

The role of regions in the European Union

The Catalan nationalist movement and the idea of the 'Europe of the regions': a way to bypass the nation state?

Fleur Schepers

MA International Relations in Historical Perspective

Utrecht University

Supervisor: Trineke Palm

Studentnr: 5939445

Date: 14-12-2018

Word count: 14.584



Abstract

The concept 'Europe of the regions' refers to the idea of regional and local authorities becoming one of the main actors in the EU, in co-existence with, and in a more radical view, to the disadvantage of nation states. As the Catalan nationalist movement declared independence from Spain in 2017 and hoped for EU's support, this movement could have been fuelled by this idea, seeing it as a way to bypass the nation state. In this research, I will investigate how the idea of a 'Europe of the regions' has empowered the Catalan nationalist movement. Regions in the EU developed gradually from economic areas into political actors, which resulted in the establishment of the Committee of the Regions in 1994. The Catalan nationalist movement indeed saw the EU as a 'window of opportunity', in which the region hoped to establish direct representation with the legislative powers in the EU. Support for independence within Catalonia began to grow in the 2000s and during this period, Catalan leaders asked the EU for backing. Although the EU institutions developed the political role of regions in the EU and therefore has empowered the nationalist movement's ambition, the EU institutions constrained the movement at the same time: It became clear that the nation states in the EU could not be bypassed. The EU institutions would therefore best be suited in the concept of the 'Europe of the nations', although regions gained greater representation in the EU.

Contents

Introduction	1
1. The role of regions in the European integration process: From 'areas' to 'actors' within the EU?	13
2. Catalonia and Spain: Their perspectives on the role of regions in the EU	20
3. The approach of the EU institutions towards the Catalan nationalist aspiration	30
Conclusion	43
APPENDIX	46
Bibliography	48

Introduction

“The hour for European sovereignty has come”, argued Jean Claude Juncker, the president of the European Commission in his State of the Union in September 2018.¹ He called upon the importance of European unity. Europe needs to develop “Weltpolitikfähigkeit”: The capacity to play a role, as a Union, in shaping global affairs.² Europe has to become a more sovereign actor in international relations. In other words, Europe needs to overcome its internal differences: Between North and South, East and West, left and right. In his speech, Juncker rejected nationalism and populism:

“Above all, I would like us to reject unhealthy nationalism and embrace enlightened patriotism. We should never forget that the patriotism of the 21st Century is two-fold: European and national, with one not excluding the other”.³

Juncker’s call for unity within the European Union and the rejection of populism reflects on current events, such as the Brexit –talks, US isolationism and the growing populism and euro-skepticism in Hungary and Italy, just like the rise of the extreme-right and nationalism in Europe. Nationalist movements in Europe are threatening its unity: Not only on the national level, but also on the regional one.

In 2017, the Catalan government declared its independence from Spain. It has not been recognized by the Spanish state, nor by the EU. The run-up to this declaration has been going on for years, due to longstanding tensions between Catalonia and the Spanish government. Catalans feel their identity is different from the Spanish one, based on their shared history, culture and language. Since the end of Franco’s regime, Catalonia has been an autonomous region within Spain, having its own police force and controlling some of its public services. Catalan has also been recognized as an official language. However, Catalonia has still been striving for greater autonomy and has made attempts to place the Catalan language above the Spanish one and to call Catalonia ‘a nation’ (within Spain). The Spanish state rejected all these attempts, which ultimately led to a referendum on independence in Catalonia in 2017, deemed illegal by the Spanish state. Catalans, however, are very divided themselves on the issue of independence: 40 % Of Catalans want Catalonia to be an independent country, while

¹ European Commission. *The State of the Union 2018: The Hour of European sovereignty*. Jean Claude Juncker. Address to the European Parliament, Strasbourg, September 12, 2018.

² European Commission. *The State of the Union 2018: The Hour of European sovereignty*.

³ Ibid.

22 % wants more autonomy within a decentralized Spain and the remaining population supports Catalonia's current status.⁴

Calling for autonomy and even secession within a EU member state is hindering the aim for more unity in the EU, as the Catalan crisis had shown. Although Catalonia expressed its wish to remain in the EU once it becomes independent, the EU declared that an independent Catalonia would have to reapply for membership for the EU, with Spain (and perhaps other member states) probably vetoing against it. Spain is not the only state dealing with this issue: Similar movements are active in Belgium, France, Italy, the United Kingdom and so on. The outcome of a Catalonian state could perhaps trigger these movements to follow the example.

So, in some sense, European sovereignty from above and nationalist movements from below are challenging the nation state. European integration has led to new levels of supranational policy-making. In order to implement these new policies, nations have handed a part of their sovereignty not only to the EU but also to the regions: In conducting the EU policies among the member states, these policies were decentralized to the regions, in which the effects could take place. The region turned into a key level of political dialogue, in which national and global forces would meet local demands.⁵

It is therefore interesting to see how nationalist regional movements are connected to European integration. In the 1990s, the idea of a 'Europe of the regions' emerged, which referred to the idea of regional authorities acquiring greater power within the EU. The regions would become one of the main actors in the EU in co-existence with, and in a more radical view, to the disadvantage of nation states. Europe was seen as an external system and force in addressing regional aspirations. It raises the question of how the idea of a 'Europe of the regions' empowered nationalist regional movements to obtain their goal of autonomy and even independence.

Academic debate

The idea of the 'Europe of the regions' is both supported and contested in academic literature. At first, literature focused positively on the growing role of regions in the EU, seeing the creation of the Committee of the Regions as the establishment of a 'Europe of the regions' in 1994. This approach changed in the 2000s, when scholars started to articulate critique on the institutional basis of the Committee of the Regions and on the role of regions in the EU. They

⁴ Pere Ríos, "Support for Catalan independence falls to 40.8 %, new survey shows", *El País*, February 23, 2018.

⁵ Barry Jones and Michael Keating, *The European Union and the Regions* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995), 3.

stressed the continuity of the nation state in the EU. This research will discuss this academic debate on the role of regions and nations in the EU. It includes particular focus on the Committee of the Regions, because it was seen as the establishment of the idea of the 'Europe of the regions'. As this is a case study to the Catalan nationalist movement, academic literature on Catalonia will be examined as well.

In the 1990s, scholars supported the idea of the 'Europe of the regions' and saw a declining role for the nation state in the EU. Michael Keating and Barry Jones argued that European integration would weaken the nation state by eroding authority from above and below.⁶ The institutions of European integration and regionalism have brought into being new actors and new networks. Keating and Jones did not believe these threats to the nation state would lead to its end, but that the state would be transformed by supranational and subnational influences.

Regions turned into political actors in the EU. Keating contributed to this idea in another work, in which he saw the EU as a new symbolic realm.⁷ The EU provided new opportunities to influence policy for regional movements: It diffused sovereignty due to its supranational structure and it therefore created an opening for groups within the nation state challenging sovereignty from below.

So, the academic debate focused on the growing role of regions in the EU. Thanks to European integration and regional representation in the EU, the nation state would lose a part of its sovereignty.

This vision of a 'Europe of the regions' changed in the 2000s: Nation states would remain the key actors in the EU, without or with a limited role for regions. Ian Bache and Rachel Jones did recognize the increase in regional involvement in the EU, but they believed that the central state remained an essential gatekeeper and mediator between the EU and domestic actors as the only recognized interlocutor at EU level.⁸ However, according to Klaus – Jürgen Nagel, the role of regions is limited: Regions would still need backing of the member states in the EU institutions.⁹ Nation states would not lose their sovereignty, as they

⁶Barry Jones and Michael Keating, *The European Union and the Regions*, 9-11.

⁷ Michael Keating, "The minority nations of Spain and European integration: A new framework for autonomy?", *Journal of Spanish Cultural Studies* 1, no. 1 (2002): 30.

⁸ Ian Bache and Rachel Jones, "Has EU regional policy empowered the regions? A study of Spain and the United Kingdom", *Regional & Federal Studies* 10, no. 3 (2000): 8.

⁹ Klaus – Jürgen Nagel, "Transcending the National / Asserting the National: How Stateless Nations like Scotland, Wales and Catalonia react to European Integration", *Australian Journal of Politics and History* 50, no. 1 (2004): 73.

would remain in control of their regions. Whether regions would be able to influence EU policy depended on their power in their respective state.¹⁰

In fact, Jakub Grygiel saw a renationalization of Europe. He argued that the EU's fatal flaw was its consistent failure to recognize the persistence of national differences and the importance of addressing threats on its frontiers.

So, nation states would not lose their sovereignty, as they would remain in control of their regions, despite an increase in regional involvement in the EU.

The formation of the Committee of the Regions (CoR) represented the "formal acknowledgement of the role regional and local governments may fulfil in the process of uniting Europe".¹¹ To many scholars, the creation of the CoR has been a significant symbol of a change in power from national governments to subnational governments. It fits in the idea of the 'Europe of the regions'; for the first time, regions were granted direct access to the EU policy – making process.

Elisa Roller and Benito Giordano indeed see the CoR as the representation of the 'Europe of the regions', as it symbolizes a significant shift of power in the European Union as it gives subnational authorities within member states a direct link to EU decision - making and policy formulation.¹² Ekaterina Domorenok supports this argument: The CoR stands as an institutional recognition of very diverse sub-state authorities in the institutions of the EU.¹³ The establishment of the CoR made it possible for regional and local authorities to address their regional interests in the EU political arena.

However, critique on the CoR developed in the 2000s. Not all scholars agree on the change the CoR has brought in the EU. It is, besides being seen as a potential third representative chamber in the EU, a weak institution with no political weight. Simona Piattoni explains why in her article:

"The CoR does not have legislative powers, its members are representatives of sub – national authorities of different economic, political and institutional weight and among the regions therein represented there are purely administrative regions as well as

¹⁰ Jakub Grygiel, "The Return of Europe's Nation-States: The Upside to the EU's Crisis", *Foreign Affairs* (2016): 99.

¹¹ Peter van der Knaap, "The Committee of the Regions: the outset of a 'Europe of the regions'?" *Regional Politics & Policy* 4, no. 2 (1994): 86.

¹² Benito Giordano and Elisa Roller, "Catalonia and the 'idea of Europe': competing strategies and discourses within Catalan Party Politics", *European Urban and Regional Studies* 9, no.2 (2002): 100.

¹³ Ekaterina Domorenok, "The Committee of the Regions: in search of Identity", *Regional and Federal Studies* 19, no. 1 (2009): 144.

region with legislative powers’’.¹⁴

With time, though, the CoR’s activity has been significantly expanded and its opinions have exerted a certain influence.

The role of regions in the EU differs from region to region: Some regions in the EU are better equipped for interregional competition and there is also a differentiation in their political capacity.¹⁵ In some regions, there are powerful movements striving for autonomy or even having separatist aspirations. To them, the EU has become a way to bypass the nation-state. A lot of research into nationalist regional movements has been published, in which scholars focus on the origins of nationalism in those regions as well as their relation to their nation states. Among these academics is J.H. Elliot, who has explored the origins and fluctuating trajectories of national sentiment in Catalonia, and of the separatist movements to which it is currently giving rise.¹⁶ Montserrat Guibernau investigates the concepts and the origins of modern Catalan nationalism and analyses the reasons behind the shift from devolution to secession and the impediments to a referendum on independence.¹⁷ That is what Michael Keating also studies: Calling it “stateless nation-building”.¹⁸

Research & Relevance

Other nationalist and secessionist movements in Europe sympathize with the Catalan cause. However, there are some differences between all these movements: Not every movement is striving to establish its own state, some hope to receive greater autonomy or a recognition of their ‘distinct’ nationality / identity.¹⁹ Catalonia is one of the more powerful movements, like Scotland or the Basque Country. These regions have a high level of autonomy, including self – governing institutions. Only Catalonia does not have the right to collect taxes. The movements of Catalonia, Scotland and the Basque Country are based on historical territories, culture and language, which are deemed to be different than that of the nation states.²⁰ If Catalonia would achieve independence, would these be the next regions to try to declare their

¹⁴ Simona Piattoni, “The Committee of the Regions as representative assembly: Mission impossible or miracle in the making?”. In: *Political Representation in the European Union: Still Democratic in Times of Crisis?*, ed. Sandra Kröger (London: Routledge, 2014), 86.

¹⁵ Barry Jones and Michael Keating, *The European Union and the Regions*, 20-21.

¹⁶ John H Elliot, *Scots and Catalans: Union & Disunion* (Cornwall: Yale University Press, 2018), 4.

¹⁷ Montserrat Guibernau, “Secessionism in Catalonia: After Democracy”, *Ethnopolitics. Formerly Global Review of Ethnopolitics* 12, no. 4 (2013): 368.

¹⁸ Michael Keating, “Stateless nation building: Quebec, Catalonia and Scotland in the changing state system”, *Nations and Nationalism* 3, no. 4 (1997): 698.

¹⁹ Holly Ellyat, “If Catalonia goes independent, these places could be next”, *CNBC*, October 6, 2017.

²⁰ Michael Keating, “Stateless nation building: Quebec, Catalonia and Scotland in the changing state system”, 694.

independence? The rise of nationalism has been perceived as a threat in Europe that could lead to splitting up the EU.²¹

Doing research into the effects of European integration on nationalist regional movements and how these regional movements could have used the idea of the ‘Europe of the regions’ in obtaining their ambitions could therefore elaborate on the rise of nationalism within the EU. This research does not only investigate the Catalan perspective on the ‘Europe of the regions’, but also looks at the EU perspective. It will put the Catalan nationalist movement in a historical context alongside the development of the role of regions in the EU, looking at the long-term. This study attempts to draw a bigger picture of all actors involved regarding the idea of the ‘Europe of the regions’.

Using the issue of Catalonia as a case – study, it could shed some light on the broader trend of nationalist regional movements seeking autonomy and/or independence within EU Member states, although being aware that every nationalist regional movement acts on its own and has specific characteristics.

My research question and sub questions will be:

How has the idea of a ‘Europe of the regions’ empowered the Catalan nationalist movement since the 1990s?

1. How has EU policy concerning the role of regions developed?
2. In what way did the Catalan nationalist movement use the European integration process and the idea of a ‘Europe of the regions’ for accomplishing its goal for greater autonomy and later independence?
3. In what way did the European Parliament, the European Commission, the Council and the CoR address the aspirations of the Catalan nationalist movement?

Theoretical Framework

This research fits into a bigger debate on the role of subnational regions and its relation to their states in the EU: Did the EU member states ‘lose’ power over their regions as a consequence of European integration? Two concepts will provide a theoretical framework in order to conduct this research: These are the ‘Europe of the regions’ and the ‘Europe of the nations’.

²¹ Simon Jenkins, ‘‘Catalonia isn’t just Spain’s nightmare; it’s Europe’s’’, *The Guardian*, November 11, 2017.

The concept of 'Europe of the regions' gained attention since the 1980s and 1990s, in a period of growing European regional development. It refers to the idea of subnational entities acquiring greater power in the political, economic, social and cultural arenas to the disadvantage of nation-states. Seeing this concept in the context of European integration, the idea was that regions would become one of the centers in which the concentration of powers in a supranational organ, like the European Community, finds its ideal outcome in a regional articulation of the territory.²² Regions would be recognized as a third level of government alongside states and the EU itself.²³ The idea behind greater regional authority in the EU was that:

“The regional dimension is intended to reflect better on the cultural and national divisions within Europe and, therefore, to tackle more adequately the problems left unsolved by the ‘obsolete’ national structure”.²⁴

According to this thought, the nation state would play an inferior role in the EU.

European integration intensified in the 1980s and 1990s, leading to political decentralization, regional economic development and interregional cooperation. These processes have appealed to the vision of a 'Europe of the regions', which derived from federalist thinking on principles of subsidiarity, solidarity and democracy.²⁵ Federalism describes political systems in which there is a division of authority in regional and central government.²⁶ Along the lines of European integration, it turned into a political project as national states lost a part of their autonomy to the supranational and regional level in the EU.²⁷

The concept of the 'Europe of the regions' is related to the theory of multi-level governance. In the 1990s, this theory developed due to the growing regional authority in the EU: It describes the “dispersion of authoritative decision - making across multiple territorial levels”.²⁸ Multi-level governance became one of the main keys in governing the EU.²⁹ The CoR, seen as the embodiment of the 'Europe of the regions' in its creation in 1994, underlined:

²² Susana Borrás-Alomar, Thomas Christiansen and Andrés Rodríguez-Pose, “Towards a 'Europe of the Regions'? Visions and Reality from a Critical Perspective”, *Regional Politics and Policy* 4, no. 2 (1994): 28.

²³ Michael Keating, “European Integration and the Minorities Question”, *Politics & Society* 31, no. 1 (2004): 11.

²⁴ Susana Borrás-Alomar, Thomas Christiansen and Andrés Rodríguez-Pose, “Towards a 'Europe of the Regions'? Visions and Reality from a Critical Perspective”, 28.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 29.

²⁶ Ben Rosamond, *Theories of European integration* (Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2000), 24.

²⁷ Ben Rosamond, *Theories of European integration*, 23.

²⁸ Liesbet Hooghe and Gary Marks, *Multi-Level Governance and European Integration* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2001), 3.

²⁹ European Union. *Berlin Declaration*. March 25, 2007.

“(It) sees the principle of multilevel governance as based on coordinated action by the EU, the Member States and regional and local authorities according to the principles of subsidiarity and proportionality and in partnership, taking the form of operational and institutionalized cooperation in the drawing-up and implementation of the European Union’s policies”.³⁰

So, the concept of the ‘Europe of the regions’ envisioned a greater role for regional authorities in the EU, to the disadvantage of the nation states. It developed in the 1990s due to the growing authority of regional actors in the EU and it is related to federalist ideas as well as the theory of multi-level governance.

On the contrary, the concept of the ‘Europe of the nations’ emphasizes that the nation states are and remain the key actors in the EU. This derives from the theory of intergovernmentalism, which is based on the view that the nation state is not becoming obsolete due to European integration. The national governments, as the primary actors in the process of European integration, became strengthened rather than weakened in this process: It has been in the member states’ interest to share sovereignty for better cooperation in some areas, while, as the intergovernmentalists argue, it had not been a ‘transfer’ of sovereignty from the national to the supranational level.³¹ The nation states remain in control of the process and the EU institutions; the Commission in particular, serves the nation states’ interests.³²

Andrew Moravcsik and Uwe Puetter have further developed the intergovernmentalism theory in the 1990s. Moravcsik saw the EU as a successful intergovernmental regime as he focused on domestic interest groups and the importance of the process of negotiation and bargaining between member states.³³ The creation of the EU in 1991 did not mean an affirmation of supranationalism, according to Puetter: The Commission did not gain more influence since the creation of the Economic Monetary Union (EMU), while at the same time member states retained the final say over the implementation of their economic policies in the EMU.³⁴ The control over monetary policy was delegated to the European Central Bank (ECB). Puetter sees this as a “integration paradox”, in which member states have pursued

³⁰ Committee of the Regions. *Building a European Culture of Multi-level Governance. Follow-up to the Committee of the Regions’ White Paper. Opinion.* (CdR 273/2011 fin). 2012.

³¹ Michelle Cini and Nieves Pérez – Solórzano Borrágán, *European Union Politics* (Oxford: University Press, 2013), 89.

³² Michelle Cini and Nieves Pérez – Solórzano Borrágán, *European Union Politics*, 89.

³³ Andrew Moravcsik, *The Choice for Europe. Social Purpose & State Power from Messina to Maastricht* (Ithaca: Cornell University, 1998).

³⁴ Christopher J. Bickerton, Dermot Hodson and Uwe Puetter, *The New Intergovernmentalism. States and Supranational Actors in the Post – Maastricht Era* (Oxford: Oxford University Press 2015), 7.

European integration without significant transfers of ultimate decision – making to the supranational level.³⁵

As a result, the concept of the ‘Europe of the nations’ underlines that European integration has and will not lead to a declining role of the nation state in the EU, because these states remain in control of the EU processes and the EU institutions.

Nationalism could be defined along these two concepts. According to the definition of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, (state) nationalism is: “An ideology based on the premise that the individual’s loyalty and devotion to the nation-state surpass other individual or group interests”.³⁶ The nation state is based on its claim to sovereignty within territorial boundaries and the imposition of common values on the society. It would therefore fit in the concept of the ‘Europe of the nations’, in which the central government has the ultimate power over its territory. Regional nationalism, however, would be placed within the concept of the ‘Europe of the regions’, as it is about the nationalist sentiments of some communities within a nation – state, calling for recognition and the right of self determination. They deny the exclusive claims of state nationalism.³⁷ Not all regions are in favour of independence. Again, it is about ‘bypassing’ the nation state: Nationalist regions hope that integration rather than separation would contribute in meeting their demands of greater regional autonomy.³⁸ In the concept of the ‘Europe of the regions’, regions hoped to establish a third chamber in the EU alongside nation states.

The concepts of a ‘Europe of the regions’ and a ‘Europe of the nations’ define the empirical chapters in this research. It offers a framework in which the role of regions in the EU can be investigated. To study the way in which European integration is connected to the role of regions and to the case of Catalonia, I distinguish between different dimensions. The first one is about the conception of the region in the EU in institutional, economical, political and cultural terms. The second dimension is about the role of the EU in the Catalan conflict.

Methodology and sources

This research is a case study based on empirical evidence from 1990 until 2017, in which regional representation in the EU increased as well as Catalan support for independence,

³⁵ Ibid., 4 – 5.

³⁶ Encyclopaedia Britannica, “Nationalism (politics)”, Website *Encyclopaedia Britannica*.

³⁷ Michael Keating, *Nations against the state. The new Politics of Nationalism in Quebec, Catalonia and Scotland* (London: Macmillan Press LTD, 1996), 24.

³⁸ Michael Keating, *Nations against the state. The new Politics of Nationalism in Quebec, Catalonia and Scotland*, 20.

leading to the referendum on independence in October 2017. I will explain what kind of primary sources and secondary literature I will use in this research.

On secondary literature, it is important to keep in mind that Catalans are very divided themselves among the issue of independence and that this might be the same for Spanish and/or Catalan scholars. I have found some publications of Cañada Blanch, a research group of the London School of Economics that promotes the study of contemporary Spain in Britain. I have also found literature published by the Centre on Constitutional Change, a research centre based at the University of Edinburgh with Michael Keating as co – director that focuses on constitutional change and territorial politics. Some Spanish and Catalan scholars are linked to these centres: Daniel Cetrà and Robert Liñeira work at the Centre on Constitutional Change and Montserrat Guibernau is a member of the Cañada Blanch.

Publications from the scientific and peer – reviewed journals of *Regional and Federal Studies*, *Nations and Nationalism*, *Foreign Affairs* and the *Journal of Common Market Studies* prove to be very useful too.

One of the most recent works on the Catalan case is John H. Elliot’s book *Scots and Catalans: Union & Disunion*.³⁹ Besides examining the political, economic, social, cultural and emotional factors that divide Scots and Catalans from the larger nations, he also investigates these movements within the development of European nationalism.

Looking at primary sources, I will use documents of governmental actors of Catalonia, Spain and the EU. The sources of Catalan actors are interviews, speeches and opinion articles of former presidents of Catalonia, such as Jordi Pujol and Pasqual Maragall. Both explained their vision on ‘the Europe of the regions’ and on the Catalan nationalist movement.⁴⁰ Pasqual Maragall was also president of the CoR in 1996 – 1998.

Not only Catalan actors will be investigated, but also the Spanish government’s perspective on the role of regions in the EU. For example, the Spanish Secretary of the State

³⁹ John H. Elliot, *Scots and Catalans: Union & Disunion*. (Cornwall: Yale University Press, 2018).

⁴⁰ - Generalitat de Catalunya. *Jordi Pujol presentarà les conclusions de la Convenció Catalana sobre el futur de la Unió Europea*. January 31, 2003. (Press Release).

- Jordi Pujol, ‘‘Address to the Assembly of the Council of Europe’’. *The assembly of European Regions*, Strasbourg, May 31, 1994.

- Jordi Pujol, ‘‘The ‘four motors of Europe’, the Committee of the Regions and the role of Catalan nationalist parties in this context’’. Interview by Cristina Blanco Sío-López, *CVCE, University of Luxembourg regarding the EU integration process*. Barcelona, March 19, 2010.

- Pasqual Maragall i Mira, ‘‘Architecture and City in an Open World’’, *The Royal Gold Medal 1999: the City of Barcelona, The Journal of Architecture* 4, no. 3 (1999): 229 – 244.

- Pasqual Maragall i Mira, ‘‘Catalonia is a nation’’, *The Wall Street Journal*, November 21, 2005.

- Pasqual Maragall i Mira, ‘‘Devolution to power of regions and cities; a road to European citizenship’’, *Conference at King Juan Carlos I of Spain NYU*, New York, May 8, 1998.

for the European Union released some sources on the establishment of the CoR with regard to the relation with the Spanish Autonomous Communities.⁴¹

I will also use documents from EU institutions, such as the European Parliament (EP), the European Commission (EC), the European Council and the Committee of the Regions (CoR). These documents are about the development of the role of regions in the EU, the creation of the CoR and on its relation with the EP and the EC afterwards.⁴² These EU institutions have also published speeches, statements and press releases on the Catalan strife for independence, mostly during the years 2010 – 2017.⁴³

The primary sources are in English and/or Spanish. I will not use sources written in Catalan, as I do not speak the language. As my research is on the Catalan and EU perspective on the idea of the ‘Europe of the regions’ with regard to autonomy and independence, Catalan actors have expressed themselves in English (and Spanish) to further spread their message in the EU.

⁴¹ - Secretaría de Estado para la Unión Europea, Madrid. *Las Comunidades Autónomas Españolas en la Unión Europea. Publicación de la Representación de las Comunidades Europeas en España sobre las Comunidades Autónomas Españolas en la Unión Europea, 1995*. CVCE.EU, University of Luxembourg regarding the EU integration process, February 14, 2014.

- Secretaría de Estado para la Unión Europea, Madrid. *El debate sobre el futuro de la Unión y las Comunidades Autónomas, 2004*. CVCE.EU, University of Luxembourg regarding the EU integration process, February 14, 2014.

⁴² - European Commission. *Closer relations with the Committee of the Regions*. RAPID. The Press and Communication Service of the European Commission: IP-95-392. April 19, 1995.

- European Commission. *Speech of Romano Prodi, President of the European Commission, to the Committee of the Regions*. (Speech 01/398). Brussels, September 20, 2001.

- European Commission, “Speech of Romano Prodi, President of the European Commission, on the role of the regions in building the Europe of tomorrow”, *Governance and the Convention meeting with the Presidents of the regions of Europe*, Bellagio, July 15, 2002.

- European Parliament. Resolution on the role of the regions, April 13, 1984. *Official Journal of the European Communities C 127*, May 14, 1984.

- José María Gil – Robles y Gil – Delgado “The Role of Spanish Regions in the European Integration Process”. Interview by Cristina Blanco Sío-López, *CVCE, University of Luxembourg regarding the EU integration process*, Madrid, March 9, 2010.

⁴³ - European Council. *Remarks by President of the European Council Herman Van Rompuy on Catalonia*. (EUCO 267/13). Madrid, December 12, 2013.

- European Commission. *Vice-President Viviane Reding's Remarks on independence*. 45th Citizens’ Dialogue. (Speech 14/152). Barcelona, February 23, 2014.

- European Parliament. *Question for written answer E-001375-17 to the Commission, Rule 130: ‘Subject: Right to self-determination of peoples: referendum on Catalan independence and Spain's opposition to it’*. Maria Bizzotto. Brussels, February 28, 2017.

- Committee of the Regions. *126th Plenary Session of the European Committee of the Regions, Item 2 - Appendix 5: Minutes of the 125th plenary session of the European Committee of the Regions: Debate on Catalonia*. (COR-2017-03634-04-00-PV-REF), Brussels, October 30, 2017.

- European Commission. *Statement on the events in Catalonia*. (Statement /17/3626). Brussels, October 2, 2017.

- Council of the EU. *Address by President Donald Tusk to the European Committee of the Regions*. (Speech 573/17). Brussels, October 10, 2017.

- European Parliament. *EP Plenary session: Constitution, Rule of Law and Fundamental Rights in Spain in the light of the events in Catalonia*. Brussels, October 4, 2017.

In the next chapter, a historical context is provided of the role of regions in the EU. It will study the development of regions in the European integration process. The second chapter investigates the Catalan and the Spanish perspectives on the role of regions in the EU, as well as the Catalan nationalist movement's political aspirations in relation to the 'Europe of the regions'. The final chapter looks at the EU's perspective on the role of regions and the Catalan nationalist aspiration.

1. The role of regions in the European integration process: From ‘areas’ to ‘actors’ within the EU?

This chapter traces the development of the role of regions in the EU from the Treaty of Rome in 1957 until the creation of the Committee of the Regions in 1994. The Treaty of Rome is seen as the starting point for regional development within the EU. Furthermore, this chapter focuses particularly on the CoR, as it was seen as the embodiment of the idea of the ‘Europe of the regions’. The role of regions will be examined in institutional terms.

European integration and regional development

President Juncker summarized the foundation of the European Union in his State of the Union: “Living up to Europe’s rallying cry – never again war – is our eternal duty”.⁴⁴ The creation of the EU can be traced back to the end of the Second World War in Europe thanks to a venture of autonomous nation – states. The Treaty of Rome established the European Economic Community in 1957, which gradually evolved into the monetary European Union in 1993.⁴⁵

Regions did not play any role in the beginning: European integration only took place on the national level. Membership of the European Communities required a sectional delegation of national sovereignty to the institutions of the EC; it was seen as the only way to prevent another war in Europe. The idea was that governmental competence on regional, national and community level should complement each other. Member states were the link in safeguarding national and European interests.⁴⁶ Even though regional policy had not been a key element in developing European integration, it did find its origins in the Treaty of Rome.⁴⁷ The founding countries have claimed the importance of regional development in Article 2 of the Treaty of Rome; they were:

“Anxious to strengthen the unity of their economies by reducing both the differences existing between the various regions and the backwardness of the less favoured regions”.⁴⁸

⁴⁴ European Commission. *The State of the Union 2018: The Hour of European sovereignty*.

⁴⁵ - European Union. Treaty on the functioning of the European Union / Treaty of Rome, (Consolidated Version), March 25, 1957. *Official Journal of the European Union* 202/01, June 7, 2016.

- European Union. Treaty on European Union / Treaty of Maastricht (Consolidated Version), February 7, 1992. *Official Journal of the European Communities* C 325/5, December 24, 2002.

⁴⁶ Peter van der Knaap, “The Committee of the Regions: the outset of a 'Europe of the regions'?", 87.

⁴⁷ European Commission, “Regional Policy: History of the Policy”, http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/en/policy/what/history/.

⁴⁸ European Union. Treaty on the functioning of the European Union / Treaty of Rome, (Consolidated Version), March 25, 1957, Article 2.

Nevertheless, this treaty did not address any regional policies directly. The only actor directly promoting regional development was the European Investment Bank (EIB):

“The Bank shall, operating on a non-profit making basis, grant loans and give guarantees which facilitate the financing of the following projects in till sectors of the economy: Projects for developing less developed regions”⁴⁹.

Its tasks were to contribute to development of the common market in the Communities in promoting economic integration and cohesion and to diminish regional imbalances.⁵⁰ So, the EIB’s economical perspective on the role of regions turned regions into key areas in the development of the Communities’ common market.

The Commission of the European Communities saw regional policies primarily as an internal state-affair. In a document on regional policy in 1969, the Commission argued that:

“Even more than other branches of economic policy, regional policy is clearly the concern of the public authorities in the member states. The measures it involves fall directly under the political, cultural, administrative, sociological and budgetary organisation of the States. Regional policy forms an integral part of the system of internal balances on which the State is based”⁵¹.

Regional policy has been a politically sensitive issue in the European Communities, as it touched on matters associated with the territorial organisation of the state. However, the Commission agreed up on the economical importance regions would exercise in the common market. It stated that:

“The basic objective of regional policy applied to the general problems of the common market is to help improve the harmony of regional structures in the Community, firstly in order to combat the mechanical effects which tend to develop owing to the mere fact of opening internal frontiers, and secondly in order to permit the implementation of common policies and to create the maximum external economies for each of the regions”⁵².

As a result, the role of regions in the European integration process started to grow thanks to regional development. The member states adopted the new regional policies as an extension of schemes of national planning. The diminishing of regional inequalities helped

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ European Investment Bank, “Sixty Years of the Rome Treaties”, March 25, 2017, <http://www.eib.org/en/about/eu-family/60-years-of-the-rome-treaties.htm>.

⁵¹ Commission of the European communities. A regional policy for the Community. *COM 69, no. 950*, October 15, 1969, 13.

⁵² Commission of the European Communities. A Regional Policy for the Community, 34.

further the national economy, which in turn led to more national solidarity.⁵³ Another explanation for the growing role of regions in the EU was the enlargement of the European Community in 1973 with the United Kingdom and Ireland. In their negotiations for admission to the European Communities, Ireland and the UK supported Italy's request for regional policy on a Community level.⁵⁴ They succeeded; they formed the foundation for the Fund for Regional Development (ERDF), established in 1975. Its aim was to address the most serious regional inequalities. The ERDF gave way to a 'regionalization' of the European Communities: Its scope and budget grew spectacularly. Moreover, it encouraged the regions in their desire to be seen as full – grown partners on the European level.⁵⁵

The admission of South European states to the European Communities had huge consequences for regional policy. The accession of Greece, Spain and Portugal brought much poorer states into the Communities, posing a risk to the common market and to their own economies. Jacques Delors, president of the Commission in 1985, stated that: “The socio-economic disparities between North and South in Europe were heightened with the accession of Greece and will be accentuated further with the accession of Spain and Portugal”.⁵⁶ He offered a solution:

“The Community's Structural Funds should, provided of course, that they have sufficient resources, make it possible for the Community to support structural conversion and adjustment projects in regions in difficulty. The Commission aims to reverse the trend towards treating these funds as mere redistribution mechanisms”.⁵⁷

It led to reforms in regional policy, creating the Structural Funds in the 1980s, which would provide effective solutions to the problems faced by the regions and not ‘just’ an intergovernmental budgetary transfer.⁵⁸ One of the leading innovations of these reforms was the introduction of the principle of partnership, derived from the notion of “subsidiarity, in which matters should be decided at the lowest level possible”.⁵⁹ It allowed flexibility in the use of funds at the most effective level and the EU would not intervene in any area unless it would be deemed necessary. Partnership is, according to the Commission, a:

⁵³ Barry Jones and Michael Keating, *The European Union and the Regions*, 2.

⁵⁴ Peter van der Knaap, “The Committee of the Regions: the outset of a 'Europe of the regions'?”, 88.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 88.

⁵⁶ Commission of the European Communities. Programme of the Commission for 1985: Statement by Jacques Delors, President of the Commission to the European Parliament and his reply to the ensuing debate. *Bulletin of the European Communities* 85 no. 4 (1985). Point 15.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

⁵⁸ Peter van der Knaap, “The Committee of the Regions: the outset of a 'Europe of the regions'?”, 88.

⁵⁹ Barry Jones and Michael Keating, *The European Union and the Regions*, 12.

“Close consultation between the Commission, the member state concerned, and the competent national, regional, local, or other level, with each party acting as a partner in pursuit of a common goal”.⁶⁰

The partnership principle entailed a substantial degree of decentralization and required sessions between all levels, thus recognizing the role of regions in these development policies.

As a result, the implementation of the European Community’s structural policies led to a greater involvement of regional and local authorities. Gradually, these regions have turned into new actors in the European Community; the Commission established a Consultative Council of Regional and Local Authorities, which was the predecessor of the Committee of the Regions. Its role was to give its opinion on all matters relating to regional development to the Commission. Independent networks / and or organizations of local and regional authorities, such as the Assembly of the Regions of Europe (ARE), the International Union of Local Authorities (IULA) and the Council of European Municipalities and Regions (CEMR), proposed the members for the Consultative Council. However, the Commission had the last say: They appointed the members.

The Committee of the Regions

The Treaty of Maastricht, signed on February 7, 1991, agreed up on the foundation of the Economic and Monetary Union in 1991.⁶¹ Article 198 of this treaty established the creation of the European Committee of the Regions (CoR) in 1994. This committee is an advisory body representing Europe’s regional and local authorities. It has been seen as a major step in European integration, as it represents the formal acknowledgement of the role regional and local governments play in the process of uniting Europe. For the first time, European regions and municipalities were granted direct access to the European policy – making process.⁶² The regions welcomed the CoR as a new, prominent means of expression.⁶³

The CoR started with 189 representatives from regional and local governments across Europe in 1994. Due to the accession of Sweden, Austria and Finland to the EU, its membership increased to 222 representatives. The Amsterdam Treaty confirmed the Committee’s position as a body independent of other EU institutions and extended the areas on which it must be consulted by the European Commission and the Council. These areas include all subjects at regional or local level, such as economic, social and territorial cohesion

⁶⁰ Commission of the European Communities. *Guide to the reform of the Community’s Structural Funds*. 1989.

⁶¹ European Union. Treaty on European Union / Treaty of Maastricht (Consolidated Version), February 7, 1992.

⁶² Peter van der Knaap, “The Committee of the Regions: the outset of a ‘Europe of the regions’?”, 86.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 90.

or the Structural Funds, the ERDF, employment, education etc. Outside these areas, the EP, EC and the Council still have the option to consult the CoR. In 2001, the Treaty of Nice fixed the upper limit for the number of Committee members to 350. It also demanded that representatives of the CoR must hold a regional or local electoral mandate or be politically accountable to an elected assembly.⁶⁴ Moreover, the Lisbon Treaty gave the CoR the right to refer cases of infringement of the principle of subsidiarity to the Court of Justice.⁶⁵ CoR - members are affiliated to political groups, these are: The European People's Party (EPP), the Party of European Socialists (PES), Group of the Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe (ALDE), European Alliance Group (EA) and the European Conservatives and Reformists Group (ECR). National governments propose their regional and local representatives.

Former president of the European Parliament, Egon Klepsch emphasized the importance of the CoR in the democratic development of the EU:

“Regions and municipalities will be involved in strengthening the European edifice, in furthering democracy, in promoting integration and solidarity between regions, and in raising the efficiency of structural policy measures. The establishment of the Committee gives Community regional policy a new dimension, as it will no longer be restricted to economic support measures, but will now have an institutional basis.”⁶⁶

That is, the establishment of the CoR would bring the EU closer to the citizen in the member states; it would help encourage participation in EU decision - making process and making the EU more efficient, authoritative and viable. The CoR would widen the EU's scope in carrying out its policies.⁶⁷ So, the EU has had a clear interest in giving regional and local government a formal role in its decisions.

Some scholars, such as Peter van der Knaap, see the Committee of the Regions as the embodiment of the notions of subsidiarity and partnership, because of the role sub-national governments can now play in the European Union: It is about coordinated action between regional, local, national and European levels. EC Regional policy would not just be a policy for the regions, but also by the regions. The partnership principle was taken as evidence of

⁶⁴ Committee of the Regions, *Regional and Local Government in the EU. Responsibilities and Resources* (Luxembourg: Office for Official Publications of the European Communities, 2000), 18.

⁶⁵ European Union. Treaty of Lisbon amending the Treaty on European Union and the Treaty establishing the European Community, December 7, 2007, *Official Journal of the European Union C 306/01*, December 17, 2007.

⁶⁶ European Parliament. *Speech of Egon Klepsch, president of the European Parliament, to the Committee of the Regions*. Brussels, March 9, 1994, 2.

⁶⁷ Committee of the Regions, *Regional and Local Government in the EU. Responsibilities and Resources*, p.18

emerging multi-level governance in the EU, in which the decision – making process took place on different levels.⁶⁸

The CoR has met some critique too. The Commission’s initiatives in the creation of this newly organ were seen as an attempt to ‘bypass’ member states as the CoR represents links between regional authorities and EU institutions: The nation state is no longer needed as intermediate.⁶⁹

Nevertheless, the EU institutions have been cautious to develop the CoR’s political potential.⁷⁰ For a great deal, it still depends on the EP, EC and the Council as it only has a consultative role to play: It has no legislative power. The CoR itself has been very divided because of its heterogeneous composition of subnational authorities with different economic, political and institutional weight as well as the difference in powers among the regions themselves.⁷¹

Conclusion

Regional policy had not been a key element in the process of European integration in its early years. The Treaty of Rome established the origins for such a policy in claiming the importance of regional development to stimulate economic growth and solidarity among its member states. Due to the enlargement of the European Community in the 1970s and 1980s, the perspective on regions changed: Regions were no longer seen as merely economic areas which had to be developed for encouraging economic growth in the Common market, but they turned into non-state actors in the EU arena. The growing involvement of regional and local authorities led to the creation of the Consultative Council of Regional and Local Authorities in 1988, which was replaced by the Committee of the Regions in 1994. The CoR, seen as a representation of the idea of the ‘Europe of the regions’, which refers to regions asserting power in the EU decision – making process at the same level as nation states, would bring the EU greater legitimacy and efficiency. While some criticized the CoR for circumventing the nation state in EU decision – making, others argued the CoR could build

⁶⁸ Ian Bache and Rachel Jones, “Has EU regional policy empowered the regions? A study of Spain and the United Kingdom”, 2.

⁶⁹ Justus Schönlaue, “Beyond Mere Consultation: Expanding the European Committee of the Regions’ role”, *Journal of Contemporary European Research* 13, no. 02 (2017): 1170.

⁷⁰ Ekaterina Domorenok, “The Committee of the Regions: in search of Identity”, 156.

⁷¹ Simona Piattoni, “The Committee of the Regions as representative assembly: Mission impossible or miracle in the making?”, 86.

bridges between regional and national ambitions in the EU. In giving regions more power in the EU, “the CoR could address the increasing mood of localism across the bloc (EU)”.⁷²

⁷² Dave Keating, “Can an EU of the regions’ offer an alternative to Catalan secession?”, *Euractiv*, October 9, 2017.

2. Catalonia and Spain: Their perspectives on the role of regions in the EU

Just one month before becoming Spanish Prime Minister, Pedro Sánchez gave a lecture on populism and secessionism in Catalonia at the London School of Economics and Political Science.⁷³ He was the leader of the opposition in Spain at that time. He said that: “The European Union unified our goals”, in the transition to democracy after Franco’s dictatorship and that: “The (Catalan) independence movement had little relevance” at that time.⁷⁴ The quote of Sánchez suggests that the Catalan nationalist party and the Spanish state cooperated together in order to improve Spain’s democracy and they both looked to the EU for doing so. This chapter is about to what extent Catalan and Spanish actors framed the role of regions in economical, political or cultural terms as part of European integration. It investigates if and how the Catalan nationalist movement used the European integration process and the idea of the ‘Europe of the regions’ for accomplishing its goal for greater autonomy and even independence. Before conducting this research, I will give an overview of the development of Catalan autonomy and nationalism.

The development of Catalan autonomy

In 2017, Catalonia has invoked its declaration of independence on the principle of self-determination, based on the idea of a Catalan identity. This identity is seen as very distinct from the Spanish one in terms of history, culture and language.

The Catalan identity has its origins in the Middle Ages.⁷⁵ Ruled by the French king Louis, son of Charlemagne, The County of Barcelona became independent in 988. In the twelfth century, it became unified with other counties into the Principality of Catalonia. The last one formed a confederation with the Crown of Aragon, in which it existed as an autonomous polity and it started to flourish as a medieval sea power. In 1493, the marriage of King Ferdinand of Aragon and Queen Isabelle of Castile laid the foundations for the kingdom of Spain. Catalonia remained an autonomous polity within Spain with its own political institutions until 1714, with the end of the Spanish Secession War. Castilian was introduced as the language of administration and justice. During the Spanish Second Republic in 1931, Catalonia restored its political power, but only for a short period: The Civil War in Spain

⁷³ Pedro Sánchez, “The Catalan Crisis: Populism and Secessionism”. Lecture, the London School of Economics and Political Science, London, May 8, 2018.

⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁵ Michael Keating, *Nations against the state. The new Politics of Nationalism in Quebec, Catalonia and Scotland*, 115.

resulted into General Francisco Franco's dictatorship in 1936. His efforts to unify Spain under one nationalist identity resulted in hostility and repression toward Catalonia and the Basque country, whose statutes of autonomy had been repealed. Castilian became the sole language of administration and speaking Catalan in public became punishable.⁷⁶ In understanding Catalan nationalist claims of nowadays, the memories of the military dictatorship are still very fresh: In the last couple of years, comparisons are drawn between the Spanish centralist government and Franco's dictatorship in rejecting Catalonia's autonomy.⁷⁷

The turn to democracy after the end of Franco's dictatorship required a response to the demands of the nationalities in Spain after years of repression. In the Spanish Constitution of 1978, the Autonomous Communities of Spain were established, in which these communities have gained limited autonomy and self-government, turning Spain into a decentralized unitary state.⁷⁸ Catalonia thus restored its autonomy and sanctioned a new Statute of Autonomy in 1979. In 1980, democratic elections resulted in a new president of the Generalitat, Jordi Pujol, his party *Convergència Democràtica de Catalunya* (CDC) holding a majority in the coalition *Convergència i Unió* (CiU).⁷⁹

In particular, support for secessionism in Catalonia had always been weak.⁸⁰ These movements did spring up during the civil war, but they have not really emerged in any strength afterwards.⁸¹

However, the support for independence began to change in the 2000s. Pujol retired in 2003; in the new elections, the *Partit del Socialistes de Catalunya* (PSC) won the majority of vote, with Pasqual Maragall as the new president.⁸² His aim was to settle the Catalan question by revising the Statute of Autonomy, in demanding the right to levy its own taxes and to call Catalonia a 'nation' instead of a 'nationality'.⁸³ The revised Statute was drafted with backing of Spanish Prime Minister José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero and accepted by the Catalan parliament in 2005. However, the statute was taken to the Constitutional Court by the main opposition party in the Spanish government, the *Partido Popular* (PP). Four years later, the Court amended the statute, in decreasing further the Generalitat's powers, and the reference

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 115 – 122.

⁷⁷ Lara Anderson, "Memories of Franco in Spain's Response to Catalonia", *International Affairs*, October 4, 2017.

⁷⁸ Montserrat Guibernau, "Secessionism in Catalonia: After Democracy", 373.

⁷⁹ John H. Elliot, *Scots and Catalans*, 229.

⁸⁰ Montserrat Guibernau, "Secessionism in Catalonia: After Democracy", 380.

⁸¹ Michael Keating, *Nations against the state. The new Politics of Nationalism in Quebec, Catalonia and Scotland*, 126.

⁸² John H. Elliot, *Scots and Catalans*, 237.

⁸³ Diego Muro, "Territorial Accommodation, Party Politics and Statute Reform in Spain", *South European Society & Politics* 14, no. 4 (2009): 460.

made in it of 'Catalonia is a nation' had no legal standing. This resulted into huge political dissatisfaction. Arthur Mas, president of Catalonia 2010 – 2015, held a non-binding independence referendum, in which 80 % was in favor of an independent Catalonia. However, the turnout was only 41%. The economic crisis has also spurred the growing secessionism in Catalonia, as well as the idea that the difference between Catalonia's contribution and what it receives in transfers and investments from the Spanish government is too large.⁸⁴

Arthur Mas was forced to step aside after elections in 2015: Paving the way for Carles Puigdemont. A new referendum on independence was held in October 2017, although the Spanish government of Mariano Rajoy declared it illegal. Nevertheless, the Generalitat continued with the referendum and, in response, the Spanish national police launched an effort to prevent people from casting their ballots. According to Human Rights Watch, the police used excessive force against peaceful demonstrators.⁸⁵

The referendum outcome stated that ninety percent were in favor of an independent Catalonia, although the turnout was very low: Only forty percent. Nevertheless, Puigdemont declared the independence of Catalonia on October 27, 2017. Protests across the country to stop Catalonia's independence movement arose, even in Catalonia itself. The Spanish premier Mariano Rajoy reacted on the declaration of independence by implementing article 155 of the Spanish constitution, which allows for direct rule from the Spanish government in its autonomous regions, such as Catalonia. So, the Spanish government stripped the Catalan regional government of his power and called for new elections in December, in which three pro-independence parties won a slight majority. Eighteen Catalan prominent leaders have been charged for rebellion or other crimes, facing prison for fifteen years. The trials are expected to start in the beginning of 2019. In October 2017, Puigdemont fled to Belgium and has been travelling through Europe ever since, in order to mobilize support for the Catalanian case.⁸⁶ He created a new political party, Crida Nacional, on October 27, 2018, exactly one year after the declaration of independence. However, the party struggled to attract support, with some allies being held in prison and others choosing a more, moderate political path.

The socialist Pedro Sánchez replaced former premier Mariano Rajoy as prime minister in June 2018, after a vote of no confidence. Sánchez wants to open a dialogue with Catalonia

⁸⁴ Robert Liñeira and Daniel Cetrà, "The Independence Case in Comparative Perspective", *The Political Quarterly* 86, no. 2 (2015): 261.

⁸⁵ Human Rights Watch, "Spain: Police Used Excessive Force in Catalonia", October 12, 2017.

⁸⁶ Raphael Minder, "Spanish Judge Jails 5 Catalan Leaders in a Blow to Secessionist Movement", *New York Times*, March 23, 2018.

and to improve the region's existing self-government, but he has refused to negotiate the staging of a referendum on secession.

So, Catalan identity developed along to the course of history, in which Catalonia experienced sovereignty and a high extent of autonomy. Since 1975, the region enjoyed self-government, having its own political institutions, as well as a police force, within the Spanish federalized system. In the 2000s, Spanish rejections towards Catalan claims for even greater self-government and recognition of Catalan nationalism spurred the support of independence in the 2000s, ultimately resulting into a declaration of independence that has not been recognized by the Spanish state.

Regions within Spain and in the EU

Within its boundaries, Spain tried to address the cultural differentiation and the varying strength of regional sentiment in establishing a democracy in the years after Franco's death.⁸⁷ The majority of the Spanish population wanted home rule for all the Spanish nationalities and regions. This resulted into a decentralized state of 17 autonomous regions and 2 autonomous cities, all with varying levels of autonomy.⁸⁸ To appease Catalonia, the region became a 'historic nationality' (together with the Basque Country and Galicia) and was granted a high degree of self-government.⁸⁹ So, Spain addressed regional political ambitions for greater self-autonomy to a certain extent within its territory.

Actually, Spanish accession to the EU weakened the political role of Spanish regions. Becoming a EU member in 1986, it was seen as the road to modernization and to put Spain back into the international context after years of isolation during Franco's regime.⁹⁰ Nevertheless, Spain faced some troubles on implementation, as it adopted the *acquis communautaire* (the whole body of EU legislation) at once. Implementing these policies meant an intrusion into the regional sphere of autonomy; the Spanish state executed regional competencies, which were outside its scope for domestic policymaking under the Spanish Constitution of 1978.⁹¹ Due to internal conflicts between the state and the autonomous

⁸⁷Stephen P. Mangen, *Spanish Society after Franco: Regime Transition and the Welfare State* (Hampshire: Palgrave, 2001), 138.

⁸⁸Luis Moreno, Ana Arriba and Araceli Serrano, "Multiple identities in decentralized Spain: The case of Catalonia", *Regional and Federal Studies* 8, no. 3 (1998): 69.

⁸⁹Elisa Roller, "Conflict and cooperation in EU policy-making: the case for Catalonia", *Perspectives on European Politics and Society* 5, no. 1 (2004): 84.

⁹⁰Margarita León, Mercedes Mateo Diaz and Covadonga Meseguer, "The Spanish Case: Who was Mobilized and How?", *South European Society & Politics* 9, no. 1 (2004): 863.

⁹¹Tanja A. Börzel, "From Competitive Regionalism to Cooperative Federalism: The Europeanization of the Spanish state of the Autonomies", *The Journal of Federalism* 30, no. 2 (2000): 26.

regions, it led to ‘Conferencias Sectoriales’, a multilateral forum of autonomous regions and the central state discussing its interests.⁹² So, Spanish admission to the EU had negative effects on the position of the regions, as they did not participate directly in the European Community decision - making.⁹³ However, the autonomous regions were trying to fix this by establishing direct communication with European institutions. Although the regions litigated against the Spanish government for an intrusion in their spheres of competencies, it did eventually turn into better cooperation between the autonomous regions and the Spanish government. The problem of implementation and the centralization of regional policies forced the Spanish communities to work more closely together.⁹⁴

Only with the implementation of the Structural Funds did Spanish autonomous regions regain some involvement in 1988. They were an immediate and major source of development investment and required more direct communication between the representatives of the European Commission and the regional authorities.⁹⁵ Regions implemented the policies within their areas of competence, which led to renewed consolidation of regional influence in Spain’s relation with the EU. According to the Spanish Secretary of state on the EU, the contribution of these funds in 1994 – 1999 has risen up to 28.094 million euros.⁹⁶ These EU transfers raised the profile of regional authorities in Spain, who were managing over one-third over the structural fund allocations.⁹⁷ In 2004, the Spanish Secretary of State for the EU called for a discussion on the role of the Autonomous regions in EU institutions, following on the reform of the Nice Treaty, as these regions expressed their will on greater participation in the EU, based on the principle of subsidiarity.⁹⁸

Although Spain’s membership in the EU led to a decrease in regional powers at home initially, the regions and the EC established more direct contacts due to the Structural Funds. It laid the foundation for greater regional participation in the EU. So, Spanish regions acquired greater regional representation at home and eventually in the EU as well.

⁹² Ibid., 24.

⁹³ Barry Jones and Michael Keating, *The European Union and the Regions*, 120.

⁹⁴ Tanja A Börzel, ‘From Competitive Regionalism to Cooperative Federalism: The Europeanization of the Spanish state of the Autonomies,’ 40.

⁹⁵ Stephen P. Mangen, *Spanish Society After Franco: Regime Transition and the Welfare State*, 140.

⁹⁶ Secretaría de Estado para la Unión Europea, Madrid. *Las Comunidades Autónomas Españolas en la Unión Europea. Publicación de la Representación de las Comunidades Europeas en España sobre las Comunidades Autónomas Españolas en la Unión Europea*, 1995.

⁹⁷ Stephen P. Mangen, *Spanish Society After Franco: Regime Transition and the Welfare State*, 187.

⁹⁸ Secretaría de Estado para la Unión Europea, Madrid. *El debate sobre el futuro de la Unión y las Comunidades Autónomas*, 2004.

The Catalan view on the role of regions in the EU

Carles Puigdemont called the Catalan crisis “a European crisis”: It is not just an internal Spanish affair, but one for the European Union too.⁹⁹ He has been travelling around Europe to gain support for his cause: An independent Catalonia that would prefer to stay in the European Union. Catalan nationalists hoped Europe would be an important actor in this crisis. It raises the question whether the Catalan nationalist movement did use European integration as a resource for its strife in greater autonomy – eventually turning into independence.

Catalan nationalists have always emphasized Europe in their discourse: It was seen as a symbol of modernity and an important counterpoint to the central state in Madrid.¹⁰⁰ In the national narrative, Catalonia has been linked to the European world thanks to its origins as an independent trading nation in the Middle Ages. Being a border region, it has strong links to France and the Mediterranean region, too. It has been involved in inter-regional networking to promote economic and social cooperation with regions across Europe.¹⁰¹

Not only did Catalonia establish interregional cooperation, it also created a lobby organization to secure its economic and political interests in Europe. The Patronat Català Pro-Europa was created in 1982, reformed into the Patronat Catalunya Món in 2007 and some years later into DIPLOCAT, the Public Diplomacy Council of Catalonia.¹⁰² It is a public body which lobbied for Catalan interests in the European Community, later in the European Union. It was founded even before Spanish accession to the European Community in 1986, in order to prepare the Catalan position in advance. However, it has never really worked against the interests of the Spanish government, but looked for close cooperation instead with the Spanish Permanent Residency at the EU.¹⁰³ As the Spanish state has the only right to execute foreign

⁹⁹ Carles Puigdemont, “Sign of the Times: Mas as Hell”. Interview by Yoeri Albrecht. *De Balie / Internationaal Theater Amsterdam*, Amsterdam, October 2, 2018.

¹⁰⁰ Michael Keating, *Nations against the state. The new Politics of Nationalism in Quebec, Catalonia and Scotland*, 129.

¹⁰¹ Michael Keating, “The minority nations of Spain and European integration: A new framework for autonomy?”, 35.

Examples of interregional cooperation: Working Community of Regions with Industrial Tradition (RETI, 1984), the Conference of Peripheral Maritime Regions (CPMR, 1986), the Association of European Border Regions (AEBR, 1987), the Assembly of European Wine Growing Regions (AREV) and the Four Motors of Europe in 1991. See:

- Klaus – Jürgen Nagel, “Transcending the National / Asserting the National: How Stateless Nations like Scotland, Wales and Catalonia react to European Integration”, 63.

¹⁰² Consell de Diplomàcia Pública de Catalunya (DIPLOCAT) Comunicació del Govern. *El Govern converteix el Patronat Català Pro Europa en el Patronat Catalunya-Món per potenciar la internacionalització de la societat catalana*. November 21, 2007. (Press Release).

¹⁰³ Klaus – Jürgen Nagel, “Transcending the National / Asserting the National: How Stateless Nations like Scotland, Wales and Catalonia react to European Integration”, 63.

policy, the Patronat Català Pro Europa took the form of a foundation. In an interview with Jordi Pujol, president of the Generalitat in 1980 – 2003, he said:

“The Patronat was created as a Catalan embassy, but the Spanish government would not allow that. It gave a great significance to Catalonia in foreign relations”¹⁰⁴

Among the members are local administrations, universities and banks. DIPLOCAT was taken over by the Spanish government in fall 2017, in response to the referendum. It has been back in power since June 2018.

Like the Catalan lobby foundation, political parties in Catalonia saw the EU as an alternative channel to promote their goals and as an example to follow. Appendix 1 offers an overview of all relevant political parties in Catalonia. The socialist Partit del Socialistes de Catalunya (PSC) shared its mother party’s view (PSOE) of Europe as a source of economic political and social modernization, which Spain and Catalonia would see as an example to follow.¹⁰⁵ During the election in 2000, the PSC started to portray itself as more ‘Catalan’. Its new leader, Pasqual Maragall i Mira, has moved the PSC towards a more nationalist stance in attempts for a new statute of autonomy of Catalonia. In explaining why the statute should indicate Catalonia as a nation, he referred to a EU principle:

“The statute tries to strengthen the principle of subsidiarity, the idea that decisions should be taken as closely as possible to the citizen’ by further decentralization of Spain”¹⁰⁶

He believed regional governments were closer to the citizens and would therefore be the best governable solution. Nevertheless, Maragall saw no threat to the Spanish government:

“There is no risk of Spain’s disintegration as result of this reform’, because ‘the region has been part of Spain for hundreds of years . . . with a constant commitment for self- government”¹⁰⁷

Maragall had been advocating for greater regional and local participation in the European Union. Instead of a ‘Europe of the regions’, Maragall focused on a ‘Europe of the cities’, probably deriving from his background as mayor of Barcelona in 1982 – 1997.

¹⁰⁴ Jordi Pujol, “The ‘four motors of Europe’, the Committee of the Regions and the role of Catalan nationalist parties in this context”. Interview by Cristina Blanco Sío-López. *CVCE, University of Luxembourg regarding the EU integration process*. Barcelona, March 19, 2010.

¹⁰⁵ Benito Giordano and Elisa Roller, “Catalonia and the ‘idea of Europe’: competing strategies and discourses within Catalan Party Politics”, 107.

¹⁰⁶ Pasqual Maragall i Mira, “Catalonia is a nation”, *The Wall Street Journal*, November 21, 2005.

¹⁰⁷ Pasqual Maragall i Mira, “Catalonia is a nation”.

During this time, Maragall situated Barcelona on the world stage, transforming it into a global city. He believed:

“The only road that leads from the present world of states to the global world, the world without borders, is precisely this: Is a rout that traverses the world of cities and the Europe of regions (...), and I assure you that the future of nations will be played out in the efficacy of their systems of cities”.¹⁰⁸

Maragall was the president of the Council of Municipalities and Regions of Europe in 1991 – 1997. He was also vice – president of the International union of Local Authorities and president of the Committee of the Regions in 1996 – 1998.

To the leftist Esquerra Republicana de Catalunya (ERC), European integration is the key to the development of Catalan sovereignty, hoping for the establishment of a ‘Europe of the regions’.¹⁰⁹ One of its members, Meritxell Serret, emphasized the relations between Catalonia and the EU: “This means almost 40 years of non-stop efforts to bring Catalonia closer to the European Union, and the EU closer to the Catalan people”.¹¹⁰

The centre – rightist CiU has been striving for recognition of Catalonia and the Catalan identity in political, economical and cultural aspect within Spain and the EU. Jordi Pujol described the CiU as nationalistic and called this strife for recognition ‘catalanismo’. Catalanismo, or Catalanism, was a movement dedicated to the glorification of the historical Catalan identity and values.¹¹¹

Pujol’s strife for recognition of Catalonia and the Catalan identity in the EU could be seen as: “An early exponent of the ‘Europe of the regions’ concept: Seeing it as a framework for a revived, but not separatist Catalanism”.¹¹² Indeed, Jordi Pujol has been calling for greater representation of regions in Europe. Besides his presidency at the Catalan government, he worked as vice-president from 1988-1992 and as president in 1992-1996 of the Assembly of European Regions.¹¹³ He elaborated on his work for this Assembly in an interview:

¹⁰⁸ Pasqual Maragall i Mira, “Architecture and City in an Open World”, in: *The Royal Gold Medal 1999: the City of Barcelona, The Journal of Architecture* 4, no. 3 (1999): 235.

¹⁰⁹ Benito Giordano and Elisa Roller, “Catalonia and the ‘idea of Europe’: competing strategies and discourses within Catalan Party Politics”, 110.

¹¹⁰ Meritxell Serret, “Reception on the occasion of the National Day of Catalonia”, Brussels, September 12, 2018, 7.

¹¹¹ Jordi Pujol, “The ‘four motors of Europe’, the Committee of the Regions and the role of Catalan nationalist parties in this context”. Interview by Cristina Blanco Sío-López.

¹¹² Michael Keating, “The minority nations of Spain and European integration: A new framework for autonomy?”, 33.

¹¹³ The Assembly of European Regions (AER) was created in 1985 to advocate regionalism in Europe. It is not a EU organ, but it contributed to the development of regional and local representation in the EU. The creation of the CoR has been seen as a victory for the AER in 1994. See:

“Within Europe we have advocated a position that took account of all the identities which are not states, the state-less nations, such as Catalonia, Scotland, the Basque Country, etc. At one particular time we sought, with some success for a number of years, to achieve this through the Assembly of European Regions; later, though, it did not work well: Although at one time there was a great deal of openness on all things in Europe. We sought a Europe on three levels: The European level, the level of the states and the level of the regions, with internal enhancement of the regions or state-less nations, enhancement of European bodies while of course retaining states as, shall we say, a key aspect of the general structure of Europe, but involving the states in a loss of powers domestically to the regions and to Brussels”.¹¹⁴

He voiced the hope that regions would contribute very much to the building of Europe, as regions and municipalities played a role in developing a European identity for Europe’s citizens.¹¹⁵ Regional and local authorities had a key role in bringing the EU closer to the citizen and thus removing the remoteness of the EU institutions.¹¹⁶

As a result, the Spanish state framed the role of regions in a political way. It addressed the political ambitions of its regions since the beginning of Spanish democracy in 1975 as regions obtained a high level of autonomy. Initially, the political role weakened due to Spanish accession to the EU, but the Spanish regions achieved greater regional representation with the implementation of the Structural Funds.

The Catalan nationalist movement saw the EU as a ‘window of opportunity’, in which regions hoped to establish direct representation with legislative powers.¹¹⁷ Through the Committee of the Regions and a lobby foundation Patronat Català Pro-Europa, the Catalan nationalists pursued recognition of a Catalan identity. The CiU, with Jordi Pujol as the president, had been striving for this acknowledgement across Spain and Europe. Pasqual Maragall i Mira had been pursuing greater self – government for Catalonia within the context of Spain and Europe. He promoted a greater role for cities and municipalities within Europe too. Despite the differences in the focus on an urban or regional level, both leaders have advocated a bottom – up approach to the processes of European integration, which contained a greater political role for subnational authorities. It has paved the way for nationalist regional

Assembly of European Regions, “The history of AER”, <https://aer.eu/the-history-of-aer/>.

¹¹⁴ Jordi Pujol, “The ‘four motors of Europe’, the Committee of the Regions and the role of Catalan nationalist parties in this context”. Interview by Cristina Blanco Sío-López.

¹¹⁵ Jordi Pujol, “Address to the Assembly of the Council of Europe”. *The assembly of European Regions*, Strasbourg, May 31, 1994.

¹¹⁶ Congress of Local and Regional Authorities in Europe, Summary report of the first session, Strasbourg 31-05 until 03-06-1994. *The Bulletin, newsletter of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of Europe*, no. 3 (2004).

¹¹⁷ Margarita León, Mercedes Mateo Diaz and Covadonga Meseguer, “The Spanish Case: Who was Mobilized and How?”, 78.

movements to see the European Union as a way to bypass the nation state in getting a greater role in participation within EU decision - making.

3. The approach of the EU institutions towards the Catalan nationalist aspiration

Carles Puigdemont has been seeking political support of the EU for an independent Catalonia. According to him: “The Catalan crisis is an European crisis, and therefore the EU should help in finding a solution democratically”.¹¹⁸ As Puigdemont set his hope on the EU, it raises the question how the European Commission, the Council, the Parliament and the Committee of the Regions have addressed the Catalan nationalist aspirations. I will analyse documents of these institutions with regard to the development of and importance given to regions and regional authorities and in what way they have addressed the Catalan strife for independence. The role of regions will be defined in economical, political or cultural terms. It also entails the second dimension of my theoretical framework, in which the role of the EU in the Catalan conflict will be examined. Moreover, this chapter will be framed along the concepts of ‘the Europe of the regions’ and the ‘Europe of the nations’. What concept represents the EU institutions best in addressing the Catalan nationalist aspiration?

European Commission

The EC promoted greater regional representation in the EU. As soon as 1995, the Commission decided to enter into closer relations with the CoR for receiving greater consultation than only on mandatory fields (economic and social cohesion, trans – European networks, education, health and culture).¹¹⁹ In the EC’s perspective, regions turned from merely being economic actors into political ones. Regional and local authorities would give the EC technical expertise as well as feedback on EU policies.¹²⁰ The political role of regions started to emerge in the following years.

In 2001, The EC and the CoR signed a cooperation agreement, which would make the EU more democratic and closer to the citizens thanks to the local and regional dimensions of the CoR.¹²¹ Instead of solely focusing on the economic role of regions in the EU, the EC started to acknowledge the political role of regions in its contribution to reduce EU’s democratic deficit. Romano Prodi, president of the Commission from 1999 – 2004 underlined

¹¹⁸ Carles Puigdemont, “Sign of the Times: Mas as Hell”. Interview by Yoeri Albrecht.

¹¹⁹ European Commission. *Closer relations with the Committee of the Regions*. RAPID. The Press and Communication Service of the European Commission: IP-95-392. April 19, 1995.

¹²⁰ Justus Schönlaue, “Beyond Mere Consultation: Expanding the European Committee of the Regions’ role”, 1170 – 1171.

¹²¹ European Commission - Committee of the Regions. *Cooperation agreement between the European Commission and the Committee of the Regions signed on 20 September 2001 - Joint declaration and protocol*. (DI CdR 81/2001). Brussels, September 20, 2001.

that: “We have now embarked upon a system of interdependence between the local, regional and European levels where each needs the other”.¹²² Moreover, the Member states should acknowledge: “The value of the sub-national bodies, which are also involved in all the aspects of building Europe”.¹²³ The EC, however, stressed that the role of national authorities should not be questioned.

Furthermore, the EC extended the political role of regions in the EU with concepts of good governance, subsidiarity and proportionality. Romano Prodi emphasized the role these authorities would play with regard to these ideas at a meeting with the president of the Regions of Europe in 2002. He believed that: “The role of the regions and local authorities is clearly important for the development of the European project”.¹²⁴ The involvement of the regions in the EU was an example of “grassroots democracy”.¹²⁵ As the EC established more dialogue with regional and local actors, the EC emphasized again that the EU institutions were ruled by member states and it would not change the role of national powers in the EU, as seen in Prodi’s statement:

“But we cannot ignore or disregard the national authorities because the regional authorities work within national constitutional frameworks that differ from State to State, which all EU institutions seek to respect”.¹²⁶

In the 2000s, the EC focused on new ways to promote unity and solidarity in the EU. It did address threats of populism and extreme nationalism in its member states, but not of growing regional political ambitions, such as the Catalan support for independence. José Manuel Durão Barroso, the Portuguese president of the European Commission from 2004 until 2014 saw culture as a way to keep Europe together.¹²⁷ As the economic crisis of 2008 had shown, the economic interdependence posed a risk for European countries, but: “To best cope with this, we need a European Union that is based on the principles of solidarity and responsibility”.¹²⁸ He emphasized that:

¹²² European Commission. *Speech of Romano Prodi, President of the European Commission, to the Committee of the Regions*. (Speech 01/398). Brussels, September 20, 2001.

¹²³ Ibid.

¹²⁴ European Commission. *Speech of Romano Prodi, President of the European Commission, on the role of the regions in building the Europe of tomorrow*. Governance and the Convention Meeting with the presidents of the regions of Europe. (Speech 02/344). Bellagio, July 15, 2002.

¹²⁵ Ibid.

¹²⁶ Ibid.

¹²⁷ European Commission. *Speech by José Manuel Durão Barroso: ‘Culture: the cement that binds Europe together’*. Opera Europa / RESEO Spring Conference. (Speech 13/280). Vienna, April 4, 2013.

¹²⁸ Ibid.

“We cannot let populism, scepticism or pessimism undermine the foundations of Europe, not to speak about new forms of nationalism that I believe are a very serious risk for the European values that we cherish”.¹²⁹

The EC did see an opportunity for regional, local and supranational actors to counter the rise of extreme nationalism and populism, as Barroso said: “We must, therefore, abandon the illusion that we can respond to European problems not only with national solutions”.¹³⁰ Decision – making would thus occur not only on the national level, but also on the regional and supranational level, which would be related to the idea of ‘Europe of the regions’. Barroso referred to a Europe with a shared European destiny, based on “a sense of belonging to a community which is bigger than the nation or the region”.¹³¹ Europe needed to be united despite regional or national differences and identities, as if these identities would be subordinated to the European one.

In the same period, instead of overcoming regional identities, the Catalan nationalist and secessionist claims grew, due to the effects of the economic crisis as well as the Spanish government’s rejection of the renewed Statute for Catalonia in this period. This would be the first time the EC referred to the Catalan nationalist movement, although it offered no support. In 2012, mass demonstrations took place in Catalonia with the slogan “Catalonia: A new European State”.¹³² Viviane Reding, EC vice president and Commissioner for Justice, Fundamental Rights and Citizenship, visited Spain in this period and she gave an interview to the newspaper *Diario de Sevilla*.¹³³ She saw it as a Spanish internal affair, referring to it as:

¹²⁹ Ibid.

¹³⁰ European Commission. *Speech by José Manuel Durão Barroso: ‘New Narrative for Europe’*. BOZAR. (Speech 13/357). Brussels, April 23, 2013.

¹³¹ Ibid.

¹³² Stephen Burgen, “Catalan independence rally brings Barcelona to a standstill”, *The Guardian*, September 11, 2012.

¹³³ Note:

This interview showed the politicization in the relations between Catalonia and Spain. Catalan newspapers saw Reding’s remark on international law not saying anything that Catalonia must leave the EU in the case the region might have achieved independence. Catalan newspapers cheered Reding’s remark, explaining it as EU’s support for the Catalan strife. Afterwards, Catalonia started to blame the Spanish government in forcing Reding to take her comments back. Neither other Spanish newspapers nor the EU, through statements or opinions, have mentioned this precedent. See:

- Gaspar Pericay Coll, “The European Commission sends contradictory messages regarding hypothetical Catalan independence”, *Catalannews*, October 30, 2012.

The interview:

- Fede Durán, “ ‘Ninguna ley dice que Cataluña deba salir de la UE si se independiza’ , Reding agradece obviar temas recurrentes como el euro y el rescate español, sin novedad en el frente, pero entra al trapo en todo lo demás: Rumanía, Hungría y Grecia, ETA, las caricaturas de Mahoma o la lentitud de la UE” , *Diario de Sevilla*, September 30, 2012.

“Please solve the internal problems in Spain” and “I would not want to interfere in matters of Spanish politics”.¹³⁴

In 2013, the EC denied any support to the Catalan nationalist movement again, when the Generalitat decided with a majority to hold a non – binding referendum on Catalan independence and its president, Arthur Mas, had asked the EU for support. However, instead of a full rejection, Reding showed some empathy for Catalonia. During public debates at the EU Citizens’ Dialogues, she stressed she had known Catalonia for a long time, understanding its wish for more autonomy and respecting the desire for independence, but personally she said: “I would find it a very regrettable result: A Europe without Catalonia”.¹³⁵ It resembled the EC’s stance on an independent Catalonia too: An independent Catalonia would not be a part of the EU, in contrast to what Catalan nationalists had hoped for. Moreover, Catalonia leaving the EU would mean a weakening of Europe, as Reding put it. She also thought that: “A Catalonia out of our Union (...) would weaken Spain. And it would weaken Catalonia – economically and politically”.¹³⁶

Strikingly, the Commission remained mute on Catalan claims for independence in the following years. It only broke its silence in the aftermath of the referendum on October 1, 2017, rejecting any support for the Catalan strife. In a statement issued the day after, the EC declared that: “This is an internal matter for Spain that has to be dealt with in line with the constitutional order of Spain”.¹³⁷ As Reding announced some years before, the EC again rejected any hope for Catalonia to remain in the EU after becoming independent. The EC stated:

“If a referendum were to be organized in line with the Spanish Constitution it would mean that the territory leaving would find itself outside of the European Union”.¹³⁸

The EC supported the Spanish government, based on the Spanish constitution that declared the referendum illegal. Spanish police tried to prevent Catalan inhabitants from voting on October 1, which resulted into use of force. Human Rights Watch published reports in which

¹³⁴ Fede Durán, “ ‘Ninguna ley dice que Cataluña deba salir de la UE si se independiza’, Reding agradece obviar temas recurrentes como el euro y el rescate español, sin novedad en el frente, pero entra al trapo en todo lo demás: Rumanía, Hungría y Grecia, ETA, las caricaturas de Mahoma o la lentitud de la UE”.

¹³⁵ European Commission. *Vice-President Viviane Reding’s Remarks on independence*. 45th Citizens’ Dialogue. (Speech 14/152). Barcelona, February 23, 2014.

¹³⁶ Ibid.

¹³⁷ European Commission. *Statement on the events in Catalonia*. (Statement /17/3626). Brussels, October 2, 2017.

¹³⁸ Ibid.

it called the use of force used by the Spanish police “excessive”.¹³⁹ However, the EC did not really condemn the Spanish police’s use of force, as it called on dialogue:

“We call on all relevant players to now move very swiftly from confrontation to dialogue. Violence can never be an instrument in politics”.¹⁴⁰

EC vice – president Frans Timmermans repeated the EC’s position during a plenary session in the EP.¹⁴¹ He considered it an internal Spanish affair and Catalonia should follow the Spanish constitution. However, in contrast to earlier statements and remarks, he offered some solution: “You can work to change the law, or adapt it but you can not ignore it”.¹⁴²

In an interview with leftist Spanish newspaper *El País* in November 2017, EC president Jean – Claude Juncker stressed the role of nations in the EU. He even claimed that he was in favor of the “Europe of regions”, of respecting identity and differences, but that: “Europe is a club of nations and I don’t accept regions going against nations. Even less so outside of the law”.¹⁴³ So, he supported the Spanish government’s view of an illegal referendum and did not voice any support for the Catalan strife for independence. His vision of a ‘Europe of the regions’ was about the cheering of regional identity in the EU, but it was never about support for political regions claiming greater autonomy and independence.

Although the EC’s stance in backing its member states did not come as a surprise, Juncker’s denial on the Spanish police’s use of violence was, as he said he was not there and that there was a lot of fake news. He did ultimately say he would never be in favor of the use of force.¹⁴⁴

In conclusion, the EC’s perspective on the role of regions has changed from mostly economic actors serving a technical purpose into political ones, based on the principles of partnership and subsidiarity. However, any political regional ambition has never been addressed by the EC: The EU remained a ‘club of nations’. Although the EC vice – president Reding showed some understanding and empathy towards the Catalan strife for independence,

¹³⁹ Human Right Watch, “Spain: Police Used Excessive Force in Catalonia”, October 12, 2017.

¹⁴⁰ European Commission. *Statement on the events in Catalonia*.

¹⁴¹ This plenary session will be discussed in the next section European Parliament. See: - European Parliament. *EP Plenary session: Constitution, Rule of Law and Fundamental Rights in Spain in the light of the events in Catalonia. Opening statement of Frans Timmermans, First Vice – President of the EC*. Brussels, October 4, 2017.

¹⁴² Ibid.

¹⁴³ Claudio Pérez, “Juncker: ‘El Nacionalismo es veneno’. El presidente de la Comisión asegura que los líderes Catalanes ‘no deben subestimar el amplio respaldo a Rajoy en Europa’”, *El País*, November 19, 2017.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid.

she – and the EC - have always emphasized the role of national authorities in the EU which could not be bypassed. The EC remained silent in the years of 2010 – 2015, in which the Catalan nationalist movement asserted great support for independence. It only responded after the outcome of the referendum in 2017, in which it supported the Spanish state's arguments in condemning it illegal.

European Council

The European Council defines the EU's overall political direction and priorities and consists of the heads of state or government of the member states. In setting the policy agenda, the Council deals with long – term issues, such as security, justice, economic growth and climate policies. It is not a legislating institution. Therefore, the Council did not contribute directly towards greater regional representation in the EU. It did stress that:

“Openness and subsidiarity are essential concepts which require further elaboration. The Union must be built with the support of its citizen”.¹⁴⁵

The Council reacted very similar to the Catalan strife for independence as the Commission. When Arthur Mas had asked the EU for support in holding a non – binding referendum on Catalan independence in 2012, the Council spoke out on the matter for the first time. At a press conference with Mariano Rajoy in Madrid, the Council's president Herman von Rompuy reacted, calling it an internal affair:

“First of all, it is not for me to express a position on questions of internal organisation related to the constitutional arrangements in a Member state”.¹⁴⁶

Another important claim he made was about EU's support: The EU treaties applied to Member states, and if Catalonia would have become independent, it would have to reapply as it would no longer be a part of the EU Member state Spain. So, the Council voiced its support for the Spanish government that condemned the referendum illegal, based on the Spanish constitution. An independent Catalonia would have to reapply for EU membership.

Just as the Commission, the Council raised the topic of Catalanian independence in the aftermath of the referendum on October 2017. However, as the Council focuses on the overall direction for the EU, it is no surprise it only reacts in moments of crisis. The Council's muteness in the previous years originates from that line of thinking.

¹⁴⁵ European Council. *Presidency Conclusions*. Corfu, June 24-25, 1995.

¹⁴⁶ European Council. *Remarks by President of the European Council Herman Van Rompuy on Catalonia*. (EUCO 267/13). Madrid, December 12, 2013.

The Council's president since 2014, Donald Tusk, spoke about the Catalan challenge during his address to the Committee of the Regions.¹⁴⁷ He stressed European unity and the need for dialogue, based on his understanding of being a member of an ethnic minority himself (in Poland): “Diversity should not, and need not, lead to conflict . . . Let us always look for what unites us, and not for what divides us.”¹⁴⁸

EU Member states reacted towards the Catalan challenge as well, although not expressed through the Council.¹⁴⁹ French president Emmanuel Macron fully supported Mariano Rajoy. Germany did not recognize the declaration of independence either. The UK and the US wanted to see the rule of law upheld and Spain united. Only some states, such as Scotland, Slovenia, Belgium and Germany, condemned the violence of the Spanish forces towards Catalan citizens in trying to prevent them from voting.

European Parliament

The European Parliament supports the development of regional and local representation in the EU. Its strategy in the 1970s and 1980s began with recognition of local and active participants in the actions and programs co-financed from the Community's structural Funds. The EP Resolution of April 13, 1984 expressed the EP's wish that:

“The European Community needs an accredited body, which is in a position to speak on behalf of the local and regional authorities, to consult on a permanent basis in the field of Community regional policy”.¹⁵⁰

In contrast to the EC, the EP from the start envisioned a political role for regional and local authorities for consulting the European Community's institutions.

In 1990, the Parliament recommended the creation of a Committee of the Regions and Local Authorities with consultative status, as part of its strategy for the EU.¹⁵¹ As the CoR was created in 1994, EP president Egon Klepsch (1992 – 1994) explained why this was so important to the EU:

¹⁴⁷ Donald Tusk addressed the CoR during ‘The Week of the Regions and Cities’, an annual four – days event in which regions and cities show their importance to the EU. See:
- Council of the EU. *Address by President Donald Tusk to the European Committee of the Regions*. (Speech 573/17). Brussels, October 10, 2017.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid.

¹⁴⁹ Saim Saeed, “How the world reacted to Catalan independence declaration. Leaders of major powers side with Spain but some warn against too hard a line”, *Politico*, October 27, 2017.

¹⁵⁰ European Parliament. Resolution on the role of the regions, April 13, 1984. *Official Journal of the European Communities C 127*, May 14, 1984.

¹⁵¹ European Parliament. Resolution on the Intergovernmental Conferences in the context of the European Parliament's strategy for European Union, November 22, 1990. *Official Journal of the European Communities C 324*, December 24, 1990.

“(The CoR), situated between the European and national level and at the same time representing its citizens, will make it possible for our people to make their voices heard formally and officially within the Union at all institutional levels of the democratic system”.¹⁵²

He believed that greater regional and local participation in the EU would help in making the EU more democratic.

The autonomous communities of Spain helped bringing citizens closer to the EU, according to José María Gil – Robles, EP president from 1997 – 1999.¹⁵³ He believed the Spanish autonomies are a good example of making the EU more democratic, as the regions have implied their regional powers on every aspect among EU policies: “That was the power of the principle of subsidiarity, in which the proximity of administration would involve the citizen more directly”.¹⁵⁴

Another quote of EP president Klaus Hansch (1994 – 1997) serves to illustrate the EP’s view further: “The European Union needs us both for we are not rivals but partners with complementary roles”.¹⁵⁵ The idea of the CoR’s partnership with the EP as a third chamber fitted in the idea of the ‘Europe of the regions’.

The EP did not raise the matter of Catalan independence until the Generalitat’s presidency of Carles Puigdemont in January 2016. In contrast to the EC and the Council, the EP remained remarkable silent in the period towards the referendum.

As a result of Puigdemont’s calls for an independence referendum, Maria Bizotto raised parliamentary questions in the EP. She asked about what role the EU would play in the Catalan case for secession and especially for a solution, as she believed the EU treaties were preventing Catalonia from holding a free and democratic referendum.¹⁵⁶ However, Maria Bizotto is an Italian member of Lega Nord; this is a secessionist movement in Italy. It could have influenced her position on the matter.

Although the EP’s muteness on the Catalan strife for independence is striking in contrast to the EC and the Council, its reaction was not unanimously the same and much more

¹⁵² European Parliament. *Speech of Egon Klepsch, president of the European Parliament, to the Committee of the Regions*. Brussels, March 9, 1994, 2.

¹⁵³ José María Gil – Robles y Gil – Delgado., “The Role of Spanish Regions in the European Integration Process”. Interview by Cristina Blanco Sío-López, *CVCE, University of Luxembourg regarding the EU integration process*, Madrid, March 9, 2010.

¹⁵⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵⁵ European Commission. *Klaus Hansch, president of the European Parliament, sees the committees of the regions and the European Parliament as partners*. (COR – 95-51). July 20, 1995. (Press release).

¹⁵⁶ European Parliament. *Question for written answer E-001375-17 to the Commission, Rule 130: ‘Subject: Right to self-determination of peoples: referendum on Catalan independence and Spain's opposition to it’*. Maria Bizzotto. Brussels, February 28, 2017.

critical on the role of the EU towards the Catalan issue after the referendum took place on October 1, 2017.

During a plenary session in the EP three days later, MEPS (Members of Parliament) and first – vice president of the EC, Frans Timmermans, discussed the constitution, rule of law and fundamental rights in Spain with regard to further events in Catalonia. It included all representatives of the political groups in the EP.¹⁵⁷

In the debate, MEPS addressed the idea of the EU as mediator several times. Gianni Pitella called on the EU to take up its role to mediate, as “the raison d’être of the EU is reconciliation”¹⁵⁸ Europe was born to bring unity and peace; it would therefore need to help break the impasse. Ska Keller argued in the same line as Pitella: “The EU is build on the idea of living together on the continent, settling our differences”¹⁵⁹ That is why she called on the EU to offer its help through mediation. So, they rejected the EC’s and Council’ stance on offering no support and calling it an internal affair. Both did see an “unbreakable link between Catalonia, Spain and the EU”¹⁶⁰.

MEPS did not recognize the outcome of the referendum, just as the EC and Council had done, due to the illegality of it. However, they did not reject Catalan’s call for independence. As Guy Verhofstadt compared:

“The future of my own Flemish community lies not in brutal separation, but lies in cooperation, cooperation inside federal structures in a federal Europe”¹⁶¹.

¹⁵⁷ The political groups in the EP and their representatives in the plenary session on October 4, 2017: European People’s Party (EPP), representative: Manfred Weber, Germany. Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats (S&D), leader: Gianni Pitella, Italy. Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe (ALDE), leader: Guy Verhofstadt, Belgium. European United Left – Nordic Green Left (GUE / NGL), representative: Patrick le Hyaric, France. Greens – European Free Alliances (Greens / EFA), representative: Ska Keller, Germany. Europe of Freedom and Direct Democracy (EFDD), representative: Raymond Finch, United Kingdom. Europe of Nations and Freedom (ENF), leader: Marcel de Graaff, the Netherlands. European Conservatives and Reformists (ECR), representative: Ryszard Legutko, Poland. See:

European Parliament. *EP Plenary session: Constitution, Rule of Law and Fundamental Rights in Spain in the light of the events in Catalonia*. Brussels, October 4, 2017.

¹⁵⁸ European Parliament. *EP Plenary session: Constitution, Rule of Law and Fundamental Rights in Spain in the light of the events in Catalonia. Round of political group speakers: Gianni Pitella (S&D, IT)*. Brussels, October 4, 2017.

¹⁵⁹ European Parliament. *EP Plenary session: Constitution, Rule of Law and Fundamental Rights in Spain in the light of the events in Catalonia. Round of political group speakers: Ska Keller (Greens / EFA, DE)*. Brussels, October 4, 2017.

¹⁶⁰ European Parliament. *EP Plenary session: Constitution, Rule of Law and Fundamental Rights in Spain in the light of the events in Catalonia. Round of political group speakers: Gianni Pitella (S&D, IT)*.

¹⁶¹ European Parliament. *EP Plenary session: Constitution, Rule of Law and Fundamental Rights in Spain in the light of the events in Catalonia. Round of political group speakers: Guy Verhofstadt (ALDE, BE)*. Brussels, October 4, 2017.

He also emphasized the missing democratic legitimacy of the referendum. So, a democratic, cooperative and legal way would be an option to achieve independence. Pitella joined his view: “Change is possible, but only with respect of common law and rules”.¹⁶² Keller stressed that the right to self-determination is fully anchored in international law and that a political solution is needed, instead of a legal one.¹⁶³

The EP was very critical of the EU’s silence on the use of force by the Spanish police towards the Catalan voters. Raymond Finch and Patrick le Hyaric urged the EC to condemn the acts of violence and repression in Catalonia.¹⁶⁴ Finch blamed the Spanish government for the escalation of the conflict to act up on the Catalan voters in “a brutal manner”.¹⁶⁵ He believed the outcome of a referendum would do no harm, as the majority of Catalans did not want independence.

Moreover, some MEPS thought that the EU’s attitude towards Spain was more favourable than to other member states, such as Poland and Hungary. The one party – government in Poland ordered some reforms in the rule of law, which are seen as contradictory to the EU core values. That also happened in Hungary, in which law amendments are being seen as a threat to the democracy by the EU. Marcel De Graaff believed that: “Freedom, democracy and human rights only are valid to EU member states that serve the agenda”, referring to the excessive force used by the Spanish police that had not been condemned by the EU.¹⁶⁶ Ryszard Legutko believed that the consequences would have been far harsher if it was another member state than Spain.¹⁶⁷

As a result, despite the EP’s muteness in the period running up to the referendum on October 1, 2017, the MEPS were very critical about the way the Spanish government reacted to the Catalan referendum in 2017 as well as on the EC’s and Council’s position in backing

¹⁶² European Parliament. *EP Plenary session: Constitution, Rule of Law and Fundamental Rights in Spain in the light of the events in Catalonia. Round of political group speakers: Gianni Pitella (S&D, IT)*.

¹⁶³ European Parliament. *EP Plenary session: Constitution, Rule of Law and Fundamental Rights in Spain in the light of the events in Catalonia. Round of political group speakers: Ska Keller (Greens / EFA, DE)*.

¹⁶⁴ European Parliament. *EP Plenary session: Constitution, Rule of Law and Fundamental Rights in Spain in the light of the events in Catalonia. Round of political group speakers: Patrick le Hyaric (GUE/NGL, FR)*. Brussels, October 4, 2017.

European Parliament. *EP Plenary session: Constitution, Rule of Law and Fundamental Rights in Spain in the light of the events in Catalonia. Round of political group speakers: Raymond Finch (EFDD, UK)*. Brussels, October 4, 2017.

¹⁶⁵ European Parliament. *EP Plenary session: Constitution, Rule of Law and Fundamental Rights in Spain in the light of the events in Catalonia. Round of political group speakers: Raymond Finch (EFDD, UK)*.

¹⁶⁶ European Parliament. *EP Plenary session: Constitution, Rule of Law and Fundamental Rights in Spain in the light of the events in Catalonia. Round of political group speakers: Marcel de Graaff (ENF, NL)*. Brussels, October 4, 2017.

¹⁶⁷ European Parliament. *EP Plenary session: Constitution, Rule of Law and Fundamental Rights in Spain in the light of the events in Catalonia. Round of political group speakers: Ryszard Legutko (ECR, PL)*. Brussels, October 4, 2017.

the Spanish state. Most of them thought of the Catalan crisis as a political problem, which could not be solved only through the legal framework or through violence. Moreover, they claimed the EU should play a role in mediation between the Catalan and Spanish government. The EP had stimulated the development of greater regional and local representation in the EU. It did not voice its support for the Catalan nationalist movement in its strife for independence, but the EP has offered some help in articulating new ways through dialogue and rule of law to settle the question in Spain.

The Committee of the Regions

The establishment of the CoR recognized regional and local authorities as administrators to organize society.¹⁶⁸ Because of the CoR, regions did not only have an economic and/or a political role, but also a cultural one. The CoR representatives have been focusing on promoting and protecting the various regional identities across Europe.¹⁶⁹ An example would be the recognition of Catalan culture and language, as seen in the approval of the use of Spanish regional languages in EU institutions, established through the CoR.¹⁷⁰

The CoR reacted very similar as the EP: It remained silent on the Catalan nationalist ambitions in the period towards the referendum on independence on October 1, 2017. As the EP, a debate on the situation in Spain occurred a couple days after the referendum. The CoR's president Karl – Heinz Lamberts said that: “The CoR would not oppose identities, but that the CoR followed the approach ‘united in diversity’ ”.¹⁷¹ So, based on this, the CoR's general approach was not in support of independence. Moreover, Lambertz stated that the CoR would support “a solution achieved by respecting democracy and the rule of law”.¹⁷² As in the EP, the other representatives during this debate in the CoR have condemned the use of force by the Spanish police and called for dialogue. Such as Altafaj i Tardio, Italian member of the European People's Party Group; he said that people's rights were undermined. To him, it was a “symptom of a problem; the majority of Catalans felt abandoned by Spain”.¹⁷³

¹⁶⁸ Peter van der Knaap, “The Committee of the Regions: the outset of a 'Europe of the regions'?”, 89.

¹⁶⁹ Committee of the Regions. *The regional and local dimensions in establishing new form of Governance in Europe*. (CoR Studies E-7/2002). Brussels, October 2002.

¹⁷⁰ Committee of the Regions. *Spanish regional languages are used for the first time in EU institutions: 'it is a history day for Europe', say Spanish regional presidents*. (COR/05/125). Brussels, November 16, 2005.

¹⁷¹ Committee of the Regions. *126th Plenary Session of the European Committee of the Regions, Item 2 - Appendix 5: Minutes of the 125th plenary session of the European Committee of the regions: Debate on Catalonia*. (COR-2017-03634-04-00-PV-REF), Brussels, October 30, 2017, 1 – 3.

¹⁷² Ibid., 2

¹⁷³ Ibid., 2.

Although all members opposed secessionist claims, some expressed their support for the Catalan nationalists. Vanlouwe, member of the European Alliance, argued that:

“Political desires for decentralisation and autonomy as well as the democratic voice could not be stopped”.¹⁷⁴

Therefore, the CoR should defend its regions against repression. Another member of the same group, Arno Kompatscher, advocated political discussion on further developing Catalan autonomy. He also called for work against nationalist tendencies.¹⁷⁵

So, the CoR did not differ that much from the EP, EC and Council in its response to the Catalan challenge. It did focus to a greater extent on the protection of regional autonomy, but, as the other EU institutions, it did not support independence.

Conclusion

The EC saw regions primarily as economic actors in receiving technical expertise and feedback on EU policies. In the 1990s, the EC gradually changed their position towards the role of regions: It became more political, thanks to the regions' contribution in reducing the democratic deficit of the EU. The adjustment of the principles of subsidiarity and proportionality in the EU contributed to the development of the political role of regions as well. In contrast to the EC, the EP had always envisioned a greater political role for regional authorities.

Even if the development of political roles for regions in the EU occurred with (a varying degree of) support of the EU institutions, the silence of these institutions on nationalist regional movements has been striking. At a time the Catalan nationalist movement grew in support, the EU remained quiet, with only a few exceptions of Commissioners and MEPS. Commissioner Reding showed some empathy towards the Catalan nationalist movement, but she did not voice support. The EC's and the Council's position never really changed from 2012 until 2017: In the years running up to the referendum and afterwards, they both referred to it as an internal affair of Spain with no role left for the EU. They also stressed that a Catalan independent state would have to reapply for EU membership.

On the contrary, the EP and the CoR offered critique towards the Spanish government on the use of force as well as on EU's unwillingness to mediate. However, they only reacted

¹⁷⁴ Ibid., 3.

¹⁷⁵ Ibid., 3.

after the referendum on October 1, 2017. They called for dialogue between the EU, Spain and Catalonia. The CoR called for greater autonomy for Catalonia in order to tackle the issue.

As a result, the EU institutions would represent the 'Europe of the nations' instead of the 'Europe of the regions', although they supported the growing political role of regions in the EU. As seen in the case of Catalonia, the EC and the Council supported the member state Spain. The EP and the CoR were much more critical on the role of the EU and of Spain, but did not support Catalan independence either. Therefore, the EU institutions would be suited best in the concept of the 'Europe of the nations'.

Conclusion

It has been argued that European sovereignty from above and regional autonomy from below posed a threat to the nation state's traditional authority. European integration did not only lead to new levels of supranational policy-making, it also empowered regional and local authorities in becoming the executors of EU policy, as a consequence of decentralization. The idea of a 'Europe of the regions' fitted in this trend, in which regions would become one of the main actors in the EU in co-existence with, and in a more radical view, to the disadvantage of nation states. Nationalist regional movements have been attracted to this idea as well, seeing it as a way to bypass the nation state. However, regional power was also contested. Some scholars see a continuation of the 'Europe of the nations', which refers to the idea that nation states would remain the key actors. Regions would still need backing of the EU member states in EU institutions and their regional power depends on the respective power in the nation state. This thesis seeks to contribute to this debate in doing a case study of the Catalan nationalist movement by investigating in what way the idea of the 'Europe of the regions' has empowered this regional movement.

We have seen that the role of regions in the EU has changed over time. In the beginning of European integration, regions did not play any role as the Commission considered them as internal state affairs. The European Investment Bank was the first to recognize the importance of regions in promoting economic development, turning them into key areas for the Community's common market. The enlargement of the European Community contributed to a changing role too, as it required a greater involvement of regional and local authorities in implementing new decentralised policies in reducing disparities among its member states. The Structural Funds entailed a substantial degree of decentralization and required sessions between all levels. So, regions became actors in the EU arena and were not merely being seen as economic areas during the 1980s.

The European Commission, Council and Parliament have all contributed to the development of greater regional representation in the EU. The Commission and the Council supported a system of interdependence between local, regional and national levels, but have always stressed the role national authorities play: It could not be questioned. In giving regional authorities a greater role, they hoped to receive technical expertise and feedback on EU policies. Regions gained a greater political role instead of solely an economic one, but the EC and the Council never intended to address political regional ambitions.

The Parliament did not question the role of national authorities either, but it saw the regions as partners rather than rivals. The EP focused to a greater extent on the democratic legitimacy of greater regional representation in the EU than on the technical expertise, thus envisioning a political role of the regions in the EU from the start.

European integration directly affected the Spanish Autonomous regions, including Catalonia. In 1986, Spain's secession to the EU led to an intrusion in the regional sphere of autonomy by the Spanish state. These regions regained some involvement with the implementation of the Structural Funds in the 1980s. It also required more direct communication between the representatives of the Commission and the regional authorities, which encouraged the Catalan nationalist movement to see the EU as a way to bypass the nation state in getting a greater role in EU decision – making.

The Catalan nationalist movement indeed saw the EU as a 'window of opportunity', in which regions hoped to establish direct representation with legislative powers. The Patronat Català Pro-Europa lobbied for Catalan interests in the EU, even before Spain's secession in 1986. It circumvented the Spanish state, although it did not necessarily work against its interests. The CiU, with Jordi Pujol as the president, had been striving for acknowledgement of a Catalan identity across Spain, Europe and in the European Union. Other political parties in Catalonia saw the EU as an example of economic, political and social modernization or European integration as a key development of Catalan sovereignty. So, Catalan leaders have advocated a bottom – up approach to the processes of European integration, which contained a greater role for subnational authorities or even sovereignty.

While Catalan nationalism gained support in the 2000s, so did the call for independence. The EC, EP, Council and the CoR in general did not address this call, until the untenable situation after the referendum in October 2017. The EC and the Council stressed the national framework of the EU and the illegality of the referendum in rejecting support for Catalanian independence. Although the EP had not voiced its support for Catalonia, it did offer some critique on the EC's muteness and on the Spanish police's excessive use of force, arguing that the EU should take up its role as mediator. The CoR, seen as the embodiment of a 'Europe of the regions', proved to be a disappointment for the Catalan nationalists: It promotes regional autonomy and not independence.

The concepts of the 'Europe of the regions' and 'Europe of the nations' provide a framework in examining the role of regions in the EU. These concepts are ideal types and therefore putting the EU into one category turns out to be difficult, as supranational, national and regional power could overlap in the EU decision – making process. Further research into

the possible areas of this overlap would therefore contribute to the understanding on how regional and national power is distributed in the EU. Looking at the CoR might be an interesting angle for further research to see the functioning of regional power in the EU. Examining the CoR's power and its relation to regional nationalist movements might help in building bridges between regional and national ambitions in the EU.

In sum, European integration has led to greater regional representation in the EU. However, the idea of a 'Europe of the regions', in which regions would be recognized as a third level of government alongside states and the EU itself, did not really become a reality: The CoR only has consultative powers and depends to a high extent on the EC and EP. The contribution of European integration towards the development of regions as actors in the EU decision - making process empowered nationalist regional movements' ambitions. It became an approach for the Catalan regional movement to address their aspirations: They have used the idea of the 'Europe of the regions' as a way to achieve their goals of autonomy, self – government and independence. Nevertheless, the EU institutions have never wished to address full regional political ambitions. Therefore, the EU's institutional framework based on nation states constrained the Catalan nationalist movement as well; it did not get support in their strife for independence.

As the EU did not back Catalan calls for independence, the EU could be seen as a representation of the 'Europe of the nations'. Yet, the EU institutions did promote regional autonomy within the EU, which resulted in the transformation of regions as economic areas into political actors. Hence, the EU could embody the idea of the 'Europe of the regions': Regions would cooperate in co-existence with nation states in the EU. The Catalan nationalist movement appealed to the more radical view of the 'Europe of the regions', in which regions would bypass the nation state in the EU decision – making process. So, the role of regions in the EU is shaped by the 'Europe of the regions', but the EU and the Catalan nationalist movement attached different definitions to this idea. However, the moderate version of the 'Europe of the regions' has not been achieved, as the CoR did not turn into a third chamber alongside nation states in the EU. In that sense, the EU institutions would best be suited in the concept of the 'Europe of the nations', as nation states remain the most powerful in EU institutions. Although regions gained greater autonomy in the EU, they never have reached the level of nation states.

In conclusion, the 'Europe of the regions' has empowered the Catalan nationalist movement in achieving greater autonomy, resulting in the current situation of its calls for independence from Spain.

APPENDIX

An overview of relevant political parties in Catalonia since Spanish democracy in 1975.

Political Party:	Key actors affiliated with party:	Nationalist, separatist or unionist:	Relations Catalonia – Spain:	Mother Party in Spanish Government:	Left / Right / Centre:
<p>Convergència i Unió: Coalition of CDC and UDC</p> <p>Broke up in 2015 over question of sovereignty</p>	<p>Jordi Pujol, (CDC), President of Generalitat, 1980 – 2003</p> <p>Artur Mas I Gavarró, (CDC), President of Generalitat, 2010 – 2015</p>	<p>Nationalist, since 2007 supportive of independence.</p>	<p>Catalonia as part of Spain, but as a ‘nation’</p> <p>Since 2007 – 2010: supports Catalan right to decide on matters that affect it, leading to a referendum on independence</p>	-	Centre - right
<p>Convergència Democràtica de Catalunya (CDC)</p> <p>Its successor in 2016: Partit Demòcrata Europeu Català (PDeCat)</p>	<p>Jordi Pujol, leader of CDC, 1974 – 2003</p> <p>Carles Puigdemont, President of Generalitat, Jan 2016 – Oct 2017</p>	<p>Nationalist.</p> <p>Since 2007 supportive of independence, leading to a separatist view</p>	<p>An independent Catalonia, even if means breaking Spanish legality</p>	-	Centre - right
<p>Unió Democràtica de Catalunya (UDC)</p> <p>Dissolved in March 2017</p> <p>(Ex-members founded a non-indepentist party Els Units in July 2017)</p>		<p>Nationalist.</p> <p>Since 2007 supportive of independence, leading to a separatist view</p>	<p>Supportive of an independent Catalonia, but within Spanish legality and through dialogue</p>	-	Centre – Right

Esquerra Republicana de Catalunya (ERC)		Separatist	An independent Catalonia with other Catalan territories in - Spain and France	-	Left
Partido Popular (PP)		Unionist and state – centric	Catalonia as part of Spain, as an ‘autonomous community’	Partido Popular (PP)	Centre – right
Partit del Socialistes de Catalunya (PSC)	Pasqual Maragall i Mira, President of Generalitat, 2003 – 2006 (Before: Mayor of Barcelona, 1982 – 1997)	In 2000s started to become nationalistic	Catalonia as part of Spain, referring to it as a ‘nation’ since 2000s	Partido Socialista Obrero Español (PSOE)	Socialist
Iniciativa per Catalunya – Els Verds (IC-V)		Nationalist	In favour of the right to self-determination for Catalonia	Alliance with centre – left Spanish party Podemos	Ecosocialist
La Crida Nacional Created in 2018	Carles Puigdemont, Leader of party, Oct 2018 - now	Separatist	Pro – independence	-	Centre - left

Bibliography

Primary sources:

Commission of the European communities. A regional policy for the Community. *COM 69, no. 950*, October 15, 1969, 1 – 257.

Commission of the European Communities. Programme of the Commission for 1985: Statement by Jacques Delors, President of the Commission to the European Parliament and his reply to the ensuing debate. *Bulletin of the European Communities* 85 no. 4 (1985). Point 15.

Commission of the European Communities. *Guide to the reform of the Community's Structural Funds*. 1989.

Committee of the Regions. *The regional and local dimensions in establishing new form of Governance in Europe*. (CoR Studies E-7/2002). Brussels, October 2002.

Committee of the Regions. *Spanish regional languages are used for the first time in EU institutions: 'it is a history day for Europe', say Spanish regional presidents*. (COR/05/125). Brussels, November 16, 2005.

Committee of the Regions. *80th Plenary Session, Own – Initiative opinion of the Committee of the Regions: On The Committee of the Regions' White Paper on Multilevel Governance*. (CdR 89/2009 fin). Brussels, June 2009.

Committee of the Regions. *94th Plenary session, Opinion of the Committee of the Regions: The future of the European Capital of Culture*. (EDUC-V-016), February 15-16, 2012.

Committee of the Regions. *Building a European Culture of Multi-level Governance. Follow-up to the Committee of the Regions' White Paper. Opinion*. (CdR 273/2011 fin). 2012.

Committee of the Regions. *126th Plenary Session of the European Committee of the Regions, Item 2 - Appendix 5: Minutes of the 125th plenary session of the European Committee of the regions: Debate on Catalonia*. (COR-2017-03634-04-00-PV-REF), Brussels, October 30, 2017, 1 – 3.

Committee of the Regions. *128th Plenary Session, Opinion: The cost and Risk of non-cohesion: The strategic value of cohesion policy for pursuing the Treaty objectives and facing new challenges for European Regions*. (COTER-VI/040). March 22-23, 2018.

Congress of Local and Regional Authorities in Europe, Summary report of the first session, Strasbourg 31-05 until 03-06-1994. *The Bulletin, newsletter of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of Europe*, no. 3 (2004): 1-11.

Consell de Diplomàcia Pública de Catalunya (DIPLOCAT) Comunicació del Govern. *El Govern converteix el Patronat Català Pro Europa en el Patronat Catalunya-Món per potenciar la internacionalització de la societat catalana*. November 21, 2007. (Press Release).

Council of the EU. *Address by President Donald Tusk to the European Committee of the Regions*. (Speech 573/17). Brussels, October 10, 2017.

European Commission, “Regional Policy: History of the Policy”.
http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/en/policy/what/history/ .

European Commission. *Closer relations with the Committee of the Regions*. RAPID. The Press and Communication Service of the European Commission: IP-95-392. April 19, 1995.

European Commission. *Klaus Hansch, president of the European Parliament, sees the committees of the regions and the European Parliament as partners*. (COR – 95-51). July 20, 1995. (Press release).

European Commission. *Speech of Romano Prodi, President of the European Commission, to the Committee of the Regions*. (Speech 01/398). Brussels, September 20, 2001.

European Commission, Committee of the Regions. *Cooperation agreement between the European Commission and the Committee of the Regions signed on 20 September 2001 - Joint declaration and protocol*. (DI CdR 81/2001). Brussels, September 20, 2001.

European Commission. *Speech of Romano Prodi, President of the European Commission, on the role of the regions in building the Europe of tomorrow*. Governance and the Convention meeting with the presidents of the regions of Europe. (Speech 02/344). Bellagio, July 15, 2002.

European Commission. *Speech by José Manuel Durão Barroso: ‘Culture: the cement that binds Europe together’*. Opera Europa / RESEO Spring Conference. (Speech 13/280). Vienna, April 4, 2013.

European Commission. *Speech by José Manuel Durão Barroso: ‘New Narrative for Europe’*. BOZAR. (Speech 13/357). Brussels, April 23, 2013.

European Commission. *Vice-President Viviane Reding's Remarks on independence*. 45th Citizens' Dialogue. (Speech 14/152). Barcelona, February 23, 2014.

European Commission. *Statement on the events in Catalonia*. (Statement /17/3626). Brussels, October 2, 2017.

European Commission. *The State of the Union 2018: The Hour of European sovereignty*. Jean Claude Juncker. Address to the European Parliament, Strasbourg, September 12, 2018.

European Council. *Presidency Conclusions*. Corfu, June 24-25, 1995.

European Council. *Declaration on the Occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of the signature of the Treaty of Rome*. 2007.

European Council. *Remarks by President of the European Council Herman Van Rompuy on Catalonia*. (EUCO 267/13). Madrid, December 12, 2013.

European Parliament. Resolution on the role of the regions, April 13, 1984. *Official Journal of the European Communities C 127*, May 14, 1984.

European Parliament. Resolution on the Intergovernmental Conferences in the context of the European Parliament's strategy for European Union, November 22, 1990. *Official Journal of the European Communities C 324*, December 24, 1990.

European Parliament. Resolution on the results of the intergovernmental conferences, April 7, 1992. *Official Journal of the European Communities C 125*, May 18, 1992.

European Parliament. *Speech of Egon Klepsch, president of the European Parliament, to the Committee of the Regions*. Brussels, March 9, 1994, 1 - 5.

European Parliament. *Question for written answer E-001375-17 to the Commission, Rule 130: 'Subject: Right to self-determination of peoples: referendum on Catalan independence and Spain's opposition to it'*. Maria Bizzotto. Brussels, February 28, 2017.

European Parliament. *EP Plenary session: Constitution, Rule of Law and Fundamental Rights in Spain in the light of the events in Catalonia. Opening statement of Frans Timmermans, First Vice – President of the EC*. Brussels, October 4, 2017.

https://multimedia.europarl.europa.eu/en/ep-plenary-session-constitution-rule-of-law-and-fundamental-rights-in-spain-in-the-light-of-the-events-of-catalonia- I144556_01-V_rv.

European Parliament. *EP Plenary session: Constitution, Rule of Law and Fundamental Rights in Spain in the light of the events in Catalonia. Round of political group speakers: Ryszard Legutko (ECR, PL)*. Brussels, October 4, 2017.

https://multimedia.europarl.europa.eu/en/ep-plenary-session-constitution-rule-of-law-and-fundamental-rights-in-spain-in-the-light-of-the-events-of-catalonia- I144556_04-V_rv.

European Parliament. *EP Plenary session: Constitution, Rule of Law and Fundamental Rights in Spain in the light of the events in Catalonia. Round of political group speakers: Ska Keller (Greens / EFA, DE)*. Brussels, October 4, 2017.

https://multimedia.europarl.europa.eu/en/ep-plenary-session-constitution-rule-of-law-and-fundamental-rights-in-spain-in-the-light-of-the-events-of-catalonia- I144556_07-V_rv.

European Parliament. *EP Plenary session: Constitution, Rule of Law and Fundamental Rights in Spain in the light of the events in Catalonia. Round of political group speakers: Raymond Finch (EFDD, UK)*. Brussels, October 4, 2017.

https://multimedia.europarl.europa.eu/en/ep-plenary-session-constitution-rule-of-law-and-fundamental-rights-in-spain-in-the-light-of-the-events-of-catalonia- I144556_08-V_rv.

European Parliament. *EP Plenary session: Constitution, Rule of Law and Fundamental Rights in Spain in the light of the events in Catalonia. Round of political group speakers: Marcel de Graaff (ENF, NL)*. Brussels, October 4, 2017.

https://multimedia.europarl.europa.eu/en/ep-plenary-session-constitution-rule-of-law-and-fundamental-rights-in-spain-in-the-light-of-the-events-of-catalonia- I144556_09-V_rv.

European Parliament. *EP Plenary session: Constitution, Rule of Law and Fundamental Rights in Spain in the light of the events in Catalonia. Round of political group speakers: Gianni Pitella (S&D, IT)*. Brussels, October 4, 2017.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1EQx7ubQKiU>.

European Parliament. *EP Plenary session: Constitution, Rule of Law and Fundamental Rights in Spain in the light of the events in Catalonia. Round of political group speakers: Patrick le Hyaric (GUE/NGL, FR)*. Brussels, October 4, 2017.

https://multimedia.europarl.europa.eu/en/ep-plenary-session-constitution-rule-of-law-and-fundamental-rights-in-spain-in-the-light-of-the-events-of-catalonia- I144556_06-V_rv.

European Parliament. *EP Plenary session: Constitution, Rule of Law and Fundamental Rights in Spain in the light of the events in Catalonia. Round of political group speakers: Manfred Weber (EPP, GE)*. Brussels, October 4, 2017.

https://multimedia.europarl.europa.eu/en/ep-plenary-session-constitution-rule-of-law-and-fundamental-rights-in-spain-in-the-light-of-the-events-of-catalonia- I144556_02-V_rv.

European Parliament. *EP Plenary session: Constitution, Rule of Law and Fundamental Rights in Spain in the light of the events in Catalonia. Round of political group speakers: Guy Verhofstadt (ALDE, BE)*. Brussels, October 4, 2017.

https://multimedia.europarl.europa.eu/en/ep-plenary-session-constitution-rule-of-law-and-fundamental-rights-in-spain-in-the-light-of-the-events-of-catalonia- I144556_09-V_rv.

European Union. *Berlin Declaration*. March 25, 2007.

European Union. Treaty on European Union / Treaty of Maastricht (Consolidated Version), February 7, 1992. *Official Journal of the European Communities C 325/5*, December 24, 2002.

European Union. Treaty of Lisbon amending the Treaty on European Union and the Treaty establishing the European Community, December 7, 2007. *Official Journal of the European Union C 306/01*, December 17, 2007.

European Union. Treaty on the functioning of the European Union / Treaty of Rome, (Consolidated Version), March 25, 1957. *Official Journal of the European Union 202/01*, June 7, 2016.

Generalitat de Catalunya. *Jordi Pujol presentarà les conclusions de la Convenció Catalana sobre el futur de la Unió Europea*. January 31, 2003. (Press Release).

http://www.president.cat/pres_gov/AppJava/president/actualitat/noticies/69950/jordi-pujol-presentara-conclusions-convencio-catalana-futur-unio-europea.html.

Generalitat de Catalunya. *Reception on the occasion of the National Day of Catalonia, Speech by the representative of the Government of Catalonia to the EU, Meritxell Serret*. Brussels, September 12, 2018.

Gil – Robles y Gil – Delgado, José María, “The Role of Spanish Regions in the European Integration Process”. Interview by Cristina Blanco Sío-López, *CVCE, University of Luxembourg regarding the EU integration process*, Madrid, March 9, 2010.

https://www.cvce.eu/en/recherche/unit-content/-/unit/492a8c2c-2850-4ba8-a327-6533841130ec/3e2b305e-076e-41f3-a0cc-285357480edc/Resources#bf4676f9-7989-459b-9aa5-a9820019e851_en&overlay.

Maragall i Mira, Pasqual, “Architecture and City in an Open World”, *The Royal Gold Medal 1999: the City of Barcelona, The Journal of Architecture* 4, no. 3 (1999): 229 – 244.

Maragall i Mira, Pasqual, “Catalonia is a nation”, *The Wall Street Journal*, November 21, 2005.

Maragall i Mira, Pasqual, “Devolution to power of regions and cities; a road to European citizenship”. Conference at King Juan Carlos I of Spain NYU, New York, May 8, 1998.

Puigdemont, Carles. “Sign of the Times: Mas as Hell”. Interview by Yoeri Albrecht. *De Balie / Internationaal Theater Amsterdam*, Amsterdam, October 2, 2018.

Pujol, Jordi, “Address to the Assembly of the Council of Europe”. *The assembly of European Regions*, Strasbourg, May 31, 1994.
https://www.cvce.eu/en/obj/address_given_by_jordi_pujol_municipalities_regions_and_european_identity_strasbourg_31_may_1994-en-aa76d5ec-10fa-462a-b7eb-3f1e058ec335.html.

Pujol, Jordi, “The ‘four motors of Europe’, the Committee of the Regions and the role of Catalan nationalist parties in this context”. Interview by Cristina Blanco Sío-López, *CVCE, University of Luxembourg regarding the EU integration process*. Barcelona, March 19, 2010.
https://www.cvce.eu/en/recherche/unit-content/-/unit/492a8c2c-2850-4ba8-a327-6533841130ec/3e2b305e-076e-41f3-a0cc-285357480edc/Resources#5ef8e9e0-0588-4cc5-8fdc-900b8915e606_en&overlay.

Sánchez, Pedro, “The Catalan Crisis: Populism and Secessionism”. Lecture, the London School of Economics and Political Science, London, May 8, 2018.
<http://www.lse.ac.uk/lse-player?id=4193>.

Secretaría de Estado para la Unión Europea, Madrid. *Las Comunidades Autónomas Españolas en la Unión Europea. Publicación de la Representación de las Comunidades Europeas en España sobre las Comunidades Autónomas Españolas en la Unión Europea, 1995*. CVCE.EU, University of Luxembourg regarding the EU integration process, February 14, 2014.
http://www.cvce.eu/obj/las_comunidades_autonomas_espanolas_en_la_union_europea_1995-es-825943ef-0da2-4bef-95af-118291ccf178.html.

Secretaría de Estado para la Unión Europea, Madrid. *El debate sobre el futuro de la Unión y las Comunidades Autónomas, 2004*. CVCE.EU, University of Luxembourg regarding the EU integration process, February 14, 2014.
http://www.cvce.eu/obj/el_debate_sobre_el_futuro_de_la_union_y_las_comunidades_autonomas-es-639ad623-5873-4556-a6c5-0ac7a2da64c6.html.

Secondary sources:

Anderson, Lara. ‘‘Memories of Franco in Spain’s Response to Catalonia’’, *International Affairs*, October 4, 2017.
<https://www.internationalaffairs.org.au/australianoutlook/spain-rejection-catalan-statehood-franco/>.

Assembly of European Regions, ‘‘The history of AER’’, <https://aer.eu/the-history-of-aer/>.

Bache, Ian and Rachel Jones, ‘‘Has EU regional policy empowered the regions? A study of Spain and the United Kingdom’’, *Regional & Federal Studies* 10, no. 3 (2000): 1-20, DOI: 10.1080/13597560008421129.

Baird, Theodore, ‘‘Research Note. Non-state Actors and the New Intergovernmentalism’’, *Journal of Common Market Studies* 55, no. 6 (2017): 1192 – 1202, DOI: 10.1111/jcms.12570.

Barbado, Amparo Almarcha, *Spain and EC Membership Evaluated*. London: Pinter Publishers, 1993.

Bickerton, Christopher J., Dermot Hodson and Uwe Puetter, *The New Intergovernmentalism. States and Supranational Actors in the Post – Maastricht Era*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015.

Borrás-Alomar, Susana, Thomas Christiansen and Andrés Rodríguez-Pose, ‘‘Towards a ‘Europe of the Regions’? Visions and Reality from a Critical Perspective’’, *Regional Politics and Policy* 4, no. 2 (1994): 1 – 27.

Bouchard, Caroline, John Peterson and Nathalie Tocci, *Multilateralism in the 21st Century. Europe’s Quest for Effectiveness*. London: Routledge, 2014.

Bourne, Angela, ‘‘Europe, Constitutional Debates and the Spanish State of Autonomies’’, *Perspectives on European Politics and Society* 9, no. 3 (2008): 283 – 300, DOI: 10.1080/15705850802223424.

Börzel, Tanja A., ‘‘From Competitive Regionalism to Cooperative Federalism: The Europeanization of the Spanish state of the Autonomies’’, *The Journal of Federalism* 30, no. 2 (2000): 17 – 42.

Burgen, Stephen, ‘‘Catalan independence rally brings Barcelona to a standstill’’, *The Guardian*, September 11, 2012.
<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2012/sep/11/catalan-independence-rally-barcelona>.

Carroll, William E., ‘‘The Committee of the Regions: A Functional Analysis of the CoR's Institutional Capacity’’, *Regional & Federal Studies* 21, no. 3 (2011): 341-354, DOI: 10.1080/13597566.2011.578810.

Cini, Michelle and Nieves Pérez – Solórzano Borragán, *European Union Politics*. Oxford: University Press, 2013.

Coll, Gaspar Pericay, ‘‘The European Commission sends contradictory messages regarding hypothetical Catalan independence’’, *Catalannews*, October 30, 2012.

<http://www.catalannews.com/politics/item/the-european-commission-sends-contradictory-messages-regarding-hypothetical-catalan-independence>

Committee of the Regions, *Regional and Local Government in the EU. Responsibilities and Resources*. Luxembourg: Office for Official Publications of the European Communities, 2000.

Cetrà, Daniel and Robert Liñeira, “Breaking up within Europe: Sub-state nationalist Strategies in Multilevel polities”, *Journal of Common Market Studies* 56, no. 3 (2018): 717 – 729, DOI: 10.1111/jcms.12710.

Csergo, Zsuzsa and James M. Goldgeier, “Nationalist Strategies and European Integration”, *Perspectives on Politics* 2, no. 1 (2004): 21 – 37.

Dayton, Ross, “Separatism, Globalization and the European Union”, *The Jean Monnet Paper Series* 15, no. 1 (2015): 1 – 10.

Domorenok, Ekaterina, “The Committee of the Regions: in search of Identity”, *Regional and Federal Studies* 19, no. 1 (2009): 143 – 146, DOI: 10.1080/13597560802692470.

Durán, Fede, “ ‘Ninguna ley dice que Cataluña deba salir de la UE si se independiza’, Reding agradece obviar temas recurrentes como el euro y el rescate español, sin novedad en el frente, pero entra al trapo en todo lo demás: Rumanía, Hungría y Grecia, ETA, las caricaturas de Mahoma o la lentitud de la UE’”, *Diario de Sevilla*, September 30, 2012.

https://www.diariodesevilla.es/espana/Cataluna-deba-salir-UE-independiza_0_629637121.html.

Elliot, John H., *Scots and Catalans: Union & Disunion*. Cornwall: Yale University Press, 2018.

Ellyat, Holly, “If Catalonia goes independent, these places could be next”, *CNBC*, October 6, 2017.

<https://www.cnbc.com/2017/10/06/if-catalonia-goes-independent-these-places-could-be-next.html>.

Encyclopaedia Britannica, “Nationalism (politics)”, Website *Encyclopaedia Britannica*.

European Investment Bank, “Sixty Years of the Rome Treaties”, March 25, 2017.

<http://www.eib.org/en/about/eu-family/60-years-of-the-rome-treaties.htm>.

Giordano, Benito and Elisa Roller, “Catalonia and the ‘idea of Europe’: competing strategies and discourses within Catalan Party Politics”, *European Urban and Regional Studies* 9, no.2 (2002): 99 – 113.

Glencross, Andrew, “A Post-National EU? The Problem of legitimising the EU without the Nation and National Representation”, *Political Studies* 59, (2011): 348 – 367, <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9248.2010.00856>.

Gross, Martin and Marc Debus, “Doe EU Regional policy increase parties’ support for `European integration?’”, *West European Politics* 41, no. 3 (2017): 594 – 614, DOI:

10.1080/01402382.2017.1395249.

Grygiel, Jakub, “The Return of Europe’s Nation-States: The Upside to the EU’s Crisis”, *Foreign Affairs* (2016): 94 – 101.

Guibernau, Montserrat, “Secessionism in Catalonia: After Democracy”, *Ethnopolitics. Formerly Global Review of Ethnopolitics* 12, no. 4 (2013): 368 – 393, DOI: 10.1080/17449057.2013.843245.

Hargreaves, John, “Ethno-nationalist movements in Europe: a debate. Hargreaves’ reply to Keating on ‘Stateless nation-building in Catalonia, Quebec and Scotland (1997)’”, *Nations and Nationalism* 4, no. 4 (1998): 569-577.

Heartfield, James, “Demobilising the nation: The decline of sovereignty in Western Europe,” *International Politics* 46, no. 6 (2009): 712 – 731.

Hepburn, Eve, “the Rise and Fall of a ‘Europe of the regions’”, *Regional & Federal studies* 18, no. 5 (2008): 537 – 555, DOI: 10.1080/13597560802351572.

Hönnige, Christop and Diana Panke, “The Committee of the Regions and the European Economic and Social Committee: How Influential are Consultative Committees in the European Union?”, *Journal of Common Market Studies* 51, no. 3 (2013): 452 – 471, DOI: 10.1111/j.1468-5965.2012.02313.

Hooghe, Liesbet and Gary Marks, *Multi-Level Governance and European Integration*. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2001.

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

Jenkins, Simon, “Catalonia isn’t just Spain’s nightmare; it’s Europe’s”, *The Guardian*, November 11, 2017. <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2017/nov/03/catalonia-spain-basque-breton-bavaria-europe>.

Jones, Barry and Michael Keating, *The European Union and the Regions*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995.

Keating, Dave, “Can an EU of the regions’ offer an alternative to Catalan secession?”, *Euractiv*, October 9, 2017. <https://www.euractiv.com/section/future-eu/news/mon-can-an-eu-of-the-regions-offer-an-alternative-to-catalan-secession/>.

Keating, Michael, “Stateless nation building: Quebec, Catalonia and Scotland in the changing state system”, *Nations and Nationalism* 3, no. 4 (1997): 689 – 717.

Keating, Michael, “The minority nations of Spain and European integration: A new framework for autonomy?”, *Journal of Spanish Cultural Studies* 1, no. 1 (2002): 29 – 42, DOI: 10.1080/713683431.

Keating, Michael, *Nations against the State. The new Politics of Nationalism in Quebec*,

Catalonia and Scotland. London: Macmillan Press LTD, 1996.

Keating, Michael, “European Integration and the Minorities Question”, *Politics & Society* 31, no 1 (2004): 1 – 22.

Kirk, Lisbeth. “Catalonia shows that the Europe of the Regions is dead”, *EUobserver*, January 24, 2018.
<https://euobserver.com/news/140666>.

Knaap, Peter van der, “The Committee of the regions: the outset of a 'Europe of the regions'?” , *Regional Politics & Policy* 4, no. 2 (1994): 86 – 100.

León, Margarita, Mercedes Mateo Diaz and Covadonga Meseguer, “The Spanish Case: Who was Mobilized and How?” , *South European Society & Politics* 9, no. 1 (2004): 63 – 81, DOI: 10.1080/13608740410001681406.

Liñeira, Robert and Daniel Cetrà, “The Independence Case in Comparative Perspective” , *The Political Quarterly* 86, no. 2 (2015): 257 – 264.

Mangen, Stephen P., *Spanish Society after Franco: Regime Transition and the Welfare State*. Hampshire: Palgrave, 2001.

Manzella, Gian Paolo and Carlos Mendez, “The turning points of EU Cohesion Policy” , *Report Working Paper* (2009).

Minder, Raphael, “Spanish Judge Jails 5 Catalan Leaders in a Blow to Secessionist Movement” , *New York Times*, March 23, 2018.
<https://www.nytimes.com/2018/03/23/world/europe/spain-catalonia-separatists-judge.html>.

Moore, Carolyn, “A Europe of the Regions vs. the Regions of Europe: Reflections on Regional Engagement in Brussels” , *Regional & Federal studies* 18, no. 5 (2008): 517 – 535, DOI: 10.1080/13597560802351564.

Moravcsik, Andrew, *The Choice for Europe. Social Purpose & State Power from Messina to Maastricht*. Ithaca: Cornell University, 1998.

Moreno, Luis Moreno, Ana Arriba and Araceli Serrano, “Multiple identities in decentralized Spain: The case of Catalonia” , *Regional and Federal Studies* 8, no. 3 (1998): 65 – 88, DOI: 10.1080/13597569808421060.

Muro, Diego, “Territorial Accommodation, Party Politics and Statute Reform in Spain” , *South European Society & Politics* 14, no. 4 (2009): 453 – 468.

Nagel, Klaus – Jürgen, “Transcending the National / Asserting the National: How Stateless Nations like Scotland, Wales and Catalonia react to European Integration” , *Australian Journal of Politics and History* 50, no. 1 (2004): 57 – 74.

Opp, Karl – Dieter, “Decline of the Nation State? How the European Union Creates National and Sub-national Identifications” , *Social Forces* 84, no 2 (2005): 653 –680.

Pérez, Claudi, “Juncker: ‘El Nacionalismo es veneno’. El presidente de la Comisión asegura que los líderes Catalanes ‘no deben subestimar el amplio respaldo a Rajoy en Europa’”, *El País*, November 19, 2017.

https://elpais.com/politica/2017/11/18/actualidad/1511027416_545140.html.

Peterson, John, “Multilateralism and the EU: A ‘Cheap Date’?”, *The International Spectator* 45, no. 4 (2010): 43 – 48.

Piattoni, Simona, “The Committee of the Regions as representative assembly: Mission impossible or miracle in the making?”. In: *Political Representation in the European Union: Still Democratic in Times of Crisis?*, edited by Sandra Kröger, 86 – 106. London: Routledge, 2014.

Ríos, Pere, “Support for Catalan independence falls to 40.8 %, new survey shows”, *El País*, February 23, 2018.

https://elpais.com/elpais/2018/02/23/inenglish/1519390093_184769.html

Roller, Elisa, “Conflict and cooperation in EU policy-making: the case for Catalonia”, *Perspectives on European Politics and Society* 5, no. 1 (2004): 81 – 102, DOI: 10.1080/15705850408438880.

Rosamond, Ben, *Theories of European integration*. Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2000.

Saeed, Saim, “How the world reacted to Catalan independence declaration. Leaders of major powers side with Spain but some warn against too hard a line”, *Politico*, October 27, 2017.

Schönlau, Justus, “Beyond Mere Consultation: Expanding the European Committee of the Regions’ role”, *Journal of Contemporary European Research* 13, no. 02 (2017): 1166 – 1184.

Serrano, Ivan, “Just a Matter for Identity? Support for Independence in Catalonia”, *Regional & Federal Studies* 23, no. 5 (2013): 523 – 545, DOI: 10.1080/13597566.2013.775945.

Tammiko, Teemu, “Catalonia as a laboratory for European separatism: understanding the independence process and its meaning in a wider European context”, *Finnish Institute of International Affairs* 233, (2018): 1 – 8.

Tatham, Michaël and Heather A.D. Mbye, “Regionalization and the Transformation of Policies, Politics and Polities in Europe”, *Journal of Common Market Studies* 56, no. 3 (2018): 656 – 671, DOI: 10.1111/jcms.12713.

Tatham, Michaël, “The Rise of Regional Influence in the EU – From Soft Policy Lobbying to Hard Vetoing”, *Journal of Common Market Studies* 56, no. 3 (2018): 672 – 686, DOI: 10.1111/jcms.12714.