

**The impact of interpersonal and institutional trust on  
secessionist support in established democracies: Evidence from  
Scotland, Catalonia and Flanders**

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The impact of interpersonal and institutional trust on secessionist support in established democracies: Evidence from Scotland, Catalonia and Flanders

## **Abstract**

The last two decades have seen a substantial increase in the number of secession attempts taking place. Secession has therefore become a more salient issue across a growing number of states, simply because it has become a more realistic possibility. As this is a fairly recent phenomenon, secession has also historically been somewhat neglected by researchers, both empirically and theoretically, and so the dynamics of support for secession have not been analysed in as granular detail as more regular forms of voting behaviour. In explaining the dynamics of secessionist support, this thesis will examine the impact of both interpersonal and institutional trust on an individual's likelihood of supporting secession.

The most commonly identified predictors of support for secession, national identity and secessionist party identification, are generally considered to be stable variables, or at least variables which cannot easily be affected by policy makers. Levels of trust meanwhile, have been found to be more malleable, both at the interpersonal level and the institutional level.

Institutional trust and in particular trust in governments, has been found to be affected by a number of factors, including institutional performance relative to citizens' expectations, transparency, and representation of citizens' concerns. Levels of interpersonal trust meanwhile, which exist horizontally between individuals and groups of individuals, can be influenced by public policy measures, such as the promotion of civic engagement and community building projects. Understanding the role of trust in shaping support for secession is therefore extremely important to separatists and unionists alike, as it has the potential to provide valuable new information about the dynamics of secessionist support, as well as the potential measures which could be taken to address secessionist demands.

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## Chapter 1. Introduction

In established democracies, the number of attempted and successful secessions have historically been very low, with secessionist parties facing the difficult task of persuading the public that independence would be more advantageous than remaining in the existing state. If only well-established democracies are considered (that is, those with at least ten consecutive years of universal suffrage), there has never been a single case of secession through referendum or electoral victory.<sup>1</sup> As a historically rare phenomenon, secession has in the past, been somewhat neglected by researchers,<sup>2</sup> particularly when compared to more regular forms of voting behaviour.

Recent decades though, have seen the rise of pro-independence politics across several regions in well-established European democracies, including Scotland, Catalonia and Flanders. As the risk of secession in mature democracies has increased, secession has become a more pressing concern to a growing number of states. The subject matter of this thesis is therefore timely and relevant to current political and scholarly debate.

Furthermore, the topic of secession and the dynamics it involves have potentially far-reaching implications. Defined here as the formal withdrawal by a member unit, from a central authority,<sup>3</sup> the secession of a nation from a state necessarily involves the breakup of one state and the creation (or alteration) of another. While the specific implications vary depending on the nations and states concerned, the process is likely to have a significant impact on areas such as trade, infrastructure, and defence and security.

This thesis will aim to further inform the literature on the dynamics of secessionist support by examining the impact of trust on an individual's preferences towards secession. While the most commonly identified predictors of secessionist support (national identity and secessionist party identification) are generally considered to be stable variables, or at least

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<sup>1</sup> Stephane Dion, 'Why is Secession Difficult in Well-Established Democracies? Lessons from Quebec', *British Journal of Political Science* 26 (2) (1996): 269

<sup>2</sup> Allen Buchanan, 'Self-determination and the Right to Secede', *Journal of International Affairs* 45 (2) (1992): 347-365

<sup>3</sup> John R. Wood, 'Secession: A Comparative Analytical Framework', *Canadian Journal of Political Science*, 16 (1981): 107-34;

Viva Ona Bartkus, *The Dynamic of Secession* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999): 3

variables which cannot easily be affected by policy makers, levels of trust have been found to be more malleable. Levels of institutional trust and in particular trust in governments, have been found to be affected by factors such as transparency, or performance relative to citizens' expectations.<sup>4</sup> Levels of interpersonal trust between groups of individuals meanwhile, can be influenced by public policy measures, including the promotion of civic engagement and community building projects.<sup>5</sup> A comprehensive analysis of the role trust plays in the dynamics of secession therefore has the potential to provide valuable insights for those concerned with the potential measures which could be taken to address secessionist demands. In order to analyse the impact of trust on secessionist support, this thesis will consider four key research questions:

1. How does an individual's trust in government impact on their likelihood of supporting secession?
2. How does an individual's trust in other citizens affect their likelihood of supporting secession?
3. How does trust impact the relationship between national identity and support for secession?
4. How does trust affect the relationship between party identification and secessionist support?

In addressing these questions, the thesis will focus on trust at both the interpersonal level and the institutional level. Focussing on the role of interpersonal trust, this research will primarily consider the levels of trust they have in two groups of individuals: those from the potential secessionist region, and those from the current, existing state. In analysing the relationship between institutional trust and secessionist support meanwhile, the thesis will

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<sup>4</sup> Arthur Miller and Ola Listhaug, 'Political Performance and Institutional Trust', in Pippa Norris (ed.), *Critical Citizens: Global Support for Democratic Government* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999): 204-216;

Ben Seyd, 'How do citizens evaluate public officials: The role of performance and expectations on political trust,' *Political Studies* 63 (1) (2015): 73-90;

Gary Orren, 'Fall from Grace: The Public's Loss of Faith in Government', in Joseph S. Nye, Philip D. Zelikow and David C. King (eds.), *Why People Don't Trust Government* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1997): 77-107;

Jenny Graham, William O'Connor, John Curtice and Alison Park, *Guiding Principles: Public Attitudes towards Conduct in Public Life* (London: National Centre for Social Research, 2002): 23-44

<sup>5</sup> Robert D. Putnam, 'Bowling Alone: America's declining social capital', *Journal of Democracy* 6 (1995): 65-78; Coleman, *Foundations of Social Theory*

test the impact of both trust in the government of the existing state, and trust in the government of the potential secessionist region.

In analysing the research questions above, this thesis aims to fill an important gap in the literature on secession. Many of the empirical studies into the dynamics of secessionist support control for some form of trust (most commonly levels of trust in the government of the existing state). Generally, trust is included in such models only as a control variable however and, as it is not the core focus of these studies, it is not tested in extensive detail or granularity. Similarly, much of the literature on why nations need their own states and the importance of national identity refers to trust, but rarely outlines the intricacies of how trust itself is expected to shape support for secession. This thesis therefore seeks to provide a novel and original contribution, which is also situated within an existing, active body of literature. In testing both the direct impact and the moderating effects of trust at both the interpersonal and institutional level, this thesis also aims to provide a rigorous analysis of the role of trust across the three case studies.

## 1.1 Literature review

This thesis will begin by exploring the key literature which has so far been produced on the subjects of secession and trust. The first sub-section of this chapter will outline the definition of secession which will be used throughout the analysis, before examining the existing theories of secession, including the normative questions of what makes a secession attempt legitimate,<sup>6</sup> and why secessionists believe their regions require their own states.<sup>7</sup> Crucial to the understanding of these issues is the distinction between nations and states, as well as the

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<sup>6</sup> Aleksandr Pavkovic and Peter Radan, *The Ashgate Research Companion to Secession* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2011);

Allen Buchanan, *Secession: The Morality of Political Divorce from Fort Sumter to Lithuania and Quebec* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1991);

Allen Buchanan, 'Theories of Secession', *Philosophy & Public Affairs* 26 (1) (1997): 31-61;

Lee Buchheit, *Secession: The Legitimacy of Self-Determination* (New Haven, CT: Yale University, 1978);

Margaret Moore (ed.), *National Self-Determination and Secession* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998);

Margaret Moore, *The Ethics of Nationalism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001);

Michael Hechter, 'The Dynamics of Secession', *Acta Sociologica* 35 (4) (1992): 267-283;

Milica Z. Bookman, *The Economics of Secession* (New York: St Martin's Press, 1993)

<sup>7</sup> Michael Ignatieff, *Blood and Belonging: Journeys into the New Nationalism* (Toronto: Penguin Canada, 1993):

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notion of what constitutes a 'stateless nation'.<sup>8</sup> This chapter will consider the 'primordialist' and 'cultural collectivist' understandings of nationalism and statehood,<sup>9</sup> before highlighting the core arguments which have been raised in favour of, and in opposition to secession. Next, the main alternatives to secession will be examined, in particular the processes of federalism and devolution, along with their proponents and critics. The first sub-section will culminate by identifying which groups and individuals have in the past sought to secede, as well as which claims in practice, are currently recognised by international law, and consider how secessionist movements which are not recognised by international law advance their cause.

The second sub-section of this chapter will introduce the concept of trust, providing a general, over-arching definition, before addressing the more specific types of trust which will be the focus of this thesis: interpersonal and institutional trust.

## 1.2 Case selection

This chapter will outline the key reasons why Scotland, Catalonia and Flanders were selected as the most suitable cases for inclusion in the thesis. Firstly, it discusses the key similarities, which make the comparison of these cases particularly interesting and insightful. All are examples of 'advanced democracies', with at least ten years of universal suffrage, and are the types of society in which no successful secession attempt has yet come to fruition.<sup>10</sup> In each case, a substantial proportion of the population think of themselves as being a 'stateless nation' and nationalist parties ultimately committed to independence are among the most voted parties in the region.<sup>11</sup>

In selecting these cases, this thesis has adopted a 'most similar systems design' (MSSD), whereby the main independent variables are expected to differ, but the control

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<sup>8</sup> Scott Greer, *Nationalism and Self-Government: The Politics of Autonomy in Scotland and Catalonia* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2007): 15;

Jacques Leruez, *L'Ecosse, une nation sans Etat* (Lille: Presses universitaires de Lille, 1983)

<sup>9</sup> Alexander Keller Hirsch, 'Articulating Secession: Self-determination, decolonization and stateless independence amongst the Kanaka Maoli', *Social Identities* 21 (2) (2015): 102-116

<sup>10</sup> Dion, 'Why is Secession Difficult in Well-Established Democracies?'

<sup>11</sup> Paolo Dardanelli and James Mitchell, 'An independent Scotland? The Scottish National Party's bid for independence and its prospects,' *The International Spectator* 49 (3) (2014): 88-105

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variables are as similar as possible, allowing for a more detailed analysis of the cases' differences.

### **1.3 Hypotheses**

Building upon the theory from the literature review on both trust and secession, this chapter will outline the hypotheses which will be tested over the course of the thesis, as well as the theory behind testing them. These hypotheses will test for the direct impact of institutional and interpersonal trust on support for secession, as well as any moderating effect they may have on the relationships between secessionist support and two of its most reliable predictors: national identity and secessionist party identification. The more general hypotheses outlined in this chapter will provide a template for the case-specific specific hypotheses, which will be tested in the three case study chapters which follow it.

### **1.4 Methodology**

This chapter will explain the methodological decisions which enabled the analysis to take place, beginning by providing some detail about the three datasets chosen for analysis (the 2015 Scottish Social Attitudes survey, the 2015 Catalan Political Opinion Barometer and the 2014 PartiRep survey), discussing their respective sample sizes, collection methods and the timeframes over which the surveys were conducted.

Secondly, the chapter will discuss the regression models which were used to test the hypotheses, outlining the previous studies into the dynamics of secessionist support and the variables they chose to control for, which influenced the analysis in this thesis. It also highlights the dependent variable (support for secession), as well as the key independent variables (measures of institutional and interpersonal trust), explaining how each variable was operationalised in order to test the hypotheses.



## 1.5 Scotland

The first of the three case-study chapters introduces the Scottish case, providing some context about the Scottish secessionist movement and central role the Scottish National Party (SNP) has played in recent years, before outlining why each of the hypotheses tested are directly relevant to the case of Scotland.

As the necessary data to test Hypotheses 3, 4 and 5 was not available for the Scottish case, this chapter focused on the role of institutional trust, testing for the direct impact of trust in the UK government and trust in the Scottish government, on support for Scottish secession. While this particular case study cannot provide any insight into the role of individual-level trust, it provides a detailed analysis of the impact of institutional trust. In the second section of the analysis, this chapter tests for the moderating effect of trust in the UK government on the relationship between support for secession and SNP party identification.

## 1.6 Catalonia

This chapter introduces the case of Catalonia, providing some historical context and raising the question of why, after several decades of apparent stability, when the Catalan case was described and analysed as a paradigmatic example of a non-secessionist nationalism, with claims for self-government which stopped short of outright independence,<sup>12</sup> the question of Catalan independence is now cited as the single most serious issue confronting Spain.<sup>13</sup>

All four measures of trust are included in the regression model for Catalonia: trust in the Spanish government, trust in the Catalan government, trust in Spanish citizens and trust in Catalan citizens. Hypotheses 1 to 4 test for the direct impact of each of measure of trust on support for Catalan secession. Hypotheses 5 and 6 meanwhile, test for any statistically significant moderating impact on the relationships between support for Catalan secession and national identity, or secessionist party identification.

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<sup>12</sup> Ivan Serrano, 'Just a matter of identity? Support for independence in Catalonia,' *Regional and Federal Studies* 23 (5) (2013): 523-545;

Michael Keating, *Nations against the State* (London: MacMillan, 1996);

Monserrat Guibernau, *Nations without States* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1999);

Monserrat Guibernau, *The Identity of Nations* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2007)

<sup>13</sup> Andrew Dowling, *The Rise of Catalan Independence: Spain's Territorial Crisis* (New York: Routledge, 2018)

## **1.7 Flanders**

Finally, this thesis will analyse the case of Flanders, providing some background information about the region and its secessionist movement, including the centrality of the pro-secession parties Vlaams Belang (VB) and Nieuw-Vlaamse Alliantie (N-VA). The Flemish secessionist movement is particularly unusual in that while many separatists favour the creation of an entirely independent Flemish state, parts of the secessionist movement advocate reunion with the Netherlands.

As with the Catalan case, the data available for Flanders enables the inclusion of four measures of trust: trust in the Belgian government, trust in the Flemish government, feelings towards Walloons and feelings towards Dutch people. Again therefore, it will be possible to test for the direct impact of interpersonal and institutional-level trust, as well as its moderating effect on the relationship between Flemish secessionist support and two of its most robust predictors.

## **1.8 Conclusions**

Firstly, this chapter compares the results from Scotland, Catalonia and Flanders, outlining the main findings from the analyses, as well as the potential contributions the findings provide to the field of literature on the dynamics of secessionist support. Within each case, it will be possible to compare the strength of estimated regression coefficients and therefore analyse which measures of trust have the most substantial impact. Similarly, it will be possible to compare and contrast which measures of trust have a significant impact on support for secession across the three cases. This has the potential to provide a valuable insight into the dynamics of secessionist support, as well as the measures which policy makers are able to take to encourage or combat secessionism. Finally, this thesis will identify the limitations of the methodology and the data available, as well as outlining directions for further research.

## Chapter 2. Literature Review

### 2.1 Introduction

This chapter will explore the existing literature and research on secession and trust, to provide a detailed theoretical understanding of the two concepts and why they are expected to be linked.

Firstly, the focus of this chapter will be on the various definitions and types of secession which have been identified in previous studies, as well as past literature relating to the dynamics of secession and predictors of secessionist support. This section will culminate, by outlining the specific forms of secessionist movement which will be the focus this thesis: electorally successful secessionist movements in 'stateless nations', which operate within advanced democracies.

Secondly, this chapter will examine the broad concept of trust, before considering the forms which are expected to play a crucial role in shaping secessionist support: institutional and interpersonal trust.

### 2.2 Secession

Secession is defined here as the formal withdrawal from central authority by a member unit.<sup>14</sup> By its very nature, secession is considered divisive, in that it necessarily involves at least two conflicting camps: those seeking to break up the existing state and formally withdraw from the central authority, versus those aiming to keep it together.<sup>15</sup>

Instances of secession are very rare in established democracies, with the process generally perceived to be disruptive and shrouded in uncertainty.<sup>16</sup> In established democracies, the number of attempted and successful secessions have therefore historically been very low, with secessionist parties facing the difficult task of persuading the public that independence would be more advantageous than remaining in the existing state. In fact, if

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<sup>14</sup> Bartkus, *The Dynamic of Secession*, 3  
Wood, 'Secession', 107

<sup>15</sup> Wood, 'Secession', 110

<sup>16</sup> Dion, 'Why is Secession Difficult in Well-Established Democracies?'

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only well-established democracies are considered (that is, those with at least ten consecutive years of universal suffrage), no nation has ever successfully seceded through referendum or electoral victory.<sup>17</sup>

While Scotland, Catalonia and Flanders have all gained increased autonomy over the last few decades, secession has so far been prevented from taking place. Up to the present time, none of the three cases considered has witnessed the rise of a separatist movement sufficiently robust to force the independence of the region it claims to represent.<sup>18</sup> In spite of substantial support for Scottish, Catalan and Flemish nationalism, each respective movement appears to have been somehow accommodated through the device of particular devolution structures, which have ultimately succeeded in preventing secession.<sup>19</sup>

### **2.2.1 Theories of secession**

Much of the existing literature on secession focuses on the normative question of what makes a secession attempt legitimate.<sup>20</sup> In pursuing outright independence, Doyle highlights, secessionists are effectively declaring themselves a 'distinct people', who must have their own state.<sup>21</sup> This notion however, Michael Ignatieff states, raises the natural question as to 'why' such a region requires its own state.<sup>22</sup> This question is particularly pertinent, Ignatieff argues, in instances where a minority group already considers itself to constitute a nation, and has already gained substantial autonomy from the central state.<sup>23</sup>

Nations, Nenad Miscevic states, are traditionally distinguished from states in that whereas the former tends to consist of an 'ethnic or cultural community', the latter is a

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<sup>17</sup> Dion, 'Why is Secession Difficult in Well-Established Democracies? Lessons from Quebec', 269

<sup>18</sup> Montserrat Guibernau, 'National Identity, devolution and secession in Canada, Britain and Spain', *Nations and Nationalism* 12 (1) (2006): 51-76

<sup>19</sup> Guibernau, 'National Identity, devolution and secession in Canada, Britain and Spain', 69

<sup>20</sup> Pavkovic and Radan, *The Ashgate Research Companion to Secession*;

Buchanan, *Secession: The Morality of Political Divorce from Fort Sumter to Lithuania and Quebec*

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Moore (ed.), *National Self-Determination and Secession*;

Moore, *The Ethics of Nationalism*;

Hechter, 'The Dynamics of Secession';

Bookman, *The Economics of Secession*;

<sup>21</sup> Don Doyle (ed.), *Secession as an International Phenomenon: From America's Great Civil War to Contemporary Separatist Movements* (Athens, GA: The University of Georgia Press, 2010): 2

<sup>22</sup> Ignatieff, *Blood and Belonging*, xxiv

<sup>23</sup> Ignatieff, *Blood and Belonging*, xxiv

political entity with a high degree of sovereignty.<sup>24</sup> The modern global state system contains considerably more nations than states, many of which express a desire for greater recognition, even if that stops short of outright independence. A very small number of states however, are at least 90 percent ethnically homogenous.<sup>25</sup> Of the world's 194 states, James Ker-Lindsay argues, only 15 are what can be considered archetypal nation-states, whereby the political state unit is closely aligned to the ethnic nation it governs.<sup>26</sup>

In considering a nation's right to secession, or national self-determination, it is useful to first consider the theory of sovereignty and in particular, territoriality. The principle of territoriality, by which members of a community are defined in modern political authority, specifies that their membership derives from their residence within borders.<sup>27</sup> This principle is significant, Dan Philpott argues, in that its definition of membership does not inherently correspond with identity, the borders of a sovereign state not necessarily circumscribing a 'people' or a 'nation'.<sup>28</sup> In reality, each sovereign state may in fact encompass multiple identities, nations and peoples, as highlighted by national self-determination and irredentist movements.

According to traditional wisdom it is assumed that secessionist movements necessarily fall into one of two camps: 'primordialists', stressing essentialist criteria for social membership and 'cultural collectivists', instead emphasizing a socially constructed collective identity.<sup>29</sup> Philosophically, the first of the two ideal typical categories is most commonly associated with German Romanticism and in particular the works of Johann Gottfried von Herder and Johann Gottlieb Fichte.<sup>30</sup> Herder for instance, emphasises an intimate

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<sup>24</sup> Nenad Miscevic, 'Nationalism', *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Winter 2014 Edition), Edward N. Zalta (ed.), (<http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/win2014/entries/nationalism>, 1st March 2016)

<sup>25</sup> Walker Connor, 'Nation-building or Nation-destroying?' *World Politics* 24 (3) (1972): 319-355

<sup>26</sup> James Ker-Lindsay, *The Foreign Policy of Counter Secession: Preventing the Recognition of Contested States* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012): 5

<sup>27</sup> Dan Philpott, 'Sovereignty', *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Summer 2014 Edition), Edward N. Zalta (ed.), (<http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/sum2014/entries/sovereignty/>, 1<sup>st</sup> March 2016)

<sup>28</sup> Philpott, 'Sovereignty'

<sup>29</sup> Hirsch, 'Articulating Secession'

<sup>30</sup> Dominique Jacquin-Berdal, *Nationalism and Ethnicity in the Horn of Africa: A Critique of the Ethnic Interpretation* (New York: Edwin Mellen Press, 2002): 9

The impact of interpersonal and institutional trust on secessionist support in established democracies: Evidence from Scotland, Catalonia and Flanders

dependence of thought on language and the notion that as each language is learned in community, it follows that it is natural for each distinct community to think differently.<sup>31</sup>

Fichte's course of lectures on the 'Wissenschaftslehre', or 'Doctrine of Scientific Knowledge' meanwhile, argues are chiefly concerned with the concept of national identity.<sup>32</sup> His principal focus is the relationship between language and nationality and the question of national education, both of which are understood by Fichte as means toward a larger, cosmopolitan end.<sup>33</sup>

Primordialist perspectives on secession, Alexander Keller Hirsch states, adhere to an essentialist conception of collective identity that is rooted in 'biological commonalities', reflected in a 'common kinship pattern' or a 'genealogical baseline'.<sup>34</sup> With regard to ethnicity, primordialists argue that 'primordial objects' including biological factors and territorial location evoke traditions of belief and action without which ethnic groups and nationalities would not exist.<sup>35</sup> Once constructed, Murat Bayer highlights, primordialism assumes ethnic identity to be fixed.<sup>36</sup> As such, the primordial understanding the Rwandan genocide in 1994 asserts that as a result of the rigid, unchanging nature of ethnicity, cultural assimilation between the Hutu and Tutsi was impossible and conflict unavoidable.<sup>37</sup> In the modern political landscape, primordialism is considered to remain an integral influence in the enduring strength of ethnic ties.<sup>38</sup>

A strong critique of the primordial perspective on secession can be found in the work of Brian Barry, who fundamentally questions the inclusion of ethnicity as a basis for state formation, on the grounds that there is no necessary connection between 'descent', which is a biological matter, and 'interest', which is a matter of the fulfilment of human needs and

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<sup>31</sup> Michael Forster, 'Johann Gottfried von Herder', *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Summer 2015 Edition), Edward N. Zalta (ed.), (<http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/sum2015/entries/herder/>), 18<sup>th</sup> April 2016)

<sup>32</sup> Dan Breazeale, 'Johann Gottlieb Fichte', *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Spring 2014 Edition), Edward N. Zalta (ed.), (<http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/spr2014/entries/johann-fichte/>), 18<sup>th</sup> April 2016)

<sup>33</sup> Breazeale, 'Johann Gottlieb Fichte'

<sup>34</sup> Hirsch, 'Articulating Secession', 102

<sup>35</sup> Steven Gryosby, 'The verdict of history: The inextinguishable tie of primordiality huth – A response to Eller and Coughlan', *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 17(1) (1994): 164-171

<sup>36</sup> Murat Bayer, 'Reconsidering Primordialism: an alternative approach to the study of ethnicity', *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 32 (9) (2009): 1-20

<sup>37</sup> Steve Spencer, *Race and Ethnicity: Culture, Identity and Representation* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2006): 77

<sup>38</sup> Sandra Fullerton Joireman, *Nationalism and Political Identity* (Cornwall: MPG Books Ltd, 2003): 20

purposes.<sup>39</sup> As Lehning highlights, what is significant about ethnicity is that it is 'negative', in the sense that it is not possible to join an ethnic group by an act of will.<sup>40</sup>

The cultural collectivist conception of secessionist movements, it is argued, stresses a vision of collective identity that is socially constructed through a set of morals, values, beliefs, social cues, cognitive schemas and cultural idioms.<sup>41</sup> In contrast to the primordialist conception of collective identity based on a catalogue of ethnic criteria, biological essentialism and ethnic indigeneity, cultural collectivist calls for secession are founded on an identity rooted in shared ideology and overlapping consensus.<sup>42</sup>

Secession has historically been rejected by governments and legal scholars, on the grounds that it implies the breakup of existing states, which is a process widely perceived to be threatening to international peace and stability.<sup>43</sup> International law, Bertus de Villiers claims is at best, vague and pragmatic with regards to secession, generally resisting the notion, but accepting the reality thereof if no other options are available.<sup>44</sup> In practice, Lee Buchheit argues, international actors often only perceive secession attempts to be legitimate, after they have already taken place.<sup>45</sup>

The pros and cons of secession have been debated at length over the past two decades, in no small part due to the great increase in both the number of attempted and successful secessions during this period.<sup>46</sup> Some of the key arguments for and against secession are outlined below.

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<sup>39</sup> Brian Barry, *Democracy and Power: Essays in Political Theory* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991): 169

<sup>40</sup> Percy B. Lehning, 'Introduction', in Percy B. Lehning (ed.), *Theories of Secession* (London: Routledge, 1998): 1-12

<sup>41</sup> Hirsch, 'Articulating Secession: Self-determination, decolonization and stateless independence amongst the Kanaka Maoli', 102

<sup>42</sup> Hirsch, 'Articulating Secession: Self-determination, decolonization and stateless independence amongst the Kanaka Maoli', 108

<sup>43</sup> Rodolfo Stavenhagen, 'Self-determination: Right or Demon?', in Donald Clark and Robert Williamson (eds.), *Self-Determination: International Perspectives* (Basingstoke: Macmillan Press, Ltd., 1996): 1-11

<sup>44</sup> Bertus de Villiers, 'Secession – the Last Resort for Minority Protection', *Journal of Asian and African Studies* 48 (1) (2012): 81-96

<sup>45</sup> Buchheit, *Secession*

<sup>46</sup> Allen Buchanan, 'Secession', *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Summer 2013 Edition), Edward N. Zalta (ed.), (<http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/sum2013/entries/secession/>, 20<sup>th</sup> November, 2015)

### **2.2.2 Pros and cons of secession**

In opposition to secession, economic arguments are frequently raised. Although the primary purpose of secession and aim of secessionist movements is to change political structures and institutions, it is also likely to have profound economic consequences.<sup>47</sup> While at the macro level, new fiscal and monetary arrangements will need to be implemented (possibly including new currency arrangements), at the micro level, as a response to the breakup of the state, market structures and their regulation may change.<sup>48</sup>

Normative perspectives also refer to the economics of secession, emphasising distributive justice arguments and asserting that it is immoral for wealthy areas to opportunistically secede from poorer ones in an attempt to keep all of the wealth in a smaller group.<sup>49</sup> This process is an example of what Wayne Norman has termed a ‘vanity’ secession.<sup>50</sup> Indeed, Norman advocates the development of a ‘secession clause’ in order to distinguish between those secessionist movements with genuine just cause and those without it.<sup>51</sup> Such perspectives imply therefore that having a majority of citizens in favour of seceding from the wider state, does not guarantee the legitimacy of a secession claim. Rather, one ought to consider the primary motivation behind the secessionist movement in order to assess its legitimacy.

In Phillip Abbott’s critical examination of Abraham Lincoln’s successful resistance to the Confederacy of the United States, it is argued that to Lincoln, secession was a rejection of democratic privilege and left only two alternatives: despotism or anarchy.<sup>52</sup> Lincoln claimed, in his ‘infinite secession proposition’ that should secession succeed, it would set a precedent for minorities within each newly seceded unit to secede, in favour of attempting to

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<sup>47</sup> David N. F. Bell, ‘Scotland and small country independence: The assessment’, *Oxford Review of Economic Policy* 30 (2) (2014): 189-207

<sup>48</sup> Bell, ‘Scotland and small country independence: The assessment’, 189

<sup>49</sup> Wayne Norman, ‘The Ethics of Secession as the Regulation of Secessionist Politics’, in Margaret Moore (ed.), *National Self-Determination and Secession* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998): 55

<sup>50</sup> Norman, ‘The Ethics of Secession as the Regulation of Secessionist Politics’, 55

<sup>51</sup> Norman, ‘The Ethics of Secession as the Regulation of Secessionist Politics’, 52

<sup>52</sup> Philip Abbott, ‘The Lincoln propositions and the spirit of secession’, in Percy B. Lehning (ed.), *Theories of Secession* (London: Routledge, 1998): 179-204



acquiesce.<sup>53</sup> The Confederacy itself, he suggested, faced such a scenario, as Southern disunionists were already ‘being educated in the exact temper of doing this’.<sup>54</sup>

A number of democratic theorists, including Robert Dahl, argue that in practice, the recognition of a right to secede would render the existence of the state impossible, since any group facing coercion on any matter could demand autonomy through the threat of secession.<sup>55</sup> Writing from a liberal perspective, Allen Buchanan recognises this risk of ‘strategic bargaining’ as one of the chief moral arguments against secession.<sup>56</sup>

In favour of secession meanwhile, national self-determination and irredentist movements argue that nations such as Scotland, Catalonia and Flanders must have their own states, if they are to be able to protect themselves from the threat of cultural destruction.<sup>57</sup> Buchanan argues that in order for cultural preservation to provide an adequate justification for secession, five conditions must be met.<sup>58</sup>

Firstly, the culture in question must be ‘truly threatened’, or at least its future ‘prospects of demise’ must be significantly greater than those faced by cultures in general. Less dramatic means of preserving the culture in question must be unavailable or inadequate, while the culture must also meet minimal standards of moral decency (excluding for example, the cultures of the Nazis or the Khmer Rouge). Finally, the seceding group must not be seeking independence in order to establish a state that violates basic civil and political rights, nor may the state or any third party have a valid claim to the seceding territory. These conditions, it is claimed, are essential in order to avoid attempts to justify secession on grounds as broad as an alleged right of self-determination for all peoples.<sup>59</sup>

Another key justification for nations requiring their own states can be found in the work of John Stuart Mill, who argues that democracy can only function in mono-national states, as the establishment of solidarity, trust and patriotic fellow-feeling essential to its success are next to impossible in a state made up of different nationalities.<sup>60</sup> Similarly, David Miller asserts that secession can be crucial in order to successfully implement a system of

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<sup>53</sup> Abbott, ‘The Lincoln propositions and the spirit of secession’, 188

<sup>54</sup> T. Harry Williams (ed.), *Abraham Lincoln: Selected Speeches* (New York: Holt, Rinehart, Winston, 1957): 144

<sup>55</sup> Robert Dahl, *Democracy and its Critics* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989): 196

<sup>56</sup> Buchanan, *Secession*, 100

<sup>57</sup> David Miller, *On Nationality* (New York: Clarendon Press, 1995): 110

<sup>58</sup> Buchanan, ‘Self-determination and the Right to Secede’

<sup>59</sup> Buchanan, ‘Self-determination and the Right to Secede’, 358

<sup>60</sup> John Stuart Mill, *On Liberty and Other Essays* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008): 428

distributive justice,<sup>61</sup> in that wealthier citizens will only agree to accept significant redistribution of wealth if they consider their fellow citizens to be co-nationals.

An example of the communitarian justification for secession can be found in the work of Paul Gilbert, which is based on a civic conception of nationalism, considering the nation to comprise a group of people that derives its communal character wholly from shared political institutions.<sup>62</sup> In this regard, Gilbert rejects Benedict Anderson's famous assertion that the nation ought to be defined as 'an imagined political community',<sup>63</sup> his own defence of national secession depending on the existence of a 'real' community with effective political institutions.<sup>64</sup>

Gilbert's argument is consistent with liberal nationalist perspectives and in particular the work of Harry Beran, concluding that secession is legitimate in the case of any state which organises people politically other than as they choose, as the state is acting in violation of the right to freedom of association.<sup>65</sup> In accordance with the Gilbert's justification, it is argued that secessionist claims ought to be constitutive of a community that is 'suitable for statehood', and not already part of a wider such community that is the primary focus of communal attachment.<sup>66</sup>

### **2.2.3 Alternatives to secession**

Several scholars have in the past, examined potential alternatives to secession, outlining the numerous strategies which can be employed to deter demands for outright independence.<sup>67</sup> In particular, this sub-section will consider the concepts of devolution and federalism, as well as the normative and empirical arguments in favour of and in opposition to each alternative.

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<sup>61</sup> Miller, *On Nationality*, 84

<sup>62</sup> Paul Gilbert, 'Communities real and imagined: good and bad cases for national secession', in Percy B. Lehning (ed.), *Theories of Secession* (London: Routledge, 1998): 205-224

<sup>63</sup> Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 1991): 6

<sup>64</sup> Gilbert, 'Communities real and imagined: good and bad cases for national secession', 207

<sup>65</sup> Harry Beran, *The Consent Theory of Political Obligation* (London: Croom Helm, 1987): 37

<sup>66</sup> Gilbert, 'Communities real and imagined: good and bad cases for national secession', 216

<sup>67</sup> Michel Le Breton and Shlomo Weber, 'The Art of Making Everybody Happy: How to Prevent a Secession', *IMF Staff Papers* (2003): 403-435

## Devolution

The process of devolution, though varying greatly from case to case, necessarily involves the statutory transfer of powers from a state's central government to a sub-unit, which governs at either the regional or local level. Devolution differs from federalism in that the decentralisation of powers is guaranteed only by statute, which can be withdrawn unilaterally by the central government, without the consent of its subnational unit. In federal systems meanwhile, powers devolved to a sub-unit are protected constitutionally.

The literature surrounding devolution is varied in its assessment of the process' suitability as a response to the demands of multi-national states, with many advocating enhanced devolution as an effective means of quelling separatist tensions, while others argue the process spurs further secessionist sentiment.<sup>68</sup> Keating for example, describes devolution as an unstable 'halfway house',<sup>69</sup> while Neil McGarvey cites devolution as a gradualist, incremental development.<sup>70</sup> These perspectives imply that devolution is a temporary measure, rather than a solution to demands for increased independence.

Despite this, Neil MacCormick has advanced a right-based 'Kantian' argument for national self-determination, grounded in Kant's principle of respect for persons, which he stresses does not necessarily entail that nations should be granted statehood.<sup>71</sup> Rather, as Caney indicates, his understanding of the right is perfectly compatible with devolution within a multinational state.<sup>72</sup> Similarly, Christopher Lasch writes of the communitarian justification for devolution, on the grounds that a 'general strategy' of devolution or decentralisation is

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<sup>68</sup> Dawn Brancati, 'Decentralization: Fuelling the Fire or Dampening the Flames of Ethnic Conflict and Secessionism?' *International Organization* 60 (3) (2006): 651-685;

Ian S. Lustick, Dan Miodownik and Roy J. Eidelson, 'Secessionism in multicultural states: Does sharing power prevent it or encourage it?' *American Political Science Review* 98 (2) (2004): 209-229;

Michael Keating, 'Nations without States: The Accommodation of Nationalism in the New World Order', in Michael Keating and John McGarry (eds.), *Minority Nationalism and the Changing International Order* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001): 19-43;

Richard Bird, Francois Vaillancourt and Edison Roy-Cesar, 'Is Decentralisation 'Glue' or 'Solvent' for National Unity', *Andrew Young School of Policy Studies Program Working Paper* (2010): 1-41

<sup>69</sup> Michael Keating, *The Independence of Scotland: self-government and the shifting politics of Union* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009): 77

<sup>70</sup> Neil McGarvey, 'Devolution in Scotland: change and continuity', in J. Bradbury (ed.) *Devolution, Regionalism and Regional Development: The UK Experience* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2008): 25-44

<sup>71</sup> Neil MacCormick, *Legal Right and Social Democracy: Essays in Legal and Political Philosophy* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1982): 264

<sup>72</sup> Simon Caney, 'National self-determination and national secession: individualist and communitarian approaches', in Percy B. Lehning (ed.), *Theories of Secession* (London: Routledge, 1998): 149-178

required to end the dominance of large organisations and to remodel our institutions on a human scale.<sup>73</sup>

Most Western nation-states, Montserrat Guibernau claims, have embraced at least some form of devolution, although the rationale, aims and mechanisms used to implement it are entirely dependent on each specific case.<sup>74</sup> When deciding on the boundaries of their regions, states must take into account a complex blend of factors, including the geographical, economic and cultural.<sup>75</sup>

In her comparison of Canada, Britain and Spain, three cases that have opted for various devolution models encompassing federation, symmetrical and asymmetrical devolution, Guibernau highlights evidence that suggests devolution can act as an 'antidote' against secession.<sup>76</sup> Each of the three cases, she argues, contains at least one strong national minority endowed with their own sense of common ethnicity and ethnohistory, cultures and identities, which have developed relatively powerful nationalist movements demanding self-determination.<sup>77</sup>

Despite this, up to the present time, none of the three cases considered has witnessed the rise of a separatist movement sufficiently robust to force the independence of the region it claims to represent.<sup>78</sup> In spite of substantial support for nationalist movements in regions like Scotland, Catalonia and Flanders, each respective movement appears to have been somehow accommodated through the device of particular devolution structures, which have so far ultimately succeeded in preventing secession.<sup>79</sup>

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<sup>73</sup> Christopher Lasch, 'The communitarian critique of liberalism', in Charles Reynolds and Ralph Norman (eds.), *Community in America* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988): 174

<sup>74</sup> Guibernau, 'National Identity, devolution and secession in Canada, Britain and Spain'

<sup>75</sup> Michael Keating, 'Asymmetrical Government: multinational states in an integrating Europe', *Publius: The Journal of Federalism* 29 (1) (1999): 71-86

<sup>76</sup> Guibernau, 'National Identity, devolution and secession in Canada, Britain and Spain', 69

<sup>77</sup> Guibernau, 'National Identity, devolution and secession in Canada, Britain and Spain', 69

<sup>78</sup> Guibernau, 'National Identity, devolution and secession in Canada, Britain and Spain', 69

<sup>79</sup> Guibernau, 'National Identity, devolution and secession in Canada, Britain and Spain', 69

## Federalism

Federal systems, it is generally agreed, are defined as those in which powers are divided between two levels of government of equal status and protected constitutionally.<sup>80</sup> Prominent examples include the USA, Australia and Canada, and there exists a comprehensive field of literature surrounding the nature and functioning of federal systems.<sup>81</sup>

Arguments surrounding changeable identity possibilities and the various groupings individuals may identify with ostensibly point in the direction of multinational federations – countries with the potential to accommodate national diversity.<sup>82</sup> The intrinsic benefit of such a system is that it can prevent the breakup of states, which many perceive to be a grave threat to peace and security,<sup>83</sup> demonstrating (as in the case of the Canadian union) how competing and conflicting diversities can be effectively reconciled.<sup>84</sup>

Since the formal creation of the Canadian federal state by the British North America Act of 1867, Michael Burgess claims that the centripetal forces making for unity have continually outweighed the centrifugal pressures leading towards dissolution.<sup>85</sup> Indeed, while there have been many serious challenges to the unity of the state, in the aftermath of the Quebec independence referenda of 1980 and 1995, most scholars agree that the movement has lost momentum and at present, the secession of Quebec is deemed very unlikely.<sup>86</sup>

Despite this, Will Kymlicka argues that in the context of accommodating ethnocultural pluralism, a federation is inherently unstable.<sup>87</sup> It is important, he notes, to recognise that many federal systems were not designed as a response to ethnocultural pluralism (such as the United States, or Australia).<sup>88</sup> As a result, the federal units do not correspond in any way

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<sup>80</sup> John Law, 'How Can We Define Federalism?' *Perspectives on Federalism* 5 (3) (2013): 88-120

<sup>81</sup> George Anderson, *Federalism: An Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008); Michael Burgess, *Comparative Federalism: Theory and Practice* (London: Routledge, 2006); Ronald Watts, *Comparing Federal Systems* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2008); Thomas Hueglin and Alain Fenna, *Comparative Federalism: A Systematic Inquiry* (Peterborough: Broadview Press, 2006)

<sup>82</sup> Lehning, 'Introduction', 5

<sup>83</sup> Asbjorn Eide, 'Peaceful Group Accommodation as an Alternative to Secession in Sovereign States', in Donald Clark and Robert Williamson (eds.), *Self-Determination: International Perspectives* (Basingstoke: Macmillan Press, Ltd., 1996): 87-110

<sup>84</sup> Michael Burgess, 'Introduction: competing perspectives of Canadian federalism' in Michael Burgess (ed.), *Canadian Federalism: Past, Present and Future* (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1990): 1-6

<sup>85</sup> Burgess, 'Introduction: competing perspectives of Canadian federalism', 1

<sup>86</sup> Buchanan, 'Secession'

<sup>87</sup> Will Kymlicka, 'Is federalism a viable alternative to secession?' in Percy B. Lehning (ed.), *Theories of Secession* (London: Routledge, 1998): 109-148

<sup>88</sup> Kymlicka, 'Is federalism a viable alternative to secession?' 111

with distinct ethnocultural groups and can be considered quite stable systems of government.<sup>89</sup>

If however, as the proponents of federalism envisage, the system works to combine shared rule with respect for ethnocultural differences, federalism will simply act as a stepping-stone to either secession or a much looser form of confederation.<sup>90</sup> One key criticism that Kymlicka highlights is in the drawing of boundaries and distribution of power, which raises limitations on the flexibility of multinational federalism.<sup>91</sup> For federalism to serve as a mechanism for self-government he argues, it must be possible to draw federal subunits in such a way that the national minority forms a majority within a particular subunit (such as the Quebecois in Quebec).<sup>92</sup> In practice, this cannot account for some national minorities (including most of the indigenous peoples in the United States or Canada), whose communities are often dispersed across state, or provincial lines.<sup>93</sup>

Furthermore, Kymlicka argues that the more federalism succeeds in meeting a minority group's desire for self-government, the more it recognises and affirms the sense of national identity within that group and serves to strengthen its political confidence.<sup>94</sup> Since the early 1960s, all Quebec governments have worked to attain special arrangements with the aim of increasing the province's power, resources and roles.<sup>95</sup> Regardless of political affiliation, Quebec governments have shown a consistent purpose to achieve as much cultural, fiscal and political autonomy as possible.<sup>96</sup> There is no reason, Gagnon argues, to assume that Quebec's pursuit of constitutional and institutional reform will stop here.<sup>97</sup>

Indeed, according to Kymlicka, the more successfully a multinational federal system accommodates the national minorities within it, the more it strengthens the case that these minorities are separate peoples with inherent rights of self-government, whose participation

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<sup>89</sup> Kymlicka, 'Is federalism a viable alternative to secession?' 111

<sup>90</sup> Kymlicka, 'Is federalism a viable alternative to secession?' 110

<sup>91</sup> Kymlicka, 'Is federalism a viable alternative to secession?' 132

<sup>92</sup> Kymlicka, 'Is federalism a viable alternative to secession?' 132

<sup>93</sup> Kymlicka, 'Is federalism a viable alternative to secession?' 132

<sup>94</sup> Kymlicka, 'Is federalism a viable alternative to secession?' 135

<sup>95</sup> Alain G. Gagnon, 'Quebec-Canada relations: the engineering of constitutional arrangements', in Michael Burgess (ed.), *Canadian Federalism: Past, Present and Future* (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1990): 95-119

<sup>96</sup> Alain G. Gagnon and Joseph Garcea, 'Quebec and the pursuit of special status', in R. Olling and M. Westmacott (eds.), *Perspectives on Canadian Federalism* (Scarborough: Prentice Hall, 1988): 304-325

<sup>97</sup> Gagnon, 'Quebec-Canada relations: the engineering of constitutional arrangements', 95

in the larger country is conditional and revocable.<sup>98</sup> In the environment of a multinational federal system, the option of secession will always be present, even becoming the default argument against which participation in the federation is measured.<sup>99</sup>

In the absence of a natural stopping point, the granting of limited autonomy may simply fuel the ambitions of nationalist leaders who will be satisfied with nothing short of their own nation-state.<sup>100</sup> For Kymlicka, multinational federalism is ultimately paradoxical, in that while it provides national minorities with a workable alternative to secession, it also helps to make secession a more realistic alternative to federalism.<sup>101</sup>

#### **2.2.4 Types of Secession**

In selecting the most useful, appropriate cases to study, it is important to consider the range of examples and types of secessionist movements that are currently present, as well as those that have existed historically.

In particular, the section which follows will examine which groups and individuals have previously sought to secede from their wider state, as well as which claims in practice, are currently recognised by international law. This section will then go on to consider how secessionist movements which are not recognised by international law advance their cause. Focus will be attributed to the distinctions between colonial and non-colonial secessionist movements, as well as those that resort to physical force in their attempts to gain independence and those that use predominantly peaceful means.

#### **Colonial Secession**

Crawford distinguishes between two sorts of secession: claims situated within the context of decolonisation and those that take place in previously unitary states.<sup>102</sup> Examples of the former include Puerto Rico and New Caledonia, whose rights to external self-determination and so-called 'decolonisation devolutions' are recognised under international law.<sup>103</sup>

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<sup>98</sup> Kymlicka, 'Is federalism a viable alternative to secession?' 136

<sup>99</sup> Kymlicka, 'Is federalism a viable alternative to secession?' 137

<sup>100</sup> Kymlicka, 'Is federalism a viable alternative to secession?' 137

<sup>101</sup> Kymlicka, 'Is federalism a viable alternative to secession?' 138

<sup>102</sup> James Crawford, *The creation of states in international law (Vol. 2)* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2006): 500

<sup>103</sup> İlker Gökhan Şen, *Sovereignty Referendums in International and Constitutional Law* (London: Springer, 2015): 76

As Stavenhagen summarises, the only internationally legally sanctioned secessions are cases of ‘good’ self-determination against ‘bad’ states (colonial empires), in contrast to ‘bad’ claims for self-determination against ‘good’ states (those member states in good standing of the United Nations).<sup>104</sup> The process of decolonisation, Hurst Hannum argues, was not only both a moral and political imperative, but the catalyst for the evolution of self-determination from a vague principle, into a right, culminating in the UN General Assembly’s adoption of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples.<sup>105</sup>

In colonies, Gilbert argues the goals and interdependencies of the colonists and of the colonised are distinct, and no formal equality exists between them.<sup>106</sup> The representation of some colonies as nationalist, he claims, is a consequence of independence being necessary to the creation of a nation – there may as yet not be one, and not even appear to be.<sup>107</sup>

Although prior to Western colonisation, African politics had produced equivalents to nations and states in the form of kingdoms, autonomous political formations and empires, Lumumba-Kasongo argues, Africa at large inherited its current structures through slavery, colonialism and the expansion of global capitalism.<sup>108</sup> Since most African countries gained their political independence, there have been many secessionist claims, which have taken many forms, ranging from the essentially political to the culturally based, those that are quasi-permanent to the spontaneous and temporary, and those which have origins in the colonial states to those whose origins are in post-colonial politics.<sup>109</sup>

In the partitioning of Africa, Lewis argues, the European powers created a whole series of Habsburg style states, comprising a medley of ethnic groups and peoples, ‘lumped together’ within frontiers that paid no respect to traditional cultural contours.<sup>110</sup> As a result of this poly-ethnic, poly-religious, poly-linguistic and poly-cultural composition, it is argued, post-colonial states were rendered fragile, precarious and weak.<sup>111</sup>

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<sup>104</sup> Stavenhagen, ‘Self-determination: Right or Demon?’, 4

<sup>105</sup> Hurst Hannum, ‘Self-Determination in the Post-Colonial Era’, in Donald Clark and Robert Williamson (eds.), *Self-Determination: International Perspectives* (Basingstoke: Macmillan Press, Ltd., 1996): 12-44

<sup>106</sup> Gilbert, ‘Communities real and imagined: good and bad cases for national secession’, 213

<sup>107</sup> Gilbert, ‘Communities real and imagined: good and bad cases for national secession’, 213

<sup>108</sup> Tukumbi Lumumba-Kasongo, ‘Why Katanga’s Quest for Self-Determination and Secession Failed’ in Redie Bereketeab (ed.), *Self-Determination and Secession in Africa: The Post-Colonial State* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2015): 163-179

<sup>109</sup> Lumumba-Kasongo, ‘Why Katanga’s Quest for Self-Determination and Secession Failed’, 167

<sup>110</sup> I.M. Lewis (ed.), *Nationalism and Self-Determination in the Horn of Africa* (London: Ithaca Press, 1983): 73

<sup>111</sup> Redie Bereketeab, ‘Self-determination and secession: African challenges’ in Redie Bereketeab (ed.), *Self-Determination and Secession in Africa: The Post-Colonial State* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2015): 3-19



Colonially inherited borders however, were declared sacrosanct, with post-colonial nationalist leaders prioritising the building of functional and sustainable nation-states over all else.<sup>112</sup> The neglect of the other issues, Olikoshi and Laakso argue, led to ethnic domination, the marginalisation of minorities, military dictatorships and economic stagnation.<sup>113</sup> The worst cases even saw the breakout of ethnic wars, as in Nigeria, the Sudan, Uganda, Ethiopia, Zimbabwe, Rwanda and Burundi, among others.<sup>114</sup>

### **Non-colonial secession**

As noted above, the right to independent statehood for minorities within existing states, or ‘non-colonial’ peoples, is yet to be recognised by international law.<sup>115</sup> Rather, the recognition of new, non-colonial states has been based on either the factual determination that the state no longer exists (e.g. Yugoslavia), or the agreement of the component parts of the state concerned, such as the USSR, Ethiopia and Czechoslovakia.<sup>116</sup>

Michael Freeman argues against the arbitrary treatment of colonies, for the purpose of the right to independence, as only those territories separated by sea, from the dominant state.<sup>117</sup> Rejecting the so-called ‘saltwater’ criterion, he argues that just as the British are not entitled to rule in Nigeria, so the English are not entitled to rule over Scotland, since separation by saltwater can have no moral significance.<sup>118</sup>

In practice, Freeman suggests that the saltwater criterion aims limit the number of intrastate secessions and ethnic conflicts, which would almost certainly cause an increase to both disruption in the world order, and the likelihood of conflict.<sup>119</sup> Furthermore, a number of democratic theorists, such as Dahl, put forward the ‘anarchy’ argument, reasoning that if political autonomy was declared to be an absolute right, the existence of the state would be rendered impossible in practice, since any group facing coercion on any matter could demand

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<sup>112</sup> Bereketeab, ‘Self-determination and secession: African challenges’, 11

<sup>113</sup> Adebayo Olikoshi and Liisa Laakso, *Challenges to the Nation-State in Africa* (Uppsala: Nordic Africa Institute, 1996): 30

<sup>114</sup> Olikoshi and Laakso, *Challenges to the Nation-State in Africa*, 30

<sup>115</sup> Hannum, ‘Self-Determination in the Post-Colonial Era’, 31

<sup>116</sup> Hannum, ‘Self-Determination in the Post-Colonial Era’, 31

<sup>117</sup> Michael Freeman, ‘The priority of function over structure: a new approach to secession’, in Percy B. Lehning (ed.), *Theories of Secession* (London: Routledge, 1998): 13-32

<sup>118</sup> Freeman, ‘The priority of function over structure: a new approach to secession’, 17

<sup>119</sup> Freeman, ‘The priority of function over structure: a new approach to secession’, 18

and through secession gain autonomy.<sup>120</sup> The question that remains therefore is how, in practice, a non-colonial people within an existing state can advance their case for secession.

### **Violent secession**

Glen Anderson's paper on unilateral non-colonial (UNC) secession highlights the frequency with which UNC secessionist crises have historically resulted in the use of force, of an abject nature.<sup>121</sup> The potential for violence that UNC secessionist disputes can contribute to is evident in cases such as Biafra (Nigeria), Bangladesh (Pakistan), Chechnya (Russian Federation) and Kosovo (Yugoslavia).<sup>122</sup>

Historically, Anderson argues, the bias in cases concerning the use of force in the UNC secessionist context has been with the existing state, as a result of the perceived importance of state sovereignty and territorial integrity.<sup>123</sup> In this form of secession, secession is seen as a solution to an 'intransigent struggle' between a state and an assertive sub-state nationality unit, who may negotiate, 'double-talk' and 'deceive' one another, but ultimately remain unreconciled.<sup>124</sup> It is this sense of irreconcilability, Ralph R. Premdas argues, along with each party perceiving itself to be self-righteous and the other to be 'evil', which can provoke both sides to resort to measures such as mass expulsion, barbarism and genocide.<sup>125</sup>

In Sri Lanka, the separatist agitation of the Tamils went through several stages and phases, moving from peaceful political pressure, on to civil disobedience, before leading to violence, which itself evolved from sporadic acts, into systematic attacks directed against the state.<sup>126</sup>

Guelke distinguishes the above examples of the use of force in UNC secessionist movements, as examples of 'deeply divided societies', or environments that exhibit social

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<sup>120</sup> Dahl, *Democracy and its Critics*, 196

<sup>121</sup> Glen Anderson, 'Unilateral non-colonial secession and the use of force: Effect on claims to statehood in international law', *Connecticut Journal of International Law* 28 (197) (2012): 199-240

<sup>122</sup> Anderson, 'Unilateral non-colonial secession and the use of force: Effect on claims to statehood in international law', 199

<sup>123</sup> Anderson, 'Unilateral non-colonial secession and the use of force: Effect on claims to statehood in international law', 199

<sup>124</sup> Ralph R. Premdas, 'Secessionist movements in comparative perspective', in Ralph R. Premdas, S.W.R. de A. Samarasinghe and Alan B. Anderson, *Secessionist Movements in a Comparative Perspective* (London: Pinter Publishers Ltd, 1990): 12-29

<sup>125</sup> Premdas, 'Secessionist movements in comparative perspective', 13

<sup>126</sup> K.M. de Silva, 'Separatism in Sri Lanka: The 'Traditional Homelands' of the Tamils', in Ralph R. Premdas, S.W.R. de A. Samarasinghe and Alan B. Anderson, *Secessionist Movements in a Comparative Perspective* (London: Pinter Publishers Ltd, 1990): 32-47

cleavages as a consequence of a legitimacy-deficient polity.<sup>127</sup> This draws distinct parallels with I. William Zartman's writings on ethnic divisions and conflict, principally true in the case of Zartman's assertion that the breakdown of 'normal politics' is integral to the development of such clashes<sup>128</sup> – in other words, the failure to establish and maintain a legitimate constitution. Despite this, Guelke declares that ethnic divisions are by no means the primary cleavage in all deeply divided societies, underlining a variety of polarising differences with the potential to produce a fault line between the communities, including class, caste, religion, language, race and clan.<sup>129</sup>

### **Non-violent secession**

In addition to deeply divided societies and UNC secessions with a high potential for violence, there are many examples of non-violent secessionist movements, which do not lead to the use of physical force. In the cases of Scotland, Wales, Catalonia, Québec, or Flanders for example, it is clear that although polarising differences are present, the secessionist movements focus their attempts to gain political autonomy on peaceful, democratic, electoral processes.

Because these cases are UNC secessionist movements, international law does not demand that these communities be granted rights to self-determination. In such cases, the pro-secession movement is most commonly spearheaded by nationalist political parties and elite actors, who seek to bring about secession by persuading the government of the existing state to sanction a legally recognised independence referendum.

Each of the examples listed above can be characterised as a national minority within an existing state and are technically classified as 'stateless nations',<sup>130</sup> each possessing a distinct culture, historical separateness and a bounded territory, but lacking a state of their own, with diplomatic recognition, or United Nations representation. As noted earlier in the

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<sup>127</sup> Adrian Guelke, *Politics in Deeply Divided Societies* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2012): 31

<sup>128</sup> I. William Zartman, 'Introduction: Posing the Problem of State Collapse', in I. William Zartman (ed.) *Collapsed States: The Disintegration and Restoration of Legitimate Authority* (London: Lynne Rienner Publishers, Inc., 1995): 1-14

<sup>129</sup> Guelke, *Politics in Deeply Divided Societies*, 27

<sup>130</sup> Greer, *Nationalism and Self-Government*, 15;  
Leruez, *L'Ecosse, une nation sans Etat*

chapter, instances of secession are extremely unusual in advanced democracies, and successful examples of peaceful secession attempts are rarer still.<sup>131</sup>

Firstly, the dissolution of Czechoslovakia in 1993 is an interesting successful example of non-violent secession. Desire for independence on the parts of both the Czech and Slovakian regions of the state, it is generally agreed, stemmed from strongly contrasting preferences towards the constitutional future of Czechoslovakia.<sup>132</sup> While the Slovaks advocated a shift to a confederal model with enhanced autonomy for each region for instance, the Czech side favoured a closer union.<sup>133</sup> After negotiations reached a protracted deadlock and minimal progress was made in the way of compromise, both sides agreed to the dissolution of the state and began separate applications to the EU and NATO.<sup>134</sup>

Another rare example of a successful, peaceful secession attempt is that of Montenegro from its union with Serbia, in 2006. This case, Bogdan Denitch argues, was particularly unusual, given the high levels of violence associated with the respective secessions of other Balkan states in the 1990s.<sup>135</sup> In the Montenegrin independence referendum of 2006, in which a supermajority of 55 percent was required to bring about secession, 86 percent of the electorate turned out to vote, with 55.5 percent voting in favour of independence.<sup>136</sup>

Finally, the dissolution of Norway's union with Sweden in 1905 was peaceful, however as Young highlights, this was predominantly due to the Swedish Parliament's decision not to mobilise their military and forcibly deny Norwegian independence.<sup>137</sup> The secession of

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<sup>131</sup> Valerie Bunce, 'Peaceful versus Violent Dismemberment: A Comparison of the Soviet Union, Yugoslavia, and Czechoslovakia', *Politics and Society* 27 (2) (1999): 217-237

<sup>132</sup> Abby Innes, *Czechoslovakia: The Short Goodbye* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2001): 177; Carol Skalnik Leff, *The Czech and Slovak Republics: Nation versus State* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1997): 138

<sup>133</sup> Innes, *Czechoslovakia*, 177;

Leff, *The Czech and Slovak Republics*, 138

<sup>134</sup> Glen M.E. Duerr, 'Peaceful and Mutual Parliamentary Dissolution: Dissolved Unions in Sweden-Norway (1905) and Czechoslovakia (1993) and their Lessons for Europe', *Sprawy Narodowosciowe* (Issues of Nationality) 35 (2009): 29-47

<sup>135</sup> Bogdan Denitch, *Ethnic Nationalism: The Tragic Death of Yugoslavia* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1996)

<sup>136</sup> Matt Qvortrup, 'New Development: The Comparative Study of Secession Referendums', *Public Money & Management* 34 (2) (2014): 153-156;

Srdjan Darmanovic, 'Montenegro: Miracle in the Balkans?' *The Journal of Democracy* 18 (2) (2007): 152-159

<sup>137</sup> Robert Young, *The Secession of Quebec and the Future of Canada* (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queens University Press, 1995): 138

Norway is generally agreed to have been motivated by three key factors: the historical grievance that Norway was given to Sweden in the aftermath of the Napoleonic Wars, contrary to the will of the Norwegian people,<sup>138</sup> growing frustrations at Sweden's power to dictate foreign policy,<sup>139</sup> and discontent at the limitations the union placed on Norway's lucrative shipping trade.<sup>140</sup> After ensuring the issue of Norwegian independence became a major parliamentary issue in the Swedish Riksdag,<sup>141</sup> Norway was granted a referendum on its independence, which took place in June of 1905. Despite 99 percent of the electorate voting in favour of Norwegian secession, further, protracted negotiations had to take place before Norway was eventually granted outright independence.<sup>142</sup>

### 2.3 Trust

For the purposes of this thesis, trust in its broad, overarching sense is defined as a willingness to be vulnerable to others and to rely on them to be competent.<sup>143</sup> At best, Russell Hardin argues, trusting someone entails that we believe they will act in our interests.<sup>144</sup> As Annette Baier puts it, trusting others affords them an opportunity to harm us and so relies on our confidence that they will not take such an opportunity.<sup>145</sup> Where one trusts therefore, they accept some amount of risk for potential harm in exchange for the benefits of cooperation.<sup>146</sup>

Defining trust, Pippa Norris has argued, largely depends on context, and the 'object' it concerns.<sup>147</sup> This thesis will consider two distinct dimensions of trust, which concern two different objects: interpersonal trust, whereby the trusted object is another individual and institutional trust, whereby the object of an individual's trust is an institution.

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<sup>138</sup> H. Arnold Barton, *Sweden and Visions of Norway: Politics and Culture, 1814-1905* (Edwardsville, IL: Southern Illinois University Press, 2003): 14

<sup>139</sup> Young, *The Secession of Quebec and the Future of Canada*, 131

<sup>140</sup> Karen Larsen, *A History of Norway* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1950): 485; Thomas Kingston Derry, *A Short History of Norway* (London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd., 1973): 148

<sup>141</sup> Duerr, 'Peaceful and Mutual Parliamentary Dissolution', 37

<sup>142</sup> Larsen, *A History of Norway*, 484

<sup>143</sup> Carolyn McLeod, 'Trust', in Edward N. Zalta (ed.) *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (<https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2020/entries/trust/>, 20<sup>th</sup> August 2020)

<sup>144</sup> Russell Hardin, *Trust and Trustworthiness* (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 2002): 151

<sup>145</sup> Annette Baier, 'Trust and antitrust', *Ethics* 96 (1986): 231-260

<sup>146</sup> Mark E. Warren, *Democracy and Trust* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999): 1

<sup>147</sup> Pippa Norris, 'Introduction: The growth of critical citizens', in Pippa Norris (ed.), *Critical Citizens: Global support for democratic government* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1999): 1-28

### 2.3.1 *Institutional trust*

Firstly, a number of scholars have written about trust that is not interpersonal, including trust in institutions, or 'institutional trust'.<sup>148</sup> It is important to note both the distinction between the two forms of trust, and the importance of not using the two forms interchangeably. Claims to trust another person for instance, are not analogous to claims to trust institutions.

Interpersonal trust, Hardin argues, is inherently cognitive in its assessments of the intentions of the trusted, making a judgement about their character before concluding as to whether or not they will act in our interests (or at least not intentionally harm us).<sup>149</sup> At the institutional level, the knowledge demanded by the interpersonal conception of trust is simply unavailable to ordinary citizens, rendering the trust a citizen has in such institutions fundamentally different to the trust they might have in other individuals.<sup>150</sup>

At the institutional level, trust is generally considered to be more closely related to confidence in institutional performance, involving less direct relationships with the trusting citizen.<sup>151</sup> As it is understood in this thesis, consistent with Trudy Govier's definition, to trust an institution means that we have fundamentally positive beliefs and expectations about our interactions with it.<sup>152</sup> This definition of institutional trust can be extended to all of those institutions in which social roles are meshed, including the government, tax authorities, the police, the military and the social welfare system.<sup>153</sup> The macro-level, most formalized institutional relationships and structures this refers to can include the political regime, the rule of law and the court system.<sup>154</sup>

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<sup>148</sup> Cynthia Townley and Jay L. Garfield, 'Public Trust', in P. Makela and C. Townley (eds.), *Trust: Analytic and Applied Perspectives* (Amsterdam: Rodopi Press, 2013): 95-107;  
Nancy Nyquist Potter, *How Can I be Trusted? A Virtue Theory of Trustworthiness* (Lanham, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield, 2002);  
Trudy Govier, *Social Trust and Human Communities* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1997)

<sup>149</sup> Hardin, *Trust and Trustworthiness*, 151

<sup>150</sup> Hardin, *Trust and Trustworthiness*, 151

<sup>151</sup> Hardin, *Trust and Trustworthiness*, 151

<sup>152</sup> Govier, *Social Trust and Human Communities*, 34

<sup>153</sup> Govier, *Social Trust and Human Communities*, 33

<sup>154</sup> Douglass North, *Institutions, Institutional Change, and Economic Performance* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1990);

Mancur Olsen, *The Rise and Decline of Nations: Economic Growth, Stagflation, and Social Rigidities* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1982)

Trust in institutions, and particularly governmental institutions, is thought to be important for a range of reasons. Citizens, Hardin argues, must often be compliant if government is to work, and they are more likely to be compliant if they are confident that the government's actions will serve their own interests or at least some broader public good that they support.<sup>155</sup> According to Almond and Verba, trust in central political institutions is integral to democracy, reflecting a sense of community between the citizens and the political elite.<sup>156</sup> Without at least a minimum amount of trust, it is argued that democracy will lose its active, participating citizens, one of the very foundations upon which it is built.

This understanding of trust is also put forward in Putnam's study into civic traditions in modern Italy.<sup>157</sup> Putnam's study suggests that declining trust in government represents a deflation of the political culture, reducing social capital and in effect, the political system's capacity to achieve collective goals.<sup>158</sup> The argument here, is that a culture of trust encourages cooperation and oils the wheels of shared, collective action, enabling projects to be initiated. Distrust, meanwhile, breeds political deflation and mutual suspicion, rendering such projects impractical.

In Putnam's investigation, he found that the most successful governments were those with a positive political culture – a tradition of trust, cooperation and high levels of social capital.<sup>159</sup> In contrast, the least effective regions were found to be those that lacked any tradition of collaboration or equality. Having analysed the efficacy of Italy's regional governments over two decades, trust and cooperation were found to facilitate good governance and economic prosperity across fields ranging from agriculture to housing and health services.

Institutional trust is said to mediate our relations to our societies and compatriots, even serving to knit communities that are too large to be bound directly by interpersonal ties.<sup>160</sup> Similarly, Govier highlights the adverse effects of institutional 'distrust', present where

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<sup>155</sup> Hardin, *Trust and Trustworthiness*, 152

<sup>156</sup> Gabriel A. Almond and Sidney Verba, *The Civic Culture* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1963): 357

<sup>157</sup> Robert D. Putnam, *Making democracy work: Civic traditions in modern Italy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993): 167

<sup>158</sup> Robert D. Putnam (ed.), *Democracies in Flux: The Evolution of Social Capital in Contemporary Society* (New York: Oxford University Press: 2002)

<sup>159</sup> Putnam, *Making democracy work: Civic traditions in modern Italy*

<sup>160</sup> Townley and Garfield, 'Public Trust', 102

there is a lack of confidence, concern that the institution will act so as to harm us, or a perception that it simply does not care about our welfare.<sup>161</sup>

In the context of support for secession, this thesis will primarily consider institutional trust in the form of the levels of trust which exist between voters in a potential secessionist region and both their devolved, regional government, and the central government of the existing state.

### **2.3.2 Interpersonal trust**

Separate to institutional trust, but similarly important throughout this analysis, is the concept of interpersonal trust. To say that we trust you, Hardin states, means that we believe you have the right intentions toward us, as well as the competence to do what we trust you to do.<sup>162</sup> Building on this conception, McLeod argues that in order to trust, three relatively uncontroversial conditions must be met.<sup>163</sup> The trustor must be willing and able to make themselves vulnerable to others (particularly to betrayal)<sup>164</sup>; think well of others, at least in certain domains; and be optimistic that the trustee is, or will be, competent in certain respects.<sup>165</sup>

Trust, as McLeod defines it, is an attitude that we have towards people whom we hope will be trustworthy, while trustworthiness is a property that ideally, those who we trust will exhibit.<sup>166</sup> Trust (the attitude) and trustworthiness (the property) are therefore distinct, but also intrinsically linked, as ideally, those whom we trust will be trustworthy, and those who are trustworthy will be trusted.<sup>167</sup> Hence, if one claims that trust is declining, one might also conclude that trustworthiness, or at least perceived trustworthiness, is in decline.<sup>168</sup>

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<sup>161</sup> Govier, *Social Trust and Human Communities*, 34

<sup>162</sup> Russell Hardin, *Trust* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2006): 17

<sup>163</sup> McLeod, 'Trust'

<sup>164</sup> Lawrence C. Becker, 'Trust as Noncognitive Security about Motives', *Ethics* 107 (1) (1996): 43–61

<sup>165</sup> McLeod, 'Trust'

<sup>166</sup> Carolyn McLeod, 'Trust', *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Fall 2015 Edition), Edward N. Zalta (ed.), (<http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2015/entries/trust/>, 20<sup>th</sup> May 2016)

<sup>167</sup> McLeod, 'Trust'

<sup>168</sup> Hardin, *Trust*, 1



One of the most important commonplace reasons for thinking someone trustworthy, Hardin argues, is the conception of trust as ‘encapsulated interests’.<sup>169</sup> In other words, I trust you to take my interests in the matter seriously, because I perceive you to value the continuation of our relationship, so that you have your own interests in taking my interests into account.<sup>170</sup> The Trusted counts my interests as his or her own, qua my interests.<sup>171</sup> Furthermore, even once limiting our trust to those with whom we have a rich enough relationship to judge as trustworthy, we only trust over certain ranges of actions.<sup>172</sup> As such, trust is a three-part relation, whereby ‘A trusts B to do, or with respect to, X’.<sup>173</sup>

Modelling trustworthiness on an Aristotelian conception of virtue, Potter defines a trustworthy person as:

*‘one who can be counted on, as a matter of the sort of person he or she is, to take care of those things that others entrust to one and whose ways of caring are neither excessive nor deficient’.*<sup>174</sup>

The key value of trust and trustworthiness, Hardin claims, is that it is crucial to enabling successful social cooperation.<sup>175</sup> It is in this sense that interpersonal trust is considered an integral element of social capital.<sup>176</sup> On its introduction by James Coleman, the term social capital referred to the social norms and expectations that underpin economic activity but cannot be accounted for from a strictly economic perspective.<sup>177</sup> Since its economic genesis however, the term has expanded to indicate the networks, associations and shared habits that enable individuals to act collectively. Interpersonal trust is particularly linked to the

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<sup>169</sup> Hardin, *Trust*, 18

<sup>170</sup> Hardin, *Trust and Trustworthiness*, 1

<sup>171</sup> Hardin, *Trust*, 19

<sup>172</sup> Hardin, *Trust*, 18

<sup>173</sup> Hardin, *Trust*, 19

<sup>174</sup> Potter, *How Can I be Trusted? A Virtue Theory of Trustworthiness*, 16

<sup>175</sup> Hardin, *Trust*, 1

<sup>176</sup> Mark Granovetter, ‘Economic Action and Social Structure: The Problem of Embeddedness,’ *American Journal of Sociology* 91 (1985): 481-510

<sup>177</sup> James S. Coleman, *Foundations of Social Theory* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1990)

horizontal dimension of social capital, which exists between individuals, in the absence of any explicit, formal, or institutionalised power or authority gradients in society.<sup>178</sup>

Within horizontal relations of social capital, Putnam has distinguished between 'bridging' and 'bonding' social capital,<sup>179</sup> the former of which he understood as the inclusive and outward-looking interactions, which take place across heterogeneous groups and diverse social cleavages, and the latter, the inward-looking ties found in the social networks between homogenous groups.<sup>180</sup>

Both bridging and bonding social capital, it is important to note, may differ greatly in character, depending on the specific groups they refer to. For instance, while bonding social capital can refer to the bonds which exist between individuals who are similar according to their age, gender, or social class, the most directly relevant to support for secession is the group-specific trust which exists between individuals from the potential secessionist region and their co-nationals. Similarly, while bridging social capital can exist across a wide range of groups, that which will be of particular focus in this thesis is the group-specific trust that exists between individuals from the potential secessionist region and those from the wider state.

Bonding social capital is summarised as the 'inward-looking' ties that link individuals or groups with much in common – a kind of sociological Super Glue, found in the social networks between homogenous groups.<sup>181</sup> These ties, it is understood, are essential to cultivation of trust, cooperation and collective strength among individuals and groups with shared history, experience and common purpose. Bonding social capital, Putnam states, is integral for supporting specific reciprocity and mobilising solidarity.<sup>182</sup> In this sense, the common interests and collective strength provided by membership of the in-group enables the members to exercise collective agency for common ends.

Francis Fukuyama warns that societies with a plurality of groups or networks which are tightly bonded may be fragmented and rife with conflicts and hostility, when viewed as a

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<sup>178</sup> Szreter and Woolcock, 'Health by association? Social capital, social theory, and the political economy of public health'

<sup>179</sup> Putnam, *Bowling Alone*, 22

<sup>180</sup> Robert D. Putnam and Lewis M. Feldstein, *Better Together: Restoring the American Community* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2004): 2

<sup>181</sup> Putnam and Feldstein, *Better Together*, 2

<sup>182</sup> Putnam, *Bowling Alone*, 22

whole.<sup>183</sup> In this sense, a society that only has bonding social capital will experience high levels of segregation and deep divisions, like those seen in Belfast and Bosnia.<sup>184</sup> In other words, by creating strong in-group loyalty, bonding social capital may also create strong out-group antagonism.<sup>185</sup>

In contrast to the exclusive, inward-looking nature of bonding social capital, bridging is inclusive and outward-looking, encompassing interactions across heterogeneous groups and diverse social cleavages.<sup>186</sup> Whereas bonding social capital bolsters our narrower selves, bridging can generate broader identities and reciprocity.<sup>187</sup> When seeking political allies, Mark S. Granovetter argued, the 'weak' ties that link us to distant acquaintances who move in different circles are more valuable than the 'strong' ties, which link us to those whose sociological niches are very like our own.<sup>188</sup> In this sense, bridging social capital enables heterogeneous groups to share and exchange information, building cross-group consensus and increasing the 'radius of trust' among individuals in smaller, more inward-looking groups.<sup>189</sup>

Bridging, Fukuyama argues, can facilitate the creation of an inclusive institutional structure, which is both more democratic in nature and has positive implications for broader political and economic development.<sup>190</sup> Among its numerous suggested effects, there is general consensus that higher levels of bridging social capital go hand in hand with increased political stability and social cohesion in heterogeneous societies.<sup>191</sup>

It is important to note that bonding and bridging social capital are not inherently antagonistic principles. In fact, bonding social capital is considered an essential antecedent for bridging and the two forms of social capital can work together productively if in balance.<sup>192</sup>

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<sup>183</sup> Francis Fukuyama, 'Social Capital and Development: The Coming Agenda,' *SAIS Review* 22 (1) (2002): 23-37

<sup>184</sup> Putnam and Feldstein, *Better Together*, 3

<sup>185</sup> Ashutosh Varshney, *Ethnic Conflict and Civic Life: Hindus and Muslims in India* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000);

Putnam, *Bowling Alone*, 23;

Richard D. Brown, 'The Emergence of Voluntary Associations in Massachusetts,' *Journal of Voluntary Action Research* 2 (1973): 64-73

<sup>186</sup> Putnam, *Bowling Alone*, 22

<sup>187</sup> Putnam, *Bowling Alone*, 23

<sup>188</sup> Mark S. Granovetter, 'The Strength of Weak Ties,' *American Journal of Sociology* 78 (1973): 1360-1380

<sup>189</sup> Fukuyama, 'Social Capital and Development,' 32

<sup>190</sup> Fukuyama, 'Social Capital and Development,' 32

<sup>191</sup> Francis Fukuyama, *Trust: The social virtues and the creation of prosperity* (New York: The Free Press, 1995);

Marcel Fauchamps, 'Development and Social Capital,' *Journal of Development Studies* 42 (7) (2006): 1180-1198

<sup>192</sup> Putnam, *Bowling Alone*, 23

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In deeply divided societies however, as Laura K. Graham highlights in her study of Northern Ireland, we expect to see high levels of bonding, but also low levels of bridging.<sup>193</sup>

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<sup>193</sup> Laura K. Graham, *Beyond Social Capital: The Role of Leadership, Trust and Government Policy in Northern Ireland's Victim Support Groups* (New York: Springer, 2016): 146

## Chapter 3. Case selection

### 3.1 Introduction

Methodologists have, in various studies, recommended numerous alternatives for case study selection, including selection of typical cases, deviant cases, influential cases, most different cases and most similar cases, among others.<sup>194</sup> This analysis will adopt an approach which constitutes something of a workhorse in comparative political studies: the most similar systems design (MSSD). This case study design, historically based on John Stuart Mill's 'method of difference',<sup>195</sup> involves the selection of cases which are as similar as possible in all but the dependent variable, on the grounds that this should enable the analysis to identify the key independent variables which explain differences in the dependent variable.

Secessionist movements have been analysed and compared by many scholars in recent years, with a substantial number of those focussing on similar cases, in mature democracies.<sup>196</sup> Building on the work of these scholars, this thesis will focus on three relatively uncontroversial examples of stateless nations,<sup>197</sup> which contain their own distinct cultures, historical separateness and bounded territory, but at this point have not been recognised as states: Scotland, Catalonia and Flanders. While each of these cases has in the past been

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<sup>194</sup> Jason Seawright, 'The Case for Selecting Cases That Are Deviant or Extreme on the Independent Variable', *Sociological Methods & Research* 45 (3) (2016): 493-525

<sup>195</sup> John Stuart Mill, *A System of Logic, Ratiocinative and Inductive: Being a Connected View of the Principles of Evidence, and the Methods of Scientific Investigation (Volume 1)* (London: John W. Parker, 1843): 455

<sup>196</sup> Daniel Beland and Andre Lecours, 'The Politics of Territorial Solidarity: Nationalism and Social Policy Reform in Canada, the United Kingdom and Belgium', *Comparative Political Studies* 38 (6) (2005): 676-703;

Danielle Conversi, *The Basques, the Catalans, and Spain: Alternative Routes to Nationalist Mobilisation* (Reno, NV: University of Nevada Press, 2000);

David Smith and Enid Wistrich (eds.), *Regional Identity and Diversity in Europe: Experience in Wales, Silesia and Flanders* (London: Federal Trust for Education and Research, 2007);

Guibernau, 'National Identity, Devolution and Secession in Canada, Britain and Spain';

Greer, *Nationalism and Self-Government*;

James Kennedy, *Liberal Nationalisms: Empire, State, and Civil Society in Scotland and Quebec* (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queens University Press, 2013);

Katherine O'Sullivan-See, *First World Nationalisms: Class and Ethnic Politics in Northern Ireland and Quebec* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1986);

Michael Keating, *Nations Against the State: The New Politics of Nationalism in Quebec, Catalonia and Scotland* (New York: St Martin's Press, 1996);

Montserrat Guibernau, *Nations without States: Political Communities in a Global Age* (Malden, MA: John Wiley & Sons, 1999);

Patrick Hossay, *Contentions of Nationhood: Nationalist Movements, Political Conflict and Social Change in Flanders, Scotland and French Canada* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2002)

<sup>197</sup> Greer, *Nationalism and Self-Government*, 15

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analysed by scholars of secession, this thesis aims to provide an original contribution, by systematically examining the impact of trust on secessionist support.

### 3.2 Scotland

Scotland, Jacques Leruez argued, is one of the least controversial or disputed examples of a nation without its own state, or a 'stateless nation'.<sup>198</sup> This term, coined by Leruez in his 1983 work on the position of Scotland within the British state, was later popularised by leading Scottish scholars, including David McCrone, Michael Keating and T.M. Devine.<sup>199</sup> Many historians have supported the notion that Scotland has possessed the characteristics of a distinct nation since the Middle Ages,<sup>200</sup> although this view is highly contested by modernisation theorists.

Ernest Gellner for example, argues that the nation is an artificial, imagined, manufactured construct, which 'fraudulently' invents a past in order to 'gain a semblance of antiquity and deep roots', coming into being as late as the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries.<sup>201</sup> Scottish political thinker Tom Nairn has argued that the phrase 'state-nation' would be most accurate to describe Scotland, stressing that it had been an independent state long before becoming a nation, in the modern sense.<sup>202</sup>

While the date of its origin may be disputed however, it is widely accepted throughout the UK that although Scotland does not currently have its own state, it is a nation with its own

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<sup>198</sup> Leruez, *L'Ecosse, une nation sans Etat*

<sup>199</sup> David McCrone, *Understanding Scotland: The sociology of a stateless nation* (London: Routledge, 1992); Keating, *Nations against the state*;

Michael Keating, *Plurinational Democracy: Stateless Nations in a Post-Sovereignty Era* (Clarendon: Oxford University Press, 2001);

Michael Keating, 'Stateless Nation-Building: Quebec, Catalonia and Scotland in the Changing State System', *Nations and Nationalism* 3 (4) (1997): 689-717;

Nathalie Duclos, 'The Idiosyncrasies of Scottish National Identity,' in Richard R. Verdugo and Andrew Milne (eds.), *National Identity: Theory and Research* (Charlotte, NC: Information Age Publishing Inc., 2016): 83-112;

Thomas Martin Devine, *Scotland's Empire, 1600-1815* (London: Allen Lane, 2003)

<sup>200</sup> H.J. Hanham, *Scottish Nationalism* (London: Faber & Faber, 1969);

Michael Lynch, *Scotland: A new history* (London: Pimlico, 1999);

Michael Lynch (ed.), *The Oxford companion to Scottish history* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001)

<sup>201</sup> Ernest Gellner, *Nationalism* (New York: NYU Press, 1997)

<sup>202</sup> Tom Nairn, *After Britain: New Labour and the Return of Scotland* (London: Granta Books, 2000): 121

national identity, which is commonly referred to as 'Scottishness'.<sup>203</sup> Each of the main political parties within the UK, Antonia Dodds and David Seawright highlight, take the existence the Scottish nation as a given, only differing in their readings of Scottishness.<sup>204</sup> Scotland's uncontested borders have remained unchanged for centuries and it has a national capital (Edinburgh), in which many of its national institutions and museums are located. Scotland has its own flag ('The Saltire'), national sports teams, an emblem (the thistle), a patron saint (St Andrew) and a national day. These factors are among the many which combine to make Scotland's status as a nation within the UK uncontroversial.

Having emerged as an independent sovereign state in the early middle ages, Scotland has a long history of struggles to retain its independence. Throughout the fourteenth century, Scotland fought off the claims of English crown, securing its own monarchical and parliamentary institutions.<sup>205</sup> Rulers of the Scottish state, Keating argues, successfully played on the Anglo-French rivalry to protect their sovereignty, until the Scottish Reformation tilted the balance firmly in favour of the English, in the 1560s.<sup>206</sup> In 1603, the Scottish and English crowns were united, as the Scottish king James VI succeeded to the throne of England. Upon the signing of the Treaty of the Union, which both kingdoms agreed to in 1707, the parliaments united to create a single state, the United Kingdom of Great Britain.

The emerging state saw the birth of a new unitary parliament for Great Britain, while preserving many of the features of Scottish civil society.<sup>207</sup> In this sense, the newly created United Kingdom of Great Britain was what Stein Rokkan and Derek W. Urwin have termed a 'union state', which was neither federal nor unitary, but somewhere between the two.<sup>208</sup> In addition to the closure of the Scottish and English parliaments and the creation of a new British parliament, the union was economically beneficial, giving Scotland free trade with the English market and access to the expanding empire.<sup>209</sup> Despite this, there was significant opposition to the treaty within Scotland at the time of signing and a degree of bribery was

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<sup>203</sup> Antonia Dodds and David Seawright, 'The politics of identity: Scottish nationalism', in Michael O'Neill (ed.), *Devolution and British politics* (London: Pearson Longman, 2004): 91

<sup>204</sup> Dodds and Seawright, 'The politics of identity: Scottish nationalism', 91

<sup>205</sup> Keating, *Nations against the state*, 163

<sup>206</sup> Keating, *Nations against the state*, 163

<sup>207</sup> Keating, *Nations against the state*, 164

<sup>208</sup> Stein Rokkan and Derek W. Urwin, *Economy, Territory, Identity: Politics of West European Peripheries* (London: Sage, 1983): 187

<sup>209</sup> Duclos, 'The Idiosyncrasies of Scottish National Identity,' 86

required to persuade the Scottish parliament to vote on its own adjournment.<sup>210</sup> This, Keating states, is point that has long been emphasised by Scottish nationalists.<sup>211</sup>

While the notion of Scottish secession did not come to dominate the political landscape until many years later, Keating argues that Scotland's sense of national identity began to re-take a political form in the late nineteenth century, when nationalist protests emerged in the Highlands, among radicals and in the labour movement.<sup>212</sup> The eventual result saw the appointment of a Secretary for Scotland in 1885 to administer the various boards and agencies responsible for Scottish affairs, which evolved into an elaborate system of administrative devolution.<sup>213</sup> At this point, the principal proponents of notion of Scottish home rule were found in the Highlands, the radical wing of the Liberal Party, and the labour movement.<sup>214</sup>

Despite thirteen parliamentary bills with broad support among Scottish MPs, Keating notes, no advancements were made towards home rule and the issue effectively faded from attention after 1922.<sup>215</sup> With the decline of the Liberal Party and Labour's focus elsewhere, the foundation of the Scottish National Party (SNP) between 1928 and 1934 came to represent those frustrated with the lack of progress towards home rule.<sup>216</sup>

In the current political climate, the SNP has been instrumental in the politicisation of the Scottish national identity. The SNP's particular brand of nationalism, it has been argued, is somewhat unusual, in that the party does not argue the central aim of Scottish secession is to grant political recognition to the Scottish national identity, nor does it present Scottish independence as signifying the end of a common British national identity, or emphasise such commonly shared national features as a common language or religion.<sup>217</sup> Indeed, while Scotland does possess two indigenous languages (Gaelic and Scots),<sup>218</sup> the former had retreated to the western Highlands and islands by the nineteenth century, and the latter

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<sup>210</sup> William Ferguson, *Scotland: 1689 to the Present* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1968)

<sup>211</sup> Keating, *Nations against the state*, 163

<sup>212</sup> Keating, *Nations against the state*, 167

<sup>213</sup> Keating, *Nations against the state*, 167

<sup>214</sup> Michael Keating and David Bleiman, *Labour and Scottish Nationalism* (London: Macmillan, 1979)

<sup>215</sup> Keating, *Nations against the state*, 167

<sup>216</sup> Keating, *Nations against the state*, 167

<sup>217</sup> Duclos, 'The Idiosyncrasies of Scottish National Identity,' 84

<sup>218</sup> Keating, *Nations against the state*, 165



never developed a standardised orthography or achieved *ausbau* status,<sup>219</sup> but was instead confined to popular use. Language therefore ceased to be considered a marker of Scottish nationality.

In contrast to the unionists, committed to the maintenance of the United Kingdom and historically favouring a unitary parliament at Westminster, as well as the home rulers who favour Scottish self-government within a reformed United Kingdom, Scottish secessionists are those ultimately seeking a separate nation state.<sup>220</sup> Traditionally, Keating has argued that as opposed to radical separatism, the prospective independence of Scotland has been viewed within a broader framework such as the European Union (EU) or historically, the Commonwealth.<sup>221</sup>

Even within the SNP there have previously been divisions relating to the timeframe of secession, with 'gradualists' favouring a more cautious approach, proceeding with devolution before eventual outright independence and 'fundamentalists' campaigning for complete secession immediately.<sup>222</sup>

In the 2011 Scottish Parliament election, the SNP gained an absolute majority, thus endowing the secessionist party with a mandate to pursue an independence referendum (although this is a matter reserved constitutionally to Westminster). The SNP's electoral victory, Keating argues, was primarily a result of the perception that they were competent in government, demonstrating an ability to take decisions on their own, without depending on Westminster.<sup>223</sup> This indication of trust and confidence in the devolved Scottish government is an example of trust between individuals and institutions that have relative power over them,<sup>224</sup> which will be integral to the analysis throughout this chapter.

On 18<sup>th</sup> September 2014, a referendum on Scottish independence was held. Despite those voting to stay in the UK achieving a clear majority of 55.3 per cent, the referendum result did not quell the secessionist movement in Scotland. The 44.7 per cent of votes in

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<sup>219</sup> J. Derrick McClure, *Why Scots Matters* (Edinburgh: Saltire Society, 1988)

<sup>220</sup> Keating, 'The Scottish independence referendum and after,' 74

<sup>221</sup> Keating, 'The Scottish independence referendum and after,' 75

<sup>222</sup> Keating, 'The Scottish independence referendum and after,' 75

<sup>223</sup> Keating, 'The Scottish independence referendum and after,' 76

<sup>224</sup> Szreter and Woolcock, 'Health by association?';

Woolcock, 'The place of social capital in understanding social and economic outcomes'

favour of secession was a much higher proportion of the vote share than many had previously predicted and gaining momentum, the SNP won 56 of Scotland's 59 seats in the UK general election, which was held a few months later. With the SNP now accounting for 50 per cent of the national popular vote, Scottish nationalism only seemed to have grown stronger in the aftermath of the independence referendum. While the immediate short-term consequence of the 2014 referendum was a defeat for the secessionists, the longer-term result was a substantial increase in nationwide support for the idea of secession.

Since 2012, there has been a clear increase in support for secession, according to SSA data.<sup>225</sup> Before the beginning of the independence referendum campaign in 2012, support for outright independence had ranged between 23 and 35 per cent, at its highest constituting just over a third of respondents. Support increased each year following the beginning of the referendum campaign until 2016, where it has remained above 40 per cent. With close to half of all voters in Scotland now supporting the notion of secession and talk of a second referendum surfacing soon after the results of the first, the 2014 independence referendum has far from settled the debate about Scotland's constitutional status.

### 3.3 Catalonia

A small territory located on the northeastern extremity of the Iberian Peninsula, with Barcelona as its capital and largest city, Catalonia has historically undergone a long process of gaining and losing political autonomy. The independence of Catalonia has been a fixture of both Catalan and Spanish politics at many points in history, with the region briefly gaining independence under the protection of France in 1640, during the War of the Reapers (*Guerra dels Segadors*), and between 1810 and 1812.

While the primary focus of Catalan nationalism has historically been the defense of the Catalan language and culture,<sup>226</sup> recent years have seen many Catalan nationalists call for outright independence and secession from the existing Spanish State. In October 2016, in the investiture debate which saw Mariano Rajoy returned as Spanish Prime Minister after almost

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<sup>225</sup> Scotcen, 'From Indyref1 to Indyref2? The state of nationalism in Scotland,' *Scottish Social Attitudes* (<http://www.ssa.natcen.ac.uk/media/38910/ssa16-2fr8m-1indyref-2-1ndyr8f-tw0-two.pdf>, 15<sup>th</sup> July, 2018)

<sup>226</sup> Brandon M. Boylan, 'In pursuit of independence: The political economy of Catalonia's secessionist movement,' *Nations and Nationalism* 21 (4) (2015): 761-785

a year of political deadlock, he cited the question of Catalan independence as the single most serious issue currently confronting Spain.<sup>227</sup>

Like Scotland and Flanders, the Spanish autonomous community of Catalonia is widely considered an example of a 'stateless nation', or 'nation without a state'.<sup>228</sup> As a stateless nation, the Catalan case is an example of a community which has a common culture and history, and an attachment to a particular territory, but a lack of its own state and an impossibility to act as a political institution on the international scene.<sup>229</sup>

Catalonia has its own distinctive traditions, language, flag (the Senyera) and national anthem (Els Segadors),<sup>230</sup> which are among the many factors that combine to make Catalonia's status as a nation within Spain uncontroversial among scholars. The Catalan language, as Katherine Woolard highlights, is a particularly key symbol of the Catalan national identity, the speaking of which is taken as a sign of assimilation and incorporation into Catalan society and culture.<sup>231</sup>

Despite its two brief periods of independence, the Catalan nation also has an extensive history of existing peacefully and prosperously as a nation within the Spanish state. Catalonia, Michael Keating highlights, has a long tradition of stateless nation-building, which dates from the period between Spanish unification and the abolition of its self-governing institutions in 1714.<sup>232</sup> As a commercial and trading nation, he argues, Catalonia was able to operate within the Spanish political and economic arenas, as well as those of Europe and the Mediterranean.<sup>233</sup>

The end of the nineteenth century saw the birth of the 'Renaixença' movement, which promoted Catalan language and culture, leading to demands for Catalan autonomy.<sup>234</sup> Catalonia was then granted autonomy under the administration of the Mancomunitat (1913–23), subsequently suppressed in 1923 after Miguel Primo de Rivera's coup d'état, before its

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<sup>227</sup> Andrew Dowling, *The Rise of Catalan Independence: Spain's Territorial Crisis* (New York: Routledge, 2018)

<sup>228</sup> Keating, 'Stateless Nation-Building' ;  
Leruez, *L'Ecosse, une nation sans Etat*;

Monserrat Guibernau, *Catalan Nationalism: Francoism, Transition and Democracy* (London: Routledge, 2004)

<sup>229</sup> Guibernau, *Catalan Nationalism*, 9

<sup>230</sup> Josep Benet, *Catalunya sota el règim franquista* (Paris: Edicions Catalanes de Paris, 1973)

<sup>231</sup> Katherine A. Woolard, *Double talk: Bilingualism and the politics of ethnicity in Catalonia* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1989)

<sup>232</sup> Keating, 'Stateless Nation-Building,' 698

<sup>233</sup> Keating, 'Stateless Nation-Building,' 698

<sup>234</sup> Montserrat Guibernau, 'Spain: Catalonia and the Basque Country', *Parliamentary Affairs* 49 (1) (1996): 55-68

re-establishment during the Generalitat (1931–38), in which Catalonia was granted its first Statute of Autonomy (1932).<sup>235</sup>

Victory for the insurrectionists in the Spanish Civil War (1936-1939) however, resulted in the complete suppression of autonomous Catalan institutions (although some continued in exile) and the proscription of Catalan language and culture.<sup>236</sup> Under the dictatorial rule of Francisco Franco, from 1939 until his death in 1975, the authoritarian Spanish state believed only the total destruction of the counter-nationalisms within Spain (including that of Catalonia) could build the Spanish political nation and ensure permanent loyalty to it.<sup>237</sup> The daily repression Catalans were faced with, Guibernau argues, entrenched divisions for many, creating a sense of 'us' (the Catalans), against 'them' (the Francoists), who identified with Castilian culture and language, conservatism, centralism and conservative Catholicism.<sup>238</sup>

The aftermath of Franco's death (1975), Guibernau states, saw Catalan nationalism transition from a clandestine resistance movement to a democratic movement, demanding some form of self-government.<sup>239</sup> This period signaled the restoration of Spanish democracy and Catalan autonomy, with the sanctioning of a democratic constitution (1978) and a new statute of autonomy for Catalonia (1979).<sup>240</sup>

Although post-Francoist attempts to build the Spanish political nation may never have fully recovered from the attempted elimination of Catalonia's distinctive linguistic and cultural heritage which took place under the dictatorship, Andrew Dowling argues there was nothing inevitable about the recent surge in Catalan secessionism.<sup>241</sup> At the turn of the century, tension relating to minority nationalism in Spain was predominantly focused on the Basque country, which was gradually approaching a post-violent scenario and by comparison, Catalan secessionism was not considered a pressing concern.<sup>242</sup>

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<sup>235</sup> Guibernau, 'Spain', 56

<sup>236</sup> Guibernau, *Catalan Nationalism*, 50

<sup>237</sup> Dowling, *The Rise of Catalan Independence*

<sup>238</sup> Guibernau, *Catalan Nationalism*, 51

<sup>239</sup> Guibernau, *Catalan Nationalism*, 1

<sup>240</sup> Congreso de los Diputados, *Spanish Constitution*

([http://www.congreso.es/portal/page/portal/Congreso/Congreso/Hist\\_Normas/Norm/const\\_espa\\_texto\\_ingles\\_0.pdf](http://www.congreso.es/portal/page/portal/Congreso/Congreso/Hist_Normas/Norm/const_espa_texto_ingles_0.pdf), 23<sup>rd</sup> March, 2019);

Generalitat de Catalunya, *1979 Statute of Autonomy*

(<https://web.gencat.cat/en/generalitat/estatut/estatut1979/>, 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2019)

<sup>241</sup> Dowling, *The Rise of Catalan Independence*

<sup>242</sup> Dowling, *The Rise of Catalan Independence*

While, since the restoration of Spanish democracy in 1978, there have always been social organisations and political parties advocating Catalan secession, only a minority of the region supported outright independence until 2010.<sup>243</sup> Before the early 1990s, none of the Catalan regional Parliament's 135 seats were held by a member (diputat), who was openly in favour of secession and even by the end of the same decade, no party in favour of Catalan secession had obtained as much as 10 percent of the vote in Catalan elections.<sup>244</sup> As recently as the mid-2000s, Catalan nationalism was considered a paradigmatic example of a non-secessionist nationalism, which sought enhanced autonomy that stopped short of outright independence, held up within Europe and beyond as a role model for successful devolution.<sup>245</sup>

Since 2010 however, the pro-independence movement has expanded rapidly, growing from 'almost political irrelevance' to occupying a 'pre-eminent place' at the heart of both Catalan and Spanish political debates.<sup>246</sup> Between 2009 and 2011, popular non-binding consultations on independence were held in more than 500 municipalities and attended by more than 800,000 people.<sup>247</sup> On 11<sup>th</sup> September 2012 (Catalan National Day), the largest pro-independence demonstration in Spanish history took place in Barcelona, with 1.5 million participants declaring their support for the secession of Catalonia.<sup>248</sup>

Two months later, in the snap Catalan regional election of 2012, parties which advocated the holding of an independence referendum obtained a clear majority in the regional parliament. As a result, the proposed 2014 referendum on the secession of Catalonia became a priority for the Catalan government, particularly in the nationalist coalition party *Convergència i Unió* (CiU) and separatist *Esquerra Republicana de Catalunya* (ERC).<sup>249</sup>

Given that the unilateral calling of an independence referendum by the Catalan government was a legal impossibility, they instead called for a non-binding consultation with

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<sup>243</sup> Xavier Cuadras Morató, 'Introduction: Catalonia, a new state in Europe', in Xavier Cuadras Morató (ed.), *Catalonia: A new independent state in Europe? A debate on secession within the European Union* (New York: Routledge, 2016): 1

<sup>244</sup> Dowling, *The Rise of Catalan Independence*

<sup>245</sup> Guibernau, *Nations without States*;

Ivan Serrano, 'Just a matter of identity? Support for independence in Catalonia,' *Regional and Federal Studies* 23 (5) (2013): 523-545;

Keating, *Nations against the State*;

Monserrat Guibernau, *The Identity of Nations* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2007)

<sup>246</sup> Cuadras Morató, 'Introduction', 1

<sup>247</sup> Serrano, 'Just a matter of identity?', 524

<sup>248</sup> Boylan, 'In pursuit of independence,' 761

<sup>249</sup> Boylan, 'In pursuit of independence,' 762

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citizens in 2014.<sup>250</sup> An estimated 40 percent of Catalans turned out to vote,<sup>251</sup> with 80.8 percent of voters favouring Catalan secession, but as this too was opposed by the Spanish Constitutional Court (Tribunal Constitucional de España) and the Regional High Court (Tribunal Superior de Justicia), the political leaders responsible for calling the consultation were condemned for prevarication and disobedience.<sup>252</sup>

In the 2015 elections of the Catalan parliament (Generalitat de Catalunya), it became clear that the secessionist movement had not been quelled, with Artur Mas, then president of the Catalan parliament, announcing that he intended for the election vote to be treated as a referendum on Catalan independence.<sup>253</sup> In the ensuing elections, the pro-independence parties won an absolute majority, this time calling for a binding independence referendum.

In contrast to the Scottish case however, the Spanish government was unwilling to accept any referendum on Catalan secession, rejecting the very existence of a 'Catalan people' with a right to decide unilaterally on their constitutional future.<sup>254</sup> Referring to Article 2 of the 1978 Spanish Constitution, the Spanish government highlighted the centrality of the 'indissoluble unity of the Spanish Nation', arguing that any referendum which could lead to the breakup of the Spanish state was unconstitutional.<sup>255</sup>

Despite repression by the Spanish authorities (including the use of violence, sealing of polling stations and seizing of ballot papers), the Catalan government held an independence referendum on 1<sup>st</sup> October 2017, in which 43 percent of Catalans turned out to vote, with 90

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<sup>250</sup> Maria Mut Bosque, 'Scotland and Catalonia in Twenty-First Century European Union: The Parallels and Differences', *The Round Table* 107 (1) (2018): 89-91

<sup>251</sup> Charlemagne, 'Catalonia's independence vote: Yes and no', *The Economist*, 10<sup>th</sup> November 2014

(<https://www.economist.com/charlemagne/2014/11/10/yes-and-no>, 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2019);

Fernando J. Péres and Pere Ríos, '1,8 millones de personas votan por la independencia catalana en el 9-N', *El País*, 10<sup>th</sup> November 2014 ([https://elpais.com/politica/2014/11/09/actualidad/1415542400\\_466311.html](https://elpais.com/politica/2014/11/09/actualidad/1415542400_466311.html), 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2019);

Patrick Jackson, 'Catalonia vote: No smiles for Spain', *BBC News*, 10<sup>th</sup> November 2014

(<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/blogs-eu-29994633>, 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2019)

<sup>252</sup> Mut Bosque, 'Scotland and Catalonia in Twenty-First Century European Union', 90

<sup>253</sup> David Martí and Daniel Cetrà, 'The 2015 Catalan Election: a *de facto* referendum on independence?',

*Regional and Federal Studies* 26 (1) (2016): 107-119;

Lluís Orriols and Toni Rodon, 'The 2015 Catalan Election: The Independence Bid at the Polls', *South European Society and Politics* 21 (3) (2016): 359-381;

Màrius Carol, 'Mas: "Si no hay mayoría soberanista, este proceso se habrá acabado"', *La Vanguardia*, 7<sup>th</sup> September 2015 (<https://www.lavanguardia.com/politica/20150906/54435132109/artur-mas-si-no-mayoria-soberanista-proceso-acabado.html>, 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2019)

<sup>254</sup> Elisenda Casanas Adam, Dimitrios Kagiarios and Stephen Tierney, 'Democracy in Question? Direct Democracy in the European Union', *European Constitutional Law Review* 14 (2018): 261-282

<sup>255</sup> Congreso de los Diputados, *Spanish Constitution*, 10

percent voting in favour of secession.<sup>256</sup> The ensuing standoff between the Spanish and Catalan orders of government saw the suspension of Catalan autonomy, in addition to the imprisonment of Catalan government members and two leaders of Catalan civil society.<sup>257</sup> Ahead of the upcoming national, regional and local elections in Spain and with pro-secession politicians currently on trial in the Supreme court, the Catalan secessionist movement remains at the heart of Spanish political debate.

### 3.4 Flanders

Upon the secession of the Kingdom of Belgium from the United Kingdom of the Netherlands, following the Belgian Revolution of 1830, Belgium became an independent unitary state with nine provinces, which were direct progeny of the 'Départements' established by its former French rulers.<sup>258</sup> From its very inception, Lode Wils argues, the Belgian state was home to a clear duality and a linguistic division between the Dutch-speaking Flemings in the northern part of the country and the French-speaking Walloons in the southern portion.<sup>259</sup>

Despite this, at the time of the revolution, there were no generally accepted toponyms for the language regions of Belgium,<sup>260</sup> with the term 'Wallonia' yet to be coined,<sup>261</sup> and the name 'Flanders' used only to describe the medieval County of Flanders, or the Belgian provinces of East and West Flanders.<sup>262</sup> Over the next 150 years however, Wallonia came to

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<sup>256</sup> Mut Bosque, 'Scotland and Catalonia in Twenty-First Century European Union', 90

<sup>257</sup> Carlota Camps, 'Barcelona mayor proposes EU dialogue platform on Catalan conflict', *El Nacional*, 5 October 2017 ([https://www.elnacional.cat/en/news/colau-dialogue-platform-eu-catalonia\\_199119\\_102.html](https://www.elnacional.cat/en/news/colau-dialogue-platform-eu-catalonia_199119_102.html), 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2019);

Casanas Adam et al, 'Democracy in Question?', 270;

Sam Jones and Stephen Burgen, 'Catalan leader calls for mediation with Spain over independence', *The Guardian*, 2 October 2017 (<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/oct/02/catalan-government-emergency-meeting-spain-independence>, 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2019)

<sup>258</sup> Jean-François Husson, Céline Mahieu and Caroline Sägesser, 'Federalism and Decentralisation in Belgium', in José Manuel Ruano and Marius Profireoiu (eds.), *The Palgrave Handbook of Decentralisation in Europe* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017): 47-76;

Theo Luykx, *Atlas Historique et Culturel de la Belgique* (Brussels: Elsevier, 1959)

<sup>259</sup> Lode Wils, 'Introduction: A brief history of the Flemish movement,' in Theo Hermans (ed.), *The Flemish Movement: A Documentary History, 1780-1990* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992): 1-40

<sup>260</sup> Alexander B. Murphy, 'Evolving regionalism in linguistically divided Belgium', in R.J. Johnston, David Knight and Eleonore Kofman (eds.), *Nationalism, Self-Determination and Political Geography* (London: Routledge, 1988): 135-150

<sup>261</sup> Albert Henry, *Esquisse d'une Histoire des Mots 'Wallon' et 'Wallonie'* (Brussels: La Renaissance du Livre, 1974)

<sup>262</sup> Maurits Gysseling, 'Vlaanderen: (Etymologie en Betekenisevolutie', in *Encyclopedie van de Vlaamse Beweging* (Tiel: Lannoo, 1975): 1906-1912

signify the area south of the Romance-Germanic language line which bisects Belgium, while Flanders came to refer to the section north of the linguistic boundary, with the two regions eventually becoming the primary administrative regions in a state which is formally partitioned along linguistic lines.<sup>263</sup>

In the period which followed the Belgian Revolution, Jean-François Husson et al highlight, cultural demands expressed in Flanders were unmet,<sup>264</sup> with a desire for the recognition of the Dutch language initially at the heart of the 'Flemish movement'.<sup>265</sup> The newly created Belgian state, Janet Polasky argues, had firmly given Francophones the upper hand,<sup>266</sup> with French chosen as the language of government, business and higher education.<sup>267</sup> As early as 1830, a patriotic movement began to grow in Flanders, promoting the use of the 'vernacular' Dutch language, through the publication of books and journals, the formation of associations and even the mounting of a political campaign in 1840.<sup>268</sup>

The 'Orangists' in particular, retained substantial affection for King William I after his abdication in 1840 and stressed that, regardless of the 'regrettable' outcome of the Belgian revolution, Dutch speakers both North and South of the Belgian border were still constitutive of one 'Netherlandish' people.<sup>269</sup> Over the course of subsequent decades and generations, the Flemish movement saw the Dutch-speaking inhabitants of Belgium grow into a Flemish nation within the Belgian state,<sup>270</sup> pushing for greater autonomy and in some sections, secession from Belgium.

By 1873, a criminal justice administration act had been introduced, granting accused Flemings the right to be tried in Dutch and, in 1883, a law on public secondary education provided for the creation of 'Flemish sections', in which the Germanic languages, history, geography, and natural sciences were to be taught in the vernacular.<sup>271</sup> It was not until the German occupation of Belgium in 1914-1918 however, that a Flemish government was

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<sup>263</sup> Murphy, 'Evolving regionalism in linguistically divided Belgium', 135

<sup>264</sup> Husson et al, 'Federalism and Decentralisation in Belgium', 47

<sup>265</sup> Kas Deprez, 'The Dutch Language in Flanders,' in Theo Hermans (ed.), *The Flemish Movement: A Documentary History, 1780-1990* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992): 416-430

<sup>266</sup> Janet Polasky, 'Liberalism and Biculturalism', in Arend Lijphart (ed.), *Conflict and Coexistence in Belgium – The Dynamics of a Culturally Divided Society* (Berkeley: Institute of International Studies, 1981): 34-45

<sup>267</sup> Murphy, 'Evolving regionalism in linguistically divided Belgium'

<sup>268</sup> Wils, 'Introduction', 7

<sup>269</sup> Wils, 'Introduction', 8

<sup>270</sup> Wils, 'Introduction', 10

<sup>271</sup> Gustave van Geyt, Felix Rousseau and Georges Smets, 'The Flemings and the Walloons', *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 247 (1946): 128-133



established,<sup>272</sup> recognizing a number of Flemish requests, including the granting of a Flemish identity to the University of Ghent.<sup>273</sup>

The shift of economic power from south to north after the Second World War, Deschouwer argues, marked a turning point in the dynamics of Belgian politics and added one more element to the territorial divide.<sup>274</sup> While prior to that time, distrust of the Belgian central state had been primarily confined to Flanders and based on linguistic identity, the South began to develop similar levels of distrust for a central state that was seen to be dominated by Flanders on all fronts.<sup>275</sup>

The structure of the Belgian state remained almost entirely unaltered however, until the 1960s, at which point nationalist tensions between Flemings and Walloons had escalated into a major political problem, with a number of nationalistic demonstrations taking place, and the popularity of nationalist political parties in both regions surging.<sup>276</sup> By the end of this decade, 'linguistic borders' became more formally established, paving the way for the development of an increasingly regionalist and ultimately federalist political system.<sup>277</sup>

In the period between 1970 and 1993, the Belgian Constitution was changed four times, with each alteration leading to increased devolution for Flanders and Wallonia.<sup>278</sup> While the official responsibilities of the linguistic communities were initially limited to cultural affairs, they soon gained competences over education and social policies, while as a response to social and economic demands, the reform of 1980 saw the formal creation of the Flemish and Walloon Regions.<sup>279</sup> Following the fourth constitutional reform in 1993, the Belgian Parliament produced a new, entirely re-written Belgian Constitution, which proclaimed that 'Belgium is a Federal State, made up of the Communities and the Regions'.<sup>280</sup>

While for around a decade, federalism appeared to have reduced the intensity of Flemish demands for independence, this period soon gave way to a new wave of instability

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<sup>272</sup> Husson et al, 'Federalism and Decentralisation in Belgium', 47

<sup>273</sup> Wils, 'Introduction', 19

<sup>274</sup> Kris Deschouwer, *The politics of Belgium: Governing a divided society* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012): 44

<sup>275</sup> Deschouwer, *The politics of Belgium*, 44

<sup>276</sup> Rolf Falter, 'Belgium's Peculiar Way to Federalism', in Kas Deprez and Louis Vos (eds.), *Nationalism in Belgium: Shifting Identities, 1780-1995* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1998): 177-197

<sup>277</sup> Husson et al, 'Federalism and Decentralisation in Belgium', 47

<sup>278</sup> Falter, 'Belgium's Peculiar Way to Federalism', 177

<sup>279</sup> Husson et al, 'Federalism and Decentralisation in Belgium', 48

<sup>280</sup> Falter, 'Belgium's Peculiar Way to Federalism', 191

and gridlock, characterised by resurfacing fractures on such issues as language, territory and the very existence of the Belgian state.<sup>281</sup> The divisions between Flemings and Walloons, many scholars argue, are deepening, calling into question the very existence of a united Belgian identity<sup>282</sup> and the sustainability of a Belgian state.<sup>283</sup>

### 3.5 Commonality of the cases

The cases of Scotland, Catalonia and Flanders have numerous similarities, which make them appropriate selections for a MSSD approach. Firstly, the three cases are similar, in that they are seeking independence by peaceful, democratic means. As Guibernau highlights, Scotland conducted an independence referendum in 2014, while Catalonia has been ‘struggling with Madrid’ for some time, in attempts to organise its own legally recognised referendum in the future.<sup>284</sup>

In Flanders meanwhile, although no formal negotiations towards the holding of an independence referendum have yet taken place, the disputes of the 1970s and 80s, between Belgium’s language communities, eventually resulted in the transformation of the unitary state into a federation, which it has officially been since 1995. In the elections of 2010 meanwhile, the Flemish nationalist Nieuw-Vlaamse Alliantie, or ‘New Flemish Alliance’ (N-VA) became the country’s largest party, running on a platform which pushed for ‘loose confederation’ and ultimately outright independence for Flanders.<sup>285</sup>

Secondly, Scotland, Catalonia and Flanders are examples of secessionist movements which have in recent years, enjoyed considerable electoral success. Indeed, following the 2014 Scottish independence referendum, the SNP went on to win 56 of Scotland’s available 59 seats in the 2015 UK general election, meaning that the SNP now accounted for 50 per cent of the national popular vote. In Catalonia meanwhile, the 2015 Catalan parliament

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<sup>281</sup> Deschouwer, *The politics of Belgium*, 1

<sup>282</sup> Jaak Billiet, Bart Maddens and Andre-Paul Frogner, ‘Does Belgium (Still) Exist? Differences in Political Culture between Flemings and Walloons’, *West European Politics* 29 (5) (2006): 912-932

<sup>283</sup> Michael O’Neill, ‘Belgium: Language, Ethnicity and Nationality’, *Parliamentary Affairs* 53 (1) (2000): 114-134;

Wilfried Swenden and Maarten Theo Jans, ‘Will it Stay or Will It Go?’ Federalism and the Sustainability of Belgium’, *West European Politics* 29 (5) (2006): 877-894

<sup>284</sup> Montserrat Guibernau, ‘Introduction: A special section on self-determination and the Use of Referendums: Catalonia, Quebec and Scotland’, *International Journal of Politics, Culture and Society* 27 (2014): 1-3

<sup>285</sup> Deschouwer, *The politics of Belgium*, 2

elections saw pro-independence parties win an absolute majority. In 2017, secessionist parties again won a majority, claiming 70 of Catalonia's available 135 seats, although falling narrowly short of a majority of the popular vote, with 47.5 percent.

In Belgium, the current coalition government features the pro-independence N-VA as major partner, lending significant plausibility to the movement for Flemish secession.<sup>286</sup> Furthermore, between N-VA and Vlaams Belang (VB), a party which also campaigned on a pro-secession platform, the secessionist parties accounted for around forty percent of the Flemish vote in 2010 and 2015, and almost fifty percent of the vote in 2019. Should secessionist parties continue to grow in popularity and come to constitute a majority of voters in Flanders, independence through the ballot box will become a viable option.<sup>287</sup>

Thirdly, each of the three cases already has a significant degree of political power, with each stateless nation having its own devolved parliament and substantial autonomy over matters within its own respective region. In spite of substantial support for Scottish, Catalan and Flemish nationalism, Guibernau has argued, each respective movement has so far been somehow accommodated through the device of particular devolution structures, which have ultimately succeeded in preventing secession.<sup>288</sup>

In addition, each of the three cases can be considered an established, mature democracy, in that they have all experienced at least ten consecutive years of universal suffrage. In established democracies, the number of attempted and successful secessions have historically been very low and, if only democracies with at least ten consecutive years of universal suffrage are considered, there has never been a single successful secession attempt through referendum or electoral victory.<sup>289</sup>

Despite this, all three of the existing states within which the secessionist regions are governed have, at some point in their history, been involved in secession themselves, or witnessed a region successfully secede from their territory.<sup>290</sup> The UK for example, saw the secession of the Republic of Ireland take place in 1921, while Spain witnessed the secession

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<sup>286</sup> Glen M.E. Duerr, *Secessionism and the European Union: The future of Flanders, Scotland, and Catalonia* (London: Lexington, 2015): 176

<sup>287</sup> Duerr, *Secessionism and the European Union*, 177

<sup>288</sup> Guibernau, 'National Identity, devolution and secession in Canada, Britain and Spain', 69

<sup>289</sup> Dion, 'Why is Secession Difficult in Well-Established Democracies', 269

<sup>290</sup> Duerr, *Secessionism and the European Union*, 21

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of the Netherlands in 1648 and Portugal in 1668.<sup>291</sup> Finally, Belgium itself seceded from the Netherlands in 1830, following the Belgian Revolution.

### 3.7 Contrasts within the cases

In addition to the various similarities between the three cases, there are several important differences, which are expected to make the cases particularly interesting for comparison. Firstly, Flanders and Catalonia are thought to be strong economic regions, when compared to their respective states, overall. Although in the nineteenth century, Wallonia was the stronger economic region in Belgium, with many Flemings migrating to the French-speaking region in search of employment,<sup>292</sup> it was overtaken by the Flemish economy in the 1960s.<sup>293</sup> Flemings, and in particular secessionist political leaders in Flanders, have frequently cited the disproportionately high fiscal contributions Flanders makes to poorer areas of Belgium as a grievance they have with the central state.

Similarly, Catalonia's fiscal contribution to the wider Spanish state has featured heavily in pro-secession arguments for many years. Jordi Pujol for example, leader of CDC from 1974-2003 and President of the Generalitat from 1980-2003, stressed that the deficit between Catalonia's contribution to the Spanish government and the revenue it receives from them has a detrimental social cost for Catalans.<sup>294</sup>

Scotland on the other hand, is generally thought to benefit financially from its continued membership in the UK. This was evident throughout the debate which preceded the 2014 independence referendum, with unionists and Scottish secessionists frequently disputing the extent to which a fully independent Scottish state would suffer economically. Unionists argued that without the aid of the Barnett formula, an allocation mechanism that adjusts levels of spending in Scotland according to increases or decreases in English

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<sup>291</sup> Mikulas Fabry, 'International Involvement in Secessionist Conflict' in Aleksandar Pavkovic and Peter Radan (eds.), *The Ashgate Research Companion to Secession* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2011): 251-266

<sup>292</sup> Samuel Humes, *Belgium: Long United, Long Divided* (London: C. Hurst & Company, 2014)

<sup>293</sup> Liesbet Hooghe, 'Belgium: Hollowing the centre', in Ugo Amoretti and Nancy Bermeo (eds.), *Federalism and Territorial Cleavages* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University, 2004): 58; Swenden and Jans, 'Will it Stay or Will It Go?' 878

<sup>294</sup> Jordi Pujol, *Paraules del president de la Generalitat de Catalunya (gener-desembre de 1999)* (Barcelona: Generalitat de Catalunya, vol. XXX., 2000): 108

expenditure on the same functions,<sup>295</sup> Scotland would be unable to pay for its own public services.

Furthermore, Catalonia and Flanders are examples of regions in which the language a majority of their citizens speak is different from that of their respective wider states. Language has long been at the heart of the 'Flemish movement',<sup>296</sup> with a movement promoting the use of the 'vernacular' Dutch language growing through the publication of books and journals, the formation of associations and even the mounting of a political campaign, as early as 1840.<sup>297</sup> The Catalan language meanwhile, is thought to be a particularly key symbol of the Catalan national identity, the speaking of which is taken as a sign of assimilation and incorporation into Catalan society and culture.<sup>298</sup>

As stated in earlier in the chapter, although Gaelic and Scots are two examples of languages which are indigenous to Scotland,<sup>299</sup> language ceased to be considered a marker of Scottish nationality, many years ago. Gaelic, for example, became confined to the western Highlands and islands as long ago as the nineteenth century, while Scots has never developed a standardised orthography or achieved *ausbau* status.<sup>300</sup>

Finally, while the secessionist movements of Catalonia and Scotland advocate for the breakup of the existing states to which they belong (Spain and the UK), in favour of creating an entirely separate, independent new state, many of those members of the Flemish movement who advocate secession would prefer unification with the Netherlands to the creation of an entirely separate state. The option of reuniting with the Netherlands is particularly popular within the separatist party *Vlaams Belang*, in addition to a number of Dutch right-wing activists and nationalists and some mainstream politicians within both Flanders and the Netherlands.

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<sup>295</sup> Keating, 'The Scottish independence referendum and after,' 80;  
Michael Keating, *The Government of Scotland: Public Policy after Devolution, 2nd edition* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2010);

Dardanelli and Mitchell, 'An independent Scotland?'

<sup>296</sup> Deprez, 'The Dutch Language in Flanders'

<sup>297</sup> Wils, 'Introduction', 7

<sup>298</sup> Woolard, *Double talk*

<sup>299</sup> Keating, *Nations against the state*, 165

<sup>300</sup> McClure, *Why Scots Matters*

## Chapter 4. Hypotheses

### 4.1 Introduction

Understanding the dynamics of secessionist support, this thesis will argue, is important for two main reasons. Firstly, the process of secession is considered to be disruptive,<sup>301</sup> in that it involves the breakup of existing states and the redrawing of state boundaries, which can have major legal implications in areas including, but not limited to international relations, defence, security, trade, distributive justice and state infrastructure. One frequently raised objection asserts that secession is inherently chaotic and can provide a recipe for anarchy, as there is no feasible way of drawing state boundaries which would simultaneously satisfy all demands for national self-determination.<sup>302</sup> The anticipated effects of secession are therefore many and varied, expected to affect a large number of people within the potential secessionist region and the wider existing state, as well as the states who trade and negotiate with them.

Secondly, the last two decades have seen a substantial increase in the number of secession attempts taking place.<sup>303</sup> Secession has therefore become a more salient issue across a growing number of states, simply because it has become a more realistic possibility. As this is a fairly recent phenomenon, secession has also historically been somewhat neglected by researchers,<sup>304</sup> both empirically and theoretically, and so the dynamics of support for secession have not been analysed in as granular detail as more regular forms of voting behaviour.

In explaining the dynamics of secessionist support, this thesis will examine the role of trust, which is understood broadly as a willingness to be vulnerable to others and to rely on them to be competent.<sup>305</sup> More specifically however, this thesis will focus on institutional

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<sup>301</sup> Buchanan, 'Secession'

<sup>302</sup> Elie Kedourie, *Nationalism* (London: Hutchinson, 1966); Ernest Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1983): 2

<sup>303</sup> Buchanan, 'Secession'

<sup>304</sup> Buchanan, 'Self-determination and the Right to Secede'

<sup>305</sup> McLeod, 'Trust'

and interpersonal trust, exploring both vertical and horizontal relations of trust and cooperation.

The most commonly identified predictors of support for secession, national identity and secessionist party identification, are generally considered to be stable variables, or at least variables which cannot easily be affected by policy makers.<sup>306</sup> Levels of social capital and trust meanwhile, have been found to be more malleable, both at the vertical level and the horizontal level. Institutional trust and in particular trust in governments, has been found to be affected by a number of factors, including institutional performance relative to citizens' expectations,<sup>307</sup> transparency,<sup>308</sup> and representation of citizens' concerns.<sup>309</sup> Interpersonal trust meanwhile, which exists horizontally between individuals, can be influenced by public policy measures, such as the promotion of civic engagement and community building projects.<sup>310</sup>

Understanding the role of trust in shaping support for secession is therefore extremely important to separatists and unionists alike, as it has the potential to provide valuable new information about the dynamics of secessionist support, as well as the potential measures which could be taken to address secessionist demands.

## 4.2 The direct impact of trust

While the overarching working definition of trust that will be used in this thesis understands it to refer to a willingness to be vulnerable to others and to rely on them to be competent,<sup>311</sup>

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<sup>306</sup> Andre Blais and Richard Nadeau, 'To be or not to be sovereigntist: Quebecers perennial dilemma', *Canadian Public Policy* 18 (1) (1992): 89-103;  
Paul Howe, 'Rationality and sovereignty support in Quebec', *Canadian Journal of Political Science* 27 (1998): 345-359

<sup>307</sup> Miller and Listhaug, 'Political Performance and Institutional Trust';  
Orren, 'Fall from Grace';  
Seyd, 'How do citizens evaluate public officials'

<sup>308</sup> Graham et al, *Guiding Principles*

<sup>309</sup> Graham et al, *Guiding Principles*;

John R. Hibbing and Elizabeth Theiss-Morse, *Congress as Public Enemy: Public Attitudes toward American Political Institutions* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995): 116;

John R. Hibbing and Elizabeth Theiss-Morse (eds.), *What is It about Government That Americans Dislike?* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001)

<sup>310</sup> Putnam, 'Bowling Alone'

<sup>311</sup> McLeod, 'Trust'

it is the more specific forms, levels and examples of trust which will be the main focus of the analysis.

While researchers have in the past distinguished between many models of trust, four specific examples will be especially crucial throughout this thesis. Firstly, as it is understood in this thesis, trusting an institution means that we have fundamentally positive beliefs and expectations about our interactions with it.<sup>312</sup> The macro-level, most formalized institutional relationships and structures this refers to can include the political regime, the rule of law and the court system.<sup>313</sup> In the context of support for secession, this thesis will primarily consider the levels of institutional trust that exist between voters in a potential secessionist region (e.g. Scotland, Catalonia, or Flanders) and both their devolved, regional government, and the central government of the existing state (e.g. the UK, Spain, or Belgium).

Separate, but similarly important throughout this analysis, is the interpersonal trust which exists horizontally between individuals, in the absence of any explicit, formal, or institutionalised power or authority gradients in society.<sup>314</sup> In accordance with Putnam's distinction between 'bridging' and 'bonding' social capital,<sup>315</sup> and Nan Lin's differentiation between interactions which are heterophilous and homophilous,<sup>316</sup> this thesis will focus on both the interpersonal trust between similar actors (or members of an in-group) and the outward-looking trust which exists between those who are different.

Both bridging and bonding social capital, it is important to note, may differ greatly in character, depending on the specific groups they refer to. For instance, while bonding social capital can refer to the trust which exists between individuals who are similar according to their age, gender, or social class, the most directly relevant to support for secession is the group-specific trust which exists between individuals from the potential secessionist region and their co-nationals. Similarly, while bridging social capital can exist across a wide range of groups, that which will be particularly integral to this thesis is the group-specific trust and that

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<sup>312</sup> Govier, *Social Trust and Human Communities*, 34

<sup>313</sup> North, *Institutions, Institutional Change, and Economic Performance*;  
Olsen, *The Rise and Decline of Nations*

<sup>314</sup> Szreter and Woolcock, 'Health by association? Social capital, social theory, and the political economy of public health'

<sup>315</sup> Putnam, *Bowling Alone*, 22

<sup>316</sup> Lin, *Social Capital*



exists between individuals from the potential secessionist region and those from the wider state.

#### **4.2.1 Institutional trust**

Firstly, this chapter will consider the role of institutional trust on support for secession. As mentioned above, the primary focus of institutional trust in this thesis will be on the levels of trust which exist between individuals in potential secessionist regions and their governments. The analysis will therefore consider the trusting relationships between individuals and both their devolved, regional government, and the central government of the existing state.

There are several reasons one might expect institutional trust to impact on support for secession, largely relating to how 'risky' the prospect of secession appears. While some scholars suppose that extremely risk-averse individuals might never be so confident that they will sufficiently assuage nagging doubts about the potential catastrophic consequences of secession (even if unlikely),<sup>317</sup> there is evidence to suggest that their trust in government could have a significant influence.

Although independence referendums ask voters to make a simple binary decision, the choices available to them are substantially different: voters can choose the relatively safe, low risk option of voting 'No' and maintaining the status quo, or vote 'Yes' for a change, which often comes with a range of unknown future outcomes. Vote-choice in independence referendums, is for several reasons considered to have a high level of risk associated with it, when compared to more regular democratic processes like voting in general elections. Indeed, comparative studies of the dynamics of referendums have found evidence that referendum voters tend to behave conservatively, allowing more consideration to potential losses than to potential gains.<sup>318</sup>

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<sup>317</sup> Dion, 'Why is Secession Difficult in Well-Established Democracies? Lessons from Quebec', 272; George A. Quattrone and Amos Tversky, 'Contrasting Rational and Psychological Analysis of Political Choice', *American Political Science Review* 82 (1988): 719-739; Susan E. Jackson and Jane E. Dutton, 'Discerning Threats and Opportunities', *Administrative Science Quarterly* 33 (1988): 370-387

<sup>318</sup> Dion, 'Why is Secession Difficult in Well-Established Democracies? Lessons from Quebec', 272; Keith Banting and Richard Simeon, 'The Politics of Constitutional Change', in Keith Banting and Richard Simeon, (eds.), *Redesigning the State: The Politics of Constitutional Change* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1985): 25; R. Darcy and Michael Laver, 'Referendum Dynamics and the Irish Divorce Amendment', *Public Opinion Quarterly* 54 (1990): 1-20

Risk and trust have long been considered closely related concepts by many scholars, with a large volume of literature dedicating itself to the relationship and distinction between the two.<sup>319</sup> A crucial element of trust is ‘the willingness to increase one’s vulnerability’ to another person or institution ‘whose behaviour is not under one’s control’.<sup>320</sup> In this sense, the trusting individual is always confronted with the possibility, or risk that their trust might not be honoured.<sup>321</sup> Similarly, where an individual or institution is considered trustworthy, and levels of trust and confidence in that individual or institution are high, placing one’s trust in that individual or institution is considered justified and inherently less risky.<sup>322</sup>

In explaining the dynamics of secessionist support, Stephane Dion has stressed the centrality of ‘fear’ and ‘confidence’,<sup>323</sup> a distinction which has parallels to that of William Gamson’s between ‘grievance’ and ‘opportunity’,<sup>324</sup> which explains protest movements generally, as well as Maurice Pinard and Richard Hamilton’s distinction between ‘internal motives’ and ‘external incentives’,<sup>325</sup> and Hudson Meadwell’s between ‘enabling’ and ‘constraining’ conditions.<sup>326</sup>

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- <sup>319</sup> Anthony M. Evans and Joachim I. Krueger, ‘Elements of trust: Risk and perspective-taking,’ *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology* 47 (1) (2011): 171-177;  
Anne Corcos, François Pannequin and Sacha Bourgeois-Gironde, ‘Is trust an ambiguous rather than a risky decision?’ *Economics Bulletin* 32 (3) (2012): 2255-2266;  
Catherine C. Eckel and Rick K. Wilson, ‘Is trust a risky decision?’ *Journal of Economic Behavior and Organization* 55 (2004): 447-465;  
Daniel Houser, Daniel Schunk and Joachim Winter, ‘Distinguishing trust from risk: An anatomy of the investment game,’ *Journal of Economic Behavior and Organization* 74 (2010): 72-81;  
Detlef Fetchenhauer and David Dunning, ‘Betrayal aversion versus principled trustfulness – How to explain risk avoidance and risky choices in trust games,’ *Journal of Economic Behavior and Organization* 81 (2012): 534-541;  
Iris Bohnet & Richard Zeckhauser, ‘Trust, risk and betrayal,’ *Journal of Economic Behavior and Organization* 55 (2004): 467-484;  
Kim Fairley, Alan Sanfey, Jana Vyrastekova and Utz Weitzel, ‘Trust and Risk revisited,’ *Journal of Economic Psychology* 57 (2016): 74-85;  
Laura Schechter, ‘Traditional trust measurement and the risk confound: An experiment in rural Paraguay,’ *Journal of Economic Behavior & Organization* 62 (2007): 272-292;  
Svein Tvedt Johansen, Marcus Selart and Kjell Grønhaug, ‘The effects of risk on initial trust formation,’ *Journal of Applied Social Psychology* 43 (2013): 1185-1199
- <sup>320</sup> Dale E. Zand, ‘Trust and managerial solving,’ *Administrative Science Quarterly* 17 (2) (1972): 229-239
- <sup>321</sup> Fairley et al, ‘Trust and Risk revisited,’ 74
- <sup>322</sup> Russell Hardin, ‘Trustworthiness,’ *Ethics* 107 (1) (1996): 26-42
- <sup>323</sup> Stephane Dion, ‘Explaining Quebec Nationalism’, in R. Kent Weaver (ed.), *The Collapse of Canada?* (Washington DC: The Brookings Institution, 1992): 77-121;  
Dion, ‘Why is Secession Difficult in Well-Established Democracies?’
- <sup>324</sup> William Gamson, *Power and Discontent* (Homewood, Illinois: Dorsey Press, 1968)
- <sup>325</sup> Maurice Pinard and Richard Hamilton, ‘Motivational Dimensions in the Quebec Independence Movement: A Test of a New Model’, *Research in Social Movements, Conflict and Changes* 9 (1986): 225-280
- <sup>326</sup> Hudson Meadwell, ‘The Politics of Nationalism in Quebec’, *World Politics* 45 (1993): 203-241

While secessionist leaders attempt to link fear with remaining in the union and confidence with secession, unionists' strategy is the reverse: to link confidence with the union and fear with the prospects of secession.<sup>327</sup> In this sense, secessionist leaders convey the sense among the potential secessionist group that it can perform better on its own and that secession is not too risky, while unionist leaders emphasise the uncertainty and risk associated with secession. Similarly, while secessionists attempt to convince members of the regional group that their cultural, economic or political situation is at risk of deteriorating if they remain in the union, unionist leaders must downplay any perceived risk that this will occur. In effect therefore, secessionist and unionist leaders are competing over which option is considered to carry a greater degree of risk in the eyes of voters.

Dion's research provides a convincing analysis of the dynamics of secession, supported by some empirical observations in the context of the Quebec secessionist movement, but while his approach is predominantly theoretical, this thesis will test his framework empirically using individual-level survey data.

***Hypothesis 1: The higher an individual's levels of trust in the government of the existing state, the lower their likelihood of supporting secession***

Extended periods of distrust, Arthur H. Miller argued, can potentially lead to societal conflicts that cannot be managed through the conventional channels of the political system.<sup>328</sup> Generally speaking, citizens have little choice but to continue cooperating with governmental institutions, even when they do not trust them. While distrusted individual politicians can be replaced through the electoral process, prolonged distrust in the institutions themselves is much more challenging to overcome.<sup>329</sup> In this regard however, individuals within regions

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<sup>327</sup> Dion, 'Why is Secession Difficult in Well-Established Democracies? Lessons from Quebec', 271

<sup>328</sup> Arthur H. Miller, 'Political Issues and Trust in Government, 1964–1970', *American Political Science Review* 68 (1974): 951-972

<sup>329</sup> Kenneth Newton and Pippa Norris, 'Confidence in Public Institutions: Faith, Confidence or Performance?', in Susan J. Pharr and Robert D. Putnam (eds.), *Disaffected Democracies: What's Troubling the Trilateral Countries?* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2000): 52-53;

Ola Listhaug, 'The Dynamics of Trust in Politicians', in Hans-Dieter Klingemann and Dieter Fuchs (eds.), *Citizens and the State* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995): 294;

which contain electorally successful secessionist movements are in a uniquely powerful position.

In accordance with Albert O. Hirschman's work on 'Exit, Voice, and Loyalty', an individual experiencing prolonged distrust toward the state's core institutions is faced with two possible responses: to voice their dissatisfaction, or to withdraw in favour of a 'separate scene'.<sup>330</sup> The threat of exit from an organisation such as the state is traditionally difficult to carry out in a physical sense, resulting in the majority of citizens opting to either voice their dissatisfaction, or exit indirectly (i.e. apathy towards political participation).<sup>331</sup> In a state which contains an electorally successful secessionist movement however, the citizen is afforded the opportunity to exit from the state itself.<sup>332</sup>

David Miller distinguished between two key types of argument, which provide justification and motivation for secessionist support: those which show that nations need states and those which show that states need to be mono-national.<sup>333</sup> While the latter argument will be explored later in this chapter, the former is of particular relevance to institutional trust and especially an individual's trust in the government of the existing state.

The argument that nations need states itself has two variants: the notion that nations need to have their own states in order to be able to protect themselves from destruction, or from forces that threaten their distinctive character, and the idea that they need states in order for co-nationals to have the institutional resources to be able to fulfil the special obligations they owe one another as members of an 'ethical community'.<sup>334</sup>

Again, it is the former argument which is particularly relevant to institutional trust and more specifically trust in the government of the existing state. Here, Miller portrays the argument that where the policies of the state threaten a national minority with cultural destruction, they may require the protection that political self-determination can provide.<sup>335</sup>

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Russell J. Dalton, *Citizen Politics: Public Opinion and Political Parties in Advanced Industrial Democracies*, 4th edn. (Washington, DC: Congressional Quarterly Press, 2006): 250

<sup>330</sup> Albert O. Hirschman, *Exit, Voice, and Loyalty: Responses to decline in firms, organizations and states* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1970): 108

<sup>331</sup> Hirschman, *Exit, Voice, and Loyalty*, 96

<sup>332</sup> Hirschman, *Exit, Voice, and Loyalty*, 96

<sup>333</sup> Miller, *On Nationality*

<sup>334</sup> Miller, *On Nationality*, 11

<sup>335</sup> Miller, *On Nationality*, 110

There are a number of liberal critiques of this argument, recognising an individual's interest in having some culture, but questioning the value in a group's wish to preserve the particular culture into which it was born.<sup>336</sup> Buchanan queries the justification for minority groups clinging to the 'sinking ship' of their old, competitively unsuccessful culture, when faced with the opportunity to 'board another, more seaworthy cultural vessel' and assimilate to the alternative.<sup>337</sup>

Nationalists however, stress that cultures are not easily discarded, but rather can provide the very conditions for a person's having an identity and being able to make choices in the first place.<sup>338</sup> Furthermore, the culture itself may not be defective, but merely inhibited and prevented from flourishing by the actions of the existing state, in the absence of the protection that can be afforded by political self-determination.<sup>339</sup>

Central to Miller's argument is the sense that the policies of the state, or the state itself, are somehow threatening to the national minority and something to be feared. Likewise, Dion has emphasised 'fear' of the state as an integral factor in motivating secessionist support in his theoretical examination of the dynamics of secession in well-established democracies.<sup>340</sup> With regards to secessionist support in Quebec, Dion found that both the 'fear' associated with remaining in the union and the 'confidence' inspired by the prospects of secession are crucial in attracting support for secession and that, unless both exist at a high level of intensity, secession is extremely improbable in well-established democracies.<sup>341</sup> Fear and confidence have traditionally been understood as opposing, contradictory notions,<sup>342</sup> as well as both being intrinsically linked to the concept of trust.<sup>343</sup>

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<sup>336</sup> Charles Taylor, 'Can Liberalism be Communitarian,' *Critical Review* 8 (1994): 257-262

<sup>337</sup> Buchanan, *Secession*, 54

<sup>338</sup> Miller, *On Nationality*, 110

<sup>339</sup> Miller, *On Nationality*, 110

<sup>340</sup> Dion, 'Explaining Quebec Nationalism';

Dion, 'Why is Secession Difficult in Well-Established Democracies?'

<sup>341</sup> Dion, 'Why is Secession Difficult in Well-Established Democracies?', 271

<sup>342</sup> Nathan Rotenstreich, 'On Confidence', *Philosophy* 47 (182) (1972): 348-358

<sup>343</sup> Carmen Keller et al, 'The General Confidence Scale: Coping with Environmental Uncertainty and Threat,' *Journal of Applied Social Psychology* 41 (9): 2200-2229;

Clause Offe, 'Political Liberalism, Group Rights, and the Politics of Fear and Trust', *Studies in East European Thought* 53 (3) (2001): 167-182;

Daniel Metlay, 'Institutional Trust and Confidence: A journey into a conceptual quagmire', in George Cvetkovich and Ragnar E. Lofstedt (eds.), *Social Trust and the Management of Risk* (London: Earthscan, 1999); Joseph Hamm et al, 'Exploring separable components of institutional confidence,' *Behavioral Sciences and the Law* 29 (1) (2011): 95-115;

Cognitive psychologists Andrew Ortony, Gerald L. Clore, and Allan Collins define fear as a feeling of displeasure about the prospect of an undesirable event, in contrast to ‘hope’, which is understood as the feeling of pleasure associated with the prospect of a desirable event.<sup>344</sup> Ortony et al argue that as a ‘prospect emotion,’ fear depends on the desirability and likelihood of the prospective outcome and is amplified by the degree of danger associated with the potential occurrence.<sup>345</sup>

To illustrate this point, Ortony et al use the example of being mugged. Upon hearing footsteps behind you, they argue, the more likely you think it is that the person intends to mug you, the more intense is the fear you are likely to feel.<sup>346</sup> Similarly, Ortony et al assert that if you are fearful of being attacked, the fear you feel will be of a higher intensity if the prospective attacker is armed with a gun or a knife, than if they are threatening to punch you, because the prospective outcome of the former is more severely undesirable.<sup>347</sup> Hence, the more likely and undesirable you believe an outcome to be, the more fearful you may be of that outcome.

As both Miller and Dion’s arguments from earlier portrayed, secessionist movements are rooted in the perception that remaining in the union is something to be feared. The cases chosen for analysis in this thesis, it is worth re-iterating, are examples of non-violent secessionist movements in advanced democracies, which are seeking to bring about secession through peaceful democratic means. In turn, few would consider the states from which they are seeking to secede to be engaging in behaviour which would make secessionists fearful of their physical safety, or an eventuality as dramatic as cultural destruction (with the possible

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Michelle Charlton, Sarah Morton and IPSOS Mori, ‘Exploring Public Confidence in the Police and Local Councils in Tackling Crime and Anti-social Behaviour’, *Research Report 50* (London: Home Office, 2011);

Rotenstreich, ‘On Confidence’, 348

Sonja Zmerli, Kenneth Newton and Jose Ramon Montero, ‘Trust in people, confidence in political institutions and satisfaction with democracy,’ in Jan Van Deth (ed.), *Citizenship and Involvement in European Democracies* (London: Routledge, 2007);

Timothy E. Cook and Paul Gronke, ‘The Skeptical American: Revisiting the Meanings of Trust in Government and Confidence in Institutions,’ *Journal of Politics* 67 (3) (2005): 784-803

<sup>344</sup> Andrew Ortony, Gerald L. Clore, and Allan Collins, *The Cognitive Structure of Emotions* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998): 131

<sup>345</sup> Ortony et al, *The Cognitive Structure of Emotions*, 70

<sup>346</sup> Ortony et al, *The Cognitive Structure of Emotions*, 70

<sup>347</sup> Ortony et al, *The Cognitive Structure of Emotions*, 112

exception of Catalonia, in which the relatively recent history of Franco's regime remains pertinent for some).

Rather, in the context of secessionism in Quebec, and as it will be understood for the Scottish, Catalan and Flemish cases in this thesis, Dion defines fear as the sense among members of a regional group that their cultural, economic or political situation will deteriorate within the existing union.<sup>348</sup> Unless this conception of fear exists at a sufficiently high level of intensity, support for secession is deemed unlikely.<sup>349</sup> Dion's study on support for secession in well-established democracies argued that an important predictor of support for secession is fear of the existing state, or the notion that the union constitutes a 'centralist, oppressive iron collar'.<sup>350</sup>

In line with Ortony et al's understanding of fear, the undesirable event about which members of the potential secessionist regional group are concerned is the prospective deterioration of their cultural, economic or political situation. The more likely one thinks it is that the central government intends to allow their regional group's cultural, economic or political situation to deteriorate, the more intense the fear they are likely to feel will be. Similarly, the more severe and undesirable this prospective deterioration is imagined to be, the more fearful an individual is likely to be of remaining in the union.

Several studies have in the past, emphasised the fundamental link between fear and trust, including Clause Offe's work on political liberalism and group rights, which argues that in order to overcome both vertical fear (of a ruler or government) and horizontal (that of one's fellow citizens), relations of trust and solidarity are essential.<sup>351</sup>

To say that we trust you, according to Hardin, means that we believe you have the right intentions toward us, as well as the competence to do what we trust you to do,<sup>352</sup> affording them the opportunity to harm us and so relying on our confidence that they will not take such an opportunity.<sup>353</sup> By the very nature and definition of trust therefore, higher levels of trust in the government of the existing state represent the belief that those associated with

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<sup>348</sup> Dion, 'Why is Secession Difficult in Well-Established Democracies? Lessons from Quebec', 271

<sup>349</sup> Dion, 'Why is Secession Difficult in Well-Established Democracies? Lessons from Quebec', 271

<sup>350</sup> Dion, 'Why is Secession Difficult in Well-Established Democracies? Lessons from Quebec', 279

<sup>351</sup> Offe, 'Political Liberalism, Group Rights, and the Politics of Fear and Trust'

<sup>352</sup> Russell Hardin, *Trust* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2006): 17

<sup>353</sup> Baier, 'Trust and antitrust'

it do not intend to deliberately or knowingly allow the deterioration of one's cultural, economic or political situation.

Dion has highlighted that decentralization and enhanced devolution can reduce the extent to which the central government is feared, thus having a positive effect on trust in the central government and a negative impact on support for secession.<sup>354</sup> The chosen case studies for this thesis (Scotland, Catalonia and Flanders) feature differing levels of political autonomy, ranging from partial devolution to federalism, which will enable the comparison of secessionist movements in the context of their political systems.

Although devolving power to the government of the potential secessionist region can strengthen confidence in the feasibility of secession, accommodating decentralization makes it difficult to convince people the central government is something to be feared, or that the union a centralist, oppressive iron collar.<sup>355</sup> Where levels of trust and linking social capital in the government of the existing state are high and it is considered to be a trustworthy institution, it is difficult to envisage a scenario where remaining in the union evokes intense fear. In this sense, higher levels of trust in the central government are expected to decrease the extent to which secession seems necessary,<sup>356</sup> and so where trust is high, support for secession would be expected to remain low.

***Hypothesis 2: The higher an individual's levels of trust in the government of the potential secessionist region, the greater their likelihood of supporting secession***

In addition to fear, Dion's theoretical work on the dynamics of secession found that the confidence inspired by the prospects of secession is crucial in attracting support for secession and that, unless this exists at a high level of intensity, secession is extremely improbable in well-established democracies.<sup>357</sup>

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<sup>354</sup> Dion, 'Why is Secession Difficult in Well-Established Democracies? Lessons from Quebec', 279

<sup>355</sup> Dion, 'Why is Secession Difficult in Well-Established Democracies? Lessons from Quebec', 279

<sup>356</sup> Dion, 'Why is Secession Difficult in Well-Established Democracies? Lessons from Quebec', 281

<sup>357</sup> Dion, 'Why is Secession Difficult in Well-Established Democracies? Lessons from Quebec', 271



Confidence has a common meaning of a certainty about handling something, whether that be a particular task, or a potential event.<sup>358</sup> In this sense, Nathan Rotenstreich understands confidence, like trust, to fundamentally be a form of reliance or dependence and understands it to be the opposite of or contradictory to fear, citing Aristotle's placement of 'the brave man' between the two poles of fear and confidence: the man who exceeds in confidence is rash, whereas he who exceeds in fear and is deficient in confidence is a coward.<sup>359</sup> Alexander D. Stajkovic conceptualised confidence as a higher order construct,<sup>360</sup> manifested by hope,<sup>361</sup> efficacy,<sup>362</sup> optimism,<sup>363</sup> and resilience.<sup>364</sup> Hope and optimism in particular, indicate an expectation of positive outcomes and the feeling of pleasure associated with the prospect of a desirable event.<sup>365</sup> In line with Ortony et al's understanding of prospect emotions therefore, confidence, hope and optimism (like fear) depend on the desirability and likelihood of the yet to be determined outcome of an event.

In the context of secessionist movements, Dion defines confidence as the sense among the group that it can perform better on its own and that the prospect of secession is not too risky.<sup>366</sup> The desirable event about which members of the potential secessionist regional group are chiefly concerned is therefore thought to be the improvement in the regional group's fortune and performance, in the aftermath of secession. The more likely one thinks it is that the potential secessionist region will perform better on its own, the more confident, hopeful and optimistic they are likely to feel. Similarly, the more positive and

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<sup>358</sup> Alexander D. Stajkovic, 'Development of a core confidence-higher order construct', *Journal of Applied Psychology* 91 (2006): 1208-1224;

Alexander D. Stajkovic, 'Introducing positive psychology to work motivation: Development of a core confidence model', *Paper presented at the academy of management meeting* (Seattle, WA, 2003)

<sup>359</sup> R.W. Browne, *The Nichomachean Ethics of Aristotle* (London: Henry G. Bohn, 1850): 73  
Rotenstreich, 'On Confidence', 348

<sup>360</sup> Alexander D. Stajkovic, Dongseop Lee, Jessica M. Greenwald and Joseph Raffiee, 'The role of trait core confidence higher-order construct in self-regulation of performance and attitudes: Evidence from four studies,' *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes* 128 (2015): 29-48;  
Stajkovic, 'Development of a core confidence-higher order construct';  
Stajkovic, 'Introducing positive psychology to work motivation'

<sup>361</sup> C.R. Snyder, *Handbook of hope* (San Diego, CA: Academic Press, 2000)

<sup>362</sup> Albert Bandura, *Self-efficacy: The exercise of control* (New York, NY: Freeman, 1997);

Gilad Chen, Stanley M. Gully and Dov Eden, 'Validation of a new general self-efficacy scale,' *Organizational Research Methods* 4 (2001): 62-83

<sup>363</sup> Christopher Peterson, 'The future of optimism,' *American Psychologist* 55 (2000): 44-55

<sup>364</sup> Diane L. Coutu, 'How resilience works', *Harvard Business Review* 80 (2002): 46-55

<sup>365</sup> Ortony et al, *The Cognitive Structure of Emotions*, 131

<sup>366</sup> Dion, 'Why is Secession Difficult in Well-Established Democracies? Lessons from Quebec', 271

desirable the prospects of the newly independent region are imagined to be, the more confident, hopeful and optimistic an individual is likely to be of secession.

Confidence has been associated with trust in a large number of previous studies.<sup>367</sup> Both concepts, Niklas Luhmann asserts, refer to expectations which have the potential to lapse into disappointments.<sup>368</sup> In fact, as Orlando Patterson has highlighted, both trust and confidence can be considered ‘trust situations’, differentiated only by the level of risk and the means by which such risk is conceptualized.<sup>369</sup> In this sense, confidence is easier to acquire than trust,<sup>370</sup> in that while you can be confident that your expectations will not be disappointed (e.g. that politicians will try to avoid war), trust requires a previous engagement on your part and presupposes a situation of risk.<sup>371</sup>

At the institutional level, trust and confidence are considered to be even more closely linked, as institutional trust involves less direct relationships between the institution and the trusting citizen than the interpersonal interactions which take place horizontally between citizens.<sup>372</sup> The knowledge and previous engagement demanded by the interpersonal conception of trust is unavailable to most ordinary citizens,<sup>373</sup> so institutional trust is generally understood, like confidence, to simply represent the fundamentally positive beliefs and expectations they have about their interactions with the relevant institution.<sup>374</sup> Conversely, institutional distrust is considered to be present where there is a lack of confidence, concern

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<sup>367</sup> Charlton et al, ‘Exploring Public Confidence in the Police and Local Councils in Tackling Crime and Anti-social Behaviour’;

Cook and Gronke, ‘The Skeptical American’;

Janne Jalava, ‘From Norms to Trust: The Luhmannian Connections between Trust and System,’ *European Journal of Social Theory* 6 (2) (2003): 173-190;

Joseph Hamm et al, ‘Exploring separable components of institutional confidence,’ *Behavioral Sciences and the Law* 29 (1) (2011): 95-115;

Keller et al, ‘The General Confidence Scale;

Metlay, ‘Institutional Trust and Confidence;

Niklas Luhmann, ‘Familiarity, Confidence, Trust: Problems and Alternatives’, in Gambetta, Diego (ed.), *Trust: Making and Breaking Cooperative Relations* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2000): 94-107;

Zmerli et al, ‘Trust in people, confidence in political institutions and satisfaction with democracy’;

<sup>368</sup> Luhmann, ‘Familiarity, Confidence, Trust,’ 97

<sup>369</sup> Orlando Patterson, ‘Liberty against the Democratic State: On the Historical and Contemporary Sources of American Distrust’, in Mark E. Warren (ed.) *Democracy and Trust* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999): 153

<sup>370</sup> Jalava, ‘From Norms to Trust’, 175

<sup>371</sup> Franz Petermann, *Psychologie des Vertrauens* (Salzburg: Miffier, 1985)

<sup>372</sup> Hardin, *Trust and Trustworthiness*, 151

<sup>373</sup> Hardin, *Trust and Trustworthiness*, 151

<sup>374</sup> Govier, *Social Trust and Human Communities*, 34

that the institution will act so as to harm us, or a perception that it simply does not care about our welfare.<sup>375</sup>

In societies which feature high levels of decentralization, where the regional group's public institutions already have a significant level of autonomy and devolved responsibility, it becomes easier to develop confidence that political sovereignty is within reach.<sup>376</sup> The more responsibilities are administered to the devolved government, the more opportunity they are afforded to prove their competence and trustworthiness. It is in this sense that Will Kymlicka has argued multinational federalism is ultimately paradoxical, in that while it provides national minorities with a workable alternative to secession, it also helps to make secession a more realistic alternative to federalism.<sup>377</sup>

Similarly, Michael Keating has described the process of devolution as an unstable 'halfway house' between union and secession,<sup>378</sup> implying that devolution is a temporary measure, rather than a solution to demands for increased independence. The more devolution arrangements succeed in meeting a minority group's desire for self-government, it is argued, the more they serve to strengthen its political confidence.<sup>379</sup> The implication therefore, is that as trust (or confidence) in the government of the potential secessionist region increases, the sense that the region is capable of making a success of secession increases, so members of the regional group are more likely to support secession.

In addition to the impact of the respective levels of trust in the government of the existing state and the government of the potential secessionist region, the theory on the dynamics of secessionist support suggests that the differential trust between these institutions is expected to play a role. Majority support for secession, Dion argues, will be attracted only if both fear in the union and confidence in the prospects of secession exist at simultaneously high levels, as confidence in the secession is unlikely in itself to be strong enough to assuage doubts in the minds of risk-averse individuals.<sup>380</sup>

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<sup>375</sup> Govier, *Social Trust and Human Communities*, 34

<sup>376</sup> Jonathan Lemco, *Political Stability in Federal Government* (New York: Praeger, 1991): 71-90

<sup>377</sup> Kymlicka, 'Is federalism a viable alternative to secession?' 138

<sup>378</sup> Keating, *The Independence of Scotland*, 77

<sup>379</sup> Kymlicka, 'Is federalism a viable alternative to secession?' 135

<sup>380</sup> Dion, 'Why is secession difficult in well-established democracies?' 272

As stated earlier in the chapter, prospect choice theorists, such as Quattrone and Tversky suggest that individuals allow greater considerations to potential losses than they do to potential gains, particularly under conditions of uncertainty.<sup>381</sup> Similarly, organisational theory argues that individuals are less sensitive to issue characteristics which are associated with opportunities than they are to those associated with threats.<sup>382</sup> Moreover, evidence from comparative studies of the dynamics of referendum show that in the specific context of a referendum, voting behaviour tends towards conservatism and risk aversion.<sup>383</sup> One may presume therefore, that in the context of secession, risk-averse individuals may never be so confident in the opportunities of secession that their confidence completely assuages the perceived threat of the secession's potentially catastrophic consequences (even if they are unlikely).<sup>384</sup>

While the balance between fear and confidence may differ between secessionist movements, Dion argues that their simultaneous presence is both essential and the key difficulty secessionists face, in that high levels of fear and confidence are ultimately antithetical.<sup>385</sup> One key manifestation of confidence in the context of secession for instance, is the belief that the secession process will be smooth. A smooth secession process however, relies on a degree co-operation from the existing state. In other words, if individuals within a potential secessionist region are distrustful and fearful of the existing state, they are unlikely to have confidence that they will peacefully collaborate in the secession process. Similarly, if a regional group is economically dominant and confident in its capacity to perform successfully when independent from the wider state, it has little incentive to leave a union in which it is already flourishing.

Excessive levels of centralisation may inspire fear in a union, as it leaves members of a potential secessionist region feeling politically powerless, but simultaneously decrease confidence in secession, as the prospects of the newly seceded state taking over all of the public services which were previously administered by the central government would be an

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<sup>381</sup> Quattrone and Tversky, 'Contrasting Rational and Psychological Analysis of Political Choice'

<sup>382</sup> Jackson and Dutton, 'Discerning Threats and Opportunities', 370

<sup>383</sup> Darcy and Laver, 'Referendum Dynamics and the Irish Divorce Amendment', 10; Banting and Simeon, 'The Politics of Constitutional Change', 25

<sup>384</sup> Dion, 'Why is secession difficult in well-established democracies?' 272

<sup>385</sup> Dion, 'Why is secession difficult in well-established democracies?' 273

extensive task for a government with minimal experience in such areas.<sup>386</sup> Conversely, in regions which have previously experienced high levels of decentralisation (such as the three cases which will be analysed in this thesis), developing confidence in the regional government might be a more achievable task, but secessionists are unlikely to convince citizens that a central government which has already accommodated demands for autonomy is an institution which ought to be feared.

If an individual exhibits high levels of trust in the government of the potential secessionist region, but also has high levels of trust in the government of the existing state therefore, Dion's theory suggests they will remain unlikely to favour secession, on the grounds that they are not sufficiently fearful of the union. Similarly, if an individual believes that neither level of government can be trusted, they are unlikely to have sufficient confidence that the regional government will make a success of the secession. As opposed to the isolated levels of institutional trust in each respect level of government therefore, the fear-confidence model suggests that the greater the difference between an individual's trust in the regional government and their trust in the central government, the more likely they are to favour secession:

***Hypothesis 3: The greater the difference between an individual's trust in the government of the potential secessionist region and the government of the existing state, the higher their likelihood of supporting secession***

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<sup>386</sup> Dion, 'Why is secession difficult in well-established democracies?' 274

#### **4.2.2 Interpersonal trust and 'bridging' social capital**

As stated earlier in the chapter, interpersonal trust is considered to be an integral element of social capital.<sup>387</sup> Although when it was initially introduced, the term social capital referred to the social norms and expectations that underpin economic activity but cannot be accounted for from a strictly economic perspective,<sup>388</sup> the term has latterly expanded to comprise the networks, associations and shared habits that enable individuals to act collectively.

More specifically, Putnam defines 'bridging' social capital as the inclusive and outward-looking interactions, which take place across heterogeneous groups and diverse social cleavages.<sup>389</sup> Whereas bonding social capital bolsters our narrower selves, bridging can generate broader identities and reciprocity.<sup>390</sup> The 'weak' ties, which link us to distant acquaintances who move in different circles, Mark S. Granovetter argues can be more valuable than the 'strong' ties, which link us to those whose sociological niches are very like our own.<sup>391</sup> High levels of trust between individuals within a potential secessionist region and those from the wider existing state are expected to provide such ties, thus decreasing the likelihood of an individual supporting secession:

#### ***Hypothesis 4: The higher an individual's trust in members of the wider state, the lower their likelihood of supporting secession***

Bridging social capital, Francis Fukuyama found, enables heterogeneous groups to share and exchange information, building cross-group consensus and increasing the 'radius of trust' among individuals in smaller, more inward-looking groups.<sup>392</sup> Bridging, Fukuyama argued, can facilitate the creation of an inclusive institutional structure, which is both more democratic in nature and has positive implications for broader political and economic development.<sup>393</sup> Among its numerous suggested effects, there is general consensus that higher levels of bridging social capital go hand in hand with increased political stability and social cohesion in

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<sup>387</sup> Granovetter, 'Economic Action and Social Structure'

<sup>388</sup> Coleman, *Foundations of Social Theory*

<sup>389</sup> Putnam, *Bowling Alone*, 22

<sup>390</sup> Putnam, *Bowling Alone*, 23

<sup>391</sup> Granovetter, 'The Strength of Weak Ties'

<sup>392</sup> Fukuyama, 'Social Capital and Development,' 32

<sup>393</sup> Fukuyama, 'Social Capital and Development,' 32

heterogenous societies.<sup>394</sup> If then, bridging social capital is lacking, it follows that democracy itself may exhibit a lack of social cohesion and be rendered politically unstable.

Although bridging social capital can refer to the relations and interactions which exist between a wide range of groups (such as those distinguished by their age, gender or class), the example of most central importance to secessionist movements is that which exists between individuals from the potential secessionist region and those from the wider state. Described by Putnam as a 'sociological WD-40', bridging social capital is thought to reduce the friction between heterogenous groups.<sup>395</sup> This is particularly crucial when considering that many key secessionist arguments relate to the divisions which are perceived to exist between the heterogenous groups of the potential secessionist region and those in the wider state.

In extreme examples of diminished inter-group trust in multinational societies, divisions can become entrenched to the point that society is deeply divided, leading to hostility and conflict such as that seen in Belfast and Bosnia.<sup>396</sup> While the case studies selected in this thesis are by no means deeply divided to the same extent as Belfast or Bosnia, the electoral success of secessionist parties within them is could be reflective of strengthening divisions, with the threat of secession emerging and growing in each of the cases. Where divisions become more deeply entrenched and those from within the potential secessionist region feel increasingly detached from the wider state, it seems increasingly unlikely that they would be attracted by the prospect of remaining in the union.

In accordance with Russell Hardin's understanding of trust, if we trust members of the wider existing state, we necessarily believe they have the right intentions toward us, as well as the competence to do what we trust them to do.<sup>397</sup>

The horizontal trust which exists between citizens, Sonja Zmerli highlights, makes it easier, less risky and more rewarding for them to participate in community and civic affairs, helping to build the social institutions of civil society upon which peaceful, stable, and efficient

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<sup>394</sup> Fukuyama, *Trust*;

Fafchamps, 'Development and Social Capital'

<sup>395</sup> Putnam and Feldstein, *Better Together*, 2

<sup>396</sup> Putnam and Feldstein, *Better Together*, 3

<sup>397</sup> Hardin, *Trust*, 17

democracy depends.<sup>398</sup> Furthermore, high levels of trust towards members of the wider existing state, reflecting a generally positive evaluation of them and the perception that they can generally be trusted, imply positive past interactions and experiences, as well optimistic expectations of any future dealings with them.

Where levels of trust are low therefore, if we express a negative evaluation of those from the wider existing state and the perception that they are not generally trustworthy, it follows that we do not necessarily consider them to have positive intentions towards us, or the competence to do what we trust them to do. When faced with a choice between secession and remaining in the union then, it seems unlikely that members of the potential secessionist region would strongly favour the preservation of the union, if they have a negative evaluation of those in the wider existing state or perceive them to be generally untrustworthy.

#### **4.2.3 *Interpersonal trust and bonding social capital***

Bonding social capital is defined by Putnam as the inward-looking ties found in the social networks between homogenous groups – a kind of sociological Super Glue, which strongly bonds those who are ‘similar’.<sup>399</sup> The expected effects of bonding social capital on support for secession, like bridging, are therefore dependent on the nature and character of the homogenous group in question. The most directly relevant example in the context of support for secession however, is the group-specific social capital which exists between individuals from the potential secessionist region and their co-nationals. Where this exists at high levels, individuals are expected to be more likely to favour secession:

***Hypothesis 5: The higher an individual’s levels of trust in their fellow members of the potential secessionist region, the greater their likelihood of supporting secession***

The strong ties associated with bonding social capital are understood to be essential in the cultivation of cooperation and collective strength among homogenous individuals and groups

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<sup>398</sup> Sonja Zmerli and Kenneth Newton, ‘Social trust and attitudes towards democracy,’ *Public Opinion Quarterly* 72 (4) (2008): 706-724

<sup>399</sup> Putnam and Feldstein, *Better Together*, 2



with shared history, experience and common purpose. It is in this sense that Putnam argues bonding social capital is integral for supporting specific reciprocity and mobilising solidarity.<sup>400</sup> The common interests and collective strength provided by membership of the in-group enables the members to exercise collective agency for common ends. In the context of secessionist movements, the chief goal, or common end of secessionists is to bring about the breakup of the existing state, and the formation of a new state, separate to that which currently exists.

The stateless nation building project, Keating has argued, necessarily depends on solidarity and collective action.<sup>401</sup> Bonding social capital, Putnam states, is integral for supporting the kind of collective action Keating mentions, in its fostering of specific reciprocity between members of the same national group and mobilising solidarity.<sup>402</sup> In this sense, the common interests and collective strength provided by the close bonds and high trust between co-nationals enable them to exercise collective agency for common ends, oiling the wheels of shared, collective action and the formation of a new state.

The notion that higher levels of bonding social capital between members of the potential secessionist region would be beneficial to the secessionist cause is perhaps unsurprising. It seems unlikely for instance, that we would feel enthusiastic about the prospects of forming a new state with a group of people we have a negative perception of and deem to be generally untrustworthy. Where levels of trust between members of the potential secessionist region are low therefore, we might expect that support for secession is diminished.

Furthermore, Putnam has asserted that bonding social capital is by definition exclusive, creating an 'in-group' that is considered similar by some criterion, but therefore inherently excluding an 'out-group' or an 'other'.<sup>403</sup> In maximising the level of in-group bonding social capital therefore, secessionists may further entrench divisions with and segregation from the wider state, thus increasing support for secession.

In particular, it has been shown that in societies which exhibit high levels of bonding social capital and low levels of bridging, we see low social cohesion and deep divisions, which

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<sup>400</sup> Putnam, *Bowling Alone*, 22

<sup>401</sup> Keating, 'Stateless nation-building'

<sup>402</sup> Putnam, *Bowling Alone*, 22

<sup>403</sup> Putnam, *Bowling Alone*, 23

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can in turn render the society politically unstable.<sup>404</sup> Francis Fukuyama warns that societies with a plurality of groups or networks which are tightly bonded may be fragmented and rife with conflicts and hostility, when viewed as a whole.<sup>405</sup>

As highlighted in the previous section, the most extreme cases of societies that only have bonding social capital will experience high levels of segregation and deep divisions, like those seen in Belfast and Bosnia.<sup>406</sup> In other words, by creating strong in-group loyalty, bonding social capital may also create strong out-group antagonism,<sup>407</sup> so that the more 'togetherness' we feel with those most similar to us, the more separate we feel from those that are different.

In this sense however, the theory suggests that as with institutional trust, there is reason to believe differential interpersonal trust will have an impact on support for secession. An individual may for instance, have simultaneously high levels of both inward-looking trust toward their co-nationals and outward-looking trust toward those with whom they do not share a national identity. Conversely, they may believe that neither their fellow members of the potential secessionist region, nor the citizens of the wider, existing state, can be trusted. It is in cases where individuals have simultaneously high levels of trust in their fellow members of the potential secessionist region and low levels of trust in those from the wider state that the theory suggests support for secession would be particularly likely:

***Hypothesis 6: The greater the difference between an individual's levels of trust in members of the potential secessionist region and those from the wider state, the higher their likelihood of supporting secession***

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<sup>404</sup> Fukuyama, 'Social Capital and Development';

Graham, *Beyond Social Capital*, 146

<sup>405</sup> Fukuyama, 'Social Capital and Development'

<sup>406</sup> Putnam and Feldstein, *Better Together*, 3

<sup>407</sup> Brown, 'The Emergence of Voluntary Associations in Massachusetts';

Putnam, *Bowling Alone*, 23;

Varshney, *Ethnic Conflict and Civic Life*

### 4.3 The moderating effect of trust

In addition to the direct effects of trust on support for secession, this thesis will test for the impact of trust as a moderator, in the relationships between support for secession and two of its most robust predictors: national identity and secessionist party identification.

#### 4.3.1 National identity

National identity has been found to be a key driver of secessionist support in many studies across a wide range of cases,<sup>408</sup> with those that report to identify exclusively with the potential secessionist region exhibiting a greater tendency to support secession than those that report to have dual national identities, or primarily identify with the existing state. Despite this, the subtleties of national identity's role have received relatively little theoretical attention. This, Jordi Muñoz and Raul Tormos highlight, is probably the case because the relationship between national identity and support for secession is considered somewhat unsurprising, or even commonsensical and is therefore not sufficiently puzzling for researchers.<sup>409</sup>

Despite this, there are numerous examples of national minorities within states, who are not seeking secession. In fact, despite much of Western political support being premised on the notion that the state should be (or should become) a 'nation-state', mono-national states are something of a rarity.<sup>410</sup> Iceland and Portugal, Kymlicka argues, are probably the clearest European examples of such, as they contain no historic groups within their territory that view themselves as a distinct nation with claims to some part of the state territory, so that the boundaries of the state more or less correspond with those of the nation.<sup>411</sup>

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<sup>408</sup> Blais and Nadeau, 'To be or not to be sovereignist';

David McCrone and Lindsay Paterson, 'The conundrum of Scottish independence', *Scottish Affairs* 40 (2002): 54-75;

Howe, 'Rationality and sovereignty support in Quebec';

Joan Costa-Font and Ramon Tremosa, 'National identity and the preference for state opting-out in the basque country', *Documents de Treball de la Facultat de Ciències Econòmiques i Empresariales* (Col·lecció d'Economia, 2006);

Serrano, 'Just a matter of identity?'

<sup>409</sup> Jordi Muñoz and Raul Tormos, 'Economic expectations and support for secession in Catalonia', *European Political Science Review* 7 (2) (2015): 315-341

<sup>410</sup> Will Kymlicka, 'Identity politics in multinational states', *State Consolidation and National Identity* (Strasbourg: Council of Europe Publishing, 2005): 46

<sup>411</sup> Kymlicka, 'Identity politics in multinational states', 45

Although national identity is commonly considered to be a stable political attitude that does not change easily, at least in the short term, if this were entirely true, it would only explain stable patterns of support for secession and not changes in this support.<sup>412</sup> While having a Scottish, Catalan, or Flemish national identity is therefore often considered something of a pre-requisite for supporting secession, in that those who do not identify with the potential secessionist region are unlikely to prioritise the creation of a separate state, it is clear that not all of those with a Scottish, Catalan, Flemish, or Quebecois national identity favour secession.

Furthermore, in recent years a growing number of studies have found that political context can play an important role in changing the nature of an individual's national identity. Maria Hierro for instance, found that higher levels of political confrontation can foster more polarised feelings of attachment with Spain and Catalonia.<sup>413</sup> While those who feel that they have a dual-identity were found to be more likely to switch towards an exclusive Catalan identity in periods of high political confrontation, those with exclusive identities tend towards reaffirming their identification in such times.

The question that remains therefore, is what might be causing the character of the relationship between national identity and support for secession to change. One possible explanation is that this relationship is a conditional one, moderated by the influence of trust. There are several reasons one might expect trust, at both the interpersonal and institutional level, to impact on this relationship, which will be examined below.

Aside from its role as something of a pre-requisite for supporting secession, the most prominent explanation for why national identity is important in secessionist arguments is found in the writing of David Miller.

As referenced earlier, Miller has distinguished between two key types of argument, which provide justification and motivation for secessionist support: those which show that

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<sup>412</sup> Blais and Nadeau, 'To be or not to be sovereignist';  
Howe, 'Rationality and sovereignty support in Quebec'

<sup>413</sup> María José Hierro, *Change in National Identification: A study of the Catalan case* (Tesis Doctoral, University Autonoma de Madrid, 2012)

María José Hierro, 'Crafting identities in a multinational context: evidence from Catalonia', *Nations and Nationalism* 21 (3) (2015): 461-482;

nations need states and those which show that states need to be mono-national.<sup>414</sup> While the former was examined in the context of its relationship with institutional trust, it is the latter argument, asserting that states need to be mono-national, which is particularly relevant to interpersonal trust.

The formation of a nation and national identity has traditionally been considered an essential precondition for the development of a stable democratic state, especially the European welfare states.<sup>415</sup> One such argument, which dates back to John Stuart Mill's *Considerations On Representative Government*,<sup>416</sup> asserts that democracy can only flourish in states with a single national identity, because multi-national states lack the solidarity, trust, or shared sentiments and values that effective democracy requires.

It is in this regard that Miller has argued national identity is of particular importance, because it increases the likelihood that people will place trust in their fellow citizens.<sup>417</sup> This form of trust, Will Kymlicka asserts is essential in encouraging citizens to make sacrifices for 'anonymous others', with whom they do not have existing relationships and in most cases never will.<sup>418</sup> The general idea of the intrinsic relationship between national identity and trust can be found in various theoretical streams, such as in the system-building tradition<sup>419</sup> and in democratic theory.<sup>420</sup> It is this formation and facilitation of trust between individuals, and

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<sup>414</sup> Miller, *On Nationality*

<sup>415</sup> Maurizio Ferrera, *The Boundaries of Welfare: European Integration and the New Spatial Politics of Social Protection* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005)

<sup>416</sup> John Stuart Mill, *Considerations on Representative Government* (New York: Prometheus Books [1861] (1991)

<sup>417</sup> David Miller, *Citizenship and National Identity* (London: Polity Press, 2000); Miller, *On Nationality*, 140

<sup>418</sup> Will Kymlicka, *Politics in the vernacular: Nationalism, multiculturalism, and citizenship* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001): 225

<sup>419</sup> Hirschman, *Exit, Voice and Loyalty*;

Rokkan and Urwin, *Economy, Territory, Identity*;

Stefano Bartolini, *Restructuring Europe: Centre formation, system-building, and political structuring between the nation state and the European Union* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007);

Stein Rokkan, 'Entries, voices, exits: Towards a possible generalization of the Hirschman model', *Social Science Information* 13 (1) (1974): 39-53;

Stein Rokkan, *Stat, Nasjon, Klasse : Essays i Politisk Sosiologi* [State, Nation, Class: Essays in Political Sociology] (Oslo, Norway: Universitetsforlaget, 1987)

<sup>420</sup> Dahl, *Democracy and its Critics*;

David Held, 'Democracy and the Global System', in David Held (ed.) *Political Theory Today* (Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 1991)

between individuals and institutions, which is assumed to be fundamental for stable democracy.<sup>421</sup>

Similarly, Miller has argued that multinational states prohibit the achievement of distributive justice, because it requires a significant redistribution of wealth from better off to less fortunate citizens, which the former group will be unwilling to accept without a certain level of solidarity and fellow-feeling towards the latter.<sup>422</sup>

Trust, Miller argues, is an essential component of social justice, in that living in a society which regulates our behaviour by principles of social justice can require us to forgo some of the advantages that would be available in a 'free-for-all'.<sup>423</sup> In doing so, we must trust that others will practise similar restraint. For instance, Miller asserts, when filling in tax returns honestly, we do so in the expectation that most others will not cheat on their own.<sup>424</sup> When we appoint applicants to jobs and positions strictly on the basis of merit, he argues, we do so on the assumption that by and large, appointments are not being made unfairly or nepotistically.<sup>425</sup>

Where levels of trust are low however, we will feel much less compulsion to act under the constraints of justice ourselves. Miller indicates that the dynamics of trust and social justice operate similarly at the political level: if an individual is to support policies that represent a fair compromise between the claims of different groups, they must assume that others also wish to see justice done, which depends on the level of trust within the political community in question.<sup>426</sup>

Our thinking about the demands of social justice, Miller asserts, is even at its most impartial, essentially shaped by the relationships in which we already stand towards the people to whom justice is owed.<sup>427</sup> Empirical studies of 'helping behaviour' and the factors

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<sup>421</sup> Will Kymlicka, *Multicultural Citizenship* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 1995); Yael Tamir, *Liberal Nationalism* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1993)

<sup>422</sup> Miller, *On Nationality*

<sup>423</sup> David Miller, *Justice for Earthlings: Essays in Political Philosophy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013): 87

<sup>424</sup> Miller, *Justice for Earthlings*, 87

<sup>425</sup> Miller, *Justice for Earthlings*, 87

<sup>426</sup> Miller, *Justice for Earthlings*, 87

<sup>427</sup> Miller, *Justice for Earthlings*, 7

that increase or decrease people's willingness to go to the aid of others is whether the potential helper sees the person in need as similar or dissimilar to themselves.<sup>428</sup>

The assumption therefore is that co-nationals will have higher levels of trust and solidarity than those which exist between members of the potential secessionist region and the wider existing state. Although some values are universal, like freedom and equality, many nationalists argue that these are too abstract and 'thin' to provide the trust and solidarity which grounds a successful democracy.<sup>429</sup> Rich, 'thick' moral values, it is argued, are discernible only within particular traditions, to those who have wholeheartedly endorsed the norms and standards of the given tradition.<sup>430</sup> As Charles Taylor asserts, the nation provides a natural framework for moral traditions and understanding, functioning as the primary school of morals to articulate 'the issues of the good' for us.<sup>431</sup>

If, however, an individual has high levels of trust towards members of the wider existing state, reflecting a positive evaluation of them and a perception that they are generally trustworthy, this implies that the trust they have in others is not limited to those who share their national identity. If we know that an individual has high levels of trust in individuals from the wider state, we can arrive at one of two conclusions: that the individual trusts all people, regardless of where they originate from, or that the individual specifically trusts members of the wider existing state.

In the first case, regardless of how strong their national identity is, they regard most people to be trustworthy, so their national identity is unlikely to infringe upon their willingness to cooperate with others or continue to participate in democratic society with them.

In the second scenario, high levels of trust would seem to indicate that an individual has positive prior experiences of dealing with members of the wider existing state and therefore considers them trustworthy precisely because they are from the wider existing

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<sup>428</sup> Jane Allyn Piliavin, John F. Dovidio, Samuel L. Gaertner and Russell D. Clark, *Emergency Intervention* (New York: Academic Press, 1981): 144

<sup>429</sup> Miscevic, 'Nationalism'

<sup>430</sup> Miscevic, 'Nationalism'

<sup>431</sup> Charles Taylor, *Sources of the Self*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989): 35

state. In this case, it seems increasingly unlikely that their national identity would be deter them from participating in democratic society with those from the wider existing state.

The same holds true for Miller's distributive justice argument. As it is diminished trust between members of different social groups which Miller argues makes them more reluctant to apply their principles impartially across groups, building trust between cultural groups is necessary to overcome the problem of social justice in multinational societies.<sup>432</sup> Where levels of cross-group trust are high, therefore, it is expected that the relationship between national identity and support for secession would be weaker. Where individuals feel that their co-nationals are more trustworthy than those from the wider state meanwhile, the relationship between national identity and support for secession is expected to be stronger.

***Hypothesis 7: The higher an individual's levels of differential interpersonal trust, the greater the extent to which their national identity will impact on their support for secession***

In addition, this thesis will test for the interaction between differential institutional trust and national identity. The fear-confidence model suggests that it is simultaneously high levels of fear in the union and confidence in the prospects of secession which ought to predict secessionist support. If the evidence supports this theory therefore, even those without an exclusive Scottish, Catalan or Flemish nationality should be more likely to support secession if their differential institutional trust is sufficiently high. In order to comprehensively test this theory, and the role of trust in the dynamics of secessionist support, it is important to examine whether differential institutional trust has the same effect in differing national identity contexts:

***Hypothesis 8: The higher an individual's levels of differential institutional trust, the greater the extent to which their national identity will impact on their support for secession***

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<sup>432</sup> Miller, *Justice for Earthlings*, 8



### 4.3.2 *Secessionist party identification*

Throughout the literature on support for secession, consistent evidence is found to suggest that intermediating agents, such as parties, leaders and governments have a significant impact on levels of support.<sup>433</sup> Although researchers have frequently found that identification with, closeness to, or support for specific parties and leaders can have an independent effect on citizens' choices with regards to sovereignty and the territorial organisation of the state however,<sup>434</sup> relatively little scholarly attention has been devoted to the subtleties of this relationship.

While secessionist parties in advanced democracies consistently make demands for outright independence, their manifestos often cover a wide range of policy areas, which do not directly relate to the constitutional future of their region. The SNP for example, combines a commitment to social democracy with a pro-business stance, has an anti-nuclear tradition dating to the 1960s, and at the time of the 2014 referendum, was the most strongly pro-European party in the UK.<sup>435</sup> Indeed, while the 2014 referendum represented a rare example of a binary, single-issue campaign on the fundamental political question 'to which country shall we belong?',<sup>436</sup> the SNP was far from a single-issue party. It is a distinct possibility therefore, that a number of those who primarily identify with secessionist parties do so for reasons that are not directly linked to their constitutional preferences.

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<sup>433</sup> Harold D. Clarke and Allan Kornberg, 'Choosing Canada? The 1995 Quebec Sovereignty Referendum', *PS: Political Science and Politics* 29 (4) (1996): 676-682;

Harold D. Clarke, Allan Kornberg and Marianne C. Stewart, 'Referendum Voting as Political Choice: The Case of Quebec', *British Journal of Political Science* 34 (2) (2004): 345-355;

Jon Pammett and Lawrence LeDuc, 'Sovereignty, leadership and voting in the Quebec referendums', *Electoral Studies* 20 (2) (2001): 265-280;

Mariano Torcal and Fabiola Mota, 'The role of political parties in shaping citizens' political preferences for the territorial organization of the state: The Spanish Case', *European Political Science Review* 6 (3) (2014): 477-502;

Richard Nadeau, Pierre Martin and Andre Blais, 'Attitude Towards Risk-Taking and Individual Choice in the Quebec Referendum on Sovereignty', *British Journal of Political Science* 29 (3) (1999): 523-539

<sup>434</sup> Clarke and Kornberg, 'Choosing Canada?';

Clarke et al, 'Referendum voting as political choice';

Nadeau et al, 'Attitudes Towards Risk-Taking and Individual Choice in the Quebec Referendum on Sovereignty';

Pammett and LeDuc, 'Sovereignty, leadership and voting in the Quebec referendums';

Torcal and Mota, 'The role of political parties in shaping citizens' political preferences for the territorial organization of the state'

<sup>435</sup> Keating, 'The Scottish independence referendum and after'

<sup>436</sup> Davide Morisi, 'Voting under uncertainty: the effect of information in the Scottish independence referendum', *Journal of Elections, Public Opinion and Parties* 26 (3) (2016): 354-372

Similarly, it is not uncommon for a pro-independence, nationalist party to alter its stance on independence over time, or to include opposing strands and factions, particularly with regards to its preferred level of autonomy, or the length of time by which they should aim to achieve secession. Within the SNP for example, there have been historical divisions between gradualists and fundamentalists relating to the timeframe with which secession should be achieved, with the former advocating patient progress with increased devolution and the latter pushing for immediate secession.<sup>437</sup>

While secessionist politicians consistently seek to polarise the public and deepen divisions between those within the potential secessionist region and those outside it, the extent to which they are successful can vary significantly. Similarly, while secessionist party identification is consistently found to be positively associated with support for secession, it is clear that not all of those who primarily identify with secessionist parties favour secession. One possible explanation for this, which will be tested in this thesis, is that institutional trust and more specifically, trust in the government of the existing state, has a moderating effect on the relationship between party identification and support for secession.

Institutional trust, it is important to note, can play a crucial role in shaping confidence and fear, with respect to the prospects of seceding or remaining in the union. A lack of political power, Dion argues, can be a key source of grievance that may inspire negative feelings, if not 'fear' toward a union.<sup>438</sup>

This, it can be argued, goes some way to explaining the results of the 1997 Scottish devolution referendum, won by a majority of three to one, in the aftermath of Scotland being governed for eighteen years by a Conservative Party for which Scots had not voted.<sup>439</sup> During this eighteen years, Keating argues, a sense of political alienation grew, as many Scottish people were forced to accept radical policies which did not represent their votes.<sup>440</sup> Ultimately, this demonstrates the way in which members of a potential secessionist region can become motivated and mobilised by uneasiness and frustration with an existing political system, which has failed to adequately represent them.

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<sup>437</sup> Keating, 'The Scottish independence referendum and after,' 75

<sup>438</sup> Dion, 'Why is Secession Difficult in Well-Established Democracies? Lessons from Quebec', 274

<sup>439</sup> Keating, 'The Scottish independence referendum and after,' 75

<sup>440</sup> Keating, 'The Scottish independence referendum and after,' 89

Where levels of trust in the government of the existing state are especially low therefore, it would be expected that similar feelings of alienation and lack of representation would be contributing to increased support for secession. If an individual has high levels of trust in the government of the existing state however, this suggests an absence of fear in the union and some degree of confidence that the government will try to act in its citizens best interests.

High levels of trust in the government of the existing state are unlikely to be present in those who consider themselves unfairly or inadequately represented by the systematic, constitutional processes of the union and so, even if the current government does not represent their views, would be expected to favour less dramatic change than outright independence and the creation of a separate state. It would be reasonable to expect therefore, that where levels of trust in the government of the existing state are higher, or at least equal to their levels of trust in the regional government, individuals are more likely to support pro-secession parties because of issues which are not related to secession. In such contexts therefore, it is expected that the relationship between secessionist party identification and support for secession will be weaker. Conversely, where there trust in the regional government markedly outweighs their trust in the government of the existing state, having a secessionist party identification is expected to be a stronger predictor of secessionist support:

***Hypothesis 9: The higher an individual's levels of differential institutional trust, the greater the extent to which secessionist party identification will impact on their support for secession***

#### **4.4 Conclusions**

In summary, both the institutional and interpersonal dimensions of trust are expected to impact on secessionist support. Firstly, the institutional trust which exists vertically between individual members of a potential secessionist region and the government of the existing state is expected to have a direct impact on support for secession. The more trusted the government is, the less likely it is to be considered an object of fear from which the potential secessionist region needs to be protected. The higher an individual's levels of trust in the

government of the existing state therefore, the lower their likelihood of supporting secession is expected to be.

Secondly, the institutional trust which exists vertically between individual members of a potential secessionist region and the government of that potential secessionist region is expected to have a direct positive impact on support for secession. The trust and confidence voters associate with the prospect of secession is thought to be crucial in attracting secessionist support and unless these exist at a high level of intensity, secession is deemed extremely improbable in well-established democracies.<sup>441</sup>

The more devolution arrangements succeed in meeting a minority group's desire for self-government, citizens' trust in the competence of the devolved government builds, serving to strengthen their political confidence.<sup>442</sup> While granting increased autonomy provides national minorities with a workable alternative to secession, it also helps to make secession a more realistic alternative to federalism, by allowing trust and confidence in the devolved government to grow.<sup>443</sup> The expectation therefore, is that as trust (or confidence) in the government of the potential secessionist region increases, the sense that the region is capable of making a success of secession increases, so members of the regional group are more likely to support secession.

The fear-confidence model suggests that, in order for a secessionist movement to garner majority support, distrust in the government of the existing state and trust in the government of the potential secessionist region must exist at simultaneously high levels. Consequently, differential institutional trust (their level of trust in the Scottish, Catalan or Flemish government, minus their trust in the government of the UK, Spain or Belgium) is expected to have a direct impact on secessionist support.

In addition to its direct effect, differential institutional trust is expected to have a moderating effect on both the relationship between national identity and secessionist support, and secessionist party identification and secessionist support. If the evidence supports the fear-confidence model, even those without an exclusive Scottish, Catalan or

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<sup>441</sup> Dion, 'Why is Secession Difficult in Well-Established Democracies? Lessons from Quebec', 271

<sup>442</sup> Kymlicka, 'Is federalism a viable alternative to secession?' 135

<sup>443</sup> Kymlicka, 'Is federalism a viable alternative to secession?' 138

Flemish nationality should be more likely to support secession if their differential institutional trust is sufficiently high.

Similarly, as high levels of trust in the government of the existing state are unlikely to be present in those who consider themselves unfairly or inadequately represented by the union, even if the current government does not represent their views, they would be expected to favour less dramatic change than outright secession. It is expected therefore, that where levels of trust in the government of the existing state are higher than or equal to levels of trust in the regional government, individuals will be more likely to support pro-secession parties because of issues unrelated to secession and so the relationship between party identification and support for secession will be weaker.

In addition to the measures of institutional trust, the horizontal relations of interpersonal trust between individual members of the potential secessionist region and members of the wider state are expected to have both a direct impact on support for secession.

Where these levels of trust are low and individuals express a negative evaluation of those from the wider existing state, as well as the perception that they are not generally trustworthy, it follows that they either do not consider them to have positive intentions, or the competence to be trusted. In such a scenario, it seems that members of the potential secessionist region would be unlikely to support the preservation of a union which ties them to people they perceive to be untrustworthy.

Furthermore, extreme examples of diminished bridging social capital in multinational societies have shown that in its absence, divisions become deepened and increasingly entrenched. Where divisions become more deeply entrenched and those from within the potential secessionist region feel increasingly detached from the wider state, it seems increasingly unlikely that they would be attracted by the prospect of remaining in the union. The higher an individual's outward-looking trust towards members of the wider state therefore, the lower their likelihood of supporting secession is expected to be.

Similarly, the interpersonal trust which exists horizontally between fellow members of a potential secessionist region is expected to have a direct impact on support for secession. Lower levels of inward-looking trust among co-nationals are most simply thought to be

detrimental to the secessionist cause, because we are unlikely to feel enthusiastic about the prospects of forming a new state with a group of people whom we have a negative perception of and deem to be generally untrustworthy. The stateless nation building project is thought to be dependent on the sort of collective action bonding social capital supports and enables, fostering specific reciprocity between members of the same national group and mobilising solidarity.<sup>444</sup>

Furthermore, in the creation of strong in-group loyalty, bonding social capital may also produce strong out-group antagonism,<sup>445</sup> so that the more 'togetherness' we feel with those to whom we are most alike, the more separate we feel from those that are different. In maximising the level of in-group bonding social capital therefore, secessionists may further entrench divisions with and segregation from the wider state, thus increasing support for secession. Consequently, it is an individual's differential interpersonal trust (their trust in their fellow members of the potential secessionist region, minus their trust in members of the wider state), which is expected to predict secessionist support.

As well as its direct impact, higher levels of differential interpersonal trust are expected to have a positive impact on the strength of the relationship between national identity and support for secession. One of the key theoretical explanations for why national identity is crucial in justifying and motivating support for secession asserts that states need to be mono-national if democracy is to function properly, because multi-national states lack the solidarity, trust, or shared sentiments and values that effective democracy requires.<sup>446</sup> It is in this regard that national identity is thought to be particularly crucial, as it increases the likelihood that people will place trust in their fellow citizens, encouraging citizens to make sacrifices for 'anonymous others'.<sup>447</sup> This theory presupposes therefore that co-nationals will

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<sup>444</sup> Keating, 'Stateless nation-building';

Putnam, *Bowling Alone*, 22

<sup>445</sup> Brown, 'The Emergence of Voluntary Associations in Massachusetts';

Putnam, *Bowling Alone*, 23;

Varshney, *Ethnic Conflict and Civic Life*

<sup>446</sup> Ferrera, *The Boundaries of Welfare*;

Mill, *Considerations on Representative Government*

<sup>447</sup> Kymlicka, *Politics in the vernacular*, 225;

Miller, *Citizenship and National Identity*;

Miller, *On Nationality*, 140

have higher levels of trust and solidarity than those which exist between members of the potential secessionist region and the wider existing state.

If, however, an individual has high levels of bridging social capital towards members of the wider existing state, reflecting a positive evaluation of them and a perception that they are generally trustworthy, the trust they have in others does not appear to be limited to those who share their national identity. Regardless of how strong their national identity is then, it is unlikely to infringe upon their willingness to cooperate with others or continue to participate in democratic society with them. Where levels of cross-group, bridging social capital are high therefore, it is expected that the relationship between national identity and support for secession would be weaker.

This theory rests on the fundamental assumption that the homophilous relations of social capital between co-nationals will be stronger than those between members of the potential secessionist region and members of the wider existing state, justifying and motivating secessionist support, on the grounds that we trust our fellow members of the potential secessionist region more than those from outside the group. Only in contexts where an individual trusts their fellow members of the potential secessionist region more than members of the wider state then, is national identity expected to have a strong impact on support for secession.

In the chapters which follow, this thesis will analyse the impact of each of the outlined forms of trust on support for secession.

## Chapter 5. Methodology

### 5.1 Introduction

In order to test for the impact of trust on support for secession, this thesis will analyse cross-sectional survey data from Scotland, Catalonia and Belgium. While a number of studies have attempted to shed light on the factors behind increasing support for secession in a longitudinal setting, the static analysis of secessionist supporters in a cross-sectional setting enables a more focused disentangling of the key drivers of support.<sup>448</sup>

In testing the identified hypotheses, this study will use logistic regression, while controlling for a wide range of variables, which are external to the hypotheses. In line with the regression model used in Diego Muro and Martijn C. Vlaskamp's recent study on support for secession in Scotland and Catalonia, this study will control for the key variables that have most commonly been found to impact on levels of support: national identity, level of education, gender, household income, political ideology and age.<sup>449</sup> In addition, the regression model used in this study will control for whether a respondent primarily identifies with a pro-secession political party, as this has been found to have a significant impact on support for secession across a wide range of cases.<sup>450</sup>

The danger of multicollinearity in the logistic regression models which will be run is an important consideration, as significant levels of multicollinearity would render the models unstable. By computing a variance inflation factor (VIF) for each of the variables in each regression model however, this analysis will account for the extent of the variance which is inflated due to multicollinearity, for each of the estimated regression coefficients included. These VIF scores will be included in the appendix and, in the event that multicollinearity is

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<sup>448</sup> Marc Guinjoan and Toni Rodon, 'Catalonia at the crossroads: Analysis of the increasing support for secession,' in Xavier Cuadras Morato (ed.), *Catalonia: A New Independent State in Europe? A Debate on Secession within the European Union* (London: Routledge, 2016): 20-62

<sup>449</sup> Diego Muro and Martijn C. Vlaskamp, 'How do prospects of EU membership influence support for secession? A survey experiment in Catalonia and Scotland' *West European Politics* 39 (6) (2016): 1115-1138

<sup>450</sup> Clarke and Kornberg, 'Choosing Canada?';

Clarke et al, 'Referendum voting as political choice';

Nadeau et al, 'Attitudes Towards Risk-Taking and Individual Choice in the Quebec Referendum on Sovereignty';

Pammett and LeDuc, 'Sovereignty, leadership and voting in the Quebec referendums';

Torcal and Mota, 'The role of political parties in shaping citizens' political preferences for the territorial organization of the state'



identified as a problem, the concerned variables will be removed, as the presence of multicollinearity would imply that the information such variables provide are redundant in the presence of the other variables.<sup>451</sup>

It is important to recognise that the selected cases were not in identical situations at the time these surveys took place, nor are they identical political systems. For instance, while the people of Scotland, at least at the time of the survey, had recently been granted a referendum on the political future of their region, this was not the case in Catalonia or Belgium. While all three cases have devolved power to regional subunits meanwhile, the Belgian state is governed under a federal system, whereby its regional subunits have decentralised powers which are constitutionally guaranteed, while the UK and Spain remain unitary states.

Furthermore, while many of the same, or at least extremely similar variables appear in the Scottish, Catalan and Flemish surveys, a number of questions are asked in significantly different ways across the three cases or are simply unavailable. Consequently, they should be considered as distinct cases, within which the role of trust in secessionist movements will be tested and the estimated regression coefficients should not be directly compared across the three cases. Within each case however, it will be possible to compare the strength of estimated regression coefficients and therefore analyse which measures of trust have the most substantial impact. Similarly, it will be possible to compare and contrast which measures of trust have a significant impact on support for secession across the three cases.

Finally, potential endogeneity issues derive from the use of trust in the government, whether at the regional and central level. Individuals who are in favour of secession for instance, are also likely to distrust non-nationalist governments and to trust nationalist governments. In order to account for this, the analysis which follows will provide a robustness test to show if results are consistent, regardless of the composition of government, by running a separate model for Catalonia which uses data from the 3<sup>rd</sup> wave of the 2009 Catalan BOP,<sup>452</sup>

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<sup>451</sup> Gareth James, Daniela Witten, Trevor Hastie, and Robert Tibshirani, *An Introduction to Statistical Learning: With Applications in R* (New York: Springer Publishing Company, Inc., 2014); Peter Bruce and Andrew Bruce, *Practical Statistics for Data Scientists* (Sebastopol, CA: O'Reilly Media, 2017)

<sup>452</sup> Centre d'Estudis d'Opinió (CEO), 'Public Opinion Barometer (BOP), 3<sup>rd</sup> wave 2009' (<http://ceo.gencat.cat/ca/barometre/detall/index.html?id=1989>, 20<sup>th</sup> August 2020)

at which point Partido Socialista Obrero Español (PSOE) led both the Catalan and the Spanish government, and nationalism and secessionism were less strongly aligned.

## ***5.2 Scotland***

In measuring the impact of trust on support for secession in Scotland, this study will analyse the data from the 2015 Scottish Social Attitudes (SSA) survey, which interviewed 1,288 respondents.<sup>453</sup> This research will analyse personal opinion data to unveil the individual-level preferences and perceptions that motivate pro- or anti- secessionist support. The 2015 SSA survey was conducted a year after the 2014 Scottish independence referendum and in the same year as the 2015 United Kingdom general election, in which the SNP increased their seat share by 50, winning 56 of the possible 59 seats in Scotland. According to SSA survey data, 39 per cent of those surveyed in 2015 were in favour of outright independence.<sup>454</sup>

In the SSA survey data-set, there are two questions which could potentially be used to measure support for secession. Firstly, respondents were asked about their hypothetical views towards the constitutional future of Scotland, ranging from those whose preference was for Scotland to become entirely independent and separate from both the UK and the EU, to those who favoured Scotland remaining part of the UK and abolishing the Scottish parliament. An ordinal variable on a five-point scale, responses in between these two extremes included becoming independent from the UK but remaining a part of the European Union, remaining a part of the UK, with its own elected parliament but with no taxation powers, and remaining a part of the UK, but with some autonomy over taxation.

Secondly, respondents were asked a more direct question about how they actually voted in the 2014 Scottish independence referendum. While the first question is directed to the entire sample, whether or not they voted in the referendum of 2014, the second was only asked to those who said that they had in fact voted. In addition, the former asks respondents about their current constitutional preferences and as such, provides a more current snapshot of views towards Scottish secession. Finally, while the latter asks respondents about their

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<sup>453</sup> 'Scottish Social Attitudes Survey, 2015,' *The UK Data Service* (<https://discover.ukdataservice.ac.uk/catalogue/?sn=8188>, 13<sup>th</sup> September, 2017)

<sup>454</sup> 'Scottish Social Attitudes: From Indyref1 to Indyref2?'

voting behaviour in a referendum which has already happened, as neither Catalonia or Flanders have partaken in an equivalent referendum, it would not be possible to analyse a similar variable for these cases, and so the variable's value would be limited across the analysis of the three research sites.

Consequently, the first of the two variables was chosen to be used as the dependent variable for the regression models in the analysis of the Scottish case. In order to be useful for this analysis however, the variable must be operationalised. While the original survey question asked respondents about the levels of autonomy they preferred for instance, as well as their views on EU membership, this thesis is primarily concerned with respondents' support for secession. As such, the original variable was re-coded into a new, dichotomous variable, which split respondents into those who hypothetically supported Scotland becoming independent from the rest of the UK, and those who did not. The newly created variable will act as the dependent variable in the logistic regression models used to test the hypotheses outlined in Chapter 4.

### ***5.2.1 Measuring the direct impact of trust***

In order to measure the direct impact of institutional trust, two variables were selected, each asking respondents about their level of trust in government. In order to test Hypothesis 1, a variable was chosen, which asked respondents to what extent they believe the UK government can be trusted to work in Scotland's interests, with possible responses ranging on a four-point scale from 'just about always', to almost never.

To test Hypothesis 2 meanwhile, an almost identical variable was selected, which simply asked respondents about the extent to which they believe the Scottish government can be trusted to work in Scotland's best interests, rather than the UK government, with the same possible responses to choose from.

While the inclusion of these two independent variables in Model I allow for the testing of both trust in the Scottish government and trust in the UK government however, they do not account for those individuals who may hold either high or low levels of trust in all institutions, for reasons that may have to do with variables that are not relevant to the study.

Failing to account for these individuals may interfere with the findings, as those with low levels of political efficacy for example, may not support Scottish secession, but may also not trust either institution.

In order to control for this, and to test Hypothesis 3, the analysis will include a separate model (Model II) which examines 'differential trust' (e.g. the difference between trust in the Scottish government and trust in the UK government).

In order to create this model, a new variable was created and included in place of the two original independent variables, in which the score a respondent gave for their trust in the UK government (from one to four) was subtracted from the score they gave for their trust in the Scottish government. A value of three was then added to every respondent's score, to create a variable ranging from zero (the highest possible score for trust in the UK government and the lowest possible score for trust in the Scottish government) to six (the highest possible score for trust in the Scottish government, and lowest for trust in the UK government). The new independent variable will be labelled 'Differential institutional trust (UK government to Scottish government).'

In addition to the key independent variables, both Model I and Model II control for national identity, SNP party identification, age, political ideology (in terms of left-right), household income, level of education and gender. While several of the control variables (age, political ideology, household income and level of education) could be included in the model in their original form, national identity, SNP party identification and gender had to first be operationalised.

Firstly, while Moreno national identity question was originally coded so that a lower score represented a more strongly Scottish national identity, this scale was reversed for the purposes of Models I and II, so that a score of one represented those who felt exclusively British and a score of five represented those who felt exclusively Scottish. SNP party identification meanwhile was re-coded into a dichotomous variable from the variable 'PartyFW', whereby those who selected a value of four (Scottish National Party) were coded as '1' and all other responses were coded as '0'. The nominal variable which asked for a respondent's gender meanwhile, was re-coded into another dichotomous variable, whereby all those answering 'male' were coded as '1', and all other responses were coded as '0'.

Unfortunately for the Scottish case, as there is no data available to test for group-specific interpersonal trust, the direct impact of only institutional trust can be analysed.

### ***5.2.2 Measuring the moderating effect of trust***

In addition to the direct impact of trust on support for Scottish secession, this thesis will analyse the moderating effect trust has on the relationships between support for secession and its most robust predictors.

In doing so, this analysis will include regression models with multiplicative interaction terms, a method which is extremely widely used in the social sciences to test whether the relationship between a dependent variable and its predictor changes depending on a moderator.<sup>455</sup> Analysts, it is argued in Thomas Brambor, William Roberts Clark and Matt

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<sup>455</sup> Bear Braumoeller, 'Hypothesis Testing and Multiplicative Interaction Terms,' *International Organization* 58 (2004): 807-820;

Chunrong Ai and Edward Norton, 'Interaction Terms in Logit and Probit Models,' *Economics Letters* 80 (2003): 123-129;

David R. Cox 'Interaction,' *International Statistical Review* 52 (1984): 1-31;

Edward Norton, Hua Wang, and Chunrong Ai, 'Computing Interaction Effects and Standard Errors in Logit and Probit Models,' *STATA Journal* 4 (2004): 103-116;

Gary L. Griepentrog, J. Michael Ryan and L. Douglas Smith, 'Linear Transformations of Polynomial Regression Models,' *American Statistician* 36 (1982): 171-174;

Gerald Wright, 'Linear Models for Evaluating Conditional Relationships,' *American Journal of Political Science* 2 (1976): 349-373;

Irwin Bernhardt and Bong S. Jung, 'The Interpretation of Least Squares Regression with Interaction or Polynomial Terms,' *Review of Economics and Statistics* 61 (1979): 481-483;

James Jaccard, Choi Wan and Robert Turrisi, 'The Detection and Interpretation of Interaction Effects between Continuous Variables in Multiple Regression,' *Multivariate Behavioral Research* 25 (1990): 467-478;

James Jaccard and Choi Wan, 'Measurement Error in the Analysis of Interaction Effects between Continuous Predictors Using Multiple Regression: Multiple Indicator and Structural Equation Approaches,' *Psychological Bulletin* 117 (1995):348-357;

Jerome Busemeyer and Lawrence Jones, 'Analysis of Multiplicative Combination Rules When the Causal Variables Are Measured with Error,' *Psychological Bulletin* 93 (1983): 549-562;

Jonathan Nagler, 'Scobit: An Alternative to Logit and Probit,' *American Journal of Political Science* 38 (1994): 230-255;

Jonathan Nagler, 'The Effect of Registration Laws and Education on U.S. Voter Turnout,' *American Political Science Review* 85 (1991): 1393-1405;

Leona Aiken and Stephen West, *Multiple Regression: Testing and Interpreting Interactions* (London: Sage, 1991);

Paul Cleary and Ronald Kessler, 'The Estimation and Interpretation of Modifier Effects,' *Journal of Health and Social Behavior* 23 (1982): 159-169;

Paul D. Allison, 'Testing for Interaction in Multiple Regression,' *American Journal of Sociology* 83 (1977): 144-153;

Ralph Rosnow and Robert Rosenthal, 'Definition and Interpretation of Interaction Effects,' *Psychological Bulletin* 105 (1989): 143-146;

Golder's influential work, should include interaction terms whenever they have conditional hypotheses.<sup>456</sup> A conditional hypothesis, they understand as simply one in which a relationship between two or more variables depends on the value of one or more other variables.<sup>457</sup> Put simply:

An increase in X has an impact on Y when condition Z is met, but not when condition Z is absent.<sup>458</sup>

Regression models with multiplicative interaction terms constitute what Jens Hainmueller et al term a 'workhorse' in the social sciences.<sup>459</sup> A large number of hypotheses stipulate that the effect of their independent variable of interest varies is context dependent, as captured by the moderating variable,<sup>460</sup> and it has been well established that multiplicative interaction models do a good job of capturing the intuition behind conditional hypotheses.<sup>461</sup>

While there is an extensive body of literature relating to the use of multiplicative interaction terms in testing conditional hypotheses, most articles now consider the guidelines emphasised in Brambor et al's 2006 study to be best practice.<sup>462</sup> These guidelines, to summarise, advise that analysts ought to include all constitutive terms (X and Z) alongside the interaction term in the model ( $X \cdot Z$ ), not interpret the coefficients on the constitutive terms as unconditional marginal effects, and provide a plot which demonstrates how the conditional marginal effect of X on Y changes across levels of the moderator, Z.

In measuring the moderating effect of trust on support for Scottish secession, X refers to the robust predictor of secessionist support (e.g. national identity), while Y denotes the

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Robert Franzese, 'Multiple Hands on the Wheel: Empirically Modeling Partial Delegation and Shared Policy Control in the Open and Institutionalized Economy,' *Political Analysis* 11 (2003): 445-474;

Robert Friedrich, 'In Defense of Multiplicative Terms in Multiple Regression Equations,' *American Journal of Political Science* 26 (1982): 797-833

<sup>456</sup> Thomas Brambor, William Roberts Clark and Matt Golder, 'Understanding interaction models: Improving empirical analysis,' *Political Analysis* 14 (1) (2006): 63-82

<sup>457</sup> Brambor et al, 'Understanding interaction models,' 63

<sup>458</sup> Brambor et al, 'Understanding interaction models,' 63

<sup>459</sup> Jens Hainmueller, Jonathan Mummolo, and Yiqing Xu, 'How Much Should We Trust Estimates from Multiplicative Interaction Models? Simple Tools to Improve Empirical Practice,' *Political Analysis* (2018): 1-30

<sup>460</sup> Hainmueller et al, 'How Much Should We Trust Estimates from Multiplicative Interaction Models?', 1

<sup>461</sup> Aiken and West, *Multiple Regression: Testing and Interpreting Interactions*

Brambor et al, 'Understanding interaction models', 64;

Friedrich, 'In Defense of Multiplicative Terms in Multiple Regression Equations'

Wright, 'Linear Models for Evaluating Conditional Relationships'

<sup>462</sup> Brambor et al, 'Understanding interaction models'

dependent variable (e.g. support for Scottish secession) and Z, the moderator (e.g. differential institutional trust). In order to test Hypotheses 8 and 9 then, separate regression models will be run, capturing the effect of institutional trust on the relationships between support for Scottish secession and two of its most reliable predictors. In order to test Hypothesis 8, Model III will therefore contain the multiplicative interaction term 'Differential institutional trust · National identity', in addition to all of the control variables included in Models I and II. Similarly, in order to test Hypothesis 9, Model IV will include the multiplicative interaction term 'Differential institutional trust · SNP party identification'.

### 5.3 Catalonia

For Catalonia, this study will analyse data from the 2015 Baròmetre d'Opinió Política (BOP),<sup>463</sup> a survey administered by the Centre d'Estudis d'Opinió (CEO) of the Generalitat de Catalunya. As in the Scottish case, this survey was conducted a year after the 2014 Catalan self-determination referendum, a referendum on the political future of Catalonia, in which 80.8 per cent of votes were cast in support of an independent state of Catalonia. Despite this, the referendum was blocked by the Constitutional Court of Spain and was therefore non-binding, while the estimated turnout was only around 40 per cent, with the majority those opposed to independence thought to have boycotted the vote.

In the BOP data-set, Catalan respondents were asked two similar questions to those found in the Scottish survey. Again, respondents were asked one question about their theoretical preferences towards the constitutional future of the region, as well as a more direct question about whether or not it should become a state. The former of the two survey questions was an ordinal variable, asking respondents whether they thought Catalonia ought to be a region of Spain, an autonomous community of Spain (as it currently is), a state in a federal Spain, or an entirely independent state. The latter of the two questions meanwhile was a nominal variable, asking respondents more precisely whether they wanted Catalonia to become a state.

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<sup>463</sup> 'Baròmetre d'Opinió Política (BOP): 2a onada 2015', *Centre d'Estudis d'Opinió* (<http://ceo.gencat.cat/ceop/AppJava/pages/estudis/categories/fitxaEstudi.html?colId=5468&lastTitle=Bar%F2metre+d%27Opini%F3+Pol%EDtica+%28BOP%29.+2a+onada+2015, 13<sup>th</sup> September 2017>)

As the second question did not specify whether the state respondents were envisaging was one entirely independent from Spain, or a state within a federal Spain however, this variable would not allow for the distinction between those who supported Catalan secession and those who favoured a transition to federalism. Consequently, the first of the two questions was chosen and operationalised, by creating a new, dichotomous variable, which simply separated respondents into those who hypothetically supported Catalan secession and those who did not.

### ***5.3.1 Measuring the direct impact of trust***

The first of the Catalan models (Model I) aims to include the most similar available variables to the Scottish Model I, in order to aid comparison. As a result, Model I does not include measures of interpersonal trust, or the language a respondent speaks at home (despite this having been identified as a strong predictor of secessionist attitudes in many previous studies on Catalonia). Rather, the key independent variables included in Model I are ‘trust in the Spanish government’ (‘P21D’) and ‘trust in the Catalan government’ (P21F). Each of these variables features a scale whereby ‘0’ represents no trust at all and ‘10’ represents complete trust.

In addition, Model I includes a number of control variables, which are equivalent to those in the Scottish model: National identity, secessionist party identification, age, political ideology, household income, level of education and gender. Of those variables, only gender and secessionist party identification necessitated operationalising, both of which required the creation of dichotomous variables. For gender, all those answering ‘male’ were again coded as ‘1’ and all other responses ‘0’. In order to create the ‘secessionist party identification’ variable from ‘P24’ meanwhile, all parties publicly in favour of outright independence at the time of the survey (CiU, ERC, Regrupament.cat, SI and CUP) were assigned the value ‘1’ and all other responses ‘0’. While ICV (Indicative per Catalunya Verds) supported a referendum on independence, they did not support secession, and so are not included in the variable.

Model II, like the Scottish equivalent, contains identical control variables but in place of the original independent variables, contains a new variable called ‘Differential institutional trust (Spanish government to Catalan government).’ As in the Scottish model, this variable



was created to account for those individuals who may have low levels of trust in both institutions for reasons which do not relate to secessionist matters. As the institutional trust variables in the Catalan model contain response options ranging from zero to ten (as opposed to one to four, in the Scottish variables), they were calculated by subtracting a respondent's score for trust in the Spanish government from their score for trust in the Catalan government, before adding ten. The resultant variable therefore included a scale from '0', representing those with 'no trust' in the Catalan government and 'complete trust' in the Spanish government to '20', which represents no trust in the Spanish government and complete trust in the Catalan government.

In addition to Models I and II from the 2015 Catalan data, the analysis of Catalonia includes a separate model which uses data from the 3<sup>rd</sup> wave of the 2009 Catalan BOP,<sup>464</sup> at which point PSOE led both the Catalan and the Spanish government. The inclusion of these models takes into account the risk of potential endogeneity which arises from the use of governmental trust as a key independent variable, because those who favour secession are also likely to distrust non-nationalist governments and to trust nationalist governments.

Model I from the 2009 data uses the same dependant variable as the 2015 model, re-coding 'P28', which asks about respondents' hypothetical constitutional preferences, into a dichotomous variable measuring whether or not a respondent supports Catalan secession. Similarly, the model includes trust in the Spanish government and trust in the Catalan government, as well as controlling for national identity, secessionist party identification, political ideology, age, income, level of education and gender. For the purposes of operationalisation, 'P21' (a nominal variable which measures party identification) has been re-coded into a dichotomous variable whereby CiU and ERC (the two response options advocating for secession at the time of the survey) are represented by the value '1' and all other response options are coded as '0'. Similarly, the question which asked a respondents' gender has been re-coded into a dichotomous variable in which those answering 'Male' are represented by the value '1' and all other responses are represented by the value '0'.

A second model using the 2009 data will be included in the analysis, which features all of the same variables as Model I, apart from trust in the Spanish government and trust in the

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<sup>464</sup> CEO, 'Public Opinion Barometer (BOP), 3<sup>rd</sup> wave 2009'

Catalan government. In their place, Model II includes a new variable named 'Differential institutional trust (Spanish government to Catalan government),' calculated in the same way as the equivalent variable from 2015.

In order to more comprehensively test the role of trust in shaping support for the secession of Catalonia, this thesis' analysis of the 2015 data will include a third model (Model III), which includes every variable from Model I, but also tests for an individual's levels of interpersonal trust, both in Catalan citizens (P22E) and in Spanish citizens (P22F), on a scale ranging from zero to ten. In addition, this model controls for the language a respondent speaks at home, as this has been identified as a strong predictor of support for Catalan secession in many previous studies. In order to operationalise this variable, all those respondents reporting to speak Catalan at in the home were coded as '1', while all other responses were coded as '0'.

A fourth model (Model IV) is also included in the analysis of Catalonia, which in addition to controlling for every variable in Model II and whether a respondent speaks Catalan at home, includes a variable measuring differential trust (Spanish citizens to Catalan citizens). Calculated in the same way as the equivalent variable for differential institutional trust, this variable contains values ranging from '0' (no trust in Catalan citizens and complete trust in Spanish citizens) to '20' (complete trust in Catalan citizens and no trust in Spanish citizens).

### ***5.3.2 Measuring the moderating effect of trust***

As in the analysis of the Scottish data, this thesis will analyse the moderating effect trust has on the relationships between support for Catalan secession and two of its most robust predictors, with the inclusion of multiplicative interaction terms.

For the Catalan case, Models V and VI will be run, which include all of the same variables as Model IV, with the addition of the multiplicative interaction terms 'Differential Trust (Spanish government to Catalan government) · National identity' and 'Differential Trust (Spanish government to Catalan government) · Secessionist party identification'. Model V, testing for the moderating effect of differential institutional trust on the relationship between national identity and support for secession, will allow for Hypothesis 8 to be tested. Model VI

meanwhile, measures the moderating effect of differential institutional trust on secessionist party identification and will therefore test Hypothesis 9. Finally, Model VII will include the interaction term 'Differential trust (Spanish citizens to Catalan citizens · National identity)', in order to test Hypothesis 7.

## **5.4 Flanders**

In order to analyse the impact of trust on support for secession in Flanders, this research will analyse data from the 2014 PartiRep Voter survey, which contains a total sample of 2,019 respondents (a sample of 1,001 respondents in Flanders). This survey was jointly organized by the universities of Brussels, Antwerp and Leuven/Louvain and took place in a year in which both a Belgian Federal election and Flemish Regional election took place. The first wave of the PartiRep study took place in the weeks building up to the election on 25<sup>th</sup> May 2014. Of the total 2,019 respondents, 1,532 also took part in a follow-up telephone interview immediately after the elections.

As in the first two cases, the PartiRep survey data contains one question which asks respondents about their theoretical views towards the constitutional future of Flanders. Respondents were asked to what extent they agree that Flanders should become independent, with possible answers ranging from total agreement to total disagreement, on a four-point ordinal scale. Again, this variable was re-coded into a new, dichotomous variable, which divided respondents into those who hypothetical think Flanders should become independent, and those who do not.

### ***5.4.1 Measuring the direct impact of trust***

In order to measure the direct impact of institutional trust, two variables from the first wave of the survey were selected, each of which asked respondents about their level of trust in government. As with the Catalan case, in order to test Hypothesis 1, a variable which asked respondents to rate their level of trust in the Belgian federal government out of ten, where '0' means no trust at all and '10' means a complete trust. To test Hypothesis 2 meanwhile, an almost identical variable was selected, which simply asked respondents about the extent to

which they trust the Flemish government, with possible responses to be placed on the same ten-point scale.

To enable more direct comparison to the Scottish and Catalan cases, Model I includes variables which are as similar as possible to those included in Model I from the Scottish and Catalan analyses. Consequently, in addition to trust in the Belgian government and trust in the Flemish government, Model I controls for national identity, secessionist party identification, political ideology, age, income, level of education and gender (all of which were asked in the first wave of the 2014 PartiRep survey).

While many of the variables did not require operationalising, the question which asked respondents which party they would vote for in an election was re-coded into a dichotomous variable, whereby N-VA and Vlaams Belang (the two secessionist response options) were coded as '1' and all other response options were represented by the value '0'. Similarly, while the variable 'V16' asked respondent the Moreno national identity question, this was originally coded so that a lower score represented a more strongly Flemish national identity. This scale was therefore reversed for the purposes of Model I, so that a score of one represented those who felt exclusively Belgian and a score of five represented those who felt exclusively Flemish. Finally, the question which asked a respondent's gender was re-coded into a dichotomous variable in which all those answering 'Male' were represented by the value '1' and all other responses were coded as '0'.

In addition, the analysis of Flanders includes Model II, which contains identical variables to Model I, with the exception of the new variable, named 'Differential trust (Belgian government to Flemish government),' which was calculated in the same way as the equivalent variable from the Catalan analysis. Subtracting a respondent's score for trust in the Belgian government from their score for trust in the Flemish government and adding ten, the new variable comprises of a scale, ranging from '0' (no trust in the Flemish government and complete trust in the Belgian government) to '20' (complete trust in the Flemish government and no trust in the Belgian government).

The Flemish analysis contains a third model (Model III), to allow for a more comprehensive examination of the role trust plays in shaping secessionist support. This model contains identical variables to those included in Model I, with the addition of two variables

from the second wave of the 2014 PartiRep survey, which took place in the immediate aftermath of the election: Feelings towards Walloons and Feelings towards Dutch people, both of which are scored from zero to ten, in the same way as the measures of institutional trust. The inclusion of these variables is somewhat problematic, limiting the reliability of the results, as these questions were asked a few weeks after the rest of questions in the model, as well as reducing the number of respondents in the total sample.

Furthermore, as one of the two questions asks respondents about their feelings towards Dutch people, rather than their feelings towards other Flemings, these measures of interpersonal trust are not directly comparable to those within the Catalan case. As outlined earlier in the chapter however, this limitation will be recognised and accounted for, by omitting any direct comparisons between the interpersonal trust variables in the Flemish case and the Catalan case.

The inclusion of these variables however, allows the models to test for the impact of interpersonal trust towards both Walloons and Dutch people, and so their value justifies their inclusion. Furthermore, the analysis of Models I and II will allow for the role of institutional trust to be tested without the limiting factors which are introduced through the inclusion of the interpersonal trust measures.

In addition, Model IV contains identical variables to Model II, with the addition of one new variable, which calculates differential interpersonal trust (Walloons to Dutch people), by subtracting a respondent's score for feelings towards Walloons from their score for feelings towards Dutch people and adding ten. In the same way as the measure of differential institutional trust in Model II therefore, the new variable in Model IV contains a scale from '0' (very negative feelings towards Dutch people and very positive feelings towards Walloons) to '20' (very positive feelings towards Dutch people and very negative feelings towards Walloons).

#### ***5.4.2 Measuring the moderating effect of trust***

In addition to the direct impact of trust, the Flemish analysis will examine the moderating effect trust has on the relationships between Flemish secessionist support and two of its strongest predictors: national identity and secessionist support.

Firstly, Model V will contain identical variables to those included in Model IV, with the addition of the multiplicative interaction term 'Differential Trust (Belgian government to Flemish government) · National identity', in order to measure the impact of differential institutional trust on the relationship between national identity and support for Flemish secession (Hypothesis 8). Additionally, Model VI will include the same variables as Model V, but will instead contain an alternative multiplicative interaction term: 'Differential Trust (Belgian government to Flemish government) · Secessionist party identification', which tests for the moderating effect of differential institutional trust on the relationship between secessionist party identification and support for the secession of Flanders (Hypothesis 9). Finally, Model VII will include the interaction term 'Differential trust (Walloons to Dutch people) · National identity', in order to test Hypothesis 7.

## Chapter 6. Scotland

### 6.1 Introduction

While the Scottish independence referendum in September 2014 resulted in 44.7 percent voting for independence and 55.3 percent against, the question of Scotland's constitutional future was not settled decisively.<sup>465</sup> Somewhat paradoxically, the aftermath of the referendum saw the secessionists emerge with optimism and momentum, with talk of Scottish secession and the possibility of a second independence referendum remaining at the forefront of the British political agenda.<sup>466</sup>

In the aftermath of the referendum, the future of the British state remains contested.<sup>467</sup> Neil MacCormick, philosopher and SNP politician, has in the past questioned whether a referendum is even required in order for Scotland to secede, advocating the possibility of state dissolution like that of Czechoslovakia,<sup>468</sup> although this is generally considered implausible in the UK. The more likely path towards independence, Peter Lynch argues, is that Scotland will work towards holding a second referendum, in which they will again face the task of convincing a majority of voters to support Scottish secession.<sup>469</sup>

This chapter has two key aims. Firstly, it focuses on the direct impact of trust on support for Scottish secession, using logistic regression to test data from the 2015 Scottish Social Attitudes (SSA) survey, to determine the extent to which various measures of trust predict an individual's preference towards the notion of an independent Scottish state. Secondly, it considers the impact of trust as a moderator, in the relationships between support for Scottish secession and one of its most robust predictors: SNP party identification.

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<sup>465</sup> Michael Keating, 'The Scottish independence referendum and after,' *Revista d'estudis Autonòmics i Federals* 21 (1) (2015): 73-98

<sup>466</sup> Keating, 'The Scottish independence referendum and after,' 73

<sup>467</sup> Brendan O'Leary, 'Europe's Embers of Nationalism', *Current History* 114 (2015): 101-107

<sup>468</sup> Neil MacCormick, 'Is there a Constitutional Path to Scottish Independence?' *Parliamentary Affairs* 53 (4) (2000): 721-736

<sup>469</sup> Peter Lynch, 'Scottish Independence, the Quebec Model of Secession and the Political Future of the Scottish National Party', *Nationalism and Ethnic Politics* 11 (4) (2005): 503-531

## 6.2 The Scottish secessionist movement

Scotland is widely considered to be one of the least controversial or disputed examples of a 'stateless nation',<sup>470</sup> with its own national identity, which is commonly referred to as 'Scottishness'.<sup>471</sup> Many factors combine to make Scotland's status as a nation within the UK relatively uncontroversial, including but not limited to its historic and uncontested borders, its national capital (Edinburgh), in which many of its national institutions and museums are located, its own flag ('The Saltire'), national sports teams and emblem (the thistle).

In the early middle ages, Scotland emerged as an independent sovereign state and since then, it has endured a long history of struggles to retain its independence, fighting off the claims of English crown throughout the fourteenth century, before securing its own monarchical and parliamentary institutions.<sup>472</sup> Upon the signing of the Treaty of the Union in 1707 however, the parliaments united to create a single state, the United Kingdom of Great Britain.

The new union was considered economically beneficial, giving Scotland free trade with the English market and access to the expanding empire.<sup>473</sup> Despite the perceived benefits however, many within Scotland opposed the treaty at the time of signing and a degree of bribery was required to persuade the Scottish parliament to vote on its own adjournment.<sup>474</sup> This, Keating states, is point that has long been emphasised by Scottish nationalists.<sup>475</sup>

Keating argues that Scotland's sense of national identity began to re-take a political form in the late nineteenth century, when nationalist protests emerged in the Highlands, among radicals and in the labour movement, although the notion of Scottish secession did

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<sup>470</sup> Devine, *Scotland's Empire*;

Duclos, 'The Idiosyncrasies of Scottish National Identity';

Keating, *Nations against the state*;

Keating, *Plurinational Democracy*;

Keating, 'Stateless Nation-Building';

Leruez, *L'Ecosse, une nation sans Etat*;

McCrone, *Understanding Scotland*

<sup>471</sup> Dodds and Seawright, 'The politics of identity', 91

<sup>472</sup> Keating, *Nations against the state*, 163

<sup>473</sup> Duclos, 'The Idiosyncrasies of Scottish National Identity,' 86

<sup>474</sup> Ferguson, *Scotland*

<sup>475</sup> Keating, *Nations against the state*, 163



not come to dominate the political landscape until many years later.<sup>476</sup> The foundation of the SNP between 1928 and 1934 came to represent those frustrated with the lack of progress towards home rule.<sup>477</sup> In the current political climate, the SNP has been instrumental in the growth of Scottish secessionism.

Scottish secessionists, or those seeking to establish an entirely separate, independent Scottish state, are traditionally in opposition to unionists, committed to the maintenance of the United Kingdom and historically favouring a unitary parliament at Westminster, as well as the home rulers who favour Scottish self-government within a reformed United Kingdom.<sup>478</sup>

After gaining an absolute majority in the 2011 Scottish Parliament election, the SNP sought to pursue an independence referendum, although as this is a matter reserved constitutionally to Westminster, it required the approval of the UK government. Once granted, a referendum on Scottish independence was held (in September 2014), with those voting to stay in the UK achieving a clear majority of 55.3 per cent. The referendum result did not quell the secessionist movement in Scotland however, as the 44.7 per cent of votes in favour of secession was a much higher proportion of the vote share than many had previously predicted.

Gaining momentum, the SNP went on to win 56 of Scotland's available 59 seats in the 2015 UK general election, meaning that the SNP now accounted for 50 per cent of the national popular vote. Scottish nationalism only seemed to have grown stronger in the aftermath of the independence referendum. Indeed, SSA data appears to suggest that since 2012, there has been a clear increase in support for secession.<sup>479</sup> Before the beginning of the independence referendum campaign in 2012, support for outright independence had ranged between 23 and 35 per cent, at its highest constituting just over a third of respondents. Support increased each year following the beginning of the referendum campaign until 2016, where it has remained above 40 per cent.

With close to half of all voters in Scotland now supporting the notion of secession and talk of a second referendum surfacing soon after the results of the first, the 2014

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<sup>476</sup> Keating, *Nations against the state*, 167

<sup>477</sup> Keating, *Nations against the state*, 167

<sup>478</sup> Keating, 'The Scottish independence referendum and after,' 74

<sup>479</sup> Scotcen, 'From Indyref1 to Indyref2?'

independence referendum has far from settled the debate about Scotland's constitutional status.

### 6.3 Trust and support for Scottish secession

As stated earlier, the overarching, working definition of trust which will be used in this thesis is a willingness to be vulnerable to others and to rely on them to be competent.<sup>480</sup> As trust is largely dependent on context and the 'object' it concerns however,<sup>481</sup> it is two specific manifestations of trust, which are the primary focus of this thesis: trust in government (a form of institutional trust), and trust in other individuals (interpersonal trust).

The forms of trust which are most directly relevant to the dynamics of support for secession are the group-specific, heterophilous relations of trust which exist between Scottish individuals and those from the rest of the UK, and the homophilous relations between fellow Scottish individuals. Unfortunately, while the SSA data contains a number of useful questions relating to levels of institutional trust towards both the Holyrood and Westminster governments, they do not contain variables relating to individual-level trust in specifically heterophilous or homophilous contexts. While the chapters which follow do contain data that captures levels of interpersonal trust between co-nationals in both Catalonia and Flanders, as well as levels of the levels of trust between Catalan individuals and those from the rest of Spain, and between Flemish individuals and Walloons, this data is not currently available for the Scottish case. The primary focus of this chapter therefore, will be on the direct impact and moderating effect of institutional trust on support for secession.

To trust an institution, as it is understood in this thesis, means that we have fundamentally positive beliefs and expectations about our interactions with it.<sup>482</sup> This definition of institutional trust applies to any institution in which social roles are meshed, including the government, both at the regional and central level.<sup>483</sup> In the context of support for Scottish secession, this thesis will primarily consider the levels of trust which exist between

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<sup>480</sup> McLeod, 'Trust'

<sup>481</sup> Norris, 'Introduction: The growth of critical citizens', 1

<sup>482</sup> Govier, *Social Trust and Human Communities*, 34

<sup>483</sup> Govier, *Social Trust and Human Communities*, 33

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Scottish individuals and both the devolved Scottish government, and the Westminster government.

### **6.3.1      *The direct impact of trust***

There are several reasons institutional trust might be expected to impact on an individual's likelihood of supporting Scottish secession, largely relating to how 'risky' the prospect of secession appears. While some scholars suppose that extremely risk-averse individuals will never be so confident as to sufficiently assuage doubts and fears about the potential negative consequences of secession,<sup>484</sup> there is evidence to suggest that their levels of trust in government could have a significant influence.

The following hypotheses, outlined in Chapter 4 and relating to the direct impact of trust on support for Scottish secession, will be tested over the course of Chapter 6:

***Hypothesis 1, Scotland (H1S): The higher an individual's levels of trust in the UK government, the lower their likelihood of supporting Scottish secession***

***H2S: The higher an individual's levels of trust in the Scottish government, the greater their likelihood of supporting Scottish secession***

***H3S: The greater the difference between an individual's levels of trust in the Scottish government and the UK government, the higher their likelihood of supporting secession***

As stated in Chapter 4, Dion stressed in his analysis of the dynamics of secessionist support in well-established democracies, the centrality of 'fear' and 'confidence',<sup>485</sup> a distinction which

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<sup>484</sup> Dion, 'Why is Secession Difficult in Well-Established Democracies? Lessons from Quebec', 272; Jackson and Dutton, 'Discerning Threats and Opportunities'; Quattrone and Tversky, 'Contrasting Rational and Psychological Analysis of Political Choice'

<sup>485</sup> Dion, 'Explaining Quebec Nationalism';  
Dion, 'Why is Secession Difficult in Well-Established Democracies?'

parallels the work of Gamson on 'grievance' and 'opportunity',<sup>486</sup> as well as Pinard and Hamilton's distinction between 'internal motives' and 'external incentives',<sup>487</sup> and Meadwell's between 'enabling' and 'constraining' conditions.<sup>488</sup>

While Scottish secessionist leaders attempt to link fear with remaining in the union and confidence with secession, unionists' strategy is the reverse: to link confidence with the union and fear with the prospects of secession.<sup>489</sup> In this sense, while secessionists attempt to convince Scottish voters that their cultural, economic or political situation is at risk of deteriorating if they remain in the union, unionists must downplay any perceived risk that this will occur. Similarly, secessionist leaders attempt to convey the sense among Scottish voters that Scotland can perform better on its own and that secession is not too risky, while unionist leaders emphasise the uncertainty and risk associated with secession. In effect therefore, secessionist and unionist leaders are competing over which option is considered to carry a greater degree of risk in the eyes of voters.

This was evident throughout the debate which preceded the 2014 independence referendum, with unionists and Scottish secessionists frequently disputing the extent to which a fully independent Scottish state would suffer economically. Unionists for example, argued that without the aid of the Barnett formula, an allocation mechanism that adjusts levels of spending in Scotland according to increases or decreases in English expenditure on the same functions,<sup>490</sup> Scotland would be unable to pay for its own public services.

Effectively, the unionist argument was that Scotland received more than its share of spending within the existing union and that, should Scottish voters elect to keep Scotland in the union, the current arrangements would continue.<sup>491</sup> Secessionists responded by emphasising the revenue generated from North Sea oil reserves, 90 per cent of which are in

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<sup>486</sup> Gamson, *Power and Discontent*

<sup>487</sup> Pinard and Hamilton, 'Motivational Dimensions in the Quebec Independence Movement'

<sup>488</sup> Meadwell, 'The Politics of Nationalism in Quebec'

<sup>489</sup> Dion, 'Why is Secession Difficult in Well-Established Democracies? Lessons from Quebec', 271

<sup>490</sup> Dardanelli and Mitchell, 'An independent Scotland?';

Keating, 'The Scottish independence referendum and after,' 80;

Keating, *The Government of Scotland'*

<sup>491</sup> Keating, 'The Scottish independence referendum and after,' 81

Scottish waters, even before accounting for the new discoveries beginning to be exploited west of the Shetland Islands.<sup>492</sup>

A similar example of secessionists and unionists clashing over the level of risk associated with the prospect of Scottish secession can be seen in the debate on which currency a fully independent Scotland would use. Nine months prior to the 2014 independence referendum, the Scottish government outlined its vision for a post-secession Scotland, proposing that a fully autonomous Scotland would retain the pound sterling, as well as a role in the management of monetary policy.<sup>493</sup> This, along with the Scottish government's proposal that a fully independent Scotland would become a full member of the EU,<sup>494</sup> is demonstrative of the secessionist strategy to minimise the perception of disruption associated with secession, thus making it appear less risky.<sup>495</sup>

On the currency question, each of the main UK parties declared that they would not countenance a monetary union under any circumstances, although the SNP dismissed this as a bluff, insisting that such a union would be in the interests of the rest of the UK.<sup>496</sup> Mark Carney, Governor of the Bank of England, set out the argument that it would be possible to operate a single currency, but that this would limit the autonomy of an independent Scotland.<sup>497</sup> In effect, Scotland would have the ability to use the pound unilaterally, but would be left with no influence at all over its monetary policy.

Similarly, unionists emphasised doubts about the potential EU membership of a fully independent Scotland. The UK government warned that it would be rendered at least temporarily a non-member, having to apply for membership as a new member state under Article 49 of the Treaty of the European Union (TEU), therefore requiring the approval of all

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<sup>492</sup> Keating, 'The Scottish independence referendum and after,' 81

<sup>493</sup> Scottish Government, *Scotland's Future - Your Guide to an Independent Scotland* (Edinburgh: The Scottish Government, 2013): 110-112

<sup>494</sup> Scottish Government, *Scotland's Future*, 112

<sup>495</sup> Dardanelli and Mitchell, 'An independent Scotland?', 98;

Stephen Tierney, 'Legal Issues Surrounding the Referendum on Independence for Scotland', *European Constitutional Law Review* 9 (3) (2013): 359-390

<sup>496</sup> Keating, 'The Scottish independence referendum and after,' 82

<sup>497</sup> Mark Carney, 'The Economics of Currency Unions', speech to the Scottish Council for Development & Industry, Edinburgh, 29 January 2014 (<http://www.bankofengland.co.uk/publications/Documents/speeches/2014/speech706.pdf>)

existing member states and leaving Scotland's EU status open to veto.<sup>498</sup> Then presidents of the European Council and the European Commission respectively, Herman Van Rompuy and José Manuel Barroso made public statements to the same effect, asserting that Article 49 would seemingly be the only viable route to membership for a new, independent Scottish state.<sup>499</sup>

Spain was widely regarded to be the most likely EU member state to veto the membership of an independent Scotland, fearful of the possible implications for Catalonia and the Basque Country and the contagion of secessionism. Although reiterating the expectation that Scotland ought to follow Article 49 and apply for EU membership as a new member state, the Spanish government promised "not to interfere" in the process.<sup>500</sup> This, Keating argues, was most likely because vetoing Scotland's application would be to tacitly imply that it was a precedent for Catalonia, a notion they strenuously denied.<sup>501</sup>

In the context of the 2014 independence referendum campaign, Paolo Dardanelli argued, warnings from both the UK government and the European institutions can be seen as attempts to sway Scottish voters away from backing secession,<sup>502</sup> by emphasising the uncertainty and potential negative consequences of seceding from the UK.

There are a number of reasons low levels of trust in the UK government would be expected to have a positive impact on support for Scottish secession. Extended periods of distrust in governments, Arthur H. Miller argued, can lead to societal conflicts that cannot be overcome through the conventional channels of the political system.<sup>503</sup> Although distrusted individual politicians can be replaced through the electoral process, prolonged distrust in the

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<sup>498</sup> UK Government, *Scotland Analysis: EU and International Issues*, Cm 8765 (London: The Stationery Office, 2014): 62-63

<sup>499</sup> "Extremely difficult' for Scotland to join EU – Barroso', BBC, 16<sup>th</sup> February 2014 (<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-26215579>, 20<sup>th</sup> February 2019);

UK Government, *Scotland Analysis*, 62

<sup>500</sup> Tobias Buck and Mure Dickie, 'Spain promises non-interference on Scotland', *Financial Times*, 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2014

<sup>501</sup> Keating, 'The Scottish independence referendum and after,' 84

<sup>502</sup> Scottish Parliament, European and External Relations Committee, 2<sup>nd</sup> Report, 2014 (Session 4), *Report on the Scottish Government's Proposal for an Independent Scotland: Membership of the European Union*, SP Paper 530 (Edinburgh: Scottish Parliament, 2014): 46

<sup>503</sup> Miller, 'Political Issues and Trust in Government, 1964–1970'

institutions themselves is much more challenging to overcome.<sup>504</sup> While citizens in most states have little choice but to continue cooperating with government institutions, even when trust is low, individuals in regions like Scotland, which contain electorally successful secessionist parties, have the option to support secession from the government institutions they distrust.

In accordance with Hirschman's work on 'Exit, Voice, and Loyalty', a Scottish individual experiencing prolonged distrust toward the UK's core institutions is faced with two possible responses: voice their dissatisfaction, or withdraw in favour of a 'separate scene'.<sup>505</sup> While threatening exit from state institutions is traditionally difficult to carry out in a physical sense, resulting in the majority of citizens opting to either voice their dissatisfaction, or exit indirectly (i.e. through apathy towards political participation),<sup>506</sup> a region like Scotland, which contains an electorally successful secessionist movement, affords the citizen with the opportunity to physically exit from the state itself.<sup>507</sup>

In the Scottish context, it is important to note that the 1997 Scottish devolution referendum was won by a majority of three to one, in the aftermath of Scotland being governed for eighteen years, by a Conservative Party for which Scots had not voted.<sup>508</sup> During this eighteen years, Keating argues, a sense of political alienation grew, as Scottish people were forced to accept radical policies which did not represent their votes.<sup>509</sup> In the 1997 referendum therefore, Scottish voters appear to have been motivated by a lack of trust in, as well as an uneasiness toward and frustration with an existing political system, which had failed to adequately represent them.

One of the key justifications and motivations for secession that Miller has highlighted is the sense that the policies of a state, or a state itself, can somehow be threatening to a national minority and are something to be feared.<sup>510</sup> Likewise, Dion has emphasised 'fear' of

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<sup>504</sup> Dalton, *Citizen Politics*, 250;

Listhaug, 'The Dynamics of Trust in Politicians' 294;

Newton and Norris, 'Confidence in Public Institutions', 52-53

<sup>505</sup> Hirschman, *Exit, Voice, and Loyalty*, 108

<sup>506</sup> Hirschman, *Exit, Voice, and Loyalty*, 96

<sup>507</sup> Hirschman, *Exit, Voice, and Loyalty*, 96

<sup>508</sup> Keating, 'The Scottish independence referendum and after,' 75

<sup>509</sup> Keating, 'The Scottish independence referendum and after,' 89

<sup>510</sup> Miller, *On Nationality*, 110

the state as an integral factor in motivating secessionist support in his theoretical examination of the dynamics of secession in well-established democracies.<sup>511</sup> Fear, in this context is understood as the sense among members of a regional group that their cultural, economic or political situation will deteriorate within the existing union.<sup>512</sup>

In line with Dion's theory, both the 'fear' associated with remaining in the UK and the 'confidence' inspired by the prospects of a fully independent Scotland are expected to be crucial in attracting support for Scottish secession and, unless both exist at a high level of intensity, secession is deemed extremely improbable.<sup>513</sup>

The fundamental link between fear and trust, it is important to note, has been emphasised in many previous studies, including Clause Offe's work on political liberalism and group rights, which argues that in order to overcome both vertical fear (of a ruler or government) and horizontal (that of one's fellow citizens), relations of trust and solidarity are essential.<sup>514</sup> As explained at greater length in the previous chapter, trust is defined here as the belief that others will not deliberately or knowingly do us harm if they can avoid it and may in the ideal case, look after our interests. By the very nature of trust therefore, higher levels of trust in the UK government represent the belief that it does not intend to deliberately or knowingly allow the deterioration of Scotland's cultural, economic or political situation.

Furthermore, Dion has indicated that decentralization and the sort of enhanced devolution Scotland has received in recent years can reduce the extent to which the central government is feared, thus having a positive effect on trust in the central government and a negative impact on support for secession.<sup>515</sup>

In 1997, upon becoming elected, the Labour Government implemented an asymmetrical devolution model, which granted varying degrees of autonomy to Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, seeking to account for the differing national identities and demands for devolution within Britain.<sup>516</sup> In the Scottish devolution referendum of September

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<sup>511</sup> Dion, 'Explaining Quebec Nationalism';

Dion, 'Why is Secession Difficult in Well-Established Democracies? Lessons from Quebec'

<sup>512</sup> Dion, 'Why is Secession Difficult in Well-Established Democracies? Lessons from Quebec', 271

<sup>513</sup> Dion, 'Why is Secession Difficult in Well-Established Democracies? Lessons from Quebec', 271

<sup>514</sup> Offe, 'Political Liberalism, Group Rights, and the Politics of Fear and Trust'

<sup>515</sup> Dion, 'Why is Secession Difficult in Well-Established Democracies? Lessons from Quebec', 279

<sup>516</sup> Keating, *Nations against the state*;

Guibernau, 'National identity, devolution and secession in Canada, Britain and Spain'



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1997, seventy-four percent of Scottish voters opted for a Scottish Parliament and sixty-three percent voted to give it tax-varying powers.<sup>517</sup>

As a result of the ensuing devolution arrangements, the citizens of Scotland were able to elect their own representatives in the Scottish Parliament, with the first elections taking place in May, 1999.<sup>518</sup> While Westminster retained power and responsibility in a number of key areas (such as UK foreign policy, defence and national security, and the stability of the UK's fiscal, economic and monetary system),<sup>519</sup> and some constraints on policy divergence remained in practice (including the existence of a common British market, a common security area and a welfare state),<sup>520</sup> the Scotland Act provided for a reasonably clear division of powers.<sup>521</sup>

Although devolving power to the government of the potential secessionist region can strengthen confidence in the feasibility of secession, accommodating decentralization makes it difficult to convince people the central government is something to be feared, or that is acting against their interests. It is difficult, for instance, to produce a convincing argument that the union is a centralist, oppressive iron collar, if the central government has shown itself willing to forgo control and devolve power to the regional institutions.<sup>522</sup>

In addition to fear, Dion's theoretical work on the dynamics of secession found that the confidence inspired by the prospects of secession is crucial in attracting support for secession and that, unless this exists at a high level of intensity, secession is extremely improbable in well-established democracies.<sup>523</sup>

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<sup>517</sup> Michael O'Neill, 'Great Britain: From Dicey to Devolution', *Parliamentary Affairs* 53 (2000): 69-95

<sup>518</sup> Graham Leicester, 'Scotland', in Robert Hazell (ed.), *The State and the Nations: The first year of devolution in the United Kingdom* (Exeter: Imprint Academic, 2000): 13-36

<sup>519</sup> Guibernau, 'Nations Without States'

<sup>520</sup> Michael Keating, 'Devolution and Public Policy in the United Kingdom: Convergence or Divergence?' in John Adams and Peter Robinson (eds.), *Devolution in Practice: Public policy differences within the UK* (London: Institute for Public Policy Research, 2002): 3-24;

Michael Keating, Linda Stevenson, Paul Cairney and Katherine Taylor, 'Does devolution make a difference? Legislative output and policy divergence in Scotland', *The Journal of Legislative Studies* 9 (3) (2003): 110-139

<sup>521</sup> Keating et al, 'Does devolution make a difference?', 112

<sup>522</sup> Dion, 'Why is Secession Difficult in Well-Established Democracies? Lessons from Quebec', 279

<sup>523</sup> Dion, 'Why is Secession Difficult in Well-Established Democracies? Lessons from Quebec', 271

Confidence has a common meaning of a certainty about handling something, whether that be a particular task, or a potential event.<sup>524</sup> In this sense, Nathan Rotenstreich understands confidence, like trust, to fundamentally be a form of reliance or dependence and understands it to be the opposite of or contradictory to fear.<sup>525</sup>

In the context of secessionist movements, Dion defines confidence as the sense among the group that it can perform better on its own and that the prospect of secession is not too risky.<sup>526</sup> Confidence has been associated with trust in a large number of previous studies.<sup>527</sup> Both concepts, Niklas Luhmann asserts, refer to expectations which have the potential to lapse into disappointments.<sup>528</sup> In fact, as Orlando Patterson has highlighted, both trust and confidence can be considered 'trust situations', differentiated only by the level of risk and the means by which such risk is conceptualized.<sup>529</sup>

At the institutional level, trust and confidence are considered to be even more closely linked, as the vertical dimension of trust involves less direct relationships between the institution and the trusting citizen than the interpersonal interactions which take place in horizontally.<sup>530</sup> The knowledge and previous engagement demanded by the interpersonal conception of trust is unavailable to most ordinary citizens,<sup>531</sup> so institutional trust is generally understood, like confidence, to simply represent the fundamentally positive beliefs and expectations they have about their interactions with the relevant institution.<sup>532</sup>

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<sup>524</sup> Stajkovic, 'Development of a core confidence-higher order construct';

Stajkovic, 'Introducing positive psychology to work motivation'

<sup>525</sup> Browne, *The Nichomachean Ethics of Aristotle*, 73

Rotenstreich, 'On Confidence', 348

<sup>526</sup> Dion, 'Why is Secession Difficult in Well-Established Democracies? Lessons from Quebec', 271

<sup>527</sup> Charlton et al, 'Exploring Public Confidence in the Police and Local Councils in Tackling Crime and Anti-social Behaviour';

Cook and Gronke, 'The Skeptical American';

Hamm et al, 'Exploring separable components of institutional confidence,';

Jalava, 'From Norms to Trust';

Keller et al, 'The General Confidence Scale';

Luhmann, 'Familiarity, Confidence, Trust: Problems and Alternatives';

Metlay, 'Institutional Trust and Confidence';

Zmerli et al, 'Trust in people, confidence in political institutions and satisfaction with democracy'

<sup>528</sup> Luhmann, 'Familiarity, Confidence, Trust,' 97

<sup>529</sup> Patterson, 'Liberty against the Democratic State', 153

<sup>530</sup> Hardin, *Trust and Trustworthiness*, 151

<sup>531</sup> Hardin, *Trust and Trustworthiness*, 151

<sup>532</sup> Govier, *Social Trust and Human Communities*, 34

Following on from their success in the 2007 Scottish parliament election, in which the SNP overtook Labour to become Scotland's largest party, 2011 saw the SNP win an outright majority in the Holyrood parliament. This success, according to analysis of the ESRC-funded Scottish Election Study 2011, was predominantly due to the perception among most voters that the party would do a better job in office than its rivals.<sup>533</sup> In other words, voters were confident in the SNP, as a consequence of the competence they had demonstrated in government.

The SNP's support for independence, Keating notes, played only an indirect role in their success, signalling the party's commitment to Scotland and a willingness to stand up for Scotland in any disputes with London.<sup>534</sup> Scottish voters, in other words, supported the party of independence more than they supported the notion of secession itself, a trend which the SNP understood and utilised in their strategy for building secessionist support.<sup>535</sup> In election campaigns, as opposed to prioritising their commitment to independence, the SNP focussed on demonstrating and emphasising their competence in government, appreciating that the more confidence voters had in the SNP government, the more likely they were to be optimistic about the prospects of a fully independent Scotland.

Scotland has always had its own legal system and separate laws, although before 1999 these were passed by the central parliament at Westminster.<sup>536</sup> Similarly, Scotland had its own executive institutions before 1999, in the form of the Edinburgh-based Scottish Office and a Secretary of State for Scotland, but these had remained an integral part of central government.<sup>537</sup> The extent to which these mechanisms and arrangements for governing Scotland amounted to Scottish autonomy however is contested, ranging from the assessment

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<sup>533</sup> Christopher J. Carman, Robert Johns and James Mitchell, *More Scottish than British: The 2011 Scottish Parliament Election* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014);

Robert Johns, James Mitchell and Christopher J. Carman, 'Constitution or Competence? The SNP's re-election in 2011,' *Political Studies* 61 (1) (2013): 158-178

<sup>534</sup> Keating, 'The Scottish independence referendum and after,' 92

<sup>535</sup> Keating, 'The Scottish independence referendum and after,' 92

<sup>536</sup> Keating et al, 'Does devolution make a difference?', 111

<sup>537</sup> Keating et al, 'Does devolution make a difference?', 111

that they constituted a distinct Scottish system within the British system,<sup>538</sup> to merely a way of putting a Scottish face on British policy.<sup>539</sup>

As highlighted in the previous section however, the terms of devolution implemented in 1999 saw a marked increase in Scottish autonomy. Although the grant Scotland was allocated by London, calculated using the Barnett formula, remained essentially the same as it had been prior to devolution, the Scottish Parliament and its executive was now free to determine its own spending priorities.<sup>540</sup> A Labour-led coalition with the Liberal Democrats governed the new, devolved Scottish parliament for its first two terms (1999-2003 and 2003-07), with the SNP becoming the largest party in 2007 (by just one seat), before winning its first majority in 2011. In the most recent Scottish parliament election (2016), the SNP was again the largest party, winning its third consecutive term in government, but falling two seats short of a majority.

In societies which feature high levels of decentralization, where the regional group's public institutions already have a significant level of autonomy and devolved responsibility, it becomes easier to develop confidence that political sovereignty is within reach.<sup>541</sup> The more responsibilities are administered to the Holyrood parliament therefore, the more opportunity the Scottish government is afforded to prove its competence and trustworthiness. It is in this sense that Will Kymlicka has argued the devolution of power to national minorities can ultimately be paradoxical, in that while it provides a workable alternative to secession, it also helps to make secession a more realistic and achievable alternative.<sup>542</sup>

Similarly, Keating has described the process of devolution as an unstable 'halfway house' between union and secession,<sup>543</sup> implying that devolution is a temporary measure, rather than a solution to demands for increased independence. The more devolution arrangements succeed in meeting Scotland's desire for self-government, the more they serve

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<sup>538</sup> James G. Kellas, *The Scottish Political System* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989)

<sup>539</sup> Arthur F. Midwinter, Michael Keating and James Mitchell, *Politics and Public Policy in Scotland* (London: Macmillan, 1991);

James Ross, 'The Secretary of State for Scotland and the Scottish Office', *Studies in Public Policy* 87 (Glasgow: University of Strathclyde, 1981);

Keating et al, 'Does devolution make a difference?', 111

<sup>540</sup> Keating, 'The Scottish independence referendum and after,' 90

<sup>541</sup> Lemco, *Political Stability in Federal Government*

<sup>542</sup> Kymlicka, 'Is federalism a viable alternative to secession?' 138

<sup>543</sup> Keating, *The Independence of Scotland*, 77

to strengthen its political confidence.<sup>544</sup> The implication therefore, is that as trust (or confidence) in the Scottish government increases, the sense that the Scotland is capable of making a success of secession increases, so Scottish voters are more likely to support secession.

### **6.3.2      *The moderating effect of trust***

In addition to the direct effects of trust on support for secession, this chapter will test for the impact of trust as a moderator, in the relationship between secessionist support and one of its most robust predictors: secessionist party identification. As outlined in Chapter 4, the following hypotheses are expected to be observed over the course of the analysis in Chapter 6:

***H8S: The higher an individual's levels of differential institutional trust, the greater the extent to which their national identity will impact on their support for secession***

***H9S: The higher an individual's levels of differential institutional trust, the greater the extent to which secessionist party identification will impact on their support for secession***

The fear-confidence model outlined in Chapter 4 suggests that it is simultaneously high levels of fear associated with remaining in the UK and confidence in the prospects of a Scottish state with outright independence which ought to predict secessionist support. If the evidence supports this theory, even those without an exclusive Scottish national identity should be more likely to support Scottish secession provided their differential institutional trust is sufficiently high. In order to comprehensively test this theory, and the role of trust in shaping support for Scottish secession, it is important to examine the role differential institutional

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<sup>544</sup> Kymlicka, 'Is federalism a viable alternative to secession?' 135

trusts has, in those with differing national identities (ranging from exclusively British to exclusively Scottish).

Throughout the literature on support for secession, consistent evidence is found to suggest that intermediating agents, such as parties, leaders and governments have a significant impact on levels of support.<sup>545</sup> Although researchers have found that identification with, closeness to, or support for specific parties and leaders can have an independent effect on citizens' preferences regarding the territorial organisation of the state however,<sup>546</sup> relatively little scholarly attention has been devoted to the subtleties of this relationship. In particular, there are a number of reasons trust in the UK government would be expected to moderate the relationship between secessionist party identification and support for secession.

As highlighted in the previous chapter, although secessionist parties like the SNP consistently make demands for outright independence, their manifestos often cover a wide range of policy areas, which do not relate to the constitutional future of their region. The SNP for instance, combines a commitment to social democracy with a pro-business stance, has an anti-nuclear tradition dating to the 1960s, and at the time of the 2014 referendum, was the most strongly pro-European party in the UK.<sup>547</sup> While the 2014 referendum itself presented voters with a rare example of a binary, single-issue political question 'to which country shall we belong?',<sup>548</sup> the SNP is far from a single-issue party. There is a distinct possibility therefore, that some of those who primarily identify with the SNP do so for reasons that are not directly

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<sup>545</sup> Clarke and Kornberg, 'Choosing Canada?';

Clarke et al, 'Referendum voting as political choice';

Nadeau et al, 'Attitudes Towards Risk-Taking and Individual Choice in the Quebec Referendum on Sovereignty';

Pammett and LeDuc, 'Sovereignty, leadership and voting in the Quebec referendums';

Torcal and Mota, 'The role of political parties in shaping citizens' political preferences for the territorial organization of the state'

<sup>546</sup> Clarke and Kornberg, 'Choosing Canada?';

Clarke et al, 'Referendum voting as political choice';

Nadeau et al, 'Attitudes Towards Risk-Taking and Individual Choice in the Quebec Referendum on Sovereignty';

Pammett and LeDuc, 'Sovereignty, leadership and voting in the Quebec referendums';

Torcal and Mota, 'The role of political parties in shaping citizens' political preferences for the territorial organization of the state'

<sup>547</sup> Keating, 'The Scottish independence referendum and after'

<sup>548</sup> Morisi, 'Voting under uncertainty,' 354

linked to secession and are not necessarily in favour of outright independence themselves, a nuance which Murray Leith and Martin Steven found evidence for in their 2010 study.<sup>549</sup>

Furthermore, many pro-independence, nationalist parties, including the SNP, have been known to alter their stance on independence over time, or to include opposing strands and factions, which differ in their preferred level of autonomy, or the length of time by which they should aim to achieve secession. Within the SNP, historical divisions between gradualists and fundamentalists related to the timeframe with which secession should be achieved, with the former advocating patient progress with incremental increases in devolution and the latter pushing for immediate secession.<sup>550</sup>

Similarly, while secessionist party identification is consistently found to be positively associated with support for secession, it is clear that not all of those who primarily identify with the SNP favour Scottish secession. While somewhat unsurprisingly, at both Scottish parliament elections and UK general elections, those in favour of secession have been more likely to vote for the SNP than those who wanted to remain in the UK, the electoral performance of the SNP has not simply followed the trajectory of support for independence.<sup>551</sup> In 2011, when the SNP won its first majority, support for outright secession was actually falling and while 79 per cent of those who favoured Scottish secession voted for the SNP, they also won the 38 per cent of the unionist vote.

The relationship between being a supporter of Scottish secession and an SNP voter seems to be becoming stronger. In 2015, the percentage of secessionists who voted for the SNP rose to 85, while their support among unionists fell to 24.<sup>552</sup> This raises questions about how and why the character of the relationship between SNP party identification and support for secession appears to have changed and what might be affecting the strength of the relationship.

One possible explanation, which will be tested in this chapter, is that trust in the UK government of the existing state (in this case, the UK government) has a moderating effect

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<sup>549</sup> Murray Leith and Martin Steven, 'Party over Policy? Scottish Nationalism and the Politics of Independence', *The Political Quarterly* 81 (2) (2010): 263-269

<sup>550</sup> Keating, 'The Scottish independence referendum and after,' 75

<sup>551</sup> Scotcen, 'From Indyref1 to Indyref2?,' 11

<sup>552</sup> Scotcen, 'From Indyref1 to Indyref2?'

on the relationship between secessionist party identification and support for secession. Institutional trust, it is important to note, can play a crucial role in shaping confidence and fear, with respect to the prospects of seceding or remaining in the union. A lack of political power, Dion argues, can be a key source of grievance that may inspire negative feelings, if not 'fear' toward a union.<sup>553</sup>

This, it can be argued, goes some way to explaining the results of the 1997 Scottish devolution referendum, won by a majority of three to one, in the aftermath of Scotland being governed for eighteen years by a Conservative Party for which Scots had not voted.<sup>554</sup> During this eighteen years, Keating argues, a sense of political alienation grew, as many Scottish people were forced to accept radical policies which did not represent their votes.<sup>555</sup> Ultimately, this demonstrates the way in which members of a potential secessionist region can become motivated and mobilised by uneasiness and frustration with an existing political system, which has failed to adequately represent them.

Where levels of trust in the UK government are especially low therefore, it would be expected that similar feelings of alienation and lack of representation would be contributing to increased support for Scottish secession. If an individual has high levels of trust in the UK government however, this suggests an absence of fear in the union and some degree of confidence that the central government will try to act in Scottish citizens' best interests.

High levels of trust in the UK government are unlikely to be present in those who consider themselves unfairly or inadequately represented by the systematic, constitutional processes of the union and so, even if the current UK government does not represent their views, would be expected to favour less dramatic change than outright independence and the creation of a separate state. It would be reasonable to expect therefore, that where levels of trust in the UK government are higher, individuals are more likely to support the SNP because of issues which are not related to secession.

## 6.4 Results

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<sup>553</sup> Dion, 'Why is Secession Difficult in Well-Established Democracies? Lessons from Quebec', 274

<sup>554</sup> Keating, 'The Scottish independence referendum and after,' 75

<sup>555</sup> Keating, 'The Scottish independence referendum and after,' 89



Table 6.1 presents the results of two logistic regression models (Models I and II) predicting hypothetical support for Scottish secession in 2015. The dependent variable for each of the two models is hypothetical support for Scottish secession, a dichotomous variable which divides respondents into those whose hypothetical constitutional preference was for Scotland to secede from the rest of the UK and those who did not favour outright secession. The first of the two models contains two measures of institutional trust, in addition to controlling for a range of factors which have previously been found to impact on support for secession (national identity, political party identification, political ideology, age, household income, level of education and gender).

While the dependent variable and control variables included were consistent across the two models, Model II contains a new independent variable ('Differential trust (UK government to Scottish government)') which ranges from zero (the highest possible score for trust in the UK government and the lowest possible score for trust in the Scottish government) to six (the highest possible score for trust in the Scottish government, and lowest for trust in the UK government).

**Table 6.1: Logistic regression analyses predicting support for secession in Scotland, in 2015**

<i>Model</i>	Estimated coefficients (standard errors)	
	I	II
<i>Institutional trust</i>		
Trust in UK government	<b>-0.874 (0.124)***</b>	-
Trust in Scottish government	<b>0.561 (0.115)***</b>	-
Differential trust (UK gov. to Scottish gov.)	-	<b>0.707 (0.090)***</b>
<i>Control variables</i>		
Moreno national identity (British to Scottish)	<b>0.495 (0.084)***</b>	<b>0.517 (0.084)***</b>
SNP party identification	<b>1.392 (0.169)***</b>	<b>1.362 (0.168)***</b>
Political ideology (left to right scale)	<b>-0.463 (0.104)***</b>	<b>-0.501 (0.102)***</b>
Age	<b>-0.019 (0.005)***</b>	<b>-0.019 (0.005)***</b>
Household income	-0.004 (0.003)	-0.004 (0.002)
Highest level of education	-0.074 (0.075)	-0.080 (0.075)
Gender (male)	<b>0.419 (0.161)**</b>	<b>0.405 (0.160)*</b>
<i>N</i>	1129	1129
<i>Pseudo R2</i>		
Nagelkerke	0.498	0.494
Cox & Snell	0.367	0.364

Bold figures denote significant effects: \*p < 0.05; \*\*p < 0.01; \*\*\*p < 0.001

Dependent variable: Whether the respondent thinks that Scotland should become independent from the UK

Data: 2015 Scottish Social Attitudes Survey

#### **6.4.1      *The direct impact of trust***

The results of Model I show that in the 2015 SSA dataset, after controlling for a range of factors known to affect support for secession, both trust in the UK government and trust in the Scottish government have a statistically significant impact on support for Scottish secession at the .001 level. With a negative estimated coefficient of -0.874, higher levels of trust in the UK government are found to be associated with a decreased likelihood of supporting Scottish secession. A positive estimated coefficient of 0.561 meanwhile entails that higher levels of trust in the Scottish government are associated with an increased likelihood of supporting Scottish secession. The 2015 SSA survey data therefore supports both Hypotheses 1 and 2, providing evidence to suggest that levels of institutional trust, both in the Westminster government of the UK and the devolved Scottish government, have a statistically significant impact on support for Scottish secession. These relationships are analysed in greater detail below, with institutional trust's impact on an individual's predicted probability of supporting Scottish secession displayed in Figures 6.1 and 6.2.

In addition to the measures of trust tested for, several of the control variables were found to have a statistically significant impact on support for Scottish secession. National identity for example, found to have been a key driver of secessionist support in many previous studies across a wide range of cases,<sup>556</sup> was found to have a significant impact at the .001 level. With respondents having self-reported their national identity on a 5-point scale, ranging from exclusively British to exclusively Scottish, a positive estimated coefficient of 0.495 demonstrates that the more Scottish a respondent reported to feel, the more likely they were to support Scottish secession.

Much of the literature on secession finds evidence to suggest that intermediating agents, such as political parties and leaders, have a significant impact on levels of support for secession.<sup>557</sup> In Model I, SNP party identification was found to have a statistically significant

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<sup>556</sup> Blais and Nadeau, 'To be or not to be sovereignist';  
Costa-Font and Tremosa, 'National identity and the preference for state opting-out in the basque country';  
Howe, 'Rationality and sovereignty support in Quebec';  
McCrone and Paterson, 'The conundrum of Scottish independence';  
Serrano, 'Just a matter of identity?';

<sup>557</sup> Clarke and Kornberg, 'Choosing Canada?';

impact on support for Scottish secession, at the .001 level. With a positive estimated coefficient of 1.392, the results from model I indicate a positive association between identifying with the SNP and supporting Scottish secession.

An individual's ideological position on a left-right scale was also found to have a statistically significant impact on support for Scottish secession, at the .001 level. With a negative estimated coefficient of -0.463, the more right-wing a respondent was on the scale, the less likely they were to support Scottish secession.

Age, which Muro and Vlaskamp's study found to have a significant impact on support for Scottish secession,<sup>558</sup> was also found to have a statistically significant impact in Model I. A negative estimated coefficient (-0.019) indicates that the older a respondent was, the less likely they were to support Scottish secession. This finding is consistent with much of the post-referendum polling data, with Lord Ashcroft's poll for example finding that only 27 per cent of those aged 65 and over reported to have voted Yes, while 52 per cent of those aged between 16 and 24 expressed their support for secession.<sup>559</sup>

Finally, gender was found to have a statistically significant impact on support for Scottish secession at the .01 level. With a positive estimated coefficient (0.419), model I found that being male made a respondent more likely to support secession. Polling data relating to support for secession has consistently found that men register about 10 per cent more support than women, a finding generally attributed to risk aversion, with women widely found to be more risk-averse than men,<sup>560</sup> although the reasons for this are still largely unexplained.

Figures 6.1 and 6.2 (below) are predicted probability plots, which demonstrate the estimated effects of trust in the UK government and trust in the Scottish government respectively, on the predicted probability of a respondent supporting Scottish secession:

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Clarke et al, 'Referendum voting as political choice';

Nadeau et al, 'Attitudes Towards Risk-Taking and Individual Choice in the Quebec Referendum on Sovereignty';  
Pammett and LeDuc, 'Sovereignty, leadership and voting in the Quebec referendums';

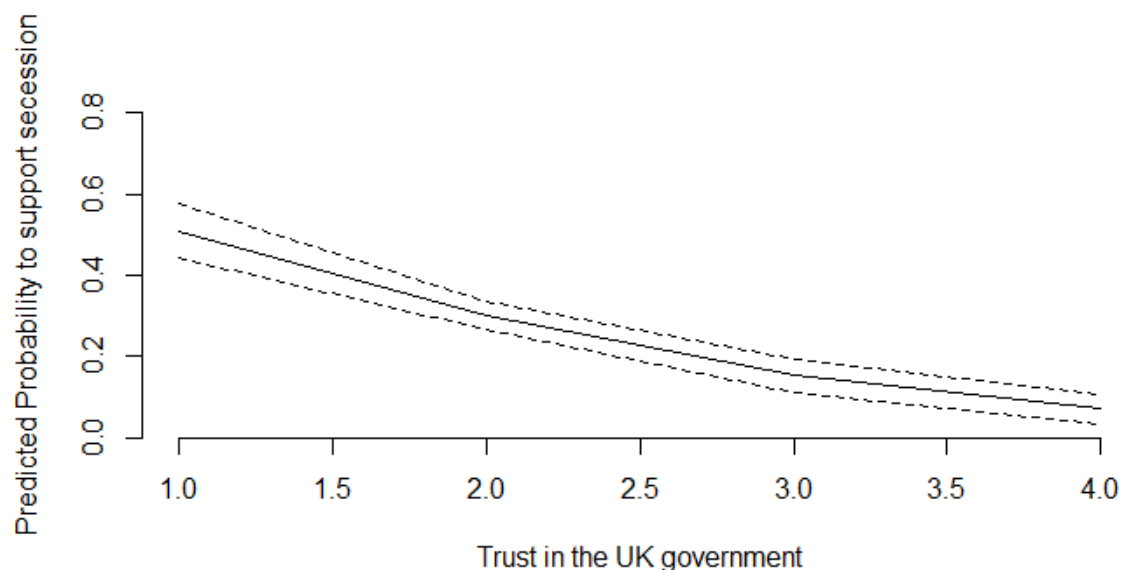
Torcal and Mota, 'The role of political parties in shaping citizens' political preferences for the territorial organization of the state'

<sup>558</sup> Muro and Vlaskamp, 'How do prospects of EU membership influence support for secession?'

<sup>559</sup> Lord Ashcroft, 'How Scotland voted, and why,' *Lord Ashcroft Polls*  
(<http://lordashcroftpolls.com/2014/09/scotland-voted/>, 20<sup>th</sup> August 2018)

<sup>560</sup> Keating, 'The Scottish independence referendum and after,' 88

**Figure 6.1: Predicted probability plot displaying the estimated effects of trust in the UK government on an individual's predicted probability of supporting secession**



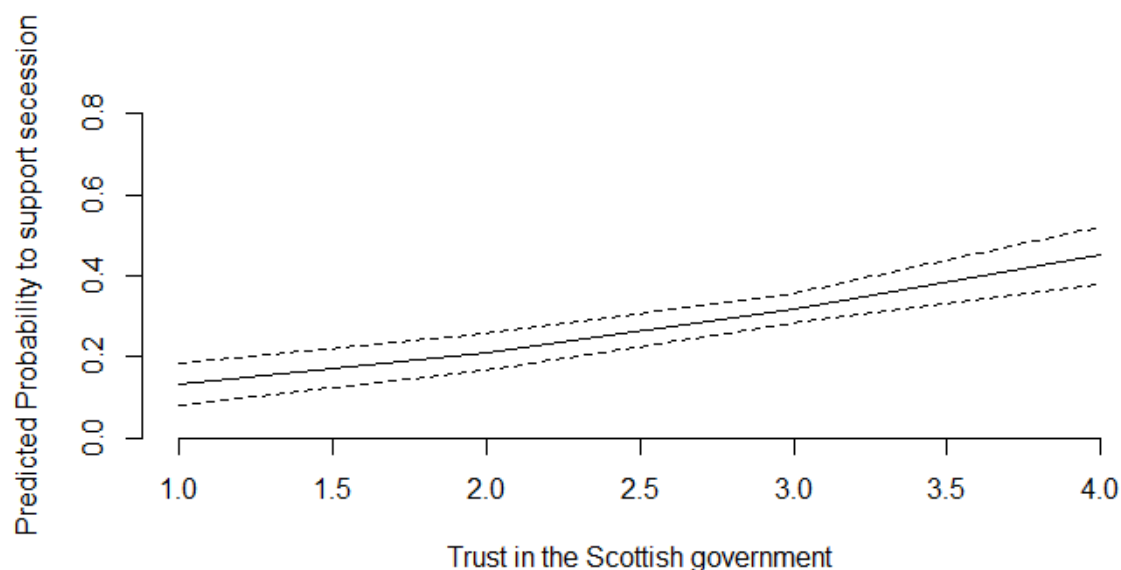
Dependent variable: Whether the respondent thinks that Scotland should become independent from the UK  
Data: 2015 Scottish Social Attitudes Survey  
Standard errors: +/- 1.96

Figure 6.1 shows the extent to which levels of trust in the UK government impact on an individual's predicted probability of supporting Scottish secession, according to the 2015 SSA survey data. Those with the lowest levels of trust, who reported to 'almost never' trust the UK government, are represented by the value '1.0'. Those individuals, figure 6.1 indicates, had a 50.8 per cent chance of supporting Scottish secession, a figure which fell to 30.1 per cent for those who reported to trust the UK government 'only some of the time' (represented by the value '2'). Those who trust the UK government 'most of the time' ('3') had a 15.2 per cent chance of supporting secession, while the perception that the UK government can 'just about always' be trusted ('4') corresponded with just a 7.0 per cent chance of supporting secession.

The data from 2015 therefore shows that in addition to those with the highest levels of trust in the UK government being seven times more likely to support Scottish secession than the least trusting individuals, every incremental increase on the scale of trust in the UK government corresponded with a decreased likelihood of supporting secession. These results therefore support hypothesis 1, providing evidence to suggest that in the case of Scotland,

the higher an individual's trust in the government of the existing state, the less likely they are to support secession.

**Figure 6.2: Predicted probability plot displaying the estimated effects of trust in the Scottish government on an individual's predicted probability of supporting secession**



Dependent variable: Whether the respondent thinks that Scotland should become independent from the UK  
Data: 2015 Scottish Social Attitudes Survey  
Standard errors: +/- 1.96

The plot in Figure 6.2 shows that trust in the Scottish government had a positive impact on the probability of a respondent supporting secession in 2015. Those with the lowest levels of trust, who reported to 'almost never' trust the Scottish government had a 13.2 per cent probability of supporting Scottish secession. Those who reported to trust the Scottish government 'only some of the time' had a 21.0 per cent chance of supporting secession, compared to 31.8 per cent, for those who reported to trust the Scottish government 'most of the time'. Individuals with the highest levels of trust in the Scottish government, figure 6.7 shows, had a 45.0 per cent chance of supporting secession.

The 2015 SSA survey data shows that those with the highest levels of trust in the Scottish government are considerably more likely to support secession than the least trusting individuals. Similarly, each incremental increase on the scale of trust in the UK government

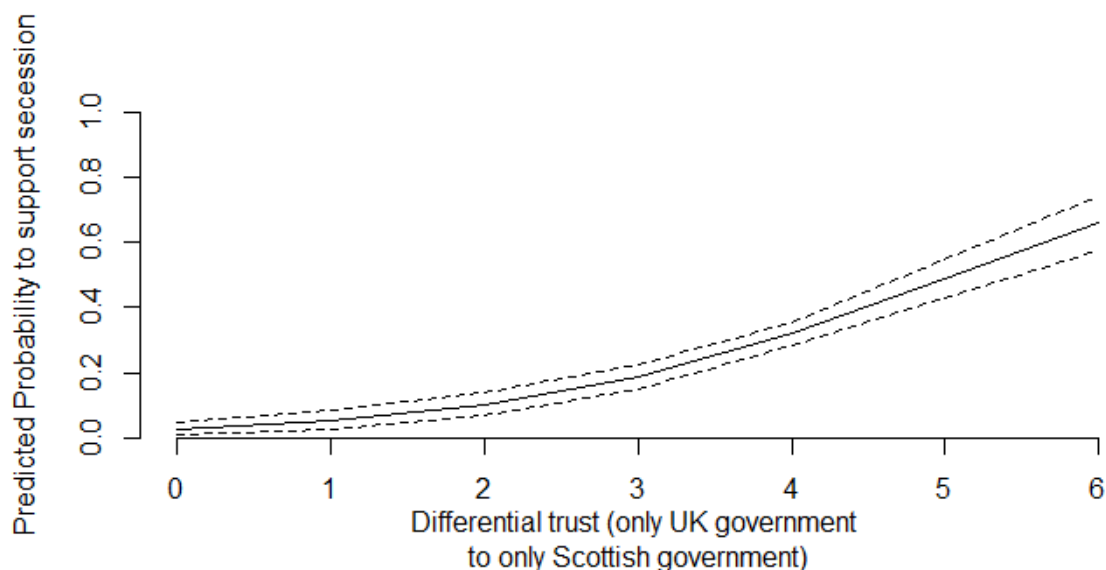
caused the likelihood of supporting Scottish secession to increase by approximately 10 per cent. This finding therefore provides support for hypothesis 2, suggesting that in the Scottish case, the higher an individual's trust in the devolved government, the more likely they are to support secession.

Despite this, it is important to note that the data displayed in table 6.1, figure 6.1 and figure 6.2 all provide evidence to suggest that levels of trust in the UK government have a stronger impact on support for Scottish secession than levels of trust in the Scottish government. Firstly, the estimated coefficient for trust in the UK government (-0.874) is more strongly negative than the estimated coefficient for trust in the Scottish government (0.561) is positive.

Furthermore, the gradients of the plots shown in figures 6.1 and 6.2 show that each incremental increase or decrease in trust in the UK government has a more substantial impact on the likelihood of a respondent supporting Scottish secession than an equivalent increase or decrease on the scale of trust in the Scottish government. While there was a 31.8 percent difference in likelihood of supporting secession between those exhibiting the lowest and highest levels of trust in the Scottish government, there was a 43.8 percent difference between those reporting to have the highest and lowest levels of trust in the UK government.

Model II tested for the direct impact of an individual's differential institutional trust – i.e. the difference between their level of trust in the Scottish government and their level of trust in the UK government. As the figures from Table 6.1 indicate, differential institutional trust was found to have a positive impact on an individual's likelihood of supporting secession, highlighted by a positive estimated coefficient of 0.707, which is significant at the .001 level. Figure 6.3 (below) shows the extent to which levels of differential institutional trust impact on an individual's predicted probability of supporting Scottish secession, according to the 2015 SSA survey data.

**Figure 6.3: Predicted probability plot displaying the estimated effects of differential institutional trust on an individual's predicted probability of supporting secession**



Dependent variable: Whether the respondent thinks that Scotland should become independent from the UK  
Data: 2015 Scottish Social Attitudes Survey  
Standard errors: +/- 1.96

The plot in Figure 6.3 indicates that differential institutional trust had a positive impact on the probability of a respondent supporting Scottish secession in 2015. Those at the lower end of the scale (between 0 and 2 on the x-axis), represent those who have higher levels of trust in the UK government than the Scottish government. As shown in Figure 6.3, those with a score of 0, who think the UK government can 'always' be trusted and the Scottish government 'almost never' had a 2.7 per cent chance of supporting Scottish secession. Those with a score of 6 meanwhile, who reported maximum levels of trust in the Scottish government and minimum levels of trust in the UK government, had a 65.9 per cent chance of supporting secession. Interestingly, the gradient of the plot increases substantially as the value on the x-axis increases from 3 to 4, indicating that while those who trust the two levels of government equally had only an 18.8 per cent chance of supporting Scottish secession, this probability increases significantly for any individual who trusts the Scottish government more than they trust the UK government.



#### 6.4.2 *The moderating effect of trust*

Table 6.2 (below) contains two models which include multiplicative interaction terms, in order to test for the moderating effect of institutional trust on the relationships between Scottish secessionist support and two of its most reliable predictors. Firstly, Model III includes the multiplicative interaction term ‘Differential trust (UK gov. to Scottish gov.) · National identity’, which measures the moderating effect of differential institutional trust on the relationship between national identity and support for Scottish secession.

By referring the figures in Table 6.2 and the plot in Figure 6.4, it will be possible to interpret how the conditional marginal effect of X (national identity) on Y (support for Scottish secession) changes across levels of the moderator Z (differential institutional trust).<sup>561</sup>

HS8 expects that higher levels of differential institutional trust would have a positive effect on the strength of the relationship between national identity and support for Scottish secession.

The results shown in Table 6.2 however, do not provide support for H8S, finding that the estimated coefficient for the multiplicative interaction term ‘Differential trust (UK gov. to Scottish gov.) · National identity’, does not have a statistically significant impact on support for Scottish secession at the .05 level. Figure 6.4 (below) displays the moderating effect of differential institutional trust in more depth, enabling a more detailed analysis of the interaction, while Figure 6.5 (also below) shows the distribution of the independent variable, national identity. As Figure 6.4 shows, the gradient of Model III, which outlines the extent to which the estimated coefficient for national identity on support for Scottish secession varies as a result of changes in differential institutional trust remains at ‘0’, regardless of changes in the predicted moderator.

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<sup>561</sup> Brambor et al, ‘Understanding interaction models,’ 63

**Table 6.2: Logistic regression analyses predicting support for secession in Scotland, in 2015**

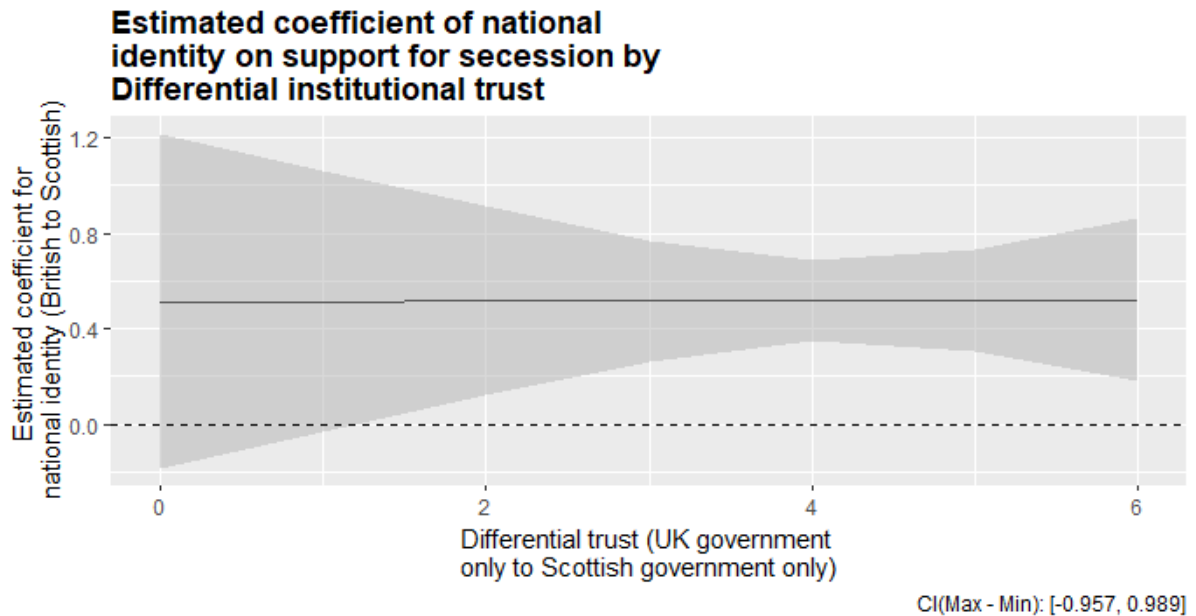
<i>Model</i>	Estimated coefficients (standard errors)	
	III	IV
<i>Multiplicative interaction term</i>		
Differential trust (UK gov. to Scottish gov.) · National identity	0.000 (0.083)	-
Differential trust (UK gov. to Scottish gov.) · SNP party identification	-	<b>0.486 (0.179)**</b>
<i>Institutional trust</i>		
Differential trust (UK gov. to Scottish gov.)	<b>0.707 (0.335)*</b>	<b>0.460 (0.124)***</b>
<i>Control variables</i>		
Moreno national identity (British to Scottish)	0.517 (0.356)	<b>0.527 (0.084)***</b>
SNP party identification	<b>1.362 (0.168)***</b>	-0.627 (0.485)
Political ideology (left to right scale)	<b>-0.501 (0.103)***</b>	<b>-0.505 (0.102)***</b>
Age	<b>-0.019 (0.005)***</b>	<b>-0.020 (0.005)***</b>
Household income	-0.004 (0.002)	-0.004 (0.003)
Highest level of education	-0.080 (0.075)	-0.089 (0.076)
Gender (male)	<b>0.406 (0.160)*</b>	<b>0.385 (0.161)**</b>
<i>N</i>	1129	1129
<i>Pseudo R2</i>		
Nagelkerke	0.494	0.501
Cox & Snell	0.364	0.369

Bold figures denote significant effects: \*p < 0.05; \*\*p < 0.01; \*\*\*p < 0.001

Dependent variable: Whether the respondent thinks that Scotland should become independent from the UK

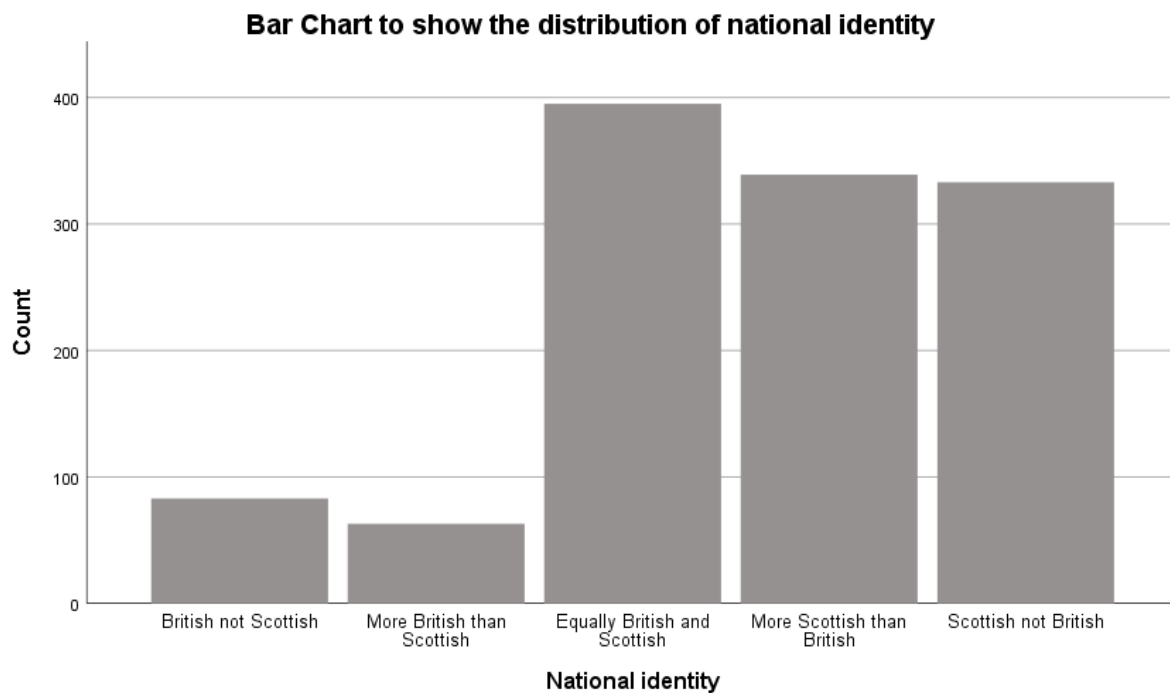
Data: 2015 Scottish Social Attitudes Survey

**Figure 6.4: Estimated coefficient of national identity on support for Scottish secession by differential institutional trust**



Dependent variable: Whether the respondent thinks that Scotland should become independent from the UK  
 Data: 2015 Scottish Social Attitudes Survey

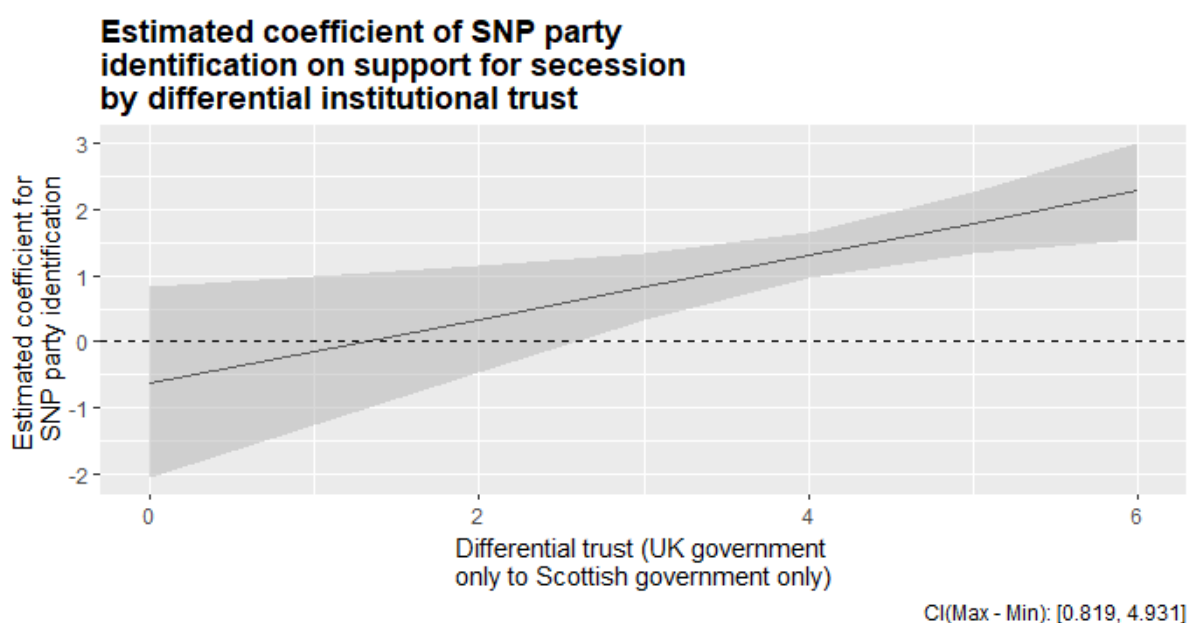
**Figure 6.5: Bar chart to show the distribution of national identity**



Dependent variable: National identity  
 Data: 2015 Scottish Social Attitudes Survey

Revisiting Table 6.2, the results from Model IV show that the multiplicative interaction term ‘Differential trust (UK gov. to Scottish gov.) · SNP party identification’ is statistically significant, at the .01 level. The plot shown in Figure 6.6 (below) displays the moderating effect of differential institutional trust, in order to enable a more detailed analysis of H9S.

**Figure 6.6: Estimated coefficient of SNP party identification on support for Scottish secession by differential institutional trust**



Dependent variable: Whether the respondent thinks that Scotland should become independent from the UK  
Data: 2015 Scottish Social Attitudes Survey

Model II found that the relationship between SNP party identification and support for Scottish secession was a positive one, with an estimated coefficient of 1.362 entailing that respondents who identify with the SNP are more likely to support Scottish secession. The plot shown in Figure 6.6 meanwhile shows that in Model IV, where an individual’s level of differential institutional trust increases, the estimated coefficient for SNP party identification on support for Scottish secession becomes significantly more positive. Where a respondent’s score is below 3 on the x-axis, representing a belief that the UK government is more trustworthy than the Scottish government, the estimated coefficient for SNP party identification is close to zero. With each step along the x-axis from 3 to 6 however, the estimated coefficient for SNP party identification increases substantially, indicating that its

impact on Scottish secessionist support is stronger, where differential institutional trust is higher.

While Model II found that respondents who identify with the SNP were more likely to support Scottish secession therefore, Model IV suggests that this relationship becomes significantly stronger, where there is a greater difference in their levels of trust in the Scottish and UK orders of government. These results therefore support H9S at the .01 level, providing evidence that the extent to which supporting the SNP impacts on their support for Scottish secession varies, depending on their differential institutional trust.

## 6.5 Conclusions

Trust, it can be concluded, played an important role in predicting support for Scottish secession, according to the SSA survey data from 2015. As the most recent data available for analysis, the 2015 SSA survey data was collected a year after the 2014 Scottish independence referendum, with 39 percent of those surveyed reporting to be in favour of Scottish secession.<sup>562</sup>

The analysis in this chapter found evidence to suggest that institutional trust has a strong role in predicting secessionist support in Scotland. Trust in the UK government was found to have a direct negative impact on support for Scottish secession, which was significant at the .001 level, showing that those individuals with higher levels of trust in the Westminster government were considerably less likely to support secession. Of those surveyed, individuals with the lowest levels of trust in the UK government had a 50.8 per cent chance of supporting Scottish secession, compared to only 7.0 percent, in those individuals with the highest levels of trust.

Conversely, trust in the Scottish government was found to have a direct positive impact on support for secession, which was also significant at the .001 level. Higher levels of trust in the Scottish government, the results showed, were associated with an increased likelihood of supporting Scottish secession. Individuals who reported to have the lowest levels

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<sup>562</sup> Scotcen, 'From Indyref1 to Indyref2?'

of trust in the Scottish government had only a 13.2 percent probability of supporting Scottish secession, compared to 45.0 percent for those with the highest levels of trust.

Of the two forms of institutional trust, the analysis found evidence to suggest that levels of trust in the UK government have a stronger impact on support for Scottish secession than levels of trust in the Scottish government. While those with the highest levels of trust in the Scottish government were 31.8 percent more likely to support secession than those with the lowest, individuals with the lowest levels of trust in the UK government were 43.8 percent more likely to support secession than those with the highest.

Differential institutional trust meanwhile, was also found to have a positive impact on an individual's likelihood of supporting secession. Those with the lowest levels of trust in the Scottish government and the highest levels of trust in the UK government had only a 2.7 per cent chance of supporting Scottish secession, while those with maximum levels of trust in the Scottish government and minimum levels of trust in the UK government, had a 65.9 per cent chance of supporting secession. Lending support to Dion's fear-confidence model therefore, these results support the theory that where levels of trust in the potential secessionist government and distrust in the existing central government are simultaneously high, secession is a more likely eventuality.

Differential institutional trust was also found to have a significant moderating effect on the relationship between support for secession and one of its most reliable predictors. In Models I and II, SNP party identification was shown to have a direct positive impact on support for Scottish secession, which was significant at the .001 level, but Model IV found that levels of differential institutional trust had a significant moderating effect on the relationship between SNP party identification and secessionist support. Where the difference between an individual's level of trust in the Scottish and UK orders of government increased, the estimated coefficient for SNP party identification on support for Scottish secession was shown to become significantly more positive, providing evidence to suggest that the extent to which an individual's party identification impacts on their support for Scottish secession varies, depending on their institutional trust.

That levels of institutional trust in the UK government appear to have a stronger effect on support for Scottish secession than trust in the Scottish government perhaps suggests that

trust in the UK government ought to be a more pressing concern for unionists than trust in the Scottish government. For those seeking to preserve the UK state, perhaps the most immediate priority, given the strength of its relationship with support for Scottish secession, is the need to build vertical trust between Scottish citizens and the central government, if support for Scottish secession is to be quelled.

Trust in government has in previous studies, been found to be shaped by a number of factors, including institutional performance relative to citizens' expectations,<sup>563</sup> transparency,<sup>564</sup> and representation of citizens' concerns.<sup>565</sup> In the context of secessionist movements meanwhile, providing a potential secessionist region with enhanced devolution measures has long been suggested as an effective means of raising levels of trust in the central government and thereby lowering support for secession. While Scotland has already received substantially increased autonomy in recent decades, it may be necessary to devolve further powers, if the union is to remain intact.

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<sup>563</sup> Cooper, 'Performance and Expectations in American Politics'; Dalton, *Democratic Challenges, Democratic Choices*'; Miller and Listhaug, 'Political Performance and Institutional Trust'; Orren, 'Fall from Grace: The Public's Loss of Faith in Government'; Seyd, 'How do citizens evaluate public officials'

<sup>564</sup> Graham et al, *Guiding Principles*;

<sup>565</sup> Graham et al, *Guiding Principles*;

Hibbing and Theiss-Morse, *Congress as Public Enemy*, 116;

Hibbing and Theiss-Morse (eds.), *What is It about Government That Americans Dislike?*

## Chapter 7: Catalonia

### 7.1 Introduction

After several decades of apparent stability, relations between Catalonia and Spain have undergone a considerable change in recent years, becoming an increasingly salient issue for the international community and the academic community alike.<sup>566</sup> Until as recently as the mid-2000s, the Catalan case was described and analysed as a paradigmatic example of a non-secessionist nationalism, characterized by the importance of 'dual identities', with a predominant 'civic nationalism' and claims for self-government which stopped short of outright independence.<sup>567</sup> By October 2016 however, Spanish Prime Minister Mariano Rajoy cited the question of Catalan independence as the single most serious issue confronting Spain.<sup>568</sup>

In recent years, since emerging as a growing threat, the prospect of secession in Catalonia has received widespread academic attention, with scholars primarily focusing on the economic impact of secession, its moral legitimacy, or the circumstances under which political actors change their preferences to embrace secessionist demands.<sup>569</sup> Short-term factors (such as the economic recession, which began in 2007-2008) are frequently stressed as causal determinants of demands for secession, but despite the increase in studies and analyses of the Catalan case, the dynamics of support for secession in Catalonia are still largely unknown.<sup>570</sup>

This chapter has two key objectives. Firstly, it will focus on the direct impact of trust on support for Catalan secession, using logistic regression to test the extent to which indicators of trust, at the institutional and interpersonal level, predict an individual's preferences toward the notion of an independent Catalan state, according to data from the

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<sup>566</sup> Guinjoan and Rodon, 'Catalonia at the crossroads'

<sup>567</sup> Keating, *Nations against the State*;

Guibernau, *Nations without States*;

Guibernau, *The Identity of Nations*;

Serrano, 'Just a matter of identity?'

<sup>568</sup> Andrew Dowling, *The Rise of Catalan Independence: Spain's Territorial Crisis* (New York: Routledge, 2018)

<sup>569</sup> Guinjoan and Rodon, 'Catalonia at the crossroads', 20

<sup>570</sup> Guinjoan and Rodon, 'Catalonia at the crossroads', 20



2<sup>nd</sup> wave of the 2015 Catalan Political Opinion Barometer (BOP), collected by the Centre for Opinion Studies (CEO).<sup>571</sup> While the previous chapter found that the institutional trust, which citizens experience towards institutions, to be a predictor of secessionist support, the data available for the Catalan case will also allow for the analysis of the interpersonal trust which exists between homogenous and heterogenous individuals, testing for the impact they have on support for Catalan secession.

Secondly, this chapter will consider the impact of trust (both at the individual and institutional level) as a moderator, in the relationships between support for Catalan secession and two of its most robust predictors. By using multiplicative interaction terms, it will be possible to analyse the interaction effects of trust indicators, on both the relationships between national identity and support for Catalan secession, and pro-secession party identification and secessionist support.

## 7.2 The Catalan secessionist movement

Catalan independence has, at various points in the history of Catalonia and Spain, been a major political issue, with the region having gained independence under the protection of France in 1640, during the War of the Reapers, and between 1810 and 1812. The primary focus of Catalan nationalism has, for most of its history, been the defense of the Catalan language and culture.<sup>572</sup> Recent years however, have seen many Catalan nationalists call for outright independence and secession from the existing Spanish State.

Catalonia, like Scotland and Flanders, is widely considered to be an example of a 'stateless nation', or 'nation without a state'.<sup>573</sup> The Catalan case has its own distinct culture and history, as well as an attachment to a particular territory, but lacks its own state, or the recognition it requires to act as a political institution on the international scene.<sup>574</sup>

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<sup>571</sup> Centre d'Estudis d'Opinió (CEO), 'Public Opinion Barometer (BOP), 2<sup>nd</sup> wave 2015' (<http://upceo.ceo.gencat.cat/wsceop/5468/Abstract%20in%20English%20-795.pdf>, 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2019)

<sup>572</sup> Boylan, 'In pursuit of independence'

<sup>573</sup> Guibernau, *Catalan Nationalism*; Keating, 'Stateless Nation-Building';

Leruez, *L'Ecosse, une nation sans Etat*

<sup>574</sup> Guibernau, *Catalan Nationalism*, 9

Catalonia was granted its first Statute of Autonomy in 1932,<sup>575</sup> however victory for the insurrectionists in the Spanish Civil War (1936-1939) soon resulted in the complete suppression of autonomous Catalan institutions and the proscription of Catalan language and culture.<sup>576</sup> Under Franco's dictatorial rule, which lasted until his death in 1975, the authoritarian Spanish state believed only the total destruction of the Catalan counter-nationalism could build the Spanish political nation and ensure permanent loyalty to it.<sup>577</sup> This period, Guibernau argues, entrenched divisions for many Catalans and created a sense of 'us' (the Catalans), against 'them' (the Francoists).<sup>578</sup>

In the aftermath of Franco's death, Catalan nationalism was able to emerge from exile and mobilise as a credible democratic movement, demanding some form of self-government.<sup>579</sup> The restoration of Spanish democracy coincided with increased Catalan autonomy, as the new democratic constitution (1978) was swiftly followed by a new statute of autonomy for Catalonia (1979).<sup>580</sup>

Despite this, Dowling argues there was nothing inevitable about the growth of Catalan secessionism.<sup>581</sup> In the period which followed the development of Catalonia's new statute of autonomy, demands for Catalan independence were no longer considered a pressing concern, with tensions relating to minority nationalism in Spain primarily focused on the Basque country.<sup>582</sup> Indeed until 2010, only a minority of Catalans supported outright independence,<sup>583</sup> while prior to the 1990s, none of the Catalan regional Parliament's 135 seats were held by an openly pro-secession diputat.<sup>584</sup> Catalan nationalism was, until the mid-2000s, considered a paradigmatic example of a non-secessionist nationalism, which sought enhanced autonomy that stopped short of outright independence and was highlighted as a role model for successful devolution.<sup>585</sup>

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<sup>575</sup> Guibernau, 'Spain', 56

<sup>576</sup> Guibernau, *Catalan Nationalism*, 50

<sup>577</sup> Dowling, *The Rise of Catalan Independence*

<sup>578</sup> Guibernau, *Catalan Nationalism*, 51

<sup>579</sup> Guibernau, *Catalan Nationalism*, 1

<sup>580</sup> Congreso de los Diputados, *Spanish Constitution*; Generalitat de Catalunya, *1979 Statute of Autonomy*

<sup>581</sup> Dowling, *The Rise of Catalan Independence*

<sup>582</sup> Dowling, *The Rise of Catalan Independence*

<sup>583</sup> Morató, 'Introduction', 1

<sup>584</sup> Dowling, *The Rise of Catalan Independence*

<sup>585</sup> Guibernau, *Nations without States*;

Guibernau, *The Identity of Nations*;

Keating, *Nations against the State*;

The pro-independence movement has since 2010 however, expanded rapidly, soon coming to occupy a 'pre-eminent place' in the political debate within both Catalonia and Spain.<sup>586</sup> Non-binding popular consultations on independence were held in more than 500 municipalities between 2009 and 2011, with in excess of 800,000 people thought to have been in attendance.<sup>587</sup> On Catalan National Day in 2012, the largest pro-independence demonstration in Spanish history took place in Barcelona, with 1.5 million participants declaring their support for the secession of Catalonia.<sup>588</sup>

In the snap Catalan regional election which took place two months later, parties advocating a referendum on Catalan secession obtained a clear majority in the regional parliament. Following this victory for the secessionists, the proposed 2014 referendum on the secession of Catalonia became a priority for the new Catalan government.<sup>589</sup> Despite this, because the unilateral calling of an independence referendum by the Catalan government was a legal impossibility, they instead opted to call for a non-binding consultation with citizens in 2014.<sup>590</sup>

Although an estimated 40 percent of Catalans turned out to vote however,<sup>591</sup> with 80.8 percent of voters favouring Catalan secession, this too was opposed by the Spanish Constitutional Court and the Regional High Court, thereby resulting in the condemnation of the political leaders responsible for calling the consultation, for prevarication and disobedience.<sup>592</sup>

Unperturbed however, Artur Mas, then president of the Catalan parliament, announced that he intended for the 2015 Catalan parliament elections to be treated as a de facto referendum on Catalan independence,<sup>593</sup> and when the pro-independence parties won

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Serrano, 'Just a matter of identity?'

<sup>586</sup> Cuadras Morató, 'Introduction', 1

<sup>587</sup> Serrano, 'Just a matter of identity?', 524

<sup>588</sup> Boylan, 'In pursuit of independence,' 761

<sup>589</sup> Boylan, 'In pursuit of independence,' 762

<sup>590</sup> Mut Bosque, 'Scotland and Catalonia in Twenty-First Century European Union'

<sup>591</sup> Charlemagne, 'Catalonia's independence vote: Yes and no';

Jackson, 'Catalonia vote';

Péres and Ríos, '1,8 millones de personas votan por la independencia catalana en el 9-N'

<sup>592</sup> Mut Bosque, 'Scotland and Catalonia in Twenty-First Century European Union', 90

<sup>593</sup> Carol, 'Mas';

Martí and Cetrà, 'The 2015 Catalan Election';

Orriols and Rodon, 'The 2015 Catalan Election'

an absolute majority in the ensuing election, they called for a binding referendum on the secession of Catalonia.

The Spanish government made it clear however, that it was unwilling to accept any referendum on Catalan secession, rejecting the very existence of a 'Catalan people' with a right to decide unilaterally on their constitutional future.<sup>594</sup> As stated in Article 2 of the 1978 Spanish Constitution, the 'unity of the Spanish Nation' is held to be 'indissoluble' and so any referendum which could lead to the breakup of the Spanish state would be considered unconstitutional.<sup>595</sup>

The Catalan government held an independence referendum on 1<sup>st</sup> October 2017, in which 43 percent of Catalans turned out to vote, with 90 percent voting in favour of secession, despite repression by the Spanish authorities, which included the use of violence, sealing of polling stations and seizing of ballot papers.<sup>596</sup> Existing Catalan autonomy was suspended in response, while a number of Catalan government members and two leaders of Catalan civil society were imprisoned.<sup>597</sup> Ahead of the upcoming national, regional and local elections in Spain and with pro-secession politicians currently on trial in the Supreme court therefore, the Catalan secessionist movement remains a major problem for the Spanish order of government.

### 7.3 Trust and support for Catalan secession

As indicated in Chapter 4, while the overarching working definition of trust that will be used in this thesis understands it to refer to a willingness to be vulnerable to others and to rely on them to be competent,<sup>598</sup> it is the more specific forms, levels and examples of trust which will be the main focus of the analysis.

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<sup>594</sup> Casanas Adam et al, 'Democracy in Question?'

<sup>595</sup> Congreso de los Diputados, *Spanish Constitution*, 10

<sup>596</sup> Mut Bosque, 'Scotland and Catalonia in Twenty-First Century European Union', 90

<sup>597</sup> Camps, 'Barcelona mayor proposes EU dialogue platform on Catalan conflict';

Casanas Adam et al, 'Democracy in Question?', 270;

Jones and Burgen, 'Catalan leader calls for mediation with Spain over independence'

<sup>598</sup> McLeod, 'Trust'

While researchers have in the past distinguished between many models of trust, four specific examples will be especially crucial throughout this thesis. In the context of support for Catalan secession, this Chapter will primarily consider the levels of institutional trust that exist between Catalan voters and both the Catalan and Spanish orders of government.

Separate, but similarly important throughout this analysis, is the interpersonal trust which exists horizontally between individuals, in the absence of any explicit, formal, or institutionalised power or authority gradients in society.<sup>599</sup> While interpersonal trust can exist across or within a wide range of groups, this chapter will focus on the inward-looking trust that exists between fellow Catalan citizens, and the outward-looking trust which is shared between Catalan citizens and individuals from the wider Spanish state.

Understanding the role of trust in shaping support for Catalan secession is an extremely useful pursuit for separatists and unionists alike, as it has the potential to provide valuable new information about the dynamics of support for the secession of Catalonia, as well as the potential measures which could be taken to address secessionist demands.

### **7.3.1 *Institutional trust***

In analysing its role in predicting support for Catalan secession, this chapter will focus on two distinct forms of institutional trust: that where the object of a citizen's trust is the central Spanish government, and that where the object of trust is the government of Catalonia. As highlighted in Chapter 4, the former is expected to have a negative impact on secessionist support, with higher levels of trust in the Spanish government corresponding with a decreased likelihood of supporting Catalan secession. The latter meanwhile, is expected to have a positive impact on support for the secession of Catalonia, with higher levels of trust in the Catalan government increasing an individual's likelihood of supporting secession. Finally, the differential between these two measures of institutional trust is expected to play a significant role, whereby simultaneously high levels of trust in the Catalan government and

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<sup>599</sup> Szreter and Woolcock, 'Health by association? Social capital, social theory, and the political economy of public health'

The impact of interpersonal and institutional trust on secessionist support in established democracies: Evidence from Scotland, Catalonia and Flanders

distrust in the Spanish government are expected to impact positively on an individual's likelihood of supporting Catalan secession:

***Hypothesis 1, Catalonia (H1C): The higher an individual's levels of trust in the Spanish government, the lower their likelihood of supporting Catalan secession***

***H2C: The higher an individual's levels of trust in the Catalan government, the greater their likelihood of supporting Catalan secession***

***H3C: The greater the difference between an individual's levels of trust in the Catalan government and the Spanish government, the higher their likelihood of supporting secession***

The growth of secessionism in Catalonia has, Guillem Rico and Robert Liñeira argue, coincided with a sharp surge in social unrest and declining trust in the central Spanish government.<sup>600</sup> 2011 for instance, saw the birth of the 'outraged' (indignados) movement, in which protests began, in rejection of welfare cuts, corruption, and a perceived lack of political responsiveness on the part of the established parties.<sup>601</sup> According to the 2015 Catalan BOP dataset, which will be analysed later in the chapter, Catalan citizens' trust in the Spanish government obtained a mean evaluation of only 2.8, on a scale from zero to ten.

As stated in Chapter 4, Hirschman argues that an individual experiencing prolonged distrust toward the state's core institutions is faced with two possible responses: to voice their dissatisfaction, or to withdraw in favour of a 'separate scene'.<sup>602</sup> Although the threat of exit from a state is traditionally difficult to carry out in a physical sense, regions like Catalonia, which contain electorally successful secessionist movements, afford their citizens the option to pursue exit from the state itself.<sup>603</sup> For those citizens with especially low levels of trust in

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<sup>600</sup> Guillem Rico and Robert Liñeira, 'Bringing Secessionism into the Mainstream: The 2012 Regional Election in Catalonia,' *South European Society and Politics* 19 (2) (2014): 257-280

<sup>601</sup> Belén Barreiro and Ignacio Sánchez-Cuenca, 'In the whirlwind of the economic crisis: Local and regional elections in Spain, May 2011', *South European Society and Politics* (17) (2) (2012): 281-294; Rico and Liñeira, 'Bringing Secessionism into the Mainstream', 261

<sup>602</sup> Hirschman, *Exit, Voice, and Loyalty*, 108

<sup>603</sup> Hirschman, *Exit, Voice, and Loyalty*, 96

the Spanish government therefore, the option of seceding from the Spanish state is expected to be increasingly appealing.

One of the key justifications and motivations for secessionist support, outlined by David Miller, can be found in the argument that nations need their own states, in order to be able to protect themselves from forces that threaten their distinctive character.<sup>604</sup> Where the policies of the state threaten a national minority with cultural destruction, Miller argues, they may require the protection that political self-determination can provide.<sup>605</sup>

Central to Miller's argument is the sense that the policies of the state, or the state itself, are somehow threatening to the national minority and something to be feared. Likewise, Dion has emphasised 'fear' of the state as an integral factor in motivating secessionist support in his theoretical examination of the dynamics of secession in well-established democracies.<sup>606</sup> With regards to secessionist support in Quebec, Dion found that the 'fear' associated with remaining in the union is crucial in attracting support for secession and that, unless this exists at a sufficiently high level of intensity, secession is extremely improbable in well-established democracies.<sup>607</sup>

Fear of the central government is expected to be particularly influential in the Catalan case, given the recent history of Franco's regime, which routinely used violence, repression and fear, in order to secure its position and suppress minority nationalisms within Spain.<sup>608</sup> Between 1938 and 1953, almost 4,000 executions are reported to have taken place in Catalonia,<sup>609</sup> while more than 4.5 percent of the Catalan population in 1936 (between 130,000 and 150,000 people) disappeared from the region due to death or exile.<sup>610</sup> In Catalonia, Guibernau states, people lived with intense fear of the state, particularly justified by the repressive behaviour of the police and the Falangists.<sup>611</sup> With the memory of Francoist repression still fresh in the minds of Catalans, with members of many Catalan families having

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<sup>604</sup> Miller, *On Nationality*

<sup>605</sup> Miller, *On Nationality*, 110

<sup>606</sup> Dion, 'Explaining Quebec Nationalism';

Dion, 'Why is Secession Difficult in Well-Established Democracies?'

<sup>607</sup> Dion, 'Why is Secession Difficult in Well-Established Democracies?', 271

<sup>608</sup> Guibernau, *Catalan Nationalism*, 46

<sup>609</sup> Max Gallo, *Historia de la España franquista* (Paris: Ruedo Ibérico, 1969): 207

<sup>610</sup> Borja de Riquer and Joan B. Culla, 'El franquisme i la transició democràtica (1939-1988)', in Pierre Vilar (ed.), *Història de Catalunya* (Barcelona: Edicions 62, Vol. VII, 1989): 24

<sup>611</sup> Guibernau, *Catalan Nationalism*, 47

lived experience of the regime, and history of the dictatorship being taught in Catalan schools, lingering fear and suspicion of the Spanish state would be somewhat unsurprising.

Although since the transition to democracy, relations between Spain and Catalonia have broadly speaking been non-violent, recent years have seen the two orders of government clash repeatedly over the scope and limits that the Spanish constitutional framework provides for Catalan autonomy and its recognition of its status as a minority nation.<sup>612</sup> In contrast to the Scottish case, in which the UK government cooperated with secessionist demands in permitting the holding of a referendum on independence, a unilateral referendum on Catalan secession was deemed unconstitutional and was consistently opposed by the central Spanish government.

Whereas an approach like that of the UK government reduces the extent to which the central government appears excessively centralist or oppressive, the Spanish government's steadfast refusal to permit the holding of a referendum on Catalan independence can be seen as restrictive, if not repressive. This was perhaps no more evident than in the actions of the Spanish authorities in the 2017 Catalan independence referendum, which they deemed illegal and attempted to suppress through the use of violence, as well as the sealing of polling stations and seizing of ballot papers,<sup>613</sup> before suspending Catalan autonomy, in addition to imprisoning Catalan government members and leaders of Catalan civil society.<sup>614</sup> Such heavy-handed methods might reasonably be expected to increase levels of fear in the central Spanish government and in accordance with Miller and Dion's theories therefore, increase support for Catalan secession.

A fundamental link between fear and trust, it is important to note, has been emphasised in many previous studies, including Clause Offe's work on political liberalism and group rights, which argues that in order to overcome both vertical fear (such as that of the Spanish government) and horizontal (that of one's fellow citizens), relations of trust and solidarity are essential.<sup>615</sup> As explained at greater length in the previous chapter, trust is

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<sup>612</sup> Casanas Adam et al, 'Democracy in Question?', 263

<sup>613</sup> Mut Bosque, 'Scotland and Catalonia in Twenty-First Century European Union', 90

<sup>614</sup> Camps, 'Barcelona mayor proposes EU dialogue platform on Catalan conflict'; Casanas Adam et al, 'Democracy in Question?', 270;

Jones and Burgen, 'Catalan leader calls for mediation with Spain over independence'

<sup>615</sup> Offe, 'Political Liberalism, Group Rights, and the Politics of Fear and Trust'



defined here as the belief that others will not deliberately or knowingly do us harm if they can avoid it and may in the ideal case, look after our interests.

By the very nature of trust therefore, higher levels of trust in the Spanish government represent a belief that it does not intend to deliberately or knowingly allow the deterioration of Catalonia's cultural, economic or political situation. Where levels of trust in the Spanish government are high and it is considered a trustworthy institution, it is difficult to envisage a scenario where remaining in the union evokes intense fear. In this sense, higher levels of trust in the central Spanish government can be expected to decrease the extent to which secession seems necessary,<sup>616</sup> and so where trust is high, support for Catalan secession would be expected to remain low.

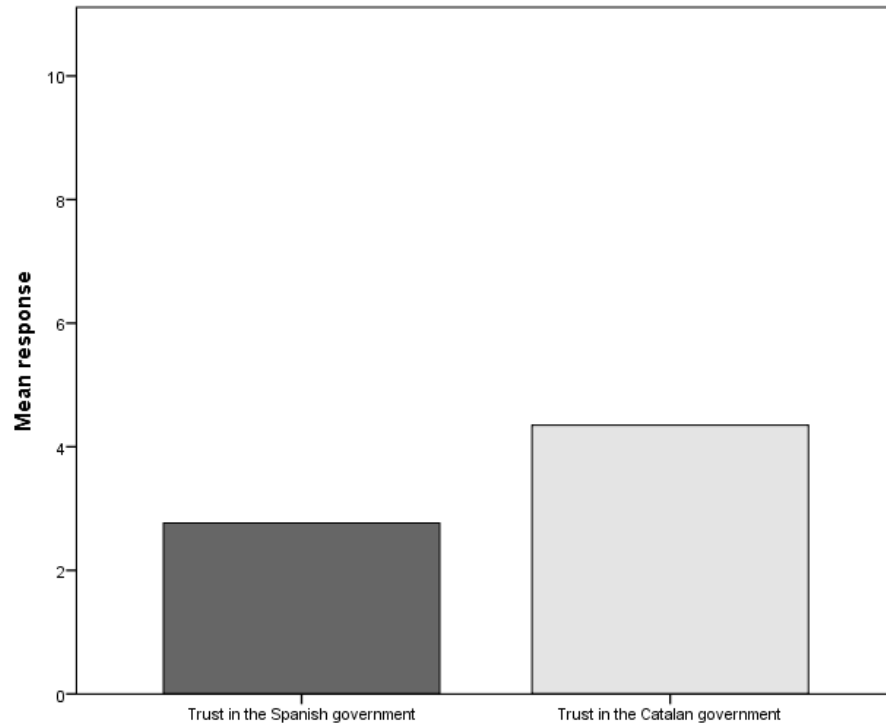
In addition to fear, Dion's theoretical work on the dynamics of secession found that the confidence inspired by the prospects of secession is crucial in attracting support for secession and that it too must exist at a sufficiently high level of intensity if secession is to become plausible in well-established democracies.<sup>617</sup> According to the 2015 Catalan BOP dataset, which will be analysed later in the chapter, citizens' trust in the Catalan government obtained a mean evaluation of 4.4 on a scale from zero to ten. Although this figure is not especially high (in fact, it is still below the mid-point of the scale), it does indicate a clear disparity between trust in the Catalan and Spanish orders of government. The mean responses for trust in the Spanish government and trust in the Catalan government are displayed below, in Figure 7.1, while the distribution of responses for both trust in Catalan and Spanish orders of government are shown in Figure 7.2.

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<sup>616</sup> Dion, 'Why is Secession Difficult in Well-Established Democracies?', 281

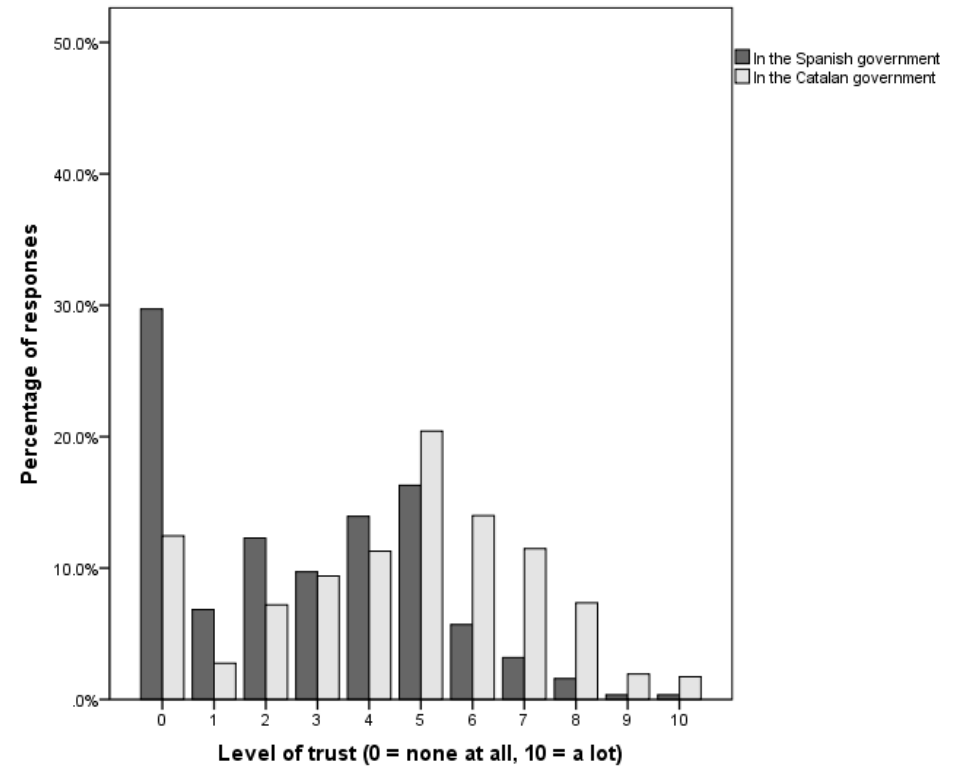
<sup>617</sup> Dion, 'Why is Secession Difficult in Well-Established Democracies?', 271

**Figure 7.1: Plot displaying the mean response for trust in Spanish government and trust in the Catalan government**



Data: *Baròmetre d'Opinió Política*, 2a onada 2015 (Political Opinion Barometer Catalonia, 2<sup>nd</sup> Wave)

**Figure 7.2: Plot displaying the distribution of the responses for trust in the Spanish government and trust in the Catalan government**



Data: *Baròmetre d'Opinió Política*, 2a onada 2015 (Political Opinion Barometer Catalonia, 2<sup>nd</sup> Wave)

Confidence has been associated with trust in a large number of previous studies,<sup>618</sup> and at the institutional level, trust and confidence are considered somewhat synonymous, as trust at the institutional level involves less direct relationships between the institution and the trusting citizen than the interpersonal interactions which take place horizontally.<sup>619</sup> The knowledge and previous engagement demanded by the interpersonal conception of trust is unavailable to most ordinary citizens,<sup>620</sup> so institutional trust is generally understood, like confidence, to simply represent the fundamentally positive beliefs and expectations they have about their interactions with the relevant institution.<sup>621</sup> In the Catalan case, trust and confidence should be considered completely interchangeable, as the Catalan word ‘confiança’ (and the Spanish ‘confianza’) is used as a direct translation of both trust and confidence.

In the context of secessionist movements, Dion defines confidence as the sense among the group that it can perform better on its own and that the prospect of secession is not too risky.<sup>622</sup> Risk and trust have long been considered closely related concepts by many scholars, with a large volume of literature dedicating itself to the relationship and distinction between the two.<sup>623</sup> Where an individual or institution is considered trustworthy, and levels of trust and confidence in that individual or institution are high, placing one’s trust in that individual or institution is considered justified and inherently less risky.<sup>624</sup> The more trusting

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<sup>618</sup> Charlton et al, ‘Exploring Public Confidence in the Police and Local Councils in Tackling Crime and Anti-social Behaviour’;

Cook and Gronke, ‘The Skeptical American’;

Hamm et al, ‘Exploring separable components of institutional confidence,’;

Jalava, ‘From Norms to Trust’;

Keller et al, ‘The General Confidence Scale’;

Luhmann, ‘Familiarity, Confidence, Trust: Problems and Alternatives’;

Metlay, ‘Institutional Trust and Confidence’;

Zmerli et al, ‘Trust in people, confidence in political institutions and satisfaction with democracy’

<sup>619</sup> Hardin, *Trust and Trustworthiness*, 151

<sup>620</sup> Hardin, *Trust and Trustworthiness*, 151

<sup>621</sup> Govier, *Social Trust and Human Communities*, 34

<sup>622</sup> Dion, ‘Why is Secession Difficult in Well-Established Democracies?’, 271

<sup>623</sup> Bohnet and Zeckhauser, ‘Trust, risk and betrayal’;

Corcos et al, ‘Is trust an ambiguous rather than a risky decision?’;

Eckel and Wilson, ‘Is trust a risky decision?’;

Evans and Krueger, ‘Elements of trust’;

Fairley et al, ‘Trust and Risk revisited’;

Fetchenhauer and Dunning, ‘*Betrayal aversion versus principled trustfulness – How to explain risk avoidance and risky choices in trust games*’;

Houser et al, ‘Distinguishing trust from risk’;

Johansen et al, ‘The effects of risk on initial trust formation’;

Schechter, ‘Traditional trust measurement and the risk confound’

<sup>624</sup> Hardin, ‘Trustworthiness’

and confident a citizen is in the government of Catalonia therefore, the less risky the prospect of Catalan secession is expected to appear.

Although throughout the duration of Franco's rule, before the sanctioning of a democratic constitution (1978) and a new statute of autonomy for Catalonia (1979), the region had no autonomy whatsoever, the period which followed saw Catalan autonomy approved and subsequently expanded. The creation of the Autonomous Communities System, Guibernau argues, represented a response to the nationalist demands of Catalonia and the Basque Country, with both communities believing they were entitled to self-determination.<sup>625</sup>

The new Constitution granted symmetrical devolution to each of Spain's seventeen autonomous communities, in a model Fossas has termed 'coffee for everyone' (*café para todos*),<sup>626</sup> although no distinction was made between those regions which had their own historical and cultural identities (such as Catalonia) and those which were artificially created where no sense of a separate identity had previously existed.<sup>627</sup>

Under the Autonomous Communities System, Catalonia (like the other communities) has a regional legislative assembly (*Parlament de Catalunya*), with members of parliament elected by proportional representation, and the leader of the majority party or coalition generally assuming presidency of the community.<sup>628</sup> The Catalan government is responsible for providing a wide range of public services, including education, health, culture, housing, local transport and agriculture, as well as controlling its own autonomous police force (*Mossos d'Esquadra*), which coexists with the Spanish National Police and *Guardia Civil*.<sup>629</sup> The central Spanish government meanwhile, retains exclusive jurisdiction over defence, the administration of justice, international relations and economic planning.<sup>630</sup>

In societies like that of Catalonia, which feature high levels of decentralization, autonomy and devolved responsibility, it becomes easier to develop confidence that political

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<sup>625</sup> Guibernau, *Catalan Nationalism*, 73

<sup>626</sup> Enric Fossas, 'Asimetría y Plurinacionalidad en el Estado Autonomico', in Enric Fossas and Ferran Requejo (eds.), *Asimetría Federal y Estado Plurinacional* (Madrid: Trotta, 1999): 275-301

<sup>627</sup> Guibernau, 'National identity, devolution and secession in Canada, Britain and Spain'

<sup>628</sup> Guibernau, 'Spain', 61

<sup>629</sup> Guibernau, 'Spain', 62

<sup>630</sup> Guibernau, 'Spain', 62

sovereignty is within reach.<sup>631</sup> As more responsibilities are administered to the Catalan parliament therefore, the Catalan government is afforded more opportunities to prove its competence and trustworthiness. In this sense, the more devolution arrangements succeed in meeting Catalonia's desire for self-government, the more they serve to strengthen its political confidence.<sup>632</sup> The implication therefore, is that as trust (or confidence) in the Catalan government increases, the sense that Catalonia is capable of making a success of secession increases, so Catalan voters are more likely to support secession.

### ***7.3.2 Interpersonal trust***

In addition to the institutional dimension of trust, between individuals and the institutions that hold relative power over them, this chapter will analyse the impact of interpersonal trust which exists horizontally between individuals, on support for Catalan secession. As outlined in Chapter 4, two group-specific examples of interpersonal trust are expected to have an impact on support for Catalan secession:

***H4C: The higher an individual's levels of trust in Spanish citizens, the lower their likelihood of supporting Catalan secession***

***H5C: The higher an individual's levels of trust in Catalan citizens, the greater their likelihood of supporting Catalan secession***

***H6C: The greater the difference between an individual's levels of trust in Catalan citizens and Spanish citizens, the higher their likelihood of supporting Catalan secession***

Firstly, a manifestation of interpersonal trust which is of particular importance to this thesis is that which is inclusive and outward-looking, taking place across heterogeneous groups and social cleavages.<sup>633</sup> It is expected that the trust which exists between Catalans and individuals from the wider Spanish state will have a negative impact on support for Catalan secession. As

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<sup>631</sup> Lemco, *Political Stability in Federal Government*

<sup>632</sup> Kymlicka, 'Is federalism a viable alternative to secession?' 135

<sup>633</sup> Putnam, *Bowling Alone*, 22

stated in Chapter 4, trust is associated with a belief that others will not deliberately or knowingly do us harm if they can avoid it and may in the ideal case, look after our interests. If a Catalan individual generally deems Spanish citizens to be trustworthy, they necessarily believe that they have the right intentions toward them.<sup>634</sup> The mean level of trust in Spanish citizens, according to the 2015 Catalan BOP data set, was 5.7 out of ten. Although this score is higher than the mean response for levels of trust in either the Spanish or Catalan orders of government, half of all respondents evaluated their level of trust in Spanish citizens as a five out of ten or below.

High levels of trust towards Spanish citizens, reflecting a generally positive evaluation of them and a perception that they can generally be trusted, implies positive past interactions and experiences, as well optimistic expectations of any future dealings with them.

Where levels of trust are low therefore, if Catalans express a negative evaluation of those from the wider Spanish state and the perception that they are not generally trustworthy, it follows that they do not necessarily consider them to have positive intentions. When faced with a choice between secession and remaining in the union then, it seems unlikely that Catalans would strongly favour the preservation of the union, if they have a negative evaluation of most Spanish citizens or perceive them to be generally untrustworthy.

In extreme examples of diminished inter-group trust in multinational societies, divisions can become entrenched to the point that society is deeply divided, leading to hostility and conflict such as that seen in Belfast and Bosnia.<sup>635</sup> While Spain is by no means deeply divided to the same extent as Belfast or Bosnia, the electoral success of secessionist parties in Catalonia could be reflective of strengthening divisions, with the threat of Catalan secession emerging and growing in recent years. Where divisions become more deeply entrenched and Catalans feel increasingly detached from the rest of Spain, it seems increasingly unlikely that they would be attracted by the prospect of remaining in the union.

While levels of inter-group trust between Catalans and Spanish citizens are expected to have a negative impact on support for Catalan secession, the trust which exists between Catalan citizens is expected to have the reverse effect. Intra-group trust, or the inward-

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<sup>634</sup> Hardin, *Trust*, 17

<sup>635</sup> Putnam and Feldstein, *Better Together*, 3

looking ties found in the social networks between homogenous groups, is said to act as a kind of sociological Super Glue, which strongly bonds those who are 'similar'.<sup>636</sup>

As highlighted in Chapter 4, the strong ties associated with intra-group trust, (or bonding social capital) are understood to be essential in the cultivation of trust, cooperation and collective strength among homogenous individuals and groups with shared history, experience and common purpose. The stateless nation building project, Keating has argued, necessarily depends on solidarity and collective action,<sup>637</sup> which bonding social capital plays an integral role in supporting, by fostering specific reciprocity between co-nationals and mobilising solidarity.<sup>638</sup> In this sense, the common interests and collective strength provided by shared trust enables co-nationals to exercise collective agency for common ends, promoting the pursuit of shared, collective action.

The notion that higher levels of trust between Catalans would be beneficial to the secessionist cause is perhaps unsurprising. It seems unlikely for instance, that an individual would feel enthusiastic about the prospects of forming a new state with a group of people they have a negative perception of and deem to be generally untrustworthy. Where levels of trust between fellow Catalans are low therefore, we might expect that support for secession is diminished.

Further evidence to support this hypothesis can be found in Putnam's assertion that bonding social capital is by definition exclusive, in that by creating an 'in-group' (e.g. of fellow Catalans), it therefore inherently excludes an 'out-group' or an 'other'.<sup>639</sup> In particular, it has been shown that in societies which exhibit high levels of intra-group trust, but low levels of inter-group trust, we see low social cohesion and deep divisions, which can ultimately render the society politically unstable.<sup>640</sup>

The mean response in the 2015 Catalan BOP data evaluated their trust in other Catalans as a 6.3 out of ten, which is a higher average than any of the other three measures of trust. Although this figure does not appear to be substantially higher than the mean

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<sup>636</sup> Putnam and Feldstein, *Better Together*, 2

<sup>637</sup> Keating, 'Stateless nation-building'

<sup>638</sup> Putnam, *Bowling Alone*, 22

<sup>639</sup> Putnam, *Bowling Alone*, 23

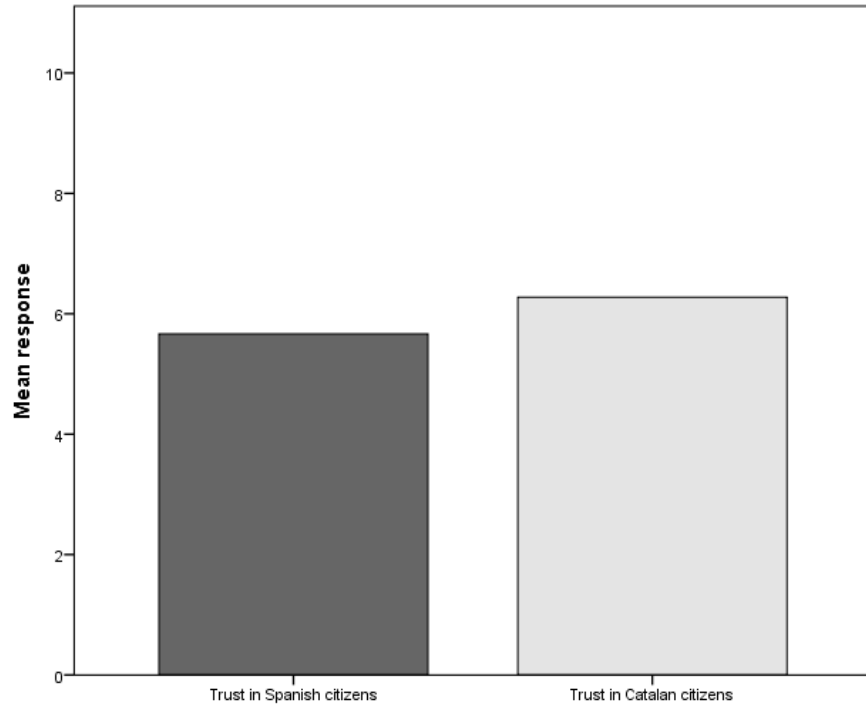
<sup>640</sup> Fukuyama, 'Social Capital and Development';  
Graham, *Beyond Social Capital*, 146

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response for trust in Spanish citizens, it does indicate a small disparity between trust in Catalan and Spanish citizens. The mean responses for trust in Spanish citizens and trust in Catalans are displayed below, in Figure 7.3, while the distribution of responses for both trust in Spanish citizens and Catalans are shown in Figure 7.4.

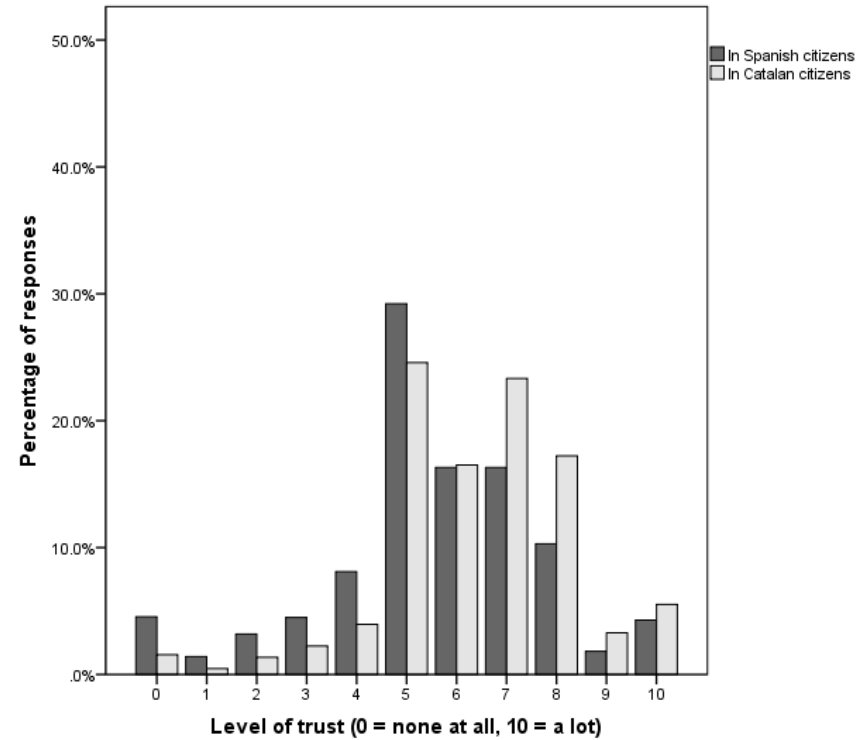


**Figure 7.3: Plot displaying the mean response for trust in Spanish citizens and trust in Catalan citizens**



Data: *Baròmetre d'Opinió Política, 2a onada 2015* (Political Opinion Barometer Catalonia, 2<sup>nd</sup> Wave)

**Figure 7.4: Plot displaying the distribution of responses for trust in Spanish citizens and trust in Catalan citizens**



Data: *Baròmetre d'Opinió Política, 2a onada 2015* (Political Opinion Barometer Catalonia, 2<sup>nd</sup> Wave)

## 7.4 The moderating effect of trust

In addition to the direct impact of trust on support for Catalan secession, this chapter will test for the effects of trust as a moderator, in the relationships between secessionist support in Catalonia and two of its most robust predictors: national identity and secessionist party identification.

### 7.4.1 National identity

As outlined in Chapter 4, the following hypotheses relating to trust's moderating effect on the relationship between national identity and secessionist support are expected to be observed, when analysing the Catalan data:

***H7C: The higher an individual's levels of differential interpersonal trust, the greater the extent to which their national identity will impact on their support for Catalan secession***

***H8C: The higher an individual's levels of differential institutional trust, the greater the extent to which their national identity will impact on their support for Catalan secession***

National identity has been found to be a key driver of secessionist support in many studies across a wide range of cases,<sup>641</sup> with those that report to identify exclusively with the potential secessionist region exhibiting a greater tendency to support secession than those that report to have dual national identities, or primarily identify with the existing state. As highlighted in Chapter 4 however, the subtleties of the relationship between national identity and support for secession have received little scholarly attention. There are a number of

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<sup>641</sup> Blais and Nadeau, 'To be or not to be sovereignist';  
Costa-Font and Tremosa, 'National identity and the preference for state opting-out in the basque country';  
Howe, 'Rationality and sovereignty support in Quebec';  
McCrone and Paterson, 'The conundrum of Scottish independence';  
Serrano, 'Just a matter of identity?'

reasons that interpersonal trust might be expected to moderate the relationship between national identity and support for Catalan secession, which will be outlined below.

Aside from its role as something of a pre-requisite for supporting Catalan secession, the most prominent explanation for why national identity is important in predicting secessionist support can be found in Miller's argument that states need to be mono-national.<sup>642</sup> National identity, it is argued, is of particular importance, because it increases the likelihood that people will place trust in their fellow citizens.<sup>643</sup> This form of trust, Will Kymlicka asserts is essential in encouraging citizens to make sacrifices for 'anonymous others', with whom they do not have existing relationships and in most cases never will.<sup>644</sup> It is this formation and facilitation of trust between individuals, and between individuals and institutions, which is assumed to be fundamental for stable democracy.<sup>645</sup>

Similarly, Miller has argued that multinational states prohibit the achievement of distributive justice, because it requires a significant redistribution of wealth from better off to less fortunate citizens, which the former group will be unwilling to accept without a certain level of solidarity and fellow-feeling towards the latter.<sup>646</sup> Where levels of trust are low, we will feel much less compulsion to act under the constraints of justice ourselves. Miller indicates that the dynamics of trust and social justice operate similarly at the political level: if an individual is to support policies that represent a fair compromise between the claims of different groups, they must assume that others also wish to see justice done, which depends on the level of trust within the political community in question.<sup>647</sup>

This, it can be argued, is particularly relevant to the Catalan case, as Catalonia's fiscal contribution to the wider Spanish state has featured heavily in pro-secession arguments for many years. Jordi Pujol for example, leader of CDC from 1974-2003 and President of the Generalitat from 1980-2003, stressed that the deficit between Catalonia's contribution to the

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<sup>642</sup> Miller, *On Nationality*

<sup>643</sup> Miller, *Citizenship and National Identity*;  
Miller, *On Nationality*, 140

<sup>644</sup> Kymlicka, *Politics in the vernacular*, 225

<sup>645</sup> Kymlicka, *Multicultural Citizenship*;

Tamir, *Liberal Nationalism*

<sup>646</sup> Miller, *On Nationality*

<sup>647</sup> Miller, *Justice for Earthlings*, 87

Spanish government and the revenue it receives from them has a detrimental social cost for Catalans.<sup>648</sup>

The assumption Miller's argument relies on however, is that as co-nationals, Catalans will have higher levels of trust and solidarity towards each other than those from the wider Spanish state. If, however, an individual from Catalonia has a high level of trust towards Spanish citizens, reflecting a positive evaluation of them and a perception that they are generally trustworthy, this implies that the trust they have in others is not limited to those who share their national identity. If we know that a Catalan individual has high levels of trust in Spanish citizens, we can arrive at one of two conclusions: that the individual trusts all people, irrespective of where they originate from, or that the individual specifically trusts Spanish citizens.

In the first case, regardless of how strong their national identity is, they regard most people to be trustworthy, so their national identity is unlikely to infringe upon their willingness to cooperate with others or continue to participate in democratic society with them. In the second scenario, high levels of trust would seem to indicate that an individual has positive prior experiences of dealing with Spanish citizens and therefore considers them trustworthy precisely because they are Spanish. In this case, it seems increasingly unlikely that their national identity would deter them from participating in democratic society with Spanish citizens.

The same holds true for Miller's distributive justice argument. As it is diminished trust between members of different social groups which Miller argues makes them more reluctant to apply their principles impartially across groups, building trust between cultural groups is necessary to overcome the problem of social justice in multinational societies.<sup>649</sup> Where levels of inter-group interpersonal trust between Catalans and Spanish citizens are high therefore, it is expected that the relationship between national identity and support for Catalan secession will be weaker.

Furthermore, the fear-confidence model suggests that it is simultaneously high levels of fear in the prospects of remaining in a united Spain and confidence in the future of a post-

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<sup>648</sup> Pujol, *Paraules del president de la Generalitat de Catalunya (gener-desembre de 1999)*, 108

<sup>649</sup> Miller, *Justice for Earthlings*, 8

secession Catalonia which ought to predict secessionist support. If the evidence supports this theory therefore, even those without an exclusive Catalan national identity should be more likely to support secession if their differential institutional trust is sufficiently high.

#### ***7.4.2 Secessionist party identification***

Throughout the literature on the dynamics of secessionist support, consistent evidence is found to suggest that intermediating agents, such as parties, leaders and governments have a significant impact on levels of support.<sup>650</sup> Although researchers have found that identification with, closeness to, or support for specific parties and leaders can have an independent effect on citizens' preferences regarding the territorial organisation of the state however,<sup>651</sup> relatively little scholarly attention has been devoted to the subtleties of this relationship. In particular, there are a number of reasons differential institutional trust would be expected to moderate the relationship between secessionist party identification and support for Catalan secession.

***H9C: The higher an individual's levels of differential institutional trust, the greater the extent to which secessionist party identification will impact on their support for Catalan secession***

As highlighted in Chapters 4 and 6, although secessionist parties consistently make demands for outright independence, their manifestos often cover a wide range of policy areas, which

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<sup>650</sup> Clarke and Kornberg, 'Choosing Canada?';

Clarke et al, 'Referendum voting as political choice';

Nadeau et al, 'Attitudes Towards Risk-Taking and Individual Choice in the Quebec Referendum on Sovereignty';

Pammett and LeDuc, 'Sovereignty, leadership and voting in the Quebec referendums';

Torcal and Mota, 'The role of political parties in shaping citizens' political preferences for the territorial organization of the state'

<sup>651</sup> Clarke and Kornberg, 'Choosing Canada?';

Clarke et al, 'Referendum voting as political choice';

Nadeau et al, 'Attitudes Towards Risk-Taking and Individual Choice in the Quebec Referendum on Sovereignty';

Pammett and LeDuc, 'Sovereignty, leadership and voting in the Quebec referendums';

Torcal and Mota, 'The role of political parties in shaping citizens' political preferences for the territorial organization of the state'

do not relate to the constitutional future of their region. In Catalonia, there is a range of electorally popular secessionist parties, all of which share a commitment to Catalan independence, but differ on a multitude of other issues. At the time of the 2015 Catalan BOP survey for instance, parties in favour of the secession of Catalonia included CiU and ERC, as well as Reagrupament Independentista (RI), Catalunya Sí (CatSí) and Candidatura d'Unitat Popular (CUP).

CiU for example, which has since dissolved, was a centrist, Catalan nationalist, electoral alliance between *Convergència Democràtica de Catalunya* (CDC) and *Unió Democràtica de Catalunya* (UDC). While CiU advocated the holding of a referendum on Catalan independence in 2014, with its President, Artur Mas, and its liberal faction (CDC), openly supporting Catalan secession, CiU had traditionally defended the notion of Catalonia as a nation within the Spanish state. Despite its pro-secession position in 2015, CDC historically defined itself as a non-secessionist party, with a political philosophy resulting from a 'convergence' of social democrat, progressive, liberal and Christian democrat thinking, with a profoundly pro-European stance.<sup>652</sup>

UDC meanwhile, generally remained opposed to Catalan secession, despite the CiU's official pro-independence position, a policy divergence which ultimately led to the dissolution of the alliance.<sup>653</sup> A Christian democratic party, the UDC's central ideas include Catalan nationalism, personalist humanism and social justice.<sup>654</sup>

ERC meanwhile, the most electorally successful of the left-wing secessionist parties, was the hegemonic party in Catalonia during the Second Republic, from which the Generalitat's first two presidents came: Francesc Macià (1931-1933) and Lluís Companys (1933-1940). While secessionism is a key ideological tenet of the ERC and independence is its main political objective, the party also has a commitment to the federal republicanism present in many Catalan areas, and the working-class movement of libertarian influences.<sup>655</sup>

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<sup>652</sup> *Convergència Democràtica de Catalunya* (CDC), 'Ponencia 1', *XI Congrés* (Barcelona: 10-12 November, 2001): point 1,175

<sup>653</sup> Fidel Masreal 'Unió ya piensa en una candidatura al margen de CDC', *El Periodico*, 19th August 2013 (<https://www.elperiodico.com/es/politica/20130819/unio-ya-piensa-en-una-candidatura-al-margen-de-cdc-2584889>, 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2019)

<sup>654</sup> Guibernau, *Catalan Nationalism*, 133

<sup>655</sup> Guibernau, *Catalan Nationalism*, 85

While the issue of Catalan secession is itself a rare example of a binary, single-issue political question ‘to which country shall we belong?’,<sup>656</sup> the pro-independence parties with which Catalans may identify are not single-issue parties. There is a distinct possibility therefore, that a significant proportion of those who primarily identify with parties which are in favour of Catalan secession do so for reasons that are not directly linked to secession.

Similarly, many pro-independence, nationalist parties, most notably including CiU, have been known to alter their stance on Catalan independence over time, or to include opposing strands and factions, which differ in their preferred level of autonomy, or the length of time by which they should aim to achieve secession.

Indeed, while secessionist party identification is consistently found to be positively associated with support for secession, it is clear that not all of those individuals who primarily identify with pro-secession parties favour Catalan secession themselves. Although pro-secession parties won an absolute majority in the 2015 Catalan regional elections for instance, CEO polling data put support for Catalonia becoming an independent state consistently below fifty percent in 2015, ranging between 37.6 and 41.1 percent, across the year’s three waves of the BOP.<sup>657</sup> This raises questions about which of those individuals who identify with pro-secession parties support Catalan secession themselves and what factors might be having an impact on the relationship.

One possible explanation, which will be tested in this chapter, is that levels of trust in the Spanish government have a moderating effect on the relationship between secessionist party identification and support for the secession of Catalonia. Institutional trust, as noted in Chapter 4, can play a crucial role in shaping confidence and fear, with respect to the prospects of seceding or remaining in the union. A lack of political power, Dion argues, can be a key source of grievance that may inspire negative feelings, if not ‘fear’ toward a union.<sup>658</sup>

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<sup>656</sup> Morisi, ‘Voting under uncertainty,’ 354

<sup>657</sup> CEO, ‘BOP, 1<sup>st</sup> wave 2015’ (<http://upceo.ceo.gencat.cat/wsceop/5268/Abstract%20in%20English%20-774.pdf>, 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2019): 10;

CEO, ‘BOP, 2<sup>nd</sup> wave 2015’, 13;

CEO, ‘BOP, 3<sup>rd</sup> wave 2015’ (<http://upceo.ceo.gencat.cat/wsceop/5468/Abstract%20in%20English%20-795.pdf>, 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2019): 9;

<sup>658</sup> Dion, ‘Why is Secession Difficult in Well-Established Democracies?’, 274

This, it can be argued, is particularly relevant in the Catalan case, as the independence movement has been growing progressively since the Spanish and Catalan orders of government clashed over the new Catalan Statute of Autonomy (2006).<sup>659</sup> Although approved by referendum with 74 percent of the vote, the Spanish Constitutional Court declared the statute unconstitutional, rewriting 14 and dictating the interpretation of a further 27. The Court's decision, Dowling argues, was the major factor which drove over one million Catalans to protest in the streets of Barcelona in July 2010, under the slogan of 'We are a Nation and we Decide'.<sup>660</sup>

Ultimately, this demonstrates the way in which some Catalans have become motivated and mobilised by uneasiness and frustration with an existing political system, which they feel has failed to adequately represent them. Where levels of trust in the Spanish government are especially low therefore, it would be expected that similar feelings of alienation and frustration would be contributing to increased support for Catalan secession. If an individual has high levels of trust in the Spanish government however, this suggests an absence of fear in the state and some degree of confidence that the central government will try to act in Catalans' best interests.

High levels of trust in the Spanish government are unlikely to be present in those who consider themselves unfairly or inadequately represented by the systematic, constitutional processes of the union and so, even if the current Spanish government does not represent their views, would be expected to favour less dramatic change than outright independence and the creation of a separate Catalan state. It would be reasonable to expect therefore, that where levels of trust in the Spanish government are higher, individuals are more likely to support pro-secession parties because of issues which are not related to secession.

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<sup>659</sup> Mut Bosque, 'Scotland and Catalonia in Twenty-First Century European Union', 90

<sup>660</sup> Dowling, *The Rise of Catalan Independence*



## 7.5 Results

Table 7.1 presents the results of two logistic regression models (Models I and II), which predict hypothetical support for Catalan secession in 2015. The dependent variable for both models is hypothetical support for secession in Catalonia, a dichotomous variable which divides respondents into those whose hypothetical constitutional preference was for Catalonia to secede from the rest of the Spain and those who did not favour outright secession.

Model I contains two measures of institutional trust (trust in the Spanish government and trust in the Catalan government), while Model II contains one measure of differential institutional trust, which represents the difference between their trust in the Catalan and Spanish orders of government.

The variable measuring differential institutional trust was included in Model II for two key reasons. Firstly, because Dion's fear-confidence model supposes that majority support for independence remains unlikely unless fear in the union and confidence in the prospects of secession exist at simultaneously high levels. Consequently, the difference between an individual's levels of trust in the Catalan government and the Spanish government is expected to be a stronger predictor of secessionist support than the isolated institutional trust indicators. Secondly, the inclusion of a variable which measures differential institutional trust accounts for individuals who simply do not trust any institution, such as those with low levels of political efficacy.

Both models also control for a range of factors which have previously been found to impact on support for secession (national identity, political party identification, political ideology, age, household income, level of education and gender).

**Table 7.1: Logistic regression analyses predicting support for secession in Catalonia, in 2015**

<i>Model</i>	Estimated coefficients (standard errors)	
	I	II
<i>Institutional trust</i>		
Trust in Spanish government	<b>-0.127 (0.049)**</b>	-
Trust in Catalan government	<b>0.227 (0.048)***</b>	-
Differential trust (Spanish gov. to Catalan gov.)	-	<b>0.179 (0.042)***</b>
<i>Control variables</i>		
Moreno national identity (Spanish to Catalan)	<b>1.663 (0.129)***</b>	<b>1.651 (0.129)***</b>
Secessionist party identification	<b>1.426 (0.186)***</b>	<b>1.482 (0.184)***</b>
Political ideology (left to right scale)	<b>-0.147 (0.052)**</b>	<b>-0.125 (0.050)*</b>
Age	-0.010 (0.006)	-0.009 (0.006)
Household income	-0.014 (0.039)	-0.007 (0.040)
Highest level of education	0.044 (0.046)	0.044 (0.046)
Gender (male)	0.253 (0.182)	0.224 (0.181)
<i>N</i>	1234	1234
<i>Pseudo R2</i>		
Nagelkerke	0.671	0.668
Cox & Snell	0.501	0.499

Bold figures denote significant effects: \*p < 0.05; \*\*p < 0.01; \*\*\*p < 0.001

Dependent variable: Whether the respondent thinks that Catalonia should become independent from Spain

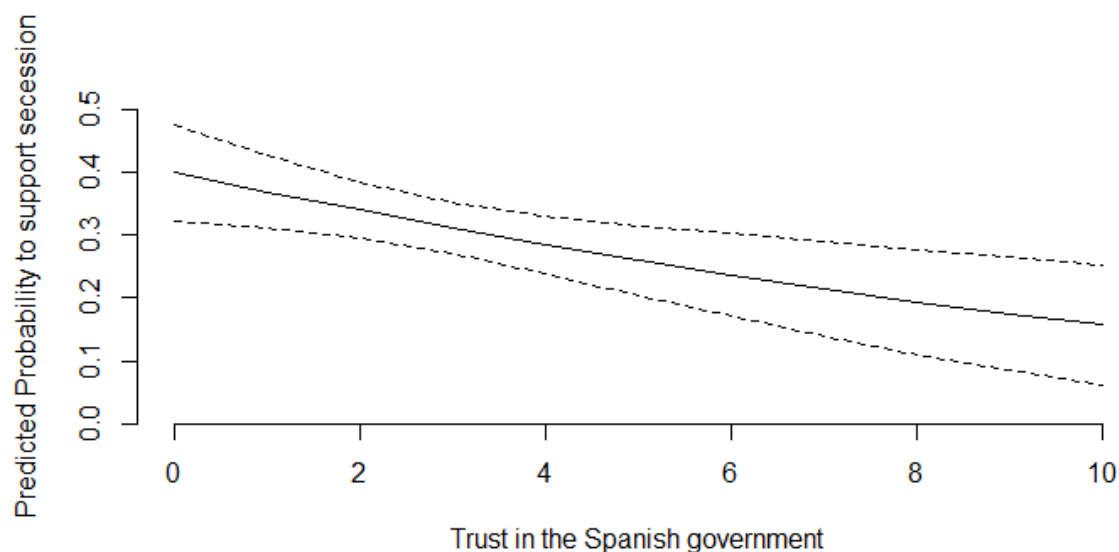
Data: *Baròmetre d'Opinió Política*, 2a onada 2015 (Political Opinion Barometer Catalonia, 2<sup>nd</sup> Wave)

### ***7.5.1 The direct impact of trust***

The results of Model I show that in the 2015 Catalan BOP dataset, after controlling for a range of factors known to affect support for secession, levels of institutional trust in both the Catalan and Spanish orders of government have a statistically significant impact on support for the secession of Catalonia.

With a negative estimated coefficient of -0.127 which is significant at the .01 level, Model I indicates that higher levels of trust in the Spanish government are associated with a decreased likelihood of supporting Catalan secession. A positive estimated coefficient of 0.227 (significant at the .001 level) meanwhile indicates that higher levels of trust in the Catalan government are associated with an increased likelihood of supporting the secession of Catalonia. Model I therefore provides support for both H1C and H2C, suggesting that levels of institutional trust, both in Spanish and Catalan orders of government, have a statistically significant impact on support for secession in Catalonia. These relationships are analysed in greater detail below, with the direct impact of institutional trust on an individual's predicted probability of supporting Catalan secession displayed in Figures 7.5 and 7.7.

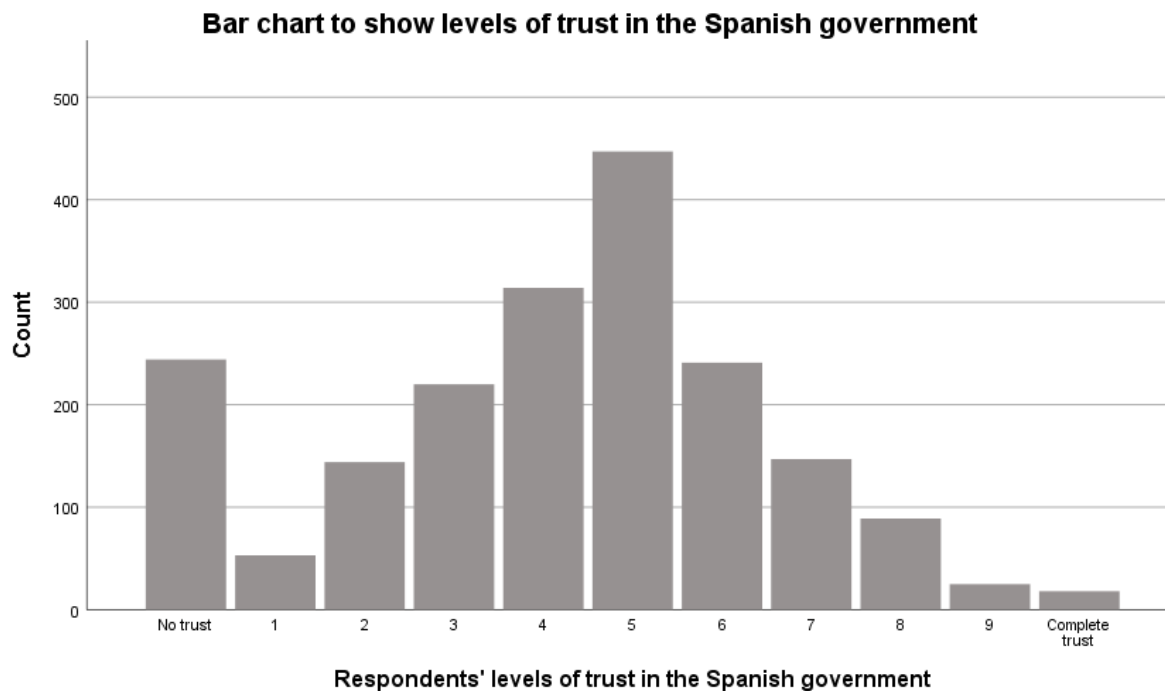
**Figure 7.5: Predicted probability plot displaying the estimated effects of trust in the Spanish government on an individual's predicted probability of supporting secession**



Data: *Baròmetre d'Opinió Política, 2a onada 2015* (Political Opinion Barometer Catalonia, 2<sup>nd</sup> Wave)  
Standard errors: +/- 1.96  
n = 1234

Figure 7.5 shows the extent to which levels of trust in the central Spanish government impact on an individual's predicted probability of supporting Catalan secession, when all other variables are held to their mean average. Those with the lowest levels of trust, who reported to have no confidence in the Spanish government, are represented by the value '0'. Those individuals, Figure 7.5 indicates, had a 40.0 percent chance of supporting the secession of Catalonia, a figure which is expected to fall at a consistent level, with every incremental increase in trust. Those who plotted their trust in the Spanish government as a 5 out of 10, at the mid-point of the scale, had a 26.0 percent chance of supporting Catalan secession, while those who reported to have the highest levels of trust (10) were found to have just a 15.7 percent chance of supporting secession. At the higher end of the scale however, the margin of error is quite large, as a result of the low number of respondents reporting to have high trust in the Spanish government. The distribution of respondents' levels of trust in the Spanish government is shown below, in Figure 7.6:

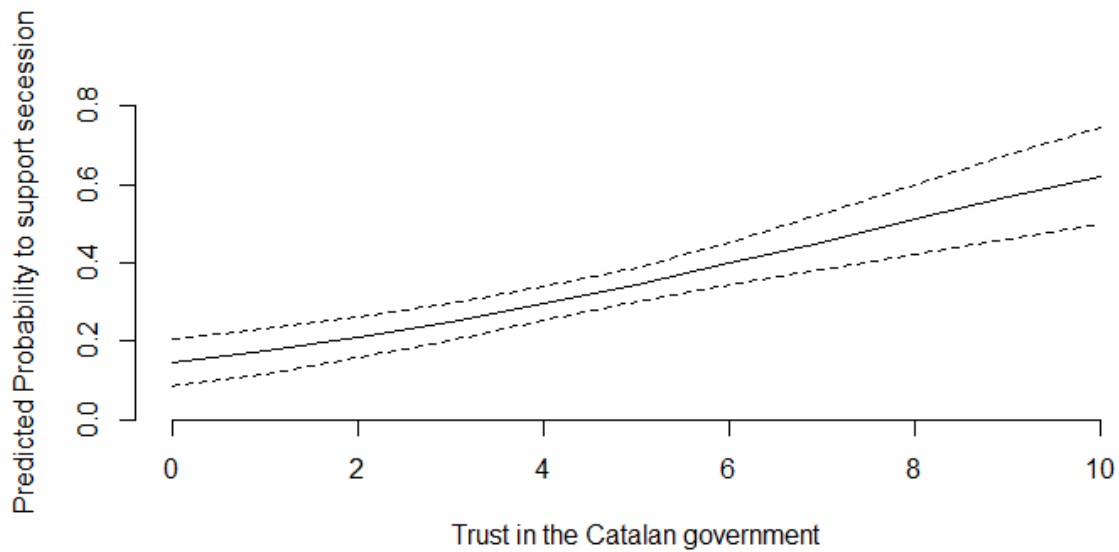
**Figure 7.6: Bar chart to show the distribution of levels of trust in the Spanish government, 2015**



Data: *Baròmetre d'Opinió Política, 2a onada 2015* (Political Opinion Barometer Catalonia, 2<sup>nd</sup> Wave)  
n = 1234

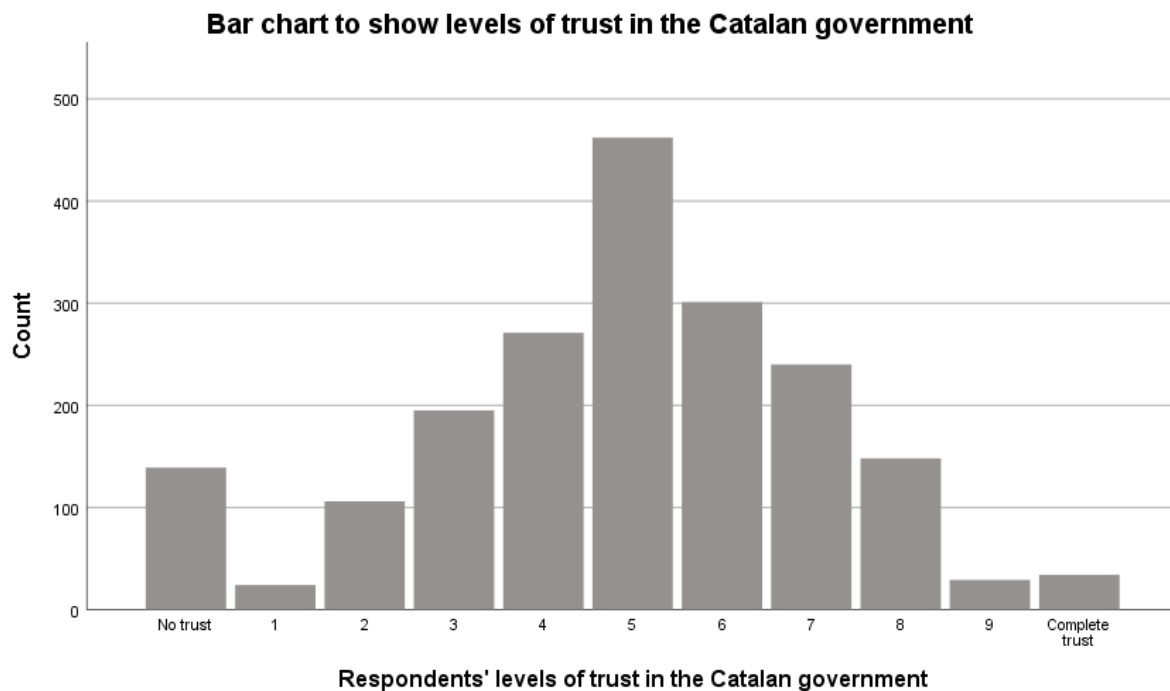
Figure 7.7 (below) meanwhile, demonstrates the extent to which levels of trust in the Catalan government impact on an individual's predicted probability of supporting Catalan secession. Those with the lowest levels of trust, reporting to have no confidence in the Catalan government had only a 14.4 per cent chance of supporting the secession of Catalonia. This figure is expected to rise at a consistent rate, with every incremental increase in trust in the Catalan government. At the opposite end of the scale meanwhile, those reporting to have the highest levels of trust in the Catalan government had a 62.1 per cent predicted probability of supporting the secession of Catalonia. Those who scored their trust in the Catalan government as a 5 out of 10, at the mid-point of the scale, had a 34.5 percent chance of supporting Catalan secession. The distribution of respondents' levels of trust in the Catalan government is also shown below, in Figure 7.8:

**Figure 7.7: Predicted probability plot displaying the estimated effects of trust in the Catalan government on an individual's predicted probability of supporting secession**



Data: *Baròmetre d'Opinió Política, 2a onada 2015* (Political Opinion Barometer Catalonia, 2<sup>nd</sup> Wave)  
 Standard errors: +/- 1.96  
 n = 1234

**Figure 7.8: Bar chart to show the distribution of levels of trust in the Catalan government, 2015**

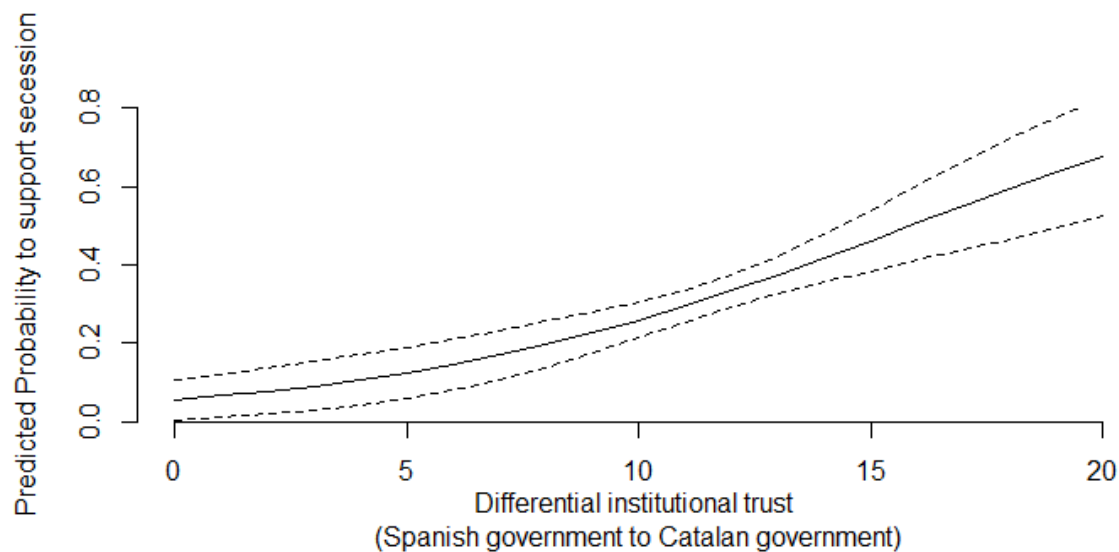


Data: *Baròmetre d'Opinió Política, 2a onada 2015* (Political Opinion Barometer Catalonia, 2<sup>nd</sup> Wave)  
 n = 1234

The data shown in Table 7.1, as well as Figures 7.5 and 7.7, indicates that while both trust in the Spanish government and trust in the Catalan government had a significant impact on Catalan secessionist support, the extent to which a respondent trusts the Catalan government had the stronger impact. This makes for interesting comparison to the Scottish analysis, in which both trust in the UK government and the Scottish government were also found to have a significant impact on Scottish secessionist support. In contrast to the Catalan case however, trust in the UK government was found to be a stronger predictor of support for secession than trust in the Scottish government. The intricacies and possible explanations for the similarities and differences between these cases will be compared in greater detail in Chapter 9.

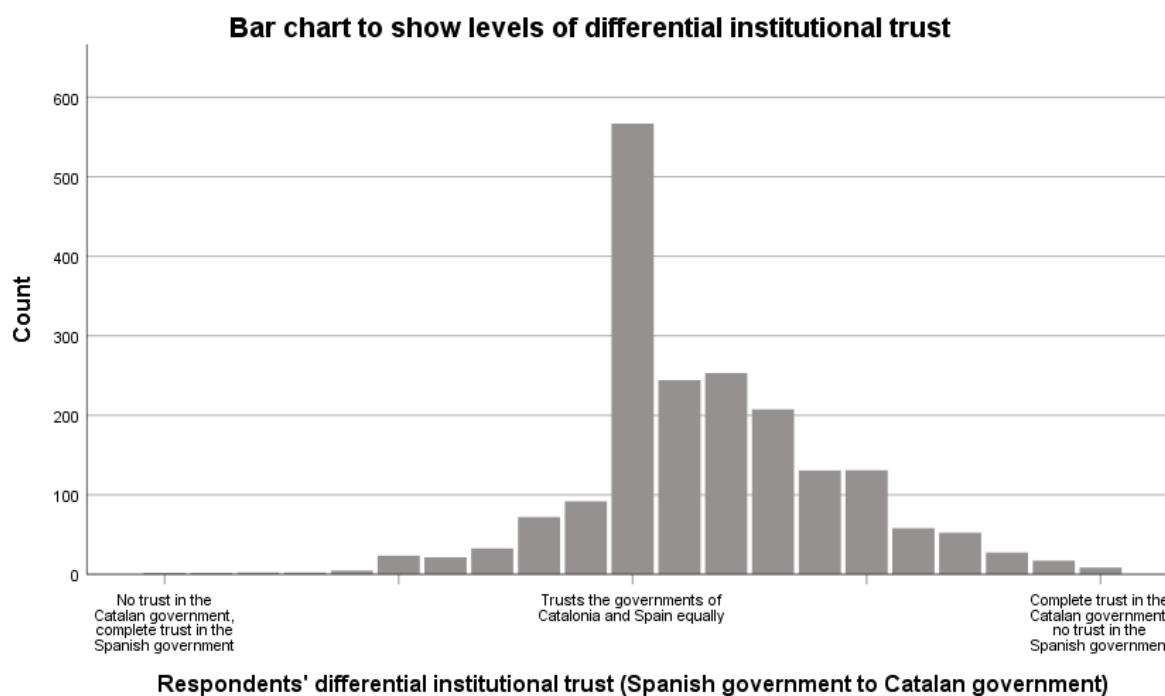
In addition to the effects of trust in the Spanish government and trust in the Catalan government, which were tested in Model I, Model II includes a variable which measures the direct impact of differential institutional trust (the difference between a respondent's levels of trust in the Catalan and Spanish orders of government). A positive estimated coefficient of 0.179, which is significant at the .001 level, indicates that differential institutional trust has a positive impact on an individual's likelihood of supporting Catalan secession. Again, this makes for interesting comparison to the Scottish case, where differential institutional trust was also found to have a statistically significant impact on secessionist support at the .001 level. The extent to which an individual's predicted probability of supporting Catalan secession is impacted by changes in differential institutional trust is shown below, in Figure 7.9, while the distribution of respondents' levels of differential institutional trust is also displayed below, in Figure 7.10.

**Figure 7.9: Predicted probability plot displaying the estimated effects of differential institutional trust on an individual's predicted probability of supporting secession**



Data: *Baròmetre d'Opinió Política, 2a onada 2015* (Political Opinion Barometer Catalonia, 2<sup>nd</sup> Wave)  
 Standard errors: +/- 1.96  
 n = 1234

**Figure 7.10: Bar chart to show the distribution of levels of differential institutional trust, in 2015**



Data: *Baròmetre d'Opinió Política, 2a onada 2015* (Political Opinion Barometer Catalonia, 2<sup>nd</sup> Wave)  
 n = 1234



Figure 7.9 demonstrates the extent to which levels of differential institutional trust impact on an individual's predicted probability of supporting Catalan secession, when all other variables are held to their mean average.

The plot in Figure 7.9 indicates that differential institutional trust had a positive impact on the probability of a respondent supporting Catalan secession in 2015. Those at the lower end of the scale (below ten on the x-axis), represent those who have higher levels of trust in the Spanish government than the Catalan government. As Figure 7.9 demonstrates, those with a score of zero, who express extremely high levels of trust in the Spanish government and extremely low levels of trust in the Catalan government, had a predicted 5.5 per cent probability of supporting Catalan secession. Those with a score of twenty meanwhile, who reported the maximum possible levels of trust in the Catalan government and minimum possible levels of trust in the Spanish government, had a 67.6 per cent chance of supporting secession. The gradient of the plot indicates that as values on the x-axis increase and the difference between their trust in the Catalan and Spanish orders of government increases, the predicted probability of supporting Catalan secession increases at a relatively constant rate.

While Models I and II were designed to be as useful as possible for the purposes of comparison to Scotland and Flanders, this meant the models omitted a number of important variables. Firstly, while both models contained measures of institutional trust, neither contained interpersonal trust indicators, as it was not possible to include such variables in the Scottish model. Similarly, as the language a respondent speaks at home is not a variable which is relevant to the Scottish secessionist movement, many previous studies on Catalonia have found this to be a strong predictor of Catalan secessionist support. In order to provide a comprehensive analysis of the role of trust in support for Catalan secession therefore, Models III and IV in Table 7.2 (below) contain measures of interpersonal trust and control for whether a respondent primarily speaks Catalan in the home.

**Table 7.2: Logistic regression analyses predicting support for secession in Catalonia, in 2015**

<i>Model</i>	Estimated coefficients (standard errors)	
	III	IV
<i>Institutional trust</i>		
Trust in Spanish government	<b>-0.101 (0.051)*</b>	-
Trust in Catalan government	<b>0.211 (0.051)***</b>	-
Differential trust (Spanish gov. to Catalan gov.)	-	<b>0.161 (0.043)***</b>
<i>Interpersonal trust</i>		
Trust in Spanish citizens	<b>-0.201 (0.072)**</b>	-
Trust in Catalan citizens	<b>0.220 (0.080)**</b>	-
Differential trust (Spanish citizens to Catalan citizens)	-	<b>0.192 (0.070)**</b>
<i>Control variables</i>		
Language spoken at home (Catalan)	0.202 (0.214)	0.213 (0.213)
Moreno national identity (Spanish to Catalan)	<b>1.532 (0.141)***</b>	<b>1.521 (0.141)***</b>
Secessionist party identification	<b>1.362 (0.194)***</b>	<b>1.424 (0.192)***</b>
Political ideology (left to right scale)	<b>-0.153 (0.053)**</b>	<b>-0.128 (0.051)*</b>
Age	-0.010 (0.006)	-0.009 (0.006)
Household income	-0.023 (0.040)	-0.016 (0.039)
Highest level of education	0.046 (0.047)	0.045 (0.047)
Gender (male)	0.262 (0.186)	0.232 (0.185)
<i>N</i>	1204	1204
<i>Pseudo R2</i>		
Nagelkerke	0.678	0.675
Cox & Snell	0.506	0.504

Bold figures denote significant effects: \*p < 0.05; \*\*p < 0.01; \*\*\*p < 0.001

Dependent variable: Whether the respondent thinks that Catalonia should become independent from Spain

Data: *Baròmetre d'Opinió Política, 2a onada 2015* (Political Opinion Barometer Catalonia, 2<sup>nd</sup> Wave)

The results of Model III show that in the 2015 Catalan BOP dataset, all four indicators of trust included in the model had a statistically significant impact on support for Catalan secession at the .05 level. With a negative estimated coefficient of -0.101, higher levels of trust in the Spanish government are found to be associated with a decreased likelihood of supporting Catalan secession.

The ‘fear’ associated with remaining in the union, as Dion argued, is crucial in attracting support for secession and, unless this exists at a sufficiently high level of intensity, secession is extremely improbable.<sup>661</sup> Those with the highest levels of trust in the Spanish government, who are least likely to fear them, are also the least likely to support Catalan secession. Those with the lowest levels of trust meanwhile, who deem the Spanish government to be most untrustworthy and are most likely to fear them, have an increased likelihood of supporting the secession of Catalonia. Similarly, these results lend credibility to Hirschman’s assertion that distrust in the state’s core institutions increases the likelihood an individual will look to exit from the existing state,<sup>662</sup> particularly in a region like Catalonia, which contains an electorally successful secessionist movement.

A positive estimated coefficient of 0.211 (significant at the .001 level) meanwhile entails that higher levels of trust in the Catalan government are associated with an increased likelihood of supporting Catalan secession. Model III therefore provides support for both H1C and H2C, suggesting that levels of institutional trust, both in the Spanish and Catalan orders of government, have a statistically significant impact on support for Catalan secession.

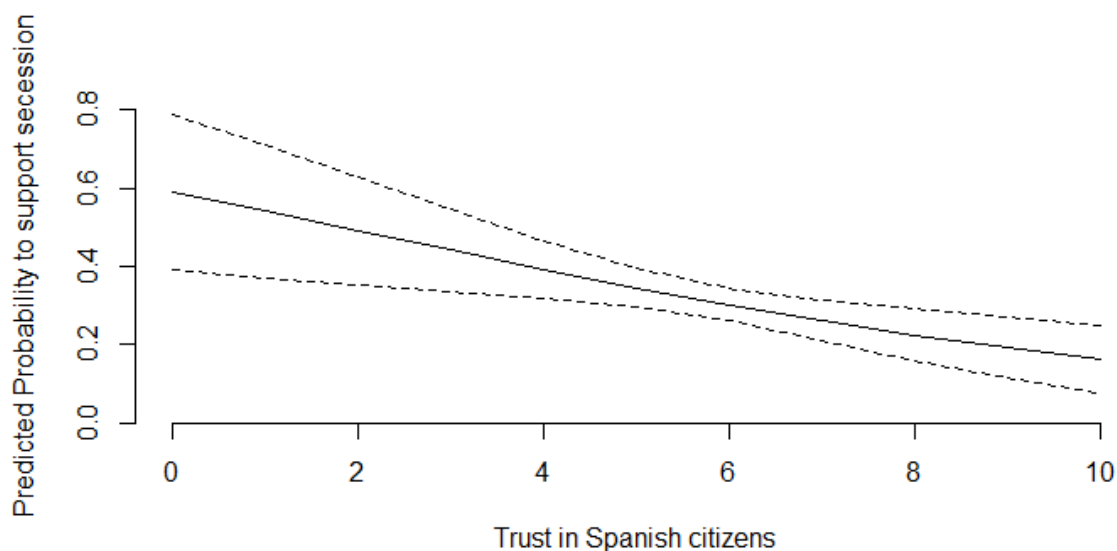
In addition to the two measures of institutional trust in Model III, both indicators of interpersonal trust were also found to have a statistically significant impact on support for Catalan secession. Trust in Spanish citizens, with an estimated coefficient of -0.201 (significant at the .01 level), was found to have a negative association with support for the secession of Catalonia, while levels of trust in Catalan citizens were shown to have a positive impact on secessionist support, with an estimated coefficient of 0.220, which was also significant at the .01 level). The relationships between these two indicators of interpersonal trust and support for Catalan secession are shown in greater detail in Figures 7.11 and 7.13:

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<sup>661</sup> Dion, ‘Why is Secession Difficult in Well-Established Democracies?’, 271

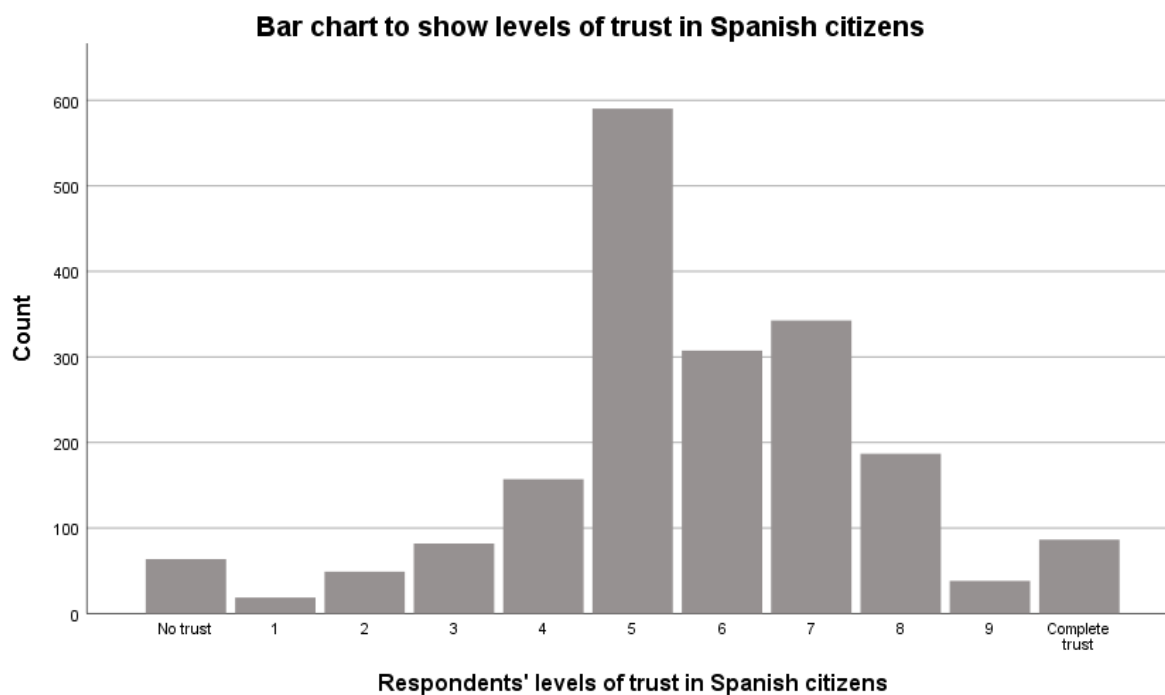
<sup>662</sup> Hirschman, *Exit, Voice, and Loyalty*, 108

**Figure 7.11: Predicted probability plot displaying the estimated effects of trust in Spanish citizens on an individual's predicted probability of supporting secession**



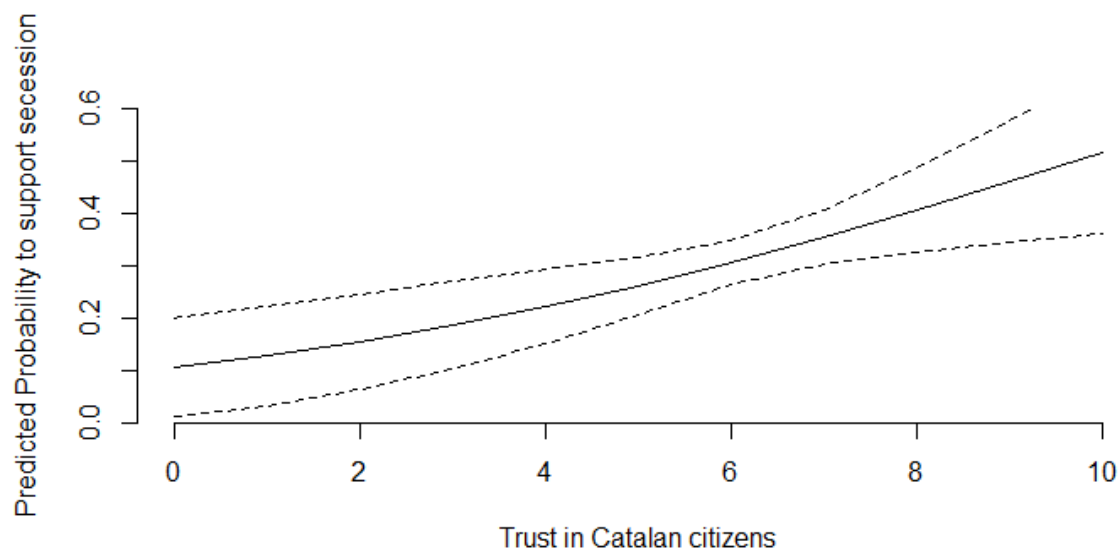
Data: *Baròmetre d'Opinió Política, 2a onada 2015* (Political Opinion Barometer Catalonia, 2<sup>nd</sup> Wave)  
 Standard errors: +/- 1.96  
 n = 1204

**Figure 7.12: Bar chart to show the distribution of levels of trust in Spanish citizens, in 2015**



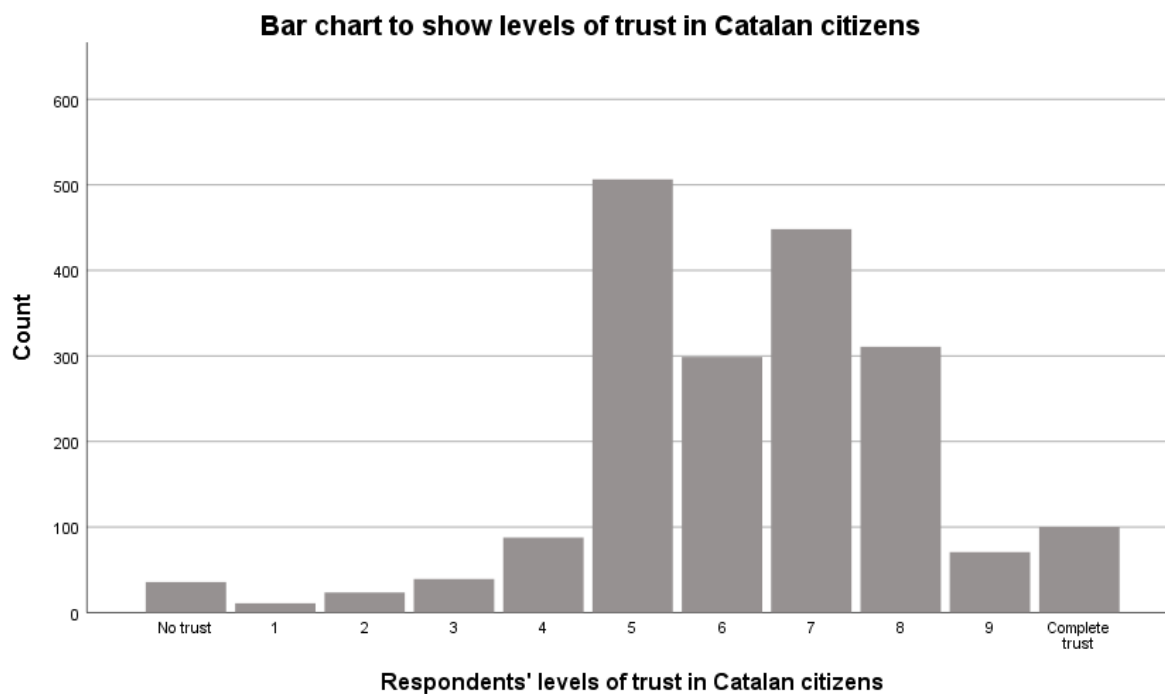
Data: *Baròmetre d'Opinió Política, 2a onada 2015* (Political Opinion Barometer Catalonia, 2<sup>nd</sup> Wave)  
 n = 1204

**Figure 7.13: Predicted probability plot displaying the estimated effects of trust in Catalan citizens on an individual's predicted probability of supporting secession**



Data: *Baròmetre d'Opinió Política, 2a onada 2015* (Political Opinion Barometer Catalonia, 2<sup>nd</sup> Wave)  
 Standard errors: +/- 1.96  
 n = 1204

**Figure 7.14: Bar chart to show the distribution of levels of trust in Catalan citizens, in 2015**



Data: *Baròmetre d'Opinió Política, 2a onada 2015* (Political Opinion Barometer Catalonia, 2<sup>nd</sup> Wave)  
 n = 1204

As Figure 7.11 displays, those with the lowest levels of trust, who reported to have no trust in Spanish citizens, were found to have a 59.0 per cent chance of supporting the secession of Catalonia, a figure which is expected to fall consistently with every incremental increase in trust. Those, for instance, who reported their trust in Spanish citizen as a 5 out of 10, at the mid-point of the scale, had a 34.6 per cent chance of supporting Catalan secession, while those with the highest levels of trust were found to have just a 16.2 per cent chance of supporting secession.

The data therefore shows that those with the lowest levels of trust in Spanish citizens were 42.8 percent more likely to support the secession of Catalonia than the most trusting individuals, with each incremental increase on the trust scale corresponding to a decreased likelihood of supporting secession. These results therefore support H4C, providing evidence to suggest that in the Catalan case, the higher an individual's interpersonal trust towards members of the wider state, the lower their likelihood of supporting secession.

In addition, the data displayed in Table 7.2 suggests that an individual's trust in Spanish citizens has a stronger impact on support for Catalan secession than their levels of trust in the Spanish government, as the estimated coefficient for an individual's trust in Spanish citizens (-0.201) is more strongly negative than that for trust in the Spanish government (-0.101). This finding has some substantial implications for unionists, who are faced with the challenge of combatting secessionist support in Catalonia. That levels of interpersonal trust between Catalans and other Spanish citizens have a stronger effect on support for Catalan secession than trust in the Spanish government suggests that the horizontal, individual-level trust between citizens (or lack thereof) is a more pressing concern for unionists than the levels of trust which exist at the institutional level. If support for the secession of Catalonia is to be quelled therefore, unionists may be forced to focus on building inter-group trust between Catalans and those from the wider Spanish state, in order to overcome divisions and raise levels of cross-group trust.

The plot in Figure 7.13 shows that trust in Catalan citizens had a positive impact on the probability of a respondent supporting Catalan secession. Those with the lowest levels of trust for instance, who reported to have no confidence in Catalan citizens, had only a 10.5 per cent probability of supporting the secession of Catalonia, a figure which is expected to

increase at a consistent rate with every incremental rise in levels of trust. Those who plotted their trust in Catalan citizens as a 5 out of 10 had a 26.1 per cent chance of supporting Catalan secession, while the probability for those with the highest levels of trust was 51.6 percent.

According to the 2015 Catalan BOP data therefore, those with the highest levels of trust in Catalan citizens are 41.1 per cent more likely to support the secession of Catalonia than the least trusting individuals, with each incremental increase on the scale of trust in Catalan citizens expected to cause the likelihood of supporting Catalan secession to increase. This finding therefore provides support for H5C, suggesting that for the case of Catalonia, the higher an individual's trust in their fellow members of the potential secessionist region, the greater their likelihood of supporting secession.

While all four measures of trust are found to have a statistically significant impact on support for the secession of Catalonia therefore, the strongest relationships were the positive impact of trust in the Catalan government, the positive effect of trust in Catalan citizens and the negative impact of trust in Spanish citizens. Trust in the Spanish government was found to have a statistically significant negative relationship with support for Catalan secession, but this was substantially weaker than the other measures of trust.

That, of the four trust indicators, trust in the Spanish government would have the weakest impact on support for Catalan secession is perhaps surprising. Given the relatively recent history of Francoism, under which many Catalans lived with an intense fear of the Spanish state,<sup>663</sup> it might be expected that lingering suspicion and distrust would be a strong predictor of support for Catalan secession.

The most likely explanation for this finding however is that the strength of the relationship was limited, because levels of trust in the Spanish government were low among most respondents, regardless of their preferences towards the constitutional future of Catalonia. With the mean response in the 2015 Catalan BOP dataset reporting their trust in the Spanish government as 2.8 out of ten, 58.5 percent of respondents rated their level of trust as three out of ten or below, and only 11.7 percent reported their level of trust to be six out of ten, or above. While a substantial majority of Catalans in favour of secession had low

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<sup>663</sup> Guibernau, *Catalan Nationalism*, 47

levels of trust in the Spanish government therefore, a significant proportion of those not in favour of outright independence also reported to have low levels of trust.

In addition to the measures of trust tested for, several of the control variables included in Model III were found to have a statistically significant impact on support for Catalan secession. National identity for example, which has been identified as a key driver of secessionist support in many previous studies across a wide range of cases,<sup>664</sup> was found to have a significant impact at the .001 level. This variable asked respondents to self-report their national identity on a 5-point scale, ranging from exclusively Spanish to exclusively Catalan, so a positive estimated coefficient of 1.532 demonstrates that the more Catalan a respondent reported to feel, the more likely they were to support secession.

In addition, the results from Model III found that secessionist party identification had a statistically significant impact on support for Catalan secession at the .001 level. With a positive estimated coefficient of 1.362, the results from Model III indicate a positive association between an individual identifying with a party which advocates for secession from Spain and supporting Catalan secession.

Finally, an individual's ideological position on a left-right scale was also found to have a statistically significant impact on support for Catalan secession, at the .01 level. With a negative estimated coefficient of -0.153, the more right-wing a respondent was on the scale, the less likely they were to support the secession of Catalonia.

Interestingly, despite having been identified as a strong predictor of secessionist support in many previous studies on Catalonia, the language a respondent speaks at home was not found to have a statistically significant impact on support for Catalan secession, at the .05 level.

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<sup>664</sup> Blais and Nadeau, 'To be or not to be sovereignist';  
Costa-Font and Tremosa, 'National identity and the preference for state opting-out in the basque country';  
Howe, 'Rationality and sovereignty support in Quebec';  
McCrone and Paterson, 'The conundrum of Scottish independence';  
Serrano, 'Just a matter of identity?';

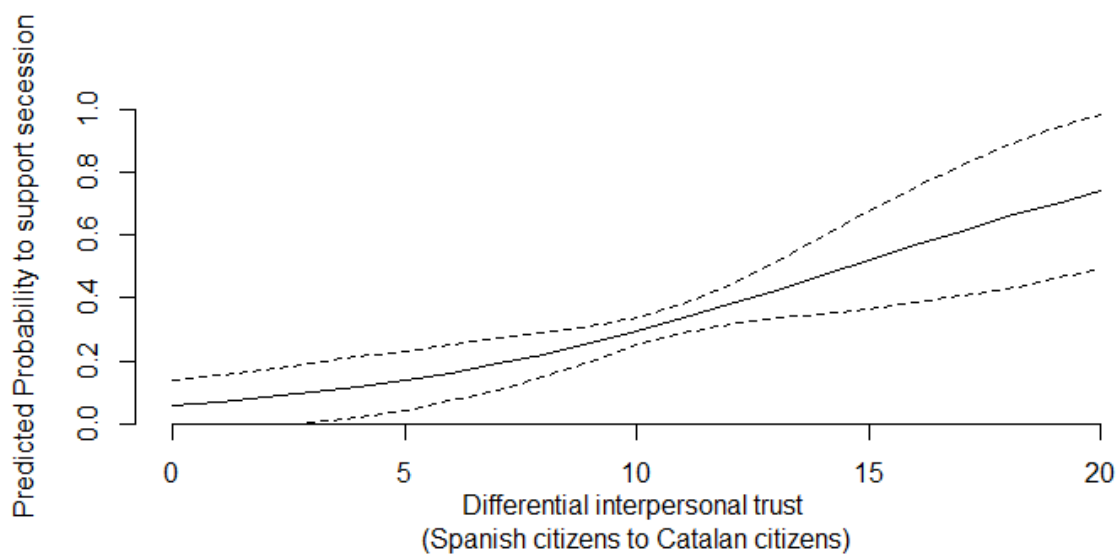


Model IV, the results from which are shown in Table 7.2, contains two measures of differential trust, in place of the four trust indicators from Model III. The first of these variables (Differential trust (Spanish government to Catalan government)) is the same variable that was used in Model II, which measures the difference between an individual's level of trust in the Catalan government and their level of trust in the Spanish government. The second variable, which measures the difference between an individual's levels of trust in Catalan citizens and Spanish citizens is primarily included to account for those individuals who are either distrustful of all people, or trusting of all people, for reasons which are not related to their nationality.

As the figures from Table 7.2 indicate, differential institutional trust was found to have a positive impact on an individual's likelihood of supporting secession, highlighted by a positive estimated coefficient of 0.161, which is significant at the .001 level and providing support for H3C.

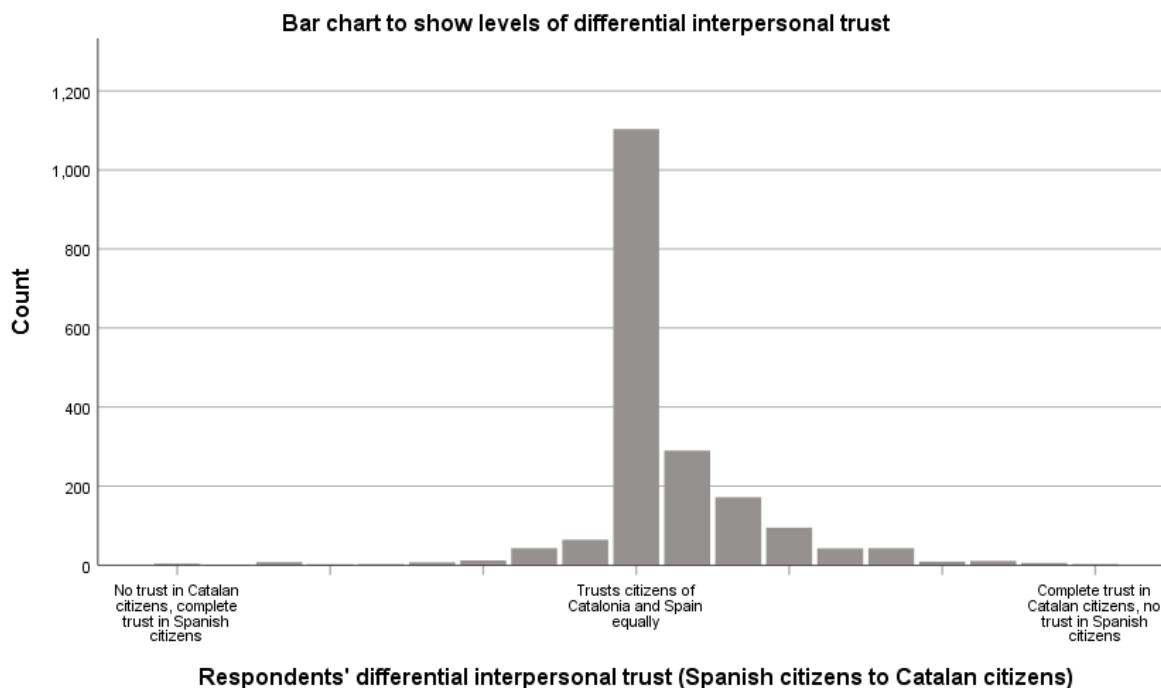
In addition to differential institutional trust meanwhile, Model IV also includes a measure of differential interpersonal trust, which comprises a scale that ranges from zero (representing those with no trust in Catalan citizens and extremely high trust in Spanish citizens) to twenty (those with extremely high trust in Catalan citizens and no trust in Spanish citizens). A higher score on the differential interpersonal trust scale therefore corresponds to a greater difference between an individual's respective trust in Catalan and Spanish citizens. With a positive estimated coefficient of 0.192 (significant at the .01 level, the results from Model IV lend support to H6C, suggesting that higher levels of differential interpersonal trust increase an individual's likelihood of supporting Catalan secession. Furthermore, the presence of a more strongly positive estimated coefficient than that for differential institutional trust indicates that differential interpersonal trust has a stronger impact on support for Catalan secession. The relationship between differential interpersonal trust and support for secession is shown in greater detail in Figure 7.15, below:

**Figure 7.15: Predicted probability plot displaying the estimated effects of differential interpersonal trust on an individual's predicted probability of supporting secession**



Data: *Baròmetre d'Opinió Política, 2a onada 2015* (Political Opinion Barometer Catalonia, 2<sup>nd</sup> Wave)  
 Standard errors: +/- 1.96  
 n = 1204

**Figure 7.16: Bar chart to show the distribution of levels of differential interpersonal trust, in 2015**



Data: *Baròmetre d'Opinió Política, 2a onada 2015* (Political Opinion Barometer Catalonia, 2<sup>nd</sup> Wave)  
 n = 1204

The plot in Figure 7.15 indicates that differential interpersonal trust had a positive impact on the probability of a respondent supporting Catalan secession in 2015. Those at the lower end of the scale (below ten on the x-axis), represent those who have higher levels of trust in Spanish citizens, while those represented by values greater than 10 on the x-axis represent those who believe Catalan citizens to be more trustworthy than Spanish citizens.

As shown in Figure 7.15, those with a score of zero, who trust Spanish citizens much more highly than Catalan citizens had a predicted 5.8 per cent chance of supporting Catalan secession. Those with a score of twenty however, who trust Catalan citizens much more highly than Spanish citizens, had a 74.0 per cent chance of supporting secession. It is worth noting however, that the margins of error at the extreme ends of the scale are very high, as the majority of respondents fall between eight and fifteen on the differential interpersonal trust scale.

### ***7.5.2 The moderating effect of trust***

In addition to the trust indicators tested for, several of the control variables were found to have a statistically significant impact on support for Catalan secession. National identity for example, found to have been a key driver of secessionist support in many previous studies across a wide range of cases,<sup>665</sup> was found to have a significant impact at the .001 level in all four models (I, II, III and IV). With respondents having self-reported their national identity on a 5-point scale, ranging from exclusively Spanish to exclusively Catalan, the variable's positive estimated coefficient across the four models indicates that the more strongly Catalan a respondent reported to feel, the more likely they were to support the secession of Catalonia.

Primarily identifying with one of Catalonia's pro-secession parties was also found to have a statistically significant impact on support for the secession of Catalonia, at the .001 level across the four models. With this dichotomous variable producing a positive estimated coefficient across Models I, II, III and IV, the results from these models indicate a positive

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<sup>665</sup> Blais and Nadeau, 'To be or not to be sovereignist';  
Costa-Font and Tremosa, 'National identity and the preference for state opting-out in the basque country';  
Howe, 'Rationality and sovereignty support in Quebec';  
McCrone and Paterson, 'The conundrum of Scottish independence';  
Serrano, 'Just a matter of identity?'

association between pro-independence party identification and supporting Catalan secession. This finding is consistent with many previous studies, with support for intermediating agents, such as political parties and leaders, having been identified as a key driver of secessionist support across a wide range of cases.<sup>666</sup>

Table 7.3 (below) contains two models (Models V and VI), which include multiplicative interaction terms in order to test for the moderating effect of differential institutional trust on the respective relationships between national identity and secessionist party identification and support for Catalan secession. Firstly, Model V includes the multiplicative interaction term 'Differential trust (Spanish government to Catalan government) · National identity', which measures the moderating effect of differential institutional trust on the relationship between national identity and support for Catalan secession.

H8C predicts that higher levels of differential institutional trust would have a positive effect on the strength of the relationship between national identity and Catalan secessionist support. By referring the figures in Table 7.3 and the plot in Figure 7.17, it will be possible to interpret how the conditional marginal effect of X (national identity) on Y (support for Catalan secession) changes across levels of the moderator Z (differential institutional trust).<sup>667</sup> H9C meanwhile, hypothesises that higher levels of differential institutional trust will have a positive impact on the strength of the relationship between secessionist party identification and support for Catalan secession.

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<sup>666</sup> Clarke and Kornberg, 'Choosing Canada?';

Clarke et al, 'Referendum voting as political choice';

Nadeau et al, 'Attitudes Towards Risk-Taking and Individual Choice in the Quebec Referendum on Sovereignty';

Pammett and LeDuc, 'Sovereignty, leadership and voting in the Quebec referendums';

Torcal and Mota, 'The role of political parties in shaping citizens' political preferences for the territorial organization of the state'

<sup>667</sup> Brambor et al, 'Understanding interaction models,' 63

**Table 7.3: Logistic regression analyses predicting support for secession in Catalonia, in 2015**

<i>Model</i>	Estimated coefficients (standard errors)	
	V	VI
<i>Multiplicative interaction terms</i>		
Differential trust (Spanish gov. to Catalan gov.) · National identity	0.001 (0.054)	-
Differential trust (Spanish gov. to Catalan gov.) · Secessionist party identification	-	0.031 (0.085)
<i>Institutional trust</i>		
Differential trust (Spanish gov. to Catalan gov.)	0.165 (0.223)	<b>0.149 (0.054)**</b>
<i>Interpersonal trust</i>		
Differential trust (Spanish citizens to Catalan citizens)	<b>0.192 (0.070)**</b>	<b>0.192 (0.070)**</b>
<i>Control variables</i>		
Language spoken at home (Catalan)	0.212 (0.213)	0.215 (0.213)
Moreno national identity (Spanish to Catalan)	<b>1.532 (0.660)*</b>	<b>1.517 (0.141)***</b>
Secessionist party identification	<b>1.424 (0.192)***</b>	1.043 (1.056)
Political ideology (left to right scale)	<b>-0.128 (0.051)*</b>	<b>-0.123 (0.051)*</b>
Age	-0.009 (0.006)	-0.009 (0.006)
Household income	-0.016 (0.039)	-0.015 (0.040)
Highest level of education	0.045 (0.047)	0.045 (0.047)
Gender (male)	0.232 (0.185)	0.229 (0.185)
<i>N</i>	1204	1204
<i>Pseudo R2</i>		
Nagelkerke	0.675	0.675
Cox & Snell	0.504	0.504

Bold figures denote significant effects: \*p < 0.05; \*\*p < 0.01; \*\*\*p < 0.001

Dependent variable: Whether the respondent thinks that Catalonia should become independent from Spain

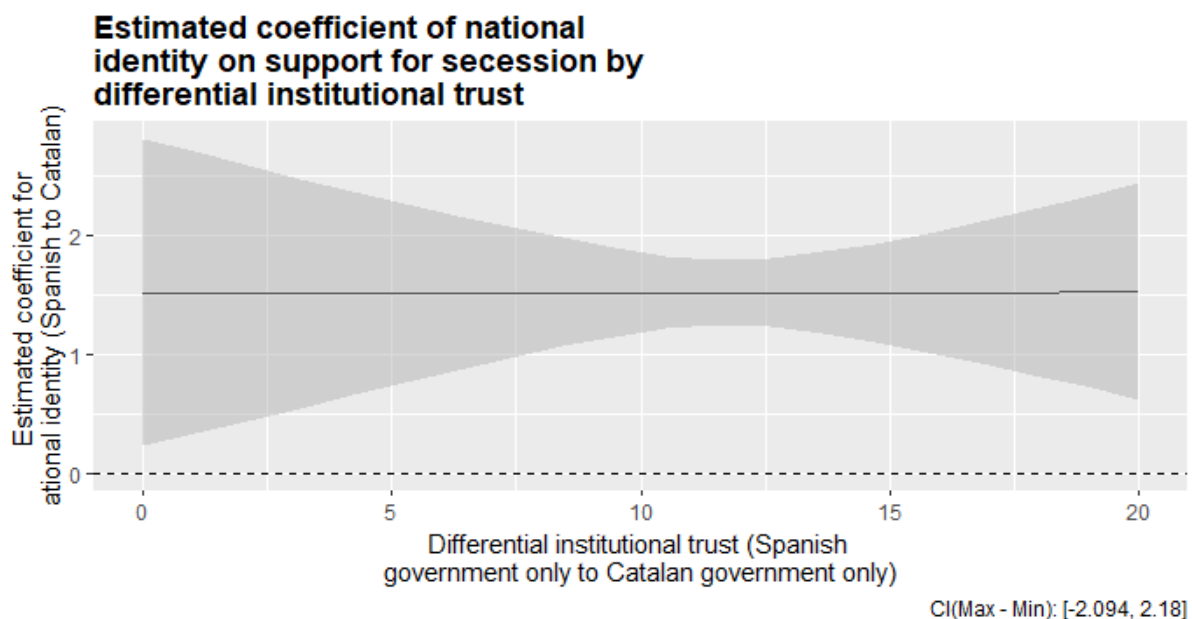
Data: *Baròmetre d'Opinió Política*, 2a onada 2015 (Political Opinion Barometer Catalonia, 2<sup>nd</sup> Wave)

Firstly, the results shown in Table 7.3 do not provide support for H8C, showing that the estimated coefficient for the multiplicative interaction term 'Differential trust (Spanish gov. to Catalan gov.) · National identity', does not have a statistically significant impact on support for Catalan secession at the .05 level. Figure 7.17 (below) displays the moderating effect of differential institutional trust in more depth. As Figure 7.17 shows, the gradient of Model V, which outlines the extent to which the estimated coefficient for national identity on support for Catalan secession varies as a result of changes in differential institutional trust remains at '0', regardless of changes in differential institutional trust.

The absence of an interaction is interesting in itself however, as it suggests that, regardless of an individual's level of differential institutional trust, national identity remains a strong predictor of secessionist support. It is important to note that the small number of respondents at either end of the differential institutional trust scale has led to a large margin of error where levels of differential institutional trust are highest. For instance, while it might be expected that values of close to zero on the x-axis, reflecting high levels of trust in the Spanish government and low levels of trust in the Catalan government, would lead to a weaker relationship between national identity and support for secession, there are too few responses close to zero to provide any firm conclusions. Closer to the centre of the plot however (e.g. between eight and fifteen), where the margin of error is low, there is strong evidence to suggest that levels of differential institutional trust do not impact the strength of the relationship.

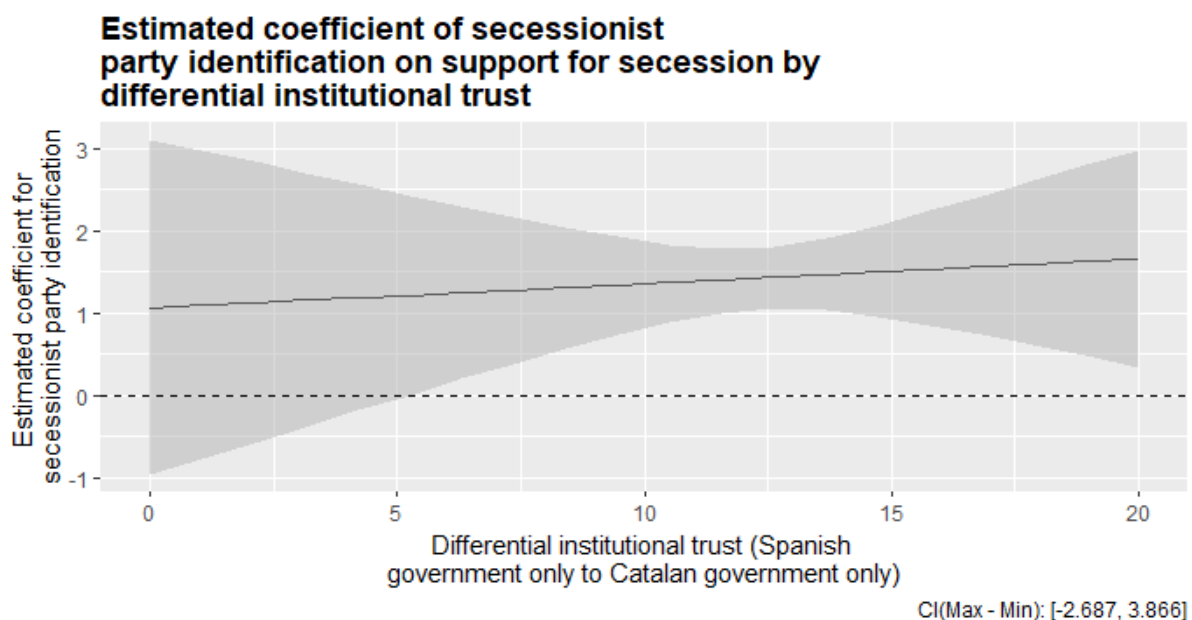
The results from Model VI meanwhile, indicate that there is also no statistically significant interaction between differential institutional trust and the relationship between secessionist party identification, at the .05 level. Figure 7.18 (below) displays the interaction in greater detail, outlining the extent to which the estimated coefficient for secessionist party identification on support for Catalan secession varies as a result of changes in differential institutional trust.

**Figure 7.17: Estimated coefficient of national identity on support for Catalan secession by differential institutional trust**



Data: *Baròmetre d'Opinió Política, 2a onada 2015* (Political Opinion Barometer Catalonia, 2<sup>nd</sup> Wave)  
n = 1204

**Figure 7.18: Estimated coefficient of secessionist party identification on support for Catalan secession by differential institutional trust**



Data: *Baròmetre d'Opinió Política, 2a onada 2015* (Political Opinion Barometer Catalonia, 2<sup>nd</sup> Wave)  
n = 1204

As was the case for Model V, it is important to note the large margin of error at either end of the differential institutional trust scale, caused by the small number of respondents at either end of the differential institutional trust scale. In the central portion of the plot however, where the margin of error is smallest, despite the presence of a positive gradient (which would suggest an interaction between the variables), the margin of error is still too great to indicate a statistically significant interaction. The results from Table 7.3 and Figure 7.18 therefore do not provide evidence to support H9C, showing that the estimated coefficient for secessionist party identification on support for Catalan secession does not significantly vary, regardless of changes in differential institutional trust.

Table 7.4 (below) contains an additional model (Model VII), which tests for the moderating effect of differential interpersonal trust on the relationship between national identity and support for Catalan secession. In doing so, Model VII includes the multiplicative interaction term 'Differential trust (Spanish citizens to Catalan citizens) · National identity.' The results from Model VII indicate that the multiplicative interaction term 'Differential trust (Spanish citizens to Catalan citizens) · National identity' is statistically significant, at the .05 level, suggesting that differential interpersonal trust does have a moderating effect on the relationship between national identity and support for Catalan secession. The plot shown in Figure 7.19 (below) displays this interaction in greater depth.



**Table 7.4: Logistic regression analyses predicting support for secession in Catalonia, in 2015**

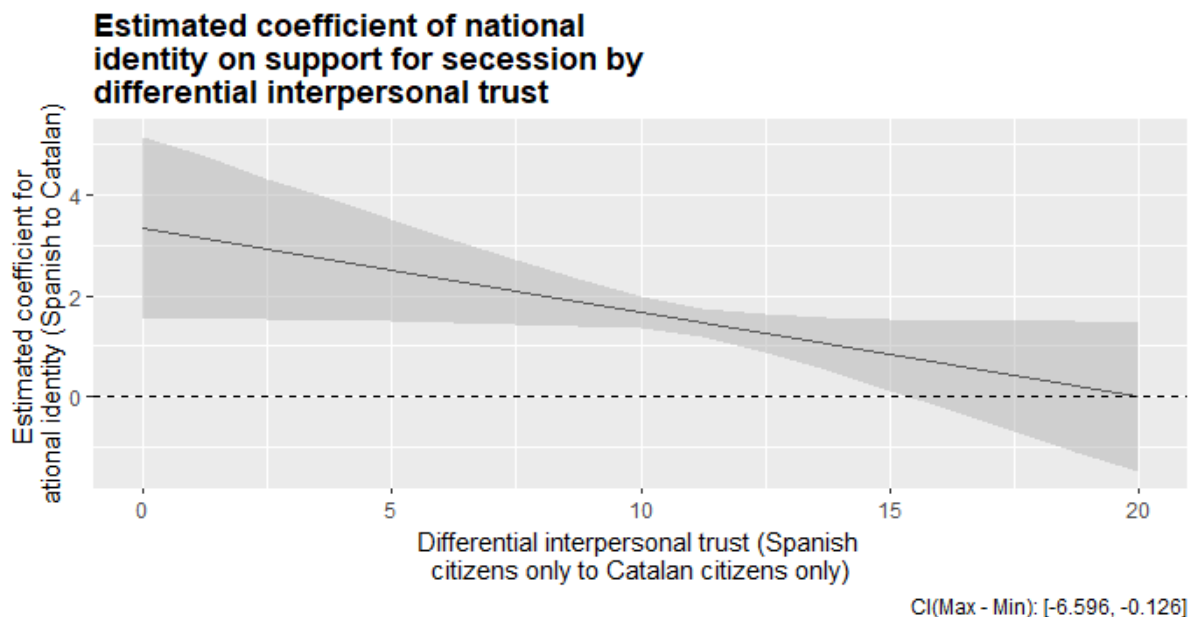
	Estimated coefficients (standard errors)
<i>Model</i>	VII
<i>Multiplicative interaction terms</i>	
Differential trust (Spanish citizens to Catalan citizens) · National identity	<b>-0.170 (0.082)*</b>
<i>Institutional trust</i>	
Differential trust (Spanish gov. to Catalan gov.)	<b>-0.161 (0.043)***</b>
<i>Interpersonal trust</i>	
Differential trust (Spanish citizens to Catalan citizens)	<b>-0.910 (0.360)*</b>
<i>Control variables</i>	
Language spoken at home (Catalan)	0.175 (0.216)
Moreno national identity (Spanish to Catalan)	<b>3.367 (0.923)***</b>
Secessionist party identification	<b>1.423 (0.192)***</b>
Political ideology (left to right scale)	<b>-0.129 (0.051)*</b>
Age	-0.009 (0.006)
Household income	-0.016 (0.040)
Highest level of education	0.045 (0.047)
Gender (male)	0.246 (0.186)
<i>N</i>	1204
<i>Pseudo R2</i>	
Nagelkerke	0.676
Cox & Snell	0.505

Bold figures denote significant effects: \*p < 0.05; \*\*p < 0.01; \*\*\*p < 0.001

Dependent variable: Whether the respondent thinks that Catalonia should become independent from Spain

Data: *Baròmetre d'Opinió Política*, 2a onada 2015 (Political Opinion Barometer Catalonia, 2<sup>nd</sup> Wave)

**Figure 7.19: Estimated coefficient of national identity on support for Catalan secession by differential interpersonal trust**



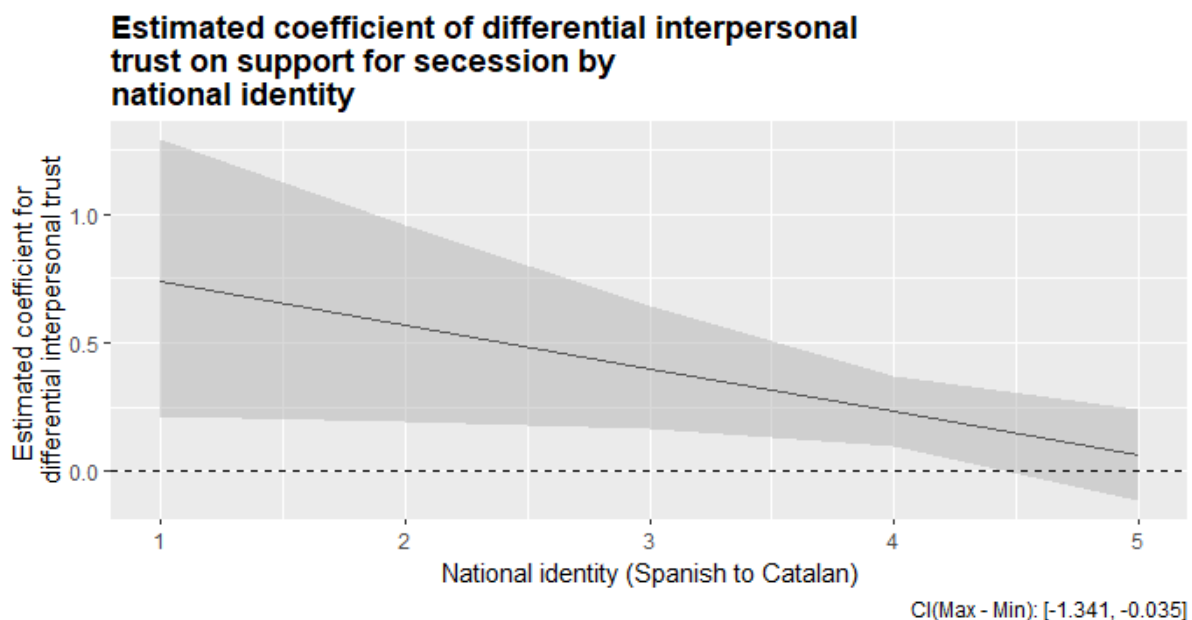
Data: *Baròmetre d'Opinió Política, 2a onada 2015* (Political Opinion Barometer Catalonia, 2<sup>nd</sup> Wave)  
n = 1204

Although the results of Model VII suggest that there is a statistically significant interaction between differential interpersonal trust and the relationship between national identity and support for secession, the direction of this effect appears to contradict that predicted in H7C. While the hypothesis expected that for those with higher levels of trust in Catalans than Spanish citizens, the relationship between national identity and support for Catalan secession would be stronger, Figure 7.19 appears to suggest that the relationship is stronger where trust in Spanish citizens is higher than trust in Catalans (from 0 to 10 on the x-axis). This interaction is difficult to explain theoretically, as there are no obvious reasons why for those with higher trust in Spanish citizens than Catalans, identifying as more strongly Catalan should have a greater impact on support for secession.

It is important to note however, that although the estimated coefficient for the multiplicative interaction term 'Differential trust (Spanish citizens to Catalan citizens) · National identity.' is significant at the .05 level, this result alone does not determine which of the two variables is acting as the moderator. There is a possibility therefore, that national

identity is in fact moderating the relationship between differential interpersonal trust and support for secession, as shown in Figure 7.20 (below):

**Figure 7.20: Estimated coefficient of differential interpersonal trust on support for Catalan secession by national identity**



The plot shown above (Figure 7.20) indicates that, where a respondent's national identity is more strongly Catalan, the relationship between differential interpersonal trust and support for Catalan secession is weak. For those who feel equally Spanish and Catalan, or more Spanish than Catalan meanwhile, differential interpersonal trust appears to have a stronger positive impact on support for Catalan secession.

The presence of a moderating effect by national identity on the relationship between differential interpersonal trust and support for secession, is itself interesting. The most likely explanation for this finding is that it reflects the strength of the relationship between national identity and secessionist support in Catalonia. Those with exclusive Catalan identities have a very high likelihood of supporting secession, irrespective of their differential interpersonal trust. For those with some element of dual Catalan and Spanish identities however, interpersonal trust is a stronger predictor of secessionist support.

## 7.6 Conclusions

In conclusion, all six measures of trust tested for in this analysis were found to have a statistically significant impact on support for Catalan secession: trust in the Spanish government, trust in the Catalan government, differential institutional trust, trust in Spanish citizens, trust in Catalan citizens and differential interpersonal trust. In addition, this chapter included three hypotheses which tested for the moderating effect of trust on the relationship between support for Catalan secession and two of its most reliable predictors: national identity and secessionist party identification. While no evidence was found to support two of these hypotheses, a statistically significant interaction effect was found in the multiplicative interaction term 'Differential trust (Spanish citizens to Catalan citizens) · National identity.'

While H7C predicted that where trust in Catalans is higher than trust in Spanish citizens, national identity would have a stronger impact on secessionist support, the results from Model VII appeared to indicate that national identity has a moderating effect on the relationship between differential interpersonal trust and support for secession. Those with exclusive Catalan identities have a very high likelihood of supporting secession, regardless of their levels of differential interpersonal trust. For those with dual Catalan- Spanish identities of some form however, interpersonal trust is a stronger predictor of secessionist support.

No evidence was found to support H8C however, as the coefficient for national identity remained constant, regardless of a respondent's level of differential institutional trust. Similarly, no evidence was found to support H9C, with Model VI suggesting that differential institutional trust had no statistically significant moderating effect on the relationship between secessionist party identification and support for Catalan secession, at the .05 level.

One explanation for this finding is that secessionist party identification and support for the secession of Catalonia was particularly closely aligned in 2015, as a result of the pro-secession parties having framed the 2015 Catalan election as a de facto independence referendum.<sup>668</sup> President Mas' announcement that the election should be treated as

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<sup>668</sup> Martí and Cetrà, 'The 2015 Catalan election', 109

'plebiscitary' vote on independence, David Martí and Daniel Cetrà argue, set the agenda of the election almost exclusively around the issue of secession.<sup>669</sup> While Catalan nationalist parties, most notably CiU, ERC and CUP framed the election as a de facto referendum on the secession of Catalonia, those parties which rejected the notion of independence (the Catalan Socialists (PSC), Partido Popular (PP) and Ciutadans (C's)) maintained that it ought to be treated as a regular regional election and that regardless of the election's outcome, secession was unconstitutional.<sup>670</sup>

With regards to the direct impact of trust, the institutional trust which exists between Catalans and the regional Catalan government was found to have a strong impact on secessionist support in Catalonia, as well as an individual's trust in their fellow Catalans, and their trust in Spanish citizens. The weakest impact of the four isolated measures of trust, though still statistically significant, was made by Catalans' levels of trust in the central Spanish government.

In addition to the isolated measures of trust, Model IV tested for an individual's differential institutional trust and their differential interpersonal trust. Controlling for the difference between an individual's trust in the Catalan government and the Spanish government, as well as that between their trust in Catalans and their trust in Spanish citizens, allowed Model IV to account for high or low levels of trust in all institutions or all people, for reasons which were not related to variables relevant to this study.

Firstly, differential institutional trust was found to have a statistically significant impact on the likelihood of an individual supporting Catalan secession, with the extent to which a respondent trusts the Catalan government more than the Spanish government increasing that they will favour secession. Increasing citizens' levels of trust however, presents the central Spanish government with something of a conundrum. Pursuing less restrictive, repressive policies towards the secessionists for instance, would be expected to play favourably with Catalans, reducing the extent to which the central Spanish government can be portrayed as a 'centralist, oppressive iron collar'.<sup>671</sup> In 2006 for instance, under Prime Minister José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero, the Spanish government accepted a stronger

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<sup>669</sup> Martí and Cetrà, 'The 2015 Catalan election', 109

<sup>670</sup> Martí and Cetrà, 'The 2015 Catalan election', 109

<sup>671</sup> Dion, 'Why is Secession Difficult in Well-Established Democracies? Lessons from Quebec', 279

autonomous status for Catalonia, which was submitted to a referendum in the same year and resulted in a clear increase in Catalans' levels of trust in the central government.<sup>672</sup> In 2007 in fact, levels of trust in Catalonia were no lower than the average in the rest of Spain.<sup>673</sup>

In recent years though, the Spanish government's policies towards Catalan independence have been increasingly restrictive, deeming the Catalan government's holding of a referendum illegal, before attempting to suppress it through violence, sealing polling stations and seizing ballot papers,<sup>674</sup> as well as imprisoning Catalan government members and leaders of Catalan civil society.<sup>675</sup> While pursuing a less heavy-handed approach to secessionist demands might help to restore trust among Catalans however, the Spanish government and Spanish Constitutional Court have declared any attempts to break up the Spanish state in its current form illegal, on the grounds that it is in contradiction of Section 2 of the Spanish constitution.<sup>676</sup> It is difficult therefore, to envisage a situation whereby the central government could sanction any referendum on Catalan secession while the constitution remains in its current form.

While both differential institutional and differential interpersonal trust were found to have a statistically significant impact on an individual's likelihood of supporting secession however, the second of the two variables was found to have the stronger impact in Model IV. While many accounts have attributed rising demands for secession to short-term factors, such as the economic recession and growing levels of unemployment,<sup>677</sup> the impact of differential interpersonal trust on Catalan secessionist support suggests the presence of deeper societal issues and divisions. Perhaps the most pressing concern for unionists therefore, given its stronger relationship with support for Catalan secession, is the need to build inter-group trust at the individual level, between Catalans and Spanish citizens.

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<sup>672</sup> Réjean Pelletier and Jérôme Couture, 'Identity and Political Trust in Multinational Democracies: The Cases of Québec and Catalonia', in Dimitrios Karmis and François Rocher (eds.), *Trust, Distrust and Mistrust in Multinational Democracies: Comparative Perspectives* (Montreal: McGill-Queens University Press, 2018)

<sup>673</sup> Pelletier and Couture, 'Identity and Political Trust in Multinational Democracies'

<sup>674</sup> Mut Bosque, 'Scotland and Catalonia in Twenty-First Century European Union', 90

<sup>675</sup> Camps, 'Barcelona mayor proposes EU dialogue platform on Catalan conflict';

Casanas Adam et al, 'Democracy in Question?', 270;

Jones and Burgen, 'Catalan leader calls for mediation with Spain over independence'

<sup>676</sup> Congreso de los Diputados, *Spanish Constitution*, 10

<sup>677</sup> Guinjoan and Rodon, 'Catalonia at the crossroads', 20

## Chapter 8. Flanders

### 8.1 Introduction

Existential debates about the nature and future of the Belgian state have dominated its political landscape at various points in its history. Kris Deschouwer for instance, has described Belgium as a divided society which has thus far survived, but constantly puts itself in question.<sup>678</sup>

The disputes of the 1970s and 80s, between Belgium's language communities, eventually resulted in the transformation of the unitary state into a federation, which it has officially been since 1995. While becoming a federation temporarily appeared to have reduced the intensity of the conflict, 2007 marked the beginning of a new period of instability and gridlock, characterised by deep divisions on issues such as language, territory and the very survival of the country.<sup>679</sup>

In the elections of 2010, the Flemish nationalist N-VA became the country's largest party, running on a platform which pushed for 'loose confederation' and ultimately outright independence for Flanders.<sup>680</sup> Voices arguing for a final 'post-Belgium' solution were much stronger in the North (Flanders), while those defending the continuing existence of Belgium were much prominent in the South (Wallonia) and Brussels.<sup>681</sup>

In comparison to the previous cases analysed in this thesis, the dynamics of secessionist support in Flanders have received relatively little scholarly attention. The most likely explanation for this is that, in contrast to the cases of Scotland and Catalonia, no referendum on Flemish secession has so far taken place. Furthermore, as voter support for pro-independence parties is yet to exceed 50 percent, it is generally assumed there is a current absence of majority support for secession and therefore no mandate to hold such a referendum.<sup>682</sup>

Following Belgium's numerous government formation crises however, taking 196 days to form a government after the 2007 general election, 541 days in 2010, and 140 days in 2014,

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<sup>678</sup> Deschouwer, *The politics of Belgium*, 2

<sup>679</sup> Deschouwer, *The politics of Belgium*, 1

<sup>680</sup> Deschouwer, *The politics of Belgium*, 2

<sup>681</sup> Deschouwer, *The politics of Belgium*, 2

<sup>682</sup> Duerr, *Secessionism and the European Union*, 177

the current coalition government in Flanders features the pro-independence N-VA as major partner, lending significant plausibility to the movement for Flemish secession.<sup>683</sup> Furthermore, N-VA and Vlaams Belang (VB), a party which also campaigned on a pro-secession platform, combined for around forty percent of the Flemish vote in 2010 and 2015, and almost fifty percent of the vote in 2019. Should secessionist parties continue to grow in popularity and come to constitute a majority of voters in Flanders, independence through the ballot box will become a viable option.<sup>684</sup>

The focus of this chapter is twofold. Firstly, it will analyse the direct impact of trust on support for the secession of Flanders, using logistic regression to determine the extent to which indicators of trust predict an individual's preferences toward the notion of outright Flemish independence. Like the previous chapter, which found trust at both the institutional and interpersonal levels to be significant predictors of secessionist support, the data available for the Flemish case will allow for the analysis of interpersonal and institutional trust, testing for the impact each of these has on support for Flemish secession.

Secondly, this chapter will consider the impact of trust (both at the individual and institutional level) as a moderator, in the relationships between support for Flemish secession and two of its most robust predictors. By using multiplicative interaction terms, this analysis will test for the interaction effects of trust indicators, on both the relationships between national identity and support for Flemish secession, and pro-secession party identification and secessionist support.

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<sup>683</sup> Duerr, *Secessionism and the European Union*, 176

<sup>684</sup> Duerr, *Secessionism and the European Union*, 177



## 8.2 The Flemish secessionist movement

In the aftermath of the Belgian Revolution in 1830, Belgium became an independent unitary state, made up nine provinces, which directly corresponded to the nine ‘Départements’ established by its former French rulers.<sup>685</sup> From the beginning of its existence, Wils argues, the newly formed Belgian state was already home to linguistic divisions between the Dutch-speaking Flemings in the northern part of the country and the French-speaking Walloons in the south.<sup>686</sup> Over the 150 years which followed Wallonia and Flanders remained linguistically divided, with the two regions eventually becoming the primary administrative regions in a state which is now formally partitioned along linguistic lines.<sup>687</sup>

In the immediate aftermath of the Belgian Revolution, Flemish cultural demands were considered unmet,<sup>688</sup> with Francophones given the upper hand in most areas of public life,<sup>689</sup> as French was chosen as the language of government, business and higher education.<sup>690</sup> A desire for the recognition of the Dutch language, Deprez states, was initially at the heart of the ‘Flemish movement’,<sup>691</sup> which took Dutch speakers to be constitutive of one ‘Netherlandish’ people, whether they resided North or South of the Belgian border.<sup>692</sup> As several decades and generations passed, the Flemish movement saw the Dutch-speaking inhabitants of Belgium grow into a Flemish nation within the Belgian state,<sup>693</sup> pushing for greater autonomy and in some sections, secession from Belgium.

In the late 1960s, at a point when nationalist tensions between Flemings and Walloons had escalated into a major political problem,<sup>694</sup> ‘linguistic borders’ became more formally established, paving the way for the development of regionalism and ultimately federalism in Belgium.<sup>695</sup> Between 1970 and 1993, the Belgian Constitution underwent four formal alterations, with each leading to enhanced devolution measures for the regions of Flanders

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<sup>685</sup> Husson et al, ‘Federalism and Decentralisation in Belgium’

Luykx, *Atlas Historique et Culturel de la Belgique*

<sup>686</sup> Wils, ‘Introduction’, 1

<sup>687</sup> Murphy, ‘Evolving regionalism in linguistically divided Belgium’, 135

<sup>688</sup> Husson et al, ‘Federalism and Decentralisation in Belgium’, 47

<sup>689</sup> Polasky, ‘Liberalism and Biculturalism’

<sup>690</sup> Murphy, ‘Evolving regionalism in linguistically divided Belgium’

<sup>691</sup> Deprez, ‘The Dutch Language in Flanders,’

<sup>692</sup> Wils, ‘Introduction’, 8

<sup>693</sup> Wils, ‘Introduction’, 10

<sup>694</sup> Falter, ‘Belgium’s Peculiar Way to Federalism’

<sup>695</sup> Husson et al, ‘Federalism and Decentralisation in Belgium’, 47

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and Wallonia.<sup>696</sup> The fourth constitutional reform in 1993 saw the development a new, entirely re-written Belgian Constitution, which proclaimed that ‘Belgium is a Federal State, made up of the Communities and the Regions’.<sup>697</sup>

For approximately a decade, Belgium’s transition to federalism appeared to have accommodated Flemish demands for independence, however this period of apparent stability soon gave way to political gridlock and resurfacing divisions on such issues as language, territory and the very existence of the Belgian state.<sup>698</sup> Fractures between Flemings and Walloons are considered by many to be deepening, calling into question the existence of a united Belgian identity,<sup>699</sup> and the long-term viability of a Belgian state.<sup>700</sup> In the current Belgian political climate, the most notable proponents of the Flemish movement can be found in two electorally successful political parties, N-VA and VB, which will be examined in greater detail below.

### **Nieuw-Vlaamse Alliantie (N-VA)**

N-VA is a relatively new political party, having formed in 2001, aiming to fill the space left in the Flemish political spectrum following declining support for its predecessor party, ‘Volkunie’.<sup>701</sup> Since the party’s inception, its popularity has surged, becoming the largest party in Flanders, as well as Belgium as a whole. Between 2014 and 2018, N-VA participated in the federal government’s centre-right coalition, alongside ‘Christen-Democratisch en Vlaams’ (CD&V), ‘Open Vlaamse Liberalen en Democraten’ (Open Vld) and ‘Mouvement Réformateur’ (MR).

Although experiencing losses in both vote share and parliamentary seats, the most recent Flemish Parliament elections of May 2019 saw N-VA returned as Flanders’ largest party, accounting for 24.8 per cent of the vote and 35 of the Flemish parliament’s 124 seats. Similarly, in the Belgian federal elections which took place on the same day, N-VA saw a decline in vote share and number of seats, but remain Belgium’s most popular party, with 16

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<sup>696</sup> Falter, ‘Belgium’s Peculiar Way to Federalism’, 177

<sup>697</sup> Falter, ‘Belgium’s Peculiar Way to Federalism’, 191

<sup>698</sup> Deschouwer, *The politics of Belgium*, 1

<sup>699</sup> Billiet et al, ‘Does Belgium (Still) Exist?’

<sup>700</sup> O’Neill, ‘Belgium’;

Swenden and Jans, “Will it Stay or Will It Go?”

<sup>701</sup> Lieven De Winter, ‘Multi-level Party Competition and Coordination in Belgium’, in Dan Hough and Charlie Jeffery (eds.), *Devolution and Electoral Politics* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2006): 76-95

per cent of the national vote and 25 of the 150 available seats in the Belgian 'Kamer van Volksvertegenwoordigers' (Chamber of Representatives). Despite losing some momentum therefore, N-VA maintained its position as the most popular party in both the regional and federal orders government, thus occupying an extremely influential position in both Flemish and Belgian politics.

Flemish independence is a firm priority for N-VA, publicly advocating a gradual movement towards an independent Flanders, through increasing the region's political autonomy until the Belgian federal government is left with virtually no powers.<sup>702</sup> On this key issue, N-VA differs from its fellow pro-independence party VB, which has stated in virtually every party publication, broadcast and statement that immediate secession from Belgium is its highest priority.<sup>703</sup> Despite favouring a comparatively gradualist approach however, Glen M.E. Duerr highlights, many of N-VA's elite political leaders privately confide that their ultimate ambition is to achieve outright secession for Flanders and the creation of an entirely independent Flemish state.<sup>704</sup>

Bart De Wever for instance, leader of N-VA, likens his party's approach to the pursuit of Flemish independence to watching aspirin when it is placed in a glass of water: while one may not see any drastic, immediate change, the aspirin gradually dissolves until it is gone entirely.<sup>705</sup> Similarly, De Wever envisages the eventual, total dissolution of the Belgian federal state, once Flanders has total sovereignty over Flemish affairs.

It is important to note however, that outright independence is not perceived to be a necessity for all members of N-VA, with some sections of the party prioritising total Flemish sovereignty, whereby the Flemish parliament has complete power over all issues in Flanders, regardless of whether or not Belgium continues to exist.<sup>706</sup> For these members, secession is not deemed essential, so long as Belgium only constitutes a 'shell', with no discernible powers to govern in Flanders.<sup>707</sup>

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<sup>702</sup> Duerr, *Secessionism and the European Union*, 56

<sup>703</sup> Duerr, *Secessionism and the European Union*, 30

<sup>704</sup> Duerr, *Secessionism and the European Union*, 56

<sup>705</sup> Duerr, *Secessionism and the European Union*, 57

<sup>706</sup> O'Leary, 'Europe's Embers of Nationalism', 102

<sup>707</sup> O'Leary, 'Europe's Embers of Nationalism', 102

## Vlaams Belang (VB)

When the party was created in 1977, under the name 'Vlaams Blok' (Flemish Bloc), Janet Laible argues, it was a fringe, radical party, with a range of extreme platforms which focussed on constitutional reform.<sup>708</sup> Following its first significant electoral breakthrough in 1999, in which the party returned 15 seats, VB's support grew steadily.<sup>709</sup> In 2004 however, despite its support continuing to grow, a court ruling judged that a number of the party's platforms violated Belgium's anti-racism laws, leading to its disbanding and subsequent name change, to 'Vlaams Belang' (Flemish Interest).<sup>710</sup>

Following the party's reconfiguration, VB enjoyed another surge in support, almost doubling its number of council members in the 2006 municipal elections, before effectively maintaining the status quo in the 2007 general election, winning 17 seats in the Belgian Chamber of Representatives and five seats in the Senate. Although VB's support declined substantially in the 2010 and 2014 federal elections, with its vote share falling to 12 per cent in the former and under 6 in the latter, this decline is generally attributed to N-VA's surge in popularity, which also campaigned on Flemish independence.

In the most recent elections of 2019, VB polled in second place in Flanders, and made gains at both the federal and regional levels, winning 18 seats in the Chamber of Representatives and 23 seats in the Flemish parliament. Following VB's recent electoral success, N-VA has discussed the possibility of breaking the 'Cordon sanitaire' currently in place, which aims to exclude far-right parties (including VB) from any political majority.<sup>711</sup>

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<sup>708</sup> Janet Laible, 'Nationalism and a Critique of European Integration: Questions from the Flemish Parties', in Michael Keating and John McGarry (eds), *Minority Nationalism and the Changing International Order* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001): 223-245

<sup>709</sup> Hans De Witte and Bert Klandermans, 'Political Racism in Flanders and the Netherlands: Explaining Differences in the Electoral Success of Extreme Right-Wing Parties,' *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 26 (4) (2000): 699-717;

Liesbet Hooghe, 'Belgium: Hollowing the Center', in Ugo Amoretti and Nancy Bermeo (eds.), *Federalism and Territorial Cleavages* (Baltimore, MD: Johns-Hopkins University Press, 2004): 55-92;

Louis Vos, 'Nationalism, Democracy and the Belgian State,' in Richard Caplan and John Feffer (eds.), *Europe's New Nationalism: States and Minorities in Conflict* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996): 85-100

<sup>710</sup> Samuel Humes, *Belgium: Long United, Long Divided* (London: C Hurst & Company Publishers Limited, 2014): 214

<sup>711</sup> The Brussels Times, 'Belgium's far-right not ruled out of potential coalition', (<https://www.brusselstimes.com/all-news/belgium-all-news/57328/belgiums-far-right-not-ruled-out-of-potential-coalition/>, 20<sup>th</sup> July, 2019)

Such a move would potentially pave the way for a level of cooperation between the two parties in favour of Flemish independence, which had long seemed implausible.

For VB, the protection of the Dutch language and Flemish culture in Flanders is vital, arguing that historically, Flemings were made to feel like second-class citizens in their own country, dominated by Walloons throughout society, in education, the court system and economic advancements.<sup>712</sup> While VB's stance on immigration has become significantly more nuanced since its predecessor party's '70 points' plan to prevent immigration completely, VB members insist on absolute assimilation into Flemish culture, in order to protect Flanders from cultural erosion.<sup>713</sup>

On Flemish secession, the party is similarly firm, citing the independence of Flanders as its highest priority in virtually every party publication, broadcast and statement it issues. In 2007, VB put forth a motion in the Chamber of Representatives advocating 'the breakup of the Belgian state', and the granting of independence to its communities.<sup>714</sup> The proposal was defeated in the Chamber however, with most Flemish parties voting against the resolution, while members of N-VA and CD&V abstained. As VB experiences a resurgence in electoral success however, and cooperation with N-VA which had long seemed unworkable is for the first time being discussed, demands for Flemish secession remain at the forefront of Belgian political debate.

### 8.3 Trust and support for Flemish secession

As in the previous chapter, two forms of trust will be especially crucial to this analysis: institutional and interpersonal trust. The first of these refers to that which operates vertically through formal hierarchical structures, between individuals and the institutions that hold relative power over them,<sup>715</sup> and in the context of secessionist support in Flanders, this

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<sup>712</sup> Duerr, *Secessionism and the European Union*, 37

<sup>713</sup> Duerr, *Secessionism and the European Union*, 32

<sup>714</sup> Belgian Chamber of Representatives, 'Proposal of Resolution to break up the Belgian State with a view to granting independence to the sovereign Flemish and Walloon peoples,' *2<sup>nd</sup> Sitting of the 52<sup>nd</sup> Legislature* (<https://www.dekamer.be/FLWB/PDF/52/0292/52K0292001.pdf>, 20<sup>th</sup> July, 2019)

<sup>715</sup> Szreter and Woolcock, 'Health by association? Social capital, social theory, and the political economy of public health';

Woolcock, 'The place of social capital in understanding social and economic outcomes'

chapter will primarily focus on the levels of institutional trust that exist between Flemish citizens and both the Belgian and Flemish orders of government.

Interpersonal trust meanwhile, exists horizontally between individuals, in the absence of any explicit, formal, or institutionalised power or authority gradients in society.<sup>716</sup> This chapter will focus on the interpersonal trust which exists between Flemings and Dutch people, and between Flemings and Walloons. The absence of available data on an individual's trust in Flemish citizens is somewhat limiting, in that a variable which measures trust in Dutch people is not directly equivalent to the variable used in the Catalan case (which measured trust in Catalan citizens). As outlined in Chapter 5 however, this limitation will be recognised and accounted for, by omitting any direct comparisons between the interpersonal trust variables in the Flemish case and the Catalan case. Furthermore, the Flemish secessionist movement is somewhat unusual in that while many separatists favour the creation of an entirely independent Flemish state, parts of the secessionist movement advocate reunion with the Netherlands. Consequently, feelings towards Dutch people should act as an appropriate predictor of Flemish secessionist support.

As highlighted in previous chapters, the most commonly identified predictors of support for secession, national identity and secessionist party identification, are generally considered to be stable variables, or at least variables which cannot easily be affected by policy makers in the short term.<sup>717</sup> In contrast, levels of trust have been found to be more malleable, both at the horizontal level and the vertical level.

Levels of interpersonal trust, which exist horizontally between individuals, have been found to be influenced by various public policy measures across a wide range of cases, such as the promotion of civic engagement and community building projects.<sup>718</sup> Institutional trust and in particular trust in governments, have been found to be affected by a number of factors,

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<sup>716</sup> Szreter and Woolcock, 'Health by association? Social capital, social theory, and the political economy of public health'

<sup>717</sup> Blais and Nadeau, 'To be or not to be sovereignist', 95;  
Howe, 'Rationality and sovereignty support in Quebec', 50

<sup>718</sup> Putnam, 'Bowling Alone'

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including institutional performance relative to citizens' expectations,<sup>719</sup> transparency,<sup>720</sup> and representation of citizens' concerns.<sup>721</sup>

Understanding the role trust plays in shaping support for Flemish secession is therefore useful for separatists and unionists alike, as it has the potential to provide valuable new information about the dynamics of support for the secession of Flanders, as well as the potential measures which could be taken to address the secessionist demands.

### 8.3.1 Institutional trust

In analysing the role of trust in predicting support for Flemish secession, this chapter will focus on three distinct forms of institutional trust. This first of these, is that where the object of a citizen's trust is the Belgian federal government, which is expected to correspond with a decreased likelihood of supporting Flemish secession. The second is that where the object of trust is the regional government of Flanders, where higher levels of trust are expected to have a positive impact on support for the secession of Flanders. Finally, this chapter will consider a respondent's differential institutional trust, which measures the difference between their levels of trust in the Flemish government and the Belgian government.

The inclusion of this third variable is particularly important for two main reasons. Firstly, testing an individual's levels of differential institutional trust enables the more comprehensive testing of Dion's fear-confidence model, which theorised that majority support for secession is only likely to exist when fear of the union and confidence in the prospects of secession are present at simultaneously high levels. Controlling for an individual's simultaneous trust in one institution and distrust in another ought to provide a more comprehensive test of this theory than testing the isolated impact of trust in each institution. Secondly, measuring differential institutional trust enables a model to account for

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<sup>719</sup> Cooper, 'Performance and Expectations in American Politics'; Dalton, *Democratic Challenges, Democratic Choices*; Miller and Listhaug, 'Political Performance and Institutional Trust'; Orren, 'Fall from Grace'; Seyd, 'How do citizens evaluate public officials';

<sup>720</sup> Graham et al, *Guiding Principles*

<sup>721</sup> Graham et al, *Guiding Principles*;

Hibbing and Theiss-Morse, *Congress as Public Enemy*, 116;

Hibbing and Theiss-Morse (eds.), *What is It about Government That Americans Dislike?*

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those individuals who may have low levels of trust in both institutions for reasons which do not relate to factors which are relevant to secession.

The hypotheses relating to the direct impact of institutional trust, which will be tested in this chapter, are outlined below:

***Hypothesis 1, Flanders (H1F): The higher an individual's levels of trust in the Belgian government, the lower their likelihood of supporting Flemish secession***

***H2F: The higher an individual's levels of trust in the Flemish government, the greater their likelihood of supporting Flemish secession***

***H3F: The greater the difference between an individual's trust in the Flemish government and the Belgian government, the higher their likelihood of supporting secession***

As outlined in Chapter 4, individuals experiencing prolonged distrust toward a state's core institutions, such as the federal government, are faced with two possible responses: to voice their dissatisfaction, or to withdraw in favour of a 'separate scene'.<sup>722</sup> As the threat of exit from the state itself is traditionally difficult to carry out in a physical sense, the majority of citizens generally opt to either voice their dissatisfaction, or exit indirectly (i.e. through apathy towards political participation).<sup>723</sup> In a region like Flanders however, which contains an electorally successful secessionist movement however, the citizen is afforded a more credible opportunity to exit from the state itself.<sup>724</sup>

One key motivation for secessionist support can be found in Miller's argument that nations need their own states, in order to be able to protect themselves from policies of the existing state.<sup>725</sup> Central to this argument is the sense that the policies of the state, or the state itself, are somehow threatening to the national minority and something to be feared. Likewise, Dion has emphasised fear of the state as an integral factor in motivating

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<sup>722</sup> Hirschman, *Exit, Voice, and Loyalty*, 108

<sup>723</sup> Hirschman, *Exit, Voice, and Loyalty*, 96

<sup>724</sup> Hirschman, *Exit, Voice, and Loyalty*, 96

<sup>725</sup> Miller, *On Nationality*, 110



secessionists, stressing that unless fear exists at a sufficiently high level of intensity, secession is extremely improbable in well-established democracies.<sup>726</sup>

Although demands for Flemish independence have dominated the Belgian political landscape on various occasions in the state's history, the recent growth of secessionism in Flanders has coincided with the 2007 Belgian political crisis and its aftermath. One of the key causes of the political instability were Flemish grievances on the continued existence of the controversial electoral district of Brussels-Halle-Vilvoorde (BHV). As Brussels has come to be inhabited by more French speakers than Dutch speakers, most Walloons argue that this should be reflected democratically, through more language rights and electoral rights in and around the city.<sup>727</sup>

For most Flemings meanwhile, the historically majority Dutch-speaking BHV region which, as delineated by the 1962 language border, constitutes a major incursion on Flemish territory, should be decided based on the principle of territoriality.<sup>728</sup> Francophones who choose to live in the BHV region should, in the view of Flemish nationalists, respect Flemish institutions and legislation, as well as Dutch, as the region's official language.

Although the perceived unfairness of the BHV issue is perhaps the most recent grievance voiced by Flemish nationalists, Flemings have long protested that they have been treated as second-class citizens in the state of Belgium.<sup>729</sup> The protection of the Dutch language and the Flemish culture in Flanders has long been a priority for those advocating secession, believing that a Belgian state can not sufficiently provide such protections.<sup>730</sup>

A lack of political power, Dion has argued, can be a key source of grievance that may inspire distrust and negative feelings, as well as in extreme cases fear, towards the union.<sup>731</sup> In the Flemish case therefore, in which there are long term grievances and frustrations with the state's perceived failure to adequately protect and represent the interests of Flemings, it

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<sup>726</sup> Dion, 'Explaining Quebec Nationalism';

Dion, 'Why is Secession Difficult in Well-Established Democracies?'

<sup>727</sup> Duerr, *Secessionism and the European Union*, 29

<sup>728</sup> Duerr, *Secessionism and the European Union*, 29

<sup>729</sup> Margaret Lyon, *Belgium* (New York: Walker and Company, 1971): 127

<sup>730</sup> Janet Laible and Henri J. Barkey (eds.), *European Responses to Globalization: Resistance, Adaptation and Alternatives* (New York: Elsevier, 2006): 234

<sup>731</sup> Dion, 'Why is Secession Difficult in Well-Established Democracies? Lessons from Quebec', 274

is reasonable to expect that those citizens in favour of secession will be motivated by their feelings towards the Belgian federal government.

As highlighted in previous chapters, the fundamental link between fear and trust has been emphasised in many studies, arguing that in order to overcome both vertical fear (e.g. in the Belgian federal government) and horizontal (e.g. in one's fellow citizens), relations of trust and solidarity are essential.<sup>732</sup> Trust, as explained in greater detail in previous chapters, implies a belief that others will not deliberately or knowingly do us harm if they can avoid it and may in the ideal case, look after our interests. By the very nature of the concept, higher levels of trust in the Belgian federal government therefore represent a belief that it does not intend to deliberately or knowingly allow the deterioration of Flanders' cultural, economic or political situation.

Where levels of institutional trust in the Belgian federal government are high and it is considered a trustworthy institution, it is difficult to envisage a scenario where remaining in the union evokes fear. In this sense, higher levels of trust in the Belgian federal government can be expected to decrease the extent to which the secession of Flanders seems necessary,<sup>733</sup> and so where trust is high, support for Flemish secession would be expected to remain low.

As indicated in previous chapters, it has been argued that confidence in the prospects of secession is an important predictor of secessionist support, and that it must exist at a sufficiently high level of intensity if secession is to become plausible in a well-established democracy.<sup>734</sup> The intrinsic relationship between confidence and trust has been highlighted in a large number of previous studies,<sup>735</sup> and at the institutional level, trust and confidence

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<sup>732</sup> Offe, 'Political Liberalism, Group Rights, and the Politics of Fear and Trust'

<sup>733</sup> Dion, 'Why is Secession Difficult in Well-Established Democracies?', 281

<sup>734</sup> Dion, 'Why is Secession Difficult in Well-Established Democracies?', 271

<sup>735</sup> Charlton et al, 'Exploring Public Confidence in the Police and Local Councils in Tackling Crime and Anti-social Behaviour';

Cook and Gronke, 'The Skeptical American';

Janne Jalava, 'From Norms to Trust: The Luhmannian Connections between Trust and System,' *European Journal of Social Theory* 6 (2) (2003): 173-190;

Joseph Hamm et al, 'Exploring separable components of institutional confidence,' *Behavioral Sciences and the Law* 29 (1) (2011): 95-115;

Keller et al, 'The General Confidence Scale;

are considered virtually synonymous.<sup>736</sup> Institutional trust is generally understood, like confidence, to simply represent the fundamentally positive beliefs and expectations they have about their interactions with the relevant institution.<sup>737</sup>

Where an institution is considered trustworthy, and levels of trust and confidence in that institution are high, placing one's trust in that institution is considered less risky.<sup>738</sup> The more trusting and confident a citizen is in the Flemish government therefore, the less risky the prospect of Flemish secession is expected to appear.

According to data from the 2014 PartiRep voter survey, a citizen's trust in the Flemish regional government obtained a mean score of 5.7 on a scale from zero to ten, while the mean response for trust in the Belgian federal government was 5.1. Although the disparity between levels of trust in the Flemish and Belgian orders of government is not large therefore, it does appear that Flemish citizens have higher levels of trust in the Flemish order of government than the Belgian. The distribution of responses for trust in both orders of government can be seen below, in Figure 8.1:

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Metlay, 'Institutional Trust and Confidence;

Niklas Luhmann, 'Familiarity, Confidence, Trust: Problems and Alternatives', in Gambetta, Diego (ed.), *Trust: Making and Breaking Cooperative Relations* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2000): 94-107;

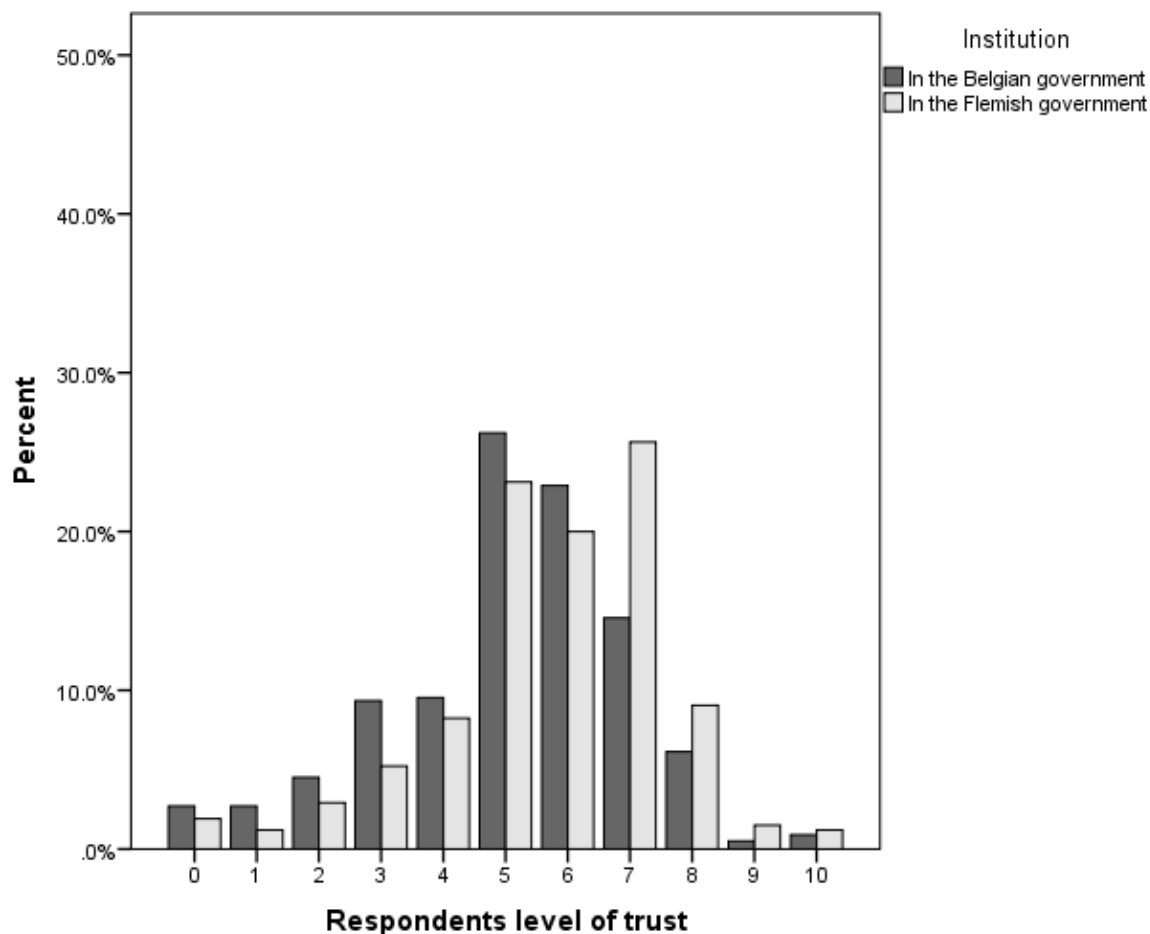
Zmerli et al, 'Trust in people, confidence in political institutions and satisfaction with democracy';

<sup>736</sup> Hardin, *Trust and Trustworthiness*, 151

<sup>737</sup> Govier, *Social Trust and Human Communities*, 34

<sup>738</sup> Hardin, 'Trustworthiness'

**Figure 8.1: Plot displaying the distribution of responses for trust in the Belgian government and trust in the Flemish government**



Data: 2014 PartiRep Voter Survey, N = 995

As explained earlier in this chapter, the region of Flanders has gained substantially increased autonomy in recent decades, as a response to Flemish nationalist demands. While the various constitutional reforms Belgium underwent throughout the 1970s, 80s and 90s temporarily appeared to have reduced the intensity of demands for Flemish secession however, deep divisions on issues such as language, territory and the very survival of the country have re-emerged.<sup>739</sup>

In the period between 1970 and 1993, the Belgian Constitution was changed four times, with each alteration leading to increased devolution.<sup>740</sup> While the first state reform of

<sup>739</sup> Deschouwer, *The politics of Belgium*, 1

<sup>740</sup> Falter, 'Belgium's Peculiar Way to Federalism', 177

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1970 saw the creation of separate cultural communities, which were to be divided along linguistic lines,<sup>741</sup> the second reform (in 1980) expanded the previously quite limited powers these communities held over the individuals within them, particularly in the areas of health and social services.<sup>742</sup> The 1980 state reform also saw the establishment of the autonomous Regions of Flanders and Wallonia,<sup>743</sup> which were separate from the existing communities, before the addition of the Brussels Region in the third reform of 1988.<sup>744</sup> The regions were given devolved powers over areas such as transport and public works, while the communities were given increased control over education.<sup>745</sup>

Finally, in the fourth state reform of 1993, Belgium completed its transition from a unitary state into a federal system, in which commensurate powers were devolved to the Regions of Flanders and Wallonia, in areas including housing, employment policy, cultural heritage, tourism, and the environment.<sup>746</sup> Since becoming a federation, Belgium has devolved further powers to the Regions, such as in the case of the Lambert accord of 2001, which granted more rights over agriculture, fisheries and foreign trade, as well as the Lombard accord of the same year, which guaranteed parliamentary representation to Flemish inhabitants of Brussels.<sup>747</sup> In 2011, powers were devolved again, which saw further components of employment and health policy governed at the regional level.<sup>748</sup>

In a federal system like that of Belgium, in which its constituent Regions have high levels of autonomy, it becomes easier to develop confidence that political sovereignty is within reach.<sup>749</sup> As more responsibilities are administered to the Flemish parliament therefore, the Flemish government is afforded a greater opportunity to demonstrate its

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<sup>741</sup> Louis Vos, 'Reconstructions of the past in Belgium and Flanders', in Bruno Coppieters and Michael Huyseune (eds.), *Secession, History and the Social Sciences* (Brussels: VUB Brussels University Press, 2002): 179-206

<sup>742</sup> Peter Wagstaff (ed.), *Regionalism in the European Union* (Portland, OR: Intellect Books, 1999): 83

<sup>743</sup> Liesbet Hooghe, *A Leap in the Dark: Nationalist Conflict and Federal Reform in Belgium* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University, 1991): 21

<sup>744</sup> Hooghe, *A Leap in the Dark*, 23

<sup>745</sup> Wagstaff, *Regionalism in the European Union*, 84

<sup>746</sup> Wagstaff, *Regionalism in the European Union*, 84

<sup>747</sup> Duerr, *Secessionism and the European Union*, 28

<sup>748</sup> Dave Sinardet, 'Is There a Belgian Public Sphere? What the Case of a Federal Multi-lingual Country can Contribute to the Debate on Transnational Public Spheres and Vice Versa', in Michel Seymour and Alain-G. Gagnon (eds.), *Multinational Federalism: Problems and Prospects* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012): 172-204;

Humes, *Belgium*, 216

<sup>749</sup> Lemco, *Political Stability in Federal Government*

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competence and trustworthiness. The more the federation's arrangements of decentralisation succeed in meeting Flanders' desire for self-government, the more they serve to strengthen its political confidence.<sup>750</sup> As trust (and confidence) in the Flemish government increases therefore, the tendency to believe Flanders is capable of making a success of secession is also expected to increase, leading to a higher likelihood of supporting Flemish secession.

### **8.3.2 Interpersonal trust**

In addition to the institutional relations of trust which operate vertically, between individuals and the institutions that hold relative power over them, the trust that exists horizontally between individuals is also expected to have an impact on support for Flemish secession. Three hypotheses relating to the direct impact of interpersonal trust on support for Flemish secession, which will be tested over the course of this chapter, are outlined below:

***H4F: The more positive an individual's feelings towards Walloons, the lower their likelihood of supporting Flemish secession***

***H5F: The more positive an individual's feelings are towards Dutch people, the greater their likelihood of supporting Flemish secession***

***H6F: The greater the difference between an individual's levels of trust in Dutch people and Walloons, the higher their likelihood of supporting secession***

As stated in previous chapters, this thesis understands trust to refer to a willingness to be vulnerable to others and to rely on them to be competent.<sup>751</sup> While interpersonal trust can exist across a wide range of groups and social cleavages, the particular focus of this chapter is that which exists between Flemings and Walloons, and between Flemings and Dutch people.

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<sup>750</sup> Kymlicka, 'Is federalism a viable alternative to secession?' 135

<sup>751</sup> McLeod, 'Trust'

Inter-group trust and its integral role in fostering bridging social capital is expected to be particularly important in the Belgian case, as Flanders and Wallonia are considered by Flemish nationalists to be quite distinct, with individuals from each region typically experiencing little to no contact with, or knowledge of the other.<sup>752</sup> Flemings and Walloons have separate symbols, celebrities and local political leaders, with only a small number of combined institutions holding the federation together. Since the 1970s, virtually all of Belgium's national political parties dissolved to become regional parties, with the few remaining nationally run parties typically performing poorly in elections.<sup>753</sup>

When Flemings were asked how positively or negatively they feel about Walloons in the 2014 PartiRep Voter Survey, the mean response was 6.8 out of ten (where 0 reflected 'very negative feelings' towards Walloons, and 10 'very positive'). This, it is worth noting, is substantially higher than the mean response for levels of trust in either the Belgian or Flemish orders of government, however just over a quarter of respondents scored their feelings towards Walloons as below five, indicating at least a somewhat negative perception.

High levels of trust towards Walloons and a generally positive evaluation of them, it can be argued, implies positive past interactions and experiences, as well optimistic expectations of any future dealings with them. Where levels of trust are low and Flemings express a negative evaluation of Walloons therefore, it follows that they do not necessarily consider them to have positive intentions. In such a context, when faced with a choice between secession and remaining a part of the Belgian state, it seems unlikely that Flemings would strongly favour the preservation of the federation, if they have a negative evaluation of most Walloons.

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<sup>752</sup> Duerr, *Secessionism and the European Union*, 27

<sup>753</sup> Francois Rocher, Christian Rouillard and Andre Lecours, 'Recognition Claims, Partisan Politics, and Institutional Constraints: Belgium, Spain and Canada in a Comparative Perspective', in Alain Gagnon and James Tully (eds.), *Multinational Democracies* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001): 338-355;

Hooghe, *A Leap in the Dark*, 5;

Lieven De Winter, 'The Volksunie and the Dilemma between Policy Success and Electoral Survival in Flanders', in Lieven De Winter and Huri Tursan (eds.), *Regionalist Parties in Western Europe* (London: Routledge, 1998): 28-50;

Rik Pinxten, 'Neo-nationalism and Democracy in Belgium: On Understanding the Contexts of Neo-communitarianism' in Andre Gingrich and Marcus Banks (eds.), *Neo-Nationalism in Europe and Beyond: Perspectives from Social Anthropology* (New York: Berghann Books, 2006): 125-137

In multinational societies with extremely diminished levels of inter-group trust and bridging social capital, divisions can become entrenched to the point that society is deeply divided. While Belgium is by no means a deeply divided society, when compared to extreme examples like Belfast or Bosnia, the electoral success of secessionist parties in Flanders appears to reflect growing divisions, and an increased threat of Flemish secession. Where divisions become more deeply entrenched and Flemings feel increasingly detached from Walloons, it seems increasingly unlikely that they would be attracted by the prospect of remaining in the Belgian state.

As opposed to the aforementioned relations of inter-group trust between Flemings and Walloons, which are expected to have a negative impact on support for Flemish secession, the trust which exists between Flemings and Dutch people is expected to have the reverse effect. Inward-looking interpersonal trust within homogenous groups is understood to be essential in the cultivation of trust, cooperation and collective strength between those homogenous individuals. The Flemish movement has long been associated with the Dutch language and culture, with Orangists as early as 1840 arguing that despite the 'regrettable' outcome of the Belgian revolution, Dutch speakers both North and South of the Belgian border were still constitutive of one 'Netherlandish' people.<sup>754</sup> Although in the current political climate, a substantial proportion of those in favour of Flemish secession support the creation of a Flemish state which is entirely separate to either Belgium or the Netherlands, a substantial portion of Flemish secessionists still advocate reunion with the Netherlands.

For the latter wing of Flemish separatists, the expectation that higher levels of interpersonal trust between Flemings and Dutch people would be beneficial to the secessionist cause is perhaps unsurprising. It seems unlikely for instance, that an individual in Flanders would feel any significant enthusiasm about the prospects of reunion with the Netherlands, if they have a negative perception of Dutch people. Where levels of trust between Flemings and Dutch people are low therefore, we might expect that support for secession is diminished.

For both those in favour of reunion with the Netherlands and those who advocate the creation of an entirely separate Flemish state, evidence to support H4F can be found in

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<sup>754</sup> Wils, 'Introduction', 8



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Putnam's theory that inward looking trust and bonding social capital are inherently exclusive.<sup>755</sup> By creating an 'in-group' (e.g. of Dutch speakers), it therefore inherently excludes an 'out-group' or an 'other' (e.g. Walloons). By creating a strong sense of in-group loyalty, it is argued, this process may also create strong out-group antagonism,<sup>756</sup> so that the more 'togetherness' a Fleming feels with Dutch people, the more separate they feel from Belgium's Francophones. By increasing levels of in-group trust between Flemings and Dutch people therefore, secessionists may further entrench divisions between Flemings and Walloons, thus increasing support for the secession of Flanders.

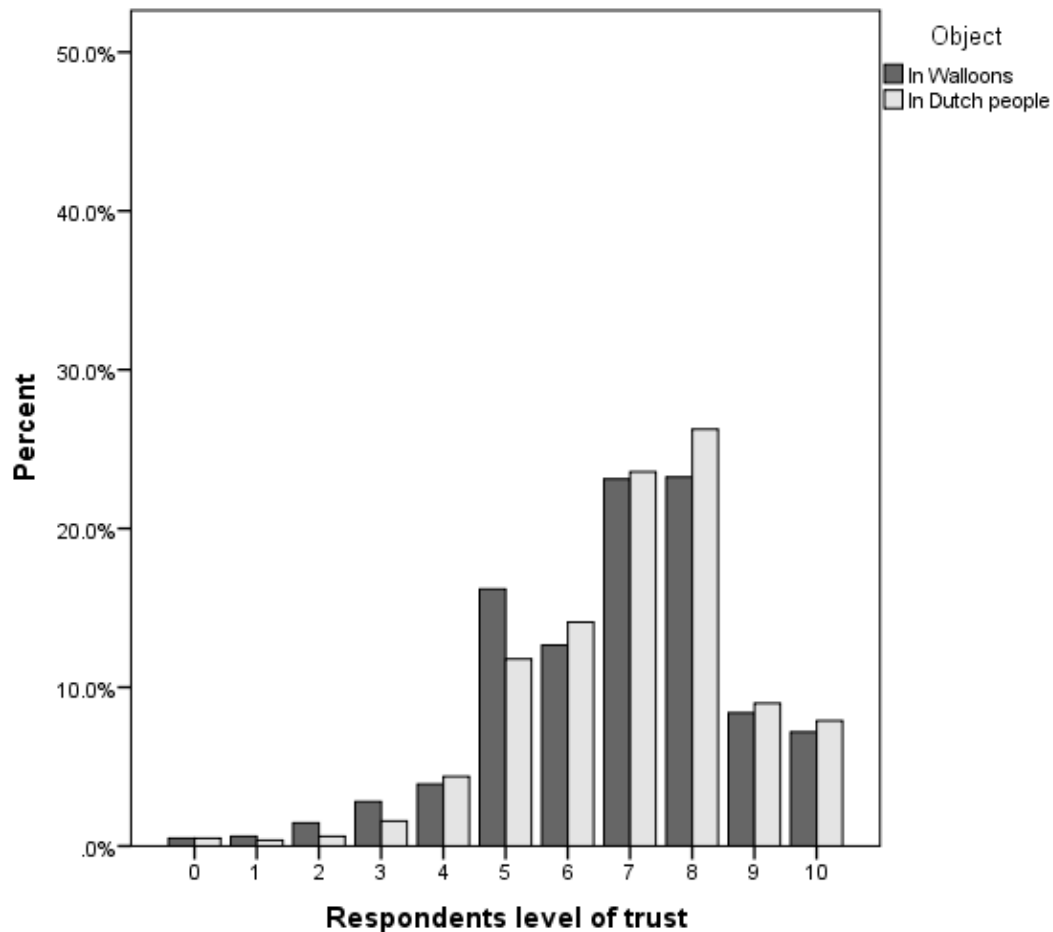
The distribution of responses for both feelings towards Walloons and Dutch people are shown below, in Figure 8.2:

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<sup>755</sup> Putnam, *Bowling Alone*, 23

<sup>756</sup> Brown, 'The Emergence of Voluntary Associations in Massachusetts'; Putnam, *Bowling Alone*, 23; Varshney, *Ethnic Conflict and Civic Life*

**Figure 8.2: Plot displaying the distribution of responses for feelings towards Walloons, and feelings towards Dutch people**



Data: 2014 PartiRep Voter Survey, N = 823

The mean response in the 2014 PartiRep survey data evaluated their feelings towards Dutch people as a 7.0 out of ten, which is a higher average than any of the other three measures of trust, although only marginally greater than the mean response for feelings towards Walloons.

## **8.4 The moderating effect of trust**

In addition to the direct impact of trust on support for Flemish secession, this chapter will test for the effects of trust as a moderator. Like Chapter 7, which analysed the role of trust in Catalonia, this chapter will examine trust's role as a moderator in the relationships between secessionist support in Flanders and two of its most robust predictors: national identity and secessionist party identification.

### **8.4.1 National identity**

As highlighted in the previous two chapters, national identity has been found to be a key predictor of support for secession in many studies across a wide range of cases,<sup>757</sup> however the subtleties of the relationship between national identity and secessionist support have received little scholarly attention. The following hypotheses relating to trust's moderating effect on the relationship between national identity and Flemish secessionist support are expected to be observed, when analysing the data from Flanders:

***H7F: The higher an individual's levels of differential interpersonal trust, the greater the extent to which their national identity will impact on their support for Flemish secession***

***H8F: The higher an individual's levels of differential institutional trust, the greater the extent to which their national identity will impact on their support for Flemish secession***

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<sup>757</sup> Blais and Nadeau, 'To be or not to be sovereignist';  
Costa-Font and Tremosa, 'National identity and the preference for state opting-out in the basque country';  
Howe, 'Rationality and sovereignty support in Quebec';  
McCrone and Paterson, 'The conundrum of Scottish independence';  
Serrano, 'Just a matter of identity?';

Firstly, as highlighted in previous chapters, one of the most prominent explanations for why national identity is important in predicting support for secession can be found in Miller's argument that states need to be mono-national.<sup>758</sup> In accordance with Miller's argument, national identity is particularly important in that it increases the likelihood that people will place trust in their fellow citizens,<sup>759</sup> encouraging them to make sacrifices for 'anonymous others', with whom they do not have existing relationships.<sup>760</sup>

In this sense, national identity is seen as integral to the achievement of distributive justice, because the significant redistribution of wealth from better off to less fortunate citizens, is unlikely to be accepted by the former group without a certain level of solidarity and fellow-feeling towards the latter.<sup>761</sup> Miller indicates that the dynamics of trust and social justice operate similarly at the political level: if an individual is to support policies that represent a fair compromise between the claims of different groups, they must assume that others also wish to see justice done, which depends on the level of trust within the political community in question.<sup>762</sup>

In Belgium, an attempted compromise of this kind became a source of great controversy for Flemings, as a result of the perceived unfairness of the BHV electoral district. For many in Flanders, the district which constitutes a major incursion on Flemish territory and was historically inhabited by a majority of Dutch speakers, should be decided based on the principle of territoriality.<sup>763</sup> Francophones who choose to live in the BHV region should, according to Flemish nationalists, respect Flemish institutions and legislation, and Dutch as the region's official language.

Miller's argument, it is important to note, is based on the assumption that Flemings will inherently have higher levels of trust and solidarity towards each other than towards Walloons. If levels of trust between Flemings and Walloons are higher, or as high as their levels of trust in Dutch people however, and Flemings have a positive general perception of Walloons, the implication is that the trust they have in others is not limited to those who

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<sup>758</sup> Miller, *On Nationality*

<sup>759</sup> Miller, *Citizenship and National Identity*;  
Miller, *On Nationality*, 140

<sup>760</sup> Kymlicka, *Politics in the vernacular*, 225

<sup>761</sup> Miller, *On Nationality*

<sup>762</sup> Miller, *Justice for Earthlings*, 87

<sup>763</sup> Duerr, *Secessionism and the European Union*, 29

share their national identity. In this case, regardless of how strong a Fleming's national identity is, it is unlikely to infringe upon their willingness to cooperate with others or continue to participate in democratic society with them.

Similarly, as it is diminished trust between members of heterogeneous groups (such as Flemings and Walloons), which Miller argues makes them more reluctant to apply their principles impartially across group lines, building inter-group trust and bridging social capital between such cultural groups ought to help overcome the problem of social justice in multinational societies.<sup>764</sup>

Furthermore, the fear-confidence model suggests that simultaneously high levels of fear in the prospects of remaining in a united Belgian state and confidence in the future of Flemish secession ought to predict secessionist support, and that unless these two factors exist at sufficiently high levels, majority support for secession will remain unlikely. If the evidence supports this theory therefore, even those without an exclusive Flemish national identity should be more likely to support secession if their differential institutional trust is sufficiently high.

#### **8.4.2 Secessionist party identification**

As outlined in Chapters 4, 6 and 7, consistent evidence has been found throughout the literature on the dynamics of support for secession, to suggest that intermediating agents, such as parties, leaders and governments have a significant impact on levels of secessionist support.<sup>765</sup> While identifying with a pro-secession political party has frequently been shown to have an independent effect on citizens' preferences towards the territorial organisation of the state however, the subtleties of this relationship have received relatively little scholarly attention. The section which follows will examine the various reasons differential institutional

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<sup>764</sup> Miller, *Justice for Earthlings*, 8

<sup>765</sup> Clarke and Kornberg, 'Choosing Canada?';

Clarke et al, 'Referendum voting as political choice';

Nadeau et al, 'Attitudes Towards Risk-Taking and Individual Choice in the Quebec Referendum on Sovereignty';

Pammett and LeDuc, 'Sovereignty, leadership and voting in the Quebec referendums';

Torcal and Mota, 'The role of political parties in shaping citizens' political preferences for the territorial organization of the state'

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trust would be expected to moderate the relationship between secessionist party identification and support for Flemish secession.

***H9F: The higher an individual's levels of differential institutional trust, the greater the extent to which secessionist party identification will impact on their support for Flemish secession***

Although pro-secession parties consistently advocate independence, their manifestos often cover a wide range of policy areas, which do not relate to the constitutional future of their region. In Belgium, the drive for Flemish independence is spearheaded by two main parties, N-VA and VB, which share a commitment to Flemish independence, yet differ on a wide range of other issues.

N-VA for example, in addition to striving for the peaceful, gradual secession of Flanders and the promotion of the use of the Dutch language in the region, advocates free market economics and extensive tax reductions, to stimulate the Flemish economy.<sup>766</sup> The party is generally considered to be centre-right, especially on economic issues, aiming to attract jobs to Flanders, protect social security and balance the budget. A major part of N-VA's strategy is obtaining the votes of immigrants and ethnic minorities, with one of its key policy platforms centred on the integration of immigrants and the aim of including them in society.<sup>767</sup>

VB meanwhile, combines its central goal of establishing an independent Flemish republic, with a number of conservative social policies, including the abolition of Belgian parole law and a strong opposition to drug liberalisation. The also party opposes what it refers to as 'mass migration', primarily opposing immigration from Muslim states.<sup>768</sup> Historically, the

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<sup>766</sup> Emmanuel Dalle Mule, 'New Trends in Justifications for National Self-Determination: Evidence from Scotland and Flanders', *Ethnopolitics* (2015): 1-19

<sup>767</sup> Duerr, *Secessionism and the European Union*, 68

<sup>768</sup> Duerr, *Secessionism and the European Union*, 33

party's anti-immigration stance has been politically beneficial and has remained relatively consistent since the 1970s.<sup>769</sup>

While the question of whether Flanders should secede from Belgium is itself a rare example of a binary, single-issue political question then,<sup>770</sup> it is important to note that the predominant pro-independence parties with which Flemings identify are not single-issue parties. The possibility remains therefore, that a significant number of those who primarily identify with parties advocating the secession of Flanders, do so for reasons that are not directly linked to secession.

Indeed, while secessionist party identification has consistently been found to have a positive impact on support for secession, it is also clear that not every individual who primarily identifies with pro-secession parties is in favour of Flemish secession. Although N-VA and VB, both of which campaigned on pro-secession platforms in the elections of 2010 and 2015, combined for around forty percent of the Flemish vote in the former, and almost fifty percent in the latter. Opinion polling however, is yet to reflect similar levels of support for Flemish secession, with the 2014 PartiRep voter survey data analysed in this chapter finding that 23.1 percent of respondents were in favour of outright independence. Questions are raised therefore, about which of those individuals who identify with N-VA and VB do support Flemish secession and what factors might be having an impact on the relationship.

One possible explanation, which will be tested in this chapter, is that levels of institutional trust have a moderating effect on the relationship between secessionist party identification and support for Flemish secession. As highlighted earlier in the chapter, institutional trust can play a crucial role in shaping the confidence and fear, which relate to the prospects of seceding or remaining in the union. A lack of political power, Dion argues, can be a key source of grievance that may inspire negative feelings, or even 'fear' toward a union.<sup>771</sup> Political self-determination can provide protection in such contexts, especially when members of a national minority feel that their cultural or political situation is not adequately protected within the existing union.

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<sup>769</sup> Duerr, *Secessionism and the European Union*, 44

<sup>770</sup> Morisi, 'Voting under uncertainty,' 354

<sup>771</sup> Dion, 'Why is Secession Difficult in Well-Established Democracies?', 274

This, it can be argued, is particularly relevant in the Flemish case, as demands for independence have long been driven by a sense that the Dutch language and Flemish culture must be protected in Flanders, as well as a belief that the Belgian state cannot sufficiently provide such protections.<sup>772</sup> Flemings have long protested that they have been treated as second-class citizens in the state of Belgium,<sup>773</sup> while VB's party slogan can be translated as 'Because we defend the Fleming', clearly emphasising the party's perception that Flemings require some form of cultural protection.

If an individual has high levels of trust in the Belgian government however, this implies an absence of fear in the state and at least some degree of confidence that the federal government will try to act in the interests of Flanders. Those who consider themselves to be unfairly treated or inadequately represented by the constitutional processes of the existing Belgian state are unlikely to express high levels of trust in the Belgian federal government. Even if dissatisfied with the current political regime, those who believe the federal government can generally be trusted would be expected to favour less dramatic change than outright independence, and the creation of a separate Flemish state. It would be reasonable to expect therefore, that where levels of trust in the Belgian government are higher than levels of trust in the Flemish government, individuals are more likely to support pro-secession parties because of issues which are unrelated to secession.

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<sup>772</sup> Laible and Barkey (eds.), *European Responses to Globalization*, 234

<sup>773</sup> Lyon, *Belgium*, 127



## 8.5 Results

Table 8.1 displays the results from two logistic regression models (Models I and II), which outline predictors of hypothetical support for Flemish secession in 2014. The dependent variable for each of the four models is hypothetical support for secession in Flanders, a dichotomous variable which divides respondents into those whose hypothetical constitutional preference was for Flanders to secede from the rest of Belgium and those who did not favour outright secession.

Model I contains two measures of institutional trust (trust in the Belgian federal government and trust in the Flemish government), while Model II contains one measure of differential institutional trust, representing the difference between an individual's levels of trust in the Flemish and Belgian orders of government. The models also each control for a range of factors which have previously been found to affect support for secession (national identity, political party identification, political ideology, age, household income, level of education and gender).

**Table 8.1: Logistic regression analyses predicting support for secession in Flanders, in 2014**

<i>Model</i>	Estimated coefficients (standard errors)	
	I	II
<i>Institutional trust</i>		
Trust in Belgian government	<b>-0.215 (0.069)**</b>	-
Trust in Flemish government	0.136 (0.072)	-
Differential trust (Belgian gov. to Flemish gov.)	-	<b>0.180 (0.062)**</b>
<i>Control variables</i>		
Moreno national identity (Belgian to Flemish)	<b>0.492 (0.102)***</b>	<b>0.491 (0.102)***</b>
Secessionist party identification	<b>1.457 (0.222)***</b>	<b>1.486 (0.221)***</b>
Political ideology (left to right scale)	0.147 (0.064)	0.097 (0.063)
Age	0.003 (0.006)	0.003 (0.006)
Household income	-0.005 (0.005)	-0.004 (0.005)
Highest level of education	-0.148 (0.099)	-0.152 (0.098)
Gender (male)	-0.083 (0.207)	-0.083 (0.207)
<i>N</i>	727	727
<i>Pseudo R2</i>		
Nagelkerke	0.329	0.327
Cox & Snell	0.217	0.216

Bold figures denote significant effects: \*p < 0.05; \*\*p < 0.01; \*\*\*p < 0.001

Dependent variable: Whether the respondent thinks that Flanders should become independent from Belgium

Data: 2014 PartiRep Voter Survey

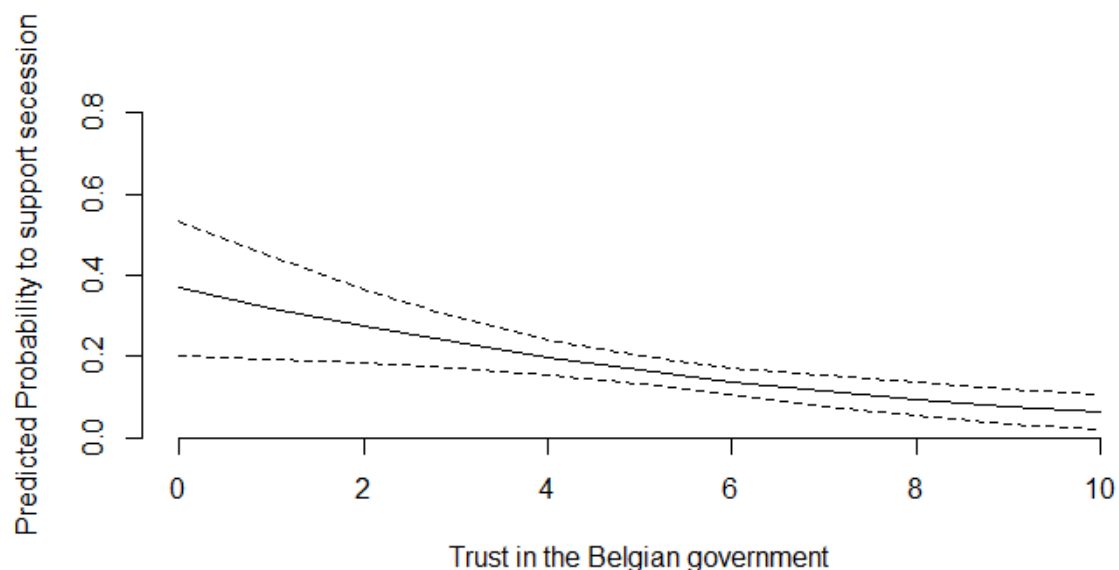
### **8.5.1 The direct impact of trust**

The results of Model I show that in the 2014 PartiRep dataset, after controlling for a range of factors known to affect support for secession, one of the two measures of institutional trust included in the model has a statistically significant impact on support for the secession of Flanders.

With a negative estimated coefficient of -0.215 (significant at the .01 level), Model I indicates that higher levels of trust in the Belgian federal government are associated with a decreased likelihood of supporting Flemish secession. Levels of trust in the Flemish government meanwhile, were not found to have a significant impact on support for the secession of Flanders at the .05 level. While Model I provides support for H1F therefore, suggesting that levels of trust in the Belgian federal government have a statistically significant impact on support for secession in Flanders, it does not provide evidence to support H2F. These relationships are analysed in greater detail below, with the direct impact of trust in the Belgian government on an individual's predicted probability of supporting Flemish secession displayed in Figure 8.3 and the impact of trust in the Flemish government shown in Figure 8.5.

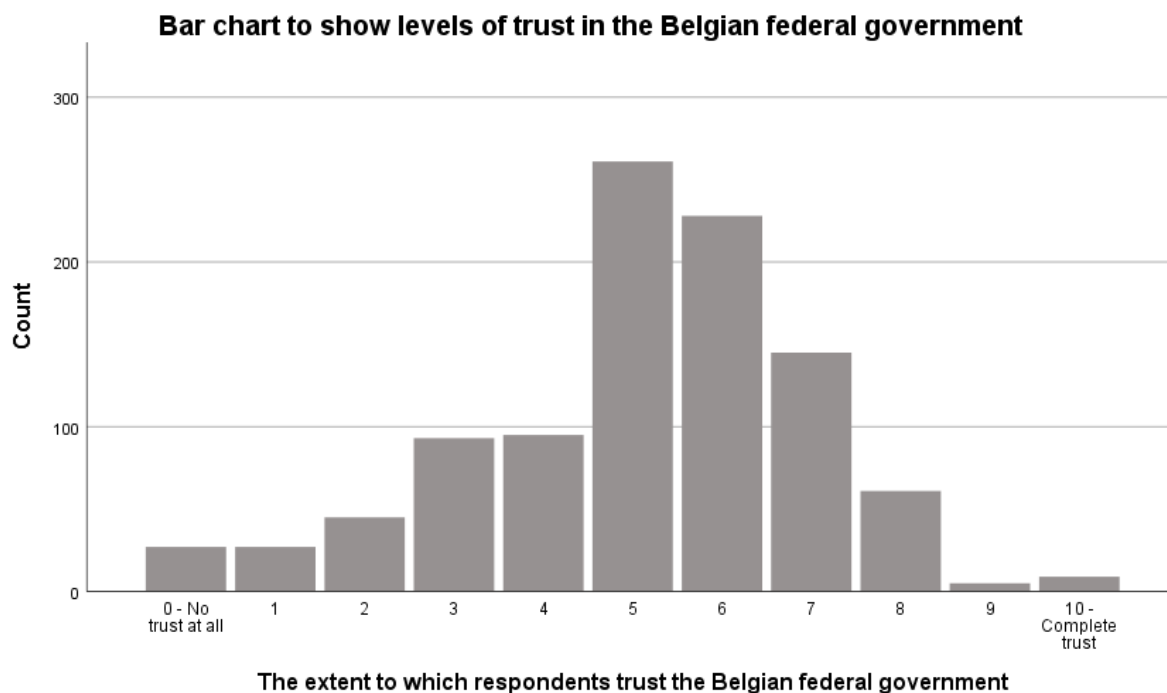
Figure 8.3 (below) is a predicted probability plot, which demonstrates the estimated effects of trust in the Belgian federal government, on the predicted probability of a respondent supporting Flemish secession. Although 23.1 percent of all respondents supported the secession of Flanders, Figure 8.3 indicates that an individual's predicted probability of supporting secession ranges from 36.8 percent to 6.4 percent, depending on their levels of trust in the Belgian government.

**Figure 8.3: Predicted probability plot displaying the estimated effects of trust in the Belgian government on an individual's predicted probability of supporting secession**



Data: 2014 PartiRep Voter Survey  
 Standard errors: +/- 1.96  
 n = 727

**Figure 8.4: Bar chart to show the distribution of levels of trust in the Spanish government, 2015**



Data: 2014 PartiRep Voter Survey  
 n = 727

Figure 8.3 shows the extent to which levels of trust in the Belgian federal government impact on an individual's predicted probability of supporting Flemish secession, when all other variables are held to their mean average. Those with the lowest levels of trust, who reported to have no confidence in the federal government, are represented by the value '0'. Those individuals, Figure 8.3 indicates, had a 36.8 percent chance of supporting the secession of Flanders. As very few respondents scored their governmental trust this low however, the margin of error is quite large. The distribution of respondents' levels of trust in the Belgian government are shown above, in Figure 8.4.

Those who plotted their trust in the Belgian government as a 5 out of 10, at the mid-point of the scale, had a 19.8 percent chance of supporting Flemish secession, while those who reported to have 'complete trust' (10) were found to have just a 6.4 percent chance of supporting secession. The 2014 PartiRep data therefore shows that those with the lowest levels of trust in the federal government were 30.4 percent more likely to support the secession of Flanders than the most trusting individuals, with each incremental increase on the trust scale predicted to correspond with a decreased likelihood of supporting secession. These results therefore support H1F, providing evidence to suggest that in the case of Flanders, the higher an individual's trust in the Belgian government, the less likely they are to support secession.

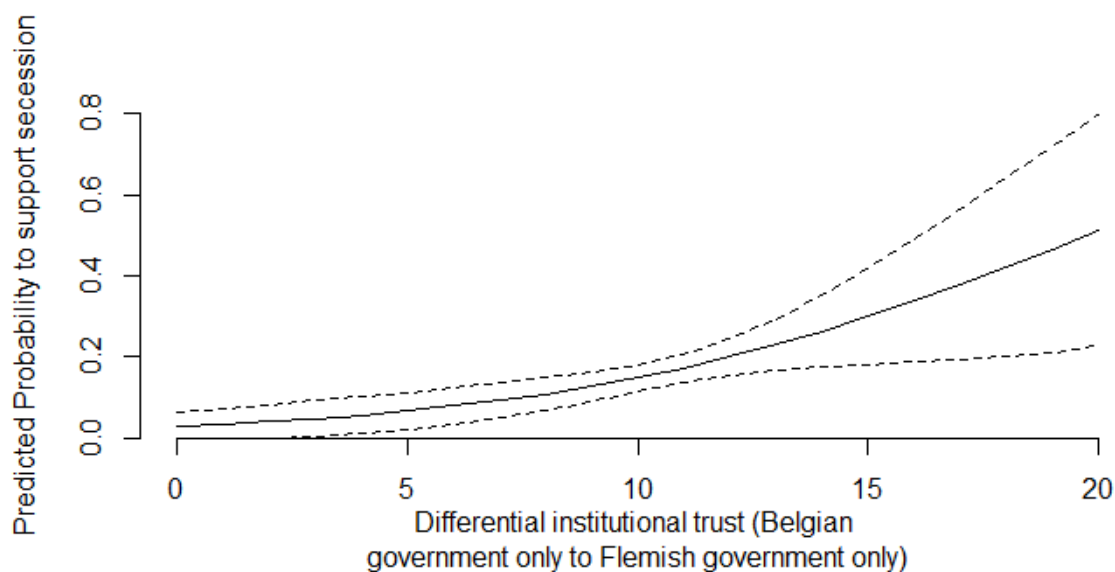
That the data shown in Table 8.1 provides evidence to suggest trust in the Belgian government has a significant impact on Flemish secessionist support at the .05 level, but trust in the Flemish government does not, makes for particularly interesting comparison to the Catalan and Scottish cases. Trust in the government of the existing state (UK, Spain and Belgium) for instance, has been found to have a statistically significant negative impact on secessionist support across all three cases. While trust in the government of the potential secessionist region was found to have a significant positive impact on support for secession in Scotland and Catalonia meanwhile, no significant relationship was found in the Flemish case. A more granular analysis and explanation of the similarities and differences between the three cases will be provided in Chapter 9.

In addition to the isolated impact of institutional trust in both the Flemish and Belgian orders of government, Model II instead includes a variable which measures the direct impact

of differential institutional trust (the difference between a respondent's levels of trust in the Flemish and Belgian orders of government). With a positive estimated coefficient of 0.180, which is significant at the .01 level, this variable was found to have a positive impact on the likelihood of an individual supporting the secession of Flanders. Again, this makes for interesting comparison to the Scottish and Catalan cases, in which differential institutional trust was also found to have a statistically significant impact on secessionist support.

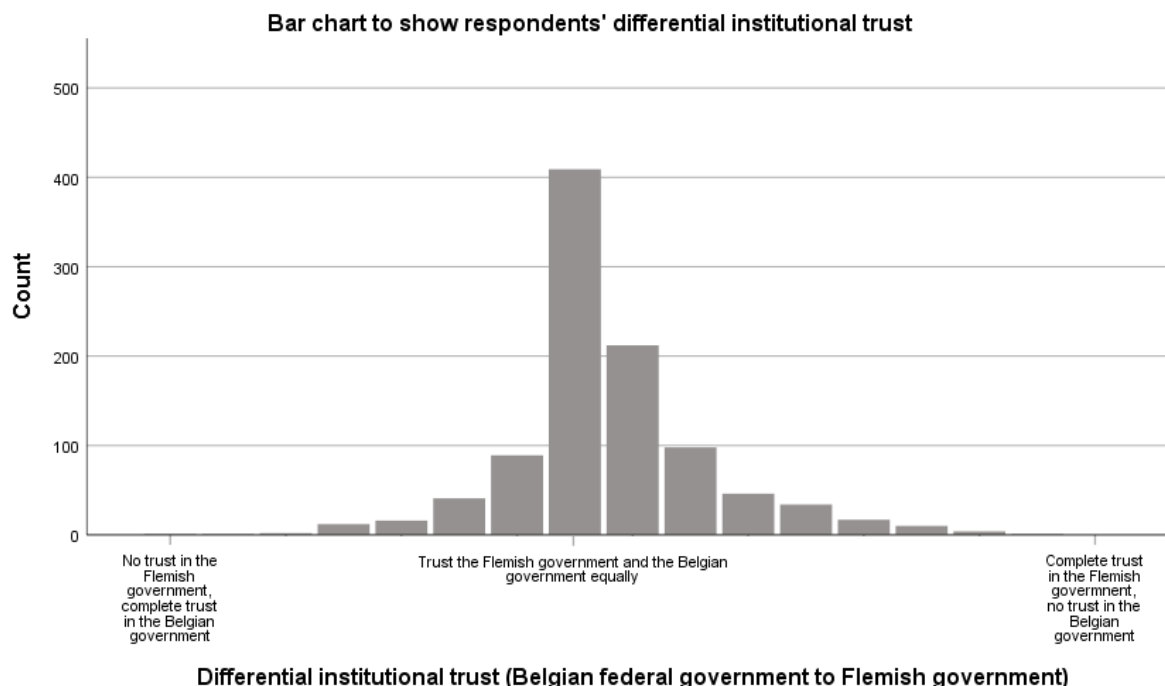
The extent to which changes in differential institutional trust impact on an individual's predicted probability of supporting Flemish secession is shown below, in Figure 8.5, while the distribution of respondents' levels of differential institutional trust is also displayed below, in Figure 8.6:

**Figure 8.5: Predicted probability plot displaying the estimated effects of differential institutional trust on an individual's predicted probability of supporting Flemish secession**



Data: 2014 PartiRep Voter Survey  
Standard errors: +/- 1.96  
n = 727

**Figure 8.6: Bar chart to show the distribution of levels of differential institutional trust, in 2015**



Data: 2014 PartiRep Voter Survey  
n = 727

Figure 8.5 demonstrates the extent to which levels of differential institutional trust impact on an individual’s predicted probability of supporting the secession of Flanders, when all other variables are held to their mean average. The plot in Figure 8.5 demonstrates that differential institutional trust had a positive impact on the probability of a respondent supporting Flemish secession in 2014, lending support to H3F.

Those respondents whose level of differential institutional trust is represented by a score of less than ten on the x-axis are with higher levels of trust in the Belgian government than the Flemish government. As shown in Figure 8.5, those with a score of zero, who exhibit ‘complete trust’ in the Belgian government and ‘no trust’ in the Flemish government, had only a predicted 2.8 per cent probability of supporting Flemish secession. Those who reported the maximum possible levels of trust in the Flemish government and minimum possible levels of trust in the Belgian government meanwhile, represented by a score of 20 on the x-axis, had a predicted 51.1 per cent chance of supporting secession.

While Models I and II were designed to be as comparable as possible to the cases of Scotland and Catalonia, this meant the models had to omit indicators of interpersonal trust, because it was not possible to include such variables in the Scottish model. In order to provide a more comprehensive analysis of the role of trust in support for Flemish secession therefore, three measures of interpersonal trust are included in Table 8.2 (below), across two additional logistic regression models (Models III and IV). While Model III includes two additional independent variables which test for the impact of feelings towards Walloons and feelings towards Dutch people, Model IV includes one additional variable in their stead, which measures the difference between how positively a respondent feels towards Dutch people and how positively they feel towards Walloons.



**Table 8.2: Logistic regression analyses predicting support for secession in Flanders, in 2014**

<i>Model</i>	Estimated coefficients (standard errors)	
	III	IV
<i>Institutional trust</i>		
Trust in Belgian government	<b>-0.198 (0.071)**</b>	-
Trust in Flemish government	0.120 (0.074)	-
Differential trust (Belgian gov. to Flemish gov.)	-	<b>0.170 (0.064)**</b>
<i>Interpersonal trust</i>		
Feelings towards Walloons	<b>-0.352 (0.070)***</b>	-
Feelings towards Dutch people	<b>0.212 (0.075)**</b>	-
Differential feelings towards Dutch people/Walloons	-	<b>0.291 (0.063)***</b>
<i>Control variables</i>		
Moreno national identity (Belgian to Flemish)	<b>0.412 (0.104)***</b>	<b>0.422 (0.104)***</b>
Secessionist party identification	<b>1.362 (0.229)***</b>	<b>1.371 (0.227)***</b>
Political ideology (left to right scale)	0.088 (0.066)	0.086 (0.065)
Age	-0.001 (0.007)	-0.001 (0.007)
Household income	-0.005 (0.006)	-0.005 (0.006)
Highest level of education	-0.024 (0.106)	-0.068 (0.103)
Gender (male)	-0.005 (0.216)	0.036 (0.214)
<i>N</i>	723	723
<i>Pseudo R2</i>		
Nagelkerke	0.371	0.362
Cox & Snell	0.245	0.239

Bold figures denote significant effects: \*p < 0.05; \*\*p < 0.01; \*\*\*p < 0.001

Dependent variable: Whether the respondent thinks that Flanders should become independent from Belgium

Data: 2014 PartiRep Voter Survey (1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Waves)

Observation of the results from Model III show that in the 2014 PartiRep dataset, three of the four indicators of trust included in the model had a statistically significant impact on support for Flemish secession at the .01 level. Trust in the Flemish government meanwhile, was not found to have a statistically significant impact on secessionist support at the .05 level. With a negative estimated coefficient of -0.198 (significant at the .01 level), higher levels of trust in the Belgian government are found to be associated with a decreased likelihood of supporting Flemish secession.

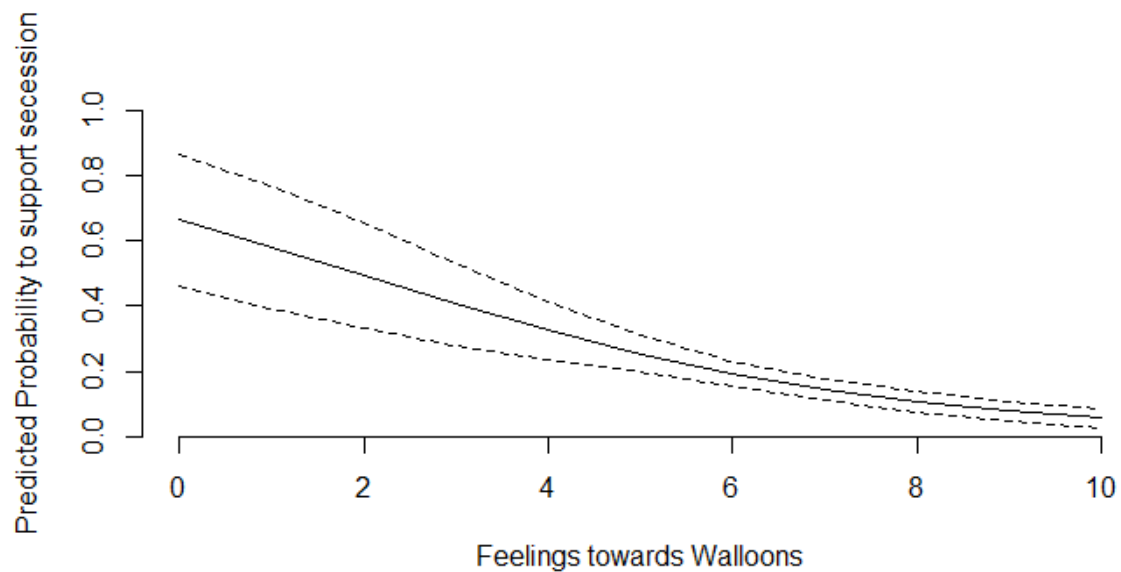
As Dion theorised in the fear-confidence model, the fear associated with remaining in the union is crucial in attracting support for secession and so, unless sufficiently high levels of fear in the prospects of remaining a part of Belgium are present, secession is deemed improbable.<sup>774</sup> The results from Model III suggest that those with the highest levels of trust in the Belgian government, who are least likely to fear them, are also the least likely to support Flemish secession.

In addition to trust in the Belgian government, both of the new indicators of interpersonal trust included in Model III were found to have a statistically significant impact on secessionist support in Flanders. A respondent's feelings towards Dutch people were found to have a significant impact on secessionist support at the .01 level, with a positive estimated coefficient of 0.212. Feelings towards Walloons meanwhile, were found to have the strongest impact on a respondent's likelihood of supporting Flemish secession, compared to the other indicators of trust, with a negative estimated coefficient of -0.352, which is significant at the .001 level. The relationships between these two indicators of interpersonal trust and support for the secession of Flanders are shown in greater detail in Figures 8.7 and 8.9 (below):

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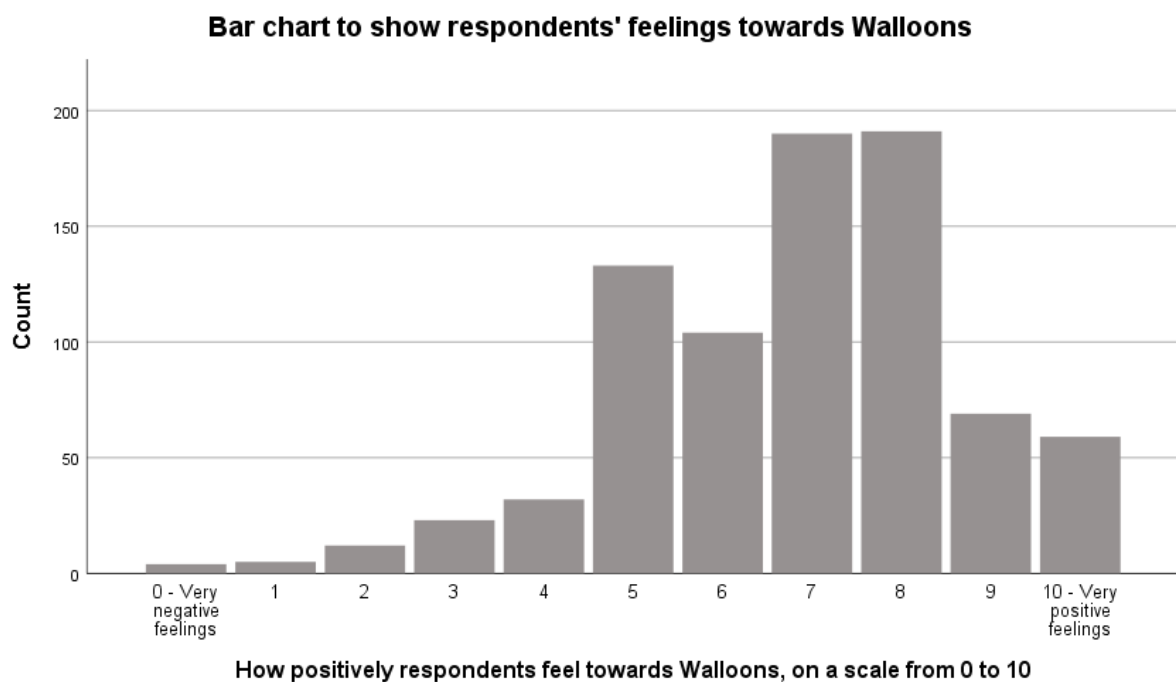
<sup>774</sup> Dion, 'Why is Secession Difficult in Well-Established Democracies?', 271

**Figure 8.7: Predicted probability plot displaying the estimated effects of feelings towards Walloons on an individual's predicted probability of supporting Flemish secession**



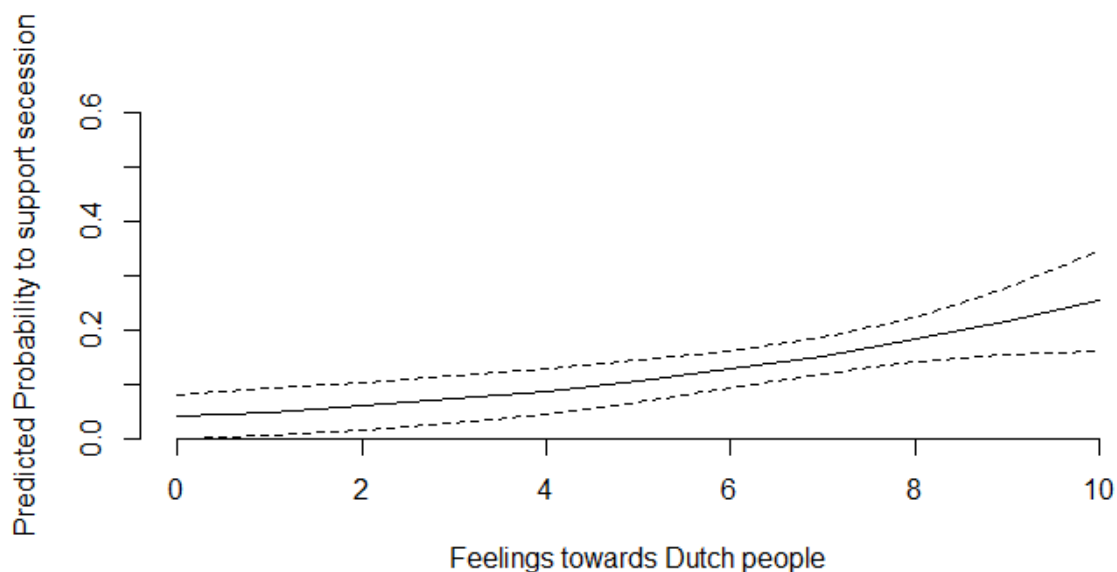
Data: 2014 PartiRep Voter Survey  
 Standard errors: +/- 1.96  
 n = 723

**Figure 8.8: Bar chart to show the distribution of feelings towards Walloons, in 2015**



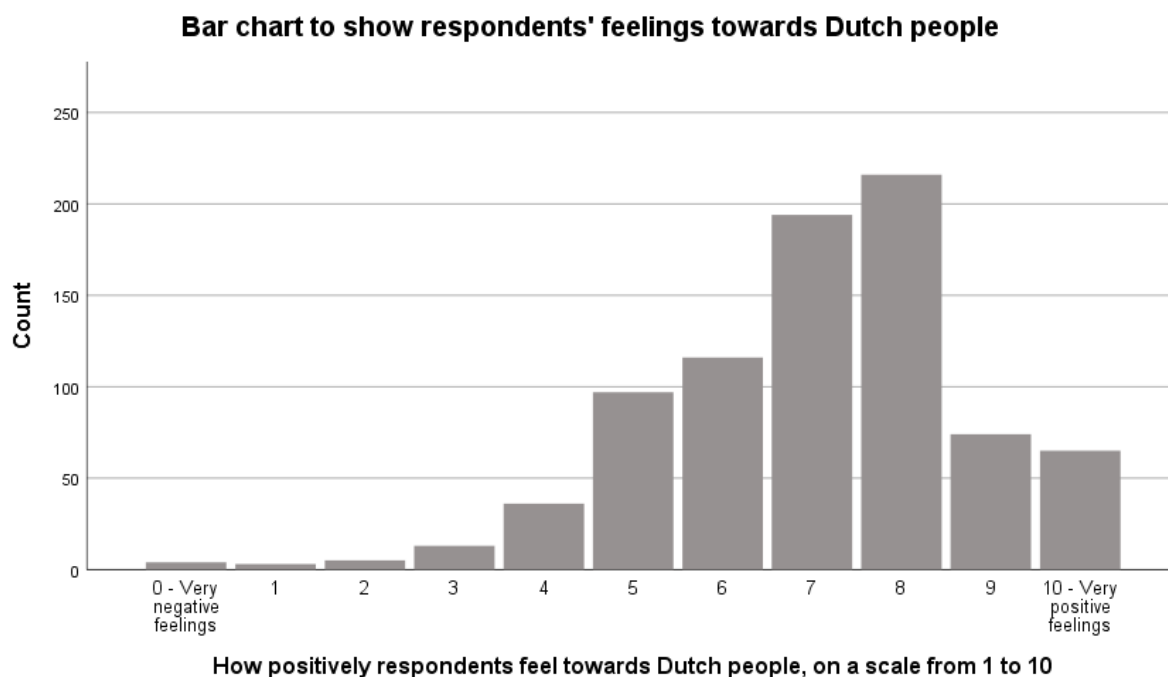
Data: 2014 PartiRep Voter Survey  
 n = 723

**Figure 8.9: Predicted probability plot displaying the estimated effects of feelings towards Dutch people on an individual's predicted probability of supporting Flemish secession**



Data: 2014 PartiRep Voter Survey  
 Standard errors: +/- 1.96  
 n = 723

**Figure 8.10: Bar chart to show the distribution of feelings towards Dutch people, in 2015**



Data: 2014 PartiRep Voter Survey  
 n = 723

As shown in Figure 8.7, those with the most negative feelings towards Walloons, represented by the value '0' on the x-axis, were found to have a predicted 66.4 per cent chance of supporting Flemish secession. This figure is expected to fall, as a respondent's feelings towards Walloons become more positive. For instance, those whose feelings towards Walloons were scored at 5 out of 10, at the mid-point of the scale, were found to have a predicted 25.3 per cent chance of supporting secession, whereas those with the most positive perceptions of Walloons had only a 5.5 per cent chance of favouring the secession of Flanders. Figure 8.7 therefore indicates that those with the most positive feelings towards Walloons were 60.9 per cent less likely to support Flemish secession than those with the most negative feelings, lending support to H4F and suggesting that the higher an individual's interpersonal trust towards members of the wider state, the lower their likelihood of supporting secession.

Furthermore, Model III suggests that an individual's feelings towards Walloons have a stronger impact on support for Flemish secession than their levels of trust in the Belgian government. The estimated coefficient for an individual's feelings towards Walloons (-0.352) for instance, is substantially more strongly negative than that for trust in the Belgian government (-0.198). This finding is consistent with the results from the Catalan case, where trust in Spanish citizens was found to have a stronger impact on support for Catalan secession than trust in the Spanish government.

Furthermore, it has potentially important implications for unionists in Belgium. That levels of interpersonal trust between Flemings and Walloons have a stronger effect on support for Flemish secession than levels of institutional trust in the Belgian government suggests that the horizontal, individual-level trust between citizens is a more urgent concern for those aiming to preserve a united Belgium than the levels of trust which exist at the institutional level. If secessionist support in Flanders is to be overcome therefore, these results suggest that building inter-group trust between Flemings and Walloons ought to be prioritised.

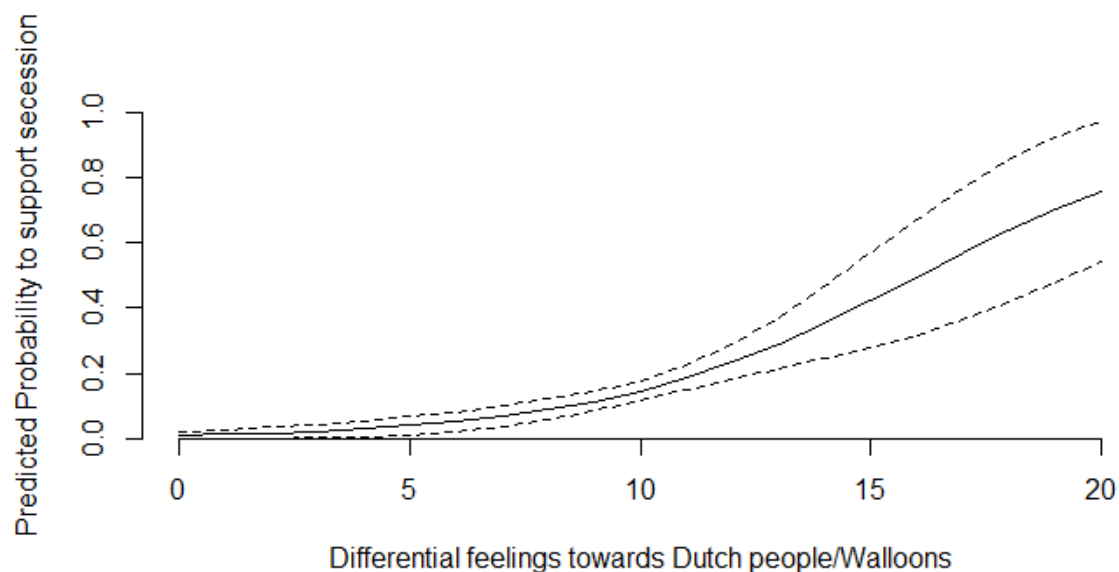
Figure 8.9 meanwhile, shows that a respondent's feelings towards Dutch people are expected to have a positive impact on support for Flemish secession, albeit one which is substantially weaker than the impact of feelings towards Walloons. Those with the most

negative feelings towards Dutch people, represented by a value of '0' on the x-axis, had only a 3.9 per cent predicted probability of supporting the secession of Flanders, a figure which is expected to rise at a relatively consistent rate with every incremental increase on the x-axis. Those who plotted their feelings towards Dutch people as 5 out of 10 had a 10.5 per cent chance of supporting Flemish secession, while the probability for those with the most positive perception of Dutch people was 25.3 percent. This finding therefore provides support for H5F, suggesting that in the Flemish case, the higher an individual's trust in their fellow members of the potential secessionist region, the greater their likelihood of supporting secession.

Model IV, the results from which are also shown in Table 8.2, does not control for the four measures of trust which were tested in Model III, but instead controls for two measures of differential trust. The first of these variables is the measure of differential institutional trust contained in Model II (Differential trust (Belgian government to Flemish government)), while the second is a new variable which measures the difference between how positively a respondent feels towards Dutch people, and how positively they feel towards Walloons. This variable ranges from a value of zero, which represents those with extremely positive feelings towards Walloons and very negative feelings towards Dutch people, to twenty, which represents those with extremely positive feelings towards Dutch people and very negative feelings towards Walloons. Higher scores on the 'Differential feelings towards Dutch people/Walloons' scale therefore indicates a greater difference between a respondent's feelings towards Dutch people and Walloons.

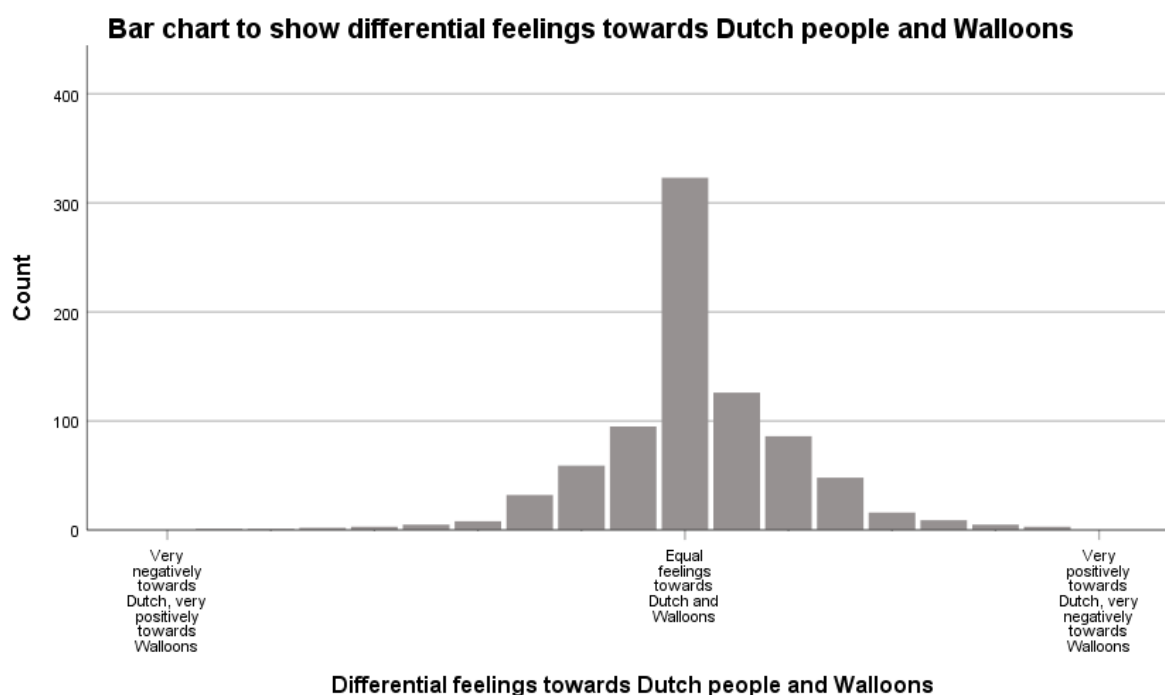
The results from Model IV provide evidence to support both Hypotheses H3F and H6F. Firstly, the variable measuring a respondent's differential institutional trust was found to have a positive impact on support for Flemish secession, with a positive estimated coefficient of 0.170, which is significant at the .01 level. Differential feelings towards Dutch people and Walloons meanwhile, was found to have a stronger impact on support for the secession of Flanders, with a positive estimated coefficient of 0.291, which is significant at the .001 level. The relationship between differential feelings towards Dutch people and Walloons is displayed in greater detail below, in Figure 8.11:

**Figure 8.11: Predicted probability plot displaying the estimated effects of differential feelings towards Dutch people and Walloons on an individual's predicted probability of supporting Flemish secession**



Data: 2014 PartiRep Voter Survey  
 Standard errors: +/- 1.96  
 n = 723

**Figure 8.12: Bar chart to show the distribution of differential feelings towards Dutch people and Walloons, in 2015**



Data: 2014 PartiRep Voter Survey  
 n = 723

The plot in Figure 8.11 demonstrates that differential feelings towards Dutch people and Walloons had a positive impact on the predicted probability of a respondent supporting the secession of Flanders in 2014. Those with a score of zero, who have the most positive feelings towards Walloons and the most negative feelings towards Dutch people, had only a predicted 0.9 per cent chance of supporting Flemish secession. The predicted probability for those with a score of ten however, who reported to have equal feelings towards Dutch people and Walloons, was 14.6 per cent, while those with the most positive feelings towards Dutch people and most negative feelings towards Walloons (with a score of twenty) had a predicted 75.9 percent chance of favouring the secession of Flanders.

### **8.5.2 The moderating effect of trust**

Two control variables, which were extraneous to Hypotheses 1 to 6 were also found to have a statistically significant impact on support for Flemish secession at the .001 level, across Models I, II, III and IV. National identity, which has consistently been identified as a key driver of secessionist support, both in previous studies and in Chapters 6 and 7 (in the Scottish and Catalan cases), was found to have a positive impact on support for the secession of Flanders. Having asked respondents to self-report their national identity on a 5-point scale, ranging from exclusively Belgian to exclusively Flemish, national identity's positive estimated coefficient across the four cases indicates that respondents who reported they felt more strongly Flemish were more likely to support secession.

Model III also found that secessionist party identification, another variable which has been identified as a consistent predictor of secessionist support in any previous studies, as well as in Chapters 6 and 7, had a statistically significant impact on support for Flemish secession at the .001 level.

Table 8.3 (below) contains the results from two additional logistic regression models (Models V and VI), which include multiplicative interaction terms, designed to highlight any significant moderating effects differential institutional trust has on the relationships between national identity and secessionist support, and secessionist party identification and support for secession.



**Table 8.3: Logistic regression analyses predicting support for secession in Flanders, in 2014**

<i>Model</i>	Estimated coefficients (standard errors)	
	V	VI
<i>Multiplicative interaction terms</i>		
Differential trust (Belgian gov. to Flemish gov.) · National identity	0.004 (0.053)	-
Differential trust (Belgian gov. to Flemish gov.) · Secessionist party identification	-	-0.157 (0.130)
<i>Institutional trust</i>		
Differential trust (Belgian gov. to Flemish gov.)	0.158 (0.186)	<b>0.271 (0.107)*</b>
<i>Interpersonal trust</i>		
Differential feelings towards Dutch people/Walloons	<b>0.291 (0.063)***</b>	<b>0.283 (0.063)***</b>
<i>Control variables</i>		
Moreno national identity (Belgian to Flemish)	0.381 (0.590)	<b>0.407 (0.104)***</b>
Secessionist party identification	<b>1.372 (0.227)***</b>	<b>3.098 (1.459)*</b>
Political ideology (left to right scale)	0.086 (0.065)	0.092 (0.066)
Age	-0.001 (0.007)	-0.001 (0.007)
Household income	-0.005 (0.006)	-0.004 (0.006)
Highest level of education	-0.068 (0.103)	0.053 (0.104)
Gender (male)	-0.034 (0.215)	0.056 (0.214)
<i>N</i>	723	723
<i>Pseudo R2</i>		
Nagelkerke	0.362	0.364
Cox & Snell	0.239	0.240

Bold figures denote significant effects: \*p < 0.05; \*\*p < 0.01; \*\*\*p < 0.001

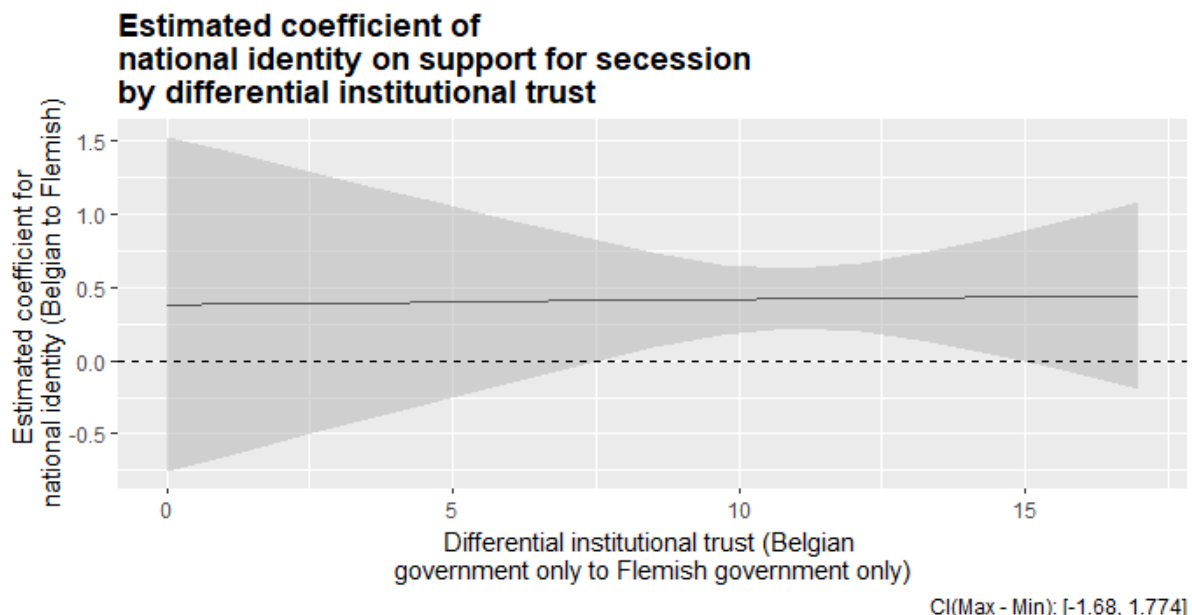
Dependent variable: Whether the respondent thinks that Flanders should become independent from Belgium

Data: 2014 PartiRep Voter Survey (1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Waves)

The first of the two models (Model V) contains the multiplicative interaction term ‘Differential trust (Belgian government to Flemish government) · National identity’, which tests for the moderating effect differential institutional trust has on the relationship between national identity and support for Flemish secession. The results from Table 8.3, along with the plot in Figure 8.13 (below) allow for the interpretation of how the conditional marginal effect of X (national identity) on Y (support for Flemish secession) changes across levels of the moderator Z (differential institutional trust).<sup>775</sup>

The results from Model V do not provide support for H8F, which predicted that higher levels of differential institutional trust would have a positive effect on the strength of the relationship between national identity and Flemish secessionist support. The plot in Figure 8.13 displays the interaction in greater detail:

**Figure 8.13: Estimated coefficient of national identity on support for Flemish secession by differential institutional trust**



Data: 2014 PartiRep Voter Survey  
Standard errors: +/- 1.96  
n = 723

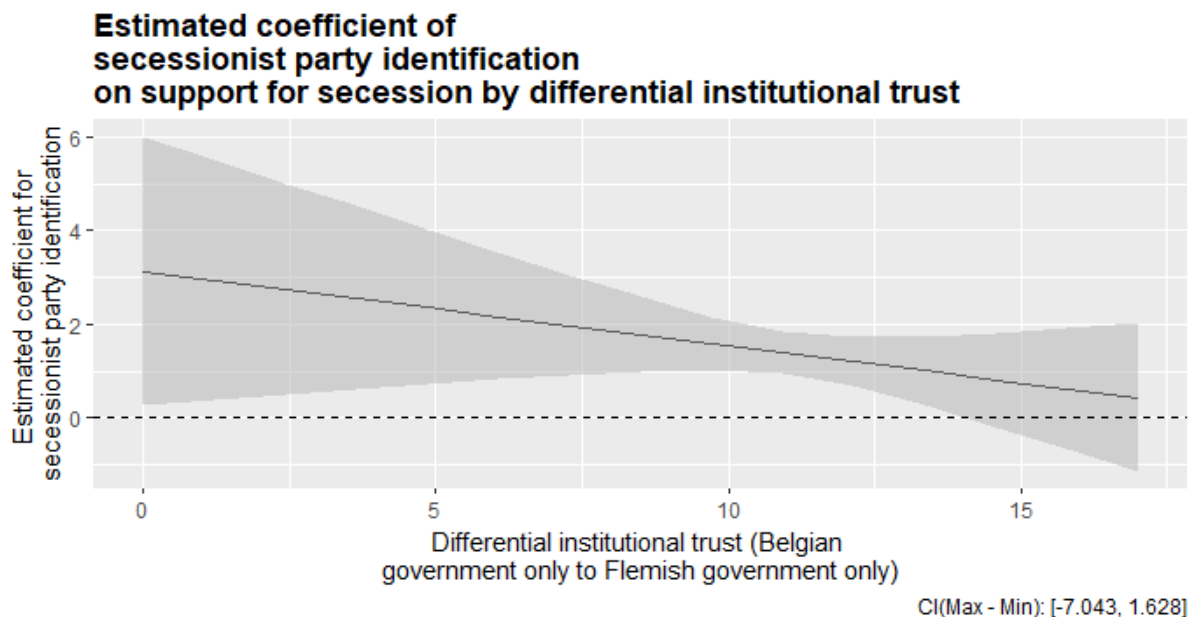
<sup>775</sup> Brambor et al, ‘Understanding interaction models,’ 63

In addition to the results from Table 8.3, which indicate that the multiplicative interaction term 'Differential trust (Belgian government to Flemish government) · National identity', does not have a statistically significant impact on support for Flemish secession at the .05 level, the gradient of the plot in Figure 8.13 provides further evidence to suggest the absence of an interaction between the variables. Regardless of changes in differential institutional trust (plotted along the x-axis), the estimated coefficient for national identity on support for Flemish secession remains constant. This finding is consistent with the results from Chapter 7, which found a similar absence of a moderating effect in the Catalan case. The absence of an interaction is interesting, in that it suggests national identity remains a robust predictor of Flemish secessionist support, irrespective of an individual's level of differential institutional trust.

With regards to H9F meanwhile, which hypothesises that higher levels of differential institutional trust will have a positive impact on the strength of the relationship between secessionist party identification and support for Flemish secession, the results from Model VI suggest that there is also no statistically significant interaction at the .05 level. While the results from Table 8.3 show that the estimated coefficient for the multiplicative interaction term 'Differential trust (Belgian government to Flemish government) · Secessionist party identification' is not significant at the .05 level, Figure 8.14 (below) displays the moderating effect of differential institutional trust in more depth.

It is important to note that, at either end of the differential institutional trust scale, the margin of error is large, as a result of the low number of respondents with extreme differences in trust between the two orders of government. In the central section of the plot however, for instance between eight and twelve, where the margin of error is smallest, the plot appears to show a negative gradient (which would suggest an interaction between the variables). The margin of error in this section is still too great however, to indicate a statistically significant interaction. The results from Model VI therefore show that the estimated coefficient for secessionist party identification on support for Flemish secession does not significantly vary, irrespective of changes in differential institutional trust.

**Figure 8.14: Estimated coefficient of secessionist party identification on support for Flemish secession by differential institutional trust**



Data: 2014 PartiRep Voter Survey  
 Standard errors: +/- 1.96  
 n = 723

Table 8.4 (below) contains a final model (Model VII), which tests for the moderating effect of differential interpersonal trust on the relationship between national identity and support for Flemish secession. In order to achieve this, Model VII contains the multiplicative interaction term 'Differential feelings between Dutch people/Walloons · National identity.' The results from this model, displayed in Table 8.4, indicate that the multiplicative interaction term is statistically significant at the .001 level, suggesting the presence of a moderating effect. The plot shown in Figure 8.15 (below) displays this interaction in greater depth.

**Table 8.4: Logistic regression analyses predicting support for secession in Flanders, in 2014**

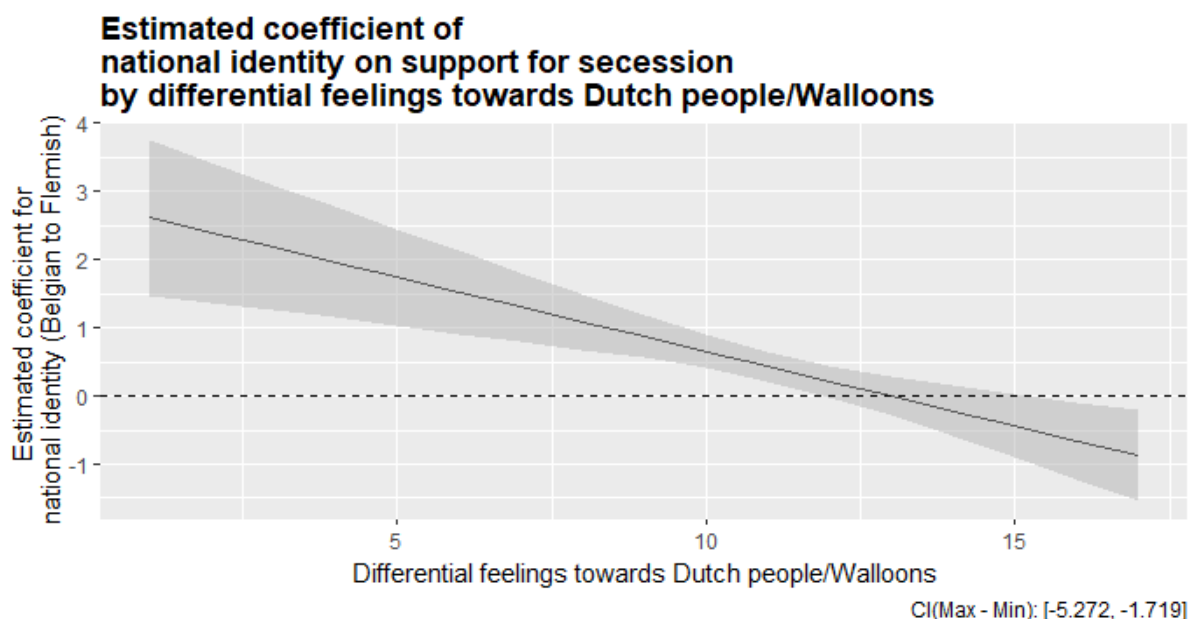
	Estimated coefficients (standard errors)
<i>Model</i>	VII
<i>Multiplicative interaction terms</i>	
Differential feelings towards Dutch people/Walloons · National identity	<b>-0.218 (0.056)***</b>
<i>Institutional trust</i>	
Differential trust (Belgian gov. to Flemish gov.)	<b>0.190 (0.064)**</b>
<i>Interpersonal trust</i>	
Differential feelings towards Dutch people/Walloons	<b>1.060 (0.217)***</b>
<i>Control variables</i>	
Moreno national identity (Belgian to Flemish)	<b>2.832 (0.641)***</b>
Secessionist party identification	<b>1.342 (0.227)***</b>
Political ideology (left to right scale)	0.089 (0.066)
Age	0.001 (0.007)
Household income	-0.005 (0.006)
Highest level of education	-0.079 (0.104)
Gender (male)	0.066 (0.215)
<i>N</i>	723
<i>Pseudo R2</i>	
Nagelkerke	0.387
Cox & Snell	0.255

Bold figures denote significant effects: \*p < 0.05; \*\*p < 0.01; \*\*\*p < 0.001

Dependent variable: Whether the respondent thinks that Flanders should become independent from Belgium

Data: 2014 PartiRep Voter Survey (1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Waves)

**Figure 8.15: Estimated coefficient of national identity on support for Flemish secession by differential institutional trust**

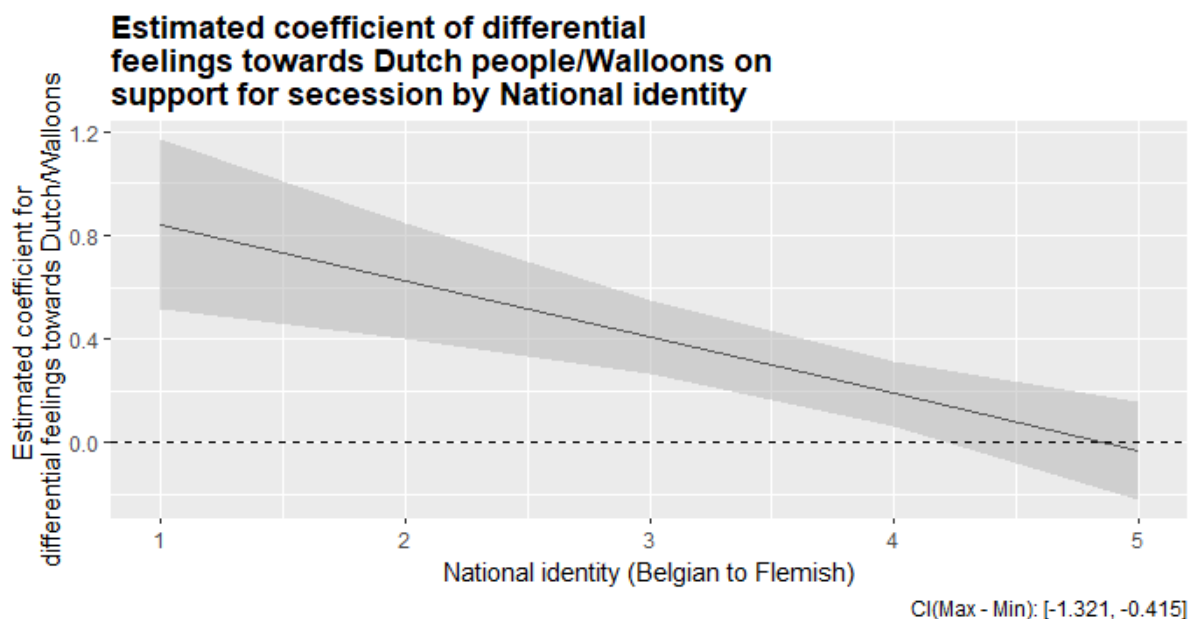


Data: 2014 PartiRep Voter Survey  
Standard errors: +/- 1.96  
n = 723

Whilst the results of Model VII, displayed in Figure 15, suggest the presence of a statistically significant interaction between differential feelings towards Dutch people and Walloons and the relationship between national identity and support for secession, the direction of this effect appears to be negative. These findings would appear to contradict H7F, which expected that for those with higher levels of trust in Dutch people than Walloons, the relationship between national identity and support for Flemish secession would be stronger.

Although the estimated coefficient for the multiplicative interaction term 'Differential feelings towards Dutch people/Walloons · National identity.' is significant at the .001 level however, this result does not provide a distinction between which of the two independent variables (national identity or differential institutional trust) is acting as a moderator. It is important to consider the possibility therefore, that national identity is in fact moderating the relationship between differential interpersonal trust and support for secession, as shown in Figure 8.16 (below):

**Figure 8.16: Estimated coefficient of differential feelings towards Dutch people and Walloons on support for Flemish secession by national identity**



Data: 2014 PartiRep Voter Survey  
Standard errors: +/- 1.96  
n = 723

Figure 8.16 suggests that, where a respondent's national identity is more strongly Flemish, the estimated coefficient of differential feelings towards Dutch people and Walloons on support for Flemish secession decreases. For those who feel equally Belgian and Flemish, or more Belgian than Flemish meanwhile, differential feelings towards Dutch people and Walloons appear to have a stronger positive impact on support for Flemish secession. These results are consistent with the findings from Chapter 7, which similarly found evidence to suggest national identity had a moderating effect on the relationship between differential interpersonal trust and support for Catalan secession.

One explanation for the presence of a moderating effect by national identity on the relationship between differential feelings towards Dutch people and Walloons, and support for Flemish secession, is that it reflects the strength of the relationship between national identity and secessionist support in Flanders. Those with exclusive Flemish national identities have a strong tendency to support Flemish secession, regardless of their feelings towards Dutch people or Walloons. For those with some degree of dual Flemish and Belgian national

identities meanwhile, differential interpersonal trust is a stronger predictor of secessionist support.

## 8.6 Conclusions

Five of the six measures of trust tested for in this analysis were found to have a statistically significant direct impact on Flemish secessionist support: trust in the Belgian government, differential institutional trust, feelings towards Walloons, feelings towards Dutch people and differential feelings towards Dutch people and Walloons. The single trust indicator which was not found to have a significant impact on support for Flemish secession was trust in the Flemish government. This, it is worth noting, is in contrast to the Catalan and Scottish cases, in which trust in the regional government was identified as a strong predictor of secessionist support.

This chapter also included three hypotheses which tested for the moderating effect of trust on the relationship between support for Flemish secession and two of its most reliable predictors: national identity and secessionist party identification. No evidence was found to support H8F, which had predicted that differential institutional trust would moderate the relationship between national identity and support for Flemish secession, nor was there evidence to support H9F, which had expected differential institutional trust to moderate the relationship between secessionist party identification and secessionist support. One explanation for this finding is that secessionist party identification and support for Flemish secession was particularly closely aligned in 2014, at the time the PartiRep voter survey data was collected, with both major pro-secession parties having campaigned on pro-secession platforms during the same year.

Although national identity had a strong impact on the likelihood of a respondent supporting the secession of Flanders, and the estimated coefficient for the multiplicative interaction term 'Differential feelings towards Dutch people/Walloons · National identity' was found to be significant at the .001 level, the results suggested that in Model VII, national identity was in fact moderating the relationship between differential feelings towards Dutch people and Walloons and support for secession. Indeed, while those with exclusive Flemish



national identities are likely to support Flemish secession, irrespective of their feelings towards Dutch people or Walloons, for those with some level of dual Flemish and Belgian national identities, differential interpersonal trust is a stronger predictor of secessionist support.

With regards to the direct impact of interpersonal trust, Model III found that the trust which exists between Flemings and Walloons was found to have the strongest impact on secessionist support in Flanders, while feelings towards Dutch people were also found to have a statistically significant impact on support for Flemish support. Model IV, which tested for the impact of differential institutional trust and differential interpersonal trust found that individual level, horizontal relations of trust had the strongest effect on a respondent's likelihood to support Flemish secession.

That interpersonal trust appears to have a stronger impact on support for Flemish secession than institutional trust, suggests that individual-level factors are a more pressing concern for those seeking to preserve a united Belgian state than institutional-level variables. Perhaps the most pressing concern, given the strength of its relationship with support for Flemish secession, is the need to build inter-group trust at the individual level. If support for Flemish secession is to be quelled, unionists may be required to focus on building trust between Flemings and Walloons, in order to overcome divisions between the two increasingly distinct regions.

## **Chapter 9. Conclusions**

### **9.1 Main findings and contributions**

In this section, I will summarise the main findings of this research and highlight its main contributions. This thesis has sought to provide an original contribution to the existing knowledge on the dynamics of secessionist support in established democracies. In particular, the aim was to produce a detailed analysis of the role institutional and interpersonal trust play in shaping secessionist support, in each of the three case studies that were analysed.

#### **9.1.1 Institutional trust**

Over the course of this thesis, the role of institutional trust was tested through three separate hypotheses, for each of the three case studies:

***Hypothesis 1: The higher an individual's levels of trust in the government of the existing state, the lower their likelihood of supporting secession***

***Hypothesis 2: The higher an individual's levels of trust in the government of the potential secessionist region, the greater their likelihood of supporting secession***

***Hypothesis 3: The greater the difference between an individual's trust in the government of the potential secessionist region and the government of the existing state, the higher their likelihood of supporting secession***

The data available for Scotland, Catalonia and Flanders allowed for the inclusion of trust in both the central government of the existing state and the devolved government of the potential secessionist region in each of the models, as well as a variable which measured a respondent's levels of differential trust between the government of the potential secessionist region and the government of the existing state. Models I and II in each of the case study chapters (Chapter 6, 7 and 8) tested for the direct impact of these three measures of institutional trust on support for secession, and these results will be displayed again in Tables 9.1, 9.2 and 9.3 (below).

**Table 9.1: Logistic regression analyses predicting support for secession in Scotland, in 2015**

<i>Model</i>	Estimated coefficients (standard errors)	
	I	II
<i>Institutional trust</i>		
Trust in UK government	<b>-0.874 (0.124)***</b>	-
Trust in Scottish government	<b>0.561 (0.115)***</b>	-
Differential trust (UK gov. to Scottish gov.)	-	<b>0.707 (0.090)***</b>
<i>Control variables</i>		
Moreno national identity (British to Scottish)	<b>0.495 (0.084)***</b>	<b>0.517 (0.084)***</b>
SNP party identification	<b>1.392 (0.169)***</b>	<b>1.362 (0.168)***</b>
Political ideology (left to right scale)	<b>-0.463 (0.104)***</b>	<b>-0.501 (0.102)***</b>
Age	<b>-0.019 (0.005)***</b>	<b>-0.019 (0.005)***</b>
Household income	-0.004 (0.003)	-0.004 (0.002)
Highest level of education	-0.074 (0.075)	-0.080 (0.075)
Gender (male)	<b>0.419 (0.161)**</b>	<b>0.405 (0.160)*</b>
<i>N</i>	1129	1129
<i>Pseudo R2</i>		
Nagelkerke	0.498	0.494
Cox & Snell	0.367	0.364

Bold figures denote significant effects: \*p < 0.05; \*\*p < 0.01; \*\*\*p < 0.001

Dependent variable: Whether the respondent thinks that Scotland should become independent from the UK

Data: 2015 Scottish Social Attitudes Survey

**Table 9.2: Logistic regression analyses predicting support for secession in Catalonia, in 2015**

<i>Model</i>	Estimated coefficients (standard errors)	
	I	II
<i>Institutional trust</i>		
Trust in Spanish government	<b>-0.127 (0.049)**</b>	-
Trust in Catalan government	<b>0.227 (0.048)***</b>	-
Differential trust (Spanish gov. to Catalan gov.)	-	<b>0.179 (0.042)***</b>
<i>Control variables</i>		
Moreno national identity (Spanish to Catalan)	<b>1.663 (0.129)***</b>	<b>1.651 (0.129)***</b>
Secessionist party identification	<b>1.426 (0.186)***</b>	<b>1.482 (0.184)***</b>
Political ideology (left to right scale)	<b>-0.147 (0.052)**</b>	<b>-0.125 (0.050)*</b>
Age	-0.010 (0.006)	-0.009 (0.006)
Household income	-0.014 (0.039)	-0.007 (0.040)
Highest level of education	0.044 (0.046)	0.044 (0.046)
Gender (male)	0.253 (0.182)	0.224 (0.181)
<i>N</i>	1234	1234
<i>Pseudo R2</i>		
Nagelkerke	0.671	0.668
Cox & Snell	0.501	0.499

Bold figures denote significant effects: \*p < 0.05; \*\*p < 0.01; \*\*\*p < 0.001

Dependent variable: Whether the respondent thinks that Catalonia should become independent from Spain

Data: *Baròmetre d'Opinió Política, 2a onada 2015* (Political Opinion Barometer Catalonia, 2<sup>nd</sup> Wave)

**Table 9.3: Logistic regression analyses predicting support for secession in Flanders, in 2014**

<i>Model</i>	Estimated coefficients (standard errors)	
	I	II
<i>Institutional trust</i>		
Trust in Belgian government	<b>-0.215 (0.069)**</b>	-
Trust in Flemish government	0.136 (0.072)	-
Differential trust (Belgian gov. to Flemish gov.)	-	<b>0.180 (0.062)**</b>
<i>Control variables</i>		
Moreno national identity (Belgian to Flemish)	<b>0.492 (0.102)***</b>	<b>0.491 (0.102)***</b>
Secessionist party identification	<b>1.457 (0.222)***</b>	<b>1.486 (0.221)***</b>
Political ideology (left to right scale)	0.147 (0.064)	0.097 (0.063)
Age	0.003 (0.006)	0.003 (0.006)
Household income	-0.005 (0.005)	-0.004 (0.005)
Highest level of education	-0.148 (0.099)	-0.152 (0.098)
Gender (male)	-0.083 (0.207)	-0.083 (0.207)
<i>N</i>	727	727
<i>Pseudo R2</i>		
Nagelkerke	0.329	0.327
Cox & Snell	0.217	0.216

Bold figures denote significant effects: \*p < 0.05; \*\*p < 0.01; \*\*\*p < 0.001

Dependent variable: Whether the respondent thinks that Flanders should become independent from Belgium

Data: 2014 PartiRep Voter Survey

As Tables 9.1, 9.2 and 9.3 show, a respondent's levels of trust in the central government of the existing state was found to have a statistically significant direct impact on support for secession in all three of the case studies, thus providing consistent support for Hypothesis 1. Trust in the UK government for instance, was found to have a direct negative impact on support for Scottish secession, which was significant at the .001 level, showing that those individuals with higher levels of trust in the Westminster government were considerably less likely to support secession. Of the two measures of institutional trust included in Model I for Scotland, trust in the UK government had the strongest impact. That levels of trust in the UK government appear to have a stronger effect on support for Scottish secession than trust in the Scottish government perhaps suggests that trust in the UK government ought to be a more pressing concern for unionists than trust in the Scottish government. For those seeking to preserve the UK state, perhaps the most immediate priority, given the strength of its relationship with support for Scottish secession, is the need to build institutional trust between Scottish citizens and the central government, if support for Scottish secession is to be quelled.

In Catalonia meanwhile, trust in the Spanish government was also found to have a significant impact on support for Catalan secession (significant at the .01 level), although for the Catalan case, trust in the regional, Catalan government was actually a stronger predictor.

In the Flemish case, while trust in the Belgian government was found to have a negative impact on support for the secession of Flanders (significant at the .001 level), trust in the Flemish government did not have a significant impact on secessionist support. This finding is particularly interesting, when compared to Scotland and Catalonia, in which trust in the regional government was found to have a significant impact. One explanation for this finding is that trust in the regional government was a significant predictor in the Scottish and Catalan cases, as a result of potential endogeneity issues deriving from the presence of nationalist, or secessionist parties in government. It might be expected, for instance, that individuals who support secession are more likely to distrust governments in which a non-nationalist party is in power. Similarly, individuals who favour secession might be expected to have high levels of trust in governments in which the governing party is nationalist, or secessionist, in character.

This theory would appear to provide a tentative explanation for differences between the cases, the SNP were the governing party in Scotland at the time of the 2015 SSA survey and the President of the Catalan government at the time of the 2015 Catalan BOP survey was Artur Mas, for whom sovereignty and Catalan secession was a central part of the political agenda. In Flanders meanwhile, although at the time of the 2014 PartiRep survey, there was separatist representation in the coalition government, there were also several non-nationalist parties in the cabinet. In addition to Models I and II from the 2015 Catalan data therefore, Table 9.4 (below) includes two models which use data from the 3<sup>rd</sup> wave of the 2009 Catalan BOP,<sup>776</sup> at which point PSOE (a non-nationalist party) led both the Catalan and the Spanish government. The inclusion of these models takes into account the risk of potential endogeneity associated with the use of governmental trust as a key independent variable.

The results from Table 9.4 (below) indicate that in the Catalan data from 2009, a respondent's levels of trust in the Spanish government still had a significant impact on support for Catalan secession, at the .05 level, providing further evidence to support Hypothesis 1 and suggesting that for trust in the government of the existing state, endogeneity was not a limiting factor. Despite this, trust in the Catalan government was not found to have a significant impact on support for the secession of Catalonia in the 2009 dataset. This finding suggests therefore, that the composition of government is an important factor in determining whether or not trust in the regional government has an impact on support. With regards to Hypothesis 2 therefore, the evidence from this thesis suggests that levels of trust in the government of the potential secessionist region only have a significant impact on secessionist support in contexts where the governing party is nationalist.

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<sup>776</sup> CEO, 'Public Opinion Barometer (BOP), 3<sup>rd</sup> wave 2009'

**Table 9.4: Logistic regression analyses predicting support for secession in Catalonia, in 2009**

<i>Model</i>	Estimated coefficients (standard errors)	
	I	II
<i>Institutional trust</i>		
Trust in Spanish government	<b>-0.133 (0.056)*</b>	-
Trust in Catalan government	0.030 (0.060)	-
Differential trust (Spanish gov. to Catalan gov.)	-	0.089 (0.090)
<i>Control variables</i>		
Moreno national identity (Spanish to Catalan)	<b>1.445 (0.139)***</b>	<b>1.472 (0.139)***</b>
Secessionist party identification	<b>1.076 (0.223)***</b>	<b>1.127 (0.222)***</b>
Political ideology (left to right scale)	<b>-0.330 (0.086)***</b>	<b>-0.308 (0.085)***</b>
Age	-0.004 (0.006)	-0.004 (0.006)
Household income	-0.080 (0.090)	-0.091 (0.090)
Highest level of education	-0.072 (0.089)	-0.057 (0.088)
Gender (male)	0.003 (0.190)	0.028 (0.189)
<i>N</i>	934	934
<i>Pseudo R2</i>		
Nagelkerke	0.427	0.423
Cox & Snell	0.286	0.283

Bold figures denote significant effects: \*p < 0.05; \*\*p < 0.01; \*\*\*p < 0.001

Dependent variable: Whether the respondent thinks that Catalonia should become independent from Spain

*Baròmetre d'Opinió Política, 3a onada 2009* (Political Opinion Barometer Catalonia, 3<sup>rd</sup> Wave)

Data:



In addition, Tables 9.1, 9.2 and 9.3 all show the results from Model II, which tests Hypothesis 3 through the inclusion of a variable measuring an individual's differential institutional trust – i.e. the difference between their trust in the government of the potential secessionist region and their trust in the government of the existing state. The results from all three cases provide support for Hypothesis 3, suggesting that the higher a respondent's level of differential institutional trust, the more likely they are to support secession. In the Scottish case for instance (displayed in Figure 9.1), a positive estimated coefficient which is statistically significant at the .001 level indicates where a respondent trusts the Scottish government more than they trust the UK government, they are more likely to support the secession of Scotland. Where their trust in the UK government is higher than their trust in the Scottish government meanwhile, they are less likely to favour secession.

This finding provides support for Dion's fear-confidence model, which theorised that fear and confidence must be present at simultaneously high levels, if majority support for secession is to be garnered. If an individual exhibits high levels of trust in the government of the potential secessionist region, but also has high levels of trust in the government of the existing state the fear-confidence model suggests they will remain unlikely to favour secession, on the grounds that they are not sufficiently fearful of the union. Similarly, if an individual believes that neither level of government can be trusted, they are unlikely to have sufficient confidence that the regional government will make a success of the secession.

Controlling for differential institutional trust also enables Model II and Hypothesis 3 to account for those individuals in the Scottish, Catalan and Flemish cases who hold either high or low levels of trust in all institutions, for reasons relating to variables which are not of relevance to this thesis. Individuals with low levels of political efficacy for example, may not support Scottish, Catalan or Flemish secession, but also distrust both levels of government.

In addition to examining the direct impact of institutional trust, the analysis of all three cases contained multiplicative interaction terms, which tested for the impact of institutional trust as a moderator, in the relationships between secessionist support and two of its most robust predictors: national identity and secessionist party identification. The results from the first of these models (Model III in the Scottish chapter and Model V in the analyses of Catalonia and Flanders) allowed for the testing of Hypothesis 8, which predicted that higher

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levels of differential institutional trust would be associated with a stronger relationship between national identity and support for secession.

***Hypothesis 8: The higher an individual's levels of differential institutional trust, the greater the extent to which their national identity will impact on their support for secession***

In other words, where an individual had more trust in the government of the potential secessionist region than the government of the existing state, the relationship between national identity and secessionist support was expected to be stronger. In none of the three cases however, was evidence found to support this hypothesis, suggesting that national identity remains a robust predictor of support for secession, regardless of an individual's levels of differential institutional trust.

For Hypothesis 9 however, which expected that higher levels of differential institutional trust would result in a stronger relationship between secessionist party identification and secessionist support, the results were more varied. Although no evidence was found to support the hypothesis in the Catalan or Flemish cases, the analysis of the Scottish data found that the multiplicative interaction term 'Differential trust (UK government to Scottish government) · SNP party identification' was statistically significant at the .01 level. While Model II found that respondents who identify with the SNP were more likely to support Scottish secession therefore, Model IV suggested that this relationship becomes significantly stronger, where there is a greater difference in their levels of trust towards the Scottish and UK orders of government.

***Hypothesis 9: The higher an individual's levels of differential institutional trust, the greater the extent to which secessionist party identification will impact on their support for secession***

That evidence would be found to support Hypothesis 9 in the Scottish case, but not the Catalan or Flemish cases, makes for interesting comparison. One possible explanation is that, of the three cases, Scotland is the potential secessionist region which has so far been

granted the least amount of autonomy. The Belgian state has officially existed as a Federation since 1993, while the Spanish 'State of Autonomies' is highly decentralised to the degree that some scholars deem it a federation in all but name.<sup>777</sup> Put simply therefore, the pro-independence parties in Belgium and Spain have fewer alternatives to advocate for their region, other than outright independence.

While the SNP's official stance is pro-secession however, historical divisions between gradualists and fundamentalists have long existed within the party, with the former advocating patient progress with incremental increases in devolution and the latter pushing for immediate secession.<sup>778</sup> There is a distinct possibility therefore, that as Leith and Steven found evidence for in their 2010 study, some of those who primarily identify with the SNP do so for reasons that are not directly linked to secession and are not necessarily in favour of outright independence themselves.<sup>779</sup> Differential institutional trust therefore, may act as a predictor of whether an SNP supporter is in favour of secession, in a way that it does not for supporters of secessionist parties in Catalonia or Flanders.

### **9.1.1 Interpersonal trust**

While it was not possible to include measures of individual-level interpersonal trust for the Scottish case, the Catalan and Flemish data did include the necessary variables. Models III and IV in Chapters 7 and 8, used the data from Catalonia and Flanders to examine the impact of interpersonal trust on secessionist support. Three hypotheses were included, in order to test the direct impact of interpersonal trust:

***Hypothesis 4: The higher an individual's trust in members of the wider state, the lower their likelihood of supporting secession***

***Hypothesis 5: The higher an individual's levels of trust in their fellow members of the potential secessionist region, the greater their likelihood of supporting secession***

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<sup>777</sup> Xavier Arbos Marin, 'The Federal Option and Constitutional Management of Diversity in Spain', in Alberto Lopez-Basaguren and Leire Escajedo San Epifanio (eds.), *The Ways of Federalism in Western Countries and the Horizons of Territorial Autonomy in Spain* (Berlin: Springer, 2013): 375-399

<sup>778</sup> Keating, 'The Scottish independence referendum and after,' 75

<sup>779</sup> Murray Leith and Martin Steven, 'Party over Policy? Scottish Nationalism and the Politics of Independence', *The Political Quarterly* 81 (2) (2010): 263-269

***Hypothesis 6: The greater the difference between an individual's levels of trust in members of the potential secessionist region and those from the wider state, the higher their likelihood of supporting secession***

Firstly, Model III across both the Catalan and Flemish analyses indicated that both measures of interpersonal trust had a statistically significant impact on secessionist support at the .01 level. In Catalonia, trust in Spanish citizens was found to have a negative impact on support for Catalan secession, while trust in Catalan citizens was positively associated with secessionist support. In the Flemish case meanwhile, the positivity of a respondent's feelings towards Walloons had a negative impact on support, while feelings towards Dutch people were positively associated with their likelihood of favouring Flemish secession. Hypotheses 1 and 2 were therefore both supported by the evidence from Catalonia and Flanders.

Model IV meanwhile, which tested for an individual's differential interpersonal trust in both the Catalan and Flemish cases, found further evidence to suggest that interpersonal trust has an important role in the dynamics of secessionist support. This variable measured the difference between an individual's trust in Catalan citizens and Spanish citizens, or the difference between how positively they felt about Dutch people and Walloons, measuring group-specific interpersonal trust, to account for those with high or low levels of trust in all individuals. That measures of differential interpersonal trust had a significant impact on secessionist support across both cases provides consistent support for Hypothesis 3 and has potentially important implications for secessionists and unionists alike. While many accounts have previously attributed rising demands for secession to more short-term factors (e.g. unemployment levels or economic dissatisfaction),<sup>780</sup> the impact of interpersonal trust suggests the presence of deeper societal issues and divisions.

Finally, analysis of the data from Catalonia and Flanders allowed this thesis to test for the moderating effect of differential institutional trust on the relationship between support for secession and national identity:

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<sup>780</sup> Guinjoan and Rodon, 'Catalonia at the crossroads', 20

***Hypothesis 7: The higher an individual's levels of differential interpersonal trust, the greater the extent to which their national identity will impact on their support for secession***

While the above hypothesis expected that for those with higher levels of differential interpersonal trust, the relationship between national identity and secessionist support would be stronger however, the results from both Catalonia and Flanders appeared to suggest that it was in fact national identity, which moderated the relationship between differential interpersonal trust and support for secession. Across both cases, the inclusion of multiplicative interaction terms in Model VII found evidence to suggest that there was a significant interaction between variables. The plots which followed however, appeared to show that for those who feel exclusively Catalan or Flemish, differential interpersonal trust had little impact on their likelihood of supporting secession. Conversely, for those with some level of dual-identities (Spanish-Catalan, or Belgian-Flemish), differential interpersonal trust was found to be a stronger predictor of secessionist support.

## **9.2 Limitations and directions for further research**

Before concluding, it is worth noting some of the limitations of my research and indicating how the research initiated with this thesis might be built upon. Firstly, while the available data did allow for the detailed analysis of how trust impacts on support for secession in established democracies, the absence of identical survey questions across the three case studies limited the potential for direct comparison. For the Scottish case for instance, it was not possible to analyse the impact of interpersonal trust, while even for the Flemish and Catalan cases, a few important questions were not directly comparable. In order to take this research forward therefore, further analysis would greatly benefit from the adaptation and distribution of the Catalan BOP survey, so that it could be used to interview respondents from Scotland and Flanders and produce more directly comparable data.

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## Appendix

### *Additional tables and figures to Chapter 5:*

#### **Appendix A: Original SSA survey question, from which the operationalised dependent variable was re-coded, for the Scottish case**

*Which of these statements comes closest to your view?*

- 1. Scotland should become independent, separate from the UK and the European Union*
- 2. Scotland should become independent, separate from the UK but part of the European Union*
- 3. Scotland should remain part of the UK, with its own elected parliament which has some taxation powers*
- 4. Scotland should remain part of the UK, with its own elected parliament which has no taxation powers*
- 5. Scotland should remain part of the UK without an elected parliament*

#### **Appendix B: Alternative SSA survey question on Scottish constitutional preferences, which was not selected to be used in the logistic regression model**

*How did you vote in the Scottish independence referendum?*

- 1. I voted yes*
- 2. I voted no*

#### **Appendix C: SSA survey question used to test for levels of trust in the UK government, in the logistic regression model**

*How much do you trust the UK government to work in Scotland's best long-term interest?*

- 1. Just about always*
- 2. Most of the time*
- 3. Only some of the time*
- 4. Almost never*

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#### **Appendix D: SSA survey question used to test for levels of trust in the Scottish government, in the logistic regression model**

*How much do you trust the Scottish government to work in Scotland's best long-term interest?*

- 1. Just about always*
- 2. Most of the time*
- 3. Only some of the time*
- 4. Almost never*

#### **Appendix E: Original BOP survey question, from which the operationalised dependent variable was re-coded, for the Catalan case**

*Do you think that Catalonia should be...*

- 1. A region of Spain*
- 2. An autonomous community of Spain (status quo)*
- 3. A state in a federal Spain*
- 4. An independent state*

#### **Appendix F: Alternative BOP survey question on Catalan constitutional preferences, which was not selected to be used in the logistic regression model**

*And more precisely, do you want Catalonia to become a state?*

- 1. Yes*
- 2. No*

#### **Appendix G: BOP survey question used to test for levels of trust in the Spanish government, in the logistic regression model**

*Next, I will read a number of institutions. Please rate the degree of confidence you have in each one of these institutions in a scale from 0 to 10, where 0 means no confidence at all and 10 means a lot of confidence:*

*P21d. The central government*



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### **Appendix H: BOP survey question used to test for levels of trust in the Catalan government, in the logistic regression model**

*Next, I will read a number of institutions. Please rate the degree of confidence you have in each one of these institutions in a scale from 0 to 10, where 0 means no confidence at all and 10 means a lot of confidence:*

*P21h. The Catalan Parliament*

### **Appendix I: BOP survey question used to test for levels of trust in Spanish citizens, in the logistic regression model**

*Next, I am going to read a number of groups. To what extent do you trust in each of them, in a scale from 0 to 10, where 0 is no confidence at all and 10 very much confidence?*

*P22f. In the citizens of Spain*

### **Appendix J: BOP survey question used to test for levels of trust in Catalan citizens, in the logistic regression model**

*Next, I am going to read a number of groups. To what extent do you trust in each of them, in a scale from 0 to 10, where 0 is no confidence at all and 10 very much confidence?*

*P22e. In the citizens of Catalonia*

### **Appendix K: Original PartiRep voter survey question, from which the operationalised dependent variable was re-coded, for the Flemish case**

*Could you indicate for each of the following statements to what extent you agree or disagree?*

*Flanders should become independent:*

- 1. Totally agree*
- 2. Agree*
- 3. Disagree*
- 4. Totally disagree*

### **Appendix L: PartiRep survey question used to test for levels of trust in the Belgian government, in the logistic regression model**

Can you, on a scale ranging from 0 to 10, indicate how much trust you personally have in each of the institutions I will now read to you? 0 means that you have no trust at all in this institution and 10 means you have complete trust in it.

The federal government

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**Appendix M: PartiRep survey question used to test for levels of trust in the Flemish government, in the logistic regression model**

Can you, on a scale ranging from 0 to 10, indicate how much trust you personally have in each of the institutions I will now read to you? 0 means that you have no trust at all in this institution and 10 means you have complete trust in it.

The Flemish government

**Appendix N: PartiRep survey question used to test for feelings towards Walloons, in the logistic regression model**

On a scale ranging from 0 to 10, how do you evaluate the following groups? 0 means that you have very negative feelings towards this group, and 10 means you have very positive feelings towards this group

Walloons

**Appendix O: PartiRep survey question used to test for feelings towards Dutch people, in the logistic regression model**

On a scale ranging from 0 to 10, how do you evaluate the following groups? 0 means that you have very negative feelings towards this group, and 10 means you have very positive feelings towards this group

Dutch People

**Additional tables and figures to Chapter 6:**

**Appendix P: Table to show the variance inflation factor (VIF) scores for the variables included in the regression model, model I, for Scotland**

Variable	Variance inflation factor (VIF)
Trust in the UK government	1.10
Trust in the Scottish government	1.15
National identity (British to Scottish)	1.08
SNP party identification	1.14
Political ideology (left to right)	1.07
Age	1.13
Household income	1.01
Highest educational level obtained	1.20
Gender (Male)	1.02

Data: 2015 Scottish Social Attitudes Survey, N = 1129

The smallest possible VIF score is one, which would indicate a total absence of multicollinearity, while a VIF value which exceeds ten is traditionally considered to reflect a problematic amount of collinearity (James et al. 2014).<sup>781</sup> A threshold VIF score of five however, is also commonly used.<sup>782</sup> As none of the variables in Model I have a VIF score higher than 2.52, there is no evidence to suggest the model contains problematic levels of multicollinearity.

**Appendix Q: Table to show the distribution of responses for the dependent variable, whether or not a respondent thinks Scotland should become independent**

Should Scotland become an independent state?	Frequency	Percent
Yes	487	37.8
No	801	62.2
Total	1288	100

Data: 2015 Scottish Social Attitudes Survey, N = 1288

<sup>781</sup> Gareth James, Daniela Witten, Trevor Hastie and Robert Tibshirani, *An Introduction to Statistical Learning: With Applications in R* (New York: Springer, 2014); Michael H. Kutner, Chris J. Nachtsheim and John Neter, *Applied Linear Regression Models* (4<sup>th</sup> ed.) (New York: McGraw-Hill Irwin, 2004)

<sup>782</sup> James et al, *An Introduction to Statistical Learning*; Simon Sheather, *A modern approach to regression with R* (New York: Springer, 2009)

***Additional tables and figures to Chapter 7:***

**Appendix R: Table to show the variance inflation factor (VIF) scores for the variables included in the regression model, model I, for Catalonia**

<b>Variable</b>	<b>Variance inflation factor (VIF)</b>
Trust in the Spanish government	1.54
Trust in the Catalan government	1.57
Trust in Spanish citizens	2.52
Trust in Catalan citizens	2.47
National identity (Spanish to Catalan)	1.15
Secessionist party identification	1.09
Political ideology (left to right)	1.14
Age	1.34
Household income	1.25
Highest educational level obtained	1.41
Gender (Male)	1.08

Data: Baròmetre d'Opinió Política, 2a onada 2015 (Political Opinion Barometer Catalonia, 2<sup>nd</sup> Wave), N = 1204

For the Catalan model, as with the Scottish model, none of the variables in Model I exceed 5 or 10, so there is no evidence to suggest the model contains problematic levels of multicollinearity.

**Appendix S: Table to show the distribution of responses for the dependent variable, whether or not a respondent thinks Catalonia should become independent**

<b>Should Catalonia become an independent state?</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Yes	753	37.6
No	1247	62.4
Total	2000	100

Data: Baròmetre d'Opinió Política, 2a onada 2015 (Political Opinion Barometer Catalonia, 2<sup>nd</sup> Wave), N = 2000

***Additional tables and figures to Chapter 8:***

**Appendix T: Table to show the variance inflation factor (VIF) scores for the variables included in the regression model, model I, for Flanders**

Variable	Variance inflation factor (VIF)
Trust in the Belgian government	1.65
Trust in the Flemish government	1.50
Trust in Walloons	1.49
Trust in Dutch people	1.45
National identity (Belgian to Flemish)	1.10
Secessionist party identification	1.17
Political ideology (left to right)	1.17
Age	1.21
Household income	1.05
Highest educational level obtained	1.20
Gender (Male)	1.06

Data: 2014 PartiRep Voter Survey, N = 723

As with the Catalan and Scottish models, none of the variables in Model I for Flanders exceed 5 or 10, so there is no evidence to suggest the model contains problematic levels of multicollinearity.

**Appendix U: Table to show the distribution of responses for the dependent variable, whether or not a respondent thinks Flanders should become independent**

Should Flanders become an independent state?	Frequency	Percent
Yes	188	23.1
No	627	76.9
Total	815	100

Data: 2014 PartiRep Voter Survey, N = 815

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