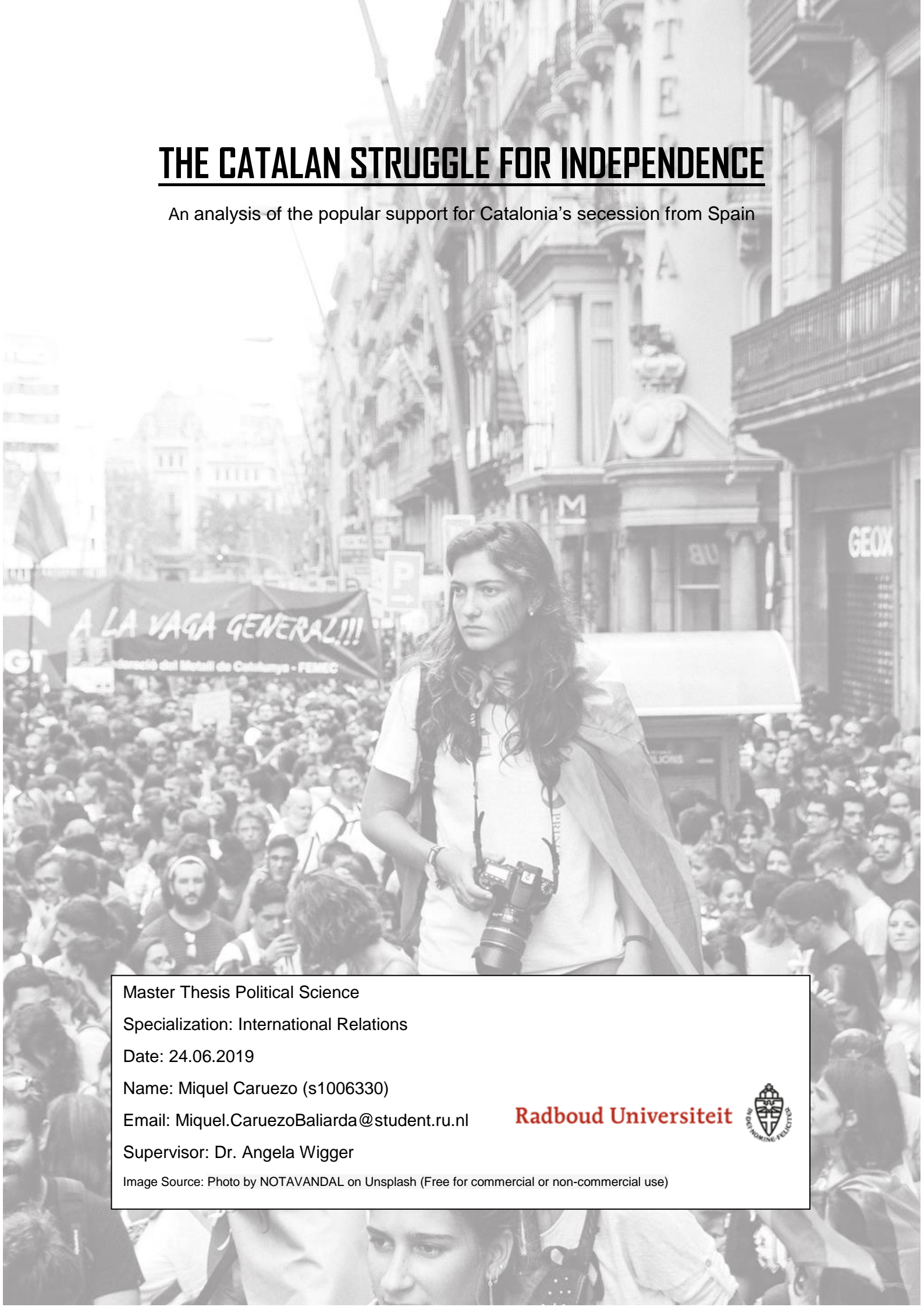


# THE CATALAN STRUGGLE FOR INDEPENDENCE

An analysis of the popular support for Catalonia's secession from Spain



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## List of Abbreviations

ANC	Catalan National Assembly – <i>Assemblea Nacional Catalana</i>
CDR	Committees for the Defence of the Referendum
CEO	Opinion Research Center – <i>Centre d'Estudis d'Opinió</i>
CiU	Democratic Convergence of Catalonia – <i>Convergència i Unió</i>
CM	Causal Mechanism
ERC	Republican Left of Catalonia – <i>Esquerra Republicana de Catalunya</i>
EU	European Union
MP	Member of the Parliament
NGO	Non-profit Organization
NLCT	Norm Life Cycle Theory
PP	Popular Party – <i>Partido Popular</i>
PSOE	Spanish Socialist Workers' Party – <i>Partido Socialista Obrero Español</i>
RMT	Resource Mobilization Theory
SCC	Catalan Civil Society – <i>Societat Civil Catalana</i>
SMO	Social Movement Organization
TSD	Time-Series Data
UDI	Unilateral Declaration of Independence
UN	United Nations

## **Abstract**

Despite a rapid increase in popular support for Catalonia's independence, the pro-independence movement has struggled to gain more support since 2014. Even though the issue gathered more attention from the media and grand-scale demonstrations continued to take place, the support for secession has stagnated around forty per cent from 2014 to 2019. This thesis seeks to provide some insight into which factors may be causing this stagnation. The theoretical approaches chosen to frame the study are resource mobilization theory and norm-life cycle theory. These theories stress the role of social movement organizations and the power of norms in the pro-independence movement respectively. The analyses and results, reached through data triangulation and process-tracing methodologies, indicate that the resource mobilization approach has more explanatory value. The role of pro-independence social movement organizations was key to mobilize people in grand-scale demonstrations and to promote the benefits of an independent Catalonia. Thus, as soon as the secessionist movement did not maintain its salience in resources for mobilization, the popular support for Catalan secession stagnated.

**Keywords:** Catalonia, Independence, Social Movement Organizations, Resource Mobilization,

## Introduction

Spain is a multicultural country with a variety of languages, traditions and cultures. The resulting complexity has created a challenging political and social situation for the central government in Madrid. One example is the northeastern region of Catalonia, one of the most developed economies in Spain: it has a distinctive language, culture and independent political institutions with a certain degree of autonomy. The history behind the Barcelona–Madrid relationship is complicated and Catalan autonomy has been called into question prior to, during and following the fall of the Franco dictatorship (Elias, 2015, p.94; Guibernau, 2013, p.373). However, over the last decade the Catalan secessionist movement has gained never-seen-before support and thus is the focus of this study.

Within the last decade, particularly beginning in the period between 2010 and 2012, major political events led to a considerable rise in the number of people who joined the secessionist movement (Figure 1). In 2010 for example, the Spanish constitutional court announced the elimination of some of the most relevant parts of the *Estatut d'autonomia*. The 'Estatut', a statute of regional autonomy, included articles describing Catalonia as a nation, which were declared unconstitutional (Strubell, 2016, p. 7). The removal of these sections was seen in Catalonia as an attack on Catalan identity and, consequently, residents staged street demonstrations in Barcelona (Guibernau, 2013, p.381).

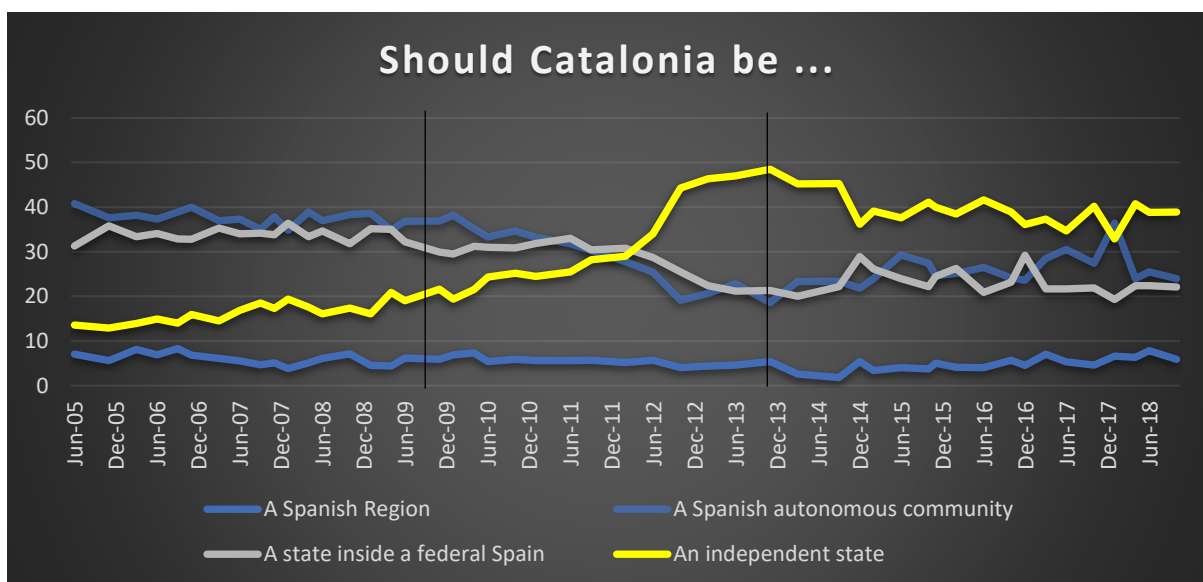
During the Catalan elections that followed, *Convergència i Unió* (CiU) achieved a major win by including in their campaign the right of self-determination (Elias, 2015, p.89). By the end of 2010, political parties in support of Catalan self-determination gained control of the regional parliament. For the two years following these elections, considerable mobilizations, including protests and rallies, were held to support Catalan independence. The popular demand for secession was discussed in the regional government and organizers began the process to hold a referendum (Elias, 2015, p.90). However, Madrid refused to answer Catalan demands for a referendum, which led to further massive rallies (Xicoy, Perales & Xambó, 2017). In summary, the political and social events organised between 2010 and 2012 led to an unprecedented rise in support for Catalan secession.

These political and social events first appeared to heavily influence Catalan society, an effect that seemed to disappear over time. Multiple mobilizations, elections and political events took place from 2013 to 2019. Some, including the referendum held on the 1<sup>st</sup> of October 2017 and the imprisonment of Catalan politicians, were political events that gathered similar or even greater public attention than those held previously (Cetra & Tàrrega, 2018). Generally, however, the level of support for secession has remained around a forty-per cent since late 2013, far from the forty-nine-per cent reached in November of 2013 (Figure 1).

Support for secession is not particular to a specific economic class or ethnic group and the Catalan independence movement includes groups that espouse different ideologies and democratic principles (Elias, 2015). The width of the spectrum can be seen in the different political parties' programs. For instance, during the last decade the right-wing liberal party (PdeCat) had to reach multiple political agreements with the anti-capitalist party (CUP).

Moreover, it is not only political parties that play an important role on the movement. Social platforms are also essential to understand it (Crameri, 2015, p.117). Mobilizations have been planned in particular by two organizations, the Catalan National Assembly (ANC) and Òmnium Cultural. Another important part of the pro-independence movement is the founding of the committees for the defence of the referendum (CDRs), created around the same time as the 2017 referendum. However, CDRs are more focused on local political participation than mass mobilization. In this respect, the pro-independence movement cannot be criticised as narrow or essentialist. The social movement is inclusive and progressive, as opposed to the right-wing, nationalist or selfish labels some Spanish politicians and media outlets have tried to promote (Stobart, 2019). This broad coalition adheres to a series of democratic principles that can be summarized as a rejection of the undemocratic use of the Spanish Constitution, a constitution that does not address issues of education, public health, decent working conditions or self-determination (Vehí & Noguera, 2019).

**Figure 1: Evolution of support for Catalan independence from 2005 to 2018**



Source: Centre d'Estudis d'Opinió

A sizeable part of Catalan society supports the principles mentioned above, but not a vast majority. As a matter of fact, support for independence has not been static over the years (Figure 1). The Centre d'Estudis d'Opinió (CEO), has been regularly asking Catalans since 2005 about what administrative division Catalonia should adopt within or independent of the

Spanish state. Included possibilities ranged from zero autonomy to a fully independent country.

Survey results collected from 2005 to 2019 show three clear stages. The first stage is marked by minimal support for independence, as secession was not seen as a feasible option. The second stage involved an unprecedented rise in support as the movement gathered media attention and more people joined. The final stage began in 2014, when support suffered a decrease and then stagnation until 2019. The evolution of this three-stage process makes for a fascinating study. In 2005, only a thirteen per cent of Catalans thought that Catalonia should be an independent state, and a majority (40,8%) supported the status quo.<sup>1</sup> Then, in 2013 Catalonia experienced the peak of support for secession, with almost a forty-nine per cent of Catalans in favour of independence, an increase that descended to a yearly average of forty per cent through 2019.

This poses an interesting question: Why did the support for secession grow exponentially in 2012 and then slowly decline and stagnate? Just when support was about to surpass the undeniably important level of fifty per cent in December of 2014, it dropped to thirty-six per cent in a few months. In this context, it is essential for the secessionist movement to increase support for independence to at least half of the population (Clua, 2014). Further, the different events that took place during the 2014-2019 period do not seem to have significantly affected support for independence, a paradigmatic shift when compared to the second stage. The consolidation in the level of support during the third stage is the current subject of study: What explanation can be given for what happened during the third stage?

During the second stage (2010-2014), support for Catalan succession spread, drawing the attention of scholars around the world. Most of the literature has focused on the reasons behind support for Catalan independence. Different factors were found to explain the magnitude of the effect. In particular, most studies found identity to be a major component. In fact, national identification is argued to be a major factor for secessionist support (Serrano, 2013; Burg, 2015; Guibernau, 2013; Muñoz & Tormos, 2014; Oliveri, 2014). Other factors include ideology and the agency of the political elite (the integrative capacity of nationalist political parties), which have shown a significant correlation regarding support for independence (Serrano, 2013; Muñoz & Tormos, 2014). Lack of autonomy, especially on matters of taxation, also increases support for independence (Serrano, 2013; Burg, 2015; Guibernau, 2013). Hence, individuals in favour of increased fiscal autonomy for Catalonia

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<sup>1</sup> Since 1978, Catalonia has operated as an autonomous community within Spain. This administrative structure allows Catalonia to have a certain level of autonomy with shared (e.g. education and health care) and unique competences (e.g. prison management and police).

orient themselves positively towards secession. Furthermore, instrumental calculations, particularly an individual's economic expectations following a possible secession from Spain, show some degree of causation (Muñoz & Tormos, 2014). Therefore, a strategy based on economic arguments could be a major factor for the growth of support for independence. Lastly, another factor that scholars found as an explanation to the growth of independentism is a change in the narrative of pro-independence political parties from issues of identity, language and culture to demands for integration and democratic participation (Clua, 2014). Nonetheless, not all research has been directed to explain popular support for Catalan secession. Many studied the influence of civil movements in the process, the importance of organizations such as Òmnium or the ANC for the pro-independence movement (Guibernau 2013; Cramer 2014, 2015; Muñoz & Tormos, 2014; Burg 2015; Strubell 2016;).

Some of the existing literature on Catalan social movement organizations (Muñoz & Tormos, 2014; Cramer, 2015) have made use of Resource Mobilization Theory to explain the mobilization of the pro-independence movement. Therefore, this approach is also used in this thesis along with a non-previously used approach in the Catalonia's independence issue, Norm-Life Cycle Theory. Resource Mobilization Theory is based on the assumptions that changes in group resources, organization and opportunities for collective action are essential to understand whether a social movement will succeed or not. An approach that stresses the influence of social movement organizations, which is key to understand the pro-independence movement. On the contrary, the second theoretical approach, Norm-Life Cycle Theory emphasizes the role of norms in identity construction, which is essential in collective behaviour. This theoretical model was established by Finnemore & Sikkink (1998) and describes a three-stage cycle that every norm has to complete in order to become fully internalized by all the actors in the system. This cycle starts with norm emergence to norm socialization or cascade, and finally to the internalization stage. That model offers the possibility to construct a theoretical narrative to understand where the "Catalan norm" is actually located within the three stage cycle. Empirically, the thesis draws from a wide range of sources. The research mainly relies on secondary data sources: newspaper articles, information gathered from the literature review, yearly economic reports and mobilization data.

The thesis is structured as follows. Chapter one describes the foundations, recent developments and critiques of the two theoretical approaches used in the study. This chapter explains why Resource Mobilization Theory and Norm-Life Cycle Theory are employed for the analysis. It is argued that RMT and NLCT can contribute to the research with an emphasis on different elements of the phenomenon. Chapter two deals with the best methods to approach the operationalisation of both theories and discusses the data acquisition process. Chapter three introduces the empirical analysis. In this chapter, the explanandum is first placed to later

investigate whether the methodological models can offer an explanation to it. Lastly, chapter four includes a conclusion, discussion of the results and avenues for future research and political advice.

## **Chapter 1: Theoretical Framework**

Different theoretical approaches can explain why people would decide to join a social movement such as the one for Catalan independence. For example, rational choice would be useful to explain the reasoning and consequent actions made by an individual voting for secessionist political parties. Nonetheless, identity and norms seem to play a huge role in determining support for secession. The evolution of demands for secession seems to follow the norm life cycle parameters established by the constructivist scholars Finnemore and Sikkink (1998). Thus, social constructivism seems to be a firm foundation for our analysis. In addition, Resource Mobilization Theory (RMT) can also contribute useful input. Both sides, for and against independence, have invested extensive resources into their campaigns.

In this chapter, these two theoretical approaches will be juxtaposed to analyse and explain the evolution of support for Catalan secession. On the one hand, Resource Mobilization Theory offers a theoretical framework for social movements and collective action, offering a unique point of view about the role and employment of resources in the mobilization of people's grievances. Accordingly, social movement organizations (SMO) and the degree of mobilizing capacity constitute the main factors to explain social change. On the other hand, norm life cycle theory (NLCT) is a social constructivist framework focusing on norms. From this perspective, changes in identity and norms are essential focal points for the purpose of understanding social change.

Each theoretical perspective will be outlined below, including a short overview of its main ideas and history, and recent research in the field. In addition, the causal mechanisms will be detailed following a brief summary of the main critiques of the two theories. Finally, after a general review of the theories, different possible hypotheses will be presented at a practical level. The objective of those hypotheses will be to provide an answer to our dependent variable, 'the stagnation of support for Catalan secessionism'.

### **1.1 Resource Mobilization Theory**

The 1960s were characterized by new upcoming social movements (mainly in the United States) such as Black Power or anti-war groups that mobilized thousands of people in the streets. This intricate US context attracted the attention of multiple scholars, who came up with new approaches to address political mobilization. New perspectives were needed because classic methods to study social theory, such as mass society theory or collective behaviour theory, struggled to explain these new social changes (Jenkins, 1983). Thus, these emerging movements presented the impetus for new theoretical developments like Resource Mobilization Theory (RMT).

Before RMT, increases in short-term grievances were used to explain social movement formation. In contrast, RMT argues that grievances are secondary, as they are relatively constant (Tilly, 1978; Jenkins & Perrow, 1977; Oberschall, 1978). RMT sought to explain the phenomenon of new social movements on the basis of resources, which were considered more important to the success of a movement than membership consciousness or manpower (Edwards & Kane, 2016). The term 'resources' refers to the infrastructure that sustains social movement organizations, such as funding, workforce, media promotion or links to elites (McCarthy, 1973). Consequently, successful social movements are formed through changes in group resources, organization and opportunities for collective action (Jenkins, 1983, p. 528).

According to RMT, a social movement will succeed due to its organization, considerable funding and inclusion of employers ready to develop a campaign strategy. Anger, dynamism and the willingness to act are not enough. Instead, coordination is key. Moreover, not only is cooperation necessary, but also potential challengers of authority must promote a commitment to the organization through group loyalty or solidarity (Gamson, 1982). When all those conditions are met, especially when resource flow and communal associations are available, there is a high probability that a social movement will succeed, as happened with the Bolshevik movement in Russia (McCarthy, 1977).

Hence, access to resources is key for social movements organizations. Edward and Kane (2016) categorized five resource types used by SMOs. First, material resources such as real estate property, equipment, financial funding, etc., in other words, monetary resources; secondly, human resources which include employees and their organizational expertise; thirdly, social-organizational resources, which refers to the ability of organizations to access social networks, such as infrastructure, social ties and networks, affinity groups and coalitions; fourthly, cultural resources, conceptualized as the construction of an identity and symbols that represent a SMO; and lastly, moral resources like the legitimacy and support that a social movement might receive. What RMT argues is that an increase in these types of resources should lead to an increase in social support and mobilization.

More recent developments in the field point to the importance of social media and new organizational resources. For instance, Eltantawy and Wiest (2011) found that resources and the efficacy of the actors involved were essential to the success of the 2011 Egyptian revolution. Social mobilization has changed with the adoption of new communication technologies, such as social media channels like Twitter or Facebook. In other words, social media technology was a necessary instrumental resource that enabled an historical social change in Egypt. In 2019, social movements not only depend on the exploitation of social media, but also must gather their own data resources. Similarly, Meng and DiSalvo (2018)

observed how grassroots advocacy groups empower movements through data gathering,<sup>2</sup> which is another form of resource mobilization.

Nonetheless, RMT has also received important critiques. Armstrong and Bernstein (2008) criticized the RMT focus on non-state institutions that challenge governmental power. The authors argue that power is dispersed across institutions and states, and therefore challenges directed towards the state by social movements cannot be generalized. One weakness cited is that RMT does not account for a multi-institutional model and consequently cannot predict when movements will emerge. Other scholars have criticized RMT for assuming that discontent and collective interest are time-constant, and thus ignores the processes by which they have been constructed over time (Jenkins, 1983; Shin, 1994).

Despite the pitfalls of RMT, it can still offer useful insights into social movements. Its approach initially shed new light on collective action theory and other aspects have been refined over time. As noted above, it explains the success of social movements through a long-term change in group resources, and not due to sudden increases in short-term grievances (Jenkins, 1983, p. 530). Hence, social progress is seen as a question of who has the resources to bring about change, while group thinking and collective grievances are considered secondary. RMT depicts social movements as rational agents, which have been created and modified by certain social actors and affected by their ability to gather resources. Therefore, the success (or popularity) of programmes such as the Civil Rights movement in the United States<sup>3</sup> was due to strategic mobilization by certain organizations and because of a shared frustration about racial discrimination (Glasberg & Shannon, 2010).

### **1.1.1 Causal Mechanisms**

Social movement organizations depend on the gathering of resources to achieve their goals (Snow, Soule & Kreesi 2004). The relationship between resources and social mobilization so pivotal to RMT raises a few questions: First, how do SMOs manage to access resources?; Secondly, how do they then use those resources to mobilize people?

Edwards and Kane (2014) provide an answer to the first question. The five types of resources mentioned above: material, human, social-organizational, cultural and moral, including the use of social media and data gathering, can be accessed through four different paths: first, through self-production: SMOs can access different types of resources by relying

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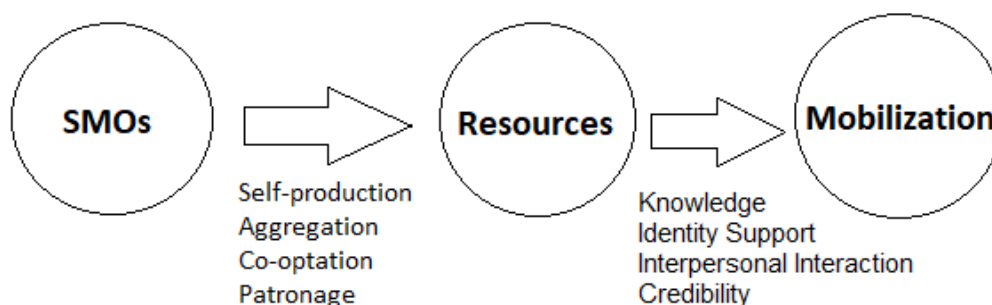
<sup>2</sup> The authors explained that Westside Atlanta Land Trust (WALT), a grassroots advocacy group, decided to defy the government through counter-data action. Based upon their own research, the organization managed to build new networks and advocate through media, breaking through any dependence on governmental sources.

<sup>3</sup> The civil rights movement (1950-1960) was a social movement in the United States organised to extend and enforce the legal rights of African Americans.

on themselves, their activists or participants; second, through aggregation, such as the conversion of resources from third parties, for example donations; third, co-optation: SMOs are rarely individual or self-sufficient actors, but often rely on other groups for cooperation or assistance; fourth, SMOs access resources via patronage, receiving donations or other resources from individuals or organizations.

The ensuing question is how SMOs use these resources for the purpose of mobilization and the promotion of participation (Figure 2). Hara and Estrada (2005) drew from the work of Gary Fine on provisioning theory (1989) to conceptualize how grassroots organizations use their resources to mobilize people and generate participation. Hara and Estrada argued that there are four paths to broader participation: knowledge, identity support, interpersonal interaction and credibility. Knowledge is essential for the dissemination of information and knowledge transfer, including navigation through social networks to expand support and recruit new participants. Identity support refers to an individual’s identification with an ideology, culture and/or belief system. A sense of belonging regularly leads to community participation (Fine, 1989). Therefore, SMOs can use symbols to create identification markers and consequently generate mobilization. Moreover, forums or other spaces for interaction are indispensable to the promotion of interpersonal interaction. In providing a place to interact and meet like-minded individuals, SMOs invite new people to join the movement. Finally, credibility is essential to the legitimacy of an SMO. A social movement founded on credible and reliable information will attract supporters as opposed to one based upon untrustworthy sources. In summary, SMOs can utilize their resources to spread knowledge, create symbols and identities, promote interaction and generate legitimization.

**Figure 2: How SMOs gather resources and promote mobilization**



Source: Edwards & Kane (2014); Hara & Estrada (2005)

### 1.1.2 Hypotheses

As noted in the introductory section, support for Catalan secession after 2014 is the dependent variable in need of explanation. The RMT framework will be employed to propose two hypotheses that might explain the intriguing evolution of support for independence.

The first hypothesis builds on the argument of Jenkins (1983, p. 528) that changes in group resources and organizational structure can explain the success of a certain social movement. In the same way, the disruption of resource salience might explain stagnation or failure. Applied to this case, popular support for the Catalan session stagnated after 2014 because the secessionist movement could not maintain its salience following a decline in resources for mobilization. In addition, a sub-hypothesis is built for each resource type because a social movement's failure is rarely the consequence of a decline only in general resources for mobilization. More often it is due to the decrease of a certain resource type: material, human, social-organizational, cultural or moral.

However, the first hypothesis does not take into account the possibility of counter-mobilization forces. For instance, the movement in favour of stricter regulations against smoking had to face the opposition of the National Smokers Alliance (NSA) (Givel, 2007). Therefore, the second hypothesis argues that popular support for Catalan session idled following 2014 because the counter-campaign had access to more resources.

## **1.2 Norm Life Cycle Theory**

Social constructivism offers a different logic to explain social mobilization. It is based on the concept that 'people's ideas coincide with their experiences and that writers build on their socio-cultural awareness' (McKinley, 2015). Consequently, identity construction is key to understand actors' behaviour. The internalization of norms plays an important role in identity construction.

Constructivist scholars share different conceptualizations of 'international norms'. Nonetheless, a few characteristics and definitions are more accepted than others. Some conceptualizations have been criticized for defining norms as 'behavioral regularities' and for stressing the concept of ideas over behaviour (Florini, 1996, p. 364). A more common definition describes norms as 'a set of intersubjective understandings readily apparent to actors that makes behavioral claims on those actors' (Finnemore, 1994, p. 319). In other words, the intersubjectivity of those understandings structures the way in which different actors will behave. Norms are supposed to guide our behaviour and those who do not follow them will be punished or disavowed by the community. Therefore, norms need to be internalized by an entire group because people obey norms 'not because they are enforced, but because they are seen as legitimate' (Florini, 1996, p. 365).

The following theoretical development is built on the previous conceptualization of norms. Known as 'norm life cycle theory' (NLCT), it was developed and has been constantly refined by social constructivists Finnemore and Sikkink to explain social and political behaviour based on the life cycle of social norms. This model was first published in an influential 1998

article by the authors, 'International norm dynamics and political change'. In this article, they try to theorize the 'life cycles' of norms, or how they emerge and develop. The article contributed greatly to social constructivism and one key element is the explanation of how norms change. Because norms are not stable, norms that are present today were not necessarily present ten years ago (Finnemore and Sikkink, 1998, p. 894). The life cycle of norms is represented by the following three stages, where each encompasses a different process or change that a norm must follow to become universally accepted (Finnemore and Sikkink, 1998, p. 896-898):

1. **Norm emergence:** During the first stage, norm entrepreneurs promote a new standard to change opinion on a particular issue. Through persuasion and the use of organizational platforms, norm entrepreneurs try to frame their argument to reach a broader audience. Most norm entrepreneurs are 'individual non-governmental organisations or transnational advocacy networks of NGOs that join their resources and expertise to advocate for a norm' (Ivanova, 2016, p. 15). Those NGOs or transnational advocacy networks can also act as organizational platforms by providing a forum for or expertise to other norm entrepreneurs. When at least one-third of the actors in a system decide to adhere to a new norm in an international context, or when the norm is institutionalized, a tipping point is reached, meaning that the norm has been partially accepted in the system and can move to the subsequent stage.

2. **Norm cascade:** The second stage is crucial. 'X' norm is now widely known and accepted with enough support to generate international pressure on states that have not adopted it. Therefore, those states or actors in the system feel compelled to adopt the norm to enhance domestic legitimacy or maintain their international reputation. In the second stage, norm entrepreneurs and organizational platforms no longer need to persuade other actors. Enough states and international organizations have been convinced to promote the norm through socialization, institutionalization and demonstration.

3. **Internalization:** The last stage is where states conform to or fully adopt the norm. This conformity happens when domestic law and government bureaucracy institutionalize the norm. A norm has entered this stage when society does not even notice its presence.

Finnemore and Sikkink argue that different variables can affect the life cycle process of a norm. One example is 'prominence': if the norm is promoted by powerful states, it is more likely that other actors will follow suit (Finnemore & Sikkink, 1998, p. 906). Moreover, the characteristics of norms also play a role during the process as some intrinsic qualities (such as universalism and individualism) are more easily accepted (Finnemore & Sikkink, 1998, p.

906). Likewise, if the norm is similar to a previously developed one it will be easier to adopt. Finally, the domestic context is crucial: if a state suffers a decline in domestic legitimacy or is going through a depression or crisis, it is more likely that it will adopt a new norm (Finnemore & Sikkink, 1998, p. 906). These factors are part of what Florini (1996) described as the 'normative environment': external environmental conditions that confront the norm.

The NLCT model was successful enough to open a new field for constructivist scholars. Concepts like norms and norm entrepreneurs would be further developed by other scholars. For example, Krook & True (2010) and Winston (2017) proposed a concept of norms more advanced and dynamic to better describe the 'nature' of norms. Krook & True argued that the norms should be illustrated as 'processes' to better describe the internal and external dynamics of norms.<sup>4</sup> Similarly, Winston tried to offer the 'cluster' concept to better represent the flexibility and stability of norms. Some norms 'are multifaceted, interlocking, and open to interpretation' (Winston, 2017, p. 639), and thus more aptly described as norm clusters, a representation of 'an expanded space within which multiple combinations of problems, ideations, and behaviors result in an intersubjectively acceptable set of solutions' (Winston, 2017, p. 654).

Critics of Finnemore and Sikkink's NLCT model focus on its simplicity and some scholars have argued that the norm life cycle process is more complex than the three-stage model (Cortell & Davis, 2005; Checkel, 2012; Jackson-Preece, 2012; Ivanova, 2016). For instance, Cortell and Davis (2005), argued that even if a norm becomes internalized (third stage) within the international system, it does not mean that every state will follow suit. For instance, Japan did not join the GATT, an organization that represented 'trade liberalization', a norm that had been internalized on a global scale (Cortell & Davis, 2005). Ivanova (2016) claimed that every norm life cycle stage contains a small-scale life cycle, adding different layers to each phase. Not only are the stages of the model contested, but also the dynamics of the norms within. Checkel (2012) and Jackson-Preece (2012) have maintained that the norm life cycle is not as regular as it seems. Some norms might not have enough support within the domestic and international contexts and, therefore, stagnate or even regress.

Norm entrepreneurs have also been a topic of discussion. For instance, Hoffmann (2003) argued that norm entrepreneurship might not be necessary in some occasions and, moreover, there are situations in which norm entrepreneurs can be entirely ineffectual. Nonetheless, the role of the 'norm entrepreneur' has been adopted by several social constructivist scholars to understand a state's influence on international society. For example,

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<sup>4</sup> Debates over the exact definitions of norms are an example of internal dynamics. Changes in the broader normative environments are an example of external dynamics (Krook & True, 2010, p. 122).

Ingebritsen (2002) stressed the importance of norm entrepreneurs in the global context, arguing that less powerful states can still exert influence if they accept this entrepreneurship role. In summary, the norm life cycle theory has been highly successful in developing a theoretical model that has been further developed in recent social constructivist research.

These theoretical developments are crucial to understand the following analyses. In the case of the 'Catalan norm', not only is the independence of Catalonia promoted, but also cultural, linguistic and democratic values (Castro, 2019, p. 225; Reguant & Gibert, 2019, p. 305). Combined, these values are better described as a 'cluster' or 'process' and not as a single norm.

### ***1.2.1 Causal Mechanisms***

The structure of the NLCT model is clear: a norm must undergo three stages in order to become institutionalized and internalized. But how does causality work within this approach? Every stage on Finnemore and Sikkink's norm life cycle is associated with different actors and effects. Thus, social mobilization can be explained by looking at the life cycle stage of a particular norm. Consequently, the analysis of causal mechanisms needs to be divided within the three stages (norm emergence, norm cascade and internalization) as different mechanisms and actors are involved in each.

### ***1.2.2 Hypotheses***

Two different hypotheses are built using the NCLT model to understand the stagnation of support for Catalan secession. Independent variables are based on the norm, or cluster of norms, established by Catalan pro-independence norm entrepreneurs, established upon ideas relating to democratic values, self-determination, political representation and cultural rights (Salellas & Serra, 2019; Knox, 2019). Thus, each hypothesis will study the use and evolution of this specific cluster of norms.

(H1) Within the domestic context, norm entrepreneurs use organizational platforms to persuade national institutions and individual actors. Whether norm entrepreneurs have persuaded at least one-third of the total actors in the system depends mainly on decision making within their institutions. For instance, the number of actors persuaded can be quantified by the voting record of the national parliament: How many members of the parliament voted in favour of laws or petitions regarding the norm? The rate of approval will be influenced by the normative environment and some norms will fit better than others with current understandings and domestic laws. The first hypothesis argues that the Catalan norm has not gained enough domestic support for its institutionalization. In an unfavourable domestic environment, the first tipping point has not yet been reached.

(H2) The domestic and international norm life cycles do not necessarily share the same actors and processes (Ivanova, 2016, p. 86). Therefore, the second hypothesis contends that different norm entrepreneurs are involved and that the Catalan norm has not gained enough international support for institutionalization. As in the domestic context, the norm has found an unfavourable international environment and therefore the first tipping point has not been reached.

## **Chapter 2: Methods and Operationalisation**

This chapter introduces the methodology used for testing the hypotheses that have been deduced from the theories and that will be centrestage in the empirical analysis and the operationalisation of the independent variables. The following sections outline the methods employed for each theoretical approach. A specification of the methods will be given, followed by the operationalisation and, lastly, an outline of the most relevant data. Because of the differences between theoretical approaches, different methods will be employed: while data triangulation, and time-data series analysis, is more suitable for testing the Resource Mobilization Theory, process tracing and explanatory narrative fit better with the Norm-Life Cycle Theory.

### **2.1 Methodology for RMT: Data Triangulation**

The methodology that will be used to analyse RMT's empirical evidence is data triangulation. Two or more sources of data can be combined in what is known as data triangulation, often used to apply diverse viewpoints to a topic (Olsen, 2004, p. 107). In other words, this method consists in using different sources of information to explain the same phenomenon. By using multiple perspectives, the final outcome has greater validity (Downward & Mearman, 2006, p. 4). An additional form of data can sometimes show elements or factors that the researcher could have missed with a single type of data. For instance, by analysing not only the expenditures of SMOs but also the participation in their demonstrations could lead to more comprehensive conclusions. Furthermore, triangulation can be used to combine not only data but also theories, observations and methods (Downward & Mearman, 2006; Flick, 2004; Thurmond, 2001).

The combination of three data types and sources, both qualitative and quantitative, provide an explanatory narrative that demonstrates how a change in a SMO's resources can influence people mobilization. First, an extensive literature review was performed in order to provide an understanding of the key premises of Resource Mobilization Theory. Second, the annual expenditure of the SMOs studied are analysed based with respect to RMT. Òmnium and the ANC provide open access to their yearly expenditure and income data on equipment, personnel and donations. Third, the figures on participation of demonstrations organized by either pro-independence or pro-unity SMOs are provided by the local police department. However, this process of trying to fit quantitative data into a qualitative mould can result in some difficulties (Thurmond, 2001, p. 256). Some data do not always fit with the theoretical concepts used. For instance, social-organizational resources are not clearly outlined or provided by SMOs, which complicates research on this topic.

### **2.1.1 Operationalisation for Data Triangulation**

Operationalisation is necessary to construct a theoretical model that can fit the empirical data gathered during the research. In other words, operationalising the theory is indicating how theoretical concepts are made measurable in the empirical analysis. In this thesis, the resources data gathered for the empirical analysis will follow the categorization created by Edwards and Kane (2016) that SMOs can access different five types of resources: material, human, social-organizational, cultural and moral. The SMOs analysed will be Òmnium Cultural and the Catalan National Assembly (ANC), which were the main platforms for citizen mobilization (Vehí & Noguera, 2019). Òmnium has conducted an external audit every year since 2006. The yearly economic report includes profits and losses, the organization's financial and physical capital. The ANC, however, has only shared internal audits from 2017 and 2018. The committees for the defence of the referendum (CDRs) are also essential to understand citizen mobilization (Vehí & Noguera, 2019, p. 213). Unfortunately, because these grassroots, self-organizing groups emerged just before the October referendum in 2017 (Teran, 2019), the short life and structure of CDRs make their incorporation in the analysis unfeasible.

This study relies mainly on Òmnium's cultural resources, as it is the only organization out of the three studied that provides open access to its economic reports. The 2018 Òmnium economic report will be released in July 2019 and a request for early access to this data went unanswered. As noted above, the ANC only published reports in 2017 and 2018. Multiple calls and emails regarding missing yearly data have been left unanswered or directly denied. Nonetheless, this emphasis is the most feasible one to test RMT despite the lack of some data, because SMOs are much easier to document than other resource types (Edwards & Kane, 2014, p. 211). Moreover, the study of Òmnium's resources was previously used by Muñoz and Guinjoan (2013) to analyse mobilization using a RMT approach.

#### General Budget

Johnson and Frickel's (2011) study showed that an increase in federal government spending on environmental issues predicted an increase in movement mobilization. Similarly, the first category includes the yearly budget destined to fund SMO's activities. The purchase and maintenance of equipment, personnel expenditures and other operating expenses are accounted for under 'general budget'. This category is intended to show a general overview of the SMO's resources inflow.

#### Material Resources

This category includes the net equity of the organization along with the profit made during the year. With those indicators, the monetary resources, property, office space,

equipment and supplies of an organization are included in a single category. Material resources are the most important type, representing the financial and physical capital of the SMO (Edwards & Kane, 2014, p. 212).

### Human Resources

Human resources including 'labor, experience, skills, and expertise' (Edwards & Kane, 2014, p. 213) are included. Factors such as experience or skills are calculated in terms of an SMO's personnel expenditures. It can be argued that those employees with more experience and skills will be paid higher than others. Therefore, 'personnel expenses' seems an adequate indicator for this category.

### Social-Organizational Resources

Social-organizational resources include infrastructure, social ties and networks, used as mobilizing structures for social movements (McCarthy, 1996). Moreover, Edwards and Kane (2014, p. 214) argue that social-organizational resources are 'infrastructures...They are the social organizational equivalent of civil infrastructures like roads, sidewalks, and traffic lights that facilitate the smooth functioning of everyday life'. Hence, this category includes the real estate investments made by SMOs: those physical spaces that serve as a workplace, gathering or meeting place.

### Cultural Resources

Beliefs, values and identities are abstract concepts that cannot be counted in a spreadsheet. Nonetheless, this category also includes 'cultural products', creations like music, literature, blogs, web pages or films, that facilitate the recruitment and socialization of new adherents (Edwards & Kane, 2014, p. 216). Hence, cultural resources are calculated based on the marketing and public relations expenditures made by the SMOs.

### Moral Resources

Legitimacy, authenticity, solidarity and sympathetic support are included in moral resources (Cress & Snow, 1996). Of these, solidarity and sympathetic support are the most conducive to analysis. Both Òmnium and the ANC offer an option to donate or to become a member. People who join send a monthly contribution without expecting anything in return. Hence, the income made by donations and member subscriptions represent the degree of solidarity support received.

The following methodology is proposed to find and operationalize causal mechanisms, 'a complex system, which produces an outcome by the interaction of a number of parts' (Glennan, 1996, p. 52). In addition, those mechanisms can be identified by the effect or

phenomenon they produce, including a causal notion, hierarchy and structure (Hedström & Ylilkoski, 2010).

### **2.1.2 Data selection for Data Triangulation**

According to Pevehouse & Brozek (2008, p.471) “The nature of politics changes over space and over time”, and time-series allows for explaining the “dynamic understanding of the interactions between political actors, economic forces, and mass publics across the globe”. Basically, TSD consists of a single unit of analysis with observations on one or more variables at many times over some period. In fact, people mobilization can be explained by the selection of incentives, cost-reducing mechanisms or structures, and career benefits in a social movement (Oberschall, 1973). To study these factors, it is necessary to analyse SMO’s resource aggregation, the involvement of individuals and organizations, the flow of resources and the structure of society (McCarthy & Zald, 1977, p. 1216). These factors are not stable and the aggregation of resources and societal norms change over time. In other words, Resource Mobilization Theory aims to explain collective behaviour through the change in resource aggregation. Therefore, TSD is an appropriate type of data to analyse resource aggregation (single unit of analysis) during many times over a period.

In fact, time series data (TSD) has previously been used by different RMT scholars (Givel, 2007; Tsang, 1994; McCarthy & Zald, 1973). Givel (2007), for example, explained the National Smokers Alliance’s resource mobilization campaign, which promoted their interests from 1994 to 1999. Tsang (1994) analysed yearly expenditures by the Chinese government on education during the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. McCarthy and Zald (1973) made use of TSD to connect voting rates, church attendance, union participation and political activity. Similarly, in this study TSD is employed to study the evolution of Catalan collective behaviour. The popularity of TSD among social movement scholars can be explained by its utility, TSD allows to make generalizations, to make an inference from a sample to population. Data gathered from demonstrations or economical reports can be used to make generalizations about a whole social movement.

### **2.2 Methodology for NLCT: Process tracing**

The high level of confidence required for theorized mechanisms to examine causal processes can be enabled by a technique called process tracing (Beach & Pedersen, 2013, p. 2), a methodology that has been increasingly implemented in qualitative research within the social sciences (Tansey, 2007). In political science in particular, multiple scholars make use of process tracing to find, for example, causation between the success of radical right parties and shifts in mainstream party policy on immigration-related issues (Van Spanje, 2010; Abou-Chadi, 2016). The reason why process tracing is used is due to its ability to open ‘black boxes’

of causation. George & Bennett (2005) explain process tracing as a 'theoretically oriented narrative', an historical explanation to trace a sequence of events to the outcome. But process tracing is not only about linking pieces of evidence, it systematically assesses the workings of a causal process (Beach & Pedersen, 2013). Nonetheless, the process of finding causal processes differs depending on a study's focus. Beach & Pedersen (2013) proposed three different variants of process tracing:

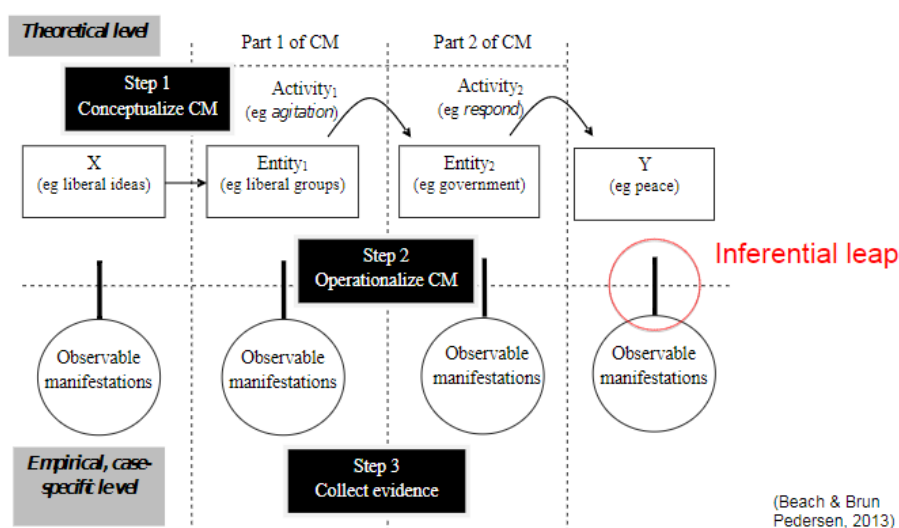
1. **Theory testing:** Where the theorized mechanisms and X/Y values are known, but the development of the mechanism is unknown. Therefore, only one inferential leap from operationalized causal mechanism to case evidence is needed (Beach & Pedersen, 2013, p.56).

2. **Theory building:** Where the correlation between X and Y, and the 'Y' outcome is known, but the causal mechanisms and 'X' values are unknown. Therefore, two inferential leaps are needed: from evidence to manifestations as a causal factor, and from observable manifestations to causal mechanism (ibid, p.60).

3. **Explaining outcome:** Only used in puzzling cases where the scholars do not attempt to build a generalizable theory of a causal mechanism, which exceeds a single case. (ibid, p.63).

This method is all about combating spuriousness to show and illustrate causation, not only to demonstrate some degree of correlation. Process tracing seems to be the recommended methodology to study NLCT, as 'the process of "norm building", the accounts of norm origins in most studies stress human agency, indeterminacy, chance occurrences, and favorable events, using process tracing or genealogy as a method' (Finnemore & Sikkink, 1998, p. 896). In this case, given that theorized mechanisms are known, a theory-testing process is preferred. This variant demands previously theorized causal mechanisms (NCLT) to evaluate whether the evidence and mechanisms function as the theory expects (Beach & Pedersen, 2013, p. 11). Figure 3 shows the workings of the theory-testing process. The research design not only demands a conceptualization of the causal mechanisms, but also an operationalisation of the related evidence. During the following empirical sections, observable manifestations of the Catalan secessionist process will be collected in order to strengthen the theoretical framework, in this case norm life cycle theory. Thus, the analysis should reveal whether norm life cycle theory provides a sufficient explanation for the stagnation of support for independence.

**Figure 3: Theory-testing process tracing**



Source: Meijers, M. adaptation of Beach & Pedersen

### 2.2.1 Operationalisation for Process Tracing

(H1) The first hypothesis argues that the Catalan norm has not succeeded on persuading enough domestic actors, and therefore it is immobilized within the first stage of the norm-life cycle. Finnemore and Sikkink (1998) argued that for a norm to succeed and move to the second stage, at least one-third of involved actors need to adopt the norm, which in this case it is argued that this has not happened. Consequently, the first hypothesis explains that the 'Catalan norm' is unable to reach the first tipping point. Consequently, the first stage of the norm-life cycle needs to be operationalized to decide whether the Catalan norm is located in it. Such operationalisation is structured in the following steps: first, the actors involved in the first stage of NCLT, norm-entrepreneurs and organizational platforms, are outlined and compared to the main Catalan norm promoters to prove whether they fit the description or not. It is essential to understand if those actors are active, as their influence is crucial during the first stage and they are meaningless in the second stage (Finnemore & Sikkink, 1998, p.902). Furthermore, the requirements to reach the socialization stage (ibid, p.901) are also reviewed to examine to which degree has the Catalan norm fulfilled those.

(H2) The first hypothesis is focused on the domestic Spanish context, but the Catalan issue has also been promoted globally, including the presence of exiled Catalan politicians (Reuters, 2019) or multiple diplomatic tensions within Europe (Rios, 2018; Solé, 2019). The second hypothesis argues that the Catalan norm has similarly suffered at the international level, Catalan norm entrepreneurs have failed to persuade other international actors to adopt the norm, consequently failing to reach the first tipping point. Hence, the operationalisation of

this second hypothesis follows the same previously mentioned pattern. The characteristics of the first norm-life cycle stage and the tipping point requirements are outlined to examine whether the Catalan norm fulfils the description of a “first stage norm” or it has surpassed the first tipping point. Additionally, the international and domestic norm environment is analysed to investigate if the Catalan norm has encountered norms that directly defy its values and principles.

Two different analyses are included in the process tracing methodology: one focused on the international context; the other on the domestic situation. Therefore, different norm entrepreneurs, organizational platforms, political actors and institutions are emphasized for each hypothesis. The selection of sources for process tracing is based on different types of documentation and primary and secondary sources are combined, including documents by and interviews conducted directly with organizational platforms and norm entrepreneurs.

### ***2.2.2 Data Selection for Process Tracing***

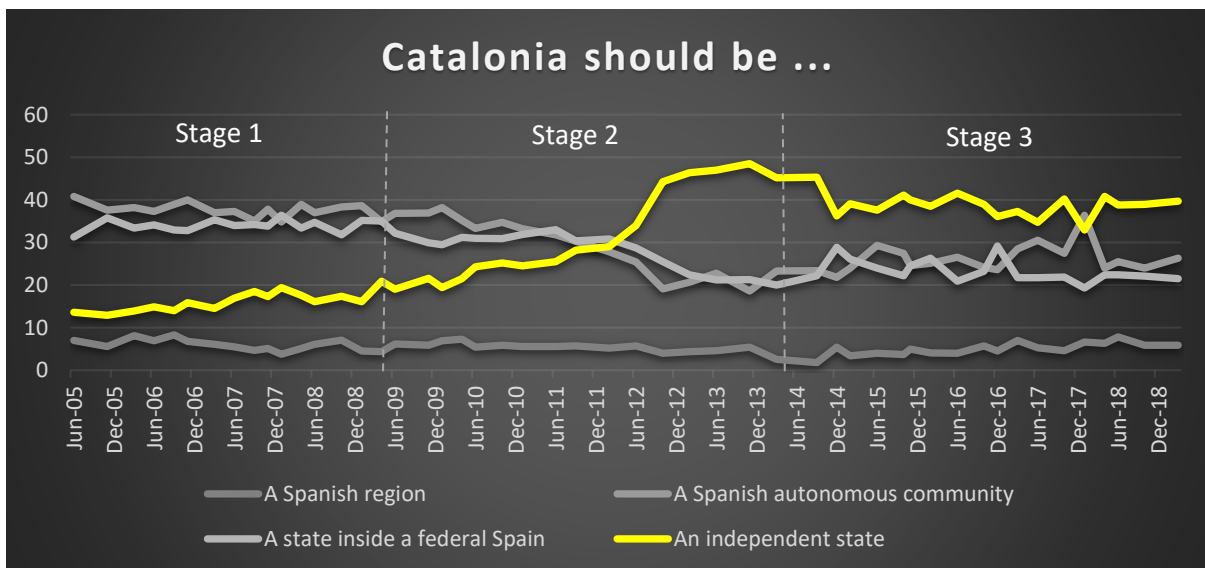
The primary sources mentioned are based on public statements made by Òmnium, the ANC and Spanish institutions. Those statements are essential to provide evidence (Beach & Pedersen, 2013, p. 140). The second main source of evidence is newspaper articles, which can provide accurate observations of intended measurements (Beach & Pedersen, 2013, p. 142). Domestic newspapers have been chosen in order to provide different perspectives (Xicoy, Perales & Xambó, 2017, p. 1043). Catalan newspapers include *La Vanguardia* and *Nació Digital*, while Spanish newspapers include *El País*, *El Confidencial* and *El Mundo*, among others. In addition, international newspaper articles are also provided, including pieces from *The Independent*, *Euronews* or *BBC News*. The vast majority are in English, except for first-hand sources which are in Spanish or Catalan.

## Chapter 3: Empirical analysis

### 3.1 Phenomenon

The Centre d'Estudis d'Opinió de Catalunya (CEO) has been conducting surveys, asking the Catalan people whether they prefer Catalonia to be a region, an autonomous community, a federal state inside Spain, or an independent country. The results from 2005 to 2019 show completely different societies (see figure 4). In 2005, when large-scale demonstrations in favour of secession were unimaginable, the most prominent answer was to maintain the status quo, a Spanish autonomous community. Almost fifteen years ago, secession was seen as highly unlikely (Guibernau, 2013, p. 380), as only thirteen per cent of the population actually supported this position. That situation slowly started to change and eight years later almost fifty per cent of the population was in favour of secession. It seemed that political discussions about independence inside Catalan institutions, protests against judicial and political decisions made in Madrid and the large-scale demonstrations were having some effect on the Catalan population (Bernat & Whyte, 2019, p. 41; Clua, 2019, p. 99).

Figure 4: Support for Catalan secession between 2006 and 2019



Source: Centre d'Estudis d'Opinió (CEO)

Similar grand-scale demonstrations and political discussions occurred after 2013, however those events seem not to have had the same effect as those during stage two. In Spain, and especially in Catalonia, important political discussions and demonstrations regarding the secession issue were held between 2014 and 2019. These include the first of October referendum in 2017, the subsequent grand-scale demonstrations and the imprisonment of multiple Catalan politicians in 2018. However, since 2014 the support for Catalan secession has stagnated around forty per cent. The pro-independence movement has

not been significantly growing or shrinking for almost five years. Can RMT or NLCT provide enough empirical evidence to explain this phenomenon?

This chapter contains the empirical findings of each theoretical approach separately. The first section provides an analysis made to the two RMT hypotheses. The second section presents the empirical findings of NLCT hypotheses.

### **3.2 Norm Life Cycle Theory Empirical Findings**

Finnemore and Sikkink (1998, p. 893) argue that 'there is a two-level norm game occurring in which the domestic and the international norm tables are increasingly linked'. However, a previous study found that the norm life cycle does not necessarily need to run uncontested between domestic and international scenarios (Ivanova, 2016, p. 86). The norm diffusion process can be challenged by domestic actors,<sup>5</sup> consequently creating two or more different norm life cycle processes. In other words, a norm does not need to be in the same stage in both international and domestic contexts. Thus, the two hypotheses will analyse separately the domestic context (Spain) and the international/European context.

#### ***3.2.1 International/European context***

The first hypothesis argues that the 'Catalan norm'<sup>6</sup> is unable to move forward to the second stage due to the challenges faced during the emergence phase. This first stage is mainly characterized by two elements, norm entrepreneurs and organizational platforms (Finnemore & Sikkink, 1998, p. 896). Owing to this, the Catalan norm must be analysed to verify the applicability of what Finnemore and Sikkink (1998) described as the first stage.

##### Norm entrepreneurs

The different characteristics of the conceptualization of norm entrepreneurs made by Finnemore and Sikkink (1998, p. 896-899) are contrasted with pro-independence Catalan norm entrepreneurs. According to the authors, 'norm entrepreneurs are critical for norm emergence because they call attention to issues or even 'create' issues by using language that names, interprets, and dramatizes them' (Finnemore & Sikkink, 1998, p. 897). Within the international context, one of the main norm entrepreneurs for the secession of Catalonia has been Carles Puigdemont.

Puigdemont served as president of Catalonia between January 2016 and October 2017. He had to flee to Belgium after the 2017 attempt to split Catalonia from Spain. Since then, he

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<sup>5</sup> An example is the Race Equality Directive. That even though it had achieved a tipping point within the European Institutions, it was still challenged by domestic actors (Ivanova, 2016, p. 87).

<sup>6</sup> Previously described in page 14

has been pursuing and promoting the 'Catalan issue' all over Europe and further abroad. Some of his actions include running for a seat in the European elections 'to internationalize Catalonia's right to self-determination' (Birnbaum & Banovic, 2019); visiting European countries, such as Slovenia, to meet political figures (Total Slovenia News, 2019); looking for European political alliances, such as with the Flemish nationalists (Cerulus & Galindo, 2018); promoting the idea of an independent Catalonia inside the European Union (EU) before different audiences, such as at Trinity College in Ireland (Forrest, 2019); or denouncing the trial of Catalan politicians as 'vengeance' (Brito & Wilson, 2019). For the most part, Puigdemont has spent his time in exile calling attention to the Catalan issue. His framing of the issue has not only focused on promotion, but also on the dramatization of Spanish judicial and political actions (Forrest, 2019; Sánchez, 2019). Thus, it is clear that between 2018 and 2019 the role of norm entrepreneurs like Puigdemont is still key and essential for the emergence of the Catalan norm.

Finnemore and Sikkink (1998, p. 897) also write that 'efforts to promote a new norm take place within the standards of 'appropriateness' defined by prior norms. To challenge existing logics of appropriateness, activists may need to be explicitly inappropriate...Deliberately inappropriate acts (such as organized civil disobedience), especially those entailing social ostracism or legal punishment, can be powerful tools for norm entrepreneurs seeking to send a message and frame an issue'. In the Catalan case, Puigdemont has taken actions that entailed a high risk of legal punishment from Spanish authorities. For instance, in 2018 the exiled president travelled to Finland despite an arrest warrant issued in Germany (The Straits Times, 2018). The arrest of the Catalan ex-president by the German authorities garnered attention from predominant international media sources (Minder, 2018; BBC News, 2018). Even though Puigdemont was eventually set free, he managed to transmit his message worldwide. Recently, as mentioned above, Puigdemont is running for European elections despite knowing that he could get arrested if he returns to Spain (Gutteridge, 2019). It is clear that Puigdemont is unafraid of legal punishment. Instead, he has employed this threat as a way to promote the Catalan norm.

Finnemore and Sikkink (1998, p. 898) also write that 'ideational commitment is the main motivation when entrepreneurs promote norms or ideas because they believe in the ideals and values embodied in the norms, even though the pursuit of the norms may have no effect on their well-being'. When Carles Puigdemont spoke to BBC Europe about life in self-imposed exile in Belgium (Lee, 2019), he said 'I miss my family, I miss my country'. Puigdemont is under a continuous arrest warrant from Spanish and European police forces. He cannot come back to Spain, and moreover, he declares that he is under the continuous surveillance of Spanish authorities. Nonetheless, Puigdemont declares that he escaped to '...put [the Catalan

issue to] a bigger scenario than ever, and to transform the Catalan crisis into an international or mainly a European issue'. Clearly, pursuing his political ideas held severe repercussions for his daily life. Certainly, an ideological commitment is adhered to by Puigdemont, demonstrating his role as a norm entrepreneur.

In summary, Carles Puigdemont has been the most relevant norm-entrepreneur in the international context among the other exiled Catalan politicians (Braum, 2018). His role has been providential for the Catalan norm, as before his exile, demonstrations and political actions remained mainly within Spanish territory. The fact that norm-entrepreneurs are still in 2018 and 2019 promoting the norm means that the second stage of the norm-life cycle has still not been reached. That can explain why support for independence has not increased during the last three years, however it cannot explain what happened after 2014, as pro-independence norm-entrepreneurs were not as influential in Europe as they did after the exile of the Catalan politicians.

### Organizational Platforms

The different elements of organizational platforms' conceptualization made by Finnemore and Sikkink (1998, p. 899-900) resemble with the pro-independence Catalan organizational platforms. As they write (Finnemore & Sikkink, 1998, p. 899), 'all norm promoters at the international level need some kind of organizational platform from and through which they promote their norms. Sometimes these platforms are constructed specifically for the purpose of promoting the norm, as are many nongovernmental organizations (NGOs)'.

Pro-independence norm entrepreneurs such as Carles Puigdemont have found an essential tool to promote their norms. These organizational platforms, based on grassroots campaigning, have been in the political background: Òmnium Cultural and Assemblea Nacional Catalana (ANC) (Vehí & Noguera, 2019; Cereceda, 2017). They have given Puigdemont (among others), a platform to speak and promote the ideas and norms of Catalan independence. For instance, both Òmnium and the ANC have organized multiple events to protest the Spanish government and to provide support to exiled Catalan politicians (ANC, 2019a; Òmnium, 2018a). Those events are crucial for Puigdemont, as these platforms allow him to speak and to be present (via Skype or recorded video) in Catalonia. Moreover, both Òmnium and the ANC were born specifically to promote Catalan culture. Òmnium was created in 1961 in order to 'preserve the Catalan culture' during the Franco dictatorship, and the ANC defines itself as 'a cross-sectional and unitary organization with the objective to achieve independence for Catalonia through democratic and pacific means' (Cereceda, 2017).

Finnemore and Sikkink (1998, p. 899) note that ‘one prominent feature of modern organizations and an important source of influence for international organizations in particular is their use of expertise and information to change the behavior of other actors. Expertise, in turn, usually resides in professionals, and a number of empirical studies document the ways that professional training of bureaucrats in these organizations helps or blocks the promotion of new norms within standing organizations.’ The contact between Puigdemont and the leaders of the above-mentioned organizations has remained constant. While the Catalan ex-president has been in exile, both Òmnium and the ANC have offered not only their help and support but also cooperation in the development of a political strategy (Òmnium, 2018b; ANC, 2018a). Furthermore, they helped Puigdemont and the other exiled Catalan politicians to organize the Brussels demonstration that took place in December 2017.<sup>7</sup> Òmnium was in charge of the full demonstration and popular mobilization (Òmnium, 2017a).

Finnemore and Sikkink (1998, p. 900) also state that ‘whatever their platform, norm entrepreneurs and the organizations they inhabit usually need to secure the support of state actors to endorse their norms and make norm socialization a part of their agenda, and different organizational platforms provide different kinds of tools for entrepreneurs to do this.’ As has been previously mentioned, Puigdemont has denounced the past actions of the Spanish government. His strategic partner in carrying out these actions has been the ANC. This organization collected signatures to apply Article 7 of the Lisbon treaty to Spain (ANC, 2019b), a project in which Puigdemont has been actively involved. Moreover, Òmnium started an international campaign called ‘democracy on trial’ with the aim to ‘get the whole of European society involved in the defense of fundamental rights’ (Òmnium, 2019a). The two organizations have made efforts to influence other states, particularly in Europe. In summary, similarly to norm-entrepreneurs, organizational platforms have been actively promoting the norm during the last three years, which demonstrates that the Catalan norm is relying on organization platforms to be promoted as it is described in the first stage of the norm-life cycle. This fact can explain why support for independence has not grown recently, but it does not explain why it got stagnated after 2014.

### Tipping point

The two crucial actors involved in the first stage of NLCT seem to be actively participating in the international context. Thus, if norm entrepreneurs and organizational platforms are still required, it means that the ‘Catalan norm’ is in the first stage. Nonetheless, Finnemore & Sikkink (1998) argued that in order for a norm to reach the second stage, some

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<sup>7</sup> “Catalan independence: 45,000 protesters march in Brussels to support exiled president Carles Puigdemont” (Stone, 2017).

requirements must be met. The authors argue (1998, p. 900) that a norm 'must become institutionalized in specific sets of international rules and organizations' to reach the tipping point where at least one-third of the total states in the system adopt the norm. In addition, the authors clarify that some states are more critical than others, defining critical states as 'those without which the achievement of the substantive norm goal is compromise' (Finnemore & Sikkink, 1998, p. 901). The following empirical evidence presented shows that those requirements have been far from fulfilled.

The acceptance of the Catalan norm<sup>8</sup> was tested at the international level in 2017 with the unilateral declaration of independence (UDI). In October of that year, the Catalan parliament approved a motion to transfer legal powers from Spain to an independent Catalonia (BBC, 2017). The UDI represented one of the main tenets of the Catalan norm: the right of self-determination. Therefore, the acceptance or refusal of that declaration by international actors would indirectly block its adaptation. The declaration prompted a worldwide reaction, but very little international recognition of an independent Catalonia (Cetra & Tàrrega, 2018, p. 136). Some of the international reactions included a declaration of the United Nations, 'For now, the Secretary-General encourages all concerned to seek solutions within the framework of the Spanish constitution and through established political and legal channels' (Tass, 2017). A statement from the Chinese government that regarded the Catalan DUI as 'a domestic affair of Spain and understands and supports the Spanish government's effort to maintain national unity, ethnic solidarity and territorial integrity' (Hui, 2017). Lastly, the United States declared that 'Catalonia is an integral part of Spain, and the United States supports the Spanish government's constitutional measures to keep Spain strong and united' (Smith-Spark & Rebaza, 2017).

Other UN members followed a similar pattern and only regional governments such as the Flemish region (Belgium), Corsica (France) or Sardinia (Italy) showed some degree of support for the UDI (Arnoudt & Vanherle, 2017; Franceinfo, 2017; Ansa News, 2017). The numbers show that the UDI is far from being accepted by one-third of states internationally, and that global actors who recognised an independent Catalonia have little impact on international relations. Undoubtedly, international recognition of the UDI could have further tipped the scale towards regional self-determination (Jamar & Vigness, 2010). Moreover, international recognition is essential to Catalan organizational platforms. In fact, failure to gain significant international recognition has impacted the support for many secessionist entities (Farley, 2010, p. 793).

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<sup>8</sup> Described in page XX

Certainly, states' refusal to recognise the Catalan UDI means that international actors have not accepted the right of self-determination for Catalonia. In addition, the European Union reaction has been similar yet also had a more extensive impact. The EU did not recognize Catalonia as an independent state (Tusk, 2017) but also the EU has denied questions about the issue and remained silent during the 2017 referendum and the trial of the Catalan leaders (Nació Digital, 2015; Emmott, 2017; Sarri, 2019). In summary, both the international and European context show no signs of reaching the tipping point. The norm has not been adopted by any critical actor or institutionalized by international or European organizations.

Hence, it is argued that first stage actors (norm entrepreneurs and organizational platforms) are still present because they need to persuade international actors and institutionalize the norm. Why institutions such as the European Union refuse to acknowledge the norm or why no state decided to recognize the Catalan UDI can be explained by external dynamics. Indeed, the success of norms not only depends on the norm by itself but also of the 'norm environment'. Florini (1996) compares the normative environment to environmental factors: whether a biological organism survives depends on 'climate, predators, prey, the availability of water, and anything else that affects the organism's survival' (Florini, 1996, p. 370). Similarly, the survival of a norm will depend on its interaction with and confrontation of other prevailing norms. Krook and True (2010) argue that a norm will succeed and gain attention if it fits with pre-existing cultural values or is associated with other widely accepted normative ideas, two conditions that the Catalan norm seems not to have acquired. Certainly, the normative environment of both the international context and the European institutions play against the values promoted.

Carles Puigdemont has emphasized the importance of self-determination multiple times (Harrington, 2019; Catalan News, 2018), with claims such as 'it is time to take another step to internationalise the right to self-determination in Catalonia from the heart of Europe to the whole world' (Euractiv, 2019). Surely, self-determination has been one of the most important values of the 'cluster of norms' involved in Catalan independence. Yet, the right of self-determination is highly contested in international relations. Territorial integrity has been a bedrock principle of the modern international system, and the UDI is considered a violation of territorial integrity and therefore contrary to international law (Ker-Lindsay, 2013). Moreover, 'the principle of respect for territorial integrity is enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations and other international instruments' (Koroma, 2010). Therefore, trying to promote a norm that is even partially based on the right of self-determination presents a seemingly impossible challenge.

In addition, the Spanish government has always opposed any proposal by the international community to establish legal principles for self-determination (Jamar & Vigness, 2010). Thus, Catalan norm entrepreneurs not only have to face the principles of the international community but also the actions of the Spanish government. In short, the Catalan norm is challenging pre-existing cultural values and fighting other norms with a more favourable reception. This highly competitive and disadvantageous international normative environment is keeping the Catalan norm stuck in the first stage, preventing it from reaching the tipping point.

In the same way, the European normative environment is equally or even more challenging. European policies, institutions and processes are shaped by member state governments that try to enforce their domestic preferences outside of their borders (Börzel, 2003, p. 19). Multiple scholars have also found a strong link between European institutions and officials and domestic actors (Ivanova, 2016; Hooghe, 2005). Hence, the Catalan norm will always be at a disadvantage against norms promoted by the Spanish government within the European Union. In conclusion, both the European and international context present a highly disadvantageous normative environment for the Catalan norm to succeed.

### ***3.2.2 Domestic context***

This section reiterates the question regarding the presence of first stage actors. It is essential to analyse whether norm entrepreneurs and organizational platforms still promote the Catalan norm within the domestic (Spanish) context. Furthermore, the strategies and actors need to be compared with the norm entrepreneurs involved in the international context.

#### Norm entrepreneurs

In order to analyse the norm entrepreneurs involved in the domestic context, an anomaly must be acknowledged. The leaders of Òmnium and the ANC, and several of the most important Catalan political leaders in recent years, have been in prison for almost two years (Blakeley, 2018). This is highly relevant, as most of them were present and involved in the events of October 2017.<sup>9</sup> Therefore, between 2018 and 2019 individuals like Jordi Cuixart (the president of Òmnium), Jordi Sánchez (the former president of the ANC) and Oriol Junqueras (the leader of the Catalan secessionist party Esquerra Republicana, or ERC) among others, have operated for the most part outside of the public sphere.

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<sup>9</sup> For instance, both Jordi Cuixart and Jordi Sánchez were involved in the protests in Barcelona on 20 September 2017, a mobilization that took place to protest the sweeping raids of the Spanish police (Strange, 2017). Both of them are still in prison in 2019.

In order to emphasize the most recent developments of the Catalan norm, only Catalan politicians who are not in prison are considered. In this case, the focus is on Catalan politicians with more influence in the domestic context, particularly those with seats in the Spanish parliament. The only pro-independence political party to have their own parliamentary group<sup>10</sup> between 2016 and 2019 was Esquerra Republicana (ERC). Consequently, two of the main political figures of the group, Gabriel Rufián and Joan Tardà, are studied.

The norm entrepreneur requirements applied to Carles Puigdemont are employed in the evaluation of Joan Tardà and Gabriel Rufián. Once again, Finnemore & Sikkink (1998) ascribe the following characteristics to a norm entrepreneur: activists who call attention to issues, need to be explicitly inappropriate and are ideologically committed. Some of their actions to draw attention include Rufián's removal of a printer from the Spanish parliament to criticize the Spanish prosecution of the 2017 referendum (El Mundo, 2017) or the speech of Joan Tardà in the Spanish parliament. Tardà said, 'if Mr.Casado [the leader of the Spanish conservative party] could, he would shoot us' (El Confidencial, 2018). Both Tardà and Rufián tried to dramatize or use certain language in their public statements to attract more mainstream media attention. Moreover, they carried out actions that were 'deliberately inappropriate' in order to send a message. For instance, Tardà has called several times for civil and political disobedience (La Vanguardia, 2018a; La Vanguardia, 2018b), and Rufián has been threatened with expulsion from the Parliament due to his 'inappropriate attitude' (Mayor, 2017). Lastly, their role in Spanish politics has exposed them to multiple death threats, even against their families (Informalia, 2018; HuffPost, 2018; La Vanguardia, 2016).

### Organizational Platforms

In this case, no distinction between the international and domestic context is needed. The organizational platforms (ANC and Òmnium) have been active in both scenarios. Both have offered a platform, information and support not only to Tardà and Rufián, but also to other Catalan politicians and figures. For instance, both Gabriel Rufián and Joan Tardà have made use of these platforms to express their opinions and promote certain ideas (La Vanguardia, 2018b; Òmnium, 2017b; ANC, 2019c).<sup>11</sup> Furthermore, other activities and rallies organized by include conferences, demonstrations and collaborative projects with other Spanish organizations (Òmnium, 2019b; Òmnium, 2019c; ANC, 2018b).

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<sup>10</sup> Political parties with their own parliamentary group enjoy greater participation in the institution. A party must have at least 15 deputies to form a parliamentary group.

<sup>11</sup> Those political rallies were organized to support the right of self-determination or to protest the imprisonment of Catalan politicians (La Vanguardia, 2018b; ANC, 2019c).

In summary, Òmnium and the ANC are also key organizational platforms in the domestic context. They offer essential information, support and a platform to norm entrepreneurs within Spain. However, in the domestic context they are less focused on influencing the domestic agenda or convincing other domestic actors. Their campaigns and demonstrations in Spain seem to be focused only on the provision of information and logistic support.

### Tipping point

Norm entrepreneurs and organizational platforms, essential actors in the first stage, seem to be active in the domestic context as well. But, have the tipping point requirements (Finnemore & Sikkink, 1998) of 'institutionalization' and 'the support of at least one-third of actors' been reached? The answer is clear: the norm has failed to reach the level of Spanish institutions and the norm entrepreneurs have been unable to garner support in the Spanish parliament. In fact, the Spanish government and leaders of parliament have been silent on or outright opposed to any proposal to negotiate a referendum for self-determination (CCMA, 2017). Examples include:

**February 2013:** The Spanish Parliament rejected a proposal made by CiU (a now-extinct right-wing liberal Catalan political party) to respect the right of self-determination and organize a referendum. The vote was 60 MPs in favour and 275 MPs against (EFE, 2013).

**September 2013:** Artur Mas (president of Catalonia from 2010 to 2015) sent a letter to Mariano Rajoy (Spanish president between 2011 and 2018) formally requesting a referendum. The only response was 'to respect the Spanish legal framework' (La Moncloa, 2013).

**April 2014:** The Catalan parliament proposed that the Spanish parliament allow it to hold a referendum. The vast majority of the chamber opposed the proposal: 44 MPs in favour; 299 MPs against (Público, 2014a).

**April 2016:** Carles Puigdemont (president of Catalonia between 2016 and 2017) sent a letter with 46 demands, including the right to hold a referendum. Rajoy rejected any proposal that included holding a referendum on secession (RTVE.es, 2016).

**June 2017:** The Spanish parliament refused to allow the 1<sup>st</sup> of October referendum called by the Catalan parliament: 92 MPs in favour; 250 MPs against (La Vanguardia, 2017a).

Thus, the right of self-determination for Catalonia (a key value for the Catalan norm) has been constantly denied by the Spanish parliament. The norm has not reached the level of Spanish institutions, nor managed to gain the support of one-third of the chamber. The answer to why the norm is stuck in the first stage of the NCLT is similar to the international context: the external dynamics oppose its emergence.

As has been previously mentioned, the Spanish government holds a strong position against the right of self-determination (Jamar & Vigness, 2010). For instance, Spain is one of only five EU states not to recognize the sovereignty of Kosovo.<sup>12</sup> Beginning in 1966, the UN approved multiple resolutions directed at Spain and the issue of the Sahrawis' right of self-determination in North Africa. Spain resisted these entreaties for nearly a decade (Franck & Hoffman, 1975, p. 338). The historic political position of the Spanish government makes it harder for the Catalan norm to enter Spanish institutions. Moreover, the Spanish normative environment is hostile to the Catalan right of self-determination. Four out of the five major Spanish political parties oppose a referendum on secession (Benito & Guisado, 2019). Those four political parties represent 270 out of 350 members of the Spanish parliament, a vast majority that the Catalan norm has to fight against. In fact, political parties such as VOX and Ciudadanos proposed the elimination of the autonomy of Catalan political institutions.

Norm socialization is crucial to the success of 'norm cascading' in stage two (Finnemore & Sikkink, 1998). However, socialization can only occur if national elites show some degree of political will and commitment to recognize and promote the new norm (Ivanova, 2016), a condition that is clearly not met in the Spanish context. Moreover, the norm cannot escape the domestic context, as some features such as self-determination or cultural recognition depend on laws and decisions that must be taken within Spanish institutions. For instance, the last time norm entrepreneurs tried to dodge Spanish authority with the 2017 referendum, the turnout was not relevant enough (43%) and international observers declared that the referendum lacked important requirements for legitimacy (Cetra & Tàrrega, 2018). Hence, the Spanish institutions' collaboration is indispensable to the success of the norm. In conclusion, since 2013, the Catalan norm has struggled to find domestic support in Spanish institutions and still in 2019 there are norm-entrepreneurs and organizational platforms actively promoting the norm. Therefore, it is argued that the Catalan norm has faced an hostile normative environment since 2013, and the consequent lack of domestic support has affected the popular support for secession in Catalonia.

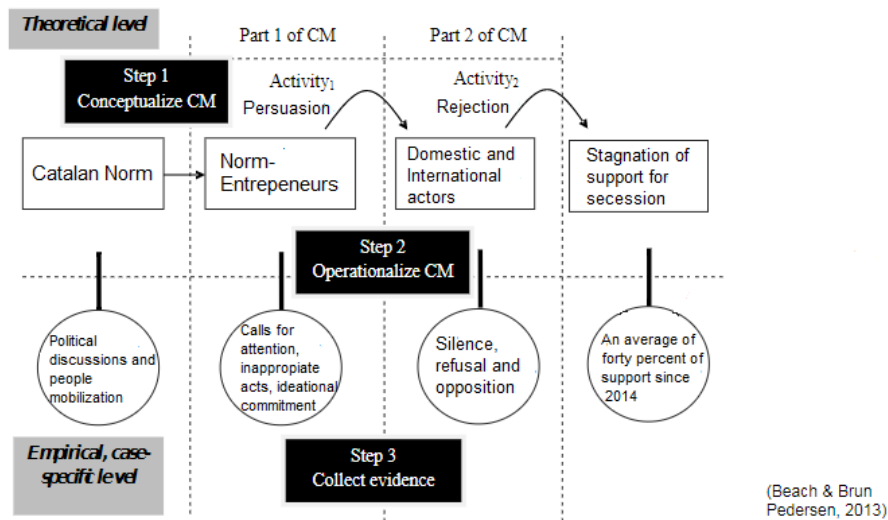
In summary, both hypotheses follow the same causal mechanisms pattern (Figure 5). Norm entrepreneurs actively promote the norm in both domestic and international contexts. However, international and domestic actors refuse to adopt it. Some have argued that this refusal is the consequence of a highly competitive environment. The international and Spanish scenarios are dominated by other norms opposed to the right of self-determination. Therefore, the normative environment plays against Catalan independence, making it difficult for it to

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<sup>12</sup> The Spanish position on Kosovo can be found in "Kosovo Calling: International Conference to Launch Position Papers on Kosovo's Relation with EU and Regional Non-recognising Countries" Kosovo Foundation for Open Society and British Council (2012).

reach the tipping point. The fact that the norm cannot reach the cascade stage explains why the idea of Catalan secession failed to maintain its momentum.

**Figure 5: Theory-testing process tracing for the Catalan norm**



Source: Own adaptation of Beach & Pedersen (2013)

### 3.3 Empirical findings on Resource Mobilization Theory

#### 3.3.1 Pro-independence SMOs resource salience

Between 2009 and 2011, fifty-eight per cent of Catalan municipalities held an unofficial, nonbinding plebiscite at the local level, asking if the ‘Catalan nation should become an independent, democratic and social state within the European Union’. Participation within these municipalities was not homogenous and some of them only reached five per cent of the population while others reached ninety per cent. Muñoz and Guinjoan (2013) found that the availability of resources of the movement explained the turnout rates in the plebiscite. The municipalities wherein SMOs put more effort and resources experienced a bigger turnout. Thus, mobilization efforts by Catalan pro-independence SMOs were key to the promotion of participation in different municipalities. With this knowledge, the first proposition will follow the same logic.

(H1) The first hypothesis builds on the premise that pro-independence SMOs could not keep resource salience as high as they did in previous years. As soon as the main SMOs (Òmnium and ANC) experienced a stoppage in the inflow of resources, the pro-independence mobilization consequently stagnated. To increase support, more resources should have been accumulated.

Scholars have stressed the importance of intellectual and political elites in formulating nationalist projects and recruiting supporters (Guibernau, 1999, p.8). However, in the Catalan

case, SMOs have been more important than political elites, and this civil commitment has led many people to characterize the movement as a ‘bottom-up’ phenomenon (Cramer, 2015, p. 105). Undoubtedly, SMOs such as Òmnium and the ANC have been key actors in the evolution of Catalonia’s recent progress towards majority support for secession (Cramer, 2015, p. 104). All the large-scale demonstrations, concerts, traditional cultural events, websites, videos, books and international publicity campaigns have been organized by either one or both SMOs (Cramer, 2015, p. 105).

Nonetheless, pro-independence SMOs have been popularly known by their mobilizing capability. For instance, the ANC was the main organizer of the 2014 demonstration, the Via Catalana. The ANC led the coordination, organization and publicization of a demonstration of 1,8 million people in the streets of Barcelona (Rosenfeld & Serra, 2014). Moreover, the ANC also carries out transport, entertainment and financing tasks (Cramer, 2015, p. 115). Similarly, Òmnium has supported the ANC in the organization of some grand-scale demonstrations. It also has organized its own promotional campaigns (Gozzer, 2017; Casals, 2013).

Since 2010, Òmnium and the ANC<sup>13</sup> have experienced undeniable success in mobilizing people. The following table summarizes the main events in which the SMOs have been involved.

**Table 1: Demonstrations partially or completely organized by Òmnium or the ANC**

Date	Event	Participation
July 10 - 2010	Grand-scale demonstration (Barcelona) <i>‘Som una nació. Nosaltres decidim’</i> . We are a nation. We decide	1,1 million
September 11 - 2010	Commemorative event (Barcelona) Diada de Catalunya – Catalonia national day	50,000
September 11 - 2011	Commemorative event (Barcelona) Diada de Catalunya – Catalonia national day	50,000
September 11 - 2012	Grand-scale demonstration (Barcelona) <i>‘Catalunya, nou estat d’Europa’</i> – Catalonia, a new state of Europe	1,5 million
June 29 - 2013	Concert (Barcelona) <i>‘Concert per la Llibertat’</i> – Concert for freedom	90,000
September 11 - 2013	Grand-scale demonstration (Catalonia) <i>‘La via catalana’</i> – The Catalan way	1,6 million
September 11 - 2014	Grand-scale demonstration (Barcelona) <i>‘La via catalana 2014’</i> – The Catalan way 2014	1,8 million
September 11 - 2015	Grand-scale demonstration (Barcelona) <i>‘Via lliure’</i> – The way of freedom	1,4 million

<sup>13</sup> Assemblea Nacional Catalana has taken part in mobilization efforts from 2012 onwards.

September 11 - 2016	Grand-scale demonstration (Catalonia) 'A punt' – Ready	850,000
September 11 - 2017	Grand-scale demonstration (Barcelona) 'La diada del sí' – The day of yes	1 million
December 7 - 2017	Grand-scale demonstration (Brussels) Wake up, Europe	45,000
September 11 - 2018	Grand-scale demonstration (Barcelona) 'Fem la República Catalana' – We make the Catalan Republic	1 million

Source: Òmnium and the ANC official websites. Participation data from the local police department (Guàrdia Urbana).

**Figure 6: ANC and Òmnium Grand-scale mobilization participation between 2010 and 2018**



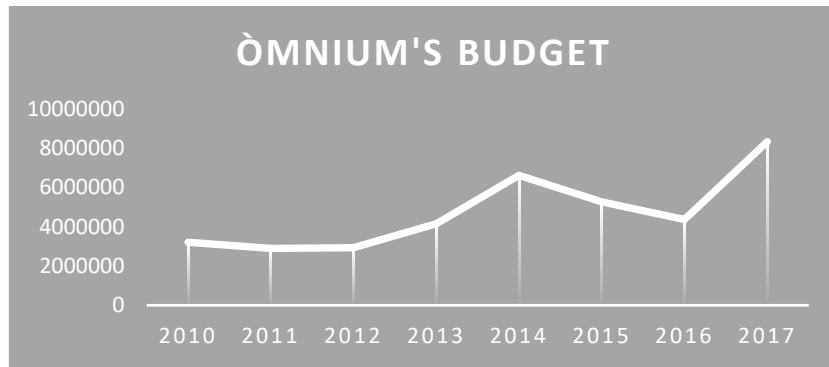
Source: Local police department (Guàrdia Urbana)

People's participation in the large-scale demonstrations on the national day of Catalonia and other events, depicts a similar pattern of support for Catalan secession (Figure 6). On September 2014, the peak mobilization was reached when 1,8 million people protested in the streets. Since then, the numbers have decreased and consolidated to around 1 million. Nonetheless, are those numbers a consequence of the resource mobilization of Òmnium and the ANC?

### Òmnium

Òmnium has been especially focused on organizing cultural and social events. Their spending on organizing and promoting those activities increased from 2010 to 2014 (Figure 7). However, during 2015 and 2016 the SMO clearly decreased its expenditure, a trend that did not last long. In 2017 the organization's expenditure on organizing activities reached its maximum historical peak, almost nine million euros.

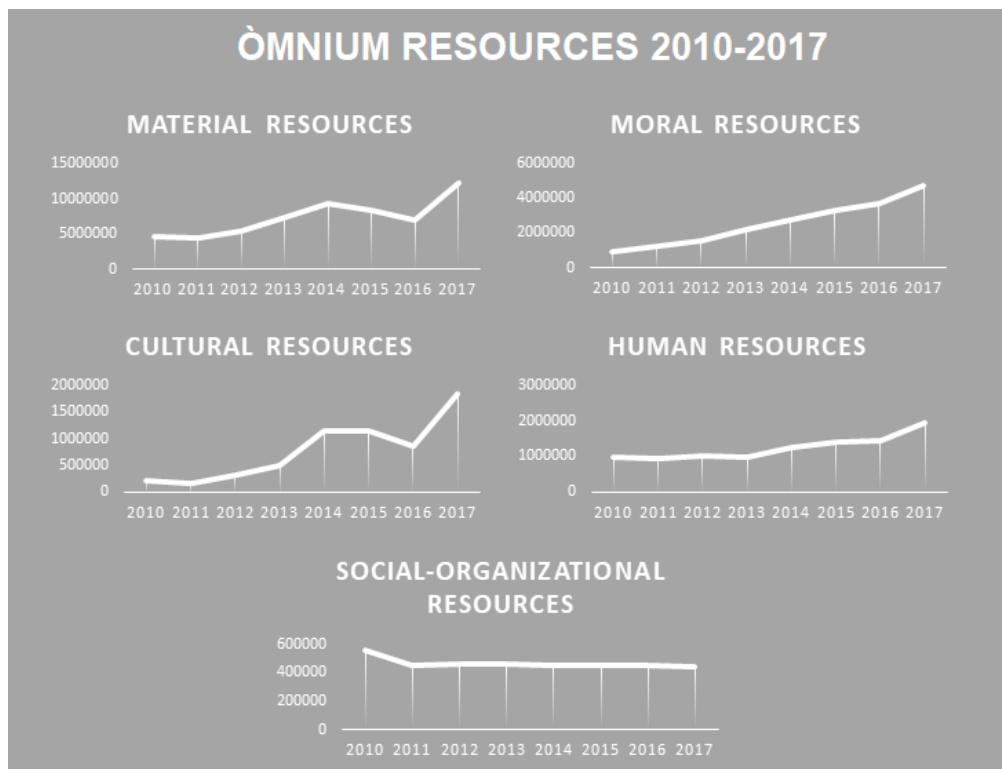
**Figure 7: Òmniùm's expenditure on organizing activities**



Source: Òmniùm.cat

Material resources (money and supplies) and cultural resources (spending on marketing and public relations) show a similar trend (Figure 8). During 2015 and 2016, the SMO suffered a decrease in these particular categories. Nonetheless, this decrease does not appear for other categories as Òmniùm has been steadily increasing their moral and human resources. The only exception is social-organizational resources, which have been consolidated for almost seven years. Overall, Òmniùm has to manage at least a six-figure budget for each category. The largest budget goes to material resources (around 12 million euros) and moral resources (around 5 million euros).

**Figure 8: Òmniùm spending on material, moral, cultural, human and social-organizational resources**

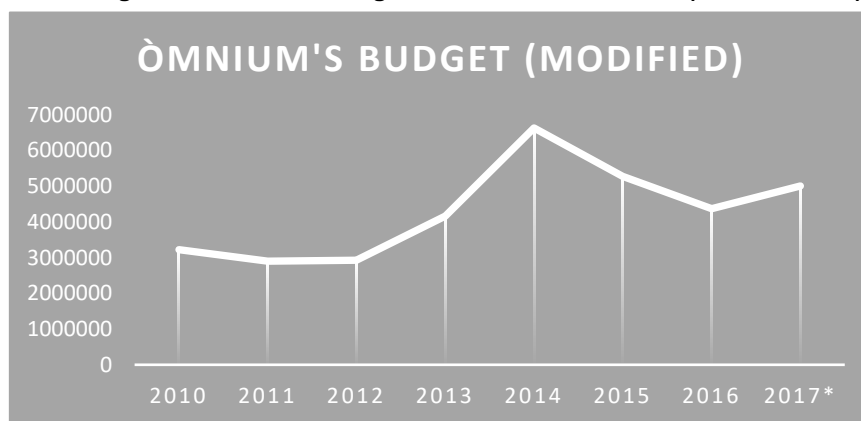


Source: Òmniùm.cat

The decrease in resources salience after 2014 could be a conceivable explanation for the stagnation of support for Catalan independence. However, in 2017 a sudden increase in resources took place, which does not fit the theoretical explanation. Nonetheless, there is an event that can explain this ‘anomaly’. The 1<sup>st</sup> of October referendum was a challenge unheard of for both Òmnium and the ANC, especially because of the fact that this referendum was organized without any financial help from the public administration (La Vanguardia, 2018c). Thus, during 2017 both of the pro-independence SMOs had to set aside a large part of their budget and focus most of their activities on promoting and organizing the referendum. For instance, Òmnium had to allocate almost half of their 2017 budget to the referendum (Rendueles & Fernández, 2018).

Furthermore, they implied that from May 2017 to October 2017, all Òmnium efforts will be solely focused on the referendum (Rendueles & Fernández, 2018). Hence, the activities and promotion focused on mobilization and the promotion of Catalan independence were actually less. In other words, during 2017 Òmnium did not really focus on converting bystanders, who are potential beneficiaries, into adherents (McCarthy & Zald, 1977, p. 1222), but on organizing and promoting the referendum. The organization estimated its referendum expenditure at around forty per cent of its 2017 budget (Rendueles & Fernández, 2018). Hence, if those resources are ignored in the data, the new graph looks like Figure 9.

**Figure 9: Òmnium’s budget between 2010 and 2017 (2017 modified)**



Source: Òmnium.cat

### Assemblea Nacional Catalana

The economic reports of the ANC show a similar trend. While in 2017 the ANC spent eight million euros on their activities, that decreased to six and half million euros in 2018. Moreover, material resources in 2018 were reduced to thirteen million from twenty-one million in 2017, and in 2018 the ANC spent half the money they did in 2017 on cultural resources (768,254 euros). The first of October was also a huge feat for the ANC: most of their donations were due to the referendum and most of their activities and campaigns were also focused on

the campaign (La Vanguardia, 2018d). In conclusion, although ANC economic data is not enough to perform a chronological analysis, the change in resources between 2017 and 2018 shows that 2017 was also an atypical year, as they allocated part of their budget to fund the first of October referendum.

### **3.3.2 Counter-Campaign**

The problem with the first hypothesis is that only pro-independence SMOs are studied. Catalan secession is not a unidimensional movement. There is also a 'pro-unity' campaign sponsored by Spanish political parties such as Ciudadanos or Partido Popular. Some highlights of their campaign include demonstrations and rallies for the unity of Spain (The Local, 2017a) and the creation of a fictional state called 'Tabarnia', a parody of the secessionist movement (BBC, 2018). Therefore, the fact that pro-independence SMOs have struggled to mobilize people since 2014 might not be entirely because of a lack of resources, but a result of the counter-campaign by pro-unity SMOs. Hence, the second hypothesis argues that the stagnation of support for secession was the result of resource mobilization by pro-unity SMOs.

Actors against the secession of Catalonia are multiple and diverse. From newspapers (Xicoy, Perales & Xambó, 2017, p. 1053), to the Spanish government (Strubell, 2016, p. 12) and even the main Spanish political parties: PP, PSOE and Ciudadanos (Bernat & Whyte, 2019, p. 50). Nonetheless, the only actor that fits the description of a SMO and is fully dedicated to defending the union of Spain is Societat Civil Catalana (SCC). SCC has been the only successful mobilization platform for the 'pro-Spain side' (Carrasco, Villar & Tejedor, 2018; Borràs, 2019, p. 29).

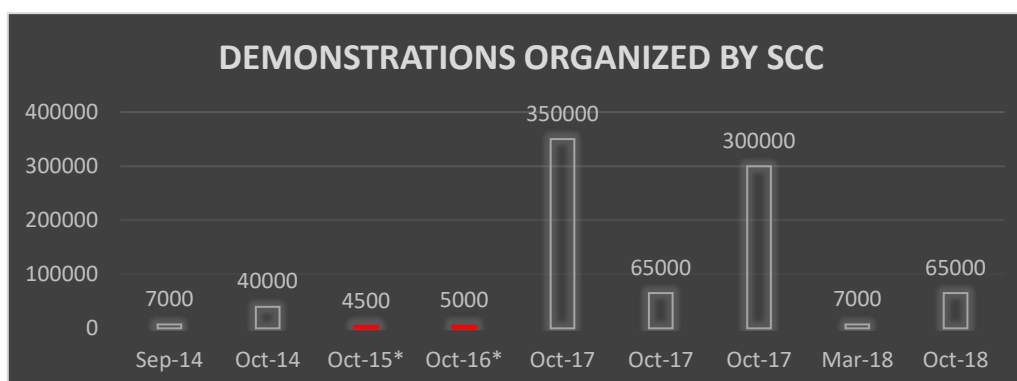
SCC defines itself as 'an association to promote the cohesion and coexistence between the citizens in Catalonia and the rest of Spanish people'. SCC has received multiple support from PP, Ciudadanos and PSC (the Catalan socialist party). In fact, members of those parties have been involved and supported numerous SCC demonstrations (Borràs, 2019, p. 15). SCC has been used as a unifying platform for those against the independence of Catalonia. This organization was created in an attempt to counterbalance the ANC and Òmnium, and to oppose the Catalan pro-independence movement (Borràs, 2019, p. 16). Moreover, SCC was born from the union of three organizations: Moviment Cívic d'Espanya i Catalans, Somatemp and Federalistes d'Esquerres, SMOs that were created in 2012 to also imitate the demonstrations organized by Òmnium and the ANC (Borràs, 2019, p. 33). Nevertheless, those former organizations were never successful in mobilizing important numbers of people. Only SCC has been able to organize the most important pro-unity grand-scale demonstrations in Catalonia during recent years:

**Table 2: Demonstrations partially or completely organized by Societat Civil Catalana**

Date	Event	Participation	Source
September 11 - 2014	Demonstration (Tarragona) 'Recuperem el seny, recuperem la senyera' – Let's recover sanity, let's recover our flag	7,000	(CCMA, 2014)
October 12 – 2014	Grand-scale demonstration (Barcelona) 'España para todos' – Spain for all	40,000	(The Guardian, 2014)
October 8 – 2017	Grand-scale demonstration (Barcelona) 'Recuperem el seny' – Let's recover sanity	350,000	(Piñol, 2017)
October 12 – 2017	Grand-scale demonstration (Barcelona) 'Cataluña sí, España también' – Catalonia yes, Spain too	65,000	(La Vanguardia, 2017b)
October 29- 2017	Grand-scale demonstration (Barcelona) 'Cataluña somos todos' – We are all Catalonia	300,000	(Graham & Burgen, 2017)
March 18 – 2018	Demonstration (Barcelona) 'Ahora más que nunca, seny' – Now more than never, sanity	7,000	(EuropaPress, 2018)
October 12 – 2018	Grand-scale demonstration (Barcelona) 'Barcelona, garante de la Hispanidad' – Barcelona, the guarantor of Spanish-ness	65,000	(El Mundo, 2018)

Source: Multiple sources. Participation data gathered from the local police department (Guàrdia Urbana)

**Figure 10: Demonstrations organized by SCC between 2014 and 2018**



Source: Local police department (Guàrdia Urbana)

SCC does not offer enough information about resources or demonstrations in which they have participated. Therefore, it is necessary to gather information and data from third parties. In any case, SCC mobilization efforts were mainly used in October 2017 (Figure 10). During 2015 and 2016, SCC refused to take part in the Spain national holiday demonstrations on October 12, which only gathered around 5,000 people (El Periódico, 2015; El Periódico, 2016). Whenever SCC has completely or partially organized the 'Día de la Hispanidad' in Barcelona, the numbers have been remarkably high: 40,000 in 2014, 65,000 in 2017 and 65,000 in 2018. Nonetheless, their largest mobilizations were in response to the first of October referendum (350,000 people) and against the DUI of 27 October 2017 (300,000 people).

Similarly, the economic reports of the organization are inaccessible through their website. Only the economic report (profits and losses) of 2014, its initial year, is available (Table 3). If the resources of SCC in 2014 are compared with Òmnium's resources in 2014, it is clear that the pro-independence SMO is more economically powerful. However, SCC received the vast majority of its funding from a different source. Ninety-seven per cent of its total earnings in 2014 comes from private investors, while Òmnium only received twenty-four per cent of their earnings from the same source. Moreover, the vast majority of this money was used by SCC to organize two demonstrations in 2014 (Figure 8) (Público, 2014b). To put it another way, SCC and Òmnium do not share the same funding strategy. While Òmnium and the ANC are grassroots organizations (Teran, 2019), SCC has relied on unknown private investors (Borràs, 2019).

In summary, the pro-unity actors launched a SMO in 2014 with enough resources to partially counterattack pro-independence platforms. In addition, although SCC economic information is not accessible after 2014, some documents were leaked to the Spanish media in 2016. During that year, it is believed that three of the most powerful banks in Spain: BBVA, Banco Santander and CaixaBank, donated almost €800,000 to SCC (Borràs & Rodríguez, 2019). The same journalists who uncovered this story believe that those resources were used to organize the grand-scale demonstrations of 2017 (Figure 8) similar to events in 2014.

**Table 3: Resource inflow for SCC and Òmnium in 2014.**

	<b>SCC 2014</b>	<b>Òmnium 2014</b>
General Budget	1.084.387€	6.628.831€
Human Resources	70.864€	1.248.232€
Social-organizational Res.	49.005€	454.613€
Cultural Resources	264.202€	1.148.886€
Moral Resources	15.250€	2.707.735€
Private Donations	963.053€	295.677€

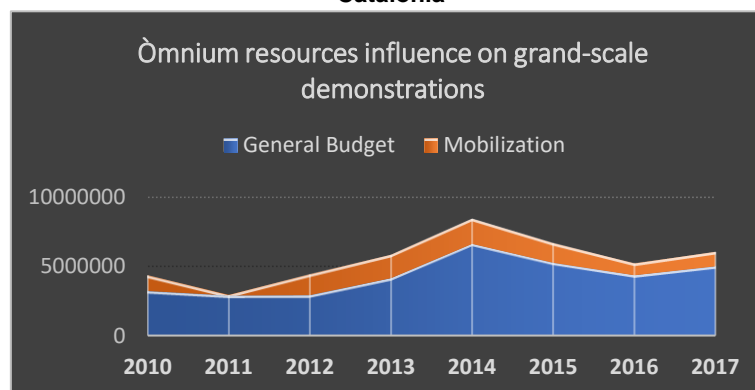
Source: SCC and Òmnium official websites

### 3.3.3 Summary and interpretation of key findings

The first hypothesis and subsequent sub-hypotheses seem to show mixed results. First, human, moral and social-organizational resources had a steady evolution (Figure 8) showing no apparent effect on either mobilization or support for independence. Those findings contradict claims that link social-organizational resources to patterns of movement mobilization (Edwards & Kane, 2014, p. 215) or that stress the importance of voluntary participation on a SMO (Edwards & Kane, 2016, p. 2). Nonetheless, material and cultural resources, to the contrary, show correlation with popular mobilization. These findings support the significance of material resources, which are fundamental for any SMO (Edwards & Kane, 2014, p. 212). In addition, the results support the idea that cultural resources are crucial to mobilize people (Jenkins, 1983, p. 538; Edwards & Kane, 2014, p. 216). In fact, since the emergence of social media, these resources are even more important for grassroots organizations (Hara & Estrada, 2005, p. 503).

Furthermore, some scholars have found that both Òmnium and the ANC have relied heavily on cultural resources like media coverage and social media as tools for mobilization (Muñoz & Guinjoan, 2013, p. 63; Cramer, 2015, p. 110). Undoubtedly, this study confirms what previous scholarship had already demonstrated: that resources and organizations remain important in understanding popular mobilization (Edwards & Kane, 2016, p. 4; Cress and Snow, 1996; Zald, 1992), and the necessary role played by Òmnium Cultural, as Muñoz & Guinjoan (2013) previously confirmed in their study of the 2009-2011 referendum.

**Figure 11: Òmnium's budget from 2010 to 2017 and participation in grand-scale demonstrations in Catalonia**



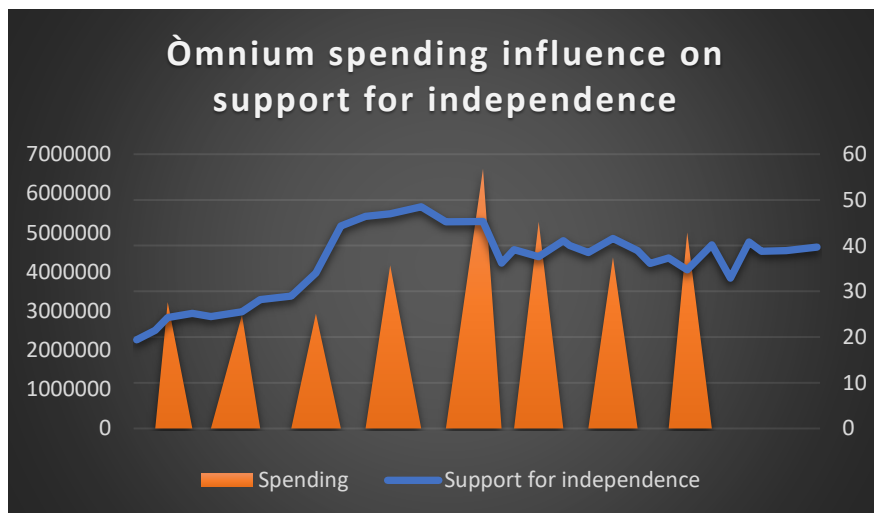
Source: Òmnium.cat and the local police department (Guàrdia Urbana)

Zald & McCarthy (2002) argued that the ability to mobilize people is directly connected to a desire for change, and secession is a change in itself. A range of social movements have achieved their objectives because of their effectiveness in facilitating subsequent mobilization (Edwards & Kane, 2014, p. 209). Mobilization is key to persuade possible new adherents to support the movement. Even if a person decides not to be part of a pro-independence SMO,

the constant social media chatter that surrounds the grand-scale demonstrations can influence them to join forthcoming events or to share a common grievance (Cramer, 2015, p. 110). In other words, collective action or mobilization can predict the likelihood of emerging preferences (McCarthy & Zald, 1977, p. 1218). Hence, those SMOs, like Òmnium and the ANC, and their efforts to mobilize people are key to understand support for secession in Catalonia, a claim supported by Cramer (2015, p. 117) when she argued that SMOs had a significant influence in helping the pro-independence movement to achieve its goals.

In conclusion, everything comes back to the basic tenets of RMT: the formation of ideology and social action can be explained by the ability of a SMO to mobilize resources (McCarthy & Zald, 1973, p. 1). The highest peak of support for independence, in early 2014, coincides with the highest budget that Òmnium had to fund their activities (Figure 9). After 2014, Òmnium's budget decreased considerably and then stagnated at a lower level, and so did the support for Catalan independence. Therefore, this data shows a similar trend to the first hypothesis: popular support for Catalan secession stagnated since 2014 because the secessionist movement could not maintain resource salience due to a decline in mobilization resources.

**Figure 12: Òmnium spending from 2010 to 2017 compared to support for Catalan independence from 2010 to 2018**

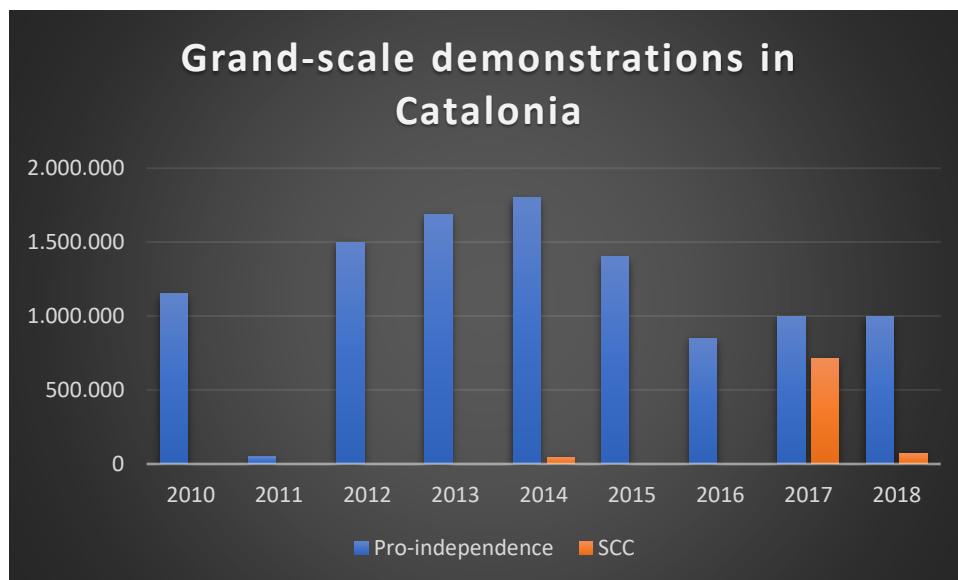


Source: Òmnium.cat and Centre d'estudis d'opinió

2014 was not only the year when support for independence started to decrease, but it was also when pro-unity actors started their counter-campaign. In RMT, a set of opinions and beliefs of a population opposed to a social movement is known as a 'counter-movement' (McCarthy & Zald, 1977, p. 1218). Counter-movements, represented by SCC in this case, become entwined in an ideological battle in response to the mobilization and success of existing social movements (Zald & Useem, 1987).

Undoubtedly, SCC tried to mobilize the pro-unity side on multiple occasions in response to pro-independence demonstrations, to little comparative success (Figure 11). Only in 2017 did SCC achieve a similar mobilization effort compared to pro-independence SMOs. Furthermore, with the available data it is clear that pro-independence SMOs have considerably more resources than SCC (Table 3). Lastly, Banaszak & Ondercin (2010, p. 16) argue that movements must respond to counter-movements. However, when it comes to resource mobilization, there was no increase in pro-independence resources after the creation of SCC. This indicates that SCC was not seen as a major threat by Òmnium. In summary, the counter-movement seems too weak in 2014 to have challenged pro-independence SMOs. Hence, the hypothesis that argued that popular support for Catalan session stagnated since 2014 because a counter-campaign had access to more resources seems unlikely.

**Figure 13: Participation in demonstrations organized by pro-unity and pro-independence SMOs**



Source: Local police department (Guàrdia Urbana)

## Chapter 4: Conclusion

During the last decade, the Catalan political scenario has been dominated by a single issue, the secession of Catalonia from Spain. From 2010 to 2014, the per cent of people who supported an Independent Catalonia grew from a nineteen per cent to almost a forty-nine per cent. However, after 2014 that support decreased to an average of a forty-per cent, and stagnated for the following five years. The question at the centre of this thesis has been focused on explaining why this stagnation happened. All those social and political events post-2014 seem to not have an influence on the popular support for secession. Rather than approaching this question from a single theoretical perspective, this thesis sought to explain the phenomenon based on two different theories. The first, resource mobilization theory, has been used in previous research to explain the mobilization of the Catalan people. The second theory, the norm-life cycle theory (NLCT) has never been used in a similar field of research.

The NLCT premise that norms might face an unfavourable normative environment when trying to reach the socialization stage can be seen as a feasible explanation. Norm-entrepreneurs can find challenging obstacles during the norm emancipation stage, especially if other contradictory norms are present within the international or domestic context. In this case, the “Catalan norm” was partially based on the right of self-determination, an idea that has not been internalized by enough international or domestic actors. For historical reasons, Spanish and international institutions have continuously refused to acknowledge any self-determination attempt. Thus, pro-independence norm-entrepreneurs have still not found enough support to socialize or even institutionalize the Catalan norm. However, there are factors that this theory does not take into account. Undoubtedly, the Catalan norm has been institutionalized, but only in Catalan institutions. The regional context has been completely left out of the analysis in this thesis. Furthermore, the Spanish normative environment in this study involves multiple factors that have not been analysed. For instance, not only can Spain be against Catalan secession because they refuse to acknowledge the right of self-determination, but also because of the economic weight of Catalonia or because of a political campaign. Multiple hypotheses can explain why domestic actors in Spain refuse to support the Catalan right of self-determination. Lastly, norm-entrepreneurship within the international context only became a target after the exile of Catalan politicians in 2017, which does not explain why the stagnation of support for independence happened in 2014.

Resource mobilization theory (RMT) also provides an approach that can explain the main research question. The analysis demonstrates what other scholars have previously found, that the ability to mobilize people depends on the availability of resources that a social movement organization has. The largest pro-independence demonstrations happened when

the two main SMOs spent the most in organizing those grand-scale demonstrations. Furthermore, not only resource mobilization gives an explanation of the number of people mobilized but also for the popular support for Catalonia's secession. Because of a decline in mobilization resources experienced by pro-independence SMOs, the popular support for the Catalan secession has stagnated since 2014. With this said, the thesis faces a number of limitations. The lack of transparency of some SMOs is an obstruction to analyse the full scope and influence of both the pro-independence and pro-unity movements. Although some data is unavailable, it does appear that pro-independence SMOs have been able to exercise significant influence in influencing Catalan people's attitude towards independence.

The analyses of both theories seem to offer explanations to address the research question. Nonetheless, the RMT perspective seems to offer a more feasible and cohesive explanation. NCLT is able to give a theoretical explanation that fits with the case; however, it does not include how this norm-life cycle actually influences people's attitude towards secession. For example, if the Catalan norm got internalized by the majority of international actors in the system, would this directly influence Catalan popular support for independence? There seems to be a missing link between the norm-life cycle and collective behaviour. A link that is better outlined by RMT, which can be considered as one of the main strengths of the research. The influence of SMOs in the pro-independence movement had been previously studied, but only within single event cases and in a short time period. This thesis has offered for the first time a chronological evolution of SMOs' resource mobilization and Catalan attitude towards secession, proving the interconnection between those variables.

Future research might investigate the development of this relationship with new data. Furthermore, new paths of research can also be pursued. The categorization of resources made by Edwards & Kane (2014) leaves room for different data to be analyzed. For instance, the use of social media for mobilization purposes would be an interesting research proposal, as it has been proven to be key for both pro-independence and pro-unity SMOs. It is clear that Catalonia's independence issue is far from being over, and whether Catalonia becomes a new independent state or stays within Spain will open multiple doors for scientific research. If popular support for secession will increase or decrease in the following years, that is beyond the scope of this thesis.

Lastly, if there is some political advice that can be extracted from this thesis, it is the importance of SMOs and the normative environment. On the one hand, investing or donating to pro-independence SMOs would enhance people mobilization and popular support. On the other hand, framing the Catalan norm not as a right of self-determination, but as a defence of

democracy and culture could work as a better strategy to be used within the international context.

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