—*Under Pressure*—

Young adult's reflections on national identity in
context of the Catalan independence movement

Myrthe Peek

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Young Adult's Reflections on National Identity in Context of the Catalan Independence Movement

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Map of the Research Location

Figure one: Map highlighting Catalonia in Spain with economic statistics.[1]

Catalonia	
Population	7,522,596
% of National Pop.	16.00%
GDP per capita	28,600 €
GDP contribution to the Nation	19.00%
Unemployment rate	13.20%
National Unemployment rate	17.20%

[1] Retrieved from www.mapsoftheworld.com on June 25th

A word of thanks for a helping hand.

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Before starting the official part of this thesis, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to the people who made my research possible. My time in Barcelona would not have been the same without the help of many.

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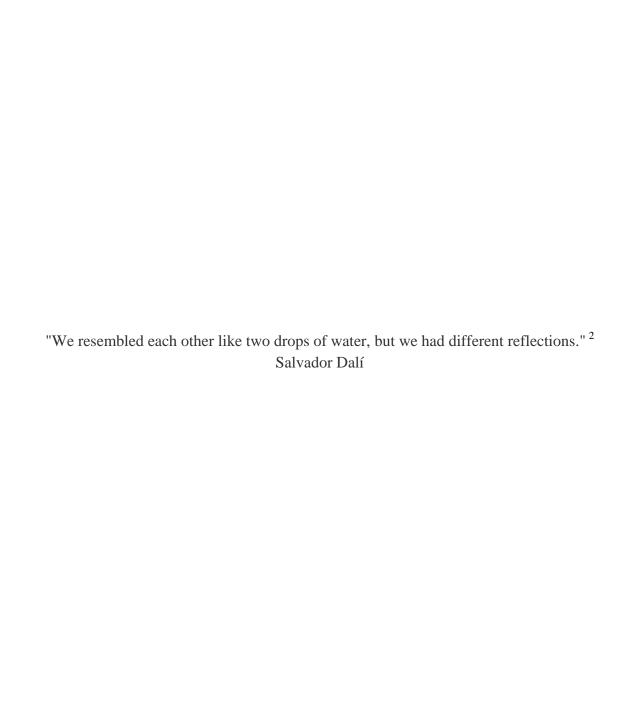
To Daniël and Inés, for guiding me, helping me, and involving me in all your activities. Besides your help with the research, I really appreciated your company and your hospitality. I could not have done it without your help.

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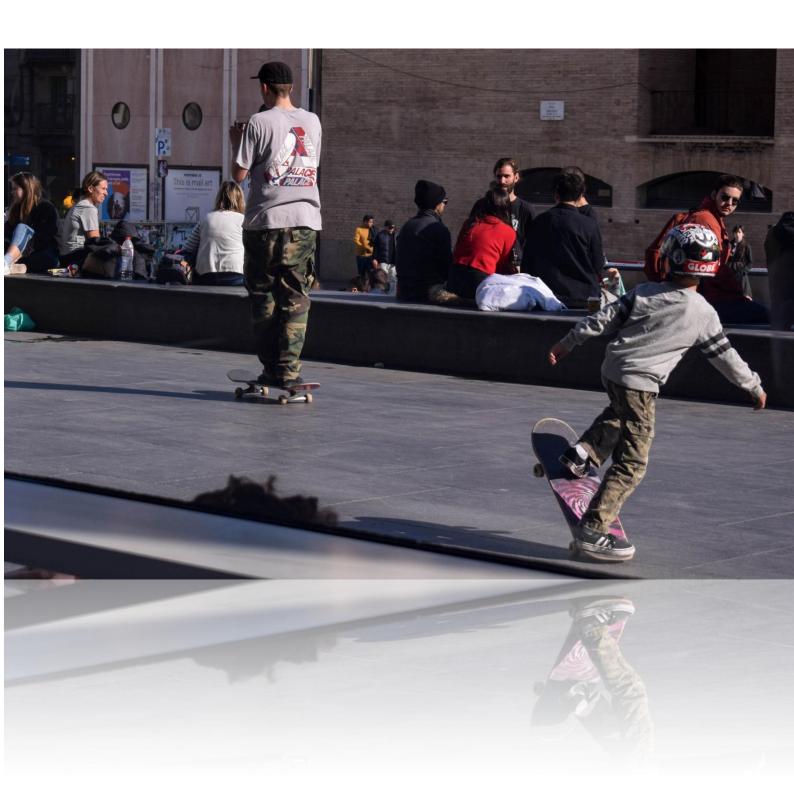
To Delfina, for introducing me to many people. Thank you for being extremely welcoming to me and becoming a real friend in a short time. I am really happy we met and that we got along so well. I hope to see you again in the near future.

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"We resembled each other like two drops of water, but we had different reflections." [2]
Salvador Dalí

[2] Salvador Dalí, *The Secret Life of Salvador Dalí* (New York: Dial Press, 1942), 2.

Introduction

"It was about brotherhood you know, we all felt connected that day and we made it possible even though the whole world was against us."[3]

On the first of October of the past year, a referendum was organised in Catalonia, a region situated in the north-east of Spain. The referendum was supposed to decide over the future of the region, since a part of the Catalans wants to break free from Spain and establish their own independent state. The Spanish authorities didn't consent with the referendum and declared it illegal. But the nation was determined to measure the public opinion. All kinds of people joined together to make the referendum possible: they spread posters through the city, organised the polling stations and took care of the ballot boxes. Newspapers that reported on the referendum were taken away by the Spanish police, so the people spread the word themselves. Some people got afraid the police would interfere the referendum and that it all would have been for nothing, but others became even more motivated. Together with neighbours and friends, the people slept in the schools that hosted the referendum to prevent the police from shutting them down. The day of the referendum, many people gathered at the polling stations in the morning. Police forces were instructed to stop the referendum and used strong force and violence to do so. The people held on: they hid the ballot boxes, they formed protective shields to keep the police out of the schools and they voted. Some people who didn't want to vote in the illegal referendum saw the violence on the news and got out to vote. People cried, people got hurt but in the end, the people triumphed. The voters made it to the polling stations, resulting in a voters percentage of approximately forty-three percent, from which almost ninety percent chose to leave Spain (Takruri 2017). The government of Catalonia declared the independence. The Spanish authorities were furious and as a result, they put the government of Catalonia out of function. They persecuted many Catalan politicians for disobedience and some ended up in prison. Catalan president Carles Puigdemont fled to Brussels where he stayed in exile for a while. After five months, he was arrested in Germany.

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[3] Respondent B, casual conversation, 09-02-2018

When the news about Puigdemont's arrest made its way to Barcelona, I was walking through a somewhat abandoned theme park on the top of mount Tibidabo with Claudia and Alex. We were looking out over the city in peace when Alex checked his phone. 'They got him!' he shouted surprised. 'They arrested Puigdemont! Nice, now put him against the wall and liquidate that son of a bitch.' I gave him an uncomfortable smile as he laughed and turned to Claudia. 'How do you feel?' he asked. She just lifted her shoulders. 'I don't care', she said and turned around. I was surprised by her lack of interest concerning an issue that has been dominating the social environment of Barcelona for months. We walked further uphill to the church. 'What do you think will happen next?' I asked Alex. 'A lot of protests, that's for sure', he sighed. Indeed, before we reached the entrance of the church, a protest was announced on social media. Within a few hours thousands of Catalans had mobilised in the streets. They had gathered in front of the German embassy in Barcelona. I took the bus back to the city centre and decided to walk with the protest for a while. By the time I reached the embassy, the police had blocked the street. The protesters had gathered right in front of them and provokingly draped their independence flags over the police helmets. I observed the happening from the back together with an elderly couple. I asked if I could take their photograph. They assented and afterwards the woman asked me where I came from. 'From the Netherlands', I answered.

'Ah, the Netherlands,' she smiled. 'You did something that we should have done a long time ago.'

'What's that?' I asked.

'Getting rid of the Spaniards.'

The semiautonomous region of Catalonia has wanted to separate from Spain for a very long time. The referendum was supposed to measure the public opinion regarding independence. A lot of Catalan citizens claim to feel different from the rest of Spain: they argue that their culture, language and way of thinking do not match with the Spanish state. Therefore, they want to create their own state that represents the Catalan people and the Catalan identity.

Identity matters are considered key components in contemporary conflict analysis. In modern conflict, ethnicity and identity have prominent roles in the justification of violent behaviour by parties involved. Mary Kaldor (2012) introduced the 'politics of identity' into the field of conflict studies by contrasting the old ideological wars - that took place throughout the biggest part of the twentieth century - to the new wars that evolve around state boundaries. Henri Tajfel, a social psychologist from Bristol University, had already conceived his 'social identity theory' in the early seventies, in which he linked identity to intergroup relations and conflict (Hogg 2016, 3-4). According to Ernest Gellner (1983), national identity is essential in the construction of the individual identity. He describes the man's necessity of having a national identity as 'having two ears and a nose'(6).

However, Fenton (2007) found dominant attitudes of indifference when conducting research on national identity among young adults in England. Young people that grew up in times of globalisation don not seem to care about their national identity. Fenton (2007) suggests that national identity may become an important part of the person in an identity threatening context (325). Demmers (2017) agrees with him, stating that identity is contextual, and one social identity may become dominant in particular context as others recede into the background (23). However, the importance of context for the expression of national identity among youth is not adequately studied. This creates a research gap that can be bridged by conducting a research that includes context into the study of national identity among youth.

The world is facing new challenges now that tensions between different identity groups are growing. To work towards solutions and international collaboration, it is necessary to understand the nature of identity conflicts. Moreover, young adults are relevant in studying identity and nationalism for radicalisation is a critical issue in modern-

day society. The new generation has been the first to be brought up in an internet dominated society with possibilities to connect beyond state boundaries. Young adults are - generally speaking - frequent internet users and can be influenced by its content. Globalisation undeniably effected processes of identification. What does networking cross-boarders mean for the experience of nationality and identity and what does the future of nation-states look like? Will international collaboration of states make nationality an unnecessary concept? Reflections of the young generation might improve our understanding of transnational forms of identification that globalisation has led on. It is therefore of great importance to get insight in young people's attitudes towards national identity and nationalism in an identity threatening context. Leading from the gap in the scholarly debate on national identity, the following research question is formulated:

'How do young adults in Barcelona construct their national identity in context of the Catalan independence movement?'

In order to answer this question, twenty-one young adults from Barcelona were interviewed on their perceptions of national identity, nationalism, the Catalan independence movement and the effects of secessionist tensions on their daily lives. The interviews were carried out between February and April 2018, shortly after the referendum of October first 2017 from which the aftermath was still sensible throughout the city. In the same time period, participant observation was performed to complement the interviews into ethnographical research. Unfortunately, the working class youth needed to be left out of the study due to a language barrier.

The use of qualitative research methods is deliberately chosen. Conducted studies on identity matters in Catalonia's fight for independence often used quantitative measuring. However, the survey statistics used in Serrano (2013) predominantly suggested multifaceted relationships between different context-related factors. According to Serrano (2013) the complexity of the data statistics is linked to the very definition of nationalism and national identity, which are multifaceted concepts. The usefulness of quantitative methods in measuring complex discourses as such is questionable (526). Qualitative research methods,

however, are useful to unravel the complexity of national identity. According to Boeije (2010), qualitative research creates the foundation of interpretative studies. Qualitative research methods are considered suitable methods to get close to the informants, since they leave room for interpretation, opinions and thoughts on the research subject. The qualitative researcher can approach the meaning of academic concepts in everyday life by collecting data from an everyday setting. Qualitative research puts statistic knowledge into the context of social reality and investigates how these findings can complement each other in an holistic understanding of the world.
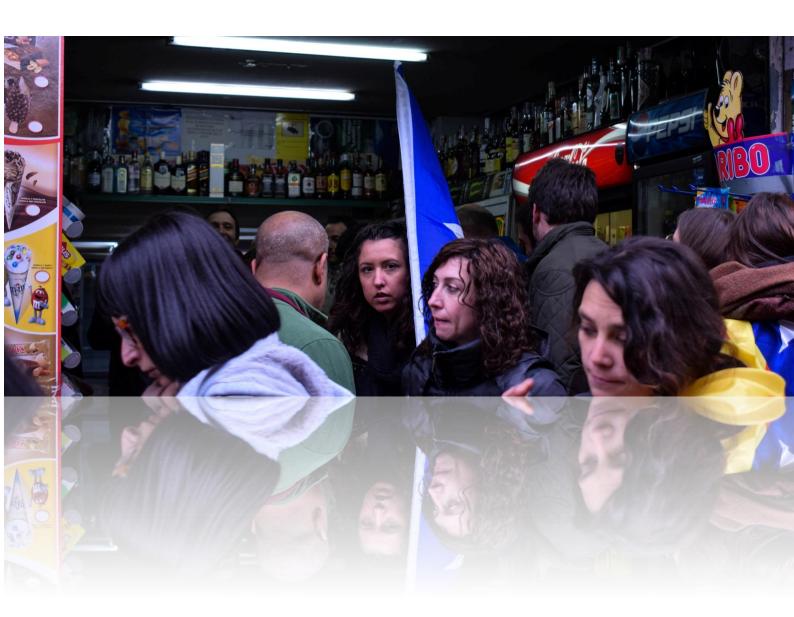
In the present research, interviews have been conducted with individuals within the age group of twenty to twenty-nine. There are several reasons why young adults of these ages are considered an interesting target group for social research. Firstly, young adults are 'the future', their overall opinions are likely to be the general opinion within years (Fenton 2007, 329). Secondly, young adults have a 'flexible' position in society: they don't often have a fixed career or permanent, defined place in the social space yet. Hence social change potentially has the biggest impact on their opportunities. Finally, I am myself of similar age, what makes young adults an easy accessible target group. According to Fenton (2007), being of a similar age increases the likelihood of achieving relaxed information in casual conversation, laughter, personal stories and 'strong language' (327).

Barcelona is seen as an adequate research location, since the secessionist tensions created by the Catalan independence movement have reached a climax after the referendum was violently interrupted by the police on October first. The events following the referendum have created a polarisation in social environment of Barcelona. Supporting the nation of Catalans or siding with Spain in the political debate is a matter of 'choosing' between national identities. These tensions could be the kind of circumstances that make national identity become salient. In this context, young adult's national identity may put on renewed significance.

In the upcoming chapters, the research findings will be gradually presented. First of all, the theoretical foundation of the research will be provided, including theories on identity, nationalism and youth. In the context, the socio-political circumstances in Barcelona will be further illustrated. The chapters 'Identification Under Pressure', 'The Paradox of

National Identification' and 'Reflections on Nationalism' expound the national identification processes in young adults in the current context. Chapter I, 'Identification Under Pressure', explains how young adults handle the pressure from the social environment to be opinionated. Chapter II, 'The Paradox of National Identification', tries to capture the paradoxical relationship between the nation and the young generation. Finally, in Chapter III, 'Reflections on Nationalism', young adult's thoughts on the nation and nationalism will be discussed. In the discussion and conclusion, the most important findings of the research will be recapitulated and linked to corresponding literature in order to formulate an answer to the research question.

A Touch of Theory

Theoretical Framework

Identity

In the broadest sense of the word, identity is the answer to the question 'Who or what are you?'(Demmers 2017, 21), or, as Richard Jenkins (2014) argues in his book 'Social Identity': *'As a very basic starting point, identity is the human capacity - rooted in language - to know 'who's who' (and hence what's what)'*(6). It is thus not only a way to describe and categorize yourself but also a way to categorise others. Roughly, there is a scholarly division in understanding identity at an individual level and understanding identity in context of a group. Erik H. Erikson (1966), a founding father of identity analysis in social reality, introduces the concept in his article with quotations of William James and Sigmund Freud. In the first quotation, James describes the man's 'sense of identity' in a letter to his wife as a *'mental or moral attitude that comes upon him'*. James adds to this remark that *'although it is a mere mood or emotion to which I can give no form in words, authenticates itself to me as the deepest principle of all active and theoretic determination which I possess.'* (James 120, 199 in Erikson 1966, 147). From this description, the recognition of his character that surprisingly 'comes upon him' expresses a unique sense of the self, something inherent that, as James describes : *"speaks and says: 'This is the real me!'"*. Identity is hence an exclusive experience which has private value to the individual.

To explain the *communal* dimension of identity, Erikson turns to Freud. These fragments contain the essence of Freud's statement: *'What bound me to Jewry was (I am ashamed to admit) neither faith nor national pride (..) But plenty of other things remained to make the attraction of Jewry and Jews irresistible - many obscure emotional forces, which were the more powerful the less they could be expressed in words, as well as a clear consciousness of inner identity, the safe privacy of a common mental construction(..)'* (Freud 1959, 273 in Erikson 1966, 148). Identity here, is expressed as a feeling of sameness, something essentially bounding because of the communal membership to a group, only known to those who share it. Erikson compares these two views on identity and concludes that identity is *'something which can be experienced as "identical" in the core of the individual and yet also identical in de core of a communal culture'* (1966, 149). These two

views on identity are embedded in the social sciences as the division between the self-concept, or individual identity, and the social identity (Demmers 2017, 22).

Social Identity

Social identity is about the relationship between the individual and the social environment. It is a way to label and categorise oneself and others in the social space (Demmers 2017, 23). Social identities are often externally ascribed and therefore have political and social meaning. During the end of the twentieth century, Henri Tajfel developed his *social identity theory*. At first it was solely focussed on intergroup relations and conflict, but, as it developed, became a broad psychological theory about identity and the role of the self in group processes (Hogg 2016, 3). Tajfel's classic definition of a social identity is the *'individual's knowledge that he belongs to certain social groups together with some emotional and value significance to him of this group membership'* (Tajfel 1972, 292 in Hogg 2016, 6). From this definition, we can isolate two important components. Firstly, social identities have intrinsic value to those who share it and secondly, we can have multiple ones. According to Jolle Demmers, founder of the centre of Conflict Studies of Utrecht University, we may 'have' multiple identities - one can be a mother, a sister, a Polish and a Christian altogether - but depending on the context, one identity may become dominant. Other identities will temporarily recede into the background (2017, 23). In a church, ones identity as 'believer' will be more important than the identity as 'European', and in a classroom the identity of 'student' will prevail over the identity of 'sister'. Also, identities can be temporary. Right now, I am identifying as a student, but when I graduate this social identity will be abandoned. Social identities are therefore temporary, fluid and changeable. Building on the idea that identities are fluid, social scientists tend to see identities as something that we 'do' rather than something that we 'have' (Jenkins 2014, 6).

A shared social identity connects members of social groups and provides them with a prescription on how one should behave, believe and 'be' in the social space (Hogg 2016, 8). These prescriptions together can form a *prototype* of the group. A prototype is a mental representation of characteristics associated with group membership. This can be in terms of behaviour, beliefs and appearance. Prototypes are unique in every individual, they structure

what being part of a social group means and define the group's entity. When self-categorisation takes place, the individual starts to see him- or herself in terms of the groups prototype. Consequently, he or she adapts his or her behaviour to the in-group norm (Hogg 2016, 8-9). Self-categorisation thus strengthens the prototypical behaviour associated with group membership. An individual that considers him- or herself part of a group, will act in ways that make others think of him or her as part of that group. This is when a prototype becomes a stereotype: a typical image of a member of a social group that lots of people share (Hogg 2016, 8).

Some social identities can be externally ascribed to us, which sometimes means that they are forced upon us. For example, third-generation migrants are likely to identify with the country of the nation in which they are born and raised, but can still be categorised as an outsider in everyday social reality (Demmers 2017, 23). Being categorised by others has the same effect as self-categorisation. Being labelled by others as a member of a social group strengthens one's self-concept as part of that group. It leads the labelled individual to feel, think and act prototypically and makes the externally ascribed identities internalize (Hogg 2016, 9).

Multi-level identities, or 'nested' identities, can be seen as identities such as local, regional and national. These are multiple levels of identities that can coexist in one individual at the same time. 'Parallel' identities are seen as same-level identities like Dutch, English, Polish or French. These identities are often exclusive, for they are limited and potentially oppose each other. We are English because we are not Polish, Dutch or French et cetera (McManus-Czubińska et al. 2003, 121). But they don't necessarily need to be so. In some cases, two seemingly opposing identities can coexist and identification with either one depends on context. It is imagined as a spectrum of identification, rather than a crossroad. A striking example of spectrum identification are the Garifuna in Honduras, who identify with local indigenous tribes as well as the Black Diaspora (Anderson 2009). These two-sided, seemingly opposing identities will be referred to as 'dual identities' later on.

You might be asking yourself: 'why is this all important?'. According to Richard Jenkins (2014), it is important to not take identities for granted, because identities matter. Either way we look, identity is present in society and categorisation by humans is generally

based on interests. When classifying ourselves and others, we make use of hierarchical scales of preference, competition, partnership, hostility and so on (Jenkins 2014, 5-7). Hierarchical classification initiate putative power relations that can lead to individuals claiming that their group is 'better' than the other group. Hierarchical intergroup relations have caused conflicts, genocides, ethnic cleansing and general violence throughout all history. Identity matters, because it can suddenly become a matter of life or death (Demmers 2017, 29).

National Identity and Nationalism

Membership to social groups often has emotional significance to the members. It goes even as far as individuals willing to kill and die in name of the group. One such group is the 'nation', a social group claiming some degree of sovereignty over a particular territory (Demmers 2017, 36). Nations often follow the lines of the state, which forms a community defined as the nation-state. A nationalist dreams of the congruity of the nation and the state. This phenomenon is introduced by Ernest Gellner (1983) as the 'nationalist principle'. But sometimes the political boundaries of the state fail to include all members of the nation, or they include not only members of the nation, but many more 'non-nationals'. These scenarios are examples of violations of the nationalist principle. Nationalist sentiments are the feelings of anger aroused by this violation, or the feeling of satisfaction aroused by the fulfilment of the nationalist principle (1983, 1). Nations living within other nation-state boundaries may claim self-determination and establish their own nation-state to restore the nationalist principle. Nations often take on arguments of historical and cultural heritage to justify their claim on a certain territory.

The question remains *why* people are willing to sacrifice so much for *imagined* groups. This is what Benedict Anderson, a leading scholar in the study of nations and nationalism, must have asked himself. In his book 'Imagined Communities', Anderson defines the nation as 'an imagined political community'. *'It is imagined,'* he argues, *'because the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion'* (Anderson 1991, 6). The only connection between different members of the nation is the

thought that they are connected. Admittedly, the whole existence of a nation is build on the fact that enough people consider it to be real and perceive themselves as a part of it. It echoes the famous words of sociologist William Isaac Thomas: *'If men define situations as real, they are real in their consequences'* (Thomas and Thomas 1928, 572). Because the connection between the members of the nation is seen as real, the nationalist sentiments it produces are real.

According to Benedict Anderson (1983), nationalism is an invention of the modern-age. It originated when prints shifted from 'exclusive' languages (such as Latin) to vernacular languages to reach a broader audience. Suddenly, prints were a commodity and news-papers, novels and literature became cultural products. These prints silently started the making of communities filled with anonymous members, who shared their cultural products. The process proceeded into the Industrial Revolution, in which these prints together with upcoming liberalism created a new framework of national consciousness (1983, 65). People started to feel a connection towards other members of the 'nation' without ever meeting them. The knowledge of sharing a communal culture, speaking the same language and reading the same literature created a sense of belonging towards other citizens of the nation-state.

However, the value of this national identity is yet to be discovered. Steve Fenton (2007) tries to grasp the emotional power of national identities by quoting Craig Calhoun, a modernist in the debate on national identity. Modernists tend to see national identity as ideologically functional, actively constructed for political and cultural purposes (Fenton 2007, 323-325). The national identity, as understood by Calhoun (1997), has an immediate relationship to individuality, and has a special priority over other collective identities in the construction of the individual identity. Greenfeld and Chirot agree with him, stating that *'(..) in the modern world, national identity constitutes what may be called the 'fundamental identity', the identity that is believed to be the very essence of the individual (..)other identities are considered secondary'*(Greenfeld and Chirot 1994, 126). Calhoun continues that *'The individual does not require the mediations of family, community, region or class to be a member of the nation. Nationality is understood precisely as an attribute of the individual.. the trump card in the game of identity'* (Calhoun 1997, 46 in Fenton 2007, 324). Almost fifteen years earlier, Ernest Gellner (1983), with whom the modernist approach is

associated, already stated that *'A man must have a nationality as he must have a nose and two ears'* (1983, 6). Clearly, nationality has a prominent role in shaping a personal identity. But, Fenton criticizes, these statements lack argumentation on *why* national identity has this superior role among other identities. To get more clarification, Fenton turns to Anthony Smith, a historical sociologist who is considered one of the founders of the 'perennialist' approach. Perennialists seek the attachment to national identities in a deeply embedded cultural and historical consciousness of shared identity (Fenton 2007, 323). Smith (1991) suggests a reason why national identity makes up an important part of the individual. As Fenton describes Smith's point: *'We handle the national coins, we watch the parades and national recreations, we practice the etiquette and the ways of acting and feeling (..)This does not mean that we will love it all or treat it all as supremely important, but it does suggest that the message of national membership will be conveyed by, if nothing else, sheer routine and familiarity'* (Fenton 2007, 324). Nationality seems, in the essence of Smith's argument, important to us because we are socialised into the nations ways of 'doing'. The category of national identity has come to feel natural to us, as we are being categorised in society all the time. We are being reminded of our national identity on airports, in international politics and in tournaments. Yet, also closer to home we are constantly reminded of our common heritage by the language that we speak. It might not be the perfect, complying argument to explain why nations and national identity have the strong appeal that they have, but it holds more explanatory power than the modernist argument. Modernists suggest that the significance of national identity lies in the notion that the economic and political power of the state contains our lives in welfare and wellbeing. Surely, pension policies, taxes, healthcare and education bring on the thought that 'being part of this country' holds an important part of our fates, but it doesn't explain the emotional value of the 'nation' as such.

Building on the debate between modernists and perennialists, we can conclude that the concept 'nationalism' has a dual nature: emotional and symbolic as well as functional and interest-laden (Máiz 2003, 208). Nationalist feelings can emerge out of cultural history, but also out of interests in welfare. Still, solely economic and political goals is not enough to cause nationalist tensions. People are more likely to support nationalist parties, or even opt for self-autonomy and independence, as an expression of their national identity (Sorens

2005, 309). However, people only vote for secessionist parties if it isn't perceived as a threat to existing levels of wellbeing (Sorens 2005, 309). Wellbeing should therefore be seen as an complementing part of nationalism (Serrano 2013, 534). It is important to be aware of these different motivations for practicing nationalism in understanding attitudes towards national identity and support for nationalist parties.

Please note that the national identity should be distinguished from nationalism, since not everyone takes their national identity seriously. Ethnicities, just as nations, are groups we are socialised into (Verkuyten 2005, 86) and being born within a country is usually enough to gain national membership. This doesn't guarantee a certain amount of enthusiasm for the 'nation'. Hence, national identity is not always correlated with nationalism and can be treated with indifference (Fenton 2007, 322).

Youth and Nationalism

Young adults are confronted with the task of deciding who to be and where to belong in terms of the many social groups and categories that exist in modern-day society (Erikson 1968 in Kiang et al. 2008, 643-644). In the study of national identity or nationalism, young adults are particularly interesting since they are the first generation to grow up in an internet dominated society. Developments in technological communication and globalisation have led to new kinds of social groups and identification processes, with social networking sites at the basis. State boundaries are slowly fading as networking becomes a cross-cultural phenomenon. Hall (1992) argues that national identities are vanishing, since globalisation stimulates global cultural homogenisation. Yet it strengthens national identities if they actively oppose to generalisation (301).

According to Sasada (2006), the internet has significant impact on nationalist feelings among youth in Japan. He argues that the internet is easy accessible and the un-censored, anonymous forums facilitate finding and expressing radical nationalist claims (120). Wilson, Fornasier and White (2010) argue that young people increasingly use online social networking sites to reach out to likeminded people. Young adults go online in the hope to get positive feedback from other users. It contributes to the sense of belonging and confirms or increases feelings of self-worth (175).

In a study among young adults from ethnically diverse backgrounds in America, Kiang et al. (2008) found that strong identification with ethnical and national identities had a positive effect on the perceived opportunities in their homeland and led to little perceived ethnic discrimination. However, individuals who identified less strongly to national and ethnic identities perceived higher levels of ethnic discrimination and perceived their opportunities in America less promising (663). Kiang et al. (2008) suggest that these individuals could be caught between ethnic and mainstream groups and don't feel like they fit in with either one (663). Based on this finding, externally ascribed identities seem to cause more perceived ethnic discrimination than self-categorised identities. Perceived discrimination can make individuals feel like they might as well behave in terms of their externally ascribed ethnicity, since they are already being victimised for it. This illustrates how the process of ethnic group formation is often the result of (verbal) violence, rather than the cause of violence (Demmers 2017, 31).

These statements correspond with the findings of Fenton (2007) who interviewed young adults to get insight in attitudes towards English and British nationalities. Besides dominant attitudes of indifference, he found that identification with England was often the result of perceived discrimination by Scottish and Welsh Britons. Participants who identified as English frequently reported perceived discrimination (*'they* [the Scottish and Welsh] *hate us'*, *'When you go to Wales as an English person, you are looked down on. And you are insulted'*) (336, 330). One respondent declared that she had felt British before moving to Wales, but identified as English after being discriminated for being English by Welsh people (330). Furthermore, Scottish and Welsh identities were often used as points of reference (*'If they are Scottish and Welsh, we might as well be English'*). These reports confirm Demmers' (2017) statement, since identification with England is reported as a result of discrimination, unfair treatment and the process of 'othering[4]'. The group formation is not the reason they are discriminated, but the result of being seen and treated as 'Others'.

However, Fenton (2007) found an overall significant element of indifference in discussing national identities with young adults (335). Within the broad definition of indifference, Fenton distinguishes three sub-categories: Rejecting nationalism and other

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[4] This process can be best explained as making a distinction between those who are thought to be different and oneself or the mainstream

categories ('*I'm just me*', '*I hate labels*'), supra-national identification ('*I'm a citizen of the world*') and a taken-for-granted kind of indifference ('*I never think about it*')(328-329). Especially for the first two categories, Fenton suggest a distrust of collective identities. Young adults have become more influenced by individualisation, causing their self-concept to be predominantly shaped by 'personal' identities such as life trajectories, career, family, friends and local communities. In addition, young adults appear to have an aversion towards nationalism and racism, in the knowledge that it's persons that matter, not categories (336). The only clearly defined feelings of nationalism were reported in temporary contexts of events, such as sports games, and yet, even then these feelings were described as 'just a bit of fun' (Fenton 2007, 336).

Harris (2010) argues that forms of identification of young adults are becoming more dynamic, more focussed on life course instead of collective identities such as the community (585). Young people are creating a new sort of citizenship, in which social cohesion and participation take on different forms that are not yet as much appreciated in the social cohesion framework. According to Harris (2010), the common image of a successful community used in the social cohesion framework is bounded to physical place, free from conflict and based on organisational engagement , something that is problematic for young people in times of globalisation (573-589). Firstly, young adult's connections are spreading through internet and peer networks, which makes their engagement go beyond physical place. Secondly, in the eyes of the younger generation, community cohesion isn't dependent on conflict free relations of different 'youth gangs' but rather the presence of facilities and activities for every interest group. Finally, the more classic forms of civic engagement, such as participation in political and cultural organisations, feel too formal to young adults. Harris (2010) suggests that young people prefer to be active in communitarian life in informal ways that aren't structured by organisations or adults. Examples could be art, music and writing events that create opportunities to connect over shared interests (585).

Fenton and Harris' findings contrast the arguments made by Calhoun and Erikson that identity is an indispensible, fundamental part of the individual identity. It seems that, within young adults, only the right context can bring out appreciation for their national identity. The context relatedness of identities was already stated by Jolle Demmers (2017), as

discussed above. The question remains to what extend young adults attitudes towards national identity change in a relevant context.

Context

Catalonia is one of the seventeen semi-autonomous regions of Spain, with their own distinctive culture, language and cuisine. They are part of the decentralized unified state of Spain, meaning that the regions have a certain amount of self-governance, but are ruled together in the national constitution of the country. Catalonia has got their own parliament, president and police force (Takruri 2017). It hasn't always been this way. The first Spanish state existed out of the union of the kingdoms of Castile and Aragon. Catalonia made up an important part of the kingdom of Aragon, that was ruled as a confederation in which Catalonia enjoyed self-rule. Catalonia benefitted from this governing system by growing into a Mediterranean trading nation in the middle ages. In the late 17th century, the Spanish state attempted to impose a unified whole in the same strain as Louis XIV's France. As a result, Catalonia's self-governing institutes were suppressed in 1714 (Keating 2000, 31). Between the second world war and the late seventies, Spain was under rule of Spanish dictator Francesco Franco. Franco banned freedom of press, democratic liberties and all expressions of diversity among different regions to pose a single national identity of Spain (Thornell 2017). In the sixties and seventies, the Catalan identity got even more sidelined as a result of massive migrations from the south of Spain to Catalonia (Serrano 2013, 529). After 1975, when Franco died, the democracy was restored and Catalonia gained their self-governance back.

Although Franco's suppression had left it's marks, the pride of Catalan culture grew over the years. In 2006, the first referendum to expand Catalonia's autonomy was held. This referendum contained demands for a new economic system and privilege of the Catalan language in public services. When the constitutional court banned several amendments, Catalans were furious. People mobilized in the streets with signs saying: 'We are a nation, we decide'(Thornell 2017).

In the economic crisis of 2008, Spain faced a high unemployment rate. Support for independence increased substantially during these years. Catalonia takes up about six percent of Spain's country, but it accounts for a fifth of the economic output (Thornell 2017). To a great extend, the growing social mobilization for independence is based on the perception of unfair treatment by the state (Serrano 2013, 524). According to Catalans,

Catalonia carries the burdens of high taxes whilst an insufficient amount of their financial input is being returned or invested into wellbeing and better living conditions in Catalonia. The nationalist argument states that if the Catalan government would collect all Catalan taxes and restore the fiscal deficit, a significant increment of the public budget and welfare levels would transpire (534).

However, many independent states of the European Union side with Spain. Additionally, the European Parliament in Brussels has made it clear that if Catalonia becomes an independent state, it will have to apply for EU membership. This process can take up to several years. Also, international corporations have preventively moved their headquarters out of Barcelona in the last few months (Takruri 2017). Separating from Spain and achieving financial autonomy may feel as an economic victory to some Catalans, but it could turn out to be a severe downfall of the Catalan economy.

According to Serrano (2013) it is not clear whether supporters of independence in Catalonia are more culturally or economically involved (534). Still, according to Sorens (2005) people only vote for secessionist parties if it increases their putative level of wellbeing and it serves political and economical goals (309). Yet, secessionist tensions are less likely to appear without the legitimacy of referring to the existence of a nation (Serrano 2013, 534). In the case of nationalism in Catalonia, economical and political motivations for independence are hardly separable from motivations in name of national identity.

Fenton (2007) argues that broken or threatened identities, also intelligible as identities in crisis, provoke reactions to achieve new certainties (325). After suppression of Franco, Catalan identity had to be brought back to life. Catalan language, traditions and culture had long been prohibited and Catalan pride needed to be restored. A taken-for-granted identity may lack intensity, but a threatened one will become salient (Fenton 2007, 325). The emerge of the independence movement could be, among other reasons, an attempt to re-establish a clear Catalan identity and achieve new certainties about cultural liberties.

The secessionist tensions have caused the seemingly nested identities of Catalan and Spaniard (referred to as regional and national identities) to shift to parallel identities. With the potential new state of Catalonia in sight, both identities have taken on the same level of

'national' identity, causing the majority of the people, who identify both with Spain and Catalonia, to face dual identities (Serrano 2013, 541). As a consequence, people may face internal conflict to determine which camp to side with. Being forced to choose either one of these identities - to support or reject the independence movement - causes the polarisation of society. Citizens of Barcelona are openly displaying their political opinion by hanging Spanish or Catalan flags from their balconies (Takruri 2017). Rest assured, the people of Catalonia are deeply divided by political preferences.

Young adults are an important group of actors in Catalonia's battle for independence. One of the driving forces to the referendum held on October first were the student members of the *Assemblea Nacional Catalana*, a civic organization that is committed to achieve an independent state of Catalonia (Takruri, 2017). As we have seen in the findings of Steve Fenton (2007) young adults in England often treated their British and English national identities with indifference. Fenton suggested a lack of significance of national identities in absence of a identity-threatening context. The ongoing Catalan independence movement in Barcelona may provide the right context to shape national consciousness among young adults. This new consciousness may change young adult's attitudes towards nationalism. Additionally, it could transform the meaning and the significance of national identity as a part of their self-concept.

According to Serrano (2013), differences in social class could predict identification with national identity. In the sixties and seventies, a wave of migrants from the deprived areas of Spain found its way to Barcelona. Ethnical reproduction within these migration groups caused citizens born outside Catalonia and their descendants to be more attached to their Spanish identities (Serrano 2013, 529). This could result in different attitudes towards independence, national identity and nationalism between individuals from families with migration backgrounds and individuals with Catalan origins. In addition, exclusive Catalan identities were frequently found among people with both parents born in Catalonia (531). Since the population of non-Catalan origins has a strong working-class component, identification with either Spain or Catalonia could be dependent on social class. This could account for more positive attitudes towards Catalan national identity among young adults who enjoyed higher education.

However, it is not only individuals with exclusive Catalan identities that are pro-independence or individuals with exclusive Spanish identities that are against. People who identify with both Spain and Catalonia are a substantial part of pro-independence votes (Serrano 2013, 541). This suggests a more complex nature of the independence movement. The majority that voted pro-independence in the referendum does not necessarily account for exclusive identification with the Catalan nation.

The referendum on the first of October proved to be a point of no return for a lot of Catalan people. After the violent interference of the Spanish police forces, the Catalan people felt more Catalan than ever. Being Catalan gained new significance that day, it meant being targeted for a democratic cause. It redefined the boundaries of the Catalan identity. Baumann compares identity group formation with wine fermentation. The ingredients are natural, yielded by nature. The grapes grow in a certain area, like people grow up in a certain environment. But shaping the ingredients into wine or an ethnicity is a human practice. Wine has to fermentate to shape it's characteristics whereas ethnicities need to be shaped by political and economical context (Baumann 1999, 64). In Catalonia's case, the violence on the first of October was a trigger for identity group formation. As Demmers states: *'As soon as people are targeted because of their putative identity, they start to act and feel collectively'* (Demmers 2017, 30). This collective movement creates a spiral in which the distinction between 'us' and 'them' grows. When Catalan people feel violated in their rights by the Spanish state, they start to perceive the Spanish authorities and Spanish people as 'others'. This socially created distinction could increase the demands for independence and diminish the identification with the Spanish state.

In summation, Catalonia has got a long cultural and political history that is expanding into a battle for independence. According to Serrano (2013) ethno-cultural motivations for independence have been present for a long time, whereas potential political and economical benefits from secession are relatively new motivations that enlarge the pro-independence movement. Catalans are divided by their political preferences. In this context national identity and nationalism may gain significance and meaning in everyday life. Citizens of Barcelona are faced with the polarisation of Catalonia's social political environment. Independence is not just a matter of identity, although identity is predominantly present as justification for demands of fiscal and political autonomy. The

polarisation of political opinion and the variety of motivations for independence add to the complexity of the independence movement. This research aims to give insight into the complex discourses of identity and nationalism in the perceived social reality of young adults.

Chapter I

Identification Under Pressure

"This interview is wasting your time", Joaquin[5] laughed nervously as I turned on the recording device. Joaquin is one of many informants who thought to be 'too apolitical' to be interviewed. "I don't know much about all this", he said whilst picking in his ice-cream cone with his little plastic spoon, "I try to be apart from all this."

"Well, that's also information", I said. "Why do you want to stay away from it?"

"I don't like this discussion. I don't know what is happening and I don't want to start to know what happened. All I know is that more frontiers aren't good for anyone." He sighed. "People are claiming territory based on history, but that doesn't make sense. We can't go back to south America and reclaim our territory there, right? It doesn't work that way.. Well never mind."

He started picking his ice-cream again. I wondered what made him so hesitant in sharing his opinion. "Did you have fights about this topic?" I asked him.

He looked at me for a brief moment and then refocused on his ice-cream. "Well, yeah a little bit. I posted something on Facebook one time. Because all people started posting their opinion. I only wrote 'I don't know why people are still trying to create frontiers'. People started arguing. I thought it was only a peaceful message, so I felt like this was the last time I was going to share my opinion."

After the events on the first of October, in which police violence was used to stop the referendum in Catalonia, many young adults like Joaquin are resistant in sharing their thoughts on the independence movement. The tension has Barcelona in a grip: The referendum and the independence movement caused the polarisation of political opinion, which has made independence a sensitive subject for conversation. Many fights and arguments with family, friends and even with strangers in bars took place on account of the referendum. After a while, some young people tried to stop discussing the subject: "*The next days, the tension was still there and a lot of people were sad and angry that this could have*

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[5] In order to keep informants anonymous, alias-names are used.

happened. I heard there were fights in bars and stuff. We didn't really talk about it in university, it became kind of a taboo I guess. People don't want to cause fights, so it is a subject that is kind of avoided."[6]

However, it is not easily ignored. The aftermath of the referendum is all around the city, the news and in everyone's mind: there are flags empathising with both parties hanging from balconies, there are big protests in the street and on television, and both parties expect everyone to be opinionated on the issue. Every now and then, elite[7] place comments on social media to stir the pot. On a micro-level, there are shifted dynamics in friendships and family relations and internal conflict causing stress and confusion. The political tensions bring questions about identity to light that were unconsciously hidden in the background. National identity used to be a taken-for-granted identity, but as Fenton (2007) argued, when an identity becomes threatened, it will become salient (325). Young adults are suddenly faced with questions such as: what does national identity mean to me? What happens if we will be independent? What are the consequences of choosing a national identity in this social environment? Am I willing to suffer from these consequences? What do I find important?

The following sections will discuss how young adults reflect on these questions, what factors play a role in their consideration and what consequences it has on their national identification processes.

Increased consciousness

Fenton (2007) found much indifference when discussing national identity with young adults in England. Fenton (2007) argued that national identity is taken for granted by the younger generation, whom often stated they 'never really think about it'. For young adults in Barcelona, the pressure of having to have an opinion in the political debate has phased out the possibility of indifference. The social environment is forcing them to have their minds made up, even when they are often still in doubt.

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[6] Respondent A, casual conversation, 07-02-2018
[7] Such as Catalan president Carles Puigdemont, who is increasingly active on social media to gain support for the independence movement

According to Serrano (2013), the Catalan identity has shifted from a regional identity to a (possible) national identity, which causes it to form a parallel identity to the Spanish national identity. Some informants face a dual identity conflict ('Which one of the two am I?'). Other informants refuse to have a dual identity conflict since they feel they are both Catalan and Spanish. They try to keep regional and national identity as they are. However, this often leads to criticism in the Catalan community. In order to escape the identity conflict, young adults are faced with the hard task of determining what it means to feel Catalan or Spanish to them, what consequences it has to choose (or not) and if they are willing to accept those consequences. Additionally, Harris (2010) argues that young adults increasingly identify in informal, commitment-free ways. The polarisation in society makes picking a side in the political debate permanent, which is not well-liked among young adults who prefer flexible, short-term identification. Being stuck to one identity, and not being able to change their minds, adds an extra dimension of stress to the identification process.

An important factor of influence are Spanish and Catalan stereotypes: what they entail and what it means to be associated with them. Do they want to be identified with the state or the nation? What does that imply? What does national identity even mean to them?

Determining what it means to feel Spanish or Catalan is a challenge for young adults, since the Spanish identity is a collection of different cultures and varieties within Spain. It is unclear what characteristics connect the people of Spain. Some consider just 'being' Spanish as feeling Spanish. Being Catalan seems to be more defined: *"I am not asking myself every day what my feelings are. That's why you asking 'what is feeling Spanish?' pff... Maybe it is just being Spanish. I don't know. (..) Maybe being Catalan is more determined. (..) Being more open-minded, being really hard at work, thinking always about not the easy way but the hard way that makes you feel proud of what you achieved."*[8] It is clear that this boy knows why he feels Catalan, but is not sure why he feels Spanish. It is just 'being Spanish' that mysteriously has a grip on him, a membership that he has since he was born that in itself has value. But could it be that it is valuable just because he is used to it? This would meet the terms of the perennialist argument to why national identity has meaning. Perennialists consider feeling part of the country as a familiarity, a connection to the ways of being in the country, out of

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[8] Respondent G, semi-structured interview, 05-03-2018

sheer routine and nostalgia. For example, this girl considers her membership to Catalonia and Spain meaningful because of the experience of living there: "*I do have sentiments for Catalonia and Spain, because I was born here, I grew up here and my parents are from a small town in Catalonia. I am from Barcelona, and sure I do have sentiments because I lived here my whole life. For Spain too, because I am from Spain.*"[9]

However, there are informants that perceive national identity beyond familiarity, in terms of certain characteristics. Members of the national identity group are seen as sharing these characteristics and accordingly, informants identified with the national identity because they are proud to have these qualities. In this way, the nationality says something about the self, the character of the person. It reflects the experience of identity as described by Eriksen (1966): ' identical in the core of the individual and in the communal culture' (149). One girl even described national identity as parts of her body: *"My heart is more Catalan, in terms of values and being a fighter and being active, and then in my surface, which is more cultural things, I feel Spanish. In terms of art, or family engagement or parties. I see those kind of things as something representative of a person, but it's more superficial. Catalan is more deep, but I like both parts. I think it's complementing.*"[10] In this description, the characteristics of the nation are deeply embodied in the person.

The statements above share the vision of the Catalan identity as being more determined and more embedded in their social being than the Spanish identity. Maybe identifying with Spain is considered a poor fitting because the concept is too big, associated with some sort of umbrella of national identity that covers all regional diversity. Identifying with Catalonia can be less problematic, since the Catalan identity might be more defined, more familiar and closer to home. Feeling Catalan is linked to ambition, effort and 'being a fighter'. It contains characteristics that lie closer at heart than the more generic identity of Spain.

A second factor contributing to the complexity of national identification, is what young adults think stereotypes of Spain and Catalonia entail. These stereotypes will determine how they are seen by others once they identify with the nation. They have to decide if they want to be associated with this image. Many young adults reconsider

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[9] Respondent O2, focusgroup, 27-03-2018
[10] Respondent L, semi-structured interview, 19-03-2018

identifying with the state because they have a negative image of the Spanish stereotype. When asked how they think Spain is seen by other European countries, the answers were often directed towards subservience. Informants thought Spain was seen as 'underdeveloped', 'stupid' and 'superficial'. They thought the common image of Spanish people would include laziness and loudness. Some informants even admitted to be embarrassed of the Spanish image. Especially in comparison to the northern part of Europe, informants declared to think of Spain as a second-rate country: "*They* [northern countries] *are sort of like the elite of Europe, and the ruling and I feel like Spain would be the work force, like the hands, the truck drivers. I feel like this is how Spain is seen, like a bit stupid. I think Europe sees Spain as a bit of a stupid land.*"[11] It seems like the image of Spain as a mediocre country has to do with a perceived inequality to northern Europe: *"They have a bad image from us, and other countries in Europe as well. (..) Portugal, Italy, Greece and Spain are the pigs, they are all in the south with the bad economy and they say that we are the countries that don't like to work.*"[12] These statements suggest a complex of inferiority towards the northern European countries. Although it is not entirely clear why informants felt this way, it could have to do with a putative economical and political incapability of the Spanish state. Many informants carried disappointment in the Spanish government because of a disproportional amount of corruption cases. Another possibility could be shame for the conservative and religious image of the Spanish state. Because Spain still has a king and a queen, it is not seen as a modern state by informants: *"I hate the fact that we are paying some king and queen and their daughters. I hate the monarchy. It's so old-fashioned. It is still there. I want to go forward*."[13]

Lastly, many informants declared to think of Spanish people as ignorant and insufficiently informed about the political circumstances: "*It is so embarrassing to think about Spanish identity. (..) I think they* [other countries] *see us as third world or something. (..) they* [Spanish stereotypes] *are so* paleto*. It is a Spanish word, it is like dumb, but not entirely.* Paleto *is like a man or a woman from a little town that doesn't know anything about nothing.*"[14] These statements could point out why young adults would rather be associated

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[11] Respondent B, semi-structured interview, 15-03-2018
[12] Respondent H, semi-structured interview, 07-03-2018
[13] Respondent N, semi-structured interview, 23-03-2018
[14] Respondent C, semi-structured interview, 14-02-2018

with Catalonia, which is seen as more like northern Europe than the rest of Spain. Catalonia is known to be more progressive, more productive and innovative; something that speaks to a lot of young adults. These characteristics were often highlighted to illustrate what differentiates Catalonia from the rest of Spain: *"The effort, the working. Being ambitious, I think in the south of Spain it isn't like this.(..) We are colder, like people in Europe, I think. We are focussed on work things, we are more selfish with money. In the south of Spain, you can see that they are generous, here we are more closed."*[15] According to this girl, Catalonia does not only inherit the positive characteristics of northern Europe. In the last statement, the coldness of Catalans compared to the generosity of people in the south of Spain is mentioned. Evidently, there are also more positive stereotypes of Spain and more negative ones of Catalonia. The Spanish stereotypes can contain characteristics such as warmth and openness as well. Many informants are proud of these characteristics and consider them a complementing part of their own person, as well as the Catalan diligence. Regardless of the regional differences, many young adults like the Spanish lifestyle, and are proud of their welcoming culture. When abroad, most of them feel a little more connected with young adults from the south of Europe, with whom they share relaxedness, humour and a warm, open attitude to the world. Youth from northern Europe was often seen as more individual, closed and distant: *"When I moved to London, basically my friends were from Portugal, Greece and Italy. Because it was really hard for me to interact with people from North (..) because they were very polite but really cold so I felt that we were different."*[16] Catalonia is seen as more like northern Europe in productiveness, but also in coldness. Spain might have a bad economic reputation, but the people are open and warm. Young adults are struggling with the question which one of the national identities is more applicable to their own person. Which identity do they want to be associated with? Warmth and generosity or ambition and productivity? What will others think of them once they choose one of them? What consequences will it have to choose?

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[15] Respondent D, semi-structured interview, 21-02-2018
[16] Respondent F, semi-structured interview, 01-03-2018

Identifying with either one of the identities usually means accepting the political dimension that comes with it. National identities are not only stressed, they are politicised. After the first of October, identifying with Catalonia became equivalent to siding with the independence movement, whereas identifying with Spain or both Catalonia and Spain is interpreted as choosing Spain: *"We are now pushed to choose one or the other. If I now said I choose both of them, in reality people are going to think that I am choosing Spain. You cannot choose both now."*[17] Choosing both means not speaking out against state violence, which can lead to a lot of criticism in the Catalan community. This can feel unfair, since none of the informants thought the violence on the first of October was justified or proportional, regardless of their national identification. Given the highly tensioned context, national identity cannot easily be treated with indifference. Identifying with the nation has consequences, which makes choosing permanent and stressed.

The majority of the informants did not know what they wanted, but felt that they should have made up their minds by now. One boy even felt guilty about not being politically conscious enough: *"I don't want complications in my life. I already have them. I feel tired. But I don't want to be easy, because I should be more worried about politics."*[18] The social environment and young adults' own perceptions of justice put a heavy load on them. This can be too much to handle. Some informants even considered leaving the country to get away from the tensions: *"I'm actually thinking of leaving the country. I don't think I want to start my adult life here, because right now I can't evolve in this tension country."*[19] These sentiments are the result of wanting to be indifferent, while knowing that it is impossible in the current situation: *"I'm forced to choose, I'm forced to understand the current situation when I don't care at all... That's why my inner wants to go far away. I'm a coward."*[20] This may lead to a mix of frustration, exhaustion and guilt that expresses itself in a necessity to flee the pressure.

However, many stay put and hope the tensions will blow over eventually. Some young adults use indifference as a defense mechanism. They hope to be able to continue their lives the way they did before the referendum and ignore the tensions in their social

[17] Respondent J, semi-structured interview, 17-03-2018
[18] Respondent N, semi-structured interview, 23-03-2018
[19] Respondent E, semi-structured interview, 27-02-2018
[20] Respondent N, semi-structured interview, 23-03-2018

environment. Some are just tired of discussing the independence issue over and over again and preventively avoid the topic: *"Everyone knows what is happening, there is no need to re-talk about the topic. I know what you think, you know what I think, end of the subject."*[21] Many others reported that they were also getting tired of the inconvenience of demonstrations. When taking the bus with respondent D, a protest blocked the road. She sighed out of annoyance and told me she was tired of the independence movement and the protesters. It was just one blocked road, train station or highway after another. *'I just want to live my life normally'*, she had said before walking the last blocks home.

Identification with National Identities

The pressure of being politically conscious at all times, is tiring. Continuing everyday practice and ignoring the events of the past months is not a proper alternative either, since it makes other people criticise them. Even if young adults want nothing to do with the independence movement, they are forced to have an opinion about it. Additionally, anyway they act, they are continuously criticised. The political circumstances in Barcelona do not only create an increased consciousness of national identity, it affects young adults in practicing their national identity.

In the next section, I will isolate three forms of identification processes that resulted from the tensioned environment. Firstly, stressed identification leading from criticism and conflict; secondly, selective identification as a result of the politicised nature of national identity and lastly, contextual identification, since context brings out meaning of identities.

Stressed identification is the result of conflict sensitivity of national identity. Showing political preferences could lead to conflict within groups of friends or family. Many informants declared that relationships with close friends or family changed after discussing political issues. Some friendships were even ended after arguments of this kind. This could be an important reason why young adults do not want to talk about possible independence and sideline themselves from the discussion. They do not criticise others so they will not become the object of criticism: *"With these kind of things you have to have your mouth*

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[21] Respondent E, semi-structured interview, 27-02-2018

closed and don't say it, because if you say 'I am pro Spanish' you will be in trouble. If you put the Spanish flag in there, you will be in trouble. They will be criticizing, like 'look at this Francista[22]*."*[23] Even a minor expression of national identity is open for extreme interpretation: both parties in the conflict compare each other with fascists from the second world war.

Identifying selective is a result of politicisation of national identity. After the events on the first of October, national identity has a connotation of political preferences. Consequently, identification with national identity is handled with care. Young adults are being selective and choose specific moments when the time is right to be seen as part of a political grouping: "*When I go to the manifestations or protest I wear a flag of independence and everything, because I felt it was the moment for it, but then I don't like walking around with things that people can point at me and say : Okay, you're this.*"[24] A possible explanation for the careful selection of identification could be the determination of the identity. The events concerning the referendum have made supporting your community a matter of 'choosing a side'. This is experienced as a definitive choice by many young adults: they can't just switch to the other side when they feel like it. Choosing seems to be problematic in the definition of new forms of identification of young people as introduced by Harris (2010). It lacks the flexible, commitment-free characteristics that are valued in identification of the young generation. This could explain why some informants prefer to join in specific activities, rather than strike a clear expression of political opinion at all times. Additionally, symbolic means such as the yellow ribbons that express support for the Catalan prisoners are not worn much among younger adults, even though they declare to support the message of it: "*I don't wear it, I would wear it but the thing is that if you wear that, people tend to think that you also agree with the whole political independence movement. And I'm not sure if I do, so I won't wear it. But I'm really into this yellow ribbon thing, if you want to wear it. I am really against the political prisoners.*"[25] Young adults are increasingly careful with identification and what results this might have on how they are seen. These findings add to

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[22] 'Francista' or 'Fathza' are terms used to describe an 'admirer of Franco', or someone who supports the fascist ideology of previous Spanish dictator Franco and his regime.
[23] Respondent D, semi-structured interview, 21-02-2018
[24] Respondent J, semi-structured interview, 17-03-2018
[25] Respondent M, semi-structured interview, 22-03-2018

the remark of Harris (2010) that young adults gradually like to identify more flexibly, and do not want to be stuck to an single-natured identity.

What an identity entails and the meaning of an identity is context dependent. Contextual identification is not exclusive to national identity, but is more relevant than ever now that the context in Barcelona makes national identification a matter of idealism and justice. Demmers (2017) argues that in any context, one identity prevails over other identities. The same goes for national identities, as illustrated by the statement of a girl talking about her time abroad: *"Well, at first I would always say that I am from Barcelona, I never say 'I'm Spanish' (..) But then when I was in Guatemala everybody there admired Spanish people (..) and I don't know why but because of the environment I kind of liked it more to say that I am from Spain..."*[26] Identification with Spain prevails when abroad. It becomes more meaningful when it causes one to be admired, or as previously stated by the girl in who moved to London: when it differentiates one from 'cold' Europeans. When these girls are in Barcelona, the negative image of the state will take over and identification with Catalonia is more relevant. Catalan identity is more relevant when interacting with the Catalan community over shared hurt about state violence. The Spanish answer to the referendum on October first shaped a context in which injustice is done against a specific group that shared the Catalan identity. As a result, identifying with the Catalan community is not only about sentiments for the nation, it is seen as showing support to the victims of a violation of human rights. Being Catalan is seen as supporting a cause of idealism. In this sense, national identity can be used as a way to protest. The context of politicised identity, creates the possibility to promote Catalan identity as a political statement. This way, the meaning and significance of national identity expanded to one of idealism, something that is highly valued among youth. Many informants declared not to support possible independence, but did join in the independence movement as a demand for political rights.

Altogether, the Catalan independence movement and the events concerning the referendum of October first increased consciousness of national identification. Young adults who treated national identity as self-evident, are not able to take their nationality for granted anymore. Many individuals are facing difficulties in determining what national identity means to them and what consequences of the politicised nationality they are willing

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[26] Respondent L, semi-structured interview, 19-03-2018

to except. The context of the independence movement politicises national identities, which expands the meaning of identification with political preferences. Not everyone supports the political connotation of national identity, but many value their nationality as an important part of themselves. Others use the politicised dimension to make a statement by expressing national identity excessively. In both cases, the current context causes stressed, selective and contextual identification. The permanent dimension of identifying with either one goes against the flexible, commitment-free identification of youth. They choose carefully when and where to display their national identity, to avoid prejudice. In the end, it leaves young adults with a tough dilemma of what they consider to be more important in which context. Some want to escape the tension by leaving the country, whereas others use indifference as a defense mechanism.

Chapter II

The Paradox of National Identification

Close-by to the Museum of Contemporary Art Barcelona, Paula and her friends wait for me. We sit down at the terrace just around the corner. The weather has been quite cold lately, but today is an exception. A pleasant breeze fills the air. We are surrounded by young people, skateboarders, and the smell of beers and cigarette smoke fill the air. The three girls at the table all study at the same design school. They talk about their deadlines and they invite me to one of their printing classes. "But wait, everyone speaks Catalan..." one girl mentions. Paula turns to me and says: "Don't worry, almost all the students speak English. It's just some teachers that don't, it's annoying. I feel like you should know English. It's a language that makes you connect with people all over the world." One of the other girls leans towards me and says: "We'll pick out a class in which the teachers speaks English."

One of the girls takes out her phone quite a lot. Paula explains to me that her boyfriend lives in a town far away and he is flying in to see her. They fly to each other every other week. The other girl tells me that she has a German boyfriend. She is learning German so she can talk to him, but she thinks it's really hard. Paula agrees with her. She has the same struggle with learning French, since she has a French girlfriend. Still, they are both strong-minded and eager to learn the foreign languages. 'I would love to surprise my girlfriend by saying something sweet to her in her own language,' Paula says.

Another assignment that they have due for next week makes its way into our conversation. The girls have to design a poster the size of a building. They explain to me how they make use of photography, paint and printing techniques. When I ask the girls if they could photograph the things that they think make them Catalan, Paula answers: "That would be very difficult for me, because I've always been interested in other cultures and I've always seen myself as someone who is a bit of everything. I will never be one hundred percent Catalan or Spanish."

In an international city like Barcelona, state boundaries are getting less and less significant. The girls with whom I had drinks on the terrace near MACBA[27] cross borders, languages and cultures for love. Globalisation has made them interact beyond their own comfort zone in many ways. For instance, the development of the internet has created new possibilities to connect with people living anywhere in the world. As they grew up, connecting was more than going into the backyard and reaching out to the neighbourhood kids, it was reaching out to the rest of the world with anyone from any place. These children grew up to be young adults in a world that requires interconnectedness and transnational familiarity.

Identifying with the nation is identifying with state territory. It is considered quite paradoxical to identify with the nation, when valuing international, cross-border connections. In their eyes, when everyone can connect with everyone, groups do not matter. However, when a group is created, it always leaves an out-group of people who don't belong into the group. When this knowledge is combined with the hierarchical structures of interest that are used when categorising others, as introduced by Jenkins (2014), creating a group can result in us-versus-them politics, something that many young adults are distrustful of.

Catalan people are often characterised by their culture, language and the territory in which they live. Moving outside of the territory, while speaking the Catalan language and practicing the Catalan culture can lead them to be categorised as Catalan by others. The Catalan national identity, with the politicised connotation to it, will be externally ascribed to them without their consent. This can result in perceived discrimination in other parts of Spain. Much of the hostile relationship between Catalans and Spaniards is catalysed by the Spanish media. Many young adults in Catalonia distrust the national media because it is linked to the state. To a large extent, this accounts for the massive 'flight' to social media for news-updates. The next chapter will elaborate further on the contradiction between the nature of the nation and the values of the modern generation. Afterwards, the effects of being categorised as part of the nation will be discussed. I will argue that the geographical compound of nations are problematic for national identification of young adults, for they increasingly identify beyond territory.

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[27] Museum of Contemporary Art Barcelona

Geographical Dimension of Nations

Not too long ago, being Catalan could be commitment-free and flexible when moving inside and outside Catalonia. Some people never introduced themselves as Catalan in other parts of Spain, because it was not necessary. All Spanish people shared the same national identity of Spain and had their own, additional, regional identity depending on which part of Spain they were raised in. However, this all changed after the Catalan independence movement started gaining momentum in the region of Catalonia.

The nation is defined by Demmers (2017) as a group demanding a certain amount of sovereignty over a territory (36). The nation is therefore always linked to territory. The moment when the Catalan independence movement made a claim on Catalonia, the group of Catalans became a nation. This is when the regional or local identity of 'Catalan' became a national identity. Identifying with this national identity is being part of the nation, which is linked to the specific territory of Catalonia.

The geographic dimension of the nation can be problematic for young adults. The generation that is brought up in times of globalisation does not assent to the necessity of borders. Many informants wanted to identify beyond state territory and wanted to let political, economical and environmental policies be regulated by international organisations, in the knowledge that working together on issues increases the likelihood to find solutions. Many idealise the unified collaboration of countries, such as the European Union. This kind of politics is seen as the future. They do not understand the necessity of states and state politics: "*(..) country borders don't make any sense, that is like states politics. Why do I have to feel part of this little town in the north of Catalonia and then not ten kilometres away from there in a little town in the south of France, you know. It doesn't make sense to me.*"[28] This attitude towards state borders has an impact on attitudes towards national identity, since the national identity is defined by state territory: the borders determine who is part of the in-group and who is part of the out-group of the nation.

As formerly suggested by Steve Fenton (2007) and Anita Harris (2010), young adults aren't likely to experience national identity the same way as it used to be. Ernest Gellner's statement on the importance of national identity being the same as 'having two ears and a

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[28] Respondent F, semi-structured interview, 01-03-2018

nose', doesn't hold up in the views of young adults. Even though the political debate on independence and its effects on society have made young people reconsider their national identity, deep down the distrust of collective identities, suggested by Fenton (2007), is still present: "*I don't like to identify in terms of state names. It's like football teams, when you like another team, you betray your friends and stuff. I don't like that kind of us versus them.*"[29] The generation of the eighties and nineties grew up in times of increasing ethnic violence and globalisation and seems to be well aware of the consequences of us-versus-them politics. These findings correlate with Fenton (2007) and his argument that national identity is weakly embraced because thinking in terms of 'the group' is coupled with racism, nationalism or, in the broadest sense, the suggestion that 'we are better than them' (336). Especially for youth that grew up in a post-Franco era in Spain, the repression of differences within collective identities and its effects are fresh in mind. All forms of nationalist sentiments and extremism are treated with suspicion. Many do not want to create distinctions between people that can cause fights: "*For most of the people, the meaning of feeling Spanish is (..) to support your fabric. I hate that.(..) It has been like this all throughout history, people go out on wars against other countries because they want to defend their country...*"[30] Many young adults do not like the us-versus-them mentality, because it creates hostility and conflict. Many young adults idealise pacific interactions between groups and want to work towards conflict-free coexistence without binding themselves to a territory that has to be battled over.

It seems that young adults preferably identify with more personal, individual identities such as friends, family, neighbourhoods and personal achievements, likes and dislikes. When asked if he felt Spanish, one boy answered: "*No. I have the culture and I'm from here and educated here, so yes I am Spanish, (..) but with globalisation, you can't be from one place. You can be the person you want to be.*"[31] The new terms of national identity contain the possibility of being from all kinds of places, defining yourself in terms of likes and dislikes instead of territory. It creates a paradox, because it defines national identity as being disconnected from territory, while national identity is entirely based on and bonded to territory.

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[29] Respondent R, casual conversation, 07-04-2018
[30] Respondent N, semi-structured interview, 23-03-2018
[31] Respondent H, semi-structured interview, 07-03-2018

The Effects of Belonging to a Nation

Being from the Catalan region has consequences when moving outside Catalonia. Being categorised as Catalan has an impact on how young adults are seen by other Spaniards. The politicised dimension of national identity creates prejudice over Catalans and negative stereotypes. Spanish people consider the Catalan claim on a territory that belongs to the Spanish state as an attempt to 'steal' the territory from other Spanish people. Catalan people are often seen as egocentric, wanting to steal a part of the country's territory including one of the most economically powerful cities. Barcelona has high financial capital generate through large amounts of tourism, the famous football club FC Barça, and the density of factories and international companies established in the city. The fear of losing this financial input facilitates anger, discrimination and conflict. The national media contributes to polarisation of people within the country by airing biased news, which amplifies the negative image of Catalans.

The effects of being a nation when moving outside of the geographical borders of the in-group territory are clearly felt. Many of my informants declared to feel discriminated when visiting other parts of Spain. They often reported experiences in which they were insulted, looked down on or approached in the street: "*We kind of travel a lot around Spain(..), but we've always encountered this kind of conflicts when we were speaking Catalan with my family. When we were travelling, sometimes somebody would approach us saying something. It happened two or three times, somebody looked at us badly because we were speaking Catalan.*"[32] These kind of experiences make young Catalans feel different from the Spanish people. The politicised identity creates prejudice, in some cases even based solely on territory: "*They* [Spanish people]*are tough on you when you go to Madrid and you tell them 'I'm from Barcelona'. They look at you like 'Ah, you're one of them', you are looked down on.*"[33] The hostile attitude towards this girl is based on a territorial origin, which seems to be enough to be seen as a member of the Catalan independence movement. Young adults feel discriminated, which makes them feel like they are seen as 'others'. This increases the feeling that they are not being seen as members of the Spanish nation.

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[32] Respondent L, semi-structured interview, 19-03-2018
[33] Respondent J, semi-structured interview, 17-03-2018

Prejudice against Catalans is largely caused by the misinterpretation of Catalan motives for independence and misleading information spread through media platforms. Even family living in other regions of Spain doubt their relatives motives for independence: *"I will give you an example of my family. When I go to* [region], *to* [city], *I don't receive good words about all this. They don't say 'oh you're fighting the government' or 'I'm proud of you for fighting for your rights'. Something that characterizes Spanish people is that they always let themselves be manipulated by TV or media in general*."[34] Many informants share the idea of national media as being selective in displaying news, causing an unrealistic image of the circumstances in Barcelona. Only little protests for independence are shown, whereas protests for an unified Spain are disproportionately often in the news. Additionally, Catalan protests are exposed as dangerous and aggressive manifestations that cause harm to the city or police officers. This kind of biased news promotes hate between Spain and Catalonia: "*So we kind of know that in the rest of Spain the media is trying to promote hate, it's not true and very superficial this hate.*"[35]

But why does the Spanish media use biased imaging to generate a hostile relationship between Spain and Catalonia? One possible explanation can be the close relationship between the Spanish government and the media. Even before the events of October first, the Spanish media were severely controlled by governmental institutions: *"(..)the newspapers weren't allowed to write 'the referendum will be held here and here' because it was not legal. We have this little newspaper of the neighbourhood and they had this tiny piece about the referendum and the Spanish police just took it and they were not allowed to spread it.*"[36] In this statement, the government is described as actively censuring and controlling even the smallest media platforms. The Spanish media is distrusted by young adults because of this governmental control. National media confirm state boundaries, being able to force believes and images on everyone within the country borders. Media channels of different countries approached the events differently. Informants who experienced the referendum from outside Spain reported the difference in media portrayal:

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[34] Respondent N, semi-structured interview, 23-03-2018
[35] Respondent L, semi-structured interview, 19-03-2018
[36] Respondent B, casual conversation, 09-02-2018

"I haven't realised how controlled we are and how not free since the first of October. Then I realised that all the media is influenced, everything is completely different when you're from the outside (..) They [international media] *pictured it as 'What is happening in Spain? There are people being injured because they want to vote!' That's it. Then, when you take a Spanish newspaper it says 'The police officers were forced to keep the people away from schools because they wanted to illegality vote'. It was really nice to be in a foreign country to see how the different media treated the topic."*[37]

The negative image of Catalans, spread through the Spanish media, supports discrimination and the process of 'Othering'. When a person sees oneself as Spanish, but is seen as Catalan by other Spanish people, he or she can start to believe there must be a difference. This may lead that person to think that he or she better meets the requirements of the Catalan identity and will thus continue identifying as Catalan. Similar to the metaphor of wine fermentation used by Baumann (1999), the political tensions and the misleading media shape the conditions for misinterpretation of Catalans, which leads to Catalans feeling different and at times discriminated. Subsequently, this leads to the formation of a group identity. However, the group is founded out of a human practice, rather than out of 'natural' causes of ethnic differences. Kiang et al. (2008) suggested that being categorised by others increases perceived discrimination. Considering yourself as Spanish, but being looked down on for being Catalan can make you feel misunderstood and unfairly treated. According to Demmers (2017), out-group discrimination and violence is often the trigger for group formation. Identity groups are shaped after experiences in which they feel violated or victimised. After violent encounters, the boundaries of the identity are being redefined. Groups are therefore the result of violence and discrimination rather than the cause (31). This is especially applicable to the Catalan community after the first of October, on which they felt violated in human rights. Many informants reported to feel more connected to the Catalan community after their experiences on the day of the referendum.

National media sharpens the borders of the state because it reaches only the members of the nation. National media can create believes and attitudes within the borders of a state and strengthen its entity by doing so. The internet seems to be the key to move beyond biased, censored national media. Internet is out of reach of governmental control

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[37] Respondent M, semi-structured interview, 22-03-2018

and is open for anyone to access. This is an important reason why young people prefer to use social media and networking sites to get their news updates. When asked how she followed updates on the independence movement, one girl answered: "*I do on twitter, and on Facebook. (..) for the news. Maybe not the assemble but journalists that I know that write about it, or the president because I want to know what he is saying. I follow him on twitter.*"[38]More young people are using social media to be informed.

However, social media may not be as transparent as they think. Many of them use an algorithm to show updates that are similar to ones you liked before. This way, people still only see one side of the story. It is like living in a bubble of news updates from like-minded people: "*If I read my twitter, everyone is super anti-capitalist, super independentist, and then the elections come and you feel like you live in a bubble with only the five percent of the population that is like you.*"[39] This is often experienced as misleading; different people from all kinds of environments end up with different images of reality. On crucial moments like elections, this alternative reality can be shattered, which can make young people feel disappointment and frustrated about the outcome. Especially when it comes to the national elections, in which the PP[40] often enjoys the largest victory, while none of the informants felt represented by this party. Having no political representation, while cherishing the idea that the social environment shares the same political preferences, adds to the feeling that the Catalan community is not able to participate in the Spanish nation.

To summarize, the geographical dimension of national identity is problematic for identification processes of young adults. Primarily because the nation is connected to territory, whereas identification of young adults is increasingly dislocated, which creates a paradox. Additionally, young people distrust group-thinking and collective identities and like to identify with more personal forms of identification, such as neighbourhoods, friends or personal likes and dislikes. The resentment for collective identities is rooted in a desire for pacific collaboration and conflict-free coexistence. This creates the second paradox, because being categorised as member of the nation outside the nation's territory often leads to hostile encounters. The political connotation of the national identity of Catalonia increases

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[38] Respondent B, semi-structured interview, 15-03-2018
[39] Respondent F, semi-structured interview, 01-03-2018
[40] *Partido Popular*, a right-winged, religious, conservative party

prejudice in other parts of Spain. Consequently, it leads young adults to feel discriminated when visiting other regions of the country. The media actively contributes to the negative stereotypes of Catalans by showing a biased image of the situation in Barcelona. The national media confirms state borders by creating a set of beliefs and sentiments among members of the state. Therefore, the national media is distrusted among young adults. As a result, the younger generation uses internet and social media to be informed on the developments in the country. However, social media is often biased too, which leads users to live in a bubble of like minded updates. This bubble will disappointingly be shattered on crucial moments such as elections, when the public opinion differs from people's idea of it. This way, being dislocated from territory makes many young adults not fully aware of what is happening in their country.

Chapter III

Reflections on Nationalism

Three streets away, I could see smoke filling the air. When I came closer, I saw that the smoke was coming from barbecues on which big piles of onions were being grilled. The streets were closed off with fences and there was music playing. To the right, I saw long tables with chairs. On the other side of the road, activists from a stand of the Assemblea Nacional Catalana *were handing out flyers and selling shirts, sweaters, signs and buttons with 'Democracia', 'Independencia' and 'llibertat presos politics' on them. They were also selling yellow ribbons and baby bibs with an illustration of the same onions. It said 'calcots de la republica'. Among the people behind the stand were two young adults. I saw the Bastons[41] in the street next to the barbecues. They just changed into their traditional dance outfits, with yellow and blue details and bells on the shoes. They greeted me welcoming.*

When the Bastons started to dance, people stopped their conversations to watch them and enthusiastically clapped along with the rhythm. Next to me was a group of small children, dressed in jeans and white shirts. They tried to copy the Bastons with the same wooden sticks, but a size smaller. There was a casual atmosphere. The 'oh' and 'ah' sounds and the clapping suggested that the audience was impressed by the routines of the Bastons. When the Bastons finished, the children got the chance to show their dance routine. The audience excitedly encouraged them. The children's happy faces turned to full concentration in split seconds as the music started.

After the children's performance, the Bastons invited people in the audience to join them. All kinds of people joined, little children with their parents, older people, young adults and teenagers. They were all very enthusiastic and curious to learn the dance. It was hard, and when they failed, they laughed. But they would not give up, as they were eager to learn. It did not feel as old-fashioned or dull as cultural dances sometimes can feel. Since everyone was enjoying themselves and every age group joined, the joy took over the embarrassment of failing. I joined too. Nobody was surprised by the fact that a foreigner attended their neighbourhood festival. It felt really open, welcoming and inclusive. Even I could be part of the community without speaking a word of Catalan.

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[41] Cultural dance group, dances the 'Baston', a traditional Catalan dance with a choreography in which pieces of wood are smashed together on the rhythm of the music.

Neighbourhood festivities like the kind I visited the day the Bastons performed, are frequently organised around Barcelona. In an international city of this size, it is necessary to support social cohesion among local communities. The Catalan community is accessible to anyone who is interested in joining. The first time I saw the Bastons perform, I was immediately invited to visit their dance recitals and join the group on performances. The small neighbourhood reunions symbolise the connectedness of the entire community of Catalans. The community is very open and inclusive and many of the members express a sense of belonging. Activities like these can create genuine love for the nation.

Nationalism is a certain sentiment for the nation; it can be enthusiasm, pride or the desire to unify the state and the nation into a nation-state. For Catalans, nationalism could be the readiness to establish the state of Catalonia. New state borders go against the ideology of many young adults, but somehow, many do feel love for the nation. According to Máiz (2003), nationalism has a dual nature, sentimental as well as functional. Sentiments for the nation can be from an emotional connection, such as love for the country, but can also stem from more functional interests such as economic wellbeing, prosperity and security.

In the context of the Catalan independence movement, young adults are faced with the task to decide what national identity means to them and to determine on what terms they feel connected to a country. Do they value the financial security of the Spanish state, or the emotional belonging of the Catalan community? Do they value the culture of the Spanish, or are they losing touch based on the lack of political representation? Are they proud of their origin, or nation? These are questions that may come to mind when discussing nationalism. In the following chapter, different explanations for the appeal of national identity will be discussed. The different sorts of love for the nation and the reflections on nationalism that informants reported will be discussed. I suggest that young adults predominantly take ambivalent attitudes towards nationalism.

Love for the Nation

Many informants are ambivalent about feeling proud for the nation. On one hand, they appreciate their nation and origins, but on the other hand side, they are afraid to be nationalist. Many young adults do not want to feel love for the nation because it contradicts

values of globalisation. They feel distrust towards collective identities, yet they feel emotionally attached to them. "*I do feel a real connection with my country. Though mostly, almost always, I hate it.*"[42] It puts them in a difficult position. However, feeling local is not perceived as an opposition to feeling global, it is rather seen as an appreciation of the place they have lived in their entire lives.

The Catalan identity is usually seen as a community-based identity rather than a national identity. Being Catalan is more about feeling part of the neighbourhood than it is about the region. Therefore, being Catalan is often seen as more suitable in forming an essential part of young people's identity. An explanation for this community-based essence of the Catalan identity could be that the things that make people 'Catalan' are found close to home. Moreover, the Catalan language is spoken in their direct surroundings which makes them distinct from the rest of Spain. Informants frequently reported to feel an undertone of Catalan identity in family traditions, primary school memories and neighbourhood festivities. The social cohesion of the Catalan community is achieved in many activities as such. These activities fit the needs of all ages and make all generations feel part of the Catalan community. It promotes sentiments for the nation. The Catalan identity is a flexible and dynamic identity that is open to anyone. It reflects short-time commitment (I was only there for ten weeks and was able to join) based on weak-tie relationships, without the burdens of obligations or responsibilities. This type of identity is an accurate mirror of what young adults value in civic engagement (Harris 2010, 585). Barcelona's social structure, with many events and activities throughout the city, fits well with the needs of young adults to guarantee civic engagement and identification: *"I feel super strongly that I am from Barcelona (..) here we celebrate the 23th of June when we do fireworks and we burn all old stuff, that's like the happiest day for me (..) you have dinner with all your neighbours on the street and all the traffic stops, it's the most amazing day. It is a day that you feel part of a community, and then there's festes the Gracia in August when all Gracia neighbourhood is decorated in a topic, and when I go there I think 'We live in the most amazing city in the world.*"[43] These and more events attract all kind of age groups and enables them to enjoy food, decorations or fireworks together. It creates the possibility to connect without being

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[42] Respondent N, semi-structured interview, 23-03-2018
[43] Respondent F, semi-structured interview, 01-03-2018

tied down to participation in community centres or organisations. Activities and events support commitment-free participation and therefore the connectedness of the younger generation to the community and the nation. Moreover, Catalan holidays, for example Sant Jordi day on which people surprise beloved ones with books and roses and the whole city is filled with book and flower markets, are often described as the most wonderful days of the year by young people. On big celebrations, groups of *castelleres* build human towers, which is a Catalan tradition that is exciting and appealing to everyone. It is connecting and symbolises the strength of the Catalan community building together: "*I love human towers. It's something unique all around the world. The connection that it is creating between people from all different ages and different kinds of family or economical situations. All together, doing something very physical, but at the same time very spiritual. It is a very beautiful tradition.*"[44] Besides the physical challenge of building a tower of people of multiple floors, it offers a spiritual challenge to build trust.

While the Catalan community is already successful in including young people, the Catalan independence movement is adding an extra dimension to the accessibility of community participation. The independence movement stimulates demonstrations, collective actions for the imprisoned politicians and more events. These types of protests are not just to take a stand against the Spanish government; they encourage people to connect, talk and mobilise together. Mobilising in the name of idealism connects people with similar interests. In addition, walking in protests with friends is described as connecting and fun. When protesting against the arrest of Catalan president Puigdemont, many young adults joined with family and friends. Although the protest sent out a serious message, the atmosphere was affable. People were walking their dogs while marching for Puigdemont's freedom, others brought strollers with babies and little children. In the small supermarkets along the route, people bought beers while singing the national anthem of Catalonia. Yet, the best example of increased civic engagement stimulated by the independence movement is given by a boy that defended a polling station in his neighbourhood on the referendum day. Together with many neighbours, he slept in a primary school to make sure the police would not close it down. The people in the school were working together to reach a shared

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[44] Respondent L, semi-structured interview, 19-03-2018

goal and it increased their engagement to the community. When asked if the first of October changed his perception of being Catalan, the boy answered:

'It didn't change the way, but it did change the determination and the activism. Before the first of October, I went to the demonstrations (..) but it was only once a year or only some pointing demonstrations. But since the first of October, I became a member of the CDR[45] and I've been in demonstrations every week, and I've been in assembles every week and the activism has made so many people mind so much."[46]

This new intensity of civic engagement leads to increased strength of the Catalan identity among young adults. Members of the community feel that they belong, they are safe and powerful together and supportive of each other. There were a number of informants that reported to feel proud of the Catalan community. In particular, the collective movement that emerged on the first of October increased feelings of pride. According to many informants, it demonstrated the ability of the Catalan community to unite for what they believe in. *"That day, I felt really Catalan. In other parts of Spain, nobody would do that. Proud, I felt proud because we achieved to be a mass, a very big mass in the streets complaining to the rest of Spain. It's difficult to achieve something like that in the modern world.*"[47] As demonstrated in these statements, the Catalan identity is suited for local identification and 'personal' identification that young adults cherish. They feel connected to their nation and even declare to feel proud at times.

However, young adults are ambivalent about being proud of the nation. They like to be conscious of their roots, culture and language, but are afraid to be seen as patriots. They like to be seen as citizens of the world, with an open-mind toward diversity and global connectedness. They do not like extreme devotion to a group. Many are afraid it could be something that they could be blinded by or they could be manipulated with by a charismatic leader. Many young adults prefer reason over emotion: they are afraid that the sentiments take over and they will not be able to reason beyond group boundaries. This explains why many informants were distrustful of sentiments of nationalism. One boy compared nationalist sentiments to sentiments for football: "*I like football, but I hate the fact that I like*

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[45] *Comitè de Defensa de la República;* A civic activist group founded by a protesters who occupied the schools on October first
[46] Respondent P, semi-structured interview, 29-03-2018
[47] Respondent N, semi-structured interview, 23-03-2018

football. Sometimes I like it too much. For example, I feel very attached to a team and I hate that, because I don't like extremes. In that case, I am extreme. I would defend my team a lot, really passionately. I like the emotion that it allows me to feel, but I don't like the extremes. Football and all the media around it blinds us a lot, and it is a big weapon to manipulate people."[48] This boy hates his own devotion to football and fears that he will be blinded by the emotion. Sometimes informants were even ashamed to be passionate about something that is considered so insignificant in their own ideology. Informants often tried to trivialise or weaken the sentiments that they were feeling. Even if they have feelings of patriotism, they do not want to call it patriotism, but rather characterise it under other things: *(..) meeting someone that can speak Catalan is like the most amazing thing when you're abroad. But that doesn't mean that I feel like any national feeling, it is just... you know."*[49] When borders are slowly fading, feeling emotional connection to a nation is considered outdated. However, many cherish love for their community. It creates internal conflict: do they prefer their love for the nation or their love for global connectedness?

Sentiments for Security and Prosperity

As argued above, nationalism has a dual nature. Besides the love for the nation, there is a second dimension to nationalism that focuses more on the functionality of the nation. This kind of nationalism is based on notions of prosperity and security within the nation. For many informants, economic security and prosperity are important reasons to side with Spain in the political debate around Catalan independence. The potential independence of Catalonia puts the current levels of wellbeing at risk. Leaving the European Union would mean citizens of Catalonia will not be able to travel effortlessly throughout Europe; it would mean more taxes on export and import of products and a lot of companies moving out of Barcelona. Deliberating these consequences can result in interest-based reasons for supporting or rejecting nationalism. These reasons define the terms that the state has to meet to keep its citizens satisfied.

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[48] Respondent N, semi-structured interview, 23-03-2018
[49] Respondent F, semi-structured interview, 01-03-2018

Many scholars have speculated over the foundation of modern states. One of the most famous ones was the English philosopher Thomas Hobbes, who argued in his social contract theory that the functioning of the states lies in a contract between the ruler and the ruled. In this social contract, the people are obeying their leader in exchange for security. Accordingly, security and prosperity are important factors for people to want to belong to the state. Sorens (2005) found that people in Catalonia are only willing to vote for independence when they do not consider it to be a threat to existing levels of wellbeing (p. 309). Feeling connected to the nation is thus not only out of pride in the culture but also pride in the services that are accessible to citizens.

The Spanish nation deserved some honourable mentions of pride when talking about prosperity. Some informants declared to feel proud of Spain when talking about the accomplishments of the state after being in a dictatorship for decades: *"sometimes I feel really proud of Spain, like when I compare it to other European countries, (..)to see how we interact with each other, and the welfare. Of course we are not on top of all states in Europe, but sometimes I feel this proud because we came from a dictatorship and we managed to have the most amazing universities for public, an amazing health system, you know, so sometimes I feel really proud of Spain as a country."*[50] This girl is proud of the public services, the health care and the universities of Spain. It reflects sincere enthusiasm for the nation, but it is rooted in a more functional approach than the enthusiasm that was reported for Catalonia. The Catalan nation has more trouble creating this kind of devotion, since they are not able to provide financial security if they become independent. If they leave Spain, they will have to apply for membership to the European Union, which can take up to several years to be approved. Independence would cause an impact on taxes on import and export, the costs of studying and travelling abroad and much more. Effortlessly crossing borders within Europe is a valued achievement of globalisation. Many young adults like these privileges: *"I feel some privilege things, you can travel around. (..)When I was looking for Masters, if you're European, you just have to pay half of the thing, or the phone works. I go around and it's free because I am in Europe. I feel it's a good place to be."* This will change when Catalonia becomes independent. Tax benefits within Europe will probably make companies move their branches from Barcelona to other cities. This could account for a severe downfall of the

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[50] Respondent F, semi-structured interview, 01-03-2018

Catalan economy. Reasons of uncertainty are often arguments to side with Spain on the Catalan independence topic: "*when we are independent, what happens with pensions, what happens with the taxes? It could be a disaster and we [Spain] are not that bad.*"[51]Clearly, doubt about financial security in many cases dominates over sentimental motivations to leave Spain.

Another part of the functional dimension to nationalism is respecting the law. To some informants, it seems unfair to break off the collaboration with other regions of Spain. Especially since Catalonia is the wealthiest region of Spain with the greatest financial output. Leaving would leave the rest of Spain with a large economic deficit. Perceptions on what is right and wrong when respecting a constitution are important in finding a point of view on independence. "*I think that we are all the same in Spain and this kind of issues, like the Catalan independence, should be decided by all Spaniards, not just Catalans. Like, I'm not from Andalusia, but I feel that Andalusia is Spain, and that is why I think that, even not being from Andalusia, I have something to say.*"[52] Having a say over other parts of Spain is considered part of the collaboration between different regions. Supporting this collaboration can be seen as Spanish nationalism, but is often referred to as nationalism for the union. *"I have to agree that there is a Spanish patriotic feeling nowadays that is increasing. It is not really bad at all, because it is a constitutional patriotism that only says that there is a constitution and that we have to respect that and we have to be proud of it*."[53] This boy is proud of the constitution and the united collaboration in which different regions work together. The demands for independence in Catalonia are seen as a violation of the constitution. Leaving would be unjust, because the Spanish regions made an agreement in which they would support each other. "*In the nineties, the autonomous regions of Spain were created. They* [Spanish authorities] *wanted to give Catalonia and Basque country more economic autonomy. Catalonia refused. They wanted to stay with Spain, because that way they would get more money. But now, when they have more money, they don't want to share it with the others. That is not correct*."[54] Evidently, this boy thinks that Catalonia is

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[51] Respondent D, semi-structured interview, 21-02-2018
[52] Respondent G, semi-structured interview, 05-03-2018
[53] Respondent G, semi-structured interview, 05-03-2018
[54] Respondent O1, focus group, 27-03-2018

doing harm to the state and enforcing order on them might be considered the logical response.

Perceptions of justice are important in taking a side in the independence debate. Other informants reported to have other perceptions of what justice is and what the role of the state in protecting security and prosperity is. Some considered the violence of the first of October as an attack on the state's own people. They are no longer respecting the social contract, since they failed to guarantee security for its citizens. It does not only limit young adults enthusiasm and love for the state, it drives them to reject the Spanish identity. *"Feeling Spanish is not feeling ashamed of your country, maybe. Being proud of it, and thinking 'Spain is great' and having many things we can count on, that you can go there and be safe, you can rely on the government, which I can absolutely not right now*."[55] This girl declared not to feel Spanish anymore after the events of October first. She now relies on the strength of the Catalan community to create a country and find its own way to prosperity and security. Some informants were enthusiastic to create something meaningful together with their community and did not consider economic insecurity to be an obstacle: "*There is something really exciting about starting a new country. It is brand new, you can decide what will be in the constitution and stuff. It has something really fresh and exciting about it.*"[56] The sentiments for state security and prosperity can be achieved by working together as a community. Catalans are a strong community, capable of collective action. With this knowledge, these informants have trust that prosperity of an independent Catalonia will grow over time.

In conclusion, nationalism has a dual nature. It entails sentiments for the nation in love an engagement as well as sentiments for security and prosperity. Both dimensions of nationalism play important parts in embracing national identity and enthusiasm for the nation.

Informants declared to feel love for the nation of Catalonia which is connected to local identity and local practices. Catalan community is including young adults and effectively enlarging their engagement to the group. However, young adults have ambivalent attitudes

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[55] Respondent E, semi-structured interview, 27-02-2018
[56] Respondent B, casual conversation, 09-02-2018

towards nationalism, because it contradicts their values of globalisation. As such, sentiments for the nation are often trivialised.

Sentiments for prosperity and security are a second dimension of nationalism. Spain is doing well at providing services, which leads informants to be proud of their country. For others, the Spanish government's reaction to the referendum broke their trust in security of the country. However, the willingness to start an independent Catalonia comes with deliberation of economical uncertainties. For informants who want to stay with Spain, financial security is often the strongest motivation. Additionally, many argue that leaving other regions is leaving them with economic uncertainty which is perceived as unjust. However, it is difficult to decide which nation means the most to them. Sentiments of nationalism contribute to the complexity of national identification in the current political context.

SPANISH GOVERNMENT KILLED
OUR DEMOCRACY BUT WILL
NEVER SHUT CATALANS MOUTH

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Discussion and conclusion

After ten weeks of interviews, participant observation and casual conversation in Barcelona, I felt a bit overwhelmed by the information. Young adults shared all kinds of stories with me that often contradicted each other. Sometimes, informants even countered their own arguments, suggesting that they have not taken a clear position in the political debate yet. It could be confusing at times: there are so many opinions, experiences and arguments on national identity that there is no univocal to be drawn from it. What the study pointed out, above all, is that people are still searching for their point of view. The Catalan independence movement created a confusing and stressful time for many young adults. A lot of uncertainties and paradoxes between ideology and feelings came to light that weren't as striking before. One day informants could express an opinion and the next day they doubted their own arguments. They are unsure and they are right to be unsure. It is a complex issue.

Research Findings

One of the most important research findings of the conducted study is the increased consciousness on national identity that the context of the Catalan independence movement created. Young adults are confronted with the polarisation of their social environment and the task to choose between their own group identities. Attitudes of indifference towards national identity, as found by Fenton (2007), are not possible anymore in the present context. To determine what identity is most applicable to their person, they have to decide what national identity means to them. This is not easily done. The context of the Catalan independence movement has politicised the Spanish and Catalan identities, meaning that making a choice equals siding with a political position in the debate on independence. Young adults do not always agree with the political ideology of their community, but do identify with other aspects of the national identity, which is making it hard for them to choose.

The context impacts the process of identification in several ways. First of all, it makes identification stressed because the pressure to choose between the two sides in the political debate can cause conflicts with family and friends. Secondly, it makes identification selective because they want only specific moments to be seen as part of a political grouping. Lastly, it

makes identification contextual because the context brings out the meaning of social identities. In this particular context, national identity prevails over other social identities. Because of the tense circumstances, national identity is considered more important. Some informants use their national identity as political statement by excessively showing it off.

The political polarisation in society makes identifying with one nation a permanent decision. Young adults cannot easily change their identification from day to day. This is not well-liked among the younger generation, since they prefer to identify flexible and commitment-free. The new significance of national identity and the permanency confronts them with a dilemma: which of the two nations means the most to them?

The nation is a difficult factor in this, since there is a natural paradox between the definition of the nation and the values of young adults. The generation of the eighties and nineties is the first generation to be brought up in a globalised world. Young adults increasingly identify cross borders and connect dislocated from territory. The nation, however, is defined by its connection to land. The geographical dimension of the nation is problematic for young adults, because it ties them down to a territory that they want to break loose from.

A second factor that creates difficulties is the distrust of collective identities shared among youth. The times in which they grew up provided them of the knowledge that group-thinking can result in horrendous conflicts. In an attempt to be pacific creatures, young adult try to avoid collective identities and us-versus-them politics. All they truly want is conflict free collaboration between people from all around the globe. Therefore, young adults tend to identify based on more personal identities, such as friends, family, small communities, personal taste and career trajectories.

However, young people are often categorised as part of nations by the social environment, which has consequences that could affect their own identification processes. The Catalan nation made a claim on Spanish territory, which is not appreciated in other parts of Spain. Moving outside the territory of Catalonia, young adults are confronted with unfriendly faces, hostility and prejudice. Informants often reported to feel discriminated and looked down on when visiting other regions of the country. These encounters contribute to the feeling that they are indeed different than the rest of the Spanish nation. It amplifies the

process of 'othering': when people discriminate others for their national membership, they are seen as members of a different nation. This way, a difference is created between themselves and the marginalised group. It makes young adults feel less part of the Spanish nation and increases their perception of themselves as part of the Catalans.

The relationship between the nation and young people is in two minds. Some informants do feel emotionally attached to their national membership, but are resistant in showing these sentiments. Feeling love for the nation, or preferring their nation over other groups, lays uneasy with their values of appreciating diversity. Some informants felt shame to have sentiments for a territorial group; something that should be insignificant in a globalised world.

However, nationalism doesn't only consist out of love for the nation, it has a more functional dimension to it as well. In functional nationalism, sentiments for prosperity and security are treasured. If Catalonia becomes an independent state, the economical stability will most likely drop for several years. Many informants do not support the independence movement out of fear of economical uncertainty.

Another factor that can influence nationalism are perceptions on responsibilities of the state. Opinions on the first of October differ, so are perceptions on justice. For some, the interference of the referendum was a logical responds to the violation of the constitution: an agreement that the different regions of Spain made together. They consider maintaining the constitution as a primer responsibility of the state. Others perceive the state's interference of the referendum as a violation of human rights and argue that Spain failed in its responsibility to protect its citizens. These different perceptions on the events on the first of October can play a key role in support for the nation and nationalism.

However, choosing between two nations that both have meaning to young adults is considered difficult. Sentiments of love, security and prosperity have a different nature, and are hard to compare. Determining which is worth more, is considered nearly impossible. The sentiments of nationalism add to the complexity of national identification in these tense times.

Parallels between Theory and Research Findings

Drawing from these findings, in less tense political circumstances, young adults would not consider their national identity as essential as described by Ernest Gellner and Craig Calhoun. These findings also contradict the statement of Greenfeld and Chirot (1994) who argued that identifying with the state is the most important building block in forming the personal identity (126). In general circumstances, young adults consider national identity a relatively insignificant part of their person and rather view themselves as a representation of personal tastes, achievements and relationships. Globalisation has caused the meaning of national identity to change, resulting in a modern world where state boundaries and national identification are vanishing. These propositions were already stated by Fenton (2007), who found predominant attitudes of indifference in young adults when talking about their British national identity.

However, since identification is a dynamic process, as stated by Jenkins (2014), there are circumstances that can change meaning and significance of national identity. Fenton (2007) suggested that in the right context, young adults might put more thought into their national identity and value it more. According to the findings of the present research, the right context does enlarge the consciousness of national identity. The option of indifference has become unavailable because of the pressure from the social environment to have an opinion in the political debate. According to Serrano (2013), the possible independence of Catalonia has changed the nature of the Catalan identity from a regional to a national identity. This causes the Catalan identity to reach the same level as the Spanish national identity, causing many people to face a dual identity conflict ('Which one of the two am I?'). This kind of conflict is frequently found in the present research, leading to an increased consciousness on national identification in many young adults.

The Catalan independence movement created a context in which national identity becomes dominant and deserves young adult's attention. Context dependency, as formulated by Demmers (2017), makes a particular social identity prevail over other social identities. Evidently, the secessionist tensions have made the national identity move to the forefront. Based on the findings of this research, national identity is valued among youth, however it makes them face paradoxical emotions for the nation and for their desire to

identify globally. The polarisation of the social environment has made them more conscious about their nationality, but also more stressed.

According to Harris (2010), young adults increasingly like to identify flexible. The young generation prefers identification based on short-term, commitment-free participation. Findings of this research show that choosing a side in the political debate lays uneasy with young adults, since it is considered a definite choice. It confirms Harris (2010) suggestion that flexible identification is better suitable to young adult's preferences. Consequently, ways of 'feeling' and 'belonging' to a community have changed. Harris (2010) demonstrated in her article on community participation that civic engagement among youth is best achieved by organising informal, commitment-free activities and events. Accordingly, young adult's love for the Catalan community is often referred to by naming local activities, festivities and events in Barcelona. The independence movement added new possibilities for engagement to the Catalan community, but it shaped circumstances in which participation cannot be free from commitment. Depending on the person, commitment-free identification or community participation prevails.

The love for the Spanish state was often pointed in a more functional direction. Sentiments for Spain were often rooted in sentiments for security and prosperity. It reflects the dual nature of nationalism, as stated by Máiz (2003), containing a dimension of love and attachment and a dimension of interests of wellbeing. Many informants made statements that can be considered nationalistic, but declared to reject feelings of nationalism. They often did not want to be seen as nationalists, since this kind of attachment to the nation contradicts values of globalisation. This is one of the reasons why young adults are careful in showing nationalist feelings in the street. They felt Catalan, but were afraid that the political connotation could make them be categorised as supporters of independence. Additionally, many young adults declared to feel uncertain about the effects of independence on the Catalan economy and their privileges within the European Union. Many of them were happy with their current levels of welfare within the Spanish state and would not want to risk them for independence. According to Sorens (2005), people only vote for independence when they do not perceive it as a thread to their wellbeing (309). Findings of the present research support his argument. Serrano (2013) stated that for this reason, interests of welfare and

wellbeing should be considered a complimenting part of nationalism in the case of Catalan independence.

Revisit to the Research Question

The aim of this research was to formulate an answer to the question: 'How do young adults in Barcelona construct their national identity in the context of the Catalan independence movement?'. Leading from the research findings, we can conclude that, as in many cases, it is complex.

Identification with a national identity in secessionist tensions can be stressed, selective and context dependent. The identities are interrelated with political preferences, which are not always supported by people who emphasise with the nation. Young adults have to determine what the nation means to them and which nation means the most. While doing so, they face paradoxes and ambivalences between what they feel and what they think. These contradictions lead to confusion, stress and despair. Many young adults are lost between ration and emotion. It is a struggle and they have not found the solution just yet.

There are a lot of factors involved that determine when and why someone feels Spanish or Catalan. Examples are young adult's own political opinions, their perceptions on justice, their perceptions on the role of the state, their feelings of being discriminated and their feelings of being included. Moreover, they have to consider if they want to endure the consequences of identifying with the nation, such as conflict and arguments with friends and family, prejudice around other parts of Spain or criticism within the Catalan community. Everyone handles these challenges differently. Many young adults have not decided yet and do not know how to. It is a continuing process of adjustment to the social surroundings.

The results of this study show how context is an important aspect of discourses of identity and nationalism. Surveys, as used in Serrano (2013), are not able to capture the multifaceted, paradoxical relationships between different factors that influence opinions on independence. Since people are often able to counter their own arguments, quantitative research is solely a snapshot of dynamic processes. Additionally, the current research has brought us closer to the understanding of global identification and its relationship to

territory. Young adults are now the only generation that identifies this way, but soon global identification will be the rule rather than the exception. It is just a matter of time before the internet is the technological component of every generation.

However, in the conducted research there has been an absence of a significant actor: the working class youth. Many of the interviewed informants enjoyed higher education, which means an important part of the nation's youth got left out of the analysis. Perceptions on national identity in youth from the working class might differ from the perceptions of the youth in the conducted study. Families in the working class often have ties to the migration wave in the sixties and seventies, moving from the deprived areas of Spain to Catalonia. Within these families, Spanish cultural traditions are often still practiced. This could possibly account for other attitudes towards the Spanish nation. Additionally, youth living on the Catalan country side may express different thoughts, perceptions and feelings towards the Catalan nation than the group of informants in the present study. Follow-up research could enlarge the knowledge obtained in the present study by including working class youth and their perceptions on globalisation and national identity.

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Appendixes

I. Summary in English[57]

 On the first of October of the past year, a nation situated in Spain tried to measure the public opinion on independence in an illegal referendum. Police forces were instructed by the Spanish authorities to stop the referendum, since voting over independence is considered a constitutional law void. Strong force was used to keep the people away from the polling stations. Almost a thousand people got injured, among which five seriously. Nevertheless, a turnout of approximately forty-three percent, from which almost ninety percent chose to leave Spain, made the referendum quite successful.

The region of Catalonia has wanted to separate from Spain for a very long time. The referendum was supposed to shape an image of the general opinion on independence among Catalonia's citizens. Many Catalans experience their national identity different than the rest of Spain. They argue that their culture and language is essentially different and therefore, they want to create their own country that represents the Catalan identity.

Young adults form an important component of the Catalan independence movement. This is striking, since many scholars argue that national identity is becoming less important to the young generation. According to many scholars, globalisation has led young adults to identify cross borders and characterise themselves based on personal tastes, friends, family, small communities and career trajectories. However, it is argued that the right context can make specific identities become salient. Therefore, the secessionist tensions may create the right circumstances in which national identity may gain new importance to people. This research aimed to investigate how national identity is constructed within the younger generation in context of the Catalan independence movement.

The conducted study made use of ethnographic fieldwork in which interviews, participant observation and casual conversation were carried out in a period of ten weeks in order to formulate an answer to the research question. After analysis of the obtained data, a few striking insights came to light. First of all, the context of the Catalan independence movement increased consciousness on national identity among young adults. The young

[57] In consultation with Hester van Wingerden is decided to add an English summary instead of a Spanish or Catalan summary. The discision is based on the language in which the interviews were carried out.

generation is confronted with the polarisation of their social environment and the task to choose between their own group identities. This is considered a hard task, for national identities have political connotations to them. Some people identify with the nation of Catalans, but do not support the aspiration for independence. Others value their Spanish identities, but feel like they have to speak out against the police violence used on October first by changing their national identification. This causes identification processes to be stressed, selective and contextual. It is stressed, for identifying with different national identities creates the risk of conflict and criticism within groups of friends and family. It is selective, for young adults are increasingly careful when and where to show support for the nation and the political grouping. Finally, it is contextual, for the meaning of national identity changes in particular contexts, such as protests.

A second obtained insight was the paradoxical relationship between the nation and the aim of the younger generation to identify cross borders. In its very definition, the nation is bonded to territory whereas young people like to disconnect from territory in identification processes. This paradox creates the foundation for an ambivalent relationship towards the nation. Additionally, being categorised as part of the Catalan nation has consequences when leaving Catalan territory. In other parts of Spain, negative stereotypes of Catalans are taking over, as the Spanish media promotes hate with selective news on the independence movement. It causes prejudice on Catalans all around the country. Perceived discrimination in other parts of Spain is often mentioned within the reasons why young adults increasingly identify with Catalonia.

Lastly, a third insight was obtained: Many young adults do not want to be associated with nationalism. It has been suggested by many scholars that nationalism has two dimensions: sentiments of love for the nation and sentiments for security and prosperity. The Catalan community uses broad policies on social cohesion, with a focus on events and informal activities. It proved to be lucrative in facilitating young people's participation in the community. The Catalan independence movement adds extra possibilities for civic engagement by organising protests that are widely joined by young adults. Activities like these make people bond and can create love for the nation. On the other hand, many young adults are also proud of Spain. This pride is often rooted in the appreciation of Spain's rich culture with many regional differences and its levels of welfare and wellbeing build up after

the dictatorship. Young people are often unwilling to support independence when its considered a threat to levels of wellbeing. Many informants idealise the European Union and the opportunities it provides them with.

Feeling nationalistic or enthusiastic for the state is partly depended on the perceptions of the state's responsibilities. Some people might perceive the state's responsibilities differently than others. For some, the state is responsible for the maintenance of the constitution. In their perception, the violence on October first can be seen as a logical and necessary responds to keep the Catalans from breaking a constitutional agreement. For others, the state's responsibility is the protection of the citizens. According to these people, the Spanish state has failed in providing security by using violence against its own people. Perceptions on justice are crucial factors in the growing nationalism for either one of the nations.

However, young adults are often ashamed to feel attached to the nation. In the modern world, the state and the nation are increasingly irrelevant. Young adults often support interconnectedness and feel shame to feel territorial belonging when it should be considered insignificant in their own ideology.

After deliberate reflection on these research findings, it can be concluded that many young adults are still searching for their position. The secessionist tensions have created a context in which young adults are faced with confusing, paradoxical feelings and thoughts on national identification. It brings out stress and uncertainties about their own ideology of transnational identification and their sentiments for local identification. Opinions on the political situation and their national identity can change from day to day and can counter their own arguments and stories.

Determining what being Spanish or Catalan means to them is difficult for young adults. There are many factors that influence the attachment to either one of the nations. Examples are their own perceptions on the role of the state, their image of the Spanish media, their feelings of being discriminated and their feelings of being included.

Moreover, there are consequences of identifying with the nation, such as conflict with family and friends. criticism and prejudice in other parts of Spain. Young adults have to decide if the membership to the nation is worth these kind of consequences. It depends on the person how all these factors and consequences are handled. In the end, national identification it is a continuous circle of adjustment to the socio-political context.