty." (2015c).³⁹

3.2.1.2. Continuity and Destiny

Continuity and destiny are the other most frequently referred concepts in the speeches of Artur Mas. In highlighting continuity, the emphasis was put especially on the survival and existence of Catalonia over a long period of time, passing through difficult

³⁹ *Via Lliure* (Free Way –to the Catalan Republic-) is a mass demonstration that took place in the national holiday of Catalonia in 2015. It was a demonstration in favour of Catalonia's independence.

times and overcoming these difficulties. Catalonia's strength in struggling with the hardships, especially the ones that have stemmed from the Catalan-Spanish relations, and continuing strength in dealing with present challenges was one of the focal points in Mas' speeches. Mas verified this argument by stating the following in one of his speeches: "Our history is full of great obstacles that were sometimes seen insurmountable. However, almost always, Catalonia have known to transform difficulties into opportunities. And now, it should not be an exception." (2011a). The achievement of continuity was attributed to the defense of Catalonia and the Catalan nation through an intergenerational resistance and fight without giving up the struggle and learning the lessons from history. Mas focused on the dedication of the Catalans in preserving their nation and said "What the Catalans did for 300 years of defeat and with their annihilated liberties is that they did not give up on who they have been, so that they can be where they are now." (2013b).

In 2014, a year that coincided with many anniversaries of important events for Catalonia, mentioning the intergenerational struggle and cohesiveness of the common losses and victories, Mas stated that "We are the sons of these two great moments, of 1714, which we lost our institutions, our rights, our constitutions, our liberties, but also of 1914, which is the first serious attempt of political and institutional recuperation of a certain degree of our self-government." (2014d). Thus, it can be seen that the symbolic meaning of 2014 for Catalonia was mostly reflected through the remembrance of the Catalan-Spanish relations. In addition, the emphasis on the continuation of the struggle was seen in another speech of his: "This has been, is and will be the fight of many generations of Catalans for the future of this country ... our duty and responsibility is to leave future generations a country that they can feel proud of" (2012a). In the 2015 celebration text of *La Diada* Artur Mas summarized all components of continuity (references to the past, intergenerational struggle and survival, dedication and decisiveness to maintain the Catalan nation, desire to get over with difficulties and challenges, and the future aspirations) and said the following:

Like every year, I wish you a happy *Diada*. A *Diada* with our sights set on the ones that precede us, on the ones that maintained the flame of Catalanity alive during many generations; a *Diada* with sights fixed on our present, tough and full of passion; a present that challenges us and constantly tests us; and a *Diada* with sights set especially on our future, on the children and the youths, and on those whom are yet to come. (2015d)

While continuity is seen to be tied to the historical narratives, destiny is mostly concentrated on the political future of Catalonia. Especially after the 2010 decision of the Constitutional Court on the statute, the concept of “right to decide” came to the surface. Since the decision was regarded as a negligence of the will of the Catalan people, the need for shaping their “own way of future” was started to be pronounced (2010b). Until 2012, the right to decide was used by Artur Mas in connection with the fiscal pact. However, the idea that “Catalonia needs a state” started to dominate the speeches of Mas (2012b), and it gave direction to the development of the Catalan national movement. Mas justified the need for a state by saying that “We want the same instruments that other nations have in order to protect our collective personality and develop our own project of country and society.” (2012c). In his 2013 *La Diada* speech, Mas emphasized “the will to exist in spite of the negation of all liberties of a nation” and the need for consulting the Catalan people on the political future of Catalonia (2013b). Mas blamed the Spanish State for its measures against the Catalan political process and its refusal to understand and enter into a dialogue for improving the situation of Catalonia (2013a).

As a result of the deadlock in the Catalan-Spanish relations, Mas defined a road map consisting of four stages: the right to decide, consultation, national transition and form of state (2013b).⁴⁰ Giving the example of Scotland, Mas especially supported consultation, since the position of the Spanish State was uncompromising and the constitutional order was a dead way (2014e). In all of his speeches, when Mas talked

⁴⁰ Known as the “*El Procés* (political process)”, a part of this road map was a project to realize a consultation that asked the Catalans whether they want Catalonia to be a state, and if yes, whether it should be independent or not. The consultation was held on 9 November 2014. However, it was declared illegal and suspended by the Constitutional Court. Therefore, as an alternative, 2015 early elections were regarded as a plebiscite that showed the support for independence.

about the right to decide, he put the emphasis on the will of Catalans. Therefore, it can be seen that the negative attitude of the Spanish State against the will of the Catalan people was used by Artur Mas as a catalyst in his attempts to mobilize the Catalan people. He stated that “The problem is that Spain [Spanish State] shows incapacity to accept Catalonia with its own personality, identity and project. Basically, [the problem] is the intolerance of the Spanish State … to accept Spain as a multinational state.” (2015a). Blaming the Spanish State, Artur Mas reinforced the significance of the democratic right to decide.

The concept of destiny was also used by Artur Mas in order to mention the international trajectory of Catalonia. Besides the advantages of having its own state would bring to the Catalan citizens, taking place in the international arena as an independent actor was one of the objectives that Mas mentioned in his speeches. Mas emphasized Catalonia’s will to remain in the EU and to contribute to the development of Europe. In addition, after the national transition was completed and Catalonia became an independent state, joining the United Nations was mentioned by Mas as another destination that Catalonia will follow (2015e). In relation to the place of Catalonia in the international arena, Mas always presented positive characteristics of his country so that the world can see the potential in Catalonia and support the cause of independence.

3.2.1.3. Autonomy

The 2010 decision of the Constitutional Court was also decisive regarding the issue of autonomy. After 2010, demands for more autonomy in general as well as in economy with a fiscal pact became dominant in the speeches of Artur Mas. Blaming the Spanish State for the current situation and the diminishing autonomy of Catalonia were used by Mas as the main strategy to mobilize the Catalans. Until 2012, fiscal sovereignty of Catalonia seems to dominate the content of Mas’ speeches. Mentioning the economic capacity of Catalonia and urgency of a fiscal pact as a national and social affirmation, he said: “We produce sufficient resources and sufficient wealth to live better than we

live now” (2012e). However, he also stated that “This is not only a matter of money, rather it is a matter of being able to have a different status within the state with our political personality and our identity as a country” (2012d). In this speech, which he gave after meeting with Mariano Rajoy, the Prime Minister of Spain to negotiate this issue, Mas blamed Rajoy for his clear negative response. Moreover, he mentioned his disappointment due to the Spanish State’s lack of understanding and respect towards the aspirations of the Catalan nation (2012d). He also blamed Madrid for the problems faced by the labour force such as unemployment, as this area is to very large extent regulated by the centre. For Mas, the Spanish State’s reluctance to negotiate the reform proposal of the Catalan government on the labour legislation was also a problem (2011a). It can be said that he creates an antagonism by blaming the Spanish State and justifies the aspirations of the Catalan national movement.

In the speeches of Artur Mas, the emphasis was not only on the fiscal matters, but also on the limitation and detention of Catalonia’s self-government in general. The Constitutional Court’s decision was given as one of the most notable examples in detaining the progress of self-government of Catalonia. Mas argued that with recentralization of the administrative system, the Catalan self-government was neglected. Mas argued that the autonomy was seriously limited with regulations such as the Law of Education and Law on the Market Unity. As Mas mentioned in one of his speeches, the scale of this recentralization tendency can be deduced from the discourse of the Minister of Education, José Ignacio Wert who said that their aim is to *españolizar* (make something Spanish) the Catalan children (2014e). In that sense, Mas strictly emphasized and used “the systematic and continuous operation of the dismantling and destruction of the self-government by the central government” to create a sense of restriction on the part of the Catalans and expresses the tiredness of Catalonia from the Spanish State which also caused the disconnection of the Catalans from the state (2014e). Mas explains this contentious relationship with respect to the inconsistency between “Catalan self-government and Spanish State’s vow to proprietorship” (2014c).

3.2.1.4. Authenticity and Homeland

Authenticity of the Catalan nation was reflected by Artur Mas through the positive presentation of Catalonia's unique characteristics and history. In his speeches, Artur Mas frequently mentioned Catalonia as "the first parliamentary political system in Europe" and having one of the most ancient parliaments in the world (2014a). In addition, he reminded Catalonia's secular constitutional and parliamentary tradition. Strongly emphasizing the ancient character of its people, institutions and culture, Artur Mas highlighted the long history which gives authenticity to the Catalan nation. The significance of the heroic stories and survival from the repressive measures of the Spanish State over centuries was shown by Mas to consolidate the authenticity of the nation (2015f). Mas also emphasized this authenticity by focusing on the festivals in Catalonia, such as the *Crida de Sant Jordi* (Saint George's Day) which is a festival unique to Catalonia and has been celebrated since 1459.⁴¹

Another sign of authenticity that Mas emphasized in his speeches is the values inherent in the Catalan nation. He stated that "respect to others, dialogue, negotiation, pact-making are tied to our history and fit with the values that define us as nation for centuries" (2015e). In order to justify the search for right to decide, he highlighted the "centuries-long trajectory of democratic convictions" in Catalonia (2014a). Describing their homeland as "a Catalonia that is convivial, civic, well-mannered, respectful, tolerant and inclusive; a Catalonia committed to social justice, faithful to its traditions of dynamism, entrepreneurship, and creativity; and a Catalonia that loves freedom and liberty", Mas positively presented the homeland in which the Catalans want to live their lives. Other than the positive presentation of the homeland in which the Catalan nation grew up, the homeland was not referred as a sacred territory.

⁴¹ Saint George's Day is celebrated only in Catalonia, on the 23th of April. On this day, people give each other books and roses as the sign of love and sharing.

3.2.2. The Presidency of Carles Puigdemont (2016-2018)

Carles Puigdemont was the 130th President of the *Generalitat*, who came to office at the beginning of 2016. As a member of the CDC and the pro-independence coalition *Junts Pel Sí* (Together for Yes), he was proposed as the presidential candidate since the CUP (*Candidatura d'Unitat Popular* – Popular Unity Candidacy), a radical pro-independence and anti-system political party, did not give support to the candidacy of Artur Mas.⁴² Puigdemont was the key political figure in the development of the Catalan national movement because the 1-O, 2017 independence referendum took place during his presidency. Compared to Mas, Carles Puigdemont was seen to have taken more radical steps toward independence. Thus, his speeches mostly focused on the independence issue and they seem to carry a populist tone.

3.2.2.1. Identity, Unity and Dignity

Although, in his speeches, Carles Puigdemont focused mostly on the political process with the objective of carrying Catalonia “from post-autonomy to pre-independence”, he also emphasized the importance of the Catalan identity, culture and language. He placed culture at the centre of modern and economically advanced societies with its ability to provide social cohesion (2016a). In his presidency investiture speech, Puigdemont specified the development and consolidation of the Catalan culture as one of his priorities (2016a). The culture, for him, is the connection with their history and gives them the sense of having profound roots as a nation (2016c). Moreover, he prioritized the efforts for the recognition of the Catalan language and its acceptance as an official language in international organizations. Thus, the importance he gave to the language and culture as the main components of the Catalan identity can be clearly seen.

⁴² *Junts Pel Sí* (2015-2017) is a pro-independence political alliance composed of the CDC, ERC, DC (Democrats of Catalonia) and the MES (*Moviment d'Esquerres* - Left Movement).

In explaining the will of the Catalan nation to be officially recognized, Carles Puigdemont stated that “Catalonia is a nation with a strong and clear-cut identity, culture and language” (2017a). The recognition of cultural, social, and linguistic singularity of the Catalan nation, for Puigdemont, was clearly demanded by the Catalan society with no response from Madrid (2016a). However, “the absolute absence of the recognition on the part of President Rajoy” was seen as the struggle for the Catalan nation (2017b). Like Artur Mas, Carles Puigdemont also blamed the Spanish State regarding the Catalan identity by saying that “our identity and language are devalued [by the State]” (2016d). Moreover, like the speeches of Artur Mas, in the speeches of Puigdemont, the Catalan identity was not only praised, but also defended against the threats coming from the Spanish State. Puigdemont mentioned the “persistent fight of Catalonia for the defence of its identity” emphasizing the historical challenges posed by the Spanish State and continuous struggles with these difficulties (2017b). In addition, he made an analogy between the struggle of the Catalan nation against the Spanish State and the story of *Sant Jordi* who fought against the fierce dragons. Doing this, he also emphasized the need to protect the Catalan language and culture and the significance of this festival (*Sant Jordi*) in doing so (2016e).

Carles Puigdemont’s reference to the unity of the Catalans was used in relation to the interplay between elites and masses and the compatibility of the elite projects and the will of the population. In his speeches, it was frequently mentioned that the democratic mandate of the Catalans was realized through Catalan political elites since “the citizens reinforce their confidence in representatives and their work” (2016a). In that sense, Puigdemont frequently made references to the will of the Catalans and their opinions on supporting the independence in the elections and 9-N consultation. Compared to Artur Mas, Carles Puigdemont is seen to be more inclined to populist discourses. In addition to emphasizing the mandate and “togetherness” of the Catalans within the political processes, he frequently praised and pampered the Catalan society. For example, he said “I understand that so many people who are always hopeful and who have worked without expecting any reward other than a little of gratitude, deserve

justly such gratitude” (2016f). Like Mas, Puigdemont also stressed the existence of the consensus on the critical issues in Catalonia such as the fiscal pact, the frustration caused by the failure of this pact and the defence of Catalonia’s liberty. In one of his speeches, he also included the civil society organizations to this unity and called everyone to unite, fight and get mobilized to reach the aim of independence (2017c). Moreover, Carles Puigdemont’s use of unity was also inclusive, bringing together both pro-independence and unionist citizens in terms of their experience: “The 8% fiscal deficit comes out of the pocket of a supporter of independence as much as a unionist. The consequences of the lack of resources make everyone suffer equally.” (2016g). The economic maltreatment and the reluctance of the Spanish State to make a fiscal pact that would ease the Catalonia’s economic situation was shown as a reason why people suffer (2016b).

In Puigdemont’s speeches, the concept of dignity is usually present as he mostly praised the Catalans. However, it can be seen that he used the concept in relation to the independence process. He related the demand of dignity of the Catalans to the right to decide and the future referendum of independence (2017a). For example, Carles Puigdemont labelled the 9-N process as “one of the moments that [the Catalans] feel dignified and proud of [their] action, civility, and organization” as it was a sign of “how the way of the Catalans is in making an independent country” (2017b). Moreover, after the 9-N process, Artur Mas and two other people were put into trial before the court. On the trial day, in expressing the importance of dignity, the unity of the Catalans’ answer toward this judgment and feeling of being put into trial altogether, Puigdemont’s said the following:

“It is the answer of a nation that, with all its differences, nuances and diversities, will maintain its dignity. It is the same dignity that will today, with a noble and loyal attitude, defend Artur Mas, Joana Ortega and Irene Rigau before the court. Not on our knees, but standing tall.” (2017d)

To express sense of dignity and pride, positive self-image is also seen in the speeches of Carles Puigdemont. In a historical sense, Puigdemont reflected on the long way that Catalonia has been through by saying “We’ve come a long journey through our history

in which we had experienced lots of things, but we are not tired ... we are hopeful” (2016d). Emphasizing the difficulties Catalonia faced, he aimed to make the people feel proud and strong. Moreover, presenting Catalonia as an economically developed country and praising the people for this result, Carles Puigdemont wanted to create a sense of self-worth and self-sufficiency among the Catalan people by saying that “Catalonia is the region that receives more foreign investment and exports the most, with its dynamic economy ... thanks to the enormous effort of the people, employers, employees, the self-employed” (2016h). In addition, the potential of Catalonia was reflected through making comparisons with Spain and Europe in general. For example, in one of his speeches, Carles Puigdemont mentioned the superiority of the Catalan economy in its dynamism and growth compared to the Spain and Europe (2016b).

3.2.2.2. Continuity and Destiny

Unlike Artur Mas, references to historical continuity of the Catalan nation in the speeches of Carles Puigdemont are not common. Rather, he put more emphasis on the destiny of Catalonia, as his presidential term coincided with the political process aiming to create the independent Catalan Republic. With respect to the concept of continuity, Puigdemont expressed the “long journey” in some of his speeches that Catalonia has been through in one of his speeches (2016d - mentioned above). The long history of Catalonia was connected to the Carolingian Empire. For example, in explaining the loyalty of Catalonia to Europe, Puigdemont mentioned Catalonia’s Carolingian past (2017a). In one of his speeches, Carles Puigdemont also referred to the Europeaness of the citizens of Catalonia since the Carolingian times (2017b). Moreover, Carles Puigdemont accepted the defence of the Catalan identity as a “historical constant” and regarded this as a characteristic of the Catalan nation, meaning that the Catalans have always been in a fight against the threats especially coming from the Spanish State (2017b).

Besides the significance of the remembrance of the past, Puigdemont emphasized the importance of the future projection of Catalonia through which the Catalans express

their will to be a nation and to decide their own future (2017e). Similar to Artur Mas, Carles Puigdemont concentrated on the destiny of Catalonia in terms of its political future. The destiny of Catalonia was projected as an independent state that would respond to the needs of the citizens, increase their well-being and eventually take their support. For Puigdemont, “the process towards an independent state is the only way out from the situation of blockade and regression which end up with affecting the people” (2016i). With this independent state, the aim was to create a Catalonia that offers “more”: more justice, equality, creativity, employment, democracy, transparency etc. (2016a). By aiming to be “more” than the Spanish State, he seems to draw a negative picture of this state and therefore, making the independent Catalan state more appealing to the Catalans. Moreover, Puigdemont frequently mentioned the preparations needed for establishing the new state which is disconnected from Spain. However, in doing this, he insisted on the fact that it is the citizens who would go to ballot box to express their will of creating this new state (2016g). In that sense, the involvement of the society and the bottom-up character of this process were also emphasized.

For Puigdemont, “there are only two peaceful ways of achieving independence: the unilateral route and the negotiated route” (2016j). Although the second option was reflected as desirable in this process, to show his determination Carles Puigdemont said the following:

“The resolution of the Catalan demand is either referendum or referendum. Until the last day we will pursue an agreement, we will work with the will of making a referendum in agreement with the State, but if we cannot get a positive response, we will be prepared and ready to climb the last step before proclaiming the independence of Catalonia with an effective way” (2016g).

Similar to Artur Mas, Carles Puigdemont was also determined to emphasize Catalonia’s wish to remain part of Europe as a separate actor. In fact, he wanted Europe to be a part of the solution to the Catalan problem (2017a). By giving examples of Flanders, Scotland and Quebec, Puigdemont tried to get the attention of Europe and the international arena and to show the similarity of the cases as well as the legitimacy

of the political process in Catalonia. Moreover, in his speeches, the international projection of Catalonia's destiny was also based on the will of "projecting Catalonia in economic, cultural and linguistic fields" independently from the Spanish diplomacy as he blamed Spain, for example, for doing "everything possible to avoid the international recognition of Catalan teams" (2016c).

3.2.2.3. Autonomy

Like Artur Mas, Carles Puigdemont used the concept of autonomy mostly with respect to its being limited by the Spanish State. He explained the Catalans' will of having more self-government, a just financial model and social, cultural, linguistic recognition in order to show the consensus of the Catalans on the issue of autonomy (2016b). In the speeches of Puigdemont, the concept of autonomy was mostly contextualized within the issue of fiscal pact. Almost all of his speeches included the Catalan demand for fiscal autonomy and Spanish State's refusal to give this autonomy. Therefore, blaming the State on this issue prevailed in his speeches as is seen from the following example: "The deterioration of autonomy, the regression of competition, financial difficulties of the State not only limit the resources that we have but also our capacity of acting" (2016i). The recentralization tendency of the State was given as the main reason for the undesirable social and economic situation in Catalonia (2016b). Like Artur Mas, Carles Puigdemont emphasized the sense of self-sufficiency created by the belief that Catalonia can generate sufficient resources to better implement public policies and provide social services (2016i).

Besides the deterioration of the autonomy, Carles Puigdemont also blamed the Spanish State for being the reason of the pro-independence shift of the Catalan national movement. In one of his speeches, he reminded the demand of the Catalans to achieve greater autonomy for more than 30 years. However, regarding the reason why the Catalan national movement changed its path toward independence, he listed certain attempts of the State such as the suspension of the reformed statute of autonomy, its reluctance to negotiate and accept the creation of a new fiscal pact and the suspension

of the 9-N consultation, all of which prevented more autonomy given to Catalonia (2016j). In his speeches, Carles Puigdemont also referred to the decision of the Constitutional Court as a means used by the Spanish State to block the Catalan government. Especially the 2010 decision of the Court on the suspension of the reformed statute of autonomy was frequently stressed by Puigdemont since the decision was seen as a limitation to the autonomy of Catalonia by most Catalans. According to him, “the pressures of Spain, firstly via the Constitutional Court, then with the intention of constant blockage of [Catalonia’s] actions” indicate that “the Spanish State uses all its foreign diplomacy to counteract the international actions of the Catalan government” (2016c).

3.2.2.4. Authenticity and Homeland

Contrary to Artur Mas, in Carles Puigdemont’s speeches the authenticity of the Catalan nation and the importance of the homeland were not clearly mentioned. Rather, future projections for Catalonia seem to be dominant theme. Although, in some speeches, the long history of Catalonia was emphasized, there are no specific statements for stressing the authenticity of the Catalan nation. However, similar to Mas, Puigdemont emphasized common history and culture that makes the Catalan nation stronger (2017f). He also attributed some inherent positive characteristics to the Catalan nation such as respect, dialogue, and agreement (2017f). In addition, describing “the Catalan way” as peaceful and democratic, he singularized the Catalan nation among the other examples (2016k). While the emphasis on the authenticity can be found in Puigdemont’s speeches, there is no mention of a sacredness attributed to the homeland. However, as a point of differentiation, frequent mentioning of Catalonia in his speeches can be explained with the sense of having a separate homeland from Spain as a whole. In short, although the speeches of Puigdemont did not focus on authenticity as frequently as the speeches of Mas, with respect to the long history of Catalonia, its culture and positive values attributed to the Catalan nation, there are important similarities between the two presidents.

As can be seen, Artur Mas and Carles Puigdemont, as the leaders of the two parties representing the Catalan nationalism, played a significant role on the direction of the Catalan national movement by leading it to gain momentum in the way of independence. Besides their institutional power as the presidents of the *Generalitat*, these two leaders shaped and directed the Catalan national movement with their speeches. By emphasizing the concepts of identity, unity, dignity, continuity, destiny, autonomy, authenticity and homeland to mobilize the masses for the objective of independence, they contributed to the path which brought the movement to the controversial independence referendum on 1 October 2017. Thus, the following chapter will further explore the impact of Artur Mas and Carles Puigdemont on the Catalan society by primarily covering the activities of the two most prominent civil society organizations, *Assemblea Nacional Catalana* (ANC) and *Òmnium Cultural*. It will also analyse the 1-O referendum in terms of its impact on the Catalan society and its reflections in the international arena.

CHAPTER IV

BEFORE AND AFTER OF *EL PROCÉS*: THE 1-O REFERENDUM

As described in the previous chapter, the process which brought the Catalan national movement to the 1 October independence referendum was directed by the Catalan nationalist elites and their reactions to the Spanish State. However, the 1-O referendum was also triggered by the incorporation of these elite reactions with the activities of civil society organizations and their influence on the Catalan society. Therefore, the aim of this chapter is to show the events that took place during and after the 1-O independence referendum, their impact on the Catalan society and the reflections of the referendum on the international arena. The chapter will also explore whether or not there is any correlation between the discourses of prominent Catalan nationalist leaders and the actions of the civil society organizations on the one hand and the change in the Catalan society's support of independence over years on the other. Using the relevant data of the *Centre d'Estudis d'Opinió* – CEO (Opinion Studies Centre) based in Catalonia, the fluctuation in the support for independence between 2010 and 2018 will be explained by linking this support to the discourses and actions of the Catalan elites and civil society organizations.

4.1. Incorporating with the Civil Society Organizations

This part of this chapter will cover the activities of the two most prominent civil society organizations, *Assemblea Nacional Catalana* (ANC) and *Òmnium Cultural*, since these two organizations played a key role in the path towards the 1-O independence referendum with their activities. After a brief information about these two civil society organizations, mass demonstrations organized by them will be covered. Then, the cooperation of these organizations with the political wing of the Catalan national

movement in calling the Catalans to participate in the demonstrations will be explored by making references to the support given in the speeches of Mas and Puigdemont. Additionally, in order to see how the Catalan political and civil society elites and their interaction with the Spanish State had an impact on the support for independence in the Catalan society, the quantitative data periodically collected by the CEO (see Appendix) will be used to show the change in this support.⁴³

Òmnium Cultural is one of the oldest organizations in Catalonia. It was founded as a cultural organization in 1961, during the period of the Franco dictatorship in order to promote the Catalan language and culture. At the beginning, the organization did not have any pro-independence stance since its aim was to protect the Catalan language and culture against the repressive measures taken by the Franco regime. However, after 2009, the activities undertaken by the organization started to be more in favour of independence. For example, between 2009 and 2011, unofficial referendums for independence took place in nearly half of the municipalities of Catalonia. Starting with a small town called *Arenys de Munt*, a trend for holding unofficial referendums emerged and this inclination spread with the intense media attention given to it. *Òmnium Cultural* helped these local referendums with its human and material resources. After these unofficial referendums organized between 2009 and 2011, the ratio of those in favour of independence was 91.7% (Muñoz & Guinjoan, 2013: 52). A brief look at these developments which led to such a high rate of support for independence makes it obvious that this support gradually increased starting in 2006 and slowly gained momentum throughout Catalonia in the following years.⁴⁴ In 2006 when *Partido Popular* (the Popular Party) withdrew the reforms approved by the Catalan society, the public opinion on independence started to rise steadily due to these reciprocal reactions in Catalan-Spanish relations. This rise would later be perpetuated and exacerbated with the 2008 economic crisis, which dramatically increased the rate

⁴³ A graph indicating the rise and fall of the support for independence in Catalonia is provided in the Appendix. The data can be found on <http://ceo.gencat.cat/ca/barometre/> - the website of the *Centre d'Estudis d'Opinió* – CEO (Opinion Studies Centre)

⁴⁴ The data provided by the CEO are presented in the Appendix.

of unemployment from 9% to 17.2% in one year.⁴⁵ As pointed out by some scholars, as a result of the “cost-benefit calculations” of the secession, the economic crisis had an impact on the preference of the Catalan citizens to be independent (Muñoz & Tormos, 2014: 6).

Especially after Artur Mas’ coming to power in 2010, support for independence again showed a steady increase.⁴⁶ On 10 July 2010, after the Constitutional Court’s decision on the Catalan Statute of Autonomy, *Òmnium Cultural* organized the biggest demonstration in Catalonia with more than one million participants in order to protest this decision. In addition to their main goal of protesting the Spanish State, the demonstrators also aimed to show their demand for recognition as a nation as well as the right to self-determination. The slogan which dominated the demonstration was “*Som una nació. Nosaltres decidim*” (We are a nation, we decide). Moreover, the demonstration was supported through the Internet with the provision of a Wi-Fi service along the route of the event so that the participants could share comments or photos under the hashtag #somunanacio (Crameri, 2015: 110). This demonstration was used by Mas and Puigdemont in most of their speeches for pointing out the resistance against the centralist policies of the state.

The other most important civil society organization for the Catalan national movement, *Assemblea Nacional Catalana* (ANC) was founded in 2012 with the objective of creating an independent state of Catalonia. After 2012, with the contribution of other smaller civil society organizations, ANC and *Òmnium Cultural* organized massive demonstrations every year on 11 September; i.e. the national day of Catalonia. After Artur Mas’ failed attempt to negotiate a fiscal pact with Mariano Rajoy, *Òmnium Cultural* worked with ANC, which succeeded to organize a demonstration bigger than the one held in the previous year with the participation of 1.5 million people. This demonstration was unique as it started the secession process in Spain under the slogan

⁴⁵ IDESCAT (2018). Retrieved February 21, 2019, from <https://www.idescat.cat/pub/?id=aec&n=318&lang=en>

⁴⁶ Centre d’Estudis d’Opinio – CEO (Opinion Studies Centre), <http://ceo.gencat.cat/ca/barometre/>

“Catalunya, nou Estat d’Europa” (Catalonia, the new state of Europe). Artur Mas gave support to this demonstration seeing it as a means for raising the voice of the citizens for a fiscal pact, proper state, dignity and respect the Catalan nation deserves (2012e). Two weeks later, he called for a snap election in order to respond to the demands of the Catalan society, to reflect their will, to provide the legitimacy to his party’s goal of independence and to propose a referendum for self-determination (2012c). In addition to the reciprocal actions of the Catalan and Spanish political elites, with the incentives of the Catalan civil society and civil society organizations the Catalan national movement spread and increased its impact on a wider population. This rising trend for independence was perpetuated as the struggle of the Catalan politicians with the Spanish State and Spanish officials continued. After Artur Mas’ initiatives to persuade the Spanish Prime Minister Mariano Rajoy to negotiate for a fiscal pact proved to be unsuccessful due to the reluctance of the latter, a steep rise from 29% to 44.3% in the support for independence emerged in 2012.⁴⁷

In 2013’s *La Diada*, with the contributions of *Òmnium Cultural*, ANC organized another demonstration in which more than 1.5 million people formed a 400-km-long human chain stretching from the Pyrenees (the French border in the north) to Valencia (southern border) to create the “*Via Catalana cap a la Independència*” (Catalan Way Towards Independence). The organizers provided an online network for the participants to follow the instructions. In addition, shortly before the human chain was organized, *Òmnium Cultural*, the ANC and other civil society organizations organized “*Concert per la Llibertat*” (Concert for Freedom) in *Camp Nou*, i.e. the stadium of the F.C. Barcelona, the famous football team. At the 11 September demonstration, the leader of the ANC Carme Forcadell, demanded from Mas a consultation on the issue of independence of Catalonia that would take place in 2014. Mas agreed on the consultation about which he had already expressed a positive opinion in one of his earlier speeches in 2013 (2013a). In that speech, he had praised the participants of the demonstration for independence of Catalonia to be the representatives of the dignity

⁴⁷ Centre d’Estudis d’Opinio – CEO (Opinion Studies Centre), <http://ceo.gencat.cat/ca/barometre/>

of their homeland. After Rajoy's complete rejection of dialogue, the rate of the pro-independence Catalans reached its peak point with 48.5% in November 2013, indicating a clear relation between the discourses and actions of political elites as well as civil society and the Catalan national movement seeking independence.⁴⁸

On 11 September 2014, ANC and *Òmnium Cultural* organized another demonstration together under the slogan “*Ara és l'hora, units per un país nou*” (Now is the time, united for a new country). Almost 1.8 million people formed a flag mosaic (by forming red and yellow stripes) in the shape of a large “V” symbolizing three Catalan words “*Votar, Victòria, Voluntat*” (Vote, Victory, Will) to press for the 9-N consultation and to increase “Yes” votes in the consultation. As in the previous demonstration, an online system was used to organize participants so that the stripes of the flag and the “V” shape can be accomplished properly. In his speech about this demonstration, Artur Mas congratulated the civil society organizations for their “remarkable, impressive and moving achievement” since the message of the Catalans who wished to be heard, to be respected, and to vote for their future was conveyed to the world and especially to the Spanish State (2014b). He also made general comments on the demonstrations that took place in recent years by saying that they were the proof of the frustration of the Catalans due to Spain’s constitutional crisis and added that the world was impressed by the size and civility of the demonstrations (2014e). In this period in which Artur Mas decided to hold an unofficial consultation instead of a referendum (since the Constitutional Court did not give permission), the support rate for independence declined approximately 10%.⁴⁹ As the pressure to make dialogue was replaced by an independent attitude of holding a consultation (which then led to the trial of Artur Mas and several other Catalan officials), this decline can be interpreted as a sign of the will of the Catalan people to proceed in agreement with the Spanish State. Thus, the

⁴⁸ Centre d'Estudis d'Opinio – CEO (Opinion Studies Centre), <http://ceo.gencat.cat/ca/barometre/>

⁴⁹ Centre d'Estudis d'Opinio – CEO (Opinion Studies Centre), <http://ceo.gencat.cat/ca/barometre/>

fluctuating trend in the support for independence continued after November 2013 due to the ongoing contentious relation between Catalonia and Spain.

By 2015, the internationalization of the process of Catalan independence was the main objective of the civil society organizations. As the main actor, *Òmnium Cultural* promoted this campaign so that people from all around the world would come to Catalonia to experience *La Diada*. *Òmnium Cultural* invited writers, philosophers, activists and political scientists in order to internationalize the demand of the Catalans for independence. With the help of the ANC, 1.5 to 2 million people participated to form “*Via Lliure*” (Free Way to the Catalan Republic) which consisted of different sections represented each by a colour symbolizing the desires of the new republic such as yellow for democracy, blue for territorial balance, red for solidarity.⁵⁰ This demonstration also aimed to campaign for the elections that would take place two weeks later, on 27 September, so that this election would function as a plebiscite showing the support for independence. Artur Mas saw *Via Lliure* as a source of “pride, confidence, and hope” and emphasized the uniqueness and greatness of these demonstrations in the world (2015c). In the same speech, Mas also stated that the consecutive demonstrations in Catalonia speeded up the political process in which the country would reach its future goal of self-determination. The data collected during the September 2015 elections showed an increase in the support for independence from 37.6% to 41.1%. In other words, elections as a means of realizing democracy was supported by the society in order to show its support for independence.

Although Artur Mas was a strong supporter of the demonstrations, he refrained from participating them due to his institutional position as the President of the *Generalitat*; on the contrary, however, Carles Puigdemont participated the first *Diada* of his presidency in 2016. The participation rate of the 2016 demonstration was much lower than the previous years. Nevertheless, it was also important in the sense that the leaders of the two civil society organizations pushed for an independence referendum. The

⁵⁰ Others were dark green for sustainability, light green for diversity, pink for equality, brown for social justice, turquoise for openness to the world, orange for culture and education, reddish for innovation.

leader of the ANC, Jordi Sànchez demanded to take the issue to the ballot box. Moreover, he and the leader of *Òmnium Cultural*, Jordi Cuixart called for a unity for all who were pro-independence and encouraged the President of the Parliament, Carme Forcadell (the ex-President of the ANC), to disobey the Constitutional Court if it sanctioned them for permitting a unilateral referendum.⁵¹ Therefore, it can be said that the civil society organizations functioned as pressure groups in collaboration with the political wing of the Catalan national movement. The effect of the civil society organizations on the political decisions can also be seen from Puigdemont's announcement on the readiness to disconnect from Spain by the end of the July 2017, even if an agreement could not be reached with the Spanish State (2016g).

Similar to the trend that was seen after the 2015 elections, during the era of Puigdemont's presidency the Catalan society showed some willingness to make an agreement with the Spanish State. Puigdemont, a more radical figure than Artur Mas, stated that he would pursue a dialogue with the Spanish State; however, he also maintained his determinant position to make progress towards independence for Catalonia. During this period in which he adopted a moderate approach towards the Spanish State to agree on a process of negotiations to form a new state for Catalonia, the supporters of independence increased from 38.5% to 41.6%. However, in July 2016, when Puigdemont announced that an independence referendum would take place in 2017, the support for independence declined almost 5%, since Carles Puigdemont stated that if an agreement with the Spanish State could not be reached, the Catalan Parliament would proclaim independence.

At the beginning of 2017, the trial of Artur Mas and several other Catalan officials due to the 9 November consultation led to a slight increase in the support for independence. The data obtained in 2017, during the period before the independence referendum on 1 October, also showed a fluctuation in the support rate since there emerged reciprocal

⁵¹ “Puigdemont ratifica el plan independentista en otra Diada multitudinaria” (Puigdemont ratifies the independence plan in other Diada with mass attendance) , *El País*, 12 September 2016, retrieved from https://elpais.com/ccaa/2016/09/11/catalunya/1473609869_860208.html

actions taken by both Catalan and Spanish governments. Strict discourses of the political elites, repressive moves of Madrid and efforts of civil society organizations to mobilize the Catalan society had an impact on the support for independence. For example, on 9 June 2017, Carles Puigdemont announced that a self-determination referendum would take place on 1 October 2017, with the question “Do you want Catalonia to become an independent state in the form of a Republic?”. However, after Puigdemont’s announcement, the Constitutional Court suspended the referendum. The suspension resulted in an increase in the number of supporters of independence between July and October by 5.5%.⁵²

As a reflection of this increase, a demonstration campaign emerged with the motto of “*La Diada Del Si*” (The Day of Yes) and with the slogans “*Votarem*” (We will vote) and “*Volem Votar*” (We want to vote) prior to the traditional *La Diada* to be celebrated on 11 September 2017. Although the participation was lower compared to the first four demonstrations, it had a specific importance as the last *La Diada* before the ‘independent’ Catalan Republic that was hoped to be created. Similar to the 2016 demonstration, the civil society leaders were strict in their speeches. For example, the leaders of the ANC and *Òmnium Cultural* stated that they no longer accepted the decisions of the Spanish Courts.⁵³

As can be seen in the shift from autonomy towards independence, the Catalan national movement was exacerbated by the discourses of the two presidents, Artur Mas and Carles Puigdemont, and actions of the two civil society organizations, ANC and *Òmnium Cultural*, all of which eventually resulted in the 1 October 2017 independence referendum. The tendency of the presidents to direct the Catalan national movement with an interplay between elites and the masses led to the growth of the support base

⁵² *Centre d'Estudis d'Opinio* – CEO (Opinion Studies Centre), <http://ceo.gencat.cat/ca/barometre/>

⁵³ “Un millón según la Urbana y 350.000 según la Delegación del Gobierno participan en la manifestación de la *Diada*” (One million according to Urban Police and 350.000 according to the Government Representation Office participated to the demonstration of *Diada*), *La Vanguardia*, 11 September 2017, retrieved from <https://www.lavanguardia.com/politica/20170911/431209531528/cifras-participacion-diada.html>

of their nationalist discourses. In addition, the incorporation of the political wing of the movement with the civil society organizations also consolidated the process and eventually, led to the rise of the support for independence. The remaining part of this chapter will deal with the impact of these actors on the support of independence in the society, especially in the context of 1 October 2017 independence referendum. Moreover, answers will be searched for the questions on how the 1-O referendum affected the Catalan society and how the international arena responded to this event.

4.2. The Separatist Challenge: The 1-O Independence Referendum

Despite the fact that a separatist referendum is illegal according to the Spanish Constitution, the Catalan political elites, especially President Carles Puigdemont, constantly pressed the central government to start negotiations in order to realize the 1-O referendum in an agreement. Starting with the end of May in 2017 after a decision taken by the Catalan government to start negotiations with Madrid, Puigdemont sent an official letter to the Prime Minister of Spain Mariano Rajoy on this issue only to be rejected in 24 hours by another such letter coming from Rajoy. This negative response triggered the civil society organizations (ANC, *Òmnium Cultural* and Association of Municipalities for Independence) to press Carles Puigdemont to hold the referendum. However, Rajoy's strict position on the referendum did not change as can be seen in his following statement: "As long as I am the President, the referendum will not happen."⁵⁴

In spite of such objections, Carles Puigdemont continued to insist on an agreement on the referendum. He even sent a letter to the Venice Commission of the Council of Europe regarding Rajoy's stand; however, the Commission's response was that the

⁵⁴ "Rajoy, en Barcelona: Mientras sea presidente no va a celebrarse el referéndum" (Rajoy, in Barcelona: As long as I am the president the referendum will not happen), *El Confidencial*, 27 May 2017, retrieved from https://www.elconfidencial.com/espana/2017-05-27/referendum-catalan-rajoy-sitges-brexit_1389678/

referendum should be held in agreement with the Spanish authorities.⁵⁵ Under these circumstances, President Puigdemont announced the date of the independence referendum as well as the question to be asked to the people in this referendum. He would also continue to voice his demand for negotiating with the Spanish government until the last day; that is, 1 October. However, the Spanish authorities kept their negative position toward the issue. Eventually the Catalan and Spanish sides took opposing decisions: Whereas the Constitutional Court declared public spending for the referendum unconstitutional, Puigdemont challenged the Court by stating that they would not give up on the referendum although it was prohibited.⁵⁶ As a result, at the beginning of September, the Catalan Parliament passed the Referendum Law and officially called the referendum which was suspended by the Court the next day. Moreover, Spanish authorities also started an anti-referendum operation through which 14 high-ranking Catalan officials were detained by the Spanish police.⁵⁷ In addition, the voting materials were seized, and the Catalan ministries which were involved in the organization of the independence referendum were raided.

Despite these confrontations, with the support of the Catalan civil society and civil society organizations, the Catalan independence referendum was held on 1 October resulting in a brutal police force against the supporters and leading to a significant division in the society afterwards. Since the central government transferred national police forces to Catalonia from the beginning of September and gave orders to both the national police and regional police force of Catalonia (*Mossos d'Esquadra*) to block the voting and clear the polling stations, the referendum day witnessed harsh and debated violence scenes in front of the eyes of both the Spanish society and the world.

⁵⁵ The Venice Commission of the Council of Europe is an advisory body on constitutional matters in order to provide legal advice to its member states concerning the fields of democracy, the rule of law, and human rights.

⁵⁶ “Puigdemont: Si el Tribunal Constitucional me inhabilita, no lo aceptaré” (Puigdemont: If the Constitutional Court disqualifies me, I will not accept it), *El País*, 24 July 2017, retrieved from https://elpais.com/ccaa/2017/07/24/catalunya/1500889774_720967.html

⁵⁷ “Los 14 detenidos en la operación contra la organización del referéndum” (14 detained in the operation against the organization of the referendum), *El País*, 20 September 2017, retrieved from https://elpais.com/ccaa/2017/09/20/catalunya/1505896269_248253.html

The Spanish police raided the polling stations and confronted the voters who tried to cast their votes. The confrontations not only did emerge between the voters and the national police forces, but also between some of the regional and national police forces. According to the *Generalitat*, more than 800 voters were injured as a result of the violence by the Spanish police. At the night of that day, Mariano Rajoy defended the actions of the national police and stated that the self-determination referendum in Catalonia did not happen and that the state reacted with legal means against the provocations.⁵⁸ However, Carles Puigdemont rejected this statement by saying that Catalonia won the right to be an independent state in the form of a republic since the results obtained by the *Generalitat* showed that 90.18% of the voters said “Yes” to the independence of Catalonia with a turnout rate of 43.03%.⁵⁹

4.2.1. The Polarization of the Society: Awakening of *La Mayoría Silenciosa* (The Silent Majority)

After all these incidents that took place on 1 October, upcoming days witnessed serious reciprocal measures taken by the *Generalitat* and the Madrid government, a deeply polarized society with the awakening of the silent majority among the Catalans and multiple demonstrations of both pro-independence and unionist camps in Catalonia. On 3 October, a general strike was organized by some syndicates and pro-independence organizations in order to support the referendum and react to the police violence. On the same day, the message of the King Philip VI exacerbated the tensions because in his speech, he referred to the illegality of the referendum and supported the efforts of the Spanish authorities to secure the constitutional order.⁶⁰ As the head of

⁵⁸ “Hundreds injured as Spain cracks down on Catalan referendum”, CNN, 1 October 2017, retrieved from <https://edition.cnn.com/2017/10/01/europe/catalonia-spain-independence-referendum-vote/index.html>

⁵⁹ *Referèndum d'autodeterminació de Catalunya – Resultats Definitius* (Self-determination referendum of Catalonia – Ultimate Results), (2017). Retrieved from <https://govern.cat/govern/docs/2017/10/06/17/31/a3c84f5f-a902-4f55-b3a9-41e112d7a8d9.pdf>

⁶⁰ “Mensaje del Rey sobre Cataluña: ‘Es responsabilidad de los legítimos poderes del Estado asegurar el orden constitucional’” (Message of the King about Catalonia: It is the responsibility of the legitimate

the Spanish State, he was criticized by the Catalan authorities for not acting in a neutral and responsible way.⁶¹ After the results of the referendum were finalized, the President of the *Generalitat*, Carles Puigdemont searched for a mediation with Madrid before officially declaring unilateral independence. However, as a response, the Madrid government warned Puigdemont not to pursue this cause further, since it could result in a worse situation such as the suspension of the autonomy of Catalonia according to Article 155 of the Spanish Constitution.⁶²

On 8 October, *la mayoría silenciosa* (the silent majority) filled the streets of Barcelona with the objective of opposing independence and defending the unity of Spain.⁶³ Organized by the unionist civil society organization *Societat Civil Catalana* (Catalan Civil Society – SCC) and the unionist political parties *Partido Popular* (Popular Party), *Ciutadans* (Citizens) and *Partit dels Socialistes de Catalunya* (Socialist Party of Catalonia – PSC), the demonstration took place under the motto “*Tots som Catalunya. Per la convivència, seny!*” (We are all Catalonia. For the coexistence, common sense!).⁶⁴ There were also banners such as “*La unidad de España no se vota ni se negocia! Se defiende!*” (The unity of Spain can neither be voted nor be negotiated.

powers of the State to secure the constitutional order), *El País*, 3 October 2017, retrieved from https://elpais.com/politica/2017/10/03/actualidad/1507049494_875682.html

⁶¹ “*La Generalitat: ‘En lugar de calmar, el Rey ha puesto más gasolina’*” (The *Generalitat*: Instead of calming [the situation], the King put more gas), *El País*, 4 October 2017, retrieved from https://elpais.com/ccaa/2017/10/02/catalunya/1506931604_497164.html

⁶² Article 155 of the Spanish Constitution states the following: “If a Self-governing Community does not fulfill the obligations imposed upon it by the Constitution or other laws, or acts in a way that is seriously prejudicial to the general interest of Spain, the Government, after having lodged a complaint with the President of the Self-governing Community and failed to receive satisfaction therefore, may, following approval granted by the overall majority of the Senate, take all measures necessary to compel the Community to meet said obligations, or to protect the abovementioned general interest.”

⁶³ “The silent majority” refers to the Catalans who were silent about the pro-independence process because of their anti-separatist positions towards the Catalan problem.

⁶⁴ As another political party, *Podemos* did not support the independence of Catalonia but it supported the idea that an agreed and legal referendum should be held for the Catalans to decide on their future.

It is defended), “*Somos todos España*” (We are all Spain), and “155 ya!” (155 now!).⁶⁵ In addition, among the most repeated slogans, there were the ones such as “*Puigdemont a prisión!*” (Puigdemont to prison!), “*Yo soy Español*” (I am Spanish), and “*Viva España, viva Cataluña y viva la Guardia Civil*” (Long live Spain, long live Catalonia and long live the Civil Guards).⁶⁶ In short, the independence referendum and its possible consequences led to a furious reaction among the Catalans who also felt Spanish and did not want to separate from Spain.⁶⁷ This reaction also spread to the companies who had legal headquarters in Catalonia; they decided to move their headquarters to other cities in Spain.

Despite the reactions coming from the unionist civil society and some parts of the economic sector, on 10 October Carles Puigdemont announced that although the pro-independence parties signed a declaration of independence, he suspended the declaration in order to allow for an international mediation and negotiation with Madrid. However, this was not a realistic expectation as international mediation would also mean the acceptance of the legitimacy of the independence plans of the Catalan government as if it had an equal status with the Spanish government.⁶⁸ The suspension of the declaration not only did create a negative response from Madrid as the issue was still on the agenda, but also from the radical pro-independence segment of the Catalan society which was now disappointed. After the ambiguous announcement of Puigdemont, Rajoy asked him to clarify whether or not he declared independence in five days so that Article 155 could be implemented to suspend the autonomy of Catalonia. However, in his response to Mariano Rajoy, Carles Puigdemont demanded Madrid “to stop the oppression against the Catalan people and Government” and

⁶⁵ Here “155” refers to the article of the Spanish Constitution about the suspension of autonomy for the communities.

⁶⁶ Civil Guards are the national police force in Spain.

⁶⁷ Unionist Spanish citizens also reacted to the Catalan independence referendum since they see it as a threat to the territorial integrity of Spain and defended the consolidation of the Spanish national identity.

⁶⁸ “Independence in Catalonia – now what?”, *El País*, 10 October 2017, retrieved from https://elpais.com/elpais/2017/10/10/inenglish/1507636762_251450.html

maintained his “commitment to find a solution, and avoid confrontation”.⁶⁹ Despite his will of negotiation with Madrid, Spanish authorities continued the juridical acts against the Catalans who took part in the organization of the referendum. Among these acts, the one that increased the tensions was the detention (without bail) and imprisonment of Jordi Sànchez and Jordi Cuixart, the leaders of ANC and *Òmnium Cultural* respectively for alleged sedition.⁷⁰ As a result, the cleavage in the society deepened, and the supporters of independence started to protest the ruling throughout Catalonia. In addition, to symbolize the support for the political prisoners, yellow ribbons were commonly used by the protesters, and this symbol was started to be used as a marker about one’s position towards independence.⁷¹

As a result of Carles Puigdemont’s insistence on negotiation, Madrid demanded him to call for a snap regional election as an alternative to Article 155. However, Puigdemont said that the Catalan Parliament would formally accept the unilateral declaration of independence if the Spanish government continued repression and prevention of the dialogue.⁷² Thus, Madrid took further steps to implement Article 155 and moved forward to transfer the powers of the Catalan government in areas of security and public order, financial administration, taxation, budget and telecommunications to the relevant ministries in Madrid. This move was seen as a “de facto coup d’etat” by the speaker of the Catalan Parliament and as “the worst attack on

⁶⁹ “Catalonia leader fails to clarify independence declaration”, *CNN*, 17 October 2017, retrieved from <https://edition.cnn.com/2017/10/16/europe/catalonia-independence-spain-puigdemont/index.html>

⁷⁰ At the time of writing, 9 May 2019, these two leaders are still in prison, and the trial still continues.

⁷¹ “La ANC llama a los catalanes a llevar un lazo amarillo en solidaridad con su presidente” (The ANC calls the Catalans to wear a yellow ribbon [to show] solidarity to its president), *Sputnik Mundo*, 17 October 2017, retrieved from <https://mundo.sputniknews.com/espagna/201710171073258462-politica-espana-madrid-barcelona-detenciones/>

⁷² “Puigdemont dice que la declaración de independencia de Cataluña sigue suspendida y el gobierno de España avanza en la aplicación del artículo 155 ‘para restaurar la legalidad’” (Puigdemont says that the declaration of independence of Catalonia remains suspended and the government of Spain moves forward for the application of the article 155 to restore the legality), *BBC Mundo*, 19 October 2017, retrieved from <https://www.bbc.com/mundo/noticias-internacional-41677957>

Catalonia's institutions since General Franco's dictatorship” by Carles Puigdemont.⁷³ On 27 October, the unilateral declaration of independence was approved in the Catalan Parliament. However, hours later, the Spanish Senate voted for the approval of the unprecedented imposition of direct rule in Catalonia. Implications of the imposition of direct rule included the dissolution of Catalan Parliament, closure of international “embassies” of Catalonia, dismissal of Carles Puigdemont, and call for regional elections on 21 December.⁷⁴ All of these developments were also accompanied by the supporters of independence monitoring the events outside the relevant buildings. These decisions deepened the pro-independence/unionist cleavage in the society. During the celebrations organized by the pro-independence demonstrators, the Spanish flag was removed from some of the buildings, in addition to the slogans of “Welcome to the Catalan Republic”.⁷⁵ However, besides these Catalans, there were others who were frustrated with the decision of the Catalan Parliament to unilaterally declare independence, since they supported the unity of Spain. This cleavage between the two sides showed itself in the streets with successive demonstrations of both unionist and pro-independence parties.

The struggle of Carles Puigdemont against the decisions of the Spanish authorities continued with his rejection of being dismissed from presidency. This rejection was backed by his call for the Catalans to democratically oppose Article 155, though he did not specify the ways to do it. Still, Puigdemont continued to emphasize the peaceful and civic character of the opposition movement, and his respect to the opponents of

⁷³ “Catalonia crisis escalates as Spain set to impose direct rule within days”, *The Guardian*, 21 October 2017, retrieved from <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/oct/21/catalan-crisis-spain-rajoy-direct-rule>

⁷⁴ “Exteriores comienza a cerrar las embajadas políticas catalanas” (*Ministry of Foreign Affairs start to close the Catalan political embassies*), *El País*, retrieved from https://elpais.com/politica/2017/10/30/actualidad/1509358941_346682.html

⁷⁵ “Varios ayuntamientos catalanes retiran la bandera española de sus fachadas” (*Various Catalan municipalities remove the Spanish flag from their facades*), *Sputnik Mundo*, 27 October 2017, retrieved from <https://mundo.sputniknews.com/espana/201710271073541155-cataluna-independencia-expresion-simbolica/>

this movement.⁷⁶ Reflections of these contentious developments between the Catalan and Spanish sides on the support for independence can be seen from the first public opinion survey after the 1-O referendum with a support rate of 40.2% in favour of independence. However, the following months, especially the period from October 2017 to May 2018 and May 2018 to July 2018 showed a significant fluctuation in the rate of supporters of independence due to the cleavage in the society.⁷⁷

Division in the Catalan society created by these political confrontations deepened with other demonstrations of the “silent majority”. Hundreds of thousands filled the streets to show support to the unity of Spain, which was “the largest display of support for a united Spain since the beginning of the crisis – underlining the depth of division in Catalonia”.⁷⁸ Since no demonstrations were called after these dynamic weeks for the secessionist side, this division showed itself with ANC’s efforts to encourage the civil servants not to follow the orders of the Madrid government as a sign of their peaceful resistance. As both pro-unity and pro-independence demonstrations continued, on 30 October, Carles Puigdemont fled to Belgium with several deposed ministers “hours before Spain’s attorney general asked for charges of rebellion, sedition and misuse of public funds to be brought against them”.⁷⁹ By the time the Constitutional Court suspended the unilateral declaration of independence, Puigdemont, in a press conference in Belgium, guaranteed that he would respect the results of the upcoming regional elections which would take place on 21 December but he wanted guarantees

⁷⁶ “Puigdemont no reconoce su cese y llama a ‘oponerse democraticamente’ al 155” (Puigdemont does not recognize his dismissal and calls for a ‘democratic opposition’ to [article] 155), *El Diario*, 28 October 2017, retrieved from https://www.eldiario.es/catalunya/politica/Puigdemont-no-reconoce-cece_0_702030017.html

⁷⁷ Centre d’Estudis d’Opinio – CEO (Opinion Studies Centre), <http://ceo.gencat.cat/ca/barometre/>

⁷⁸ “Hundreds of thousands march for united Spain, poll shows depths of division”, *Reuters*, 29 October 2017, retrieved from <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-spain-politics-catalonia-poll/hundreds-of-thousands-march-for-unified-spain-poll-shows-depths-of-division-idUSKBN1CY072>

⁷⁹ “Catalan leaders facing rebellion charges flee to Belgium”, *The Guardian*, 31 October 2017, retrieved from <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/oct/30/spanish-prosecutor-calls-for-rebellion-charges-against-catalan-leaders>

for a fair judicial process in order for him to turn back to Spain.⁸⁰ President Carles Puigdemont's escape to Belgium and the Spanish government's decision to suspend the autonomy of Catalonia, the support rate for independence decreased almost 8%. The silent majority that started to be active on the streets after 1 October can be seen as a factor which affected this decrease since the chaotic environment and social division experienced in Catalonia was not favoured by most of the Catalans.

After the “exile” of Carles Puigdemont, other members of the cabinet who stayed in Spain were jailed. Imprisonment of the Catalan officials led to a general strike on 8 November, and a massive demonstration of 750,000 participants was organized by ANC and *Òmnium Cultural* with the objective of demanding freedom for the political prisoners on 11 November.⁸¹ Although some of the imprisoned members of the previous Catalan cabinet were released, another demonstration was organized on 7 December by these two civil society organizations with the participation of the exiled Catalan officials. However, this time the protest took place in Brussels in order to internationalize the Catalan problem and send messages to the European Union to change its position on the issue with the banner of “Europe wake up! Democracy for Catalonia”.⁸² On 21 December, with a historical turnout of 79,09%, the regional elections were held in which pro-independence parties won the majority of seats in the parliament (70 out of 135 with 47,5% of the total votes) although the first party was the pro-union *Ciutadans* (Citizens) getting 25,35% of the votes.⁸³ Therefore, in addition to the displays on the streets, the cleavage in the Catalan society also reflected

⁸⁰ “Catalonia crisis: deposed leader Puigdemont says he'll respect elections”, *The Guardian*, 31 October 2017, retrieved from <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/oct/31/catalonia-ex-president-puigdemont-belgium-asylum-independence>

⁸¹ “Catalonia latest: 750,000 protesters descend on Barcelona demanding release of jailed separatist leaders”, *The Independent*, 11 November 2017, retrieved from <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/barcelona-protesters-demand-release-of-jailed-separatist-leaders-catalonia-latest-a8050116.html>

⁸² “Pro-independence demonstration in Brussels attracts 45,000 protestors”, *El País*, 7 December 2017, retrieved from https://elpais.com/elpais/2017/12/07/inenglish/1512661373_204052.html

⁸³ *Eleccions al Parlament de Catalunya 2017* (Parliamentary Elections of Catalonia 2017), retrieved from <http://gencat.cat/economia/resultats-parlament2017/09AU/DAU09999CM.htm>

itself clearly in the ballot box with 47,5% of the voters in favour of independence, while 43,47% against. According to the data of CEO, after the pro-independence groups won the December 2018 elections, the direct rule in Catalonia ended in June 2018. In the aftermath of these elections, under the presidency of Quim Torra, who was a close ally of Carles Puigdemont, support for independence once again started to increase and reached the previous rate of 40.8%.⁸⁴

4.2.2. Reflections of the 1-O Referendum on the International Arena

Catalonia's independence referendum was not only critical for the internal affairs of Spain, but also for the international actors, especially the European Union, since most of the member states consist of different groups that might potentially have similar tendencies. Therefore, the 1-O independence referendum had a major impact and created discomfort especially among other European states. Despite the insistence of Carles Puigdemont from Brussels to intervene, the general tendency of the European Union and European states was their indifference to the referendum seen as an internal affair of Spain. Moreover, most European countries stayed silent against the police violence in Catalonia on 1 October. In general, the Catalan independence referendum led to questions about the unity of the European Union and role of this supranational organization on such matters in the international community. Furthermore, as will be explored below, regarding the recognition of the results of the referendum and Catalonia's declaration of independence, with the exception of some minority nations such as the Scottish and Quebecois, the Catalan independence was not recognized. Globally, almost all states supported the Spanish authorities in their claim to protect the territorial integrity of their country.

4.2.2.1. The European Union

As a supranational and intergovernmental organization which had the primary importance for Catalonia, the European Union did not support the Catalan cause; thus,

⁸⁴ Centre d'Estudis d'Opinió – CEO (Opinion Studies Centre), <http://ceo.gencat.cat/ca/barometre/>

the EU could not meet the expectations of the Catalan officials who had deep pro-EU position. The day after the referendum, European Commission issued a statement. The statement included the illegality of the referendum under the Spanish Constitution, and despite the calls of Carles Puigdemont to the EU for an international mediation, the European Commission expressed that this was an internal matter for Spain. While reminding the fact that “if a referendum were to be organized in line with the Spanish Constitution it would mean that the territory leaving would find itself outside of the European Union”, it also called the sides for dialogue without resorting to the use of force.⁸⁵ However, the position taken by the First Vice President of the Commission made the EU’s stance towards this issue ambiguous since he said that the proportionate use of force was sometimes required to uphold the law which is the duty of governments even though nobody wanted to see violence.⁸⁶ Since the referendum was seen as an internal matter of Spain by the EU, and thus, an intervention was not possible due to the possibility of a chaos in the EU, the President of the European Commission, Jean-Claude Juncker stated that he urged Mariano Rajoy to take the situation under control but his advice were not taken into consideration.⁸⁷ In addition, he expressed his concerns over the fact that if Catalonia became independent, other regions would want to do the same. On 27 October, when the Catalan Parliament unilaterally declared independence, Jean-Claude Juncker stressed that Europe did not need more splits and reiterated his unwillingness to see the EU with 95 states in it if Catalan independence were to be followed by other European regions.⁸⁸ Moreover, showing his support to the Spanish government, the President of the European Council,

⁸⁵ European Commission statement on the events in Catalonia, 2 October 2017, retrieved from http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_STATEMENT-17-3626_en.htm

⁸⁶ “Brussels defends use of ‘proportionate force in Catalonia’”, *Politico*, 4 October 2017, retrieved from <https://www.politico.eu/article/brussels-defends-use-of-proportionate-force-in-catalonia/>

⁸⁷ “EU intervention in Catalonia would cause chaos, Juncker says”, *The Guardian*, 13 October 2017, retrieved from <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/oct/13/eu-intervention-in-catalonia-would-cause-chaos-juncker-says>

⁸⁸ “World reacts as Catalonia calls for independence”, *Al Jazeera*, 28 October 2017, retrieved from <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2017/10/world-reacts-catalonia-calls-independence-171027221353642.html>

Donald Tusk tweeted the following: “For EU nothing changes. Spain remains our only interlocutor.” President of the European Parliament, Antonio Tajani also expressed his views on Catalonia’s unilateral declaration of independence by saying that the declaration was a breach of the rule of law and that no one would recognize the declaration.

4.2.2.2. The European States

In addition to the reaction of the EU as a supranational body, member states of the Union also showed their own reactions to the Catalan independence referendum. As a country which contains minority nations such as the Flemish and the Walloons, Belgium was one of the first states which did not remain silent in front of the separatist threat that Spain was faced with. Belgium’s Prime Minister Charles Michel condemned the police violence on the referendum day and called the parties to engage in a political dialogue. By giving his country as an example, Michel drew attention to the decline of separatist tendencies in Belgium as the end result of showing respect for different national identities and engaging in official negotiations.⁸⁹ Condemning the police violence, Belgium maintained its position of advising dialogue on the issue of independence as well.

Contrary to Belgium’s negative attitude towards the police violence, French President Emmanuel Macron did not even mention the attitude of the Spanish police towards the voters; rather he expressed his support to the constitutional order and unity of Spain.⁹⁰ Similarly, Germany only emphasized the need to respect the rule of law, the Spanish

⁸⁹ “‘Just talk’: Belgium offers Spain relationship advice”, *Reuters*, 2 October 2017, retrieved from <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-spain-politics-catalonia-belgium/just-talk-belgium-offers-spain-relationship-advice-idUSKCN1C72EI>

⁹⁰ “France’s Macron backs Spain’s constitutional unity in call to PM Rajoy”, *Reuters*, 2 October 2017, retrieved from <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-spain-politics-catalonia-france/frances-macron-backs-spains-constitutional-unity-in-call-to-pm-rajoy-idUSKCN1C71M7>

Constitution and order.⁹¹ With respect to the Catalan Parliament's declaration of independence, France and Germany re-expressed their full support to Spain and its sovereignty and territorial integrity. In the case of the United Kingdom, although the Labour Party, the Scottish National Party (the SNP) and the Liberal Democrats urged Prime Minister Theresa May to intervene and speak out about the police brutality, she and other government officials also preferred to stay silent in condemning the violence. The British Foreign Secretary Boris Johnson only tweeted that the Spanish Constitution should be respected and the referendum is an internal matter of Spain.⁹² Contrary to the moderate positions encouraged by the Labour Party and Scotland, Britain took sides with Spain by focusing on the illegality of the referendum in Catalonia. The British government declared that it did not and would not recognize the unilateral declaration of independence of the Catalan Parliament and called for respect to the Spanish Constitution and the rule of law.⁹³

As for other EU states, Finland also declared its full support to the Spanish government, although a member of the ruling Centre Party and the Finnish Parliament, Mikko Kärnä tweeted that he planned to introduce a bill to the parliament on the recognition of the Catalan independence.⁹⁴ While Italy, Portugal, Latvia, and Serbia openly stated that they would not recognize the unilateral declaration of independence of Catalonia and that they were in total solidarity with defense of Spain's unity against this threat of the rule of law in Spain, countries like Sweden, Greece, and Lithuania

⁹¹ "Germany: Rule of law must hold in Spain", *Reuters*, 4 October 2017, retrieved from <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-spain-politics-catalonia-germany/germany-rule-of-law-must-hold-in-spain-idUSKCN1C918V>

⁹² "Catalan referendum: Jeremy Corbyn urges Theresa May to intervene 'to find political solution to the crisis'", *The Independent*, 1 October 2017, retrieved from <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/catalonia-independence-referendum-jeremy-corbyn-theresa-may-violence-intervention-mariano-rajoy-a7976976.html>

⁹³ "UK 'won't recognize' Catalan independence", *BBC*, 27 October 2017, retrieved from <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-politics-41783238>

⁹⁴ "Foreign Minister rejects rumour of Finnish recognition for Catalan independence: "Spanish government has our full support", *Yle*, 28 October 2017, retrieved from https://yle.fi/uutiset/osasto/news/foreign_minister_rejects_rumour_of_finnish_recognition_for_catalan_independence_spanish_government_has_our_full_support/9906032

only mentioned the need for dialogue as well as their full support to the constitutional order of Spain.⁹⁵ In addition, not commenting on the declaration of independence, Croatia, Denmark, Hungary, and Malta stated that they saw the referendum as Spain's internal affair which needed to be solved with dialogue and they condemned the police violence. Poland, Romania, and Estonia solely showed support for the territorial integrity of Spain and stressed the Catalonia's violation of the Spanish constitutional order without mentioning the need for dialogue or the police violence. As the only exception in the EU, Slovenia showed sympathy to the pro-independence Catalans because of the similarities of the Slovenian nation under the domination of Serbs in Yugoslavia. The President of Slovenia declared that "Many Slovenian hearts beat for the Catalan people".⁹⁶

4.2.2.3. Other Countries

When we look at the countries outside Europe, we again see that Catalonia was not supported and recognized in its claim of independence. To begin with, the United States expressed its full support to Spain and its sovereignty and territorial integrity. Although before 1 October, the State Department Spokeswoman, Heather Nauert said that the United States had taken "no position on the referendum" and implied that this was an internal affair of Spain, President Donald Trump stated his opposition to the secession of Catalonia from Spain as a "foolish" action.⁹⁷ As a multinational country which contains Quebecois nation in it, Canada also took sides with Spain. Canada's Prime Minister Justin Trudeau also emphasized that his country recognized "one united Spain" and called for peaceful internal discussions which were to be in line with

⁹⁵ "Reacciones internacionales tras la declaración de independencia de Cataluña" (International reactions after the declaration of independence of Catalonia), *El País*, 30 October 2017, retrieved from https://elpais.com/politica/2017/10/27/actualidad/1509118059_068644.html

⁹⁶ "EU's united front on Catalonia disguises a weak link or two", *Financial Times*, 29 October 2017, retrieved from <https://www.ft.com/content/e43e865c-bb14-11e7-9bfb-4a9c83ffa852>

⁹⁷ "Trump says U.S. opposes independence bid in Spain's Catalonia region", *Washington Post*, 26 September 2017, retrieved from https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/post-politics/wp/2017/09/26/trump-says-u-s-opposes-independence-bid-in-spains-catalonia-region/?utm_term=.e7b7925db05c

the rule of law, Spanish Constitution and the international law.⁹⁸ As another country dealing with separatist movements in some of its regions such as Tibet and Xinxiang, China also took sides with the Spanish government and stated that it understood and supported the efforts to protect national unity and territorial integrity of Spain.⁹⁹ Likewise, the Catalan independence referendum carried a significance for Russia although it said that the issue was an internal affair of Spain, which was an opinion shared by Japan and Israel as well. Nevertheless, even though Catalonia's independence was not supported officially by Russia, President Vladimir Putin emphasized the "double standards" within the EU since Kosovo's independence was recognized by the majority of the member states (Spain was not among them), whereas supporters of independence were not seen as "worthy fighters".¹⁰⁰ Similarly, in addition to its denial to accept the Catalan independence referendum, Serbia accused the EU for having double standards over Catalonia and Kosovo.¹⁰¹ Turkey issued a press release which supported the efforts of Spain and emphasized the fundamentality of the territorial integrity and the Spanish Constitution.¹⁰²

As an ex-colony of the Spanish Empire for three centuries, Mexico's president Enrique Pena Nieto declared that Mexico would not recognize the unilateral declaration of

⁹⁸ "Amid Catalonia crisis, Trudeau says Canada supports 'united Spain'", *Huffington Post Canada*, 27 October 2017, retrieved from https://www.huffingtonpost.ca/2017/10/27/amid-catalonia-crisis-trudeau-says-canada-recognizes-united-spain_a_23258697/

⁹⁹ "China offers support to Spanish government amid Catalonia crisis", *Reuters*, 12 October 2017, retrieved from <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-spain-politics-catalonia-china/china-offers-support-to-spanish-government-amid-catalonia-crisis-idUSKBN1CH1DR>

¹⁰⁰ "Russia sees Catalonia as evidence of EU's 'double standards'", *Deutsch Welle*, 6 November 2017, retrieved from <https://www.dw.com/en/russia-sees-catalonia-as-evidence-of-eus-double-standards/a-41245885>

¹⁰¹ "Serbia accuses world of double standards over Catalonia and Kosovo", *Reuters*, 3 October 2017, retrieved from <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-spain-politics-catalonia-serbia/serbia-accuses-world-of-double-standards-over-catalonia-and-kosovo-idUSKCN1C818G>

¹⁰² Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Turkey. No: 333, 27 October 2017, Press Release regarding the developments in the region of Catalonia in Spain.

independence of Catalonia and that it would stand beside Mariano Rajoy.¹⁰³ Other Latin American countries such as Colombia, Argentina, and the Dominican Republic supported the territorial integrity and constitutional order of Spain. However, among them, Venezuela is the only country which supported the Catalan independence. Especially the President Nicolas Maduro, who was severely criticized by Spain due to the accusations of undermining democracy in Venezuela and shortages of food and medicine, reacted harshly to Mariano Rajoy due to the police violence in Catalonia. He expressed his support to Catalonia by saying “Resist, Catalonia! Latin America admires you.”¹⁰⁴

4.2.2.4. International Organizations

In addition to the European Union, other international organizations also commented on the Catalan independence referendum. Through his spokesperson, the General Secretary of the United Nations, António Guterres called for a legal solution within the Spanish constitutional framework.¹⁰⁵ In addition, The United Nations Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner (OHCHR) had its own comments on the referendum. Before the referendum day, on 28 September 2017, the UN experts issued a statement on the importance of the fundamental rights such as the freedom of expression, assembly and association, and public participation. They also declared that “regardless of the lawfulness of the referendum, the Spanish authorities have a responsibility to respect those rights that are essential to democratic societies” and that

¹⁰³ “Mexico will not recognize Catalonia’s independence: President”, *Reuters*, 28 October 2017, retrieved from <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-spain-politics-catalonia-mexico/mexico-will-not-recognize-catalonias-independence-president-idUSKBN1CW32R>

¹⁰⁴ “Venezuela blasts Spain’s Rajoy over ‘repression’ in Catalonia”, *Reuters*, 1 October 2017, retrieved from <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-spain-politics-catalonia-venezuela/venezuela-blasts-spains-rajoy-over-repression-in-catalonia-idUSKCN1C61S9>

¹⁰⁵ “Reacciones internacionales tras la declaración de independencia de Cataluña” (International reactions after the declaration of independence of Catalonia), *El País*, 30 October 2017, retrieved from https://elpais.com/politica/2017/10/27/actualidad/1509118059_068644.html

the violence should be avoided.¹⁰⁶ Human rights organizations such as Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International also put emphasis on the excessive use of force by the national police of Spain towards the voters who were willing to participate to the Catalan independence referendum. Human Rights Watch documented the injuries resulting from the police violence and proposed Spain to “consider asking for assistance from an independent international expert body”.¹⁰⁷ Amnesty International also demanded the Spanish authorities to refrain from excessive use of force and stressed the essentiality of respecting both to “the Spanish law and international human rights”.¹⁰⁸ NATO was another organization that commented on the declaration of independence in Catalonia by stating that Spain was “a committed ally” and the issue was a domestic affair which needed to be solved in line with the Spanish constitutional order.¹⁰⁹ Other than above-mentioned international organizations, there were no other organization that commented on the Catalan independence referendum, including the significant ones such as the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) and the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD).

4.2.2.5. Minority Nations

Contrary to most of the states’ indifference towards the police brutality in Catalonia and their rejection of Catalonia’s declaration of independence, minority nations such as the Scottish and the Quebecois showed their support even though the governments of the states in which they live took sides with the Spanish State. Scotland, as the main

¹⁰⁶ “Spain must respect fundamental rights in response to Catalan referendum, UN rights experts”, *United Nations Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner*, 28 September 2017, retrieved from <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=22176>

¹⁰⁷ “Spain: Police used excessive force in Catalonia”, *Human Rights Watch*, 12 October 2017, retrieved from <https://www.hrw.org/news/2017/10/12/spain-police-used-excessive-force-catalonia>

¹⁰⁸ “Catalan referendum: Police must not use excessive or disproportionate force”, *Amnesty International*, 2 October 2017, <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2017/10/catalan-referendum-police-must-not-use-excessive-or-disproportionate-force/>

¹⁰⁹ “NATO says Catalonia issue domestic matter to be resolved by Spain”, *Reuters*, 27 October 2017, retrieved from <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-spain-politics-nato/nato-says-catalonia-issue-domestic-matter-to-be-resolved-by-spain-idUSKBN1CW29Y>

European example to Catalonia with its success in making an agreement with the British government to hold a self-determination referendum in 2014, was a loyal supporter to the Catalonia's self-determination referendum from the beginning by backing the demands of the Catalans to decide their future. Therefore, the reaction of Scotland to the police violence on the referendum day was the condemnation of Spain. Scottish Prime Minister Nicola Sturgeon demanded Spain to "let people vote peacefully".¹¹⁰ In Scotland, not only did the party in power condemn the violence by the Spanish police in Catalonia, but also other parties in the parliament expressed their concern and urged dialogue to solve the problem. After the Catalan declaration of independence, although Scotland's Nicola Sturgeon refrained from explicitly supporting the declaration, the Scottish government once again expressed its respect and understanding towards the position of the Catalan government, that is, the Scottish government supported the right of the Catalan people to determine their own future. However, it also stated that Spain has the right to oppose independence. Nevertheless, 21 of 63 lawmakers from the SNP (one of whom was from the Scottish Green Party) in the Scottish parliament passed a motion calling the international community to recognize the vote of the Catalan Parliament.¹¹¹

Similar to the Scottish case, Quebec's Prime Minister Philippe Couillard condemned the police violence and suggested dialogue between the sides. In addition, most of the Quebecois political parties condemned the Spanish police violence towards the Catalan voters. For example, the leader of the *Parti Québécois*, Jean-François Lisée saluted "the Catalan people who stand before the Spanish State's unworthy and shameful violence".¹¹² In fact, with his initiative, a motion condemning the actions of

¹¹⁰ "Nicola Sturgeon 'concern' over images from Catalonia", *BBC*, 1 October 2017, retrieved from <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-scotland-scotland-politics-41453955>

¹¹¹ "Scottish lawmakers call for international recognition for Catalan independence", *Reuters*, 2 November 2017, retrieved from <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-britain-scotland-catalonia/scottish-lawmakers-call-for-international-recognition-for-catalan-independence-idUSKBN1D20VN>

¹¹² "Quebec reacts to violence during Catalan independence vote", *CBC*, 1 October 2017, retrieved from <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/montreal/quebec-catalan-violence-1.4315719>

the Spanish government and calling the sides to engage in dialogue passed unanimously in the Quebecois legislature.¹¹³ The Prime Minister of Quebec, however, avoided to take a clear position on the declaration of independence and made calls for dialogue, even though the leader of the *Parti Québécois* welcomed and recognized it and asked the regional government to call “the Spanish people to respect democracy and allow the Catalan people to vote”.¹¹⁴

To summarize the whole picture, in line with the data of the CEO, it can be seen that the rise of the support for Catalonia’s independence in the Catalan society had increased since 2006. Between the years 2006 and 2018, the Catalan national movement was shaped by the incorporation of the political wing of the movement and civil society organizations. With the initiatives taken by both political and civic wings, the support for the movement increased or decreased. Reaching its peak with 48.5% towards the end of 2013, it seems to continue with a fluctuating manner meaning that there is a volatility of the support rate for independence. This fluctuation is likely to stem from the dynamism of the Catalan-Spanish relations and politics backed by the discourses of political elites and civil society. As a result of this dynamism and the contentious process that paved the way for the independence referendum on 1 October 2017, the peak point in the history of the Catalan national movement, the referendum resulted in a decline and relative defeat both for the Catalan people and the movement itself. As a result of the police brutality led by the Spanish authorities against the supporters of the vote and strict measures to prevent the referendum, the movement started to lose its momentum especially after the suspension of the Catalan autonomy with the Spanish authorities taking control of the Catalan competences. The movement, rather, started to focus on the freedom of the political prisoners who were

¹¹³ “Quebec passes unanimous motion condemning Spain’s ‘authoritarianism’ over Catalonia”, *Global News*, 4 October 2017, retrieved from <https://globalnews.ca/news/3785619/quebec-passes-unanimous-motion-condemning-spains-authoritarianism-over-catalonia/>

¹¹⁴ “Catalan independence vote sparks contrasting opinions from Quebec and Canadian politicians” , *CBC*, 27 October 2017, retrieved from <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/montreal/catalonia-independence-canadian-politicians-1.4376007>

jailed for the charges of rebellion and sedition and continued its struggle basing its argument on injustices of the Spanish judiciary. Moreover, the disappointment caused by the absence of the EU's support can also be said to curb the development of the Catalan national movement as it can be seen from the quantitative data of the CEO on the support for independence.¹¹⁵

¹¹⁵ *Centre d'Estudis d'Opinió* – CEO (Opinion Studies Centre), <http://ceo.gencat.cat/ca/barometre/>

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

As a multinational state which could not fully achieve the successful and satisfying accommodation of its national minorities compared to the other multinational states, Spain has been dealing with the threats coming from these minorities towards its territorial integrity for centuries. The most recent challenge coming from the Catalan national movement; that is, the Catalan independence referendum in 2017, once again showed the problems that the country faces regarding the national minorities in Spain. Due to the Spanish State's lack of ability to meet the evolving needs of the Catalan nation, the country had to cope with such attempts of obtaining more autonomy or even attempts of secession. This thesis tried to understand the transformation in the objectives of the Catalan national movement with a historical perspective. Considering the historical background of the relationship between the Spanish State and the Catalan nation, the reasons of the changing motivations of the Catalan national movement were explored. Compared to the literature which mostly dealt with this movement in terms of cultural and economic struggles with the Spanish State and of the institutional structure of Spain as a quasi-federal state, this study combined these three dimensions by focusing on the instrumentalization of them by the Catalan political elites in their speeches and political actions. Additionally, the contributions of the civil society organizations to the speeches and actions of the Catalan political elites were analysed in order to account for the change in the direction of the Catalan national movement. Therefore, rather than focusing and basing the motivations of the movement on only one dimension, this thesis aimed to present a broader and more complete understanding of the dynamics of the Catalan national movement and as such to fill a gap in the literature by mostly emphasizing the interplay between the Catalan political elites and the civil society under various circumstances.

To have a broader understanding of the Catalan national movement and its transition, it is essential to benefit from the relevant theories indicated in the Introduction of this thesis. To begin with, Miroslav Hroch asserted that nations are described by the combination of several types of relationships such as linguistic, economic, and political rather than only one of these (as also mentioned above); likewise, the Catalan nation can be described as such. As explored in the second chapter of this thesis, the conflicting relationship between the Spanish State and the Catalan national movement has contained these aspects and has always been reciprocal and in opposition with each other, which eventually intensified and reinforced the positions of each side since the 16th century. The circumstances that paved the way for the Catalan nationality to become a full nation, as for Hroch's theory, were present in different times. For example, during the 17th century, the Catalan nation was under the domination of foreign Castilian rulers and was able to form an ethnic and historical unit without political independence. Moreover, during the Franco period, the literary language of the Catalan nation was oppressed and not allowed to be used by the dominant political group; i.e. the Spanish State. Under such conditions, the Catalan national movement emerged with the help of the members of the Catalan nation to spread awareness and to promote the sense of Catalan national identity.

As in the three-stage model of Hroch, the Catalan national movement also started with Phase A; the promotion of the Catalan language and culture by a group of intellectuals through a cultural movement called *Renaixença*. After that period, the Catalan movement passed to Phase B in which the call for compatriots to join the project of a fully-fledged nation by forming political organizations and official documents that helped to determine the agenda of the project. In the meantime, it is crucial to keep in mind that there was an action-reaction paradigm between the Spanish State and these Catalan initiatives. The last period of the three-stage model, Phase C that includes the patriotic mass movement, full social structure of the nation and the political differentiation can be said to be still in effect, since the Catalan national movement still maintains its aspirations for “more” political differentiation. After Catalonia

obtained a significant degree of autonomy and self-government with the acceptance of the 1978 Constitution, the movement started consolidating its nationhood and extended its demands for political differentiation as in Phase C. Although the Catalan nation has full social structure and a considerable amount of political differentiation in the Spanish administrative system of the “State of Autonomies” (which granted Catalonia a certain level of autonomy), the aspirations for more political differentiation, such as the secession, leads to the maintenance of Phase C up until today. Unless the Catalan nation achieves the goal of independence, Phase C would not be completed, and the Catalan nation would not be a fully-fledged nation according to Hroch’s three-stage model.

However, naturally, it is not always possible to see the national movements to follow these three phases in a linear manner and separately from each other. To be clearer, although the Catalan national movement started its journey with the promotion of the Catalan language and culture, it had not completed Phase A when it passed to Phase B. For example, during the Franco period, the movement concentrated mostly on the cultural and linguistic demands as in Hroch’s Phase A since the circumstances and the relations between the majority and minority groups affected the progress of the national movements. In fact, Phase A is an unending process since the language is the most important value of the nationalities, as was the case for the Catalan nation. Therefore, by means of different linguistic programmes aiming to emphasize the importance of the Catalan language, to realize its standardization, to spread the literacy and schooling in Catalan, and the entrance of the Catalan into the political sphere, the Catalan nation still maintains Phase A and achieves the consolidation of its national identity, which further leads to the spread of the national awareness to wider segments of the Catalan population. In addition, Phases A and B went hand in hand for the Catalan national movement due to the emergence of political aspirations of intellectuals who promoted cultural and historical aspects of Catalan identity. In the late 19th century, the intellectuals based these aspirations on the cultural characteristics of the Catalan nation as well as the economic interests of the bourgeoisie. After the

movement had a national leadership, the national leaders also promoted their political aspirations through the usage of the culture and history.

After analysing the historical background of the Catalan national movement in the light of Hroch's theory, it is important to delve into the details of the movement by using Anthony Smith's ethno-symbolism. This is basically due to the main problem that this study explored: how did the Catalan political elites enter into an interplay with the civil society and contributed to the change in the direction of the Catalan national movement, which shifted its position from pro-autonomy to pro-independence? The third chapter of this thesis examined the speeches of the two key political actors of the transformation of the Catalan national movement (Artur Mas and Carles Puigdemont) by employing the basic themes of national movements that Smith put forward: identity, unity, dignity, continuity, destiny, autonomy, authenticity, and homeland. When the speeches of these two presidents were analysed in detail, it can be seen that Mas and Puigdemont employed three dimensions of the Catalan movement; i.e. cultural/linguistic, economic, political/institutional, by including them into the above-mentioned concepts of Anthony Smith in order to appeal to the citizens of Catalonia and to justify their discourses and the ambitions of the Catalan national movement.

To begin, Artur Mas used different arguments that helped to explain the Catalan national movement and its consolidation. Firstly, the concept of identity was seen to be mainly embedded in cultural/linguistic arguments in his speeches. Since the Catalan language and culture are the fundamental elements of the Catalan identity, they were defended against the threats coming from the Spanish State; thus, respect to these fundaments was demanded. Similarly, although Carles Puigdemont mentioned the concept of identity less than Artur Mas, he also emphasized the Catalan culture and language among his priorities and integrated them in the cultural/linguistic arguments. He mostly highlighted the Catalan identity within the context of the contention between Catalonia and the Spanish State, blamed the State for the weakening of the Catalan identity and put the emphasis on the defending this identity. Secondly, the concept of unity was emphasized by Artur Mas in relation to all the cultural/linguistic,

economic and political/institutional arguments. Sharing of a common culture, presence of a consensus on economic issues, emphasizing the contribution of every Catalan to Catalonia's future and the will of providing the unity for the legitimacy of government actions can be given as examples to these arguments that were used by Mas. On the other hand, the unity was mostly integrated into the political/institutional arguments in Carles Puigdemont's speeches, since the mandate of the citizens was dominantly emphasized in the context of political process which mostly took place during his presidency. Similar to Mas, the unity was also underlined in criticizing the deteriorating economic consequences; thus, it was embedded in the economic arguments of the Catalan national movement. Finally, the sense of dignity was related to different types of arguments, especially cultural/linguistic and economic ones in the speeches of Artur Mas. For example, the possession of a long-lasting identity including the culture, language and European values, and the economic potential of Catalonia were used as the conditions to be proud of. On the other hand, in the speeches of Puigdemont, the dignity and pride were seen to be integrated into the political/institutional arguments. The continuation of the political process and steps toward the realization of it were reflected as reasons to feel dignified and proud. To create a sense of dignity and pride, economic arguments were used, as well. Since these arguments were used by the elites in order to support the idea of independence to appeal to the masses, economic comparisons were made to create a sense of self-sufficiency among the Catalans and led them to support independence.

Continuity and destiny were also seen to be used to support the arguments of Artur Mas and Carles Puigdemont in their speeches. Both concepts were generally used to justify the political/institutional arguments. It is crucial to mention that these concepts were mostly produced as a result of the conflicting relations between Catalonia and Spain. By emphasizing the intergenerational struggle and defence of Catalonia, continuation of the political existence of Catalonia is highlighted by these two presidents. In the speeches of Mas, supported by historical narratives, sense of continuity was tried to be transferred to the audience so that they can have the sense

of a common past and a common future that act as unifying and mobilizing factors. Compared to Artur Mas, the continuity was not emphasized that much in the speeches of Carles Puigdemont, although the concept of destiny dominated his speeches mostly due to the fact that the political process accelerated during his presidential term, which began in early 2016. The destiny was discussed in terms of the aims and possible consequences of the political process. The bottom-up character of the process with which citizens would eventually have certain advantages was used as a legitimizing factor for the Catalan national movement. Likewise, Artur Mas also inserted the concept of destiny in the political process of Catalonia. Basing the legitimacy on the will of the Catalan people, their right to decide in the future of Catalonia was promoted after 2012. Moreover, this projection of political destiny was also reflected to the international relations promoting the capacity of Catalonia for having a place among the other nations. International context was also emphasized in Carles Puigdemont's speeches on the destiny of Catalonia. Previous referendums such as the one in Scotland were used as justifications for the Catalan demand for the independence referendum. Moreover, the insufficiency of the Spanish State in Catalonia's international recognition and their demand for a chance of acting on their own in the international arena were also listed by Puigdemont among the legitimizing factors of the movement.

Concept of autonomy was used by Artur Mas mostly to justify the cause of the Catalan national movement, whereas Carles Puigdemont used this concept in blaming the Spanish State for the creation of the current situation. Therefore, in the speeches of these two leaders, autonomy was put forward in relation to all of the cultural/linguistic, economic and political/institutional arguments of the movement. It can be said that autonomy included some of the previously explained concepts of identity, continuity, and destiny. As the recentralization efforts of the State ranged from identity to economy, the emphasis on this concept could be noticed more easily. Firstly, regarding the cultural/linguistic argument, according to Artur Mas, under the competences of self-government, Catalonia had the ability to preserve its identity, culture and language. For example, the Spanish State's will to *españolizar* (to make Spanish) the

Catalans was strictly opposed, and defence of the culture and language was emphasized in the discourses of Mas. On the other hand, although the economic and political/institutional arguments dominated Puigdemont's speeches, demand of cultural and linguistic recognition of the Catalan nation was also stressed to show the place of cultural/linguistic arguments in the Catalan national movement. Secondly, Artur Mas emphasized Catalonia's self-sufficiency and economic potential to live better on its own. However, due to the Spanish State's unwillingness for dialogue and negotiation on a new fiscal model, Catalonia's demand for the fiscal sovereignty seemed unreachable. Likewise, economic arguments dominated the speeches of Carles Puigdemont on the basis of similar arguments with Artur Mas. Thus, the Catalan economy was used as a significant base for the justification of the Catalan national movement. Lastly, from the perspective of the political/institutional dimension, the Spanish State's lack of tolerance and efforts to limit the activity of Catalonia was used in line with the previously explained concepts, especially continuity and destiny. In addition to the involvement in the fiscal issues, the Spanish State's interventions on practices of the Catalans' right to decide were seen as the intentions to detain the self-government of Catalonia. All these were used by Artur Mas as means of justification and mobilization of the support base. Different from Artur Mas, the presidency of Puigdemont coincided with a clear pro-independence objective of the Catalan national movement, so the demand for something more than autonomy dominated Puigdemont's speeches. In addition, the will to stand against the centralization tendencies of the State and wrong projection of Catalonia in the international arena were emphasized within the framework of the political/institutional arguments of the Catalan national movement, supporting the creation of an independent state.

The concept of authenticity was used by Artur Mas in relation to the cultural and institutional arguments, especially from a historical point of view. The ancient past of the Catalan institutions and political system and their pioneer position among its counterparts were reflected as one of the bases of the authenticity of the nation. In addition, the possession of unique festivals such as Saint George's Day was also

emphasized by Artur Mas. European values and characteristics that are traditionally inherent in the nature of the Catalan nation were also used by Mas to present Catalonia in a positive manner and to differentiate it from other nations. Likewise, Carles Puigdemont also referred to the common history and culture in order to emphasize the authenticity of the Catalan nation though in an implicit way. Positive presentation of Catalonia was also present in Puigdemont's speeches so that the Catalan nation can be differentiated from other examples. Although the emphasis on the homeland was not present in a sacred sense in the speeches of the two presidents, references to Catalonia were so frequent that it can be clearly seen that the positive characteristics attributed to the land, the will of the Catalan people to freely live on this particular homeland, and the differentiation of Catalonia from Spain as a separate homeland were emphasized to show the loyalty of the Catalans to the land.

As in Anthony Smith's theory of ethno-symbolism, cultural elements and symbols carry an importance for the Catalan national movement. Language being the most significant cultural element, the Catalan nation have a wide range of symbolic repertoire such as traditions, shared memories, and symbols. This repertoire has helped the Catalan nation to differentiate itself mainly from the Spanish nation and to consolidate the bonds of the national community by the creation of its own public culture which includes symbols, traditions, ceremonies, myths etc. With the use and sometimes "abuse" of these elements by various elites that shape the relations between the Catalan and Spanish sides of the conflict, reciprocal use of language and culture inevitably creates an environment of dissensus within such multinational contexts and reinforces clashing national movements.

In analysing the Catalan national movement, the fourth chapter explored the interaction between these elites and the civil society in the context of 1 October 2017 Catalan independence referendum. The result is that the Catalan national movement managed to get the support of the masses thanks to the strength of the citizens' sense of national identity, which has been encouraged and supported by the actions of the elites. This Catalan national identity was also perpetuated by the continuity between

the past and the present. The continuity of the cultural elements and collective symbols such as language, flag, national holiday, traditions, myths, and repeated actions helped the strengthening of the Catalan national identity and the symbolic cultivation. Therefore, the Catalan nation drew a symbolic boundary vis-à-vis outsiders, even though a significant number of Catalans also see themselves both Spanish and Catalan. Still, it can be easily argued that since the Catalan elite projects backed by the pre-existing and distinct public culture have found response from the Catalan society, the Catalan national movement gained a momentum that resulted in its most radical position taken towards Spain.

In addition to the perpetuation of the interplay between the Catalan elites and the civil society by the instrumentalization of different arguments, that is, cultural/linguistic, economic, and political/institution in the speeches of these elites, the use of existing symbols such as the Catalan flag, and new symbols like the yellow ribbon in the public sphere and especially during the public speeches and demonstrations, contributed to the consolidation of the sense of national identity of the Catalans and their emotional and psychological bond with their nation. The yellow ribbon emerged as a symbol of the pro-independence tendency right after the Spanish authorities detained multiple Catalan politicians and civil society leaders who defended the independence of Catalonia. It somehow became the symbol of the Catalan national movement and separatism, since most of the Catalans saw these detentions as a threat and insult to their existence just because the detained politicians and leaders. Yellow ribbons were placed in many public places including the buildings of the regional government causing a deep division and controversy in the already-divided Catalan society.

Moreover, looking at the newly emerged and adopted symbols, it can be argued that the Catalan national movement concentrated on the political prisoners and the injustices of the Spanish authorities. After the imprisonment of the Catalan leaders, the protests and demonstrations that were organized by the civil society came together around the demand for the liberty of the political prisoners. In fact, a permanent and sustainable series of protests were announced to be held in Barcelona and Madrid in

order to protest against the trial of “*El Procés*” under the slogan of “*Autodeterminación no es un delito*” (Self-determination is not a crime) and two ideas: “*Ni las urnas ni las movilizaciones se pueden condenar*” (Neither the ballot boxes nor the demonstrations can be sentenced) and “*Ni los referéndums ni la autodeterminación se pueden juzgar*” (Neither the referendums nor the self-determination can be judged).¹¹⁶ The remembrance of the past and the continuity with the present also showed itself during these demonstrations by reminding the repression of Philip V via the following: “From Felipe V to Felipe VI, the repression continues.”

Meanwhile the trial of the political prisoners continued and the imprisoned Catalan politicians insisted that their aim was to give the Catalans a chance to express themselves via a referendum, not rebellion. However, the leaders of the civil society organizations (ANC and *Òmnium Cultural*) took a more defiant stance by expressing that they had no regrets and they drew attention to the political nature of this problem by pointing out that it was not judicial.¹¹⁷ Although Anthony Smith did not specifically mention the civil society organizations and their leaders, for the Catalan case these actors act as a buffer zone between the elites and the masses, and this buffer zone has an utmost importance for the direction of the national movement since they have the ability and power to shape the decision-making process of the Catalan elites and to affect the mobilization of the Catalan society.

In analysing the mobilization of the Catalan civil society and the rate of the support for independence, it is possible to come up with several arguments in terms of the mostly emphasized “will to dialogue” by taking the attitudes of the Catalan and Spanish sides into consideration. To be more precise, we can infer that the dialogue and the willingness to make negotiations carry utmost importance for the Catalan

¹¹⁶ “*El soberanismo convoca para el 16 de marzo una movilización en Madrid contra el juicio del ‘procés’*” (The separatism call for a demonstration on 16 March in Madrid against the trial of the “procés”), *El País*, 7 February 2019, retrieved from https://elpais.com/ccaa/2019/02/07/catalunya/1549535232_758966.html

¹¹⁷ “Catalan separatists call for ‘political solution’ to crisis on last day of trial”, *El País*, 13 June 2019, retrieved from https://elpais.com/elpais/2019/06/13/inenglish/1560408638_344315.html

society in determining their preferences to support independence. When the Catalan and Spanish authorities are in a strict opposition with each other and neither of them shows willingness to make dialogue, this creates an opposite effect on the Catalan society and reduces the support for independence rather than consolidating the antagonism toward the Spanish State. However, if the Spanish State shows reluctance towards the dialogue when the Catalan authorities are insistent on making negotiations, this creates an increase in the support for independence among the Catalan society, since they see independence as a solution to get rid of this political problem between Catalonia and Spain. As another inference, when the Catalan authorities abandon their moderate position for a dialogue with the Spanish State and take one-sided, harsh decisions such as the unilateral declaration of independence, the support for independence decreases regardless of the closeness of the State toward dialogue. Since the Catalan society sees the will to dialogue as the basis of legitimacy of the Catalan national movement and as an inherent characteristic of the Catalan nation, any action distancing itself from supporting the dialogue creates a reaction on their preferences in favour of independence. Therefore, to solve the political problem created as a result of the contentious relationship between Catalonia and Spain, both sides of the problem (especially the Spanish State) should be open to a dialogue willingly and without prejudices.

Throughout its history, depending on the decisive historical circumstances, the struggle of the Catalan national movement in the relation to the Spanish authorities has been shaped by various dimensions that were effective in different periods of time. In the hands of key political and civil society elites, these diverse dimensions are used when suitable and incorporated when necessary. Evidence of this changing nature of the movement can be seen in the change of the Catalan society's preferences on the issue of independence. The Catalan society is also affected by these various factors, contexts, and circumstances in which the Catalan national movement changed its direction; however, this influence is not unilateral, rather the discourse and ability of political and civil society elites directing the movement towards certain ends also

depend on the public opinion. In connection with the well-being and satisfaction of citizens as well as their feeling of belonging to their region or country, preferences for more autonomist or secessionist position develop. The intensity of these opposing processes of centralization and decentralization affect the objectives and demands of the Catalan national movement. Therefore, this movement is seen to have transformed with respect to its interaction with the Spanish State. Not only did the repressive measures taken by the Spanish State lead to the intensification of the Catalan national movement, but also granting Catalonia a certain level of autonomy led the Catalan national movement to expand the scope of its objectives.

As Juan Linz stated almost five decades ago, “Spain today is a state for all Spaniards, a nation-state for a large part of the population, and only a state but not a nation for important minorities” (Linz, 1973, p.99). This quotation still very well explains the problems that the Spanish State faces, because besides the population that internalized Spanish nationalism, the historical nationalities such as Catalonia do not recognize Spain as a nation, but only as a state. In this study, to understand this complicated problem between Catalonia and Spain and to see how the Catalan political elites used different arguments to mobilize the Catalan society especially on the way of 1-O referendum, official speeches of two Catalan presidents were analysed in line with Anthony Smith’s theory. In addition, with the help of Miroslav Hroch’s theory, the historical background of the relationship between Catalonia and Spain, the direction of the Catalan national movement and the role of elites in its development were examined in order to show how the accumulation of different events affected the direction of the movement. Mainly considering Catalonia’s relationship with the Spanish State, this study also analysed the complexity of nationalism and how national movements change over time due to the competing policies of each side of the conflict.

For further research, a qualitative study based on in-depth interviews aiming to explore the ideas of the Catalans on the dialogue between Catalans and Spaniards, the issue of independence and democracy can be conducted. Such a study would also help to make more accurate inferences on the perspectives of the Catalan society on independence

under different circumstances. In addition, it would be more accurate to consider and fully integrate the turnout rates of the referendums and consultations in Catalonia and the regional inconsistencies regarding the intensity of the support for independence. That is, the turnout rates of the referendums in Catalonia might be regarded as low since they did not exceed 50% most of the time and the results showed significant differences between the rural and urban areas of Catalonia. Therefore, to evaluate the Catalan national movement in terms of its support base would make it possible to consider the motivations which created the difference in the support for independence between the rural and urban areas of Catalonia.

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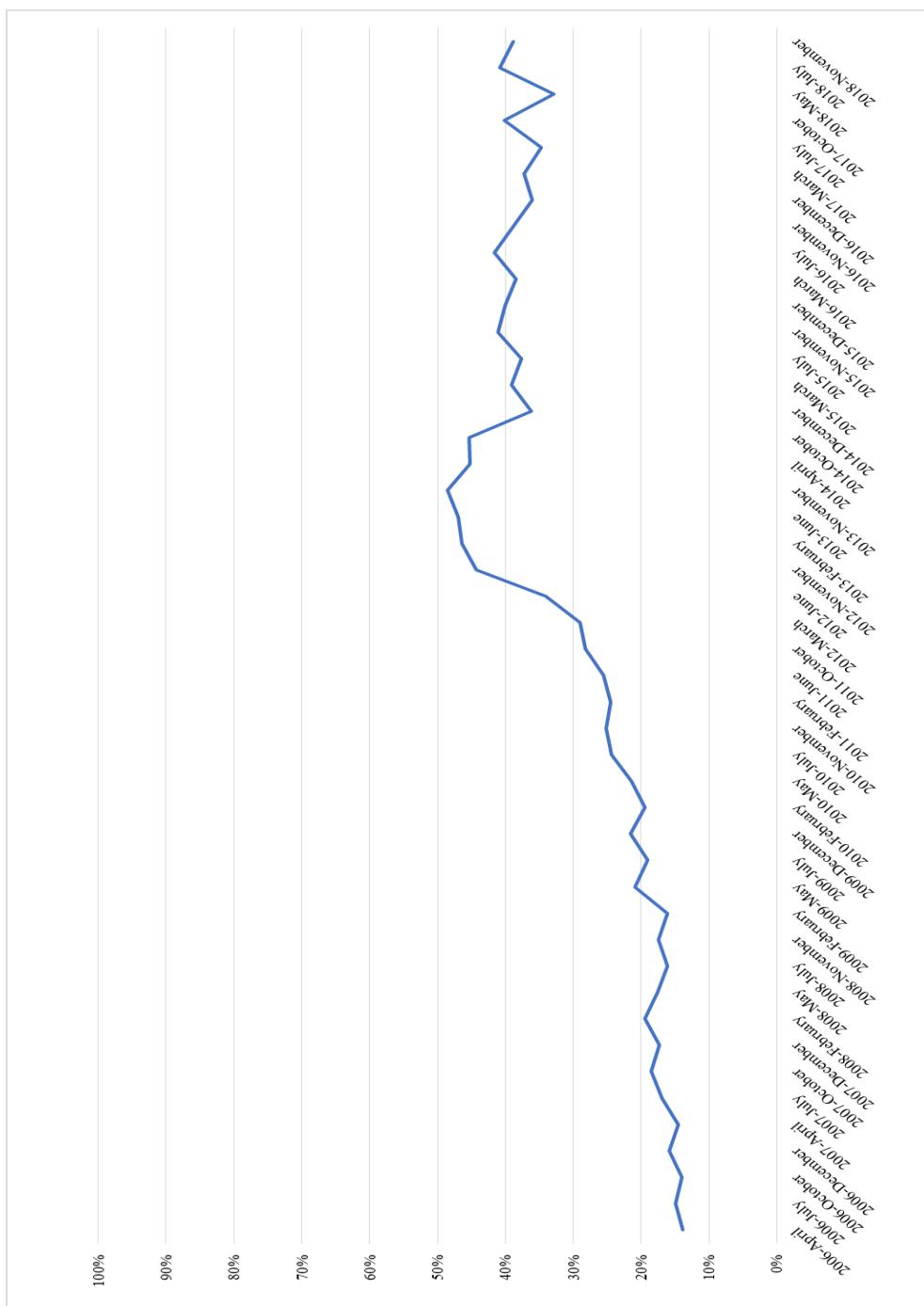
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APPENDICES

A. GRAPH ON THE SUPPORT FOR INDEPENDENCE (2006-2018)



B. TURKISH SUMMARY / TÜRKÇE ÖZET

Bu tez, Katalan siyasi elitlerinin ve en önde gelen iki Katalan sivil toplum örgütü, *Assemblea Nacional Catalana - ANC* (Katalan Ulusal Meclisi) ve *Òmnium Cultural*'nın, söylemini özerklik yanlısı bir konumdan bağımsızlık yanlısı ve ayrılıkçı bir tutuma kaydıran Katalan ulusal hareketinin dönüşümünü analiz etmedeki rolünü araştırmayı amaçlamaktadır. Bu çalışma, 2006 ve 2018 yılları arası döneme, özellikle 1 Ekim 2017 Katalan bağımsızlık referandumuna odaklanmakta, Katalonya-İspanya arasındaki ilişkilerinin uzun tarihsel arka planını da göz önüne alarak, sonucta İspanya'dan ayrılmayı gayri resmi bağımsızlık referandumuna yol açan Katalan siyasi elitlerinin ve sivil toplum örgütlerinin bu kayma üzerindeki etkisini araştırmaktadır. Çalışma, aşağıdaki ana araştırma sorusuna cevap vermeye çalışacaktır: Bu radikal kaymaya ve Katalan siyasi elitleri, ANC ve *Òmnium Cultural* tarafından desteklenen bugünkü bağımsızlık yanlısı pozisyonuna sebep olan tarihsel nedenler nelerdir? Katalonya özelinde, Katalan siyasi elitleri ve bu iki önde gelen sivil toplum örgütü, Katalan ulusal hareketi konusundaki tartışmalarını desteklemek için kültürel/dilsel, ekonomik ve politik/kurumsal boyutları kullanmıştır. Tez aynı zamanda Katalan elitlerinin ve sivil toplum kuruluşlarının çatışmayı şiddetlendiren İspanyol Hükümeti ile ilişkisine ve toplumun bu çekişmeli ilişkiye tepkisine bakmaktadır. Bu anlamda, daha sonra ayrıntılı olarak ele alınacağı gibi, Katalan ulusal hareketi ve bağımsızlığı konusundaki literatürden farklı olarak, bu çalışma siyasi elitler ile sivil toplum kuruluşları arasındaki etkileşimin 1 Ekim 2017 referandumuna kadar giden olayların gidişatını şekillendirdiğini ileri sürmektedir.

Son yıllar, Birleşik Krallık, Kanada ve İspanya gibi bazı Batı demokratik ülkelerindeki azınlık uluslararasıının taleplerinde bir radikalleşme eğilimine şahit olmuştur. Bu çok uluslu devletlerin tümü merkezi olmayan idari yapılara sahiptir ve kendi bölgesel kuruluşları içinde birden fazla ulusal grup içermektedir. Bu nedenle azınlık uluslararası kendi bölgelerinde ademi merkeziyet kapsamını genişletme yönündeki talepleri, bu

ülkelerdeki iç siyasette siyasi haklar üzerinde etkili olmuştur. İngiltere örneğinde, ayrı bir kimliği ve kültürü olan azınlık milletlerinden biri İskoçya'daki İskoç milletidir. 1970'lerde, İskoç milliyetçiliği siyasi olarak İskoç Ulusal Partisi - SNP tarafından uyandırıldı. O zamanlarda, Kuzey Denizi'ndeki yeni keşfedilen petrol gelirlerine dayanarak, İskoç milliyetçileri ekonomik olarak kendi kendine yeterli, bağımsız bir devlet olma hedefini takip ettiler (Connolly, 2013: 60). İlk yetki devri girişimi 1979'da İşçi Partisi'nden gelmesine rağmen, yetersiz destek nedeniyle başarısız oldu. Ancak, bu süreç 1990'larda da sürdürdü, bu sefer İskoç seçmenler tarafından desteklendi (Connolly, 2013: 61). Yetki devrine verilen destek arttı ve 2007 İskoç parlamento seçimlerinde SNP'nin liderliğinde bir azınlık hükümeti kurulmasını sağladı. 2011 seçimlerinde SNP'nin kazanmasından sonra; yani, İskoç parlamentosundaki sandalyelerin çoğunluğunu kazanan İskoç milliyetçiliğinin radikalleşmesi, İngiliz ve İskoç hükümetleri hükümetler arasında yapılan anlaşma sayesinde 2014 yılında bağımsızlık referandumu yapılması kararı ile açıkça ortaya çıktı. Ancak referandum nüfusun %55,3'ünün bağımsızlığa "Hayır" demesiyle sonuçlandı.

Kanada, 1960'lı yıllarda Quebec'te "Sessiz Devrim" süreciyle benzer bir radikalleşme yaşadı. Quebec, Fransızca konuşan ve Kanadalıların geri kalanından farklı bir kimliğe ve kültüre sahip olan Quebec milletinin yaşadığı Kanada'nın bir parçasıdır. 1968'de, Parti Québécois'in (PQ) ortaya çıkışı, 1980'de gerçekleşecek bir referandum düzenlenmesi söyleyle Kanada'dan ayrılma fikrini gündeme getirdi. Fakat bu referandum seçmenlerin yalnızca % 40.4'ünün bağımsızlığa "evet" demesi ile olumsuz sonuçlandı (Lecours, 2018: 7). Quebec milletinin taleplerine ilişkin müzakereler ilk referandumdan sonra da devam etti ve 1987'de Quebec'i özel bir topluluk olarak tanıyan Meech Gölü Anlaşması imzalandı (Zhang, 2016: 221). Ancak, bu anlaşma yandaşları tatmin etmediğinden, 1995'te ikinci bir referandum düzenlendi. Bu referandumdan %49.4 "Evet" oyu ile yeterince destek sağlayamadı (Lecours, 2018: 11). Başka bir referandum tehdidi nedeniyle ve bu zorlukların üstesinden gelmek için, merkezi hükümet 2000 yılında, bağımsızlık konusunda herhangi bir referandum

yapılmadan önce merkezi hükümetin onaylanma koşulunu getiren bir yasa kabul etti. (Zhang, 2016: 221)

Düger bir çok ulusal devlet olan İspanya da ulusal azınlıklar tarafından her zaman zorlanmıştır ve bu gruplardan kaynaklanan zorlukları yaşamaya devam etmektedir. Juan J. Linz, başından beri “dilsel-kültürel ve duygusal bütünlüğe” başaramadığı için İspanya'yı başarısız bir Batı Avrupa devleti olarak kabul etmiştir (1973: 99). İspanya'da, tarihsel olarak İspanyol kimliğinden farklı olarak kendi dilsel ve kültürel kimlikleri olan birçok ulusal azınlık olması nedeniyle, ülke nüfusunu dil, kültür ve tarih açısından bir araya getirememiştir. İspanya'nın merkezi ve bölgesel hükümetleri arasındaki sürekli ayrılık ve ihtilaf nedeniyle İspanya, farklı tarihsel özelliklere sahip olan Katalanlar tarafından birliğine tehdit oluşturabilecek en radikal sorunla karşılaşmıştır.

İspanya'da ulus-devlet oluşumunun başarısızlığının nedenini ve ülkenin ulusal azınlıklarından kaynaklanan zorlukları anlamak için, İspanya'nın on yedi özerk topluluktan olduğunu belirtmek çok önemlidir. Bu özerk topluluklar arasında Katalonya, dil ve kültür gibi kendine has özelliklere sahiptir ve 1978 İspanya Anayasası ile “tarihi milliyet” olarak kabul edilmiştir. Katalonya, İspanya'nın kuzeydoğu köşesini ve Fransız sınırında yer alan tarihi bir bölgedir. Başkenti Barselona Madrid'den sonra İspanya'nın en büyük ikinci şehridir. En kalabalık ikinci topluluk olan Katalonya 7,5 milyon nüfusuyla İspanya'nın toplam nüfusunun % 16'sını oluşturmaktadır. İspanyolca ile birlikte Katalanca bölgenin iki resmi dilden biridir. Katalanca nüfusun % 73,16'sı tarafından konuşulurken, sakinlerinin % 95,12'si tarafından anlaşılabilimektedir. Ancak, Katalan dili sadece Katalonya'da değil, Valensiya, Balear Adaları ve Andorra gibi diğer bazı bölgelerde de konuşulmaktadır.

Bölgelin idari yapısı ile ilgili olarak, Katalonya 1979 yılında bölgeye öz-yönetim yeterliliklerini güvence altına alan bir özerklik tüzüğü ile özerk bir topluluk olarak kurulmuştur. Bu tüzük *Generalitat*'ın (Katalan hükümeti) yapısı hakkında 223 makale içermektedir ve Katalonya'nın öz-yönetim kurumları (yasama, yürütme ve yargı

yetkileri) hakkında hükümler ve kuralları içeren ana kurucu metin olarak işlev görmektedir. Bu tüzüğe göre, *Generalitat*'nın medeni hukuk, dil, kültür, eğitim ve kurumsal sistem üzerindeki yetkilerini içeren tarihsel hakları İspanyol Anayasası tarafından kabul edildi. Ayrıca, statüde Katalanca'nın Katalonya'daki resmi statüsü de garanti edilmektedir. Katalonya'nın bayrak, milli bayram ve marş gibi ulusal semboller de tüzüğe dahil edilmiştir. İspanya'daki *Estado de las Autonomías* (Özerk Devleti) sistemi sayesinde, Katalonya ve diğer özerk topluluklar geniş yetkilere sahiplerdir. Örneğin, Katalonya, Katalan topraklarında kamu güvenliği ile ilgili yerel polis gücüne sahiptir. Ekonomik olarak ise Katalonya, İspanya GSYİH'nın yaklaşık %20'sini üretmektedir. Diğer özerk topluluklar arasında İspanya'nın en sanayileşmiş bölgesi olarak konumunu korumaktadır. Kısacası, Katalonya İspanya'da benzersiz ve önemli bir yere sahiptir.

Literatürde Katalan ulusal hareketi kültürel/dilsel, ekonomik ve politik/kurumsal boyutlarıyla incelenmiştir. Kültürel/dilsel boyuta odaklanan literatür için, Katalan dili, Katalan ulusal hareketinin temel unsurudur. Katalan ulusunun ve kimliğinin en eski ve en önemli unsuru olan Katalan dili, Katalanlar arasında güçlü bir birlik ve kimlik duygusu yaratmaktadır. Dilin yanı sıra, Katalan kültürünün semboller, mit ve ritüeller gibi diğer unsurları da ortak kimlik duygusunu ve daha sonra ulusal hareketini güçlendirmeye yardımcı olmuştur. Katalan ulusal hareketinin yaratıcısı olarak Katalan dili ve kültürü, 16. yüzyılda başlayan İspanyol dili ve kültürüyle yüzleşmesi antagonistik bir şekilde gerçekleştiği zaman öne çıkmaya başlamıştır.

Ekonomik boyuta odaklanan literatür, özellikle 2008 ekonomik krizinden sonra, Katalan ulusal hareketinin radikalleşmesinde ekonominin önemli rolünü vurgulamaktadır. Bununla birlikte, çoğu zaman, Katalonya ekonomik olarak İspanya'nın en gelişmiş ve en sanayileşmiş kısmı olmuştur. Bu nedenle, tarihsel olarak, İspanyol İmparatorluğu'nun yıkılması sırasında, Kastilya yönetiminin yol açtığı ekonomik şikayetler Katalan ulusal hareketini daha da şiddetlendirmeye başlamıştır. Demokrasiye geçtikten sonra, Özerklik Devleti sistemi daha zengin bölgelerin daha yoksul bölgelere sübvanse etmesini gerektiriyordu. Özellikle 2008 krizinden sonra,

Katalonya, Katalonya'dan aldığı paraya oranla daha az katkıda bulunan İspanya hükümetinin mali politikası nedeniyle mali açık ve dengesizlikten muzdarip olmaya başladı. Ekonomideki bu memnuniyetsizlik nedeniyle, Katalan toplumunun değişen tercihleri, Katalan ulusal hareketinin gelişimi ve bağımsızlık mücadeleisinin yükselişine yansındı.

Siyasi/kurumsal boyuta odaklanan literatüre göre, Katalan ulusal hareketi İspanya'nın siyasi yapısı yani anayasal düzeni nedeniyle gelişti. İspanya Anayasası bölgelere yalnızca tarihi siyasi özerklik kazandırmakla kalmayıp toprak bütünlüğünü korumayı da amaçlamıştır. Toprak bütünlüğü amacıyla merkezileşme politikalarının uygulanmasını gerektirdiği için ve anayasadaki çelişkili tasarım nedeniyle, merkezi ve bölgesel hükümetler, özellikle tarihi milliyetlerin hükümetleri arasındaki gerilimler ve sorunlar ortaya çıkmıştır. Bu nedenle, hem merkezi hükümetin merkezileşme politikaları hem de özerk topluluklara verilen siyasi özerklik, Katalan ulusal hareketinin artan ivmesini etkiledi. Ayrıca, siyasi partiler ve sivil toplum kuruluşları gibi bazı kurumların Katalan ulusal hareketinin dönüşümünde önemli rolleri vardı. İspanya'nın merkezci partileri ve Katalonya'nın bölgesel milliyetçi partileri arasındaki sürekli çatışmalar, özellikle son on yılda Katalan ulusal hareketinin gelişmesini teşvik etti. Ayrıca, iki sivil toplum örgütü tarafından düzenlenen kitleSEL gösteriler, ANC ve *Òmnium Cultural*, Katalan ulusal hareketini şiddetlendirmede büyük önem taşımaktadır.

2000'lerin ortasından itibaren, İspanya'daki çekişmeli politika, ülkedeki en karmaşık ve çözülemeyen sorun haline geldi ve Katalan ulusal hareketinin dönüşümü zirveye ulaştı. Bir yandan, ulus inşası sürecinde ciddi bir ilerleme kaydeden, ancak hala bir devletten yoksun olan Katalan ulusunun, İspanya makamlarının neden olduğu tarihsel şikayetlerden dolayı ciddi bir memnuniyetsizlik seviyesine ulaştığı, öte yandan, İspanyol "uluslar devleti", bölgesel birliğini korumak için daha fazla ademi merkeziyetçiliği hedefleyen taleplere direndiği görülmektedir. Bu karmaşık çerçeve altında, bu tez, farklı boyutların siyasi elit söylemlerinde araçsallaştırılarak İspanya'da büyük bir kaosa neden olduğunu ve bu söylemlerin Katalan ulusal hareketinin yörüngeсинin radikalleşmesine nasıl yol açtığını göstermeyi amaçlamaktadır.

Katalan ulusal hareketini hem İspanya bağlamında hem de benzeri demokratik Batı ülkeleri arasında benzersiz kılan birkaç faktör bulunmaktadır. Birincisi, milliyetçilik çalışmalarında Katalan ulusal hareketi, şiddet içermeyen bir özelliği sürdürme ve taleplerini demokratik bir şekilde yerine getirme konusundaki kararlılığıyla her zaman en önemli örneklerden biri olarak verilmiştir. İkincisi, Katalan milliyetçiliği Bask terör örgütü ETA'nın faaliyetlerini durdurmasından sonra İspanya'daki en belirgin bağımsızlık yanlısı hareket olmuştur. Üçüncüsü, Katalan ulusal hareketindeki sivil toplum, hareketin gelişiminde eşsiz bir rol oynamıştır. Dördüncü, Katalonya'da gerçekleşen bağımsızlık referandumu, diğer Batı ülkelerindeki diğer uygulamalardan farklıydı çünkü diğer örnekler gibi merkezi hükümetle anlaşma içinde yapılmamıştır. Son olarak, bu hareket Avrupa Birliği'ndeki diğer azınlık uluslararasılarının bağımsızlık arayışını tetikleme potansiyeline sahiptir.

Bu tezin amacı ve Katalan ulusal hareketinin karmaşıklığını ve dinamik doğasını kavramak için, Anthony D. Smith'in etno-simbolizmi ve Miroslav Hroch'un üç aşamalı modeli en uygun teoriler olarak kullanılmıştır. Ulusal hareketlerin doğasını açıklayan bu iki teorinin harmanlanmasıyla, Katalan ulusunun ulus oluşum süreci analiz edilecek ve siyasi ve sivil toplum elitlerinin Katalan ulusal hareketinin evrimini etkileyen farklı boyutları nasıl kullandıkları sorusuna cevap aranacaktır.

Ulusların ve ulusal hareketlerin oluşum sürecini anlamak için, Anthony Smith, dil, mit, hafiza, değer, ritüel ve gelenek gibi kültürel öğelerin önemine odaklanan etno-simbolizm terimini benimsemiştir. Bu kültürel unsurlar, her milletin aralarındaki ayrimı yaratarak, sosyal sınır oluşturma sürecinde onları diğer benzer topluluklardan ayıran dil, gelenek ve kurumları içeren "ayırt edici simbolik bir repertuara" sahip olmalarını sağlar (Smith, 2009: 25). Modernist yaklaşımın aksine, etno-simbolist olarak Smith, ulusların oluşumu ile ilgili projelerde "elit teklifler ve çoğunluk tepkileri arasında bir etkileşim" olduğu fikrini desteklemektedir; yani, elitlerin kitleleri çekmek ve "kitlesel rezonans" yaratmak için fikirlerini ve sembollerini yeniden şekillendirmelerine ihtiyaç vardır (2009: 31). Ulusal hareketlerle ilgili olarak, Smith ayrıca özerklik, birlik, kimlik, özgünlük, vatan, onur, süreklilik ve kader gibi bazı

temel kavramlara da odaklanmaktadır. Ulusal bir topluluğun üyeleri, onur duydukları benzersiz ve tarihi bir kimliğe sahip olduklarına inanırlar. Bu ayırt edici kimlik, ortak bir irade ve üzerinde ulusal bir hareket yaratabilecekleri belirli bir vatandaşın ortak kaderin temelidir. Bazı milliyetçilik motifleri bir ulusal hareketten diğerine veya bir dönemden diğerine değişebilse de, bu temalar ““milliyetçi hareket””i diğer ideolojik hareket türlerinden ayırmaya yarar” (Smith, 2009: 63).

Miroslav Hroch, Smith'e kıyasla, tam bir ulus olma sürecindeki ulusal hareketleri analiz etmedeki üç aşamalı modeliyle daha sistematik bir bakış açısı sunuyor. Çeşitli ulusal hareketler tarafından öne sürülen taleplerin farklı zamanlamaları olabileceğine dikkat çeken Hroch, ayrıca “ulusal hareketin farklı aşamalarında dilsel, sosyal veya politik taleplerin göreceli önemini” ayırt etmenin bir gereğinin de bulunduğu öne sürmüştür (2007: 68). Bu nedenle, bu aşamaları ve tam bir ulusal varlığa yönelik ulusal hareketlerin gelişimini gösteren “üç aşamalı modeli” şu şekilde tasvir edilmiştir: Aşama A, küçük bir aydın grubunun kendilerini baskın olmayan etnik grubun diline, tarihine, geleneksel kültürüne vb. bilimsel araştırma yapmaya adadığı aşamadır. Aşama B; tam teşekkülü bir ulus oluşturma projesine katılmak için vatandaşlarına heyecan vermeye başlayan yeni aktivistlerin ortaya çıktığı aşamadır. Aşama C ise, nüfusun çoğunluğunun vatansever çağrıya cevap verdiği ve kitlesel bir hareket oluşturduğu aşamadır (2007: 68). Hroch, ulusal hareketlerin amaçlarına ulaşması ve tam bir ulus haline gelmesi için, dilsel programların beş aşamasını öne sürmüştür. Bu beş aşama, dilin savunulması, dil planlaması ve kodlaması, ulusal dilin entelektüelleştirilmesi, dilin okullara tanıtılması ve tam dil eşitliğinin gerçekleştirilmesidir. Dilin ulusal hareketler için öneminin yanı sıra, Hroch, grupların ve bireylerin belirli faaliyetlerinin ulusal farkındalıkın yayılmasında oynadığı önemli rolü vurgular. Argümanlarını “kendi geçmişine sahip olma”; yani, “tarihsel olarak meşru” olmak argümanı ile destekleyerek, ulusal hareketin liderleri amaçlarını pekiştirmektedir.

Bu tezde, nicel verilerden de yararlanılarak nitel analiz kullanılacaktır. Tarihsel bir perspektifle bir vaka çalışması araştırması yapılmıştır. Birincil kaynaklar olarak,

İspanya Anayasası, Katalan Özerklik Tüzüğü, ilgili yasalar ve beyanlar gibi resmi belgeler inceleneciktir. Ek olarak, referandumla ilgili haberler de incelenecik, böylece gerekli bağlamlar ve detaylar açıklığa kavuşturulacaktır. Çalışmaya niceliksel bir boyut eklemek için, *Centre d'Estudis d'Opinio* - CEO'nun (Fikir Araştırmaları Merkezi) sağladığı toplumun bağımsızlık yanlısı eğilimindeki ilerleme ile ilgili veriler kullanacaktır. Ek olarak, siyasi elitlerin hareket üzerindeki etkilerini belirlemek için, önemli ve sıcak zamanlarda yaptıkları konuşmaların bazıları analiz edilecektir.

İspanya Devleti ile Katalan ulusal hareketi arasındaki çelişkili ilişki 16. yüzyılın başlarından itibaren her iki tarafın pozisyonlarını karşılıklı ve birbiriyle muhalefet içinde kuvvetlendiren ve güçlendiren dilsel, ekonomik ve siyasal yönleri içeriyordu. Katalan milliyetinin, Hroch'un teorisinde olduğu gibi tam bir millet olma yolunu açan koşullar, farklı zamanlarda mevcuttu. Örneğin, 17. yüzyılda, Katalan milleti yabancı İspanyol yöneticilerinin egemenliğinde ve siyasi bağımsızlığı olmayan bir etnik ve tarihi birim oluşturabiliyordu. Franco döneminde ise, Katalan ulusunun edebi dili baskılандı ve baskın siyasi grup yani İspanyol Devleti tarafından kullanılmasına izin verilmedi. Bu şartlar altında, Katalan ulusal hareketi, Katalan milleti üyelerinin farkındalığı yaymak ve Katalan ulusal kimliği duygusunu artırmak amacıyla ortaya çıktı. Hroch'un üç aşamalı modelinde olduğu gibi, Katalan ulusal hareketi de Aşama A; yani Katalan dilinin ve kültürünün bir grup aydın tarafından *Renaixença* adlı bir kültürel hareketle tanıtılması ile başladı. Bu dönemden sonra Aşama B'ye geçildi. Burada, vatandaşların, tam teşekkürüllü bir ulus projesinin gündemini belirlemeye yardımcı olan siyasi örgütler ve resmi belgeler oluşturmaları için çağrıda bulunuldu. Bu arada, İspanya Devleti ile bu Katalan girişimleri arasında eylem-tepki paradigmاسı olduğunu akılda tutmak çok önemlidir. Üç aşamalı modelin son dönemi, Aşama C vatansever kitle hareketini, ulusun tam sosyal yapısını ve siyasal farklılaşmayı içerdigi için bu aşamanın hala yürürlükte olduğu söylenebilir çünkü Katalan hareketi "daha fazla" siyasal farklılaşma amacını bugün de sürdürmektedir. Ayılma gibi daha fazla politik farklılaşma arzusu, Aşama C'nin bugüne kadar sürdürülmesine yol açmaktadır. Katalan milleti bağımsızlık hedefine ulaşmadıkça, C Aşaması tamamlanmayacak ve

Katalan milleti Hroch'un üç aşamalı modeline göre tam teşekkülü bir millet olmayacağıdır.

Anthony Smith'in etno-sembolizminin kullanılmasının, siyasi elitlerin ulusal hareketi pekiştirmek için kültürel/dilsel, ekonomik ve politik/kurumsal boyutları nasıl kullandıklarını göstermeye yardımcı olduğunu görüyoruz. Bu çalışmada, üç boyutun bu kavamlara nasıl dahil edildiğini görmek için Artur Mas ve Carles Puigdemont'un konuşmaları Smith'in ulusal hareketlerinin temel kavramları altında gruplandırıldı. Dilsel olarak, iki Katalan başkan konuşmalarında ayırtıcı bir dil kullanmıştır. İspanya ve Katalonya için ayrı kelimeler kullanarak (çoğunlukla Katalonya için millet ve ülke, İspanya için devlet) ve “biz ve onlar” ayrimını sürekli olarak vurgulayarak, Katalonya'nın farklılığını yeniden ürettikleri görülmektedir. Katalan ulusal hareketinin üç boyutu da bu iki başkanı tarafından şu şekilde araçsallaştırılmıştır: Kültürel/dilsel boyut özelinde, Artur Mas ve Carles Puigdemont'un konuşmalarında antik Katalan kimliğinin belirleyici karakteri, dilin ve kültürün Katalan hareketinin merkezindeki yerleri üzerinde durulmuştur. Devletten gelen tehditlere ve Katalonya ile İspanya arasındaki krizlere karşı bu elementler savunulmuştur. Ortak kültür birleştirici bir faktör olarak birliğin önemini hatırlatmak için vurgulanmıştır (etnik kökene ya da doğum yerine bağlı olmayan bir birey). Nesiller arası bir direnişle zorlukların üstesinden gelme gücüne sahip olmak ve tarihten çıkarılan dersler, ortak kayıpların ve zaferlerin birleştirici gücү ve Katalan kimliğinin uzun süre hayatı kalması başarısı vurgulanmıştır. Bu sürekliliğin başarısı, Katalonya ve Katalan ulusunun savunulmasına bağlanmıştır. Milletin özgünlüğünü vurgulamak için Katalan kurumlarının ve siyasi sisteminin uzun geçmişi, ortak tarih ve kültürün üzerinde duruldu. Vatan kutsal bir anlamla kullanılmasa da Katalanların yaşamak istedikleri yer olarak olumlu bir şekilde sunulmuştur. Katalonya'nın azalan özerkliğinin sebebi olarak İspanya Devleti'ni suçlamak, Katalanları seferber etmek gibi stratejiler iki başkan tarafından kullanılmıştır. Ekonomik boyut ise Mas ve Puigdemont tarafından İspanya Devleti ile kriz dönemlerinde, birliği teşvik etmek için ekonomik konularda bir uzlaşmayı teşvik ederek kullanılmıştır. Katalonya'nın ekonomik potansiyelini ve kendi kendine yeterliliğini göstermek için diğer Avrupa ülkelerinin ekonomileri ile

karşılaştırma yapmak, özerklik taleplerini haklı çıkarmak gibi stratejiler onur duygusunu yaymak için kullanılmıştır. Politik/kurumsal boyut özelinde ise her Katalan'ın Katalonya'nın geleceğine katkısı ve Katalan hükümetinin eylemlerinin meşruiyeti için birliği sağlama isteği vurgulanmıştır. Katalanların birliğine yapılan bu gönderme, Smith'in teorisinde olduğu gibi elitler ile kitleler arasındaki karşılıklı etkileşim ve elit projelerin nüfusun iradesiyle uyumluluğuyla ilgili olarak kullanılmıştır. Bağımsızlık süreci sık sık (özellikle Puigdemont tarafından), Katalonya'nın kaderi, İspanya Devleti'nin Katalan özerkliği üzerindeki kısıtlamalara bir tepki ve Katalanları birleştiren bir süreç olarak Katalanların onurlu ve gururlu hissetmeleri amacıyla kullanılmıştır.

Anthony Smith'in etno-sembolizm teorisinde olduğu gibi, Katalan ulusal hareketi için kültürel unsurlar ve semboller de büyük önem taşımaktadır. Katalan ulusunun en önemli kültürel unsuru olan dil ile birlikte gelenekler, paylaşılan anılar ve semboller Katalan ulusunun geniş sembolik repertuarını oluşturmaktadır. Bu repertuar, Katalan ulusunun kendisini esasen İspanyol ulusundan farklılaşmasına ve semboller, gelenekler, törenler, mitler vb. içeren kendi halk kültürünün yaratılmasıyla ulusal toplumun bağlarını pekiştirmeye yardımcı olmuştur. Bu unsurların elitler tarafından kullanılması çatışmanın Katalanca ve İspanyol tarafları arasındaki ilişkileri şekillendirmekte ve çatışan ulusal hareketleri güçlendirmektedir. Katalan elitleri ile sivil toplum arasındaki etkileşimin farklı argümanları araçsallaştırılmasının yanı sıra Katalan bayrağı gibi mevcut sembollerin kullanılması ve kamusal alandaki sarı şerit gibi yeni sembollerin özellikle de kamusal konuşma ve gösteriler sırasında kullanılması, Katalanların ulusal kimliği duygusunun ve onların milletle olan duygusal ve psikolojik bağlarının güçlendirilmesine katkıda bulunmuştur.

Daha önce de belirtildiği üzere, Katalan ulusal hareketini 1 Ekim 2017 bağımsızlık referandumuna getiren süreç, Katalan milliyetçi elitleri ve bu elitlerin İspanyol Devleti'ne tepkileri tarafından yönlendirilmiştir. Bununla birlikte, 1 Ekim referandumu, bu elit tepkilerin sivil toplum örgütlerinin faaliyetleri ve Katalan toplumu üzerindeki etkileri ile birleştirilmesiyle de tetiklenmiştir. Katalan sivil toplum

örgütleri (ANC ve *Òmnium Cultural*), 2010 yılından başlayarak her yıl Katalan ulusal bayramı olan 11 Eylül günü milyonların katılımıyla gerçekleştirilen gösteriler düzenlemiştir. Gösterilerin amacı bağımsızlığı desteklemek, toplumdaki desteği artırmak ve bu süreçte bağımsızlık referandumu gerçekleştirilebilmesi için siyasi elitler üzerinde baskın kurmaktır. Katalan başkanlarının Katalan ulusal hareketini elitler ve kitleler arasındaki karşılıklı etkileşim yoluyla yönetme eğilimi, milliyetçi söylemlerine olan desteğin büyümeye yol açmıştır. Ayrıca, hareketin siyasi kanadının sivil toplum örgütleriyle birleşmesi de süreci pekiştirmiştir ve sonunda bağımsızlığa olan desteğinin yükselmesine neden olarak 1 Ekim 2017 referandumuyla sonuçlanmıştır.

İspanya Anayasası'na göre ayrılıkçı bir referandum yasası olmasına rağmen, Katalan siyasi elitleri, özellikle de Başkan Carles Puigdemont, 1 Ekim referandumunu bir anlaşma içinde gerçekleştirmek için müzakereleri başlatmak üzere merkezi hükümete sürekli olarak baskı yaptı. Katalan hükümetinin Madrid ile müzakerelere başlama kararının alınmasından sonra (2017 yılının Mayıs ayının sonundan başlayarak) Puigdemont, İspanya Başbakanı Mariano Rajoy'a bu konuda mektup gönderdi fakat Rajoy'un cevabı olumsuz oldu. Bu itirazlara rağmen, Carles Puigdemont, referandum üzerinde bir anlaşma konusunda ısrarlarına devam etti. Bu koşullar altında Puigdemont bağımsızlık referandumu tarihini ve referandumda sorulacak soruyu açıkladı. Ayrıca, İspanya hükümetiyle müzakere talebini son güne kadar (1 Ekim) dile getirmeye devam etti. Ancak İspanyol yetkililer konuya ilgili olumsuz tutumlarını sürdürdüler. Sonunda Katalan ve İspanyol tarafları karşılıklı kararlar aldı: Anaya Mahkemesi referandum için yapılan kamu harcamalarını anayasaya aykırı ilan ederken, Puigdemont, yasak olmasına rağmen referandumdan vazgeçmeyeceklerini belirterek mahkemeye itiraz etti. Sonuç olarak, Eylül başında, Katalan Parlamentosu Referandum Yasasını kabul etti ve bu yasa ertesi gün mahkeme tarafından askıya alındı. Dahası, İspanya makamları referandum karşıtı operasyon başlatarak 14 üst düzey Katalan yetkilinin gözaltına alınmasına sebep oldu. Oylama materyalleri ele geçirildi ve bağımsızlık referandumunun örgütlenmesinde yer alan Katalan bakanlıklarına baskınlar düzenlendi. Bunlara rağmen, Katalan sivil toplumunun ve sivil toplum örgütlerinin

desteğiyle, Katalan bağımsızlık referandumu 1 Ekim'de düzenlendi. Destekçilere karşı acımasız bir polis kuvveti uygulandı. 1 Ekim'de meydana gelen tüm bu olayların ardından önumüzdeki günlerde, *Generalitat* ve Madrid hükümeti tarafından alınan ciddi karşılıklı tedbirler alındı ve Katalanlar arasındaki sessiz çoğunluğun uyanmasıyla birlikte bağımsızlık yanlıları ve karşıtları olarak toplumda katı bir bölünme yaşandı.

Referandum sonuçları kesinleşikten sonra, *Generalitat* Başkanı Carles Puigdemont, resmi olarak tek taraflı bağımsızlık ilan etmeden önce Madrid ile arabuluculuk fırsatı aradı. Bununla birlikte, yanıt olarak Madrid hükümeti Puigdemont'u İspanya Anayasası'nın 155. Maddesi uyarınca Katalonya özerkliğinin askiya alınması gibi daha kötü bir durumla sonuçlanabileceğinin amacında daha fazla ısrar etmemesi konusunda uyardı. Bağımsızlık karşıtı sivil toplumdan ve ekonomik sektörün bazı kesimlerinden gelen tepkilere rağmen, 10 Ekim'de Puigdemont, bağımsızlık yanlısı partilerin bağımsızlık ilanını imzalamasına rağmen, uluslararası bir arabuluculuk ve müzakere sağlamak için bildiriyi askiya aldığı açıklandı. Ancak, uluslararası arabuluculuk Katalan hükümetinin bağımsızlık planlarının meşruiyetini ve İspanya hükümeti ile aynı statüye sahipmiş gibi kabul etmek anlamına geleceği için gerçekçi bir beklenti değildi. ANC ve *Òmnium Cultural* liderlerinin tutuklanmasıyla durum daha da kızıştı. 27 Ekim'de, tek taraflı bağımsızlık ilanı Katalan Parlamentosu'nda onaylandı. Ancak, saatler sonra, İspanya Senatosu Katalonya'da özerkliğin askiya alınması ve doğrudan yönetim uygulanmasını onayladı. Doğrudan yönetimin sonuçları arasında Katalan Parlamentosu'nun dağılması, Katalonya'nın uluslararası "elçiliklerinin" kapatılması, Carles Puigdemont'un görevden alınması ve 21 Aralık'ta bölgelik seçimler yapılması çağrıları yer aldı. Hem birlik yanlısı hem de bağımsızlık yanlısı gösteriler devam ederken, 30 Ekim'de Carles Puigdemont Belçika'ya kaçtı.

Katalonya'nın bağımsızlık referandumu, yalnızca İspanya'nın içişleri için değil, aynı zamanda uluslararası aktörler için de, özellikle Avrupa Birliği için kritikti çünkü üye devletlerin çoğu, benzer eğilimlere sahip olabilecek farklı gruplardan oluşuyordu. Bu nedenle, 1 Ekim bağımsızlık referandumunun büyük etkisi oldu ve diğer Avrupa ülkeleri arasında rahatsızlık yarattı. Puigdemont'un Brüksel'den müdahale etmedeki

ısrarına rağmen, Avrupa Birliği'nin ve Avrupa devletlerinin genel eğilimi, İspanya'nın iç meselesi olarak görülen referandumu ilgisizlikleriyydi. Ayrıca, çoğu Avrupa ülkesi, 1 Ekim'de Katalonya'daki polis şiddetine karşı sessiz kaldı. Genel olarak, Katalan bağımsızlık referandumu, Avrupa Birliği'nin birliği ve örgütün uluslararası toplumdaki rolü hakkında sorulara yol açtı. Referandum ve Katalonya'nın bağımsızlık ilanının sonuçlarının tanınmasıyla ilgili olarak, İskoçya ve Quebec gibi bazı azınlık milletler hariç, Katalan bağımsızlığını tanınmadı. Küresel bazda, neredeyse her ülke İspanyol yetkilileri, ülkenin toprak bütünlüğünü koruma konusunda destekledi.

Katalan sivil toplumunun mobilizasyonunu ve bağımsızlığa destek oranını analiz ederken, Katalan ve İspanyol taraflarının tutumlarını dikkate alarak en çok vurgulanan "diyalog arzusu" konusunda çeşitli argümanlar ortaya koymak mümkündür. Yani, diyalogun ve müzakerelerin yapılmasına istekli olmanın Katalan toplumu için bağımsızlığı destekleme tercihlerini belirlemeye büyük önem taşıdığı sonucuna varabiliriz. Katalan ve İspanyol yetkililer birbirleriyle sıkı bir muhalefet içindeyken ve hiçbiri diyalog kurma isteğini göstermezken, bu Katalan toplumu üzerinde tam tersi bir etki yaratmakta ve İspanya Devleti'ne karşı düşmanlığı sağlamlaştırmak yerine bağımsızlık desteğini azaltmaktadır. Bununla birlikte, eğer İspanya Devleti Katalan yetkilileri müzakere yapmakta ısrar ettiğinde diyaloga karşı isteksizlik gösterirse, bu, Katalan toplumu arasında bağımsızlığı destekleme konusunda bir artış yaratmaktadır çünkü bağımsızlığı Katalonya ve İspanya arasındaki bu siyasi sorundan kurtulmanın bir çözümü olarak görmektedirler. Başka bir çıkışım olarak, Katalan yetkilileri İspanyol Devleti ile diyalog için ilimli konumlarını bırakıklarında ve tek taraflı bağımsızlık ilanı gibi tek taraflı, sert kararlar aldıklarında, bağımsızlık desteği azalmaktadır. Katalan toplumu, diyalog isteğini Katalan ulusal hareketinin meşruiyetinin temeli ve Katalan milletinin doğasında var olan bir özellik olarak gördüğü için, diyalogu desteklemekten uzaklaşan her türlü eylem bağımsızlık lehine tercihleri üzerinde bir tepki yaratmaktadır. Bu nedenle, Katalonya ve İspanya arasındaki çekişmeli ilişki sonucunda ortaya çıkan politik sorunu çözmek için, sorunun her iki tarafının (özellikle İspanya Devleti'nin) isteyerek ve önyargısız bir diyaloga açık olması gereklidir.

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YAZARIN / AUTHOR

Soyadı / Surname : Ergan
Adı / Name : Seren
Bölümü / Department : Siyaset Bilimi ve Kamu Yönetimi

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