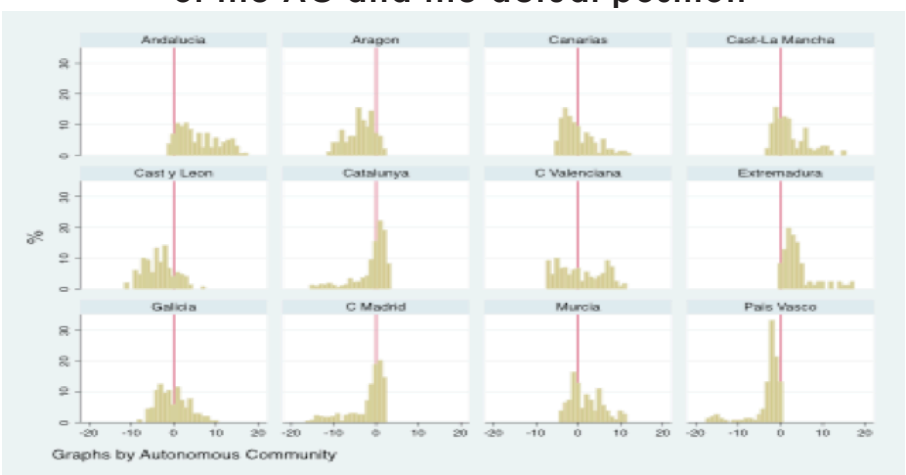
We find that when Spaniards are primed by being asked to evaluate the economic rankings of regions representing their "out-group" they display greater preferences for inter-regional redistribution, a result that holds throughout non-Catalan regions, even in areas that are also net-contributors such as Madrid. Within Catalonia, when respondents are primed by the poorest region in Spain and therefore the most obvious net recipient of transfers (i.e. Extremadura), they show significantly distinct preferences for redistribution, becoming less favorable to inter-regional redistribution. Thus, out-group priming activates preferences for or against inter-regional redistribution, and might operate in conjunction with information.

Our overall findings cast doubt on a purely political economic model of preferences for regional redistribution and regional policy issues. Of course, distinguishing between purely political economic and 'identity-oriented' explanations remains an empirical challenge, and more research could be done along these lines.

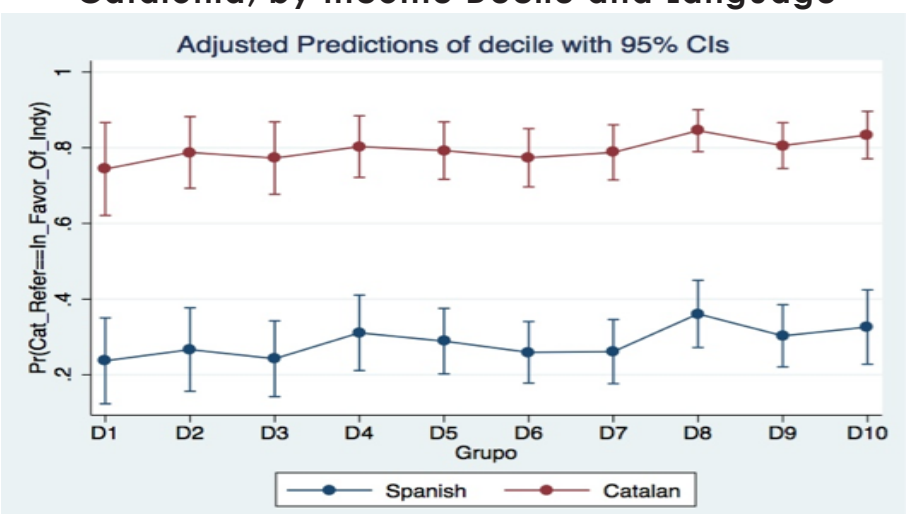
Taking a broader perspective, many political economy models argue that the growth of free trade in the world economy stimulates the demand for sovereignty in peripheral nations because it reduces the net benefit of attachment to a multinational state (Hecther 2000: 117; Alesina and Spolaore 2003; Rodrik 2012). The paradox of the European Union is that, by aiming at creating supranational unity, it also eased the quest for sovereignty of disenchanted regions. The absence of a clear threat of violence within the EU and the democratic consolidation of European states also encourage movements such as the Scottish or the Catalan, which are using referenda/elections as a tool for self-determination. These peaceful secessionist movements contrast with current experiences in other parts of Eurasia and the world (i.e. Ukraine), as well as with past experiences in other regions of the UK and Spain, where terrorist groups fought for self-determination during decades. The bad news for the EU states is that secessionism is far from gone in the continent: in a way, they are a byproduct of the common market, monetary stability, peace, and globalization. The good news is that self-determination movements are now using the tools of nonviolence to achieve their goals, and that the era of nationalist terrorism seems to be fortunately over in Western Europe.

Figure 1: Difference in the perceived relative location of the AC and the actual position



Balcells, Fernandez-Albertos and Kuo (2014)

Figure 2: Vote in an Independent Referendum in Catalonia, by Income Decile and Language





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