

Canada's Wexit Movement Offers Optimism for Irexit

Economics Is Not Enough: Positive Vision, Distinct Identity Are Critical

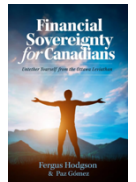
Fergus Hodgson (August 12, 2024)

Many believers in Irish sovereignty, which necessitates Irexit, will be familiar with the longstanding movement for Quebec's independence—likely to happen in the next decade or two. For those with an affinity for rugged individualism, there is a more prescient movement on the Canadian Prairies: Wexit.

Wexit means Alberta's departure from Canada, and Wexit's momentum has been growing since the 1970s. The name Wexit (Western exit) implies that peer Prairie provinces Manitoba and Saskatchewan would likely join Alberta in a decentralised Western alliance.

The people working for Alberta to be a proud, independent nation have gathered insights along the way. Their epiphanies are relevant to the Irish cause and suggest that, with the right strategy, Irexit can happen sooner rather than later.

My maternal grandparents settled in Calgary, Alberta, after leaving Ireland in the 1950s, so I got to visit as a child with my mother and grew an affection for the agrarian, cowboy culture. This May I was there to speak at the Capitalism & Morality conference and promote my book.



Two admirable Alberta separatists spoke at the conference: Cory Morgan and Michael Wagner.

Respectively, their books, which I have read, are *The Sovereignist's Handbook: Charting the Course to Western Independence* (2023) and *No Other Option: Self-Determination for Alberta* (2021).



Wagner's latest is *Time to Leave: Canada Cannot be Fixed* (2024).

While their books overlap, they offer two distinct conclusions.

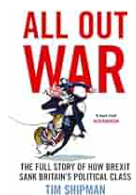
Attacking the central government (Ottawa or Brussels) is **not** enough. You need a positive vision of the alternative.

After leading an independence party, Morgan is familiar with retail politics and has learned from his mistakes. He has plenty of advice for grassroots party participants, such as those in the Irish Freedom Party. However, his chief insight is how to present secession. Those promoting a return to an independent Republic of Ireland will need to first and foremost demonstrate why she can be a bastion worth fighting for, and she can.

Economic arguments only go so far. People want independence on account of loyalty to a distinct identity.

Wagner holds a doctorate in political science and has pieced together the history of Alberta's independence movement. He has identified the fundamental drivers and the hurdles that have derailed its realisation. In addition to criticising wealth redistribution away from Alberta, Wagner emphasises how Alberta is markedly different from Laurentian Canada (Ontario and Quebec).

As noted in *All Out War: The Full Story of Brexit* (2016) by Tim Shipman, few Britons were inspired by the remain option. It did not conjure up nostalgia or pull at the heartstrings, but Brexit did in spades. Almost everyone understands patriotism better than economic jargon.



This is where Ireland has a tremendous advantage over independence movements in Canada.

There remains a firm sense of Irish identity and ethnic nationhood, including in the diaspora. While Albertans tend to think of themselves as Canadians, few Irishmen think of themselves as EU citizens. There is also a memory of pre-European Union times so less status quo bias.

Although the European Union robs the Irish taxpayer, his vision of Ireland's future and identity will be his chief motives to fight and vote for sovereignty.

Fergus Hodgson, a New Zealand native, is an Irish citizen based in Fort Collins, Colorado. He is a financial economist and geopolitical editor, and his first book is [Financial Sovereignty for Canadians](#). Follow him on [LinkedIn](#), [Substack](#), and [X](#).

