

ORIGINAL ARTICLE

Catalonia rescaling Spain: Is it feasible to accommodate its “stateless citizenship”?

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Abstract

The Spanish nation-state is gradually being rescaled by Catalonia's “secession crisis.” Recently and dramatically, in the aftermath of the “illegal” and “constitutive referendum” that took place on 1 October 2017, 2,286,217 Catalan citizens attempted to exercise the “right to decide” to ultimately become “stateless citizens.” This paper examines this rescaling process that has been forming in Barcelona since 10 July 2010 when 1 million Catalan citizens marched to claim their “right to decide” on secession. This paper concludes that, at present, it is not feasible for the Spanish nation-state to accommodate Catalonia's “stateless citizenship.”

KEYWORDS

Catalonia, rescaling, right to decide, secession, stateless citizenship

JEL CLASSIFICATION

D74; F5; F52; H7; H70; H77; O35; R5; R58

1 | INTRODUCTION: CATALONIA'S “STATELESS CITIZENSHIP” AND RESCALING THE SPANISH NATION-STATE

In Europe, the recent announcement of the second independence referendum in Scotland by First Minister (FM) Nicola Sturgeon (Calzada, 2014; Hennebry-Leung & Bonacina-Pugh, 2019; Sanghera, Botterill, Hopkins, & Arshad, 2018), the uncertain future of the UK in a currently changing constitutional setting (post-Brexit) (Johnston, Manley, Pattie, & Jones, 2018), and the (unilateral) independence “constitutive referendum” on 1 October 2017 in Catalonia resulting in growing secessionism support in Barcelona (according to the recent local election results on 26 May

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2019; Requejo, Grau, Martín, & Sanjaume, 2019; Stjepanović & Tierney, 2019), thus exacerbating the territorial crisis in Spain (Dowling, 2018), are key to understanding how conventional nation-states are being qualitatively transformed—not eroded or dismantled—by the triggering of wider debates on potential accommodation mechanisms for competing claims about secession, devolution, and the “right to decide” regarding the rescaling of nation-state power (Levrat, Antunes, Tusseau, & Williams, 2017; Schneider & Cottineau, 2019). Furthermore, insofar as European nation-states have continuously been urbanized over the last several decades, they have rapidly been metropolitanized, reinforcing pervasive and profound rescaling processes of decentralization and recentralization (Loughlin & Antunes, 2019), as the norm rather than an exception or anomaly, by which city-regional citizenship can no longer be envisaged as a homogeneous status exclusively bestowed by the nation-state. As such, city-regional citizenship is an essential constitutive dimension of the constitutional architecture of the nation-state (even contesting it) and is, consequently, demos-defining (Arrighi & Stjepanović, 2019; Bollens, 2007).

Upon agreeing to the principle of fixed territorial integrity and sovereignty in the 1648 Treaty of Westphalia, Europe invented the nation-state (Jordana, Keating, Marx, & Wouters, 2019). Tracing the beginning of “statelessness” to the decline of the nation-state (Ohmae, 1995), Arendt (1949) distinguished between nations and states. A *nation* referred to a dominant group living in a bounded territory and sharing a culture, language, and history, whereas a *state* referred to the legal status of the people living in a territory who are considered citizens with legal rights. Since the origin of the modern nation-state, there has been structural tension between the nation and the state regarding which people are the “true” members of a nation—whether certain people living in a territory count as citizens with legal rights or are excluded and ignored as non-citizens (Marsili & Milanese, 2018). Arendt inferred that no effective international or state mechanism existed to protect the rights of “stateless citizens” (Bernstein, 2018). Arendt’s observation resonates with the current European, metropolitanized, civic, stateless, and emancipatory city-regionalized nationalistic pattern (Calzada, 2018b) and, particularly in this paper, with the case of Catalonia, where, since 2010, a remarkable majority of Catalan citizens’ self-determination-consistent demands have not been accommodated thus far as a form of a properly framed “democratic politics” (Keating, 2019, p. 8) by examining potential and varied mechanisms to exercise the “right to decide” in Spain (Guibernau, 2013a; Centre d’Estudis d’Opinió, 2019). As such, the Spanish nation-state was established as a fixed, indissoluble, and homogeneous entity with uniform attributes—particularly a set of fiercely enforced nation-state monopolies (e.g., defence and law) that gave the government substantial control over the national destiny—and a narrow sense of citizenship, understood as the legal bond between an individual and a state, that are familiar to us today. However, as Arendt anticipated, what are then the implications of rescaling processes for city-regionalized and stateless citizens and their “right to vote” in the current Catalonia (Kraus & Vergés, 2017; Piccoli, 2019; Stjepanović & Tierney, 2019)?

The literature on rescaling nation-states has explained that the fragmentation of the scale of the nation-state has undermined the privileged position of the nation-state as the natural platform (Archer, 2012; Keating, 2013; Mykhnenko & Wolff, 2018). In turn, rescaling has allowed for the emergence of new forms of city-regionalized “stateless citizenship,” which is further invigorated, beyond other factors, by the limitations created by Spain that refrain the metropolitan hub of Barcelona in its global role (Jordana, 2019), where a “right to decide” has continuously been claimed (Cramer, 2015, 2016; Davidson, 2016; Generalitat de Catalunya, 2017; Guibernau, 2013b) and where “stateless citizenship” has manifested in grassroots demonstrations demanding a referendum on the future form of a city-regionalized nation of Catalonia in reference to Spain and the European Union (EU) (Wydra, 2018). Paradoxically, the old European nation-state is apparently dying, but new states seem unable to be born under these circumstances (Bianchini, 2017; Calzada, 2015; Hepburn, 2008; Moisisio, 2018; Scott, 1998). According to Jordana (2019), this gradual political reaction stemming from a perception founded on territorial abandonment by Madrid, provoking an emotional detachment with Spain, has forced the Spanish government to react (by any means)—even if only in terms of a determined refusal to grant any legitimacy or voice in support of secession. As a result, this paper argues that the Spanish nation-state is gradually being rescaled by Catalonia’s “secession crisis” (Rodríguez López, Harguindéguy, & Sánchez Sánchez, 2019).

This paper examines the nature and evolution of this “secession crisis” from two intertwining perspectives: (i) how the Spanish nation-state has been rescaled by this crisis since the Constitutional Court banned the Statute of Autonomy in 2010 in a dispute that reflects the struggle between legal and democratic legitimacy and, as a result; (ii) how the metropolitan hub of Barcelona is increasingly shaping and invigorating this “secession crisis” by placing the “right to decide” (Ajuntament de Barcelona, 2019a), rather than secession itself (regardless of the outcome of a highly unlikely referendum on independence), at the front of this debate. In the wake of the 2,286,217 Catalan citizens (43.03% of the Catalan census for this vote) who attempted to vote in the “illegal” referendum on 1 October 2017, this paper presents two aims: first, to describe the complex context of the detachment by “stateless citizens” in light of the factual and combined data stemming from several sources. The second aim is to shed light on the following main research question: is it feasible to accommodate the claims of Catalonia’s “stateless citizenship” as a way out of this “secession crisis”? (Moreno, Colino, & Hombrado, 2019; Stjepanović & Tierney, 2019).

This paper considers that this crisis in the Spanish nation-state has progressed to the point that it has become a “secession crisis” (Bartkus, 1999), provoking emotional detachment among a remarkable portion of Catalan citizens who broadly represent various forms and attitudes and whom this paper defines as “stateless citizens” in Catalonia as of 2010. “Stateless citizens” represent, as Jordana (2019) suggests, a singular and heterogeneous coalition of city-regional citizens in Catalonia who have been demonstrating regularly since 2010 (i) while being ignored by the Spanish government; (ii) which has provoked their socio-political and metropolitan counter-reaction that is geopolitically focused on Barcelona in pursuit of accommodating their further autonomy demands and the international project of using the global city by imagining a currently *inexistent* federal or independent state in Europe as way out of the status quo and/or the increasing recentralization strategy in *their existing* Spanish nation-state. This singular coalition, essentially blending civic nationalism and secessionism, remains highly united due to three factors (Bollens, 2007; Jordana, 2019): (i) the perception of a unity from which all parties benefit; (ii) the shared self-perception of a coalition with regard to the attractiveness of a global city such as Barcelona; and (iii) a strong balance among political parties and grassroots movements with heterogeneous political orientations but a common aim. These three factors lead us to conceive of “stateless citizens” as neither a purely nationalistic movement (despite strong civic features) nor a movement exclusively based on identity. Instead, “stateless citizenship” is considered a geopolitical and a city-regional civilian response that is spreading through the metropolitan hub of Barcelona while being driven by the global city through its support of the “right to decide” as a way to internationalize the self-determination “right to the city” in a hyper-globalized and multipolar realm (Fukuyama, 2018; Smith, 2019; Tamir, 2019).

“Stateless citizenship” is operationally defined (using factual evidence and empirical data in tables and figures and operationalizing the main research question throughout the paper, as depicted in Table 1) as those Catalan citizens who are somehow randomly represented by these (not mutually exclusive) six ongoing contextual factors that are characterized by a complex metropolitan driver and a political claim in the awake of the Catalan grassroots secession decision on 10 July 2010 in Barcelona: (i) 62% of Catalan citizens believe that Catalonia deserves to develop alternative accommodation mechanisms such as either an independent state or a state in federal Spain (according to the 1st wave of March 2019; Centre d'Estudis d'Opinió, 2019) (Figure 1); (ii) 65% of Catalan citizens are willing to further explore ways to increase devolution in Catalonia (Centre d'Estudis d'Opinió, 2019) (Figure 2); (iii) 48% of Catalan citizens demonstrate widespread social support for independence through their continuous active participation in grassroots demonstrations since 2010 (Centre d'Estudis d'Opinió, 2019) (Figure 3); (iv) 2,286,217 Catalan citizens attempted to vote on the “illegal” and “constitutive referendum” on 1 October 2017 (Generalitat de Catalunya, 2019) (Table 2); (v) Catalan citizens voted for political parties favourable to the “right to decide” (which is understood as the right to vote in a referendum) with representation in the regional and local elections (61% of the MPs in Barcelona City Council's Parliament after local elections on 26 May 2019 and 58% of the MPs in the Parliament of Catalonia after regional elections on 21 December 2017) (Figure 4); and ultimately, (vi) 78.7% of Catalan citizens agree that Catalans have the “right to decide” their own future as a country/nation voting in a referendum (Centre d'Estudis d'Opinió, 2019) (Figure 5). The data and evidence presented in this article corresponds to the evolution



TABLE 1 Operationalizing the main research question: Is it feasible to accommodate Catalan “Stateless Citizenship” in the Spanish nation-state?

Factors	Metrics	Factual evidences and empirical data
(1) Political Opinion on: Accommodation, Devolution, and Secession (Source: Centre d'Estudis d'Opinió, 2019)	Potential accommodation mechanisms in relation to Spain	1.1. Do you believe that Catalonia should be ...? (Q33) (Figure 1)
	Favourable/unfavourable toward further Devolution	1.2. Do you think that Catalonia has achieved ...? (Q32) (Figure 2)
	Favourable/unfavourable toward Secession	1.3. Do you want Catalonia to become an independent State? (Q34) (Figure 3)
(2) Direct Democracy, Constitutive Referendum (Stjepanović & Tierney, 2019), and Grassroots/Social Mobilization (Source: Generalitat de Catalunya, 2019)	Favourable/unfavourable toward Secession	2.1. Outcome of the “illegal” and “constitutive referendum” on 1 October 2017 (Table 2)
(3) “Right to Decide” (Cramerí, 2015, 2016; Davidson, 2016; Guibernau, 2013a, 2013b) (Source: Centre d'Estudis d'Opinió, 2019; Calzada, 2018b)	Favourable/unfavourable toward the “Right to Decide”	3.1. Institutional/parliamentary representation: The distribution of seats in the Catalan and Barcelona City Councils' Parliaments in relation to their position on the “Right to Decide” (Figure 4)
		3.2. Socio-political opinion: Do Catalans have the “right to decide” their own future as a country voting in a referendum? (Q35) (Figure 5)

Source: Elaborated by the author.

until the 1st Wave 2019 (March 2019; Centre d'Estudis de'Opinio, 2019) published by the d'Estudis d'Opinió after the fieldwork that was carried out by Gabinet d'Estudis Socials i Opinió Pública (GESOP), SL, from 4 to 25 March 2019.

This paper is structured as follows. Section 2 presents the rationale by which rescaling has been invigorated since 2010, which is manifested by the “right to decide” grassroots demonstrations and backed by an increasing political attitude demanding the exercise of consultation on the matter of secession. Section 3 highlights the metropolitan nature of Barcelona alongside its global city role in this “secession crisis.” Section 4 concludes that, at present, with the analysed factors in this paper, it is hardly feasible for the Spanish nation-state to accommodate Catalonia's “stateless citizenship.”

2 | RATIONALE: THE “RIGHT TO DECIDE” DEBATE AS THE UPDATED VERSION OF THE “RIGHT TO THE CITY” IN SECESSIONISM

According to Keating (2013, p. 6), nation-state rescaling can be defined as the “migration of economic, social, and political systems of action and of regulation to new spatial levels above, below, and across the nation-state.” The forms and functions of the nation-state have been displaced upwards (to supranational bodies), downwards (to regional, metropolitan, and urban bodies) and sideways (to non-state agencies). As the mutual correspondence of the state, the governing order, the economy, society, and identity can no longer be taken for granted, in this paper, I



argue that an emergent and gradual sense of “stateless citizenship,” which is closely related to the claim of the “right to decide”, rather than the secession decision itself, has thus far characterized the case of Catalonia. Similarly, this claim has increasingly and continuously been manifested since 10 July 2010 and has been supported by a longitudinal evolution of political attitudes in favour of the creation of an independent state (approximately 40% in both levels, in Catalonia and the metropolitan province of Barcelona; Figure 1; Guinjoan & Rodon, 2016); a million people participated in a demonstration in the streets of Barcelona in support of Catalonia's new Statute of Autonomy, which had been the subject of an unfavourable ruling by Spain's Constitutional Court. Furthermore, that figure was exceeded by a march on 11 September 2012 (and again in 2013 and 2014 in celebrations of the national holiday of Catalonia), which was estimated to have drawn 1.5 million people (Cramer, 2015). Therefore, this paper takes a somewhat different perspective on nation-state rescaling, based on Somerville's approach (2004), considering it from the perspective of the manifestations of pervasive democratic emancipation, and transformation, including a shift towards more open and participatory—yet no less geographically scaled—modes of “stateless citizenship.” As such, by using the construct “metropolitan province” of Barcelona, the nature of the most metropolitanized province of Catalonia is fully represented in this paper.

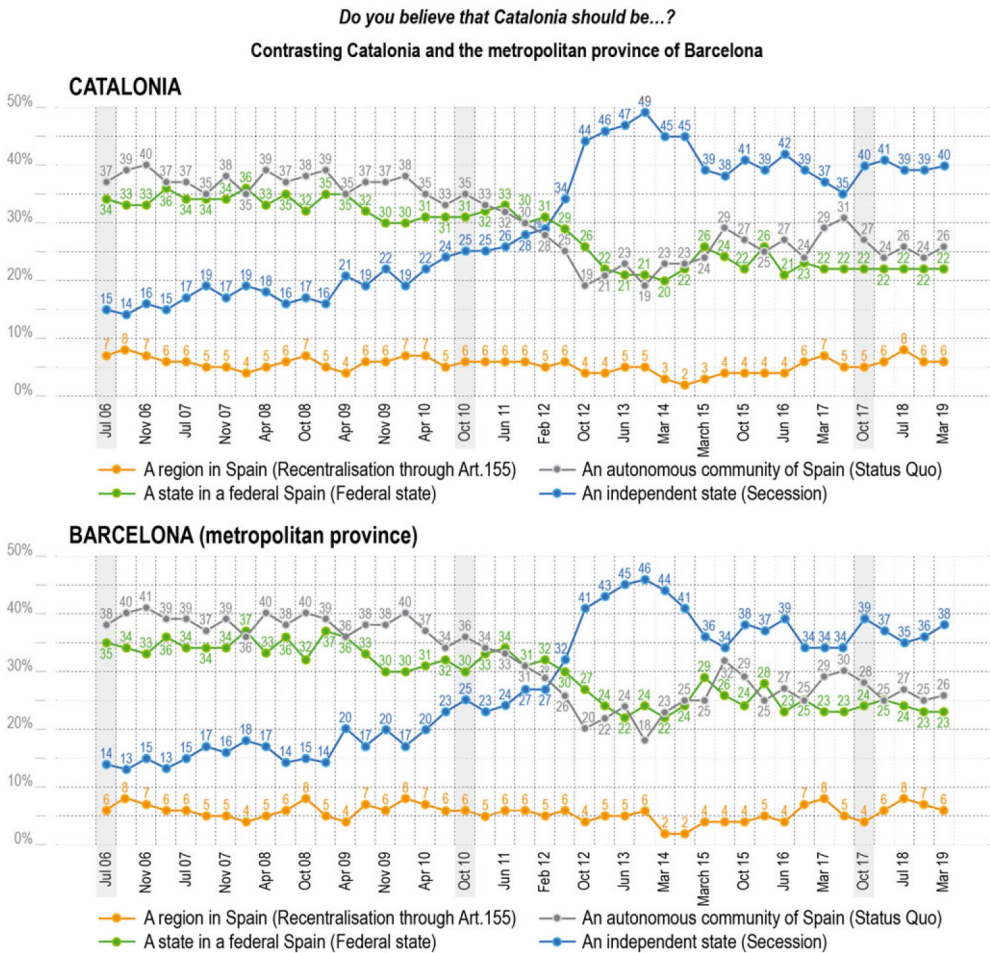


FIGURE 1 Factor “Political opinion on accommodation” and the metric of potential “accommodation” mechanisms in relation to Spain (1.1)

Source: Centre d'Estudis d'Opinió (2019) (Q33)



“Stateless citizenship” confers moral autonomy to each individual member of a collective *demos*; the right to constitute a federal or an independent state is a primary right of the individuals who compose the collective (Generalitat de Catalunya, 2017). In the case of Catalonia, a stress on the rights of the individual—instead of traditional ethnic nationalistic features—has always appeared in the slogans circulating on social media (Arrighi & Stjepanović, 2019; Cramer, 2016) regarding the Catalan National Assembly (*Assemblea Nacional Catalana*, ANC; www.assemblea.cat) and *Òmnium Cultural* (OC; www.omnium.cat) civil pro-independence movements. Thus, “stateless citizenship” in Catalonia is phrased as a desire for independence (or feasible federal accommodations) stemming from the right of the moral autonomy of the individual, which not only downplays group membership but also reinforces the argument that each Catalan citizen should have the democratic right to peacefully vote on the way forward.

Hence, the metropolitan root of the political expression of the “right to decide” can be viewed as a new version of a metropolitan-based “right to the city” beyond nation-states. Thus, a *demos*-driven, self-determination 2.0 version empowered by a wide range of political ideologies around a “civic nationalist” peaceful movement activates a bottom-up and progressivist city-regional political response in Catalonia (Keating, 2019). The push for the “right to decide” in Catalonia cannot entirely be explained without the metropolitan hub of Barcelona and its pursuit of an explicit and self-conscious sense of metropolitan belonging that renews the idea of the “right to the city” (Harvey, 2008; Lefebvre, 1968). In this interpretation (Calzada, 2018b), the civic quest for political-democratic ownership of the metropolis is extended to “stateless citizenship.”

Moreover, rescaling has caused new social and political cleavages between subnational levels in the Spanish nation-state based on the metropolitan push by secessionist social movements operating simultaneously by overlapping at a number of different scales (urban, metropolitan, and city-regional) (Bauböck, 2019; Calzada, 2017). Consequently, a city-regionalized “stateless citizenship” has been fuelled by “civic nationalism” rooted in the metropolitan “right to decide” (as an updated version of the principle of the “right to the city”) and bolstered by the metropolitan hub of Barcelona through an increasing push by grassroots movements such as the ANC and OC. However, before the ongoing re-emergence period of Catalan secessionism, authors such as Miley (2007) advocated against the thesis of Catalonia as a “civic nation.” As Miley stated, as a counterargument to the previous trend—and in opposition to exercising the “right to decide” through referendum and consultation so as to defend fixed state-territorial integrity stemming from the Westphalian order of the club of nation-states and from the principle of the “empire of law”—state-centric “ethnic nationalistic” expressions with different rationales have recently (re-)emerged and are embodied by the liberal, conservative, and far-right Spanish political parties: the Citizens' Party (*Ciudadanos*, the Cs), the Popular Party (*Partido Popular*, PP), and Vox (Billig, 1995).

Against this backdrop, in Catalonia, the regimes of self-government and devolution accommodation provided by Spain continue to be perceived as insufficient by a large share of Catalan (and Barcelonese) society (Figure 2), resulting in further tensions among territorial statehood, the spaces of historical identity, and future secessionist aspirations (Mulle & Serrano, 2018; Rodríguez López et al., 2019). One means by which Spain can relieve this tension is to seek outright independence to reconcile the spaces of identity and statehood of Catalonia's small city-regionalized nation through referenda, as occurred in Scotland in 2014 (Arrighi, 2019; Qvortrup, 2014). Nevertheless, Cetrà and Harvey (2018, p. 1) predicted that “independence referendums will continue to be rare events.”

The hypothesis of this paper focuses on the link among civic nationalism, secessionism, and the emancipatory role of cities (and city-regions) through the claims of the “right to decide”, as noted by Berlin (1996, p. 252), who stated that “nationalism springs, as often as not, from a wounded or outraged sense of human dignity, the desire of recognition.” Moreover, Guibernau (2013a, p. 411) defines the “right to decide” as “the right by citizens of the nation to defend and exercise, through referenda and consultation, their right to be recognized as a *demos* able to decide upon their political destiny triggered by their desire to share a common fate.” This paper depicts the evolution of secessionism in Catalonia and Barcelona, which complement each other and are characterized by a demand made by

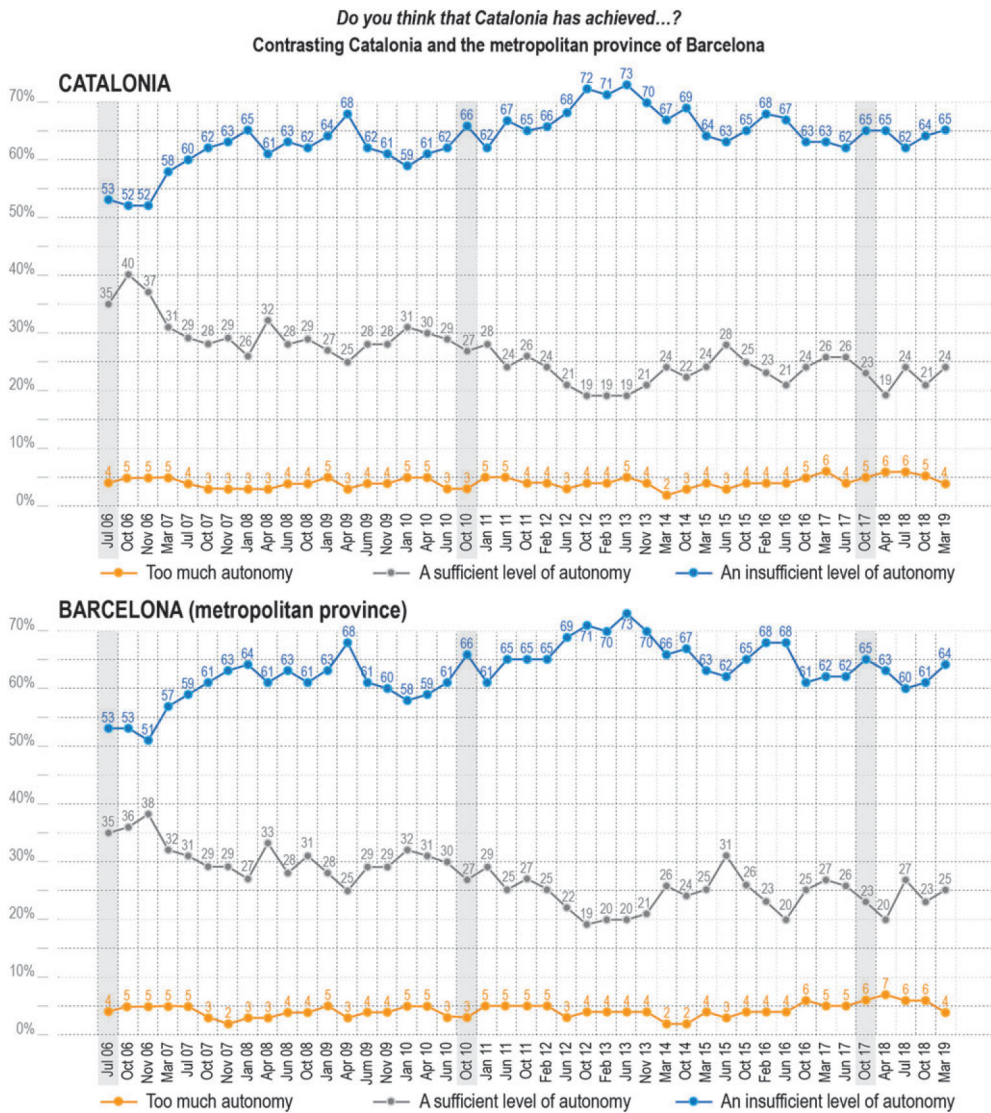


FIGURE 2 Factor “political opinion on devolution” and the metric of favourable/unfavourable towards further “devolution” (1.2)
Source: Centre d'Estudis d'Opinió (2019) (Q32)

considerable portions of the Catalan and Barcelonese populations to hold a referendum and, according to recent data in March 2019, favour secession (Keating, 2019; Tamir, 2019). According to Figure 3, judging from the evolution since March 2015 until March 2019, the disparity over the time among those in favour of and against the idea of “Catalonia becoming an independent State” is higher in Barcelona than in Catalonia, which suggests that gaining or lacking metropolitan support will establish the future directions of devolution debates (Calzada, 2018b). However, it remains to be seen: (i) whether it is feasible to accommodate a referendum claim and effective secession through the realization of an independent state in the EU (or at least a federal state in Spain) (Guinjoan & Rodon, 2016; Jordana et al., 2019; Rico, 2016); or (ii) whether there is room for another type of experimental and federal pathway in Europe, as long as citizens' geodemocratic rights to remain in the former nation-state or to secede are ensured (Calzada, 2018a).



Do you want Catalonia to become an independent State?
Contrasting Catalonia and the metropolitan province of Barcelona

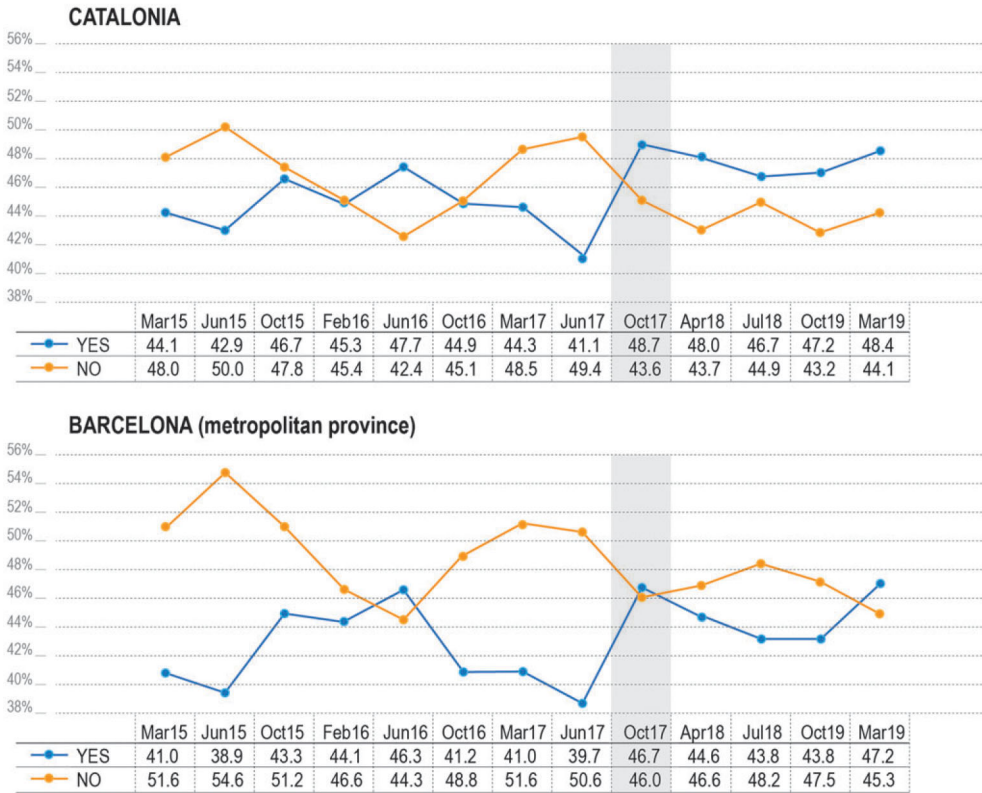


FIGURE 3 Factor “political opinion on secession” and the metric of favourable/unfavourable towards “secession” (1.3)

Source: Centre d'Estudis d'Opinió (2019) (Q34)

3 | DISCUSSION: IS IT FEASIBLE TO ACCOMMODATE CATALAN “STATELESS CITIZENSHIP” IN THE SPANISH NATION-STATE?

Despite being located at the geographic periphery, according to the centralistic mindset of Madrid's elites (Ehrlich, 1997), Catalonia has often held a central position in Spanish politics. According to Jordana, since the nineteenth century, Barcelona has been one of the most advanced and modern cities in Spain (Jordana, 2019; Jordana et al., 2019). This modernity stemmed from the success of the broad “Catalanist” movement, which, over time, has almost always simultaneously housed autonomists, federalists, confederalists, and pro-independentists but, in recent years, has transitioned collectively (despite not hegemonically) towards a singular and heterogeneous coalition in favour of the “right to decide” (Guibernau, 2013b). This historical goal of mainstream “Catalanism” consisted of securing accommodations within Spain combined with direct participation in the EU. However, this accommodation has resulted in an unstable equilibrium: since 2010, this increasing support for the “right to decide,” rather than secession itself, has become sufficiently widespread to force the Spanish government to fiercely react to Catalan demands in terms of a fixed position rooted in constitutional legality.

Although the starting point of Catalan grassroots mobilization could be situated in 2010, the first milestone must be located in 2006: The updated Catalan Statute of Autonomy came into force and was approved in the

Catalan and Spanish Parliaments and by a referendum in Catalonia. However, the turnout for this approval failed to reach 50%, indicating public apathy towards the statute and reflecting the top-down nature of the reform process itself. Furthermore, in June 2010, the Constitutional Court declared several articles of the statute regarding the consideration of Catalonia as a nation to be unconstitutional. This decision set Catalonia onto the pathway of secessionist politics: One month later, on 10 July 2010, as a socio-political and metropolitan reaction to this legal decision, a massive demonstration in Barcelona took place under the motto "We are a nation, we decide." Consolidating this trend, on Catalonia's national holiday on 11 September 2012, another demonstration in Barcelona organized by OC took place; using the explicit motto "Catalonia, a new state in Europe," this demonstration marked the symbolic beginning of the independence referendum campaign, which continues to this day (Colomer, 2017; Cuadras-Morató, 2016). The 1.5 million citizens who demonstrated in Barcelona in favour of self-determination on 11 September 2012—and on many occasions thereafter—illustrate the strength of the civic/metropolitanized nationalistic movement that favours dissolving the concept of a single *demos* by overcoming the ethnic nature of citizenship, thus blending Spanish and Catalan identities with the opportunity to democratically vote in favour of or against independence. In contrast, the accommodation of such democratic claims directly challenges the position of a large majority of Spanish public opinion by depicting a clear asymmetric perception between the Spanish and the Catalanian as well as the political class in the Spanish central government, who insist that the constitutional provisions supporting centralism are non-negotiable. Moreover, stressing this counter-reaction to the Catalan "secession crisis," on 12 February 2019, the long-awaited trial of twelve Catalan separatist leaders subject to up to 25 years of imprisonment on charges of rebellion and misuse of public funds for their role in the "illegal" referendum that took place on 1 October 2017 began in the Spanish Supreme Court. Paralleling this long process, the emergent far-right in Spain (Billig, 1995), embodied by the new party Vox, has capitalized on the secessionist backlash by re-introducing Franco-era discourses and analogies to the Spanish nation-state and achieving representation in the Spanish parliament for the first time, which is likely to even further accelerate the inner systemic conflict by exacerbating the rescaling process in Spain.

To briefly summarize the socio-political unrest and the civilian mobilization in response to it, Barcelona witnessed four main milestones as the principal strategic steps in the long Catalan secession process (Harguindéguy, Sola Rodríguez, & Cruz Díaz, 2018): (i) on 9 November 2014, a non-binding self-determination referendum was organized; (ii) on 27 September 2015, a plebiscitary election with a unity list in favour of "yes" was announced yet did not obtain a majority of votes but did obtain a majority of MP seats (Martí & Cetrà, 2016); (iii) on 1 October 2017, the "illegal" and "constitutive referendum" was held; and (iv) on 27 October 2017, a unilateral and "symbolic" declaration of independence took place (Cetrà, Casanas-Adam, & Tárrega, 2018).

In Barcelona, the claim for independence has continued since the Statute of Autonomy was first approved by the Catalan regional parliament in 2006, which was later rejected by the Constitutional Court in what was interpreted as an act of aggression not only by the main Catalan nationalistic parties but also by proponents of other federalist (not likely to be in favour of full independence) options merely demanding respect for the sovereignty of the Catalan parliament and a say in the future of the city-region.

As the highpoint of this process, on 1 October 2017, the referendum on Catalan independence prompted scenes of police violence that were broadcast all over the world and that were followed by the declaration of independence by the Catalan regional government, which has been the turning point not only for politics in Catalonia but also for the balance of power among Spanish political parties and, more broadly, the internationalization of this political conflict rooted in secessionism and claims for devolution through the "right to decide" (Table 2). However, this paper argues that this case is about more than Catalonia itself. The events taking place reflect a battle between two versions of Spain, and the competition between them appeared to have been resolved during the transition from dictatorship to democracy in the late 1970s. Therefore, as many Spaniards had long suspected, it turns out that the memories of the Civil War of 1936 to 1939 have not been laid to rest. According to Figures 1 and 2, despite the fact that there are other options besides independence and recentralization, the evolution in both Catalonia and the metropolitan province of Barcelona shows a willingness to achieve further autonomy through the "right to decide."



TABLE 2 Factor “direct democracy, constitutive referendum, and grassroots/social mobilization” and the metric of favourable/unfavourable towards secession (2.1): outcome of the “illegal” and “constitutive referendum” on 1 October 2017

		Turnout			Votes		Results					
		Census	Voters	%	Validated	Null	YES	%	NO	%	White	%
Catalonia		5,313,564	2,286,217	43.03	2,266,498	19,719	2,044,038	90.18	177,547	7.83	44,913	1.98
Multilevel Barcelona (Bauböck, 2019)	Provincial	3,971,666	1,637,401	41.23	1,622,139	15,262	1,438,682	88.69	147,294	9.08	36,163	2.23
	Metropolitan	3,605,651	1,425,607	39.54	1,411,409	14,198	1,239,232	87.80	138,759	9.83	33,418	2.37
	Urban	1,570,607	564,321	35.93	557,930	6,391	486,131	87.13	55,477	9.94	16,322	2.93
	Municipal	1,136,354	446,388	39.28	441,237	5,151	389,777	88.33	37,975	8.60	13,485	3.05

Source: Generalitat de Catalunya (2019)

Furthermore, the local (26 May 2019), general (28 April 2019), and regional election (21 December 2017) results have shown that Catalonia and Barcelona are not particularly aligned with the Spanish nationalistic view represented by PP, Cs, as well as the far-right Vox (Ajuntament de Barcelona, 2019b). Actually, consistently, 61%, 58%, and 60% of the representatives, elected through the respective elections (local, regional, and general), favour the “right to decide.” The cause of Catalan independence could be viewed as the catalyst for the recent upheavals, not as the underlying reason for the re-emergence of the most extreme version of ethnic state-centric nationalistic expression embodied by the new far-right party Vox (Billig, 1995).

Consequently, this paper argues that the claim for the “right to decide” in Barcelona and, by extension, in Catalonia, has been consistent since 10 July 2010, due to official support continuously being manifested through regional and city council parliamentary elections as well as the crowded grassroots demonstrations regularly occurring in the metropolitan province of Barcelona. Of course, self-determination does not necessarily mean secession; it simply means being able to decide whether to secede (Stjepanović, 2018). The newly elected radical-left mayor of Barcelona, Ada Colau (BComú), appears cautiously ambivalent in confronting this debate, while Barcelona remains trapped in the city-regional/metropolitan territory. Colau openly supports the popular referendum to implement the “right to decide” while also taking no clear position on Catalan independence. And in line with this and in contrast to widespread perceptions, the majority of the current Catalan regional parliament (58% of MPs) and the majority of the city council parliament in Barcelona (61% of representatives) favour the exercise of the “right to decide” (Calzada, 2018b) (Figure 4). For most Catalans, regardless of whether they favour independence, the principle that they should be able to vote on their status vis-à-vis Spain has become the embodiment of the meaning of democracy in the current “secession crisis” (Cramer, 2015). To further illustrate this support, a platform called www.somel80.cat (“We Are the 80% Platform”) has recently been set up to point out that the majority of the residents of Catalonia (78.7%, according to the latest Baròmetre published result in March 2019; Figure 5) enjoy a high level of agreement regarding: (i) the defence of essential democratic rights and freedoms; (ii) the rejection of repression and the use of the criminal justice system as a tool to resolve political conflicts; and (iii) the defence of a political solution that must always allow the residents of Catalonia to decide and democratically determine their political future. Therefore, the platform advocates the “right to decide” for the majority of the Catalan society that could be represented in terms of non-recognized “stateless citizenship” in the EU. Despite legal considerations, as Arendt anticipated, the rights of 2,286,217 Catalan “stateless citizens” in the EU who voted in the “illegal” referendum on 1 October 2017 may not presently be protected or recognized. Unsurprisingly, through civil movements and protests, the Catalan republican movement has spurred a transformation of the sense of the metropolitan “right to the city” into the sense of belonging to civic republican and nationalistic conceptions of democracy in which democracy is conceived of as a participatory, inclusive, and deliberative form of government in line with EU values.

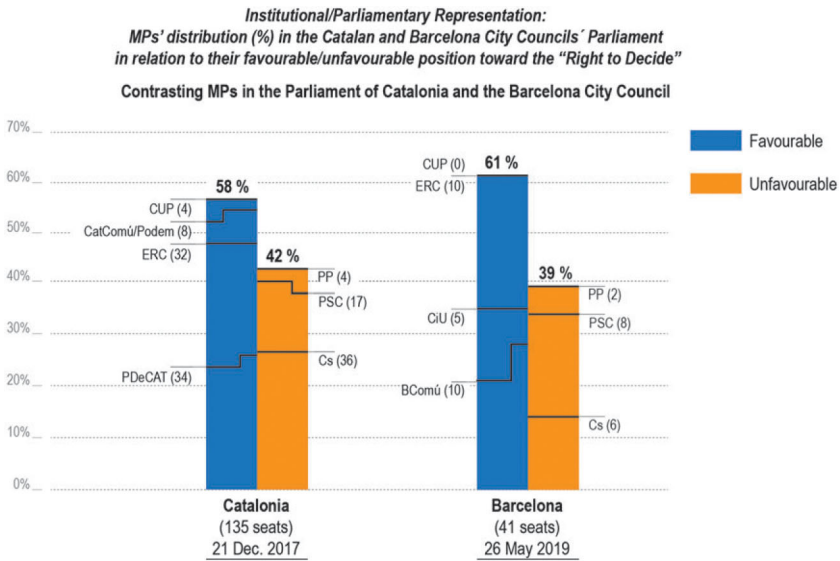


FIGURE 4 Factor "right to decide" and the metric of favourable/unfavourable towards the "right to decide" (3.1.)
 Source: Calzada (2018b) Note: Despite subtle ambiguities and even different opinions among the same political party regarding the position towards the "right to decide," it should be pointed out that, generally speaking, the official position of *CatComú/Podem* and *BComú* is favourable, whereas the position of *Partit del Socialistes de Catalunya-PSC* is unfavourable

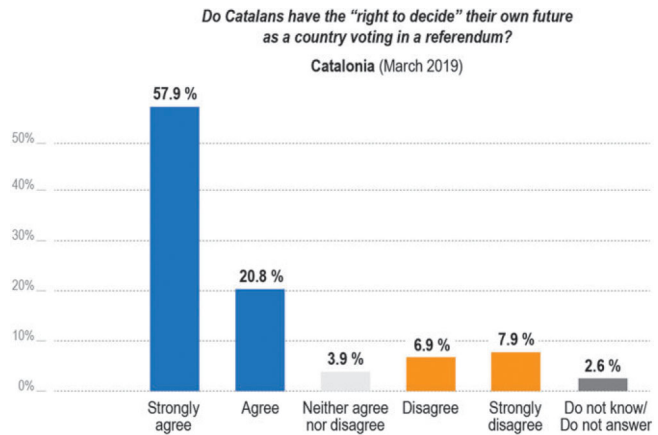


FIGURE 5 Factor "right to decide" and the metric of favourable/unfavourable toward the "right to decide" (3.2)
 Source: Centre d'Estudis d'Opinió (2019) (Q35)

As a counter-reaction to the Catalan secessionism invigorated by demonstrations in the metropolitan province of Barcelona, a further re-centralizing of state-centric and ethnic nationalistic machinery as a long-term historical feature was intensified just after article 155 was implemented by the Spanish government to take control of key institutions of self-rule on 10 October 2017. Article 155 imposed direct rule in Catalonia to suspend the autonomy provided by the Spanish Constitution to comply with the requirement of territorial integrity and to force a recentralization. The growing support for the Cs anti-independence political party in the Catalan regional elections on 21 December 2017 clearly set up a battleground in the metropolitan Barcelona area among those in favour of and those against the "right to decide." Furthermore, *Societat Civil Catalana* was established in 2014 to oppose the secession of Catalonia from Spain, imitating the metropolitan push of the civil secessionist movement fuelled by anti-secessionist feeling in a specific metropolitan area of Barcelona, namely, the red belt of Barcelona: Cerdanyola



del Vallès, Santa Coloma de Gramenet, Sant Adrià de Besòs, Cornellà de Llobregat, L'Hospitalet de Llobregat, and Sant Andreu de Llavaneres (Jordana, 2019). This metropolitan area is mainly inhabited by working-class people who emigrated from other regions of Spain and who used to vote PSC but who changed to overwhelmingly supporting the Cs, the winner of the regional elections that took place on 21 December 2017. Nonetheless, outstandingly, this trend has recently shifted in Barcelona in favour of ERC (*Esquerra Republicana de Catalunya*), which won, respectively, first the general elections on 28 April 2019 (25% of the total votes; 1,015,355 votes), later revalidating the victory in the local elections on 26 May 2019 (21% of the total votes), and is now the primary and largest pro-independence party. ERC obtained 161,189 votes and *BComú* 156,493 votes in 2019 local elections, while, in 2015, the opposite occurred: *BComú* won with 176,612 votes and ERC only achieved 77,120 votes. This evolution is consistent with recent research findings suggesting that “the Catalan party system is moving towards a political competition between a pro-independence left and an anti-independence right” (Romero-Vidal, 2019, p. 16; see also Rico, 2016), which inevitably requires nuanced future examinations for the implications of rescaling Spanish nation-state and the quest for the “right to decide” by “stateless citizens” in Catalonia.

An expressive piece of evidence of this confrontation is the emotional irrationality that has become a metropolitan joke (Delgado, 2018): the spoof separatist campaign focused on “Tabarnia”—a fictional, coastal metropolitan area between Barcelona and Tarragona—which itself wants independence from the secession of the “claimed independent Republic of Catalonia”, namely, a subtle recentralization of Catalonia nestled in Spain with neither self-rule nor institutional autonomy.

Against this backdrop, before the events of 1 October 2017, Cramerí (2015) asserted that Catalans have the “right to decide” on secession, legitimacy, and democracy in twenty-first century Europe. According to Cramerí's (2015, p. 423) conclusion:

The Catalan government's attempt to prove that Catalonia could constitute a politically legitimate independent state, and should therefore be allowed to ask its residents whether they wish it to do so, as it is particularly significant as a challenge to generally accepted “remedial right” theories of secession.

However, this conclusion should now be filtered through the current momentum: therefore, the effective *de facto* recognition of claims of “stateless citizenship” in Catalonia seems to be less likely than ever before given: (i) the imprisonment without trial for more than a year of twelve separatist leaders; (ii) the outcome of the ongoing trial against those leaders for “sedition and rebellion”; (iii) the emergence of a homophobic, misogynistic, anti-immigrant, far-right political party such as *Vox*, which imitates the mainstream European populist trend; and (iv) the quite possible ushering in of a ruling coalition among the PP, the Cs, and *Vox* that is more hard-right than anything seen since Franco.

Hence, although the literature prior to 1 October 2017 yields conclusions that are relatively favourable to accommodating Catalan “stateless citizenship” through the “right to decide” (Bianchini, 2017; Cramerí, 2015, 2016; Davidson, 2016), unless the dynamics of accommodation/claims have radically shifted, which thus far does not seem likely without any external intervention, current events demonstrate that this process can also drive a deeper wedge between those in favour of and those opposed to a referendum in addition to entailing further damage to the Spanish nation-state's democratic reputation in the EU (Cetrá et al., 2018; Harguindéguy et al., 2018; Jordana et al., 2019; Walker, 2018; Wydra, 2018). While Cramerí (2016) acknowledged that the Catalan contemporary independence movement was working hard to shift perceptions of the legitimacy of secession as a democratic phenomenon based on the “right to decide” (Wilson-Daily & Kemmelmeier, 2019), holding a referendum on independence encountered massive opposition from the main Spanish political parties, the police force, the judicial system, the mass media, and public opinion (reacting with *A por ellos* translated as *Against them*, in reference to Catalan citizens). In addition, the international political community has characterized this “secession crisis” as a genuinely internal matter for the nation-state concerned. It is possible that this context has shifted since 1 October 2017 as a result of the internationalization of the Catalan struggle, which was extensively portrayed by the global media showing dark images of violent confrontations between the Spanish police and Catalan (stateless) citizens voting in the “illegal” referendum, provoking the resistance of former members of the Catalan government on trial and Catalan politicians in exile.



4 | CONCLUSION

Now that the Catalan case has reached this point, we must remember the research question of this paper and ask whether it is feasible for the Spanish nation-state to accommodate Catalan "stateless citizenship" by any means possible. Based on the presented evidence and data as of March 2019, this paper demonstrated the existence of a "stateless citizenship" in Catalonia through the following set of factors (Table 1): (i) 62% favouring an independent or federal state; (ii) 65% favouring further devolution; (iii) 48% explicitly choosing secession; (iv) 2,286,217 citizens attempting to vote in a referendum; (v) 61% and 58% of the MPs in the Barcelona City Council and the Catalan Parliament, respectively, favouring the "right to decide"; and, ultimately, (vi) 79% agreeing on the "right to decide."

This paper examined the degree to which the Spanish nation-state is being rescaled by the Catalanian "secession crisis" through the emphasis on the metropolitan nature of the demand for the "right to decide", which has been made in the metropolitan province of Barcelona on a regular basis since 2010, as the main driver of the claims of Catalan stateless citizens. Therefore, the "right to decide" can be viewed as a new socio-political expression of the metropolitan-based "right to the city" for global cities and stateless nations (Jordana, 2019) and, in particular in this paper, as part of the civic quest for political-democratic ownership of the metropolis in Barcelona to be extended to "stateless citizenship" in Catalonia in pursuit of a new independent state in Europe (or, at least, a federal state in Spain).

In conclusion, despite the fact that further research is necessary, in response to the research question, this paper elucidates that, at present, it is not feasible for the Spanish nation-state to accommodate Catalonia's "stateless citizenship" due to four additional and intertwining contextual elements: (i) a strong opposition by almost all Spanish political parties (with the exception of *Podemos*) to reforming the Spanish constitution to accommodate any sort of direct democracy mechanisms to allow Catalan "stateless citizens" to express their will; (ii) related to this opposition and as a direct consequence thereof, a reinvigoration of ethnic and banal Spanish nationalism in favour of the empire of law, constitutionalism, and the "duty to abide" through re-centralizing strategies to control the self-rule of Catalonia (and to standardize the remaining regions of Spain); (iii) an electoral state entirely focused on maximizing the confrontation against anything related to the idea of the "right to decide"; and (iv) ultimately, the difficulty in appointing a mediator or an external "third party" to find a way out of this "secession crisis" and to feasibly accommodate the express will of the citizenry.

We now return to Arendt's initial observation in this paper: how should the rights of the 2,286,217 Catalan "stateless citizens" be protected in twenty-first-century Europe (1949)? Jordana et al. (2019) argue that the search for new alternatives to rescaling the politics of European nation-states must be not only a task for isolated nation-states dealing with internal pressures from certain parts of their territories but also a task for the EU. However, paradoxically, the Spanish nation-state is likely to be ungovernable as long as it does not confront the Catalan "secession crisis" and, moreover, due to the ongoing trial of the secessionist leaders in charge of implementing the "right to decide" referendum and, consequently, the "symbolic" secession declaration on 27 October 2017. As Harguindéguy et al. (2018) demonstrated, the ongoing battle concerning Catalonia's rescaling by Spain reflects a debate between legal and democratic legitimacy. Therefore, the fact of the celebration of the independence referendum in 2017, which actually allowed 2,266,498 Catalan "stateless citizens" to vote, has been used by Spanish political parties as a way to transform political issues into judicial issues, ultimately becoming criminal issues. The fact that, under hostile conditions, Catalans came out to vote (90.2% in favour of independence) highlights the very high degree of citizen dissatisfaction and detachment regarding Catalonia's relationship with and accommodation by the rest of the Spanish nation-state, which is significant. Although it is unlikely that an accommodation is forthcoming, the Spanish nation-state seems to face a delicate operation before the EU; it is taking steps to reinforce the "duty to abide" territorial fixity and uniformity to dilute the secessionist feeling among Catalan citizens. A political dispute may not be resolved by strictly legal means, and the last word regarding the legal outcome of the current trial of the twelve Catalan separatist leaders will be had by the European Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg (Castells, 2019). In summary, this



“secession crisis” can thus be deemed a radical rescaling process and a response born of the frustration and apathy with the Spanish nation-state of 2,044,038 “stateless citizens” who aspire to create a new state in Europe founded on and bolstered by the renowned metropolitan hub and global city, Barcelona (Jordana, 2019).

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The author has no conflicts of interest to declare.

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Resumen. El estado-nación español se está reestructurando gradualmente por la “crisis de secesión” de Cataluña. Recientemente y de forma dramática, tras el “referéndum ilegal y constitutivo” que tuvo lugar el 1 de octubre de 2017, 2 286 217 ciudadanos catalanes intentaron ejercer el “derecho a decidir” para convertirse finalmente en “ciudadanos apátridas”. Este artículo examina este proceso de reestructuración que se está llevando a cabo en Barcelona desde el 10 de julio de 2010, cuando un millón de ciudadanos catalanes se unieron en una marcha para reclamar su “derecho a decidir” sobre la secesión. Este artículo concluye que, en la actualidad, no es factible para la nación española dar cabida a la “ciudadanía apátrida” de Cataluña.

抄録: スペインの国民国家 (nation-state)は、カタルーニャ州の「分独立危機 (secession crisis)」によってその模が徐々に変わりつつある。2017年10月1日に「法に」行われた「国民投票 (constitutive referendum)」の結果、最近では劇的なことに、カタルーニャ州の2,286,217人の市民は、最終的に「無国籍民」になることを「決定する権利」を行使することを企てた。本稿では、2010年の7月10日に100万人のカタルーニャの市民が分独立を求めて行進を行った時以来、バルセロナで始まった国民国家の模の変化の過程を検討する。スペインの国民国家がカタルーニャ州の「無国籍市民権」を受け入れることは、現在のところは実行できない、ということが本稿の結論である。