



- Committee:** Special, Political and Decolonization Committee, GA3
- Issue:** Stabilizing the position of autonomous communities
- Student Officer:** Koray Karaduman (President Chair)

Introduction to the Issue

Nationalism and separatism, these two parameters can be shown as the biggest factors of independence movements and autonomies throughout history. First nationalist actions that we can take into consideration occurred in the 18th century, within the French Revolution. Following that, nations that were gathered under empires, inspired by the French Revolution started their own revolutions in their own way. Nations declared their independence one after the another, which made nation-states the modern norms of the 19th-century era.



Some say history repeats itself. The French revolution is obviously not going to happen again, in the exact same way it did happen. That would be plagiarism for the history, however, history can paraphrase itself. For instance, the Yellow Vests Movement can be shown as a repetition of the French Revolution. And another crucial example would be the inarguable alikeness between the nationalist acts in the 18th century and 21st century. Particular (Bulgarians, Serbs, Irish etc.) people demanded to follow their own culture, name their cities and villages under their national requisite and work for their people's perpetuity. They fought and splat bloodshed for it. In the end, they got what they wanted it.

As it was before, particular people and folks of regions are demanding their independence or autonomy from their origin states. They demand to follow their own culture, name their cities and villages under their national requisite and work for their people's perpetuity. As a matter of fact, their political demands are turning into hot conflicts in certain geographies such as Turkey and Ukraine.



Such demands of those communities have a couple of reasons to follow their causes.

- Firstly, minorities of such states which are located in focused regions of their country, who are offended by the majority and depressed culturally are tempting to revolt for a land that they will be the majority.
- Secondly, the depression that the globalization causing on local people which forces them to lose their identities and leaves them lost, those lost people's seek for belongingness creates a domino effect and turn that depression into aggression. As it happened in, Catalonia, Basque, Flanders, and Scotland.
- And lastly, the global failure of national governments about keeping their electoral premises to their people. Which is the main reason for leadership -regardless of the left, right or central wing- that getting kicked out of the office in the next term.

Aforementioned movements usually desire to be autonomous from their origin states. Scotland's referendum to leave United Kingdom (UK), UK's referendum to leave the European Union (Brexit), Catalonia's "illegal" referendum to leave Spain etc, secessionism is becoming more and more popular every single day. Oppression upon the people about increasing taxes and governmental crises -such as the European Refugee Crisis- is fanning the flames. Crown it all, those issues are not even solved yet. With that being said, nationalist and separatist actions will keep snowballing on the stage of politics.





Involved Countries & Organizations

Even though almost every single country has an on the agenda or not secessionist movement, some are must to be mentioned. As well as some organizations which accepts globalization as their core vision and mission.

United Kingdom (UK)

Their break up with EU caused a huge divergence in the UK and again caused an inner separatist conflict which is the Scottish Independence Referendum. On top of that, conflicts followed by the increasing of Welsh and Irish independence movements in the country. Thereupon the parliament's rejection of EU deal put the leadership on spot. Obviously, the situation of Britons isn't pleasant in this case.

United Nations (UN)

UN prefers to be neutral and intermediary in issues of separatist actions. They usually get involved when there is a hot conflict such as the Cyprus War. UN is known to have a voice about the Kosovo issue.

United States of America (USA)

The US is also relevant on the topic of separatism. They usually interfere with every single major conflict about new establishing states in politics and military. This can be supported by the NATO Peacekeepers in Kosovo and movement of the US embassy in Tel Aviv to Jerusalem.



A press release of ETA Rebels in Basque Country



European Union (EU)



A unitary organ that provides a strong economic and political bond between 28 European states. Nevertheless, in March 2019 that number will be decreased to 27 after the United Kingdom's divorce, and it seems like that number will not stay permanent, too. People today do not want other nations to have the right to speak for their countries, they state that it is some sort of a mechanism makes other countries able to tell them what to do and don't. Which makes European Parliament irrelevant for them.

Spain



A country that tried to recognize every national community living under its territories and now suffering from it, Spain. Despite the fact that Spain is not a federation, it is an extremely decentralized country within the limited-autonomy that has been given to every 17 communities of Spain in the Constitution of 1978. Whilst it is true that this system worked out for several years, it erupted in recent years. Now, the majority of the Basque Country (this dispute also includes France), Catalonia and Galicia demands their independence from Spain.

France



Brittany, Savoy, Alsace and lastly, Basque Country. Those regions are some of the regions that desire to establish their self-governance in France. The situation of Brittany and such examples might not be really heated, indeed. On the other hand, the situation of Basque Country is a whole different case. People of Basque, with their own language and culture, showing their patriotic actions both in France and Spain. However, after secessionist group ETA announced an end for their violent actions in 2011, protests decreased significantly.

Italy



If the separatist movements in Italy were successful, there would be nothing remaining from Italy, probably. Autonomous regions of Sicily, South Tyrol, Veneto, and Lombardy, demanding greater autonomy or their freedom from Italy. Since the majority do not want freedom and satisfied with their autonomy, the situation is no bigger than a couple of protests. Although there has been an attempt to set referendums, they neither failed or outcomes were to not be independent.



Detailed Analysis of the Issue

Like it has been stated in the text before, nationalism and separatism are the two parameters that can be shown as the biggest factors of independence and autonomy movements. In this very time of the era, that policies are more than left, central and right, communication at its peak and propaganda are being sold like hot cakes things are even worse than the 19th century.

Leading issues on this agenda are known by almost everyone, which can be considered a success for those groups. Catalonia, Puerto Rico, California, Kurdistan and so on. People crucially and heatedly demand their independence or autonomy that they can live by their culture and norms. With the support of states, they get more and more reliable and put unbearable pressure on their origin states. On the other hand, origin states usually get confused about what they should do and instantly start offending the independence demonstrators.

However, some independence movements, turn into something a lot more different than it should be, lose its contact with politics and diplomacy and turn its face to violent actions.

Such as the Kurdish independence movement in Iraq, Syria, Iran and Turkey, the Russian independence movement in Ukraine (in specific Donetsk Luhansk), and lastly Palestinian independence war in West Bank.

There also has been some movements that succeeded so far. Northern Cyprus, Kosovo, Kurdish autonomy in Iraq can be shown as some examples of it. The major factor in the success was the help of the West except for Northern Cyprus. Nevertheless, it is a big example of how nationalism affects such events. One way or another, such movements always find a way to fit themselves into the stage of politics and conflicts in the world of the 21st century. And making us have to understand what's going on.



List of Important Events

Since, there are no such official events that are going on about the issue, putting a chronological list of referendums is way more useful. Those are the significant ones that occurred lately and discussed a lot by the international media, however, there are a lot more events that occurred from the 1950s that can be taken into consideration. Events that turned into terrorist organizations are not stated on this list, seeing that they have a different aspect than autonomy and independence.

Date	Event
1995	Quebec Independence Referendum - Canada's dispute with people of Quebec started with the referendum that have been held in 1995. Although the referendum was recognized, parties who supported the independence lost by 1.16%.
16 - 21 March 2014	Venetian Independence Referendum - It was an unofficial and non-binding referendum that was organized online and by a private company that resulted with 89.1% for independence.
11 May 2014	Donetsk P.R. and Luhansk P.R. Independence - held by people of Donetsk and Luhansk, With the results that compose independence from Ukraine. They have been self-declared. Now they are two de-facto states
18 October 2014	Scottish Independence Referendum was planned by the Scottish Parliament in 2013, Scottish people wanted to remain in the Union with 55.3% votes which say no for independence.
23 June 2017	Brexit Referendum - a focal point in the issue that ended up with UK's break up with EU.
1 October 2017	Catalan Referendum - is declared illegal and suspended by the Constitutional Court of Spain. 92.01% of Catalans wanted to become independent.



Past Resolutions and Important Documents

- The Rights of Peoples and Nations to Self-Determination, 16 December 1952 (UNGA Res 2160)
http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/637%28VII%29
- Treaty of Lisbon, 13 December 2007 (emphasizing on *Article 3a,2*, it block the EU from intervening to national matters) <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=celex%3A12007L%2FTXT>
- Treaty of Union, 16 January 1707, <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/aosp/1707/7/contents>

Since matters about the issue are going under the umbrella of internal affairs, there are not any significant treaties or resolutions we can take a look at.





Past Attempts to Solve the Issue

What states have tried to have always repeated itself, as history did.

First attempts are usually in favor of the demonstrators. In order to cool down the environment, governments sometimes give compromise and grant some rights to the groups.

If that doesn't answer their claims -which is likely to happen- governments prefer to put obstacles against separatist groups such as not giving authority to organize protests or censoring their advertisements etc.

However, this usually causes a distinct boom up in the means of supporters of the movement. Since people of today are really eager to stand beside the unheard and the weak.

Right after the mess they came up with, governments try to solve everything once and for all but turn everything into a bigger mess with assaulting and getting into action to protestors.

That always draws the attention of the international media to the issue and makes other states have to choose a side in the issue. Which strengthens the protestors and makes everything even worse. This pattern repeats in almost every such conflict, without a doubt. Sometimes things get even messier and protests turn into terrorist actions (Turkey, Ukraine)

In the end, states ask the help of the United Nations, however even though the UN is against separatism, what they do as a mediator is calling the states to stop and nothing else.

Such attempts failed, since harsh oppression only causes growth in the strength and size of the movement





Possible Solutions

Whilst it is true that an international regulation and unity of decisions in order to stabilize autonomy and independence movements is extremely hard to do and kind of an interference of inner matters. It must be done one way or another if we want a credible solution that we can lean on.

Here are some possible solutions:

- A joint treaty, that will be signed after a conference (about the legitimacy of the independence movements and whether the protestors should become independent or not) with current independence movements, their origin countries and a mediator (which will probably be the UN),
- A sub-body of SOCHUM which will be fighting against separatism by the way of political communication with possible regions that might uprising to such an act, this aim can be achieved by the use of media and education,
- Authorizing the UN, when it deemed unavoidable by the Security Council, to intervene to the regions that minorities are being oppressed by the majority, and getting into hot conflicts with them, those interventions can be a deployment of Peacekeepers, making suggestions to the leadership etc.
- Preparing a recognition system for autonomies such as Catalonia, Scotland, the Basque Country etc. which will make them able to vote in platforms such as the EU and the UN, and be recognized by other states partially.



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