In our paper, we ask whether devolution works as a strategy for managing ethnoregional conflict in a democratic state. Does devolution decrease disintegrative nationalist challenges to the integrity of the shared state, or does it create opportunities and even incentives to mount such demands?

The emergence of “dual identity” (identifying equally with both Spain and the autonomous community) is often cited as evidence of the success of devolution. The emergence of dual identity is interpreted as a manifestation of a developing civil, or shared identity, that continues to recognize the sovereignty of the Spanish state. Almost all analyses to date share the perspective adopted by Beramendi and Máiz, who argue that devolution may be considered successful as long as we observe a robust association between the development of the State of the Autonomies, the expansion of dual identities, and the shrinking of exclusive identities.
Other political scientists suggest that devolution contributes to dissolution by strengthening regionalist parties. The vote for regionalist and nationalist parties in autonomous community elections in Spain is significant, in some communities dominant, and in several regions increasing. We argue that the utility of devolution as a strategy for managing ethnoregionalisms depends on its effect on the attachments of regional populations to the common state. The success of devolution, we argue, is better measured in terms of its effect on identification with the common state, and on preferences for the future organization of the state, than in terms of the vote for nationalist/regionalist political parties. Changes in identity and preferences may threaten state integrity if they bring to power regional leaderships who demand greater devolution or independence, regardless of their party affiliation.

Indeed, we argue that, in the face of the changing identities and preferences examined in this paper, even the leaderships of regional organizations of the statewide parties in Spain are compelled to adopt regionalist political agendas if they are to succeed electorally.

We examine changing patterns of political identities, preferences concerning the organization of the Spanish state, and voting in regional elections. We
explain these patterns in terms of demographic, institutional, political, and cultural factors. And, we consider their implications for the integrity of the democratic state. Our analysis is based on national and regional surveys conducted by the Centro de Investigaciones Sociológicas in Madrid in 1992, 1996 and 2005.

We use logistic regression models to explore the sources of identity, preferences, and nationalist/regionalist voting. In order to facilitate comparison of the relative effect of each independent variable, we calculate the percentage change in the probability of the dependent variable having a value of 1 associated with each independent variable.

We employ a seven-category classification scheme for identity, which combines the five category self-identification variable used almost universally in the literature to define respondents’ identity, and an item that asks respondents to declare whether they consider their autonomous community a nation or a region.

The latter is a powerful differentiator of national-cultural and regional-historical identities. Distinguishing between those who identify with the
autonomous community as a nation and as a region captures important differences in the identities of respondents across and within the autonomous communities. This is especially true for those respondents who identify equally with Spain and with their autonomous community – individuals categorized in the literature as “dual identifiers.”

For the purpose of creating dichotomous variables for our regressions, we collapsed the seven categories into five:

- national,
- equal-nation (dual identifiers who define their community as a nation),
- Spanish,
- equal-region (dual identifiers who define their community as a region),
- and regional identifications.

**FIRST SLIDE**

Our first slide illustrates how our indicator of identification was derived. Here we see the ten categories created by combining self-identification with region-nation. We have labeled the resulting identities, distinguishing between Spanish, equal-nation, equal-region, national, and regionalist
identities. Below that, we have arranged these categories into the classification scheme used in our analysis. We have used different colors to emphasize the fact that this is NOT an ordinal scale – there are two distinct dimensions of identity captured here: the nationalist-Spanish dimension, and the regionalist-Spanish dimension. For the purpose of our regression analyses, we have combined the exclusively national and mostly national categories into a single national identification category. We have done the same for regional identification.

**SLIDES 2 AND 3**

The next two slides show the distributions of preferences across our seven categories of identification. Our seven categories of identity capture the effects of differing levels of national and regional identification. These bar graphs suggest that both regional and national identification increase preference for more autonomy. But, preference for independence is much more pronounced among national identifiers than among regionalists.

**SLIDE 4**

Comparing 1992 and 2005, we see that preferences for independence and autonomy are increasing among national identifiers. But they are also increasing among regionalists.
Some important variables are not included in all of our data sets. An indicator of the degree of respondents’ interest in politics (coded here as “apathetic”) is included in our 1992 survey. Indicators of the effects of competitive devolution (respondents’ perception that their own autonomous community is being treated unfairly or unequally by the central government in Madrid; coded here as “jealousy”) are also included in our 1992 survey, but not in the 2005 survey (a moment at which this factor is likely to have been highly salient). Our 1992 and 2005 surveys do not include data on language of respondents. However, a 1996 survey of identity in the autonomous communities contains important indicators of respondents’ linguistic and cultural characteristics not available in our other studies. We use data on mother tongue, bilingualism, and the language of instruction of respondents’ schooling from the 1996 study to explore the impact of language and culture on identity. In all our surveys, we use the difference between political generations and a simple dichotomization between those with at least some post-secondary education and those with none to capture the institutionalist effects of devolution.

Our analysis demonstrates that identity and preferences are the primary drivers of nationalist/regionalist voting in regional elections. Native-born
status and the grievances arising out of perceived status inequalities associated with asymmetrical devolution also increase the probability of nationalist/regionalist voting, but not as powerfully. We also find that neither voting nor identity is the product of a rationalist evaluation of regime performance. The effect of regime performance on preferences is weak and unsystematic.

Our data suggest that language and culture are the most important factors determining national identities.

For regionalist identity, native-born status is by far the most powerful predictor.

Our examination of the relationship between identities and preferences makes it clear that regional identity (whether predominant or partial) is distinct from national/cultural identity.

In the following slides, based on the regressions for all of Spain presented in Table 4 in our paper, we present bar graphs of the percentage change in the probability of national, equal-nation, equal-region, and regionalist
identification associated with demographic factors, generational and educational differences, evaluation of regime performance, and language and culture variables.

**SLIDE 5**

Here we see the powerful positive effect of language and culture on the probability of national identity. Being a native speaker of the autochthonous language (native mother tongue) has the most powerful positive effect, by far, on the probability of national identity. All the indicators of national culture have positive effects, as does native-born status.

**SLIDE 6**

Only bilingualism has a significant positive impact on the probability of equal-nation identity. The negative, and relatively strong effect of membership in the generations that matured after the transition to democracy ("democracy generation") requires further investigation. The generally more modest effect of generation elsewhere in our analysis suggests we need to explore substituting age cohorts for generation as we refine our analysis.

**SLIDE 7**
Once we move from national to regional identities, we see a major shift in the relative impact of language and culture. All our indicators of knowledge of the indigenous language decrease the probability of equal-region identity. Native-born status has the strongest positive effect by far.

**SLIDE 8**

Native-born status is also the strongest predictor of regionalist identity. Knowledge of the language has little or no effect on the probability of regionalist identity. The results of these regressions suggest equal-nation ID is based on culture, while equal-region ID is based on territory.

These results demonstrate that our seven-category classification of identities distinguishes between the cultural-linguistic bases of national identity and the nativist or territorial bases of regional identity in Spain.

We use our identity categorizations as independent variables in the regressions presented in Tables 5 and 6 of our paper.
Despite our concern about endogeneity among these variables, and between our identity variables and our preference variables, we view preferences as the product (at least in part) of identity, rather than vice-versa.

**SLIDE 9**

And, we view identity as affecting nationalist/regionalist voting both directly, and indirectly, through preferences.

This approach produced robust effects. They make it clear that, for Spain as a whole, identity is of singular importance for voting and for preferences.

**SLIDE 10**

For Spain as a whole, nationalist identity increases the probability of a nationalist/regionalist vote in regional elections by over 1,200 percent in the 1992 data, and by almost 800 percent in the 2005 data. Equal-nation and regionalist identities, as well as preferences for more autonomy and independence all increase the probability of nationalist/regionalist voting.

**SLIDE 11**

National and regional identities also have a strong effect on preferences concerning the future organization of the Spanish state. National identity increases the probability of preference for independence by over 1,500 percent in our 1992 data,
SLIDE 12

and by more than 2,200 percent in our 2005 data. Equal-nation ID has a strong positive effect, while equal-region ID has a moderate negative effect on preference for independence in both 1992 and 2005.

SLIDE 13

National, regionalist, and both types of dual identities – in effect, all non-Spanish identities – increase the probability of preference for more autonomy in 1992. Of these, regionalist ID has the strongest effect.

SLIDE 14

In 2005, equal-nation identity had the greatest positive effect on preference for more autonomy. In both regressions, post-secondary education has a modest positive effect on preference for more autonomy, which suggests that the institutionalist effect of devolution is to generate preferences for more devolution.

These results make it clear that equal-nation and equal-region identities differ in their effects: Equal-nation identity increases preferences for more autonomy and for independence, while decreasing preference for the status quo. Identification as equal-nation thus constitutes a challenge to the state in much the same way, although on a lower order of magnitude, as nationalist
and regionalist identification. This contradicts the widespread assumption in the literature that “dual identity” is an expression of support for the state as it exists.

The effects of equal-region identity more closely approximate those attributed in the literature to “dual identity.” Equal-region identity reduces preference for independence and increases preference for the status quo, but also increases preferences for more autonomy in some regions. Our findings thus suggest the importance of distinguishing between these two categories of identification for understanding the implications of identity for the future integrity of the Spanish state.

SLIDE 15

Our 1992 regression for all of Spain, which we display here again, shows that perceived status inequalities associated with asymmetrical devolution (jealousy) have a positive effect on the probability of preference for independence and a strongly positive effect on preference for more autonomy.

SLIDE 16

These relationships are also evident within the autonomous communities. Non-Spanish identities increase the probability of preferences for independence in the Basque Country and Catalonia, with national ID (which
we have shown is driven by indigenous language and culture) having by far the greatest effect.

**SLIDE 17**

In the non-historic regions and

**SLIDE 18**

Galicia, non-Spanish identity increases preferences for more autonomy. The strong positive effect in Galicia of satisfaction with the performance of the autonomous government on preference for more autonomy is the single example in our data of regime performance having such an effect.

**SLIDE 19**

In addition to identity, perceived status inequalities associated with asymmetrical devolution (jealousy) also increases the probability of preferences for independence and more autonomy. Jealousy has a positive effect on preferences for independence in the Basque Country and Catalonia.

**SLIDES 20**

The effect of jealousy on preference for autonomy ranges from positive to strongly positive in the non-historic regions

**SLIDES 21**

and Galicia.
Perceived status inequalities associated with asymmetrical devolution thus contribute to a continuous spiral of demands for further devolution by increasing demands for greater autonomy and symmetry in the non-historic communities, and demands in the Basque Country and Catalonia to preserve their asymmetrically greater authority, or even for independence. In effect, asymmetry represents an unstable solution to ethnoregional demands.

SLIDE 22

Preference for the status quo is sometimes cited as evidence of support for the state as it exists.

But, as we see here, apathy has the strongest positive effect on the probability of preference for the status quo.

At the same time, apathy has a negative effect on the probability of preferences for independence and autonomy.

Therefore, we argue that preference for the status quo constitutes only weak support for the Spanish state, while preferences for more autonomy and for independence represent clear challenges to the existing organization of the state.
Our regressions also make clear the relatively weaker effects of rationalist evaluation of regime performance.

The effects of “satisfaction” with the AC in our 1992 regressions, the rational evaluation of AC performance (across a group of policy areas), and evaluation of the consequences of devolution in general (operationalized as “separatism” and “cost”), proved to be insignificant, or relatively weak and unsystematic in our analyses.

The relative unimportance of regime performance in our data magnifies the challenge confronting Madrid. If positive evaluation of regime performance has little effect on identities, voting and preferences, there may be little the state can do to end the spiral of demands for devolution.

That challenge is further magnified by the effect in our data of membership in the democratic generation. In most regions greater proportions of respondents in the democracy generation fall into the “national” categories of our identity classification and prefer greater autonomy or possible
independence. Preliminary examination of age cohorts reveals these relationships even more clearly,

**SLIDE 23**

as the proportion within each cohort that expresses **national identity** grows over time, while the proportion identifying as **Spanish** declines. At the same time, each new cohort is more nationalist and less Spanish than its predecessor. These findings constitute strong support for the institutionalist argument that the socializing effects over time of autonomous institutions increase support for further devolution. They also suggest that the disintegrative challenge to the Spanish state is likely to increase over time.

The importance of competitive devolution for voting, identity and, especially, preferences in our data suggests that in all three **historic** communities, a sense of unfair or unequal treatment of the region by the central government, an inevitable product of asymmetric devolution or, in the case of the Basque Country, the frustration of aspirations for independence, increases the probability of preferences for more autonomy and for independence and, in the historic regions, nationalist identity.
In the Basque Country, the nationalist/regionalist government is pressing for implementation of the so-called “Ibarretxe Plan,” a de facto demand for independence that has already led to direct confrontation with the government in Madrid, and to an intensification of political conflict in the autonomous community.

Elsewhere, a sense of unfair or unequal treatment increases the probability of regionalist (Andalucía and Valencia) or equal-region identity (Cantabria). Thus, some of the same factors that produce nationalist identity in the historic communities produce regionalist identity in the non-historic communities.

Our findings suggest that Dawn Brancati may be correct in arguing that devolution contributes to dissolution. But Brancati argues that the disintegrative effect of devolution is determined by the presence and strength of regional parties. Our findings suggest that change in identity, and the changes in preferences associated with identities and the perception of status inequality, better reflect the challenge to the integrity of the democratic state arising out of devolution than the nationalist/regionalist party vote in regional elections.
The greater importance of identities and preferences derives from the very nature of the democratic state itself. In the interim between our surveys, regional organizations of statewide, or “Spanish,” parties responded to electoral competition by increasing their competitiveness for the votes of nationalist/regionalist identifiers and those with preferences for autonomy/independence. They did so by adopting more “regionalist” agendas, in historic and in non-historic communities. The Catalan branch of the Spanish socialists, the socialist government in Andalucía (with the support of the conservative opposition), and the conservative government in Valencia (with the support of the socialist opposition), as well as governments in four other regions not among those we have selected for analysis in this paper, have in recent years pressed for and won greater devolution. It is for this reason that we conclude asymmetrical devolution represents an unstable solution to ethnoregional conflict. The devolution of greater authority to any one region inevitably gives rise to demands for more authority from others. The regions granted more autonomy at the outset of the devolutionary process seek to preserve their relative greater authority. This makes it difficult, if not impossible, to achieve an equilibrium.
The escalation and multiplication of regional demands for greater authority seem to be eroding the coherence of the main Spanish, or statewide, parties. These parties have played a major integrative role in Spain since the moment of transition to democracy. But the most recent round of devolution suggests the autonomous communities of Spain appear to have entered into a spiral of escalating demands that are progressively “hollowing out” the national political parties and, through them, the central state. The conservative and socialist parties each depend on support in the regions to secure power in Madrid. If central party leaderships lose control over their regional organizations, or these regional leaderships turn away from Madrid in the interest of securing regional political power, devolution may very well turn into dissolution. The coherence of the national political parties, and their representation of social and economic interests that cut across regional borders remains the key to the stability of the Spanish state.