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## **The rise of independence feelings in Catalonia and Scotland. A longitudinal study on the profile of independence in the beginning of the 21st century**

### **Introduction**

One of the main characteristics that determined the beginning of the 21st century has been the arise of serious separatism challenges among several plurinational Western democracies (Dalle Mulle, 2015: 20). When accounting those challenges, the cases of Catalonia and Scotland have taken pride of place (Liñeira, 2011; Bourne, 2014; Liñeira, Cetrà, 2015; Muro, Vlaskamp, 2016; Cetrà, Harvey, 2019; Porta, O'Connor, Portos, 2019; Muro, Vidal, Vlaskamp, 2020).

The sharp increase of favourable attitudes towards separatism in Scotland and Catalonia, together with the sudden growth of support to non-state-wide parties that defend separatism positions and the resulting rise of institutional representation of these parties, have gotten Spanish and the United Kingdom governments on the ropes.

In the following article, we will be analyzing the main characteristics of those citizens that support separatism in Scotland and Catalonia by a longitudinal study of the growth in political preferences regarding an independent state among the Catalanian and Scottish citizenship. In addition to this, we will be considering the changes in the profile of these citizens along the temporal period studied. In order to do so, we will briefly describe the growing support, from the citizenship, in these two territories, of an independent state in the beginning of the 21st century. After doing so, we are going to propose some hypothesis. Subsequently, focusing on the opinion polls from the Institut de Ciències Polítiques i Socials (ICPS) in Catalonia and the Scottish Social Attitudes Survey (SSAS) in Scotland, we will code the variables that we will be using in order to carry out several logistic regression analyses with the goal of studying the main characteristics in the profile of Catalanian and Scottish independence supporters over the last years. To end up with some brief conclusions in which the main findings of the abovementioned analysis will be discussed.

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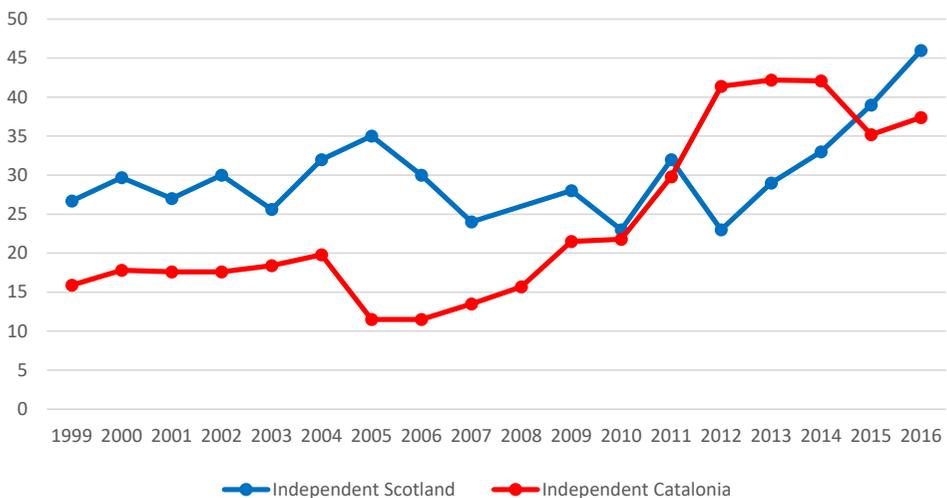
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## The steep increase of political preferences for an independent state in Catalonia and Scotland

Scotland and Catalonia are both highly decentralized territories (Hooghe et al., 2016; Dardanelli, 2019) that are, at the same time, part of plurinational states (Lereuz, 1983; Rokkan, Urwin, 1983; Moreno, 1995; Keating, 1996; Colomer, 2008; Linz, 2008) asymmetrically decentralized (Moreno, 2008; Leyland, 2016; Parrado, 2013).

Both territories count on self-government democratic institutions. In spite of the fact that the democratic institutions found in the United Kingdom have a much longer background than those found in Spain, this deed is reversed regarding the executive and legislative self-government institutions of the sub-state units. While Catalonia has had a parliament since 1980, the Scottish legislative chamber was not set up until 1999.

As far as the evolution of territorial preferences from the public opinion is concerned both in Catalonia and Scotland, it can be observed at first sight that there is a steep growth in the support to independence at the beginning of the second decade of the 21st century. Until the 2010 Catalanian autonomic elections, the support from the public opinion to an independent state was below the 25% barrier. However, 2013, this figure had increased to over 42%, going down until registering 37% in 2016. On the other hand, in Scotland the public opinion support on an independent Scotland has continuously increased since 2012, reaching the highest figure of 46% by 2016 (see Figure 1).



**Figure 1.** Evolution of the percentage of Scottish and Catalanian citizens that, when being asked about their political preferences for the territorial organization, chose an independent state (SSAS and ICPS, 1999 to 2016)

Source: compilation based on (NatCen Social Research, 2017; Instituto de Ciencias Políticas y Sociales, 2020).

There is a great amount of existing investigations regarding the evolution of public opinion in relation with individual preferences on the state territorial organization (Liñeira, 2012; Guibernau, 2013, 2014; Cramer, 2014; 2015; Torcal, Mota, 2014; Nagel, 2014; 2015; Liñeira, Henderson, Delaney, 2017; Llera, Leonisio, Pérez Castaños, 2017; Pérez Castaños, García Rabadán, 2019), as this indicator remains more volatile against other indicators used in the analysis of increasing secessionist nationalism as a subjective national identity (Liñeira, Cetrà, 2015: 259).

In our case study, in order to be able to do a logistic regression analysis, we have divided the analyzed period of time into three different phases. These temporal phases have been selected taking into account the political milestones that could have had influence over the growth in the support of independence in Catalonia and Scotland. The first period comprehends the years between 1999 and 2003. This temporal period starts with the first elections to the Scottish parliament and ends up with the end of the first Scottish term. In Catalonia, the period starts with the last elections won by Jordi Pujol, candidate by the political party *Convergència i Unió* (CiU) and it is closed with the 2003 autonomic elections. The second temporal phase is the one comprehended between 2004 and 2010. In the year 2004, Alex Salmond gets proclaimed as the Scottish National Party (SNP) candidate after winning the internal elections with a 75% support; meanwhile in Catalonia the first Generalitat government is being constituted without a CiU president, a three-party government made up by *Partit dels Socialistes de Catalunya* (PSOE/PSC), *Esquerra Republicana de Catalunya* (ERC) and *Iniciativa per Catalunya Verds* (ICV). (The three-party government was constituted in December 2003, given the proximity to 2004 it has been considered as an event of 2004 year). This period ends up in 2010, coinciding with the Constitutional Court decision concerning the constitutionality of the Catalanian Statute of Autonomy (Catalonia's Basic Law) and the end of the three-party government in Catalonia. For Scotland, the period ended up with the entry of David Cameron in Downing Street. The last period studied is the one that takes place between 2011 and 2016, a phase that starts with the first SNP absolute majority to the Scottish parliament elections and with the return of CiU to the Generalitat presidency with President Artur Mas, as well as the Popular Party (PP) return to the Spanish government. The studied stage ends up with the election of Nicola Sturgeon as the First Minister of Scotland and the election of Carles Puigdemont as the president of the Catalanian Generalitat in 2016 regional elections.

## Hypothesis

Over this section we will be formulating a series of hypothesis before diving into the statistical analysis. The first hypothesis (H1) will be focusing on the profile and common characteristics among Catalanian and Scottish independence.

There are already several studies focused on the social and demographic characteristics of those citizens that are prone to secessionism. The seminal investigation of Lucien LeDuc proved that support for separatism in Quebec was higher within young and educated citizens (LeDuc, 1977). Since this first study, it has become usual to include such type of variables in the multivariable analysis on separatism support (Pammett, LeDuc, 2001; Liñeira, 2012; Serrano, 2013; Boylan, 2015; Burg, 2015; Pattie, Johnston, 2017; Rodon, Guinjoan, 2018).

On the other hand, subjective national identity has inspired a great amount of studies (Brand, Mitchell, SurrIDGE, 1993; Linz, 2008; Chernyha, Burg, 2012; Burg, 2015; Dalle Mulle, 2015; Liñeira, Cetrà, 2015; Muñoz, Tormos, 2015; Olivieri, 2015; Zwet, 2015; Rodon, Guinjoan, 2018) and despite the fact that the bond found between subjective national identity and the support of secessionism does not need to be necessary, the empirical evidence shows that when the identification with the region is bigger than the identification with the state, the probability of the individual demanding territorial autonomy (Pérez-Nievas, Bonet, 2006: 126; Moreno, Lecours, 2009: 25) or the independence increases (Chernyha, Burg, 2012: 780; Boylan, 2015: 778; Burg, 2015: 300).

Lastly, sympathy, memory or voting percentage of secessionist parties are other variables that have also been related with its support (Medina, Rico, 2017; Pattie, Johnston, 2017; Álvarez Pereira, Portos, Vourdas, 2018; Bel, Cuadras-Morató, and Rodon, 2019). Taken into account all mentioned above, our first hypothesis states as follows: H1 (common independentist profile): The younger, most educated individual, showing sympathy or identifying themselves with secessionist parties and those who have a predominant subjective national identity or exclusively regional identity will all be prone on independence for Catalonia and Scotland.

In addition to H1, will be exploring an economically based hypothesis (H2). This second hypothesis will be centred on Donald Horowitz' competition over resources thesis (Horowitz, 1985). According to this author, in regions with great internal and external immigration flows there is a competition over resources between immigrants and native population. When these resources are limited, as it happens over an economic crisis, the competition for the resources aggravates and the native population with harsh economic problems that experiences the competition for the resources, can express their dissatisfaction through a nationalist mobilization (Horowitz, 1985). According to this theory, those economically vulnerable sectors should increase their support for independency over the years of economic crisis. This is why our second hypothesis states as follows: H2 (competition over resources and economic crisis): During the worst economic crisis years, there would be an increase on supporting the independence of Catalonia among the most economically vulnerable sectors of population, mainly unemployed.

## Statistical analysis

### Selection of variables

Coding the variables for the analysis as the dependent variable for both cases, we chose the question about the political preferences for the territorial organization of the state as we consider it the most adequate to register the independence support rather than proxies such as voting memory or direct intention of vote (Porta, Portos, 2020: 2). Along the coding process, we grouped up those options referring to an independent state on the one hand and, on the other hand, we grouped the answers referring to any other type of territorial organization.

To carry out the logistic regression, we will be using several independent variables, many of them common to the Scottish and Catalanian case, but some of them will be specific to each case or to a determined model due to the characteristics of each case along with the limitations of data bases.

The first group of common variables will be the so-called social and demographic ones such as sex, age, studies, or occupation. This type of variables is commonly used throughout political behaviour studies, at least since the pioneer studies of the Columbian School (Berelson, Lazarfled, McPhee, 1954; Berelson, Lazarfled, Gaudet, 1968).

One of the biggest similarities between Scotland and Catalonia is that both territories have developed national identities that are alternative to the state national identity (Liñeira, Cetrà, 2015: 258). These identities have been promoted and disseminated by non-state-wide governments, political parties and political and social actors (Martínez-Herrera, 2010: 10). Most of the population have developed a dual identity in which their territorial identity has lived together with the state identity, as public opinion shows in the cases of Scotland and Catalonia regarding subjective national identity. This means that most of Scottish people see themselves as Scottish and British and that most of Catalonians feel up to some point Catalanian and Spanish (Moreno, 1988; Keating, 1996). Because of this, we will be using the subjective national identity as an independent variable for both selected study cases.

Other the commonly used independent variable for this type of study is party identification. It is a very interesting variable to look at, moreover, if we take into account that one of the similarities between both study cases is contemporary institutional-cum-political crisis (Mota, 2015; Colomé, 2017; Pattie, Johnston, 2017; Pérez-Nievas, Rama Caamaño, 2017), where the traditional social and democratic parties – PSOE/PSC/Labour Party – have suffered a great electoral decrease within these territories. However, the crisis and the change in the Catalanian political party system has been bigger than that registered in Scotland. Besides, the fall of PSC/PSOE, the dissolution of CiU, the change in the ideological position on secessionism of Convergència Democràtica de Catalunya (CDC) the afterwards founding of CDC as the Partit Democràta Europeu Català (PDCAT), the fact that this new party ran for different elections under different

electoral names, and the upturn of new state-wide political parties with parliamentary representation – Podemos y Ciudadanos (C's) and non-state-wide parties Candidatura d'Unitat Popular (CUP) – corroborate so. In the case of Catalonia, we will be using as independent variables, for all our models, sympathy for the following political parties: PP, CiU/PDCAT, ERC, PSC/PSOE and ICV/Podemos, to which we will be adding as independent variables the sympathy for the political parties of CUP and C's in the last period (between 2010 and 2016). On the other hand, for the Scottish analysis, we will be using as an indicator the sympathy for the Conservative Party, Labour Party, Liberal Party and the SNP. Moreover, in both study cases, we will be adding a variable with which we will be distinguishing between the sympathy for national sovereignty parties and non-sovereignty parties. The last common independent variable for Scotland and Catalonia would be the interest in politics. This variable has also been used as independent variable and control variable in several studies versing about changes in the territorial organization preferences of the state (Muñoz, Tormos, 2015; Rodon, Guinjoan, 2018; Pérez Castañós, García Rabadán, 2019).

As specific independent variables for Catalonia we will be introducing social and demographic variables such as provinces and municipality size<sup>1</sup> as well as other variables directly linked with the Catalonian reality. Among these variables, one of the most studied factors by the literature, that is considered as typical of the Catalan case and is seen as a cultural element in the Catalonian political identity – differentiating it from the Scottish case – is the linguistic element. Spain is a plurilingual state, in which Catalonia has a specific language that lives together with the Spanish language. This multilingual characteristic and bilingualism inside Catalonia differentiates it from other territories with a specific language such as Flanders, Valona, Swiss cantons or Quebec, where the societies are monolingual (Miley, 2008). In the case of Catalonia, the Catalonian language is an important part of the collective identity and those citizens that consider the Catalonian language as their mother language register differences as far as identity, origin, social class and electoral behaviour is concerned from those citizens considering Spanish as their mother language (Miley, 2008; Simon, Orriols, 2016). Therefore, we will be introducing as independent variable, in our study, the intensity of the Catalonian language usage among respondents while at home or with friends.

The abovementioned institutional crisis and political party system crisis, both in Spain and Catalonia, have brought us to the conclusion of adding to our analysis variables such as: the legal system evaluation, the Generalitat government evaluation, State government evaluation, approval or disagreement with the statement “political parties divide people” (added just in analysis over temporal phases), and satisfaction with the

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<sup>1</sup> The electoral behaviour studies show that support of independence is bigger in Girona and Lleida than in Barcelona. Moreover, support of sovereignty parties is higher in small municipalities in the centre and north of Catalonia the bigger and situated closer the municipalities are, the less support for the independence they show (Ortega Villodres, Trujillo Cerezo, 2017: 87-97).

democracy (observed just in the phases rooted between 2004 and 2010 and 2011 and 2016). The last specific variable in the Catalan case would be the importance given to each election, which will allow us to link the analysis with the bibliography versing on differential abstention and dual vote in Catalonia (Montero, Font, 1989; 1991; Pallarés, Font, 1994; Riba, 2000; Riera Sagrera, 2011; Liñeira, Vallès, 2014), as well as allow us to search for an explication on the recent changes in participation and electoral behaviour tendencies in Catalonia.

On the other hand, as for the Scottish case, on top of the common independent variables we will be adding three categorical variables about subjective national identity. In this specific case the respondents will be asked about their identification as Europeans, British or Scottish. The variables of 'Britishness' and 'Scottishness' are common in Anglo-Saxon scientific literature (Schrijver, 2006; Tilley, Heath, 2007; Devine, 2008; McHarg et al., 2016; Keating, 2017; Pattie, Johnston, 2017; Cetrà, Harvey, 2019). Moreover, we will be adding a primordialist variable such as the pride of Scottish citizens in their country if Scotland was independent – variable only added for the 2011 to 2015 analysis. There will also be added classical factors observed in nationalism studies, that is religion influence (O'Brian, 1988; Hastings, 2000) and the discrimination on economic redistribution (Hechter, 1976; 2000; 2001; Nairn, 1990).

With regard to religion, while in Spain the Catholic religion is vastly professed among, Scotland had a schism with England in the 16th century. Nowadays, there is a sensitive religious division within Scotland, where the majority of citizens does not profess any religion, closely followed by those professing the Scottish Presbyterian Church and followers of other Christian faiths (Clark, 2019). This is why we will be adding categorical independent variables having into account these three groups.

Discriminatory economic redistribution with the peripheral areas is one of the mainly arguments used by the secessionist supporters, as well as the conception of the Welfare State which is a fact of friction between the Scottish and British governmental institutions. In Scotland, welfare politics have a great support from the public opinion, being a limestone in favour of independence debates (Scottish Government, 2013; Liñeira, Cetrà, 2015; Mooney, Scott, 2015; Cortizas, Antunes, 2016; Liñeira, Henderson, Delaney, 2017). In order to observe the importance given to these arguments by the independence supporters in Scotland, we have introduced some related independent variables to the specific analysis for this territory, such as feeling of the respondent of being benefiting economically from the United Kingdom (categorical England and categorical Scotland); a continuous variable about Scottish trust in the Great Britain government working on behalf of Scotland's interest; another continuous variable on the share of fair government expenditure in Scotland (only added for the analysis done between 2004 and 2011 and from 2011 and 2015); and one last variable in which the respondents are asked about the hypothetical economic situation of an independent Scotland (this last one just for the temporal phase of 2011 to 2015).

Finally, we will be adding categorical independent variables on the institution respondents considered to be the most influential in their daily lives and one variable on the institution that should be the most influential (just for the analysis on 1999 to 2003 and the analysis done from 2004 to 2010). With these variables, we will try to get equivalent data for the variable on the level of importance given to different elections used for the Catalan case and we will also approach the accountability in those states with multilevel governments (León, 2011; Bourne, 2014).

### **Logistic regression**

Having into account all of the variables we will, through the next paragraphs, discuss the results of the analysis for Catalonia and Scotland.

Focussing on the first model for Catalonia, we can observe that a young age is linked with a higher probability of aligning with the political preference for an independent state. When it comes to occupation, pensioners and unemployed are more eager to support the independence than the working respondents. On the other hand, it is possible to see that the bigger the subjective national identity in Catalonia, the bigger the probability of opting for independent states when considering political preferences on territorial organization. Also, it can be observed that PP/PSOE voters are less eager for independence than those voting on CiU/PDCAT, but they still will be less eager for independence than ERC voters. It seems logical that those voters of political parties with secessionist positions are more eager for supporting independence than voters of non-secessionist position formations. Besides, there is a higher probability of the Lleida province citizens to support a different territorial organization than those of the province of Barcelona and, also, it is more probable that the support on independent state option comes from citizens living in small municipality rather than from those living in bigger municipalities. The usage of Catalan language at home or with friends has also a positive effect on the support of an independent state when it comes to territorial organization, as well as in the positive evaluation of the Generalitat government and the negative vision of the Spanish legal system and its government. Lastly, giving a higher importance to the local elections or the general or regional elections, it has a negative effect and statistically significant in the figures of support of a territorial option involving an independent state in Catalonia (see Table 1).

Bringing into the spotlight the models resulting from the diverse temporal phases analyzed, it is possible to imply that the shorter the life experience, the bigger the Catalan subjective national identity. Being ERC supporter, positively evaluating the Generalitat government and negatively the Spanish government, as well as giving a bigger importance to the autonomic elections are all great predictors of political preferences for an independent Catalan state. However, the minor level of education only works in the second and third model. The negative effect of being PSOE voter, being inter-

ested in politics and the municipality size arise as explanatory factors with a statistical significant figure for the years from 1999 to 2003. Besides, in this same exact temporal stage, the fact of speaking Catalanian at home or with friends and agreeing with the statement that “political parties only divide” has also proved a positive statistical effect the support of an independent State. If we move on to the regression model that comprehends the years from 2004 to 2010, it is possible to observe that speaking Catalanian at home has a positive and statistically significant effect on the support of an independent state. While giving a bigger importance to the municipality elections rather than the autonomic ones and the satisfaction with overall democracy have all shown a negative effect (see Table 1).

The most interesting is model number four, as it covers the period in which the support for an independent state in Catalonia has registered a bigger increase, and as it has already been mentioned, it is as well the model with the highest explanatory capacity<sup>2</sup>. If we bring into the spotlight the different independent variables of this model, it is possible to see that along with the age, the national subjective identity, being a sympathizer of ERC, the evaluation on the Generalitat government and the government of Spain and the importance of the general elections, there is a great number of other variables with a statistical significance. Among the variables with a significant statistical positive effect and, therefore, contributing to the increase of the probability of the respondents to be eager for an independent state, we can enlist for example being a sympathizer of the CUP, being a Girona citizen, speaking Catalanian at home and being supporter of any of the political parties supporting sovereignty causes. This last variable includes the supporters or sympathizers of CiU/PDCAT, ERC and CUP, among others. It may have gained statistical significance in this specific temporal period due to the change in the position of CiU with regard to independence during 2012. It is important to highlight that, historically, CiU had always maintained a non-secessionist nationalist attitude, being eager for negotiating with the central state administration and the government of the region by gradually obtaining higher autonomy figures and bigger concessions (Conversi, 1997; Díez Medrano, 1999; Aguilera de Prat, 2002; Keating, Wilson, 2009). These changes over the last studied period, as Artur Mas’ government pleaded as secessionist after the Diada mass demonstration that had taken place in September 2012, may have caused the change in the positions regarding independence of many of its voters. On the other hand, among the independent variables with a negative statistical significance, we can find being a C’s supporter, living in Lleida, giving a bigger importance to the local elections rather than to the autonomic ones, overall democracy satisfaction and the positive evaluation of the Spanish legal system. The last two mentioned variables are widely related to the aforementioned institutional crisis within the Spanish political system.

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<sup>2</sup> Reported Nagelkerke’s pseudo R square of 0.636, Cox-Snell’s pseudo R square of 0.474 and a proportional reduction in error of 24.6%.

**Table 1.** Decisive factors of political preferences for an independent state in Catalonia (logistic regression)

Variable	General	1999-2003	2004-2010	2011-2016
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
Gender ( <i>Man</i> )	-0.043	-0.031	0.106	-0.015
Age	-0.017***	-0.025***	-0.021***	-0.022***
Education level	-0.010	-0.094*	-0.086**	-0.054
Activity situation ( <i>paid work</i> )				
Studying	-0.014	0.004	-0.232	-0.069
Retired	0.221**	0.268	0.127	0.047
Unemployed	0.299***	-0.092	0.050	0.255
Doing housework	-0.030	0.235	0.001	-0.007
National identity scale	1.013***	0.910***	0.952***	1.138***
Party sympathy ( <i>CiU/PDCAT</i> )				
PP	-0.343*	-0.250	-0.284	-0.465
ERC	0.682***	0.633***	0.866***	1.171***
PSC/PSOE	-0.179**	-0.267*	0.106	0.079
ICV/Podemos	-0.156	-0.190	0.025	-0.189
C's				-2.150***
CUP				1.147***
Sympathy for non-secessionist party				
Sympathy for secessionist party	0.234***	0.174	0.059	0.333**
Interest in politics	0.029	-0.101*	-0.016	0.034
Province ( <i>Barcelona</i> )				
Girona	0.017	-0.041	0.083	0.304*
Lleida	-0.270***	-0.241	-0.019	-0.598***
Tarragona	-0.112	0.063	-0.099	-0.222
Municipality size	-0.143***	-0.189**	-0.109	-0.061
Language that you use most often at home	0.114**	0.098	0.143*	0.164*
Language that you use most often with friends	0.107*	0.380***	0.067	0.147
Evaluation of the legal system	-0.036**	0.008	-0.010	-0.087***
Evaluation of the government of the Generalitat	0.101***	0.059*	0.066**	0.253***
Evaluation of the Spanish government	-0.188***	-0.125***	-0.145***	-0.131***
Most important election (regional elections)				
General elections	-0.549***	-0.264**	-0.664***	-0.792***

Variable	General	1999-2003	2004-2010	2011-2016
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
Municipal elections	-0.366***	-0.121	-0.396***	-0.433**
Agreement: Political parties only divide		0.366***	0.094	-0.022
Satisfaction with the way democracy works			-0.235***	-0.255***
Constant	-3.749***	-3.852***	-2.797***	-3.651***
N	16805	5173	6419	4930
	* p<0.05	** p<0.01	*** p<0.001	

Source: compilation based on (Instituto de Ciencias Políticas y Sociales, 2020).

It should be noted that the main Catalan independence leaders brought to the table strong critics to the legal and democratic Spanish system (see Table 1).

With regard to the general model of Scotland, we can observe that being young, male, with a lower level of formal education, being unemployed or pensioner, in contrast to being professionally active, having a bigger Scottish subjective national identity and being a supporter of secessionist parties and not supporting conservatives, labour or liberal parties, showing an interest in politics, having a feeling of European belonging rather than British, not being religious or being Christian (with the exception of the Scottish Presbyterians) and thinking that England benefits economically from the relation to Great Britain are, all considered to be significant statistical predictors of respondents eager for supporting an independent Scotland (see Table 2).

Carefully examining the four models for Scotland, we can declare that several independent variables show a statistically significant relation with the dependent variable in all of the four models. Among these variables with a positive relation, we can mention the subjective national identity, being a sympathizer of secessionist parties, not considering yourself as religious and thinking that England most benefits the most among the regions in the United Kingdom. With a negative effect on the dependent variable, we can find factors such as the age, being supporter of conservatives, supporting the liberal party, and a British belonging feeling (see Table 2).

Moreover, in the second and third model, we can see that for these temporal periods: being a male, feeling European and considering oneself Christian (not belonging to the Scottish Church) have a positive statistically significant relation with the dependent variable. On the other hand, a lower education also increases the probability of respondents being eager for preferring an independent state. Feeling Scottish has a negative statistically relevant effect on the dependent variable for the second model. This could be due to the transverse of feeling Scottish between the Caledonian region citizens (Keating, 2012: 97). With regard to the occupation, we can observe that while being a pensioner shows a positive statistically significant relation for the years from 1999 to 2003, it does not show it for the years 2004 to 2010, where unemployed respondents

**Table 2.** Decisive factor on preferences of an independent Scottish state (logistic regression analysis)

Variable	General	1999-2003	2004-2010	2011-2015
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
Gender ( <i>Man</i> )	0.182***	0.206*	0.252**	0.124
Age	-0.014***	-0.020***	-0.010**	-0.011**
Education level	-0.047**	-0.055*	-0.072**	-0.062
Activity situation ( <i>paid work</i> )				
Studying	-0.074	-0.259	-0.016	0.211
Retired	0.217**	0.397**	0.105	0.039
Unemployed	0.394***	0.198	0.604***	0.122
Doing housework	0.092	0.107	0.214	-0.112
National identity scale	0.462***	0.527***	0.366***	0.312***
Party identification ( <i>SNP</i> )				
Conservative	-1.020***	-0.658***	-0.774***	-0.844**
Labour	-0.299***	-0.157	-0.253*	-0.391**
Liberal	-0.544***	-0.543**	-0.335*	-0.822**
Identification for non-secessionist party				
Identification for secessionist party	1.021***	0.920***	0.833***	0.713***
Interest in politics	0.068**	0.052	0.043	0.139**
British	-0.566***	-0.334***	-0.531***	-0.604***
European	0.337***	0.278*	0.485***	0.348
Scottish	-0.084	-0.530**	-0.144	-0.009
Religion ( <i>Church of Scotland</i> )				
Other Christian	0.311***	0.410***	0.223*	0.231
No religion	0.367***	0.372***	0.275**	0.300*
UK benefits (Scottish) economy				
UK benefits (English) economy	0.972***	0.692***	0.788***	0.638***
Trust UK govt. works in Scotland interest		-0.427***	-0.317***	
Which institution have most influence ( <i>Scottish Parliament</i> )				
Westminster		-0.149	-0.062	
Which institution should have most influence ( <i>Scot. Parl.</i> )				
Westminster		-1.372***	-0.867***	
Scots get fair share govt. spending			-0.134**	-0.173**
If indep.. Scotland's economy....				0.677***

Variable	General	1999-2003	2004-2010	2011-2015
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
If indep.. people will be less/ prouder				0.548***
Constant	-2.609***	-1.300***	-0.975**	-5,778***
N	14304	4586	4462	3740
		* p<0.05	** p<0.01	*** p<0.001

Source: compilation based on (NatCen Social Research, 2017).

do show that relation. There are also some specific variables that significantly increase the probability of a preferring an independent state. The example of such variable can be the distrust of the Great Britain's government working for the Scottish benefit and being against the fact that Westminster should be the most influential institution in the daily life of citizens (variables working for both models). It is also the case of the believing that Scotland is receiving an unfair share of government spending in comparison to what it should be really receiving, but it has to be taken into account that this variable is included just in the third and fourth model of the logistic regression (see Table 2).

In the Catalan case, the fourth model corresponding to the years from 2011 to 2015, is the one found to have the biggest explanatory capacity<sup>3</sup>. In this case, this temporal period corresponds to the biggest growth of independence, since from 2012 one can observe a gradual, but clear, increase in preferences for an independent Scottish state, registering a sharp increase in August 2014 and the two last weeks before the referendum (Liñeira, Henderson, Delaney, 2017: 169-170; Pattie, Johnston, 2017: 83), in which the independence support reached levels unknown until that time. In this model, apart from the statistically significant variables that are common to all the models, it is possible to see that other variables such as being a supporter of a liberal party, sharing the opinion that Scotland is receiving a lower public expenditure than deserved, register a negative statistically significant relation with regard to the dependent variable. Being interested in politics, as well as the belief that an independent Scotland will feature a better economy and that an independent Scotland would increase the pride of its citizens, have also shown a positive statistically significant relation to being eager for having an independent state (see Table 2).

## Conclusions

Once both cases have been tackled, there are some common conclusions. For starters, there are several variables statistically significant and with a great amount of explanatory power that work for both study cases, i.e. age and subjective national identity. These variables are significant for all the models and keep the same sign – negative for the

<sup>3</sup> Reported a Nagelkerke's pseudo R square of 0.561, Cox-Snell's pseudo R square of 0.4 and a proportional reduction in error of 15.87%.

age, positive for the subjective national identity – throughout the carried-out analysis, which is also the case for variables such as being a pensioner, being unemployed or supporting secessionist political parties for the general models on Scotland and Catalonia.

Focusing on the common variables, it is possible to say that the LeDuc's investigation about the Quebec separatism support is also applicable up to 50% in Catalonia and Scotland (LeDuc, 1977), as younger citizens have a higher probability of opting for an independent state, but it does not happen the same in the case of the most educated citizens. The level of education is statistically significant just in two temporal periods for Catalonia – models two and three – and in the general model, and two temporal periods in Scotland – models one, two and three – but, contrary to what happens in LeDuc's study for Quebec, the sign is always negative.

It is possible to say that the first hypothesis (H1) does not totally apply to this study. In spite of the fact that younger individuals, individuals with a subjective national identity predominantly or exclusively alternative to the state and individuals that identify themselves with sovereignty parties (ERC for Catalonia and sovereignty parties for Scotland) are prone to support the independence of Scotland and Catalonia, it does not seem to apply to those individuals with a higher level of education.

In fact, this last variable not only is statistically non-significant for some of the models, but has a negative relation with the dependent variable of our study in every model, meaning that a higher education implies less independence support.

With regard to the second hypothesis (H2), we can observe through the logistic regression analysis that for the general models of Catalonia and Scotland the unemployed group has a higher statistically significant probability of supporting independence.

This discovery would be in the line with Horowitz' thesis (Horowitz, 1985), but for the Catalanian case this hypothesis is not verified in any of temporal periods, and what is more important, it does not appear in the model four which is the one tracking the peak years of the economic crisis. Meanwhile in Scotland, the unemployed variable is statistically significant for the general model and the temporal period comprehended between 2004 and 2010. Something similar happens with the pensioners, another social group that even though they do not get into the resource competition as Horowitz outlines, it is a part of the population that has traditionally encountered economic problems. In this case, this group also registers a positive statistically significant relation with the dependent variable in the general models of the logistic regression for Catalonia and Scotland. Moreover, in Scotland, this relation appears also in the first temporal period (1999 to 2003).

Taking into account these results, we cannot confirm the second hypothesis (H2), nevertheless they appear to be extremely interesting as Catalanian nationalism has been traditionally studied as a bourgeois or accommodated middle-class nationalism (Balcells, 1996; Díez Medrano, 1999; Miley, 2007; Cramer, 2015; Miley, Garvía, 2019). The fact that in this study economically unprotected social sectors, such as the unemployed, have

a higher probability of supporting Catalanian independence than employed people in the general model, bringing into the spotlight the new social sectors that have been attracted by independentism and from where the movement may have nourished its growth.

Finally, the most important symmetry between both studied cases can be seen in the analysis carried out by temporal phases. During the last temporal phase, from 2011 onwards, the model for Catalonia, as well as for the one of Scotland, show a bigger explanatory percentage in the logistic regression than the rest of the periods. This throws into the spotlight a very interesting information, given that it is during this period when the territorial preferences turn to an independent state approach, as the public opinion seems to be eager for this option, casting a bigger social mobilization supporting the independence of their territories. Moreover, the analysis not only just show the characteristic profile of independence supporters, but it also registers the fact that as the Scottish and Catalanian public opinion was more inclined towards independent positions, the independence supporters seemed to turn out more homogeneous. This means that independence supporters look more alike each other in the last studied period of time than, for instance, in the first one. It is interesting to highlight the fact that the homogeneity shown for the last period is slightly bigger in the Catalanian case, but way over the figures registered for the other studied temporal periods for both of the territories.

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**Abstract:** The following article aims to make headway on the knowledge related to the elements that explain the steep increase of secessionist nationalism during the 21st century in the peripheral territories of plurinational Western long-established democracies, such as the ones existing in the United Kingdom and Spain. In order to do so, we will be focusing on the quick change observed in the preferences as to the state territorial organization in Catalonia and Scotland. Through the usage of the logistic regression technique, a longitudinal analysis will be carried out to analyze the principal characteristics of the Catalanian and Scottish independence profile throughout the period comprehended between 1999 and 2016.

**Keywords:** Catalonia, Scotland, secessionism, logistic regression

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