

# *Secessionism in the New Europe*

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February 21, 2013

# Key Questions

- What is “secessionism” in the European context?
- What are the sources of secessionism?
- How have central governments responded, and with what consequences?
  - Political & economic uncertainty
  - Regional institutional development (below and above)
  - Secessionist demands
- How likely is an actual secession in Europe within the next several years?

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# Conceptualizing Secessionism

- “Secessionist” movement – a movement that supports:
  1. “significant” political autonomy for the national group
  2. a right to self-determination for the national group (independence not ruled out, contra “regionalism”)
- *All* secessionism is conditional (e.g., Scottish National Party [SNP], Catalan Convergence and Unity [CiU])
- Autonomy itself is a continuum; “independence” is never unconditional (e.g., European Union member states, Isle of Man, Quebec, Basque Country)

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# Theorizing Secessionism

- Minority cultural distinctiveness + territorial concentration → “nation” as fundamental political unit (for some group members)
- Group interests → political status demands
  - Fiscal transfers
  - Population (viability)
  - Ideological differences
  - Geographic separation & ports (trade)
  - Existing autonomy?
  - Economic conditions?
  - Demonstration effects?
  - Policy concessions unlikely to work because of commitment problem

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# Central Government Responses

- Decentralization
  - Partisan logic: office-holding value versus electoral value (e.g., Britain, Spain, Italy, Belgium, France)
- Referendums and the “right to decide”
  - Canada, Britain, Belgium vs. France, Spain, Italy
  - Global evidence
  - Political & economic uncertainty
  - Unlikelihood of success
- European Union issues
  - “Europe of the regions”
  - Right to join EU

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# Current Challenges

- Scotland
- Catalonia
- Basque Country
- Flanders
- Faroes
- Corsica

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