Devolution and Democracy: Identity, Preferences, and Voting in the Spanish “State of Autonomies”

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Does devolution work as a strategy for managing ethnoregional conflict in a democratic state? That is, does devolution decrease disintegrative nationalist challenges to the integrity of the shared state, whether in the form of demands for autonomy or demands for outright secession, or does it create opportunities and even incentives to mount such demands? This paper examines empirically the impact of devolution on the legitimacy, stability and, potentially, integrity of an ethno-regionally differentiated democratic state. We examine changing patterns of political identities, preferences, and voting in regional elections in the autonomous communities of Spain; attempt to explain such changes in terms of demographic, institutional, political, and cultural factors; and consider their implications for the democratic state. The paper thus addresses both theoretical and empirical questions central to understanding the relationship between ethnoregionalism and the democratic state, and estimating the utility of one of the most widespread strategies for managing ethnoregional conflict. Our conclusions address the implications of devolution for Spanish political development, and the challenge of ethnoregionalism to the legitimacy and integrity of a democratic state. Our paper is based on analysis of data drawn from several large-n surveys conducted by Spanish research institutions over a period of 13 years, containing similar or identical questions probing these dimensions of attitude, belief and behavior.

Devolution, Identity, and Ethnoregionalism

There is strong evidence from several Western democracies that devolution, in fact, increases disintegrative demands. Canada (Quebec) is one such case, Belgium (Flanders) another. Even in France, the archetypical unitary state with a strong civic identity, administrative decentralization seems to have given rise to ethnoregional political parties.1 In the Canadian case, the Quebecois have mounted a nationalist challenge to the state, but it is difficult to distinguish the effects of structure (the quasi-federal/confederal origins and institutions of the Canadian state which we will here call “devolution”) from the effects of political-cultural forces, otherwise described as nationalism.2 In Belgium, we have two regions (plus Brussels), but both are characterized by mobilized ethno-cultural, if not “national” identities (Flemish and Walloon, or French).3 In France, however, regions do not enjoy as extensive authority as the provinces of Canada or the regions of Belgium. In order to test the effects of devolution on ethnoregional conflict,

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and therefore democratic stability, we should compare the effects of devolution on orientations toward the common state in both ethno-regions and non-ethnically distinct regions, under similar circumstances, or conditions of devolution, and with respect to common states with similar characteristics. In other words, we must find comparable cases of devolution.

Because electoral competition lies at the core of democratic politics, most of the literature examining the effects of devolution focuses on the rise of regionalist or nationalist parties, as do all of the works cited above. Most of the contributions to a recent collection on Devolution and Electoral Politics, 4 for example, focus on understanding the dynamics of a two-level (regional and national) party system, examining such issues as the organization of regional parties and their electoral strategies. Not much attention is devoted to the nature of the constituencies of regional parties, or the role of ethnicity and nationalism as bases for party formation and the definition of regional political agendas. 5 Dawn Brancati argues that the impact of decentralization on ethnic conflict and secessionism is largely determined by the presence and strength of regional parties. She suggests that regional parties, in turn, increase ethnic conflict and secessionism by “reinforcing regionally based ethnic identities, producing legislation that favors certain groups over others, and mobilizing groups to engage in ethnic conflict and secessionism or by supporting terrorist organizations that participate in these activities.” Based on statistical analysis of electoral data from 30 democracies, she argues that regional parties increase both “antiregime rebellion” and “intercommunal conflict.” 6 In essence, she concludes that regional parties make devolution less likely to succeed as a tool for the management of ethnic conflict.

Johanna Kristin Birnir’s recent study of Ethnicity and Electoral Politics offers contradictory evidence that ethnic parties do not, in fact, necessarily contribute to instability. 7 But her case studies focus on non-devolved states (indeed, the Romanian case is one in which devolution is demanded by the minority Hungarian and Szekler parties, but resisted by the majority Romanian parties), and her statistical analysis does not consider devolution as a system characteristic (focusing instead on presidentialism and proportionality). However, her observation that inclusion of minority parties in central government discourages ethnic violence is highly suggestive for the study of devolution. Birnir’s results suggest that participation in devolved institutions may, as Yash Ghai has

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5 Francesc Palleres, who is co-author of one of the chapters in the Hough and Jeffrey volume, examines the constituencies of regional parties in Francesc Palleres, Jose Ramon Montero, and Francisco Jose Lera, “Non state-wide parties in Spain: An attitudinal study of nationalism and regionalism” Publius 27, 4 (Fall 1997), pp. 135-169.
7 Johanna Kristin Birner, Ethnicity and Electoral Politics (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007).
argued, have a positive, integrative effect on inter-ethnic relations. These studies focus, in other words, on an important issue, the structure of the party system and patterns of party participation in government, but not on the effect of devolution on mass identities, preferences, and political behaviors as they affect the legitimacy and long-term stability of the democratic state.

Liesbet Hooghe argues, on the basis of a lengthy consideration of the social bases of nationalist movements, that “there is no social pattern common to all nationalist movements at either macro- or meso-level.” To identify the social bases of nationalism, she argues, one must carry out a “contextual analysis” of the “distribution and structuring of resources that makes mobilization and activity for or against nationalism at a certain stage more likely.” And, “nationalism must be seen as a politico-strategic interpretation of social changes. In the last resort nationalists participate in a struggle for power.” In other words, the explanation for nationalist movements lies in a rational calculation of self-interest: “those with power distribute values and goods in close accordance with their own interests and values.” Xosé-Manoel Núñez comes to the same conclusion in explaining the rise of regionalist and nationalist parties in Spain: “There is no correlation between peripheral nationalists’ election scores, national consciousness and support for independence…. Peripheral nationalists…are often regarded as the best defenders of…economic and social interests.”

From an institutionalist perspective, creation of autonomous communities in the historical regions of Spain privileged the indigenous ethno-national identities of these regions. Devolution created governing institutions and processes that defined the boundaries of these identities while expressing and reinforcing them, and created incentives for elites to articulate and advocate for these identities as a means of advancing their own power. Linz and Montero, in their analysis of the national and regional party systems of Spain, argued that in the Basque Country, Catalonia, and Navarre, “the regional cleavage derives from historical, cultural and political features that have generated conflictive perceptions of national identities, and is structured by regional governments equipped with extraordinarily wide-ranging institutions, policies and resources. In other communities, regionalist parties have benefited from the political opportunity structure offered by the decentralization process and the institutional consolidation of the Estado de las Autonomías. Both developments gave regional entrepreneurs the possibility to

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compete profitably with the statewide parties, to use the political resources generated by the new regional bureaucracies, and to foster regional identities, not least through their ability to make more or less demagogic resort to claims of relative deprivation with respect to other communities or against central government.”

Balfour and Quiroga, in their recent comprehensive analysis of the dynamics of devolution in Spain, also offer an institutionalist explanation of the dynamics of devolution in Spain. They argue “the institutional momentum generated by the creation of the autonomies led to an accumulation of resources and levers of control and the construction and dissemination of meaning, identity, myths, and symbols, often in competition with other autonomies. These were consolidated through regional administrative cadres, intelligentsias, public agencies, clientele networks, and public-private sector initiatives dealing with the economy, services, education, and cultural life in general.” In the autonomous communities defined by distinct regional languages, they argue, “policies to entrench the regional (termed national by regional institutions) language in all public spaces, from education to advertising, may have the effect of distancing the periphery from the centre….” They conclude, like Nuñez, that “the dynamic driving this new quasi-nationalism is competition for funds, powers, and votes.”

The impact of devolution on what Hall and Taylor characterize as the “strategic calculus” of elites is especially evident in the adoption by almost all political parties in Catalonia of regionalist or nationalist positions. But it is evident in the rise of regionalist parties in some of the autonomous communities of Spain in which there is no culturally distinct identity and no previous history of regionalism. In some regions, the rise of regionalist parties and leaderships may reflect a “defensive” strategy, aimed at protecting the prerogatives of local leadership against the claims of nationalist neighbors, as appears to be the case, in part, in Navarre, Aragón, and Valencia. The electoral strength of nationalist and regionalist parties in the autonomous communities of Spain thus appears to be the product of what Rogers Smith calls “historical political processes of institution-building and power-structuring that have strengthened and modified certain existing identities, sometimes fostered new ones, and often played strong roles in defining the relationships of those identities to various others.”

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14 Nuñez, “Spanish nationalism today,” suggests PAR in Aragon and UV in Valencia were founded to defend their regions against Catalan nationalism, and UPN was founded to defend Navarre against Basque nationalism (p. 734). He offers a similar account of the formation of regional parties in “Autonomist regionalism,” pp. 128-134. See also Angel Smith and Clare Mar-Molinero, “The Myths and Realities of Nation-Building in the Iberian Peninsula” in Nationalism and the Nation in the Iberian Peninsula: Competing and Conflicting Identities edited by Clare Mar-Molinero and Angel Smith (Oxford: Berg, 1996), pp. 1-30, at pp. 14-15, for a brief historical account of Valencia.
William Safran, following this “institutionalist logic,” argues that “any meaningful cultural autonomy granted a larger group gives it a base from which to escalate and politicize its demands.”\(^\text{16}\) For Safran, the absence of a secessionist challenge from the region makes a strategy of territorial devolution a “success.” But he also recognizes that devolution may weaken the central state by reducing the resources under its direct control (e.g., revenues) and shifting the identification or loyalty of the population from the central state to the region. He asks whether the granting of regional autonomy associated with devolution may “serve as a ‘trigger’ for further demands, and ultimately, for secession.”\(^\text{17}\)

The Belgian case, in which national political parties defined by ideological cleavages have given way to regional parties defined in ethno-linguistic terms, provides some support for this argument. Some Belgian analysts, basing their findings on survey data on political attitudes and patterns of party support, now even call into question the survival of the common state.\(^\text{18}\) A crucial component in such analyses is “the lack of national political parties representing national interests” in Belgium.\(^\text{19}\) The rise of the Parti Québécois (PQ) in Quebec is another widely-cited example of the potentially disintegrative impact of ethnoregional parties on the state in which they arise. Mendelsohn presents data on the evolution of dual Canadian-Québécois identity over time, and evidence of a strong association between “Québécois” identity and support for provincial sovereignty.\(^\text{20}\) Similarly, Billiet et al. observe that “the degree of national or subnational consciousness is, of course, closely intertwined with the political attitude to constitutional reform and the level of autonomy for the provinces. …[S]tronger subnational feelings in Flanders are also translated into more outspoken support for the further federalisation of Belgium.”\(^\text{21}\) In both these cases, ethnic identity groups are regionally concentrated, a condition Brancati identifies as a prerequisite for decentralization to contribute to the rise of secessionist parties.

In France, Schrijver reports, the decision by President Mitterand to introduce regional elections in France in 1982 created the opportunity for the re-emergence of historical regionalisms, and the creation of regionalist parties. This phenomenon, he reports, is strongest in those regions in which a regional historical and cultural identity, and language, is strongest. The relative strength of regionalist parties, his analysis suggests, is


\(^{17}\) Safran, “Spatial and Functional Dimensions of Autonomy;” p. 27.


a function of the relative strength of regional and French identities in the electorate. Schrijver reports that “very strong identification” with France exceeds such identification with the region in almost every region of the country (except Corsica and Brittany). As a result, regional parties remain marginal to electoral politics in France, even at the regional level, except in Corsica, where a strong regionalist movement had already extracted concessions to regional autonomy prior to Mitterand’s reform.22

The argument that devolution and the creation of regional entities per se causes the rise of ethnoregionalism in Spain seems implausible in light of the fact that the three historic regions had already struggled for and won varying degrees of autonomy under the short-lived Second Republic, and the fact that at the very outset of democracy and devolution, that is, by the first round of regional elections (see Table 1, in the appendix), there was relatively strong regionalist/nationalist voting in the Basque Country, Catalonia, Galicia, Aragón, the Balearic and Canary islands, and Navarre. Moreover, regionalist/nationalist voting increases significantly in some of the other regions (e.g., Cantabria, Valencia, Andalucía) but not in others, where it remains low or even declines over time. The institutionalist argument thus appears to hinge on the rise of regionalist/nationalist elites and parties, which begs the question what accounts for the rise of electoral support for such parties?

Devolution and Ethnoregionalism in Spain

The Spanish case offers a unique opportunity to test major theoretical perspectives on the sources of political attitudes, preferences and voting behaviors that may provide a basis for ethnoregional challenges to the state. Spain has a long history of inter-regional and inter-cultural conflict with periods of significant violence (war) between regional entities recognized by contemporary populations as their ethnic, or national antecedents.23 The Spanish state integrated under a single central authority disparate territorial entities with varying historical and cultural identities. The process of state construction emerged over a long historical period, and was “layered” – that is, sub-entities comprising multiple, previously-distinct units, came together prior to integration into what eventually became the modern Spanish state. For example, the integration of Aragón and Catalonia, their extension of control over Valencia and the Balearic Islands, and then the integration of this entity [the crown of Aragón] with Castile (which had been busy absorbing, more or less, such entities as Guipuzcoa, Alava and Vizcaya over the course of several centuries) in 1469, was followed later by absorption of other previously-distinct entities such as Navarre. Juan Linz has argued, and almost every Spanish analyst and Western political scientist has agreed, that the state-building process in Spain resulted in the establishment of a “weak state,” in which the previously-existing entities never fully gave up their identities to the center. The result is a persistent tension between Spanish national identity, nationalism, and state-building on the one hand, and the corresponding forces in

the ethno-regions on the other. Violence, in the form of terrorist violence carried out by a single Basque nationalist group, ETA, has continued into the present. But Spain successfully democratized itself following the death of Franco, and devolution was an integral part of that process. Without devolution, in the form of “the state of autonomies,” it is arguable that there would be no democratic Spanish state today.  

The strategy of devolution, adopted following the death of Franco in order to mitigate the historical tensions between the Spanish state and its ethno-regions, was applied to all of Spain. Devolution thus resulted in the establishment of seventeen autonomous communities in regions with varying degrees of ethno-cultural, linguistic, and historical distinctiveness, but with similar levels of authority, similar internal political structures (the most significant structural difference is between the single-province regions and the multi-province regions), similar political/electoral systems, and a shared common state. Rodden identifies several key indicators of decentralization, including the proportion of public spending attributable to the regions, the degree of tax autonomy/authority of the regions, regional responsibility for primary education curriculum and staffing, and regional authority over infrastructure and policing. The Spanish “state of autonomies” is decentralized across all these dimensions, and increasingly so with respect to public expenditures by the regions, regional tax authority and “own source” financing, and regional responsibility for health care and education. In addition, the ratio of civil servants employed by the regions to those employed by the central government has increased dramatically. The dependence of the regions on grants from the central government for a large portion of their resources acts as a counterweight to devolution, however, and only the Basque Country enjoys authority over local policing.

The autonomous communities of Spain thus constitute a set of “comparable cases” for studying the effects of devolution over time. Not surprisingly, democratic electoral competition has produced varying levels of support for regional and/or nationalist parties at both the regional and national levels across these autonomous communities. These parties vary in character. Pallerés has identified four types of such parties: pro-independence nationalist parties of the Basques and Catalans, non-secessionist moderate nationalist parties, parties that seek to advance regional interests without challenging the

24 See, for example, Josep M. Colomer, Game Theory and the Transition to Democracy: The Spanish Model Brookfield, VT: Edward Elgar, 1995
integrity of the Spanish state, and local parties (not examined in this paper). Hence, the variation in voting patterns is not a simple one-to-one “fit” with ethno-cultural and linguistic differences across the regions. The nature of nationalism and/or regionalism, as well as orientations, evaluations, and preferences with respect to the Spanish state, also vary across the communities. We have selected seven of these regions for the present analysis.

Our cases include the three “historic” regions (in Spanish constitutional terms, “historic nationalities”) of Catalonia, the Basque Country, and Galicia. These regions encompass distinct linguistic, cultural, and national communities, and had been granted autonomy under the Second Republic, only to have it eliminated under Franco. The three phenomena on which we focus in this paper (regional and national identity, autonomist and secessionist preferences, and regionalist and nationalist voting) vary even among these regions. We also examine Valencia, which has a mixed linguistic and cultural heritage that distinguishes it from Castilian Spain, but has a lower level of regional voting (around 9 percent in 2007) than the historic communities. We include two of the Castilian regions of Spain: Aragón and Cantabria. There has been a significant vote for regional parties in regional elections in Cantabria (around 30 percent in 2007). Aragón is certainly a region with a distinctive historical identity. But it is not differentiated culturally from Castilian Spain, and was not designated a “historic” community. Yet, it has a relatively high level of regional voting (around 21 percent in 2007). Finally, we include Andalucía, a region with a distinct history and culture, but which shares the Castilian language and in which regional voting is lower (around 8.5 percent in 2004). The seven regions we analyze here offer enough variation to allow us to test competing explanations of regionalist and nationalist voting, and changes in identities and preferences, while the exclusion of regions does not introduce a selection bias.

National and regional surveys conducted by the Centro de Investigaciones Sociológicas in Madrid allow us to examine the changing relationships between attitudes, beliefs, and preferences of Spanish voters, and their voting behavior in regional elections, against the background of changes over time in the scope and depth of devolution. Although these surveys do not constitute a cross-time panel study, they provide a strong basis for cross-time analysis of the impact of devolution on the coherence of a democratic state. They allow us to explore several alternative explanations of ethnoregionalism (manifest in

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30 Navarre is also a culturally divided region, and is particular interest, but our data do not adequately disaggregate the multiple dimensions of identity in Navarre (i.e., Navarren regional identity, Basque national identity, and Spanish identity). We have reserved analysis of Navarre for a later stage of our larger project on Spain. We have also excluded the two island communities (Balaeres and Canaries) because the small size, fragmentation, and isolation of these communities leads us to question whether identity, preferences and voting in these communities reflect the same dynamic as that present in the mainland communities. Madrid is excluded from our study despite its large, economically developed, and internally differentiated population, and important variation in terms of the potential explanatory variables in our analysis, because there are such low levels of regionalist/nationalist voting in this region that it is not recorded in survey results. In effect, our dependent variable is missing in the Madrid data.
31 Survey data made available, and used with permission of the Juan March Institute, Madrid; Martha Peach, Director of the Library, CEACS, Instituto Juan March.
attitudes, beliefs, preferences, and voting) common in the theoretical and case-oriented literatures on ethnic conflict. These include demographic explanations; cultural explanations focused on identities; institutionalist explanations focused on the impact of devolution over time; political explanations focused on preferences and the competition for power; and, rationalist explanations that link the strength of regionalism or nationalism to positive or negative evaluations of regime performance. A nationalist or regionalist vote may be a “protest” vote, or a “strategic” vote. It may even be the product of the “demonstration effect” of nationalism or regionalism elsewhere that leads voters concerned about the loss of relative power of “their” region compared to others to support their “own” nationalist or regionalist party, and a consequent escalation of demands.

The focus in this paper on the impact of devolution on the ethnoregional challenge to the democratic state in Spain builds upon and expands the concerns of the existing literature on Spain. Analyses of regional voting in Spain, including analyses based on some of the data we analyze here, have examined the party system per se from a Sartorian perspective, and explored differences in the political constituencies of the regionalist and nationalist parties. Much of the literature focuses on changes in patterns of self-declared identification with the autonomous community versus the Spanish state. This emphasis is consistent with the dominant perspective in the political science literature on regionalist voting, that “the strength of ethnoregional identity, whether measured in terms of prevalence of a specific language, feelings of belonging to the region instead of to the national state, or the strength of demands made for self-government, is proposed to be the main determinant of ethnic votes.”

Several analysts have noted a decline over time in Spain in the proportion of respondents in regional and national surveys who declare exclusively regional/national or exclusively Spanish identity, and a simultaneous increase in the proportion who declare mixed regional/national and Spanish identity. Beramendi and Máiz, and Martínez-Herrera have examined changes in regional identities over time in Spain, and conclude that dual identities (Spanish plus the regional identity) are on the rise, at the expense of exclusivist identities (Spanish only, or regional only). Xavier Coller and Rafael Costelló examine the bases of dual identity in a single region of Spain, Valencia, based on the 1992 data we

use in our analysis.\textsuperscript{35} They define dual identity “strictly,” as “equally Spanish and regional” only, and find respondents’ evaluation of the “state of autonomies” as a regime offers the most explanatory power with respect to dual identity. Demographic variables (such as region of birth, sex, urban-rural residence), language, and orientations toward Spain and Valencia were of less significance and lower explanatory power.\textsuperscript{36} Beramendi and Máiz, and Martínez-Herrera argue that changes in identity have resulted from the creation of regional governments, and the emergence of regional parties. Beramendi and Máiz find, on the basis of a binomial regression analysis of the 1992 data used in this paper, that “three variables have a significant effect on the development of dual identities. The scale of [self-reported] nationalism and the presence/absence of a strong nationalist party in the region have a strong negative impact…. The degree of development of the process of decentralization in each AC…has a net positive, though not very strong effect”\textsuperscript{37}. These comparative, cross-regional analyses are supported by several other studies of voting in specific regions of Spain.\textsuperscript{38}

The emergence of “dual identity” over time is often cited by Spanish scholars as evidence of the success of devolution in Spain. The emergence of dual identity is interpreted as a manifestation of a developing civil, or shared identity in Spain,\textsuperscript{39} or as evidence of the decline of exclusivist nationalisms in favor of a multinationalism or pluralism that recognizes other identities, but continues to locate sovereignty in the overarching Spanish nation.\textsuperscript{40} 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 EA [Estado de las Autonomías, or State of the Autonomies], the expansion of dual identities, and the shrinking of exclusive ones….”\textsuperscript{41}

While identity shift may suggest increasing support for the Spanish state, the persistence of regionalist and nationalist voting in regional elections suggests a continuing


\textsuperscript{36} Coller and Costelló, “Las bases sociales de la indentidad dual,” regression table 3 (p. 171).

\textsuperscript{37} Beramendi and Máiz, “Spain: Unfulfilled Federalism,” Table 4.4, page 146.

\textsuperscript{38} See, e.g., Coller and Castelló, “Las bases socials de la identidad dual.”

\textsuperscript{39} Martínez-Herrera, “From nation-building to building identification with political communities,” cites Brubaker’s concept of “nationalization” in the context of an argument in favor of the possibility of “civil or ‘associative’ nation-building,” which seems to frame his analysis of the emergence of dual identities in the autonomous communities. But see Diego Muro and Alejandro Quiroga, “Spanish nationalism: Ethnic or civic?”Ethnicities 5, 1 (2005), 9-29 for the argument that “constitutional patriotism is a neo-Saxonish nationalism essentially, but not completely, civic” (at p. 24).

\textsuperscript{40} See, e.g., Núñez’ discussion of the political agendas of regionalist parties in “What is Spanish nationalism today?” at p. 734. Balfour and Quiroga argue that “despite their demands for a high degree of decentralization, regionalists [N.B. as opposed to nationalists in the ethno-linguistically defined communities] acknowledge Spain as the sole nation and the Spanish people as the ultimate sovereign body. (at p. 75)”

ethnoregional challenge to the integrity of the Spanish state. Aggregate data on the vote for regionalist and nationalist parties in the regional elections in Spain varies from source to source, and appears to depend on how each analyst classifies numerous relatively small parties in each of the regions across many regional elections. But, as can be seen from Table 1 in Appendix One, it is clear that the vote for regionalist and nationalist parties in these elections is significant, in some places dominant, and in several regions increasing.\(^{42}\)

Data in this table do not show a consistent increase over time in the proportion of the vote for regionalist and nationalist parties in regional elections. It excludes votes for coalitions between a regionalist/nationalist party and a Spanish party, or for strongly regionalist branches of Spanish national parties, and thus does not capture the full expression of regionalism in regional elections. But to do so would weaken the clear distinction between regionalist/nationalist voting on the one hand, and voting for parties fully integrated into the Spanish national party system. This underscores the importance of examining changing identities and preferences in the autonomous community electorates, and their implications for state integrity. But we return in our concluding section to the political implications of the regionalism of statewide, or “Spanish” party organizations in some of the autonomous communities.

Parallel with changes in identity and voting for regionalist and nationalist parties, in some regions there has been an increase in preferences for greater regional autonomy or even recognition of the possibility of independence. Martínez-Herrera, whose main focus is on the shift toward dual identities, also reports that preferences of the regional populations with respect to organization of the Spanish state have also shifted over the period of his study (1978-2001), with support for a unitary state declining.\(^{43}\)

Santiago Pérez Nievas and Eduard Bonet examine the relationship between identity, preferences and voting in Catalonia, the Basque Country and Galicia, based on surveys conducted in all three regions in May-June 2004.\(^{44}\) They find regional identity, preferences for more autonomy or independence, and ideology to be more powerful explanations of regionalist and nationalist voting than demographic factors.\(^{45}\) In this paper we use large-n surveys conducted in 1992, 1996 and 2005 to compare the interrelationships among changing patterns of identity, voting, and preferences across time, and across a selected subset of the regions of Spain. We argue that the utility of devolution as a strategy for managing ethnoregionalisms depends on its effect on the

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\(^{42}\) Data presented here are from Chernyha, “Devolution, Identity and Regional Parties in Spain,” paper presented to the Northeastern Political Science Association 39th annual meeting, Philadelphia, PA (November 17, 2007), Table 1 (amended to include most recent regional election), which we believe to be the most accurate, and for which the classification scheme is made transparent in a lengthy footnote to the paper.

\(^{43}\) Martínez-Herrera, p. 440.


\(^{45}\) Pérez Nievas and Bonet, “Identidades regionales,” regression table 5 (p. 146).
attachments of regional populations to the common state. We explore the meaning of shifts in popular identification from the common state (Spain) to the regions, or to dual identification with both state and region, by examining the relationship between identity, preferences for organization of the state, and nationalist/regionalist voting. We argue that the success of devolution is to be measured in terms of its effect on identification with the common state, and preferences for increasing devolution or even dissolution of the state. 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.

Identity, preferences, and voting in Spain

Results of the large-n Spanish national surveys we use in this analysis suggest that differences in voting can be attributed, first of all, to differences in identification and preferences. Identification patterns differ between respondents native-born to an autonomous community and immigrants. Identification also differs in association with differences in political ideology, age, and educational achievement; and in association with differences in evaluation of regime performance and, especially, culture (i.e., native language). Preferences with respect to organization of the Spanish state appear to be affected by the same factors that affect identity, as well as by identity itself. Differences in preferences are also associated with differences in voting. We examine these relationships using national surveys conducted in 1992, 1996, and 2005.46

Our data support the findings of Martínez-Herrera and others that in many of the seventeen autonomous communities in Spain the proportion of respondents declaring “only Spanish” identity declined between 1992 and 2005, and the proportion declaring themselves “equally Spanish and of the autonomous community” increased. There was no clear pattern of change in identification mostly or exclusively with the autonomous community. Application of an independent proportions test47 to changes in each of our seven selected regions found significant increases in the proportion of respondents who identify as “equally Spanish and of the autonomous community” (i.e., what is referred to as “dual identity” in the literature) in five of our regions. [See Table 2, in Appendix One.] In Valencia, there was a significant increase in the proportion that identifies as “more Spanish than of the autonomous community,” and no significant increase in the proportion that declares dual identity. In all our selected regions, there was a simultaneous significant decline in the proportion that identifies as “only Spanish.” In the Basque Country, there was a significant increase in those who identify only with the autonomous community, and significant decreases in the proportions that identify as more or equally Spanish.

46 Centro de Investigaciones Sociológicas studies number 2025 (1992), 2228 (1996), and 2610 (2005).
Among our only selected communities, the proportion of respondents preferring more autonomy increased in Catalonia, the Basque Country, and Valencia. These increases appear to have come in large part as the result of declining proportions of respondents who preferred no autonomy or the status quo. Preferences for the status quo require careful examination. The selection by a respondent of the middle option (specifying “a state with Autonomous Communities as they presently exist [como en la actualidad]”) from a card list of five responses appears to function as a default category for the politically apathetic. Sixty-three percent of politically apathetic respondents in our 2005 data, for example, chose the status quo or “do not know” option. Sixty-four percent of those choosing the status quo, and 88 percent of those who chose “do not know,” were apathetic toward politics. This suggests that both “status quo” and “do not know” likely tap a weak preference for no change or uncertainty about change. Following the logic of the Downsian interpretation of non-voting as endorsement of the status quo, we have recoded “do not know” as preference for the status quo, and focus our analysis more closely on preferences for greater autonomy or the possibility of independence for the autonomous communities.

There were few changes in the proportions of those preferring the possibility of independence for the autonomous community, except in the Basque Country, where this increased. Application of the independent proportions test to these changes found the increases in preferences for greater autonomy and for independence to be significant. The proportion of respondents preferring “no autonomy” is small, and in significant decline, (as indicated in Table 3 in the appendix).

For an earlier study, Chernyha used cross tabulations to examine the distribution of political preferences associated with dual identity. She found that dual identity is associated with greater support for the Spanish state than identification with the autonomous community, but less than self-identification as Spanish. Examining the same 2005 data used in this paper, Chernyha found that in Andalucía, Aragón, Cantabria, Galicia, and Valencia, between 44 and 77 percent of dual identifiers preferred maintaining the status quo. In Catalonia, however, only about 32 percent preferred the status quo, while 54 percent of dual identifiers preferred greater autonomy. In the Basque Country, 39 percent of dual identifiers preferred greater autonomy. Both in Catalonia (72 percent) and the Basque Country (83 percent), the vast majority of those who identified only with the autonomous community preferred the possibility of independence. Our finding here, that the growth in dual identity appears to come at the expense of identification as only or mostly Spanish, suggests the growth of dual identity may be associated with a net increase in support for further devolution among the population.

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48 This approach will find further support later in the paper, when we use logistic regression techniques to identify the sources of preferences.
49 Chernyha, “Devolution, Identity and Regional Parties in Spain.” Tables 7 and 8 report Spanish, Catalan and Basque data only.
An institutionalist explanation for growing identification with the regions of Spain finds some support in differences in the patterns of identification between birth cohorts, and especially political cohorts, across the regions. If we examine birth cohorts, we find that the proportion of respondents who view the autonomous community as a nation is greater in younger cohorts than in older ones, especially in the Basque Country and, to a lesser extent, Galicia. In almost every region, the youngest cohort, which has grown up in the context of devolution, has the highest proportion of respondents who view the autonomous community as a nation. In Catalonia, where the proportion is second only to the Basque Country, it is lower among the oldest cohort, but relatively high across the three following cohorts. There is a marked increase in Catalonia between our 1992 and 2005 datasets in the proportion of each birth cohort declaring the autonomous community a nation. There is little change over time within cohorts in the Basque Country. There are few consistent trends in the data for self-identification. In the Basque Country, identification with the autonomous community increases in each new cohort, and both dual and Spanish identification decreases. Identification with the autonomous community is also increasing across cohorts in Andalucía and Aragón. In Catalonia, surprisingly, identification as “mostly Spanish” is increasing both between and within cohorts.

The political preferences associated with birth cohorts show a shift within cohorts between our 1992 data and our 2005 data toward more support for the status quo in Andalucía, Aragón, Valencia and Galicia. In Catalonia, there is a strong shift within cohorts toward support for more autonomy. At the same time, although younger cohorts tend to be more pro-independence than older ones in Catalonia, within each cohort support for independence declines over time. Thus, in Catalonia, we can say there is a demographically progressive increase in support for greater autonomy over time. Once again, trends in the Basque Country are more pronounced, with declining support for the status quo across and within cohorts, along with a simultaneous increase in support for possible independence. The patterns of identification and preferences across birth cohorts, and within cohorts over time, thus lend some support to the institutionalist argument that the socializing effects over time of autonomous institutions increase support for further devolution. The increase in preferences for greater autonomy and, in the Basque Country, independence, thus seem likely to continue over time, and constitute a disintegrative challenge to the Spanish state.

These effects are much clearer when we simply divide the population into those 18 years of age and older in 1976, at the transition to democracy (the Franco generation), and those younger (the “democracy generation”). We find that in most regions greater proportions of respondents in the democracy generation identify with the autonomous community, view the autonomous community as a nation, fall into the “nationalist” categories of our identity classification (and much smaller proportions are found in the Spanish category in every region but Galicia), and prefer greater autonomy or possible independence. The differences between these political cohorts are very clear, and constitute much stronger support for the argument that devolved institutions generate

support for further devolution. They also suggest that the disintegrative challenge to the Spanish state is likely to increase over time.

One might also expect education to tap the institutionalist effects of devolution. However, differences in the levels of educational achievement in our survey data correspond very closely to generational differences, and meaningful classification of educational achievement based on our surveys is difficult.\textsuperscript{51} We have employed a simple dichotomization between those with at least some post-secondary education and those with none in an effort to capture the effects of education.

Our survey data suggest that native-born respondents in every autonomous community identify more strongly with the community than immigrants (those born outside the autonomous community), who identify more strongly with Spain. Among our selected cases, this differential is greatest in the regions with their own national languages: Catalonia, the Basque Country, Galicia, and Valencia. But it is also present in Andalucía, Aragón, and Cantabria. Most of these immigrants come from other, Castilian-speaking regions of Spain, which supports the view that language and culture may be important determinants of identification. Immigrants, however, can become acculturated, or even assimilated to the local culture. Knowledge of the local language, therefore, may be a better indication of the strength of cultural influences on respondents than simple native versus immigrant status.

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 variable.\textsuperscript{52} Our independent variables include gender (male), native-born status, and residence in an urban community. We expect maleness and native-born status to increase the probability of nationalist/regionalist voting, and the effect of urban residence to vary among communities. There is no direct measure of the level of devolution, or even respondents’ perception of the degree of devolution, in the data. We elected not to integrate aggregate measures of devolution into our data, both because of the ecological fallacy inherent in attributing aggregate, or community characteristics to individuals, and the difficulty of compiling a reliable single measure of devolution. We use the difference between

\textsuperscript{51} Control over primary and secondary education curricula and staffing has shifted over time to the autonomous communities, and the cultural content of curricula varies even within regions. An educational reform initiated in 1991-92 altered the definitions of institutions, so that previously distinct categories of education are integrated into new categories, reducing the utility of data for individuals who completed their education before this date. Moreover, not all the regions offer higher education, and many students from other regions attend university in Madrid, even when university education is available in the autonomous community. Survey responses do not allow us to capture the potentially significant difference between attending a regional university (especially one that functions in the regional language) and attending university in Madrid. Given the centrality of education to political socialization processes, this issue demands further investigation.

\textsuperscript{52} For discussion of this method, see Fred C. Pampel, \emph{Logistic Regression: A Primer} Sage University Papers Series on Quantitative Applications in the Social Sciences, 07-132 (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 2000), pp. 22-23.
political generations and post-secondary education to capture the institutionalist effects of devolution.

In determining how to explore the potential rationalist foundations of identity, preferences, and voting, we focus on questions that ask respondents explicitly to evaluate the government of the autonomous community, the policies of the autonomous community, or conditions in the autonomous community. We found strong correlations among responses on several items, patterned in a manner consistent with the interpretation of responses as manifestations of a rational evaluation of regime performance. We used these to develop our “rationalist evaluation of the autonomous community” predictor. We rejected the use of items that were either too abstract, focused too broadly on evaluation of the “state of autonomies,” or too narrowly focused on specific incumbents.

We used identical or comparable items in each of the surveys to provide a basis for understanding cross-time change. However, some important variables are not included in every data set. An indicator of the degree of respondents’ interest in politics (coded here as “apathetic”) is included only in our 1992 survey. Similarly, 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 included in our 1992 and 1996 surveys, 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. The 1996 survey of identity in the autonomous communities contains a set of linguistic and cultural indicators not available in our other studies. Here, we use mother tongue, bilingualism, and the language of instruction of respondents’ schooling from the 1996 study to explore the impact of language on identity. We employ the Chernyha 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 thus captures important differences in the identities of respondents across and within the autonomous communities. We collapsed the Chernyha categories into nationalist, equal nation (dual identifiers who define their community as a nation), Spanish, equal region (dual identifiers who define their community as a region), and regionalist. A complete listing of the survey questions used in this study, and how they were coded, is contained in Appendix Two.

53 The 1992 survey, CIS 2025, did include language questions administered in the bilingual regions only, but these data are not available to us.

54 These data were collected only in the six bilingual communities, so our analysis is restricted to Catalonia, Galicia, the Basque Country, and Valencia (Navarre and Baleares are not among our selected cases.)
The 1996 survey focuses on identity in the autonomous communities. This is a smaller survey than those conducted in 1992 and 2005, and questions on language were asked only in the bilingual communities. Table 4 in Appendix One displays the results of logistic regressions for Spain as a whole using data from the 1996 study, for differing categories of identity as the dependent variable. Native mother tongue is by far the strongest predictor of nationalist identity. This cultural characteristic increases the probability that a respondent will declare a nationalist identity by almost 470 percent. Native-born status increases the probability by over 150 percent. The language in which respondents were schooled is also an important factor. Instruction in both the local language and Castilian, (half and half, or mostly or only the local language) increases the probability of declaring a nationalist identity by over 120 percent. Bilingualism increases the probability of declaring a nationalist identity by 105 percent. A leftist political orientation and post-secondary education also substantially increase the probability of declaring a nationalist identity, while evaluations of regime performance and gender have a statistically significant but minimal impact. The dynamic of competitive devolution, or the sense of one’s own community being treated unfairly or unequally by the central government, is not significant for nationalist identity. These results clearly show that, taking Spain as a whole, cultural-linguistic factors are the primary source of nationalist identification defined by the Chernyha classification scheme.

For regionalist identity, native-born status is by far the most significant predictor, increasing the probability by almost 250 percent. Native mother tongue is statistically significant but its impact is minimal, increasing the probability of declaring a regionalist identity by only 38 percent. Gender, political socialization, evaluations of regime performance, and competitive devolution are all statistically significant predictors, but their impact is also minimal. For equal-nation identity, the most important predictor is bilingualism, increasing the probability of declaring this identity by over 50 percent. This suggests that simultaneous identification with the community as a nation and with Spain as a whole is driven by dual culture and language. This constitutes strong support for the argument that culture drives identity in Spain. For equal-region identity, native-born status is by far the most important predictor, increasing the probability of declaring an equal-region identity by 110 percent. “Democracy generation” and evaluations of regime performance are also statistically significant, although their relative importance is small. However, native mother tongue, bilingualism, and schooling in the local language all reduce the probability of declaring equal-region identity. This constitutes additional evidence that regional identity (whether predominant or partial) is distinct from national/cultural identity. These results support our argument that the Chernyha classification scheme captures the cultural-linguistic elements of identity, and underscores the importance of distinguishing between “dual identifiers” who declare their community a nation, and those who declare it a region.

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55 Centro de Investigaciones Sociológicas study number 2228 (1996)
56 Defined as the declaration of two mother tongues (Castilian and the local language), or declaration of Castilian as mother tongue and knowledge of the local language,
We further tested the consistency of Chernyha’s categorization of identities by examining responses in our 2005 survey to the question “What is the significance of Spain for you?” for each category of identity. Between 51 and 75 percent of all respondents in most regions opted for the ambiguous response, “my country.” But, in Catalonia, only 34 percent chose this response, and in the Basque Country just under 19 percent chose it. In every region, those who defined Spain as “a nation of which I am a member” are concentrated in categories that reflect identification with the autonomous community as a region rather than a nation, or identification as Spanish. Very few respondents who consider themselves members of a Spanish nation also identify with their autonomous community as a nation, except in Catalonia, where they distribute themselves across all categories of self-identification. The clearly nationalist response (Spain as a state of which “my country is not a part”) is selected only by respondents in Catalonia and the Basque Country who identify with their autonomous community as a nation. Thus, the Chernyha classification scheme, by combining the distinction between identification with the autonomous community as a nation and as a region with the relative strength of identification with Spain or the autonomous community, captures the effect of language/culture on identity, and the distinction between nationalist and regionalist identities in the autonomous communities.

When we applied an independent proportions test to changes in the distribution of responses between 1992 and 2005 on the Chernyha identification scheme in our seven selected communities, we found significant increases in national identification in the Basque Country, Catalonia and Andalucía, and significant increases in regional identity in Galicia, Aragón, and Valencia.

Using this classification scheme, Chernyha identified distinct patterns of voting among those with nationalist, regionalist, dual, and Spanish identity in the 2005 data. Stronger identification with the autonomous community was associated with a greater tendency to vote regionalist or nationalist in regional elections. Stronger identification as Spanish was associated with a greater tendency to vote for a Spanish party. Differences in the degree of identification with the autonomous community (equally, mostly, or only) were associated with differences in the level of support for the more extreme nationalist parties in the Basque Country and Catalonia.

Tables 5 and 6 display the results of regressions for nationalist/regionalist voting in regional elections for all of Spain, and for three categories of political preference: Preference for maintaining the status quo, for more autonomy, and for independence for the autonomous community. These results make clear the singular importance of identity. Nationalist identification is statistically significant and increases the probability of a nationalist/regionalist vote by over 1,200 percent in the 1992 data, and by almost 800 percent in the 2005 data. Regionalist identity and equal-nation identity are also significant, and increase the probability of nationalist/regionalist voting. Equal-region is

57 Respondents were asked to choose from a set of options shown on a card: “My country;” “A nation of which I am a member;” “The state of which I am a citizen;” “A state formed of various nationalities and regions;” and “A foreign state of which my country is not a part.”

insignificant in both regressions. These results contradict the dominant assumption in the literature on Spain, that “dual identity” is an indicator of positive support for the state of autonomies. Preferences for more autonomy and, especially, independence also both increase the probability of nationalist/regionalist voting.

These regression results illustrate the nature of the relationship between identities and preferences. Nationalist identification increases the probability of preference for independence by over 1,500 percent in our 1992 data, and by more than 2,200 percent in our 2005 data. At the same time, nationalist identity has the strongest, and negative effect on preference for the status quo and a moderately positive effect on preference for more autonomy. Regionalist identity also decreases the probability of preference for the status quo, and increases the probability of preference for more autonomy and for independence. 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. The effects of equal-region identity are consistent with the concept of “dual identity;” it reduces preference for independence and increases preference for the status quo.

The 1992 regression includes a measure of political interest. Apathy increases the probability of preferring the status quo, and reduces the probabilities of preferring more autonomy and independence. These results provide additional support for our earlier argument that preference for the status quo represents a default option rather than a clear preference. We interpret preference for the status quo as, at best, 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.

On an all-Spain level, demographic factors, institutionalist socialization effects, and evaluations of regime performance, are relatively unimportant for voting and preferences in comparison to the effects of identity and preferences in both the 1992 and the 2005 results. The relative unimportance of regime performance magnifies the challenge to the Spanish state. The 1992 data demonstrate that the inevitable perceptions of unfair/unequal treatment arising out of asymmetrical devolution increase the probabilities of nationalist/regionalist voting and, more important, preferences for more autonomy and independence. The effects of competitive devolution are even greater on the regional level. The relative unimportance of regime performance suggests there may be little the state can do to alter preferences.

Table 7 displays the results of logistic regressions in each of our selected communities, using our 1992 survey data, for the vote for nationalist and regionalist parties in the most recent prior regional elections. These results make clear the importance in five of our seven selected cases of nationalist and/or regionalist identity, preferences for autonomy or independence, and the perception that the autonomous community is treated unfairly or unequally by the central government in Madrid. Native-born status is the only demographic factor that is statistically significant. It increases the probability of
nationalist/regionalist voting in 4 of our regions, with the strongest effect occurring in Catalonia. The effect of membership in the democratic generation is significant in only 3 of our regions, and surprisingly modest. Even more surprising, the effect is negative—that is, it decreases the probability of nationalist/regionalist voting. Closer examination of the voting data for this group revealed relatively high proportions of non-voters (from 18.6 percent in Galicia to 29.5 percent in Aragón), as well as some members too young to have voted in the regional elections some 2-4 years prior to the survey (from 1.1 percent in Galicia to 5.5 percent in Catalonia). This helps explain the relatively weak, and negative relationship.

Post-secondary education is significant only in the Basque Country, where it has only a modest positive effect on voting in comparison to identity, and in Andalucía, where it has a strong positive effect. The rationalist explanation of voting finds only modest support in these data. Evaluation of regime performance in the autonomous community is significant in only three of the regions, and negative in two of them. Satisfaction with the government of the autonomous community is significant, positive, and relatively strong only in Catalonia, where a regionalist/nationalist party has been dominant in local politics. The weakness of this factor suggests that nationalist/regionalist voting is not the product of a rationalist evaluation of performance.

Contrary to the assumption underlying treatment of “dual identity” in the literature as an indicator of support for Spain, dual identities increase the probability of nationalist/regionalist voting in four of our seven selected communities. Equal-nation identification contributes positively and strongly in four of our cases, and equal-region identification makes a moderate positive contribution in two cases. The perception of unfair/unequal treatment of the region is significant in 5 of our 7 regions, increases the probability of nationalist/regionalist voting in all of them, and is relatively strong in four of the five. Preferences for more autonomy and/or independence are also significant, increase the probability of nationalist/regionalist voting, and are relatively strong in most of our regions.

These regressions thus suggest that identity and preferences and, to a lesser extent, native-born status and the grievances arising out of perceived status inequalities associated with asymmetrical devolution, were the primary drivers of nationalist/regionalist voting in the autonomous communities in 1992.

Our data for 2005, shown in Table 8, demonstrate the continuing importance of identity for nationalist/regionalist voting in the historic communities. Both equal-nation and equal-region identity increase the probability of nationalist/regionalist voting in Catalonia. In Andalucía, equal-region identity has a negative effect on voting, which is consistent with existing treatments of “dual identity.” There is no indicator of competitive devolution in this data set. Other factors lose their significance or coherence across regions in comparison to our earlier results. In part, this is because of the importance of devolution as an issue in regional politics, reflected in the strength of the competitive devolution factor in 1992. In the interim between these surveys, regional organizations of statewide, or “Spanish,” parties increased their competitiveness for the votes of
nationalist/regionalist identifiers and those with preferences for autonomy/independence by adopting more “regionalist” agendas. The analytical value of the vote for regionalist/nationalist parties as an indicator of the effects of devolution may thus be declining. This increases the importance of exploring changes in identity and in the political preferences of the Spanish regional electorates, and their implications for state integrity.

Tables 9, 10, and 11 display the results of logistic regressions for nationalist, regionalist, and equal-region identity in our selected communities, based on the 1992 survey data. These are fairly weak regressions because, as we have demonstrated in our analysis of the 1996 data, language and culture drive identity, and these factors are not addressed in our 1992 and 2005 surveys. However, we are interested primarily in the relative importance of the independent variables in each regression. We use the change in probability of the dependent variable as a statistical basis for making judgments about relative importance. The results of regional regressions in Tables 9-11 suggest that native-born status and a sense of unfair/unequal treatment by the central government in Madrid greatly increase the probability of nationalist identification in Catalonia. Leftist ideology and post-secondary education have more modest positive effects on the probability of nationalist identification. Residence in an urban environment, and a positive rational evaluation of the performance of the autonomous government, have modest negative effects. Native-born status has the strongest, positive effect on the probability of regionalist identification in Catalonia. Urban residence has a negative effect here, as well. A sense of unfair/unequal treatment of Catalonia by the central government reduces the probability of both regionalist and equal-region identification, which suggests that asymmetrical devolution in Spain contributes to a sense of comparative disadvantage at the hands of the central government, and the rise of nationalist political identity at the expense of regionalist or equal-region identity in Catalonia.

In Galicia, the regression results demonstrate that nationalist identification in 1992 is driven by leftist ideology, membership in the democratic generation, post-secondary education, and a sense of unfair/unequal treatment of the autonomous community. For equal-region identification, native-born status has the strongest, positive effect. A positive evaluation of regional government performance and urban residence also increase the probability of equal-region identification. But, not surprisingly, leftist ideology decreases the probability. Thus, in Galicia, as in Catalonia, asymmetrical devolution appears to contribute to a sense of comparative disadvantage at the hands of the central government, and the rise of nationalist political identity, while urban residence and positive evaluation of government performance in the region contribute to equal identification with Spain and the autonomous community as a region.

In the Basque Country, the regression results support the view that nationalist identification is rooted in the native-born population. Leftist ideology and a sense of grievance against the central government also increase the probability of nationalist identification. The rural foundations of nationalism in the Basque Country are reflected in the negative effect of urban residence on nationalist identity. The regression for regionalist identification in the Basque Country tells us very little. But, the regression for equal-region identity suggests that urban residence, leftist ideology, satisfaction with the
performance of the Basque government, and the absence of a sense of unequal/unfair
treatment of the region all increase the probability of equal identification with both Spain
and the Basque Country as a region. Thus, in all three historic communities, a sense of
unequal or unfair 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, lies at the core of nationalist identity. Residence in an urban
community, and satisfaction with regional government performance increased the
probability of equal identification with Spain and the autonomous community as a region.

While native-born status appears to drive nationalist identity in the historic regions, it
increases the probability of regionalist or equal-region identity in our other selected
cases. In Andalucía and Aragón, urban residence reduces the probability of regionalist
identity and increases the probability of equal-region identity. The effect is quite the
opposite in Cantabria. There is no clear, patterned relationship between political
generation and either regional or equal-region identity in these communities. Where
religiosity (an indicator of social conservatism) is statistically significant (for regionalist
identity in Andalucía and Cantabria), it has a negative effect. While the perception of
unequal/unfair treatment drives nationalist identity in the historic regions, it increases
the probability of regionalist (Andalucía and Valencia) or equal-region identity (Cantabria)
elsewhere. Thus, some of the same factors that produce nationalist identity in the historic
communities produce regionalist identity in the non-historical communities. These
differences reduce the utility of regression analysis of the sources of identity carried out
on the all-Spain level.

Tables 12, 13, and 14 display the results of logistic regressions for nationalist, regionalist,
and equal-region identity in our selected communities, based on our 2005 survey data.
Native-born status has a strong, positive effect in our 2005 data on the probability of
nationalist identification in both Catalonia and the Basque Country, regionalist identity in
five of our seven cases, and equal-region identity in four cases. The effect is strongest for
nationalist identification, and greater for regionalist than for equal-region identity. But, it
is negative for equal-region identity in Catalonia. As in 1992, leftist ideology has a
moderate, positive effect on the probability of nationalist identification in Catalonia and
the Basque Country. The positive effect of respondents’ general assessment of the
autonomous government in these two communities reflects the fact that nationalist and
regionalist parties dominate each government. The absence of any clear pattern in the
effects of socialization, culture, or regime performance variables on identities might
suggest that identity is simply a product of “nativism” in the autonomous communities.
But our 2005 survey data do not include linguistic/cultural indicators. Nor does it include
an indicator of perception of unfair/unequal treatment of the autonomous community, a
significant factor in our 1992 regressions. The fact that competitive devolution continued
to play an important role in Spanish politics at the time of this survey suggests that had
our data included such an indicator it would likely have been a significant factor in our
2005 regressions.

The regressions for preferences for more autonomy and for independence in our selected
communities in 1992, shown in Tables 15 and 16 in Appendix One, demonstrate that
nationalist and/or regionalist identity has a strong, positive impact on the probability of preference for more autonomy in six of our seven selected cases, and on preference for independence in both Catalonia and the Basque Country. Equal-nation and/or equal-region identity also has a strong, positive impact on preference for more autonomy in six of the communities. But, while equal-nation identification has a positive effect on preference for independence in Catalonia, equal-region has a negative effect in both Catalonia and the Basque Country. This is further evidence of the importance of distinguishing between these two forms of “dual identity.” The perception of unfair or unequal treatment contributes strongly and positively to the probability of preferences for more autonomy and independence among respondents in our 1992 survey. Membership in the democratic generation is more relevant for preferences than for identities or voting. This result supports the institutionalist argument that institutions created by the process of devolution will generate support for further devolution. Finally, apathy has a negative effect on preferences for both more autonomy and independence. This is in sharp contrast to the results of regressions on preference for the status quo, shown in Table 17. Apathy increases the probability of preference for the status quo, while all other factors that contribute to the probability of preferences for autonomy and independence reduce the probability of preference for the status quo. This result supports our interpretation of respondents’ choice of the status quo option as a default category, rather than an expression of a strong preference.

The impact of identity on preferences in our 2005 data is very similar. As can be seen from the regression results shown in Tables 18 and 19, nationalist identity has a strong positive effect on the probability of preference for independence. Nationalist and/or regionalist identity has a positive effect on preference for more autonomy in four of our selected regions. Equal-nation has a positive effect on preference for independence. It also increases the probability of preference for more autonomy in three of our selected regions. Equal-region, however, has no significant effect on autonomist preferences, and a negative effect on preference for independence in Catalonia and the Basque Country. This finding reinforces the argument that dual identity conflates two distinct types of identity with differing political implications for the state. The regression on preference for the status quo in our 2005 data, displayed in Table 20, show the same sharp reversal of relationships as in 1992. Despite the absence of indicators of apathy and competitive devolution from these data, the results are consistent with the interpretation of preference for the status quo as a default category rather than an expression of support for the Spanish state.

**Conclusion: Identity, preferences, voting and the dynamics of devolution**

Our analysis demonstrates that identity and preferences are the primary drivers of nationalist/regionalist voting in regional elections in Spain. 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 in determining identities. Native mother tongue is by far the strongest predictor of nationalist identity. The impact of bilingualism is weaker, because dual culture and language drives simultaneous identification with the community as a nation and with Spain. For regionalist identity, native-born status is by far the most significant 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.

We find that identity is of singular importance for voting and preferences. Nationalist identification 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. It increases the probability of preference for independence by over 1,500 percent in our 1992 data, and by more than 2,200 percent in our 2005 data. At the same time, nationalist identity has the strongest, and negative effect on preference for the status quo and a moderately positive effect on preference for more autonomy. Regionalist identity also decreases the probability of preference for the status quo, and increases the probability of preference for more autonomy and for independence. 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 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. At the same time, we find 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.

The relative unimportance of regime performance in our data magnifies the challenge confronting Madrid. The inevitable perceptions of unfair/unequal treatment arising out of the asymmetrical character of devolution increase the probabilities of nationalist/regionalist voting and, more important, preferences for more autonomy and independence. If positive evaluation of regime performance does little to moderate voting or preferences, this suggests there may be little the state can do to alter preferences.

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 identify with the autonomous community, view the autonomous
community as a nation, fall into the “nationalist” categories of our identity classification, and prefer greater autonomy or possible independence. 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, strongly increases the probability of preferences for more autonomy and independence, and increases the probability of nationalist identity in the historic regions. A sense of unfair or unequal treatment increases the probability of regionalist (Andalucía and Valencia) or equal-region identity (Cantabria) elsewhere. Thus, some of the same factors that produce nationalist identity in the historic communities produce regionalist identity in the non-historic communities. These findings suggest that Brancati may be correct in arguing that devolution contributes to dissolution. But the linkage between devolution and dissolution does not run directly from one to the other. Our findings suggest that it is change in identity, and the changes in preferences associated with identities and the perception of status inequality, that matter more for the integrity of the democratic state than 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 these 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 other regions not among those we have selected for analysis here, have in recent years pressed for and won greater devolution. 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.59 As the experiences of Canada and Belgium, and now Spain, suggest, regionalism on the part of statewide party organizations may constitute as serious a threat to the integrity of a democratic state as the agendas of nationalist/regionalist parties.

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

59 For an overview, see Violeta Ruiz Almendral, “Basque proposal of ‘free association’ challenges Spanish federalism” Federations 4, 4 (2005), pp. 7-9; Diego Muro, Ethnicity and Violence: The Case of Radical Basque Nationalism (London: Routledge, 2008), pp. 178-180; and Balfour and Quiroga, Reinvention of Spain, pp. 63-65.
played a major integrative role in Spain from the moment of transition to democracy. Balfour and Quiroga report that both the socialists and the conservatives are now internally divided between elements sympathetic to greater devolution, and those opposed. What sets “devolutionists” in both of these national parties apart from the nationalists of Catalonia, the Basque Country and Galicia, is their support for a symmetrical pattern of devolution. Balfour and Quiroga characterize this as “neo-regionalism” and “an alternative Spanish nationalism,” because “regionalists acknowledge Spain as the sole nation and the Spanish people as the ultimate sovereign body.” But the most recent round of devolution suggests that this view is decidedly optimistic. 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. To the extent the conservative and socialist party leaderships in Madrid lose control over their regional organizations, or these regional leaderships turn away from Madrid in the interest of securing local (regional) political power, devolution may very well turn into dissolution. Preservation 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.

Spain thus confronts what Chernyha has characterized as a “democratic dilemma.” Changing identities and preferences in the regional electorates, and especially grievances arising out of perceived status inequalities associated with asymmetric devolution, lead inevitably to shifts in the political agendas of democratic parties. The dynamics of competitive devolution under conditions of asymmetry ensure continuing demands for ever-expanding powers and authority from both regional electorates whose preferences are shifting, and the elites who seek to lead them. The implications for future research are clear: The analytical value of the vote for regionalist/nationalist parties as an indicator of the effects of devolution may thus be declining, and the importance of understanding the sources of identities and preferences is increasing.

Ten years ago Juan Linz and José Ramón Montero noted that the Basque nationalist and Catalan regionalist parties “tended to provoke an escalation of demands based on unilateral, conflictive and untrustworthy, when not actually semi-loyal strategies.” Despite their willingness to lend their support to governing parties in Madrid, without which those parties might not have been able to govern, “the cooperation seen at the central level is replaced by harsh, principled and sometimes semi-loyal competition at the regional level.” This contradictory dynamic led Linz and Montero to speculate that “the centrifugal dynamics which inspires them all will prove scarcely compatible with the so-called Bundestreue, or the basic loyalty to the federal constitution and to the state, …without which multinational federalism might not be a stable solution.” Changing patterns of identity, preferences and voting in Spain reported here, and especially the intensification of competitive devolution since 2003, suggest their concern for the future integrity of the Spanish state remains as valid today as when they drafted it ten years ago.

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60 Balfour and Alejandro Quiroga, *The Reinvention of Spain*, p. 75.