

Is support to independence *just* matter of identity? Three circles of nationalism in Catalonia

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Abstract

Based on two recent surveys conducted in 2008 and 2009, this paper analyses the relation between national identity, constitutional preferences and electoral behaviour in Catalonia. A reasonable starting hypothesis could expect the existence of a strong relation between support to independence, feelings of exclusive identity and vote for nationalist parties. According to this 'congruence hypothesis' these three particular positions could be represented as almost perfectly overlapping spheres -the three circles of nationalism. However, different studies have suggested that such a clear relation does not exist and complex and multifaceted relations are rather the norm (MacCrone and Paterson, 2002; Paterson: 2003). Furthermore, in the case of Catalonia constitutional preferences have been usually approached by a fourth grade scale of self-government ('region', 'autonomous community', 'state within a federal Spain' and 'independent state'), but relatively little work has addressed them in terms of support or opposition to an independence referendum. The paper will present some evidence on the relation between national identity and electoral behaviour with regard to constitutional preferences in both dimensions, the four-grade scale of self-government and the referendum question. Based on the results of this twofold analysis a number of issues will be discussed, from the extent to which the 'hypothesis of congruence' is a useful tool to interpret the Catalan case to the limits of well established contributions such those emphasizing the importance of the so-called 'dual identities' to explain varying levels of support to different constitutional options. This complementary approach can contribute to understand why, far from fulfilling certain expectations of a non-conflictive accommodation within a decentralised state, the question of self-government has remained an important element in the political agenda of Catalan and Spanish politics.

Introduction

Catalonia has been a paradigmatical case in some of the most important debates of the theories of nationalism. The Catalan case has been depicted by some of the most influential scholars on the subject as an example of a 'nation without state' with a predominant 'civic nationalism', characterized by the importance of 'dual identities', with claims for self-government of non-secessionist character (Guibernau, Keating, Smith). At the turn of the century the Catalan question is

strongly reemerging in the political agenda. In 2005 the Catalan parliament sent a proposal for a new Statute of Autonomy to the Spanish congress, where the text was amended after a controversial period of negotiations. In June 2006 the new charter was approved by referendum in Catalonia. However, some aspects were challenged before the Constitutional Court, and four years later important aspects of the text were overruled under a strict interpretation of the Spanish Constitution. After 30 years of democracy and devolution, the territorial question in Spain and particularly in Catalonia remains at the center of the political debate. Moreover, the possibility of independence has become more visible in the political debate, not only at the parliamentary and partisan level but also because of a growing social mobilisation around pro-independence positions. As the debate about independence has taken a more relevant position in the public debate, some classical assumptions about Catalan nationalism are being revisited. This evolution would challenge the expectation of a balanced society in terms of national identification -to use Moreno expression to define Catalonia- with the autonomist model of 1978, that should foster dual identities and the preference for self-government short of secession.

Thus, several questions can be raised in the debate. Is the definition of Catalonia as a paradigmatical case of dual identities still a useful image to explain the increasing presence of independence as a political option in the public debate? Has support to independence actually grown in Catalonia? Is it just a matter of identity or a significant proportion of population with dual identities are supporting more self-government if not outright independence? Which are the effects, if any, of the traditional approach to national identity and constitutional preferences? Does support to independence vary depending on the number of constitutional options available?

How do we measure nationalism?

Constitutional preferences, national identification and electoral behaviour are the three main variables by which political science approaches the question of self-government in minority nations. While we can find well established formulations for each one of them in the field of opinion studies, relative little attention has been paid to how they can influence the polling results, that is, if individuals position themselves differently depending on the number of constitutional options considered. By combining two sources of data we can analyze if there is any effect with regard to national identification and electoral behaviour.

Constitutional preferences: a scale of self-government or a two-option referendum

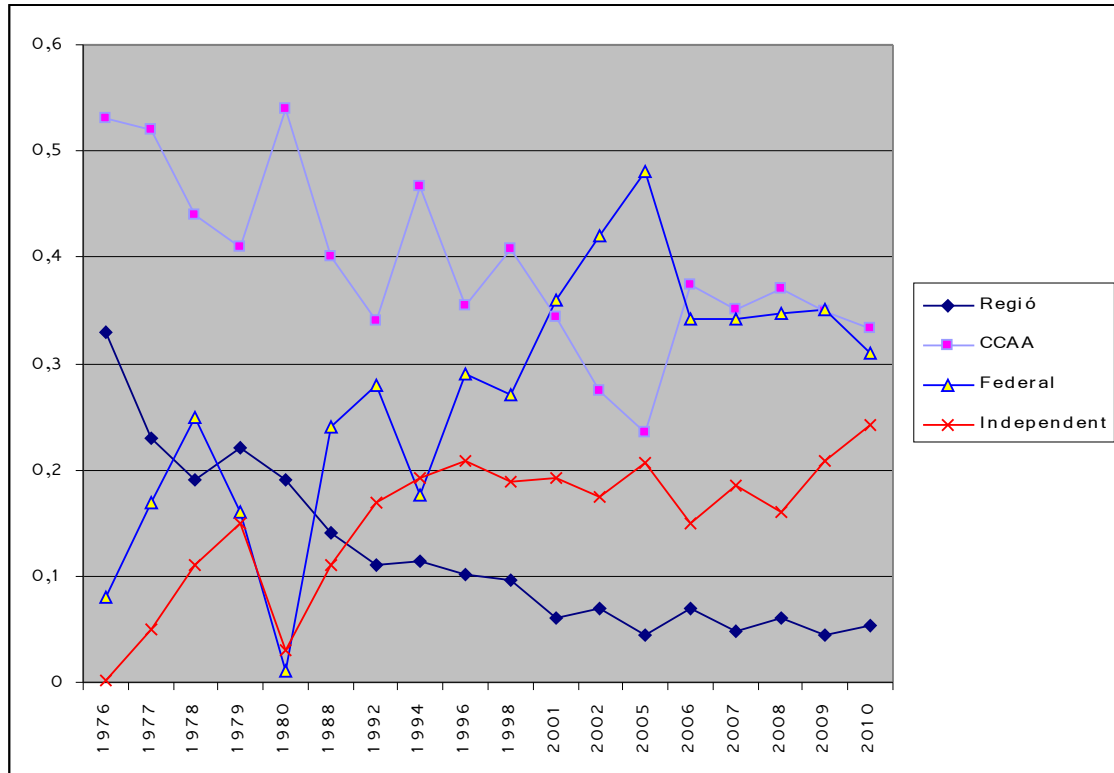
Constitutional preferences in nations without states refer to different institutional possibilities, from a centralized state to the option for independence. Wherever a certain level of devolution exists, these options may include a preference for a lesser level of self-government, the *status quo*, higher powers -in a variety of arrangements- or independence. In fact, constitutional preferences in this multi-option format can be understood as a scale of self-government, ranging from minimum or null powers to a maximum level of self-government, that is, an independent state. While the extreme options of this scale are rather clear -from no self-government arrangements to an independent state- the central options seem more controversial. In the data analysed here for Catalonia, this is particularly the case of the option 'a state within a federal Spain' which combines the idea of a high level of self-government in the form of a federal state.

Federalism is deeply rooted in the political tradition of Catalonia as one of the main options to accommodate the national diversity of the State. However, the presence of federal arrangements in the institutional organisation of the State has been rather limited. The democratic transition in the late 1970s after the francoist regime resulted in a constitution that addressed the territorial question by the so-called 'State of autonomies'. Whether the current model of devolution in Spain corresponds to a federal State is a controversial question. Spain has been often characterised as a quasi-federal state, but, despite presenting some federalising arrangements, it also lacks some fundamental elements to qualify as a fully-fledged federal state (Nagel, Moreno)¹. This theoretical debate can raise the question about the very existence of a common public understanding about the federal idea, beyond the perception that it is a sort of 'more powers' short of independence. This is an important aspect to take into account, as the series for the last five years show a stable scenario where the majoritarian options are *status quo* in the form of current Autonomous Communities and the mentioned federal options. The preference for the regional option stays at low levels below ten per cent, while the preference for independent state shows a slightly incremental trend representing around one fifth of the population. The reference to statehood, mentioned in two of the four options, also adds a further

¹ Actually, one of the main elements of the Spanish constitutional system is the fact that it allows for a wide range of institutional options. The ambiguous protection of self-government to nationalities and regions provided by the Spanish constitution actually allows for a wide range of territorial options, from homogeneous administrative decentralization to political asymmetry. The absence of significant power-sharing arrangements in the Spanish constitutional system is one of the elements that prevent to qualify it as a fully-fledged federation, as the central government and state institutions such the constitutional court retain a veto power over the scope of territorial reform. In fact, the only mention made in the constitution about federalism is to forbid the possibility of federation between autonomous communities. On the other hand, the Spanish constitution recognizes a single, indivisible body of sovereignty, the Spanish nation, so there is little room for substate identities to claim for a right to self-determination within the institutional framework of the state. For a further discussion on the federal character of Spain and the evolution of autonomy since 1978 see Nagel, 2006 and Moreno, 2001.

element of complexity as it can be argued that more than 50% of the population support some form of statehood in Catalonia.

Graph 1. Constitutional preferences 1976-2010²



An alternative way to approach constitutional preferences is to ask about the position towards independence, either as a general idea –support or opposition– or as an attitude before an independence referendum –yes or no vote, or abstention. While this formulation can add clarity it also simplifies the question in a way that may ‘force’ respondents to position themselves in one of the options, though the possibility of ‘no voting’ or ‘don’t know’ can moderate this effect.

If the different questions had no effect on the results, a similar percentage of support to independence could be expected regardless of the number of options available, as those supporting independence would represent a similar

² Data from 1976 to 2010. Sources: DATA, CIS and CEO.

proportion according to their constitutional preferences³. On the other hand, if we consider the four-option question as a sort of self-government scale we could expect that a certain number of respondents that do not opt for independence would give their support to it when the question is redefined into two alternative options.

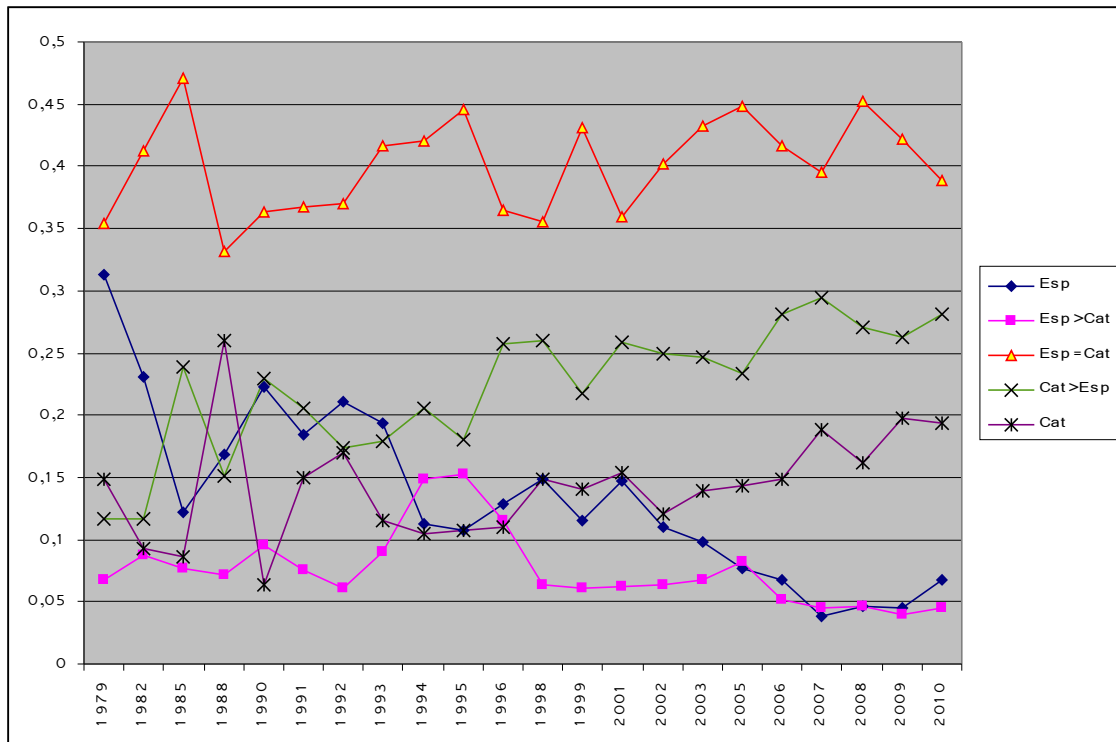
National identity

Long-term evidence suggest that, while balanced identity (i.e. Equally Spanish and Catalan) has remained strong as the main identification group among Catalans, population feeling more Catalan than Spanish or only Catalan have grown from a 24% by 1979 to reach levels beyond 40% during the last years. Conversely, Spanish only and more Spanish than Catalan positions have fallen from representing more than 30% of the population to figures around 15% according to the most recent data available. This evolution can discuss those interpretations in the literature that would expect devolution fostering dual, non-conflictive identities, strengthening regional identities without weakening state's national identity and also tending to generate support to self-government arrangements short of independence⁴.

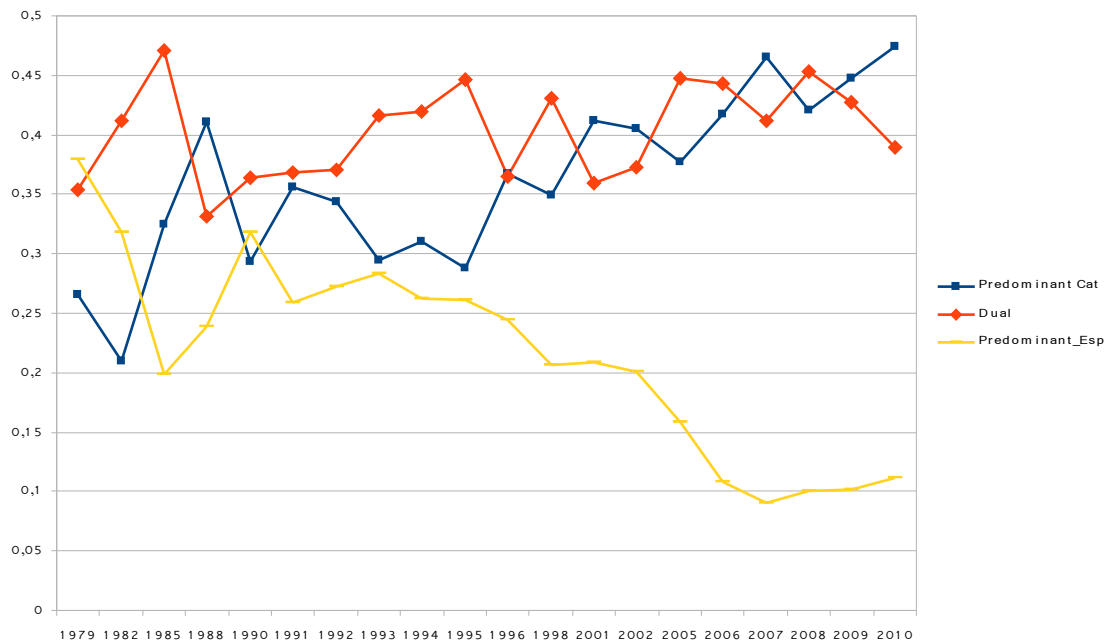
³For the Scottish case, see the Scottish Social Attitudes reports, available at <http://www.natcen.ac.uk/series/scottish-social-attitudes>. Support to independence between a three-option and a two-option question shows a variation of seven points (20% vs. 28%).

⁴ For the question of dual identities and to what extent devolution arrangements foster this kind of identification see the classical contribution of L. Moreno (Moreno, 2001)

Graph 2. National identity 1979-2010⁵



Graph 3. National identity three categories 1979-2010⁶



⁵ Data from 1979 to 2010. Sources: DATA, CIRES, CIS and CEO.

⁶ Data from 1979 to 2010. Sources: DATA, CIRES, CIS and CEO.

Political parties

The third element of the circles of nationalism is vote for nationalist parties. The literature usually includes ERC and CiU as the 'nationalist' parties of Catalonia, but most Catalan parties define Catalonia as a nation, with the only exception of the regional branch of the PP (People's Party). The definition of Catalan national identity usually includes civic and ethnic elements; a historical community with its own traditions and language, but also dynamic and characterized by a collective will for self-government based on an inclusive conception of all Catalans regardless of origins, where the most visible marker of Catalanness is speaking the language. In accordance with the cultural specificity of Catalonia, most parties conceive Spain as a plural state, though they differ on the political implications of the term, whether plural or plurinational. The institutional horizon for the PSC (Catalan Socialist Party) is a federal model with asymmetrical elements where Spain would be something close to a nation of nations. The federal approach is shared by the post-communist ICV (Initiative for Catalonia-Greens), though they emphasize plurinationality, the asymmetrical transformation of the state and the right of self-determination. On the contrary, the coalition CiU (Convergence and Union) has historically bid for asymmetry but not for the federalization of the state, while ERC at most regards federalism as a step towards the creation of an independent State⁷. Furthermore, CDC (Democratic Convergence of Catalonia) - the bigger party in the coalition CiU- and ERC have addressed the recognition of the Catalan nation in the last years by emphasizing the 'right to decide', a sort of self-determination right claiming the condition as a fully-fledged demos, a position shared by ICV, though not as a political priority⁸.

⁷For a comprehensive characterisation of contemporary Catalan nationalism see Guibernau, 2004.

⁸ For a more detailed analysis, see Serrano 2008.

Constitutional preferences and national identity

The internal distribution of constitutional preferences by national identity shows an interesting pattern. On the one hand, the expectation that support to independence is higher in the two-option question than in the scale of self-government seems fulfilled, with a 36% of support in the first case and 21% in the second one. On the other hand, the relative weight of identity groups have a clear effect on the internal distribution of each constitutional preference, but is interesting how the internal composition of those supporting independence is similar in both cases. Exclusive Catalan identity accounts for half of those preferring an independent state, and if those with a predominant Catalan identity are added the percentage rises to a range between 78%-85%.

	A region	Autonomous Community	State within a Federal Spain	Independent State	Others
Only Spanish	17,17	9,05	2,81	0,13	15,09
More Spanish than Catalan	10,04	8,19	0,66	2,07	6,83
Equally Spanish and Catalan	54,92	63,3	38,08	11,15	75,01
More Catalan than Spanish	12,58	14,71	39,46	29,93	38,5
Only Catalan	1,64	3,67	16,61	55,28	33,62
Others	3,66	1,08	2,39	1,44	30,93
<i>N</i>	<i>118</i>	<i>739</i>	<i>597</i>	<i>433</i>	<i>113</i>

Source: Ceo

Table 2. National identity by Constitutional Preferences (Two-option referendum). Vertical percentages.

	Yes	No	No vote	Blank	DN/DA
Only Spanish	1,74	13,78	10,93	28,85	4,14
More Spanish than Catalan	0,70	13,04	7,10	0,00	4,67
Equally Spanish and Catalan	15,49	47,87	43,94	32,90	33,08
More Catalan than Spanish	30,61	7,31	17,67	0,00	28,03
Only Catalan	48,69	3,92	10,10	17,65	19,37
Others	2,46	14,10	10,25	20,61	10,70
<i>N</i>	371	225	273	10	123

Source: UOC

Being the biggest group of national identification, balanced identity has a significant weight in all the options, but it seems likely to expect a similar pattern of politisation of national identity regardless of how constitutional preferences are formulated. A further element of analysis can be found if we observe how constitutional preferences are distributed within every category of national identity, as shown in tables 3 and 4.

When analyzing how constitutional preferences are distributed by national identity, we find a reference category for every position in the identity scale. Exclusive Catalan identity is transformed in a wide majority supporting the independent state, a majority of those expressing a predominant Catalan identity opt for a state within a federal Spain, while the categories feeling equally and more Spanish than Catalan or only Spanish show a wide support for the status quo of Autonomous Community.

	Only Spanish	More Spanish than Catalan	Equally Spanish and Catalan	More Catalan than Spanish	Only Catalan	Others
A region Autonomous Community State within a Federal Spain	18,0	13,3	7,6	2,9	0,5	9
Independent State	59,0	67,8	54,7	21,2	7,1	16,7
Others	14,8	4,4	26,6	45,9	26,0	29,6
	0,5	10,0	5,7	25,3	62,7	13
	7,7	4,4	5,4	4,7	3,8	31,6
<i>N</i>	113	89	855	513	382	48

Source: CEO

	Only Spanish	More Spanish than Catalan	Equally Spanish and Catalan	More Catalan than Spanish	Only Catalan	Others
Yes	8,47	4,52	17,47	52,26	73,51	10,46
No	40,64	51,49	32,18	7,58	3,59	36,38
No vote	39,02	33,93	35,74	22,18	11,22	32,01
Blank	3,48	0,00	0,91	0,00	0,60	2,18
DN/DA	8,40	10,06	13,70	18,00	11,00	19,00
<i>N</i>	76	57	335	217	246	88

Source: UOC

This pattern is present in both sets of data, that is, when correlating with a four-grade scale of self-government and the vote in a two-option referendum, but here a relevant variation is found, that is, it seems to exist a tendency towards favouring independence by those groups with more Catalan identities, while balanced and Spanish identities lean towards contrary positions to independence. In the exclusive Catalan identity group, 58% of respondents opt for independence in the scale of self-government, while in the second case this percentage rises to 74%. For those expressing a more Catalan than Spanish identity the percentage of support for independence from 18% in the four-grade scale to 53% in the two-option referendum. Those feeling equally Spanish and

Catalan, though showing a significant percentage of support to independence in the referendum question of 17%, opt in a majoritarian way for negative or indifferent position. The option of no voting in an independence referendum is remarkably high in the groups with higher Spanish feelings⁹.

It must be noted that, on the one hand, exclusive identity does not transform completely into a preference for the independence state, and, on the other hand, that this transformation presents a similar degree of heterogeneity. Thus, support for independence either in a four-grade scale or in the two-option question features a significant proportion of respondents expressing dual identities. We find clear patterns of relation between certain national positions and constitutional preferences but also that dual identities also transform to a certain extent on positions favouring independence. Conversely, exclusive national identification as Catalan does not transform homogeneously into a political preference for independence, though it is the group which present higher levels of support for this option.

Constitutional preferences and vote for nationalist parties

The relation between vote and constitutional preferences shows a higher degree of variation depending on the formulation of the question. In the four-grade scale of self-government, half of ERC voters –a party with an explicit pro-independence position- support the option of an independent state, while CiU's voters feature a 23,8%, slightly above the average. While both parties represent around two thirds of those supporting independence, they neither have an homogeneous electorate nor they are able to gather the whole electorate with

⁹ The evidence available show that these groups show higher percentages of turnover in ordinary elections.

this constitutional preference. When comparing the vote with the two-option question on independence, both parties electorate show a significant increment towards pro-independence positions, with levels above the fifty per cent. In the case of ERC this percentages rises to 83% and in the case of CiU up to 51%. This increment does not however involve a greater capacity to concentrate pro-independence positions. Rather to the contrary, both parties gather less than a half of those supporting an independent state. The reason is to be found in the other parties. While featuring levels of support to independence below the average, the electorate of PSC and ICV represents a significant percentage within this group.

Vote by Constitutional Preferences (vertical percentage)					
	A region	State within			Others
		Autonomous Community	a Federal Spain	Independent State	
No vote	40,0	32,0	14,3	26,2	36,5
PPC	11,4	6,9	1,7	0,4	3
CiU	16,6	15,4	23,3	20,8	14
ERC	0,4	2,8	12,5	28,8	6,2
PSC	16,1	22,1	24,8	9,8	15,2
ICV-EUIA	0,0	3,9	11,8	3,6	6,9
Other options	15,5	16,9	11,6	10,5	18
<i>N</i>	118	739	597	433	113

Source: CEO

Table 6. Vote by Constitutional preferences (referendum)

	Yes	No	No vote	Blank	DN/DA
CiU	23,8	11,1	10,1	14,8	19,9
ERC	21,2	1,1	2,2	0	4,8
PSC	14	25,9	26,7	28	15,8
ICV-EUIA	4,2	4,7	4,6	10,2	6,1
PP	0,7	7,4	1,2	0	1
C's	0	3,7	0,8	0	0
Other	36,2	46,1	54,4	47	52,4
<i>N</i>	371	225	273	10	123

Source UOC

Nationalist parties are the two main groups gathering pro-independence voters, but they reach levels around fifty per cent of respondents, either in the scale of self-government or the two-option referendum. On the other hand, abstentionists is the biggest group among those supporting the *status quo* or the regional option but they stay on average within the independence group, while it is under the average in the federal option. In the case of the two-option referendum, the label 'other' includes not only abstentionists but also voters for minority options (which represent approximately five points of this category) and it becomes the highest single group in every option. It must be noted that the distribution of vote and turnover in these second data source is closer to the real percentage of participation in the Catalan parliamentary election, so it is not surprising that it represent the highest group as real turnout in the elections of 2006 was 56%.

Table 7. Constitutional preferences by vote (vertical percentages)

	No vote	PPC	CiU	ERC	PSC	ICV- EUIA	Other options
A region Autonomous Community	9,0	17,0	5,2	0,2	4,9	0,0	6,6
State within a Federal Spain	45,2	64,0	30,0	8,9	41,9	23,5	44,9
Independent State	16,3	12,9	36,8	32,9	37,9	57,5	24,8
Others	21,6	1,9	23,8	54,9	10,9	12,7	16,3
	7,9	3,4	4,2	3,1	4,4	6,3	7,3
N	524	80	378	227	390	123	279

Source CEO

Table 8. Constitutional preferences (referendum) by vote

	CiU	ERC	PSC	ICV- EUIA	PP	C's	Other
Yes	51,9	83,7	24,9	32,3	10,4	0,0	28,9
No	14,7	2,7	28,1	21,8	69,9	78,9	22,4
No vote	16,2	6,4	35,0	26,1	13,8	21,1	31,9
Blank	1,0	0,0	1,2	1,9	0,0	0,0	1,0
DN/DA	16,4	7,2	10,7	17,9	5,9	0,0	15,8
N	170	94	208	48	23	10	465

Source UOC

The internal distribution of constitutional preferences by party vote (tables 7 and 8) shows how voters of all parties are split among the different options. In the case of the four grade scale of self-government, only two parties show a clear internal majority; the People's Party (PP), whose electorate supports the status quo of Autonomous Community, and ERC, with half of its electorate supporting independence. In the case of the two-option referendum, we find the same pattern among these two parties' electorate, while relevant differences are observed among the biggest parties CiU and PSC. CiU's voters favouring independence rise to a majority above fifty per cent, while PSC's voters are divided in three groups. The figures thus show how with the exception of ERC –and this only to a certain extent and more clearly in the two-option referendum- voters of all parties are split among the different constitutional preferences, whether formulated in the scale of self-government or in the two-option referendum. This is consistent with the literature supporting that vote is influenced by a variety of dimensions (i.e. From the combination of the ideological and the national cleavage, to compensation models of electoral behaviour, valence issues, etc., see Balcells, 2006). This data supports the fact that this does not only affect nationalist parties, but significant groups of left parties' voters (PSC and ICV) support independence when confronted with the two-option referendum, while they present a higher preference for the federal option in the scale of self-government.

The three circles of nationalism

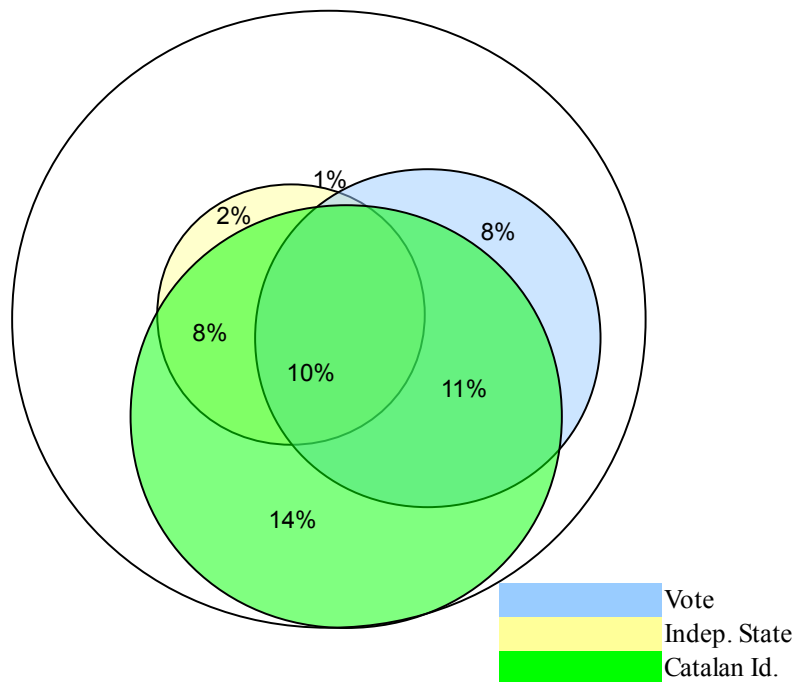
In the previous sections I have briefly analysed how constitutional preferences are related to national identification and electoral behaviour. While some of the classical approaches regarding the hypothesis of congruence are supported by the available data, we have also seen how the interaction of these three variables is rather complex and multifaceted. In this section I will emphasize

the elements conforming the three circles of nationalism with regard to support to independence, showing how the groups with a preferent or exclusive Catalan identity, vote for nationalist parties and support to independence, while complex they encompasses a vast majority of Catalan population. For each of the variables in the analysis I have selected the values of support to independence, vote for nationalist parties and predominant or exclusive Catalan identity. Their graphical representation as three overlapping circles will show to what extent the hypothesis of congruence for the Catalan case is fulfilled. Moreover, the external perimeter of these circles will provide a visual evidence of the extent to which the national question represents the centrality of the Catalan case. As the next table show, we first identify the percentage over the total population represented by each intersection for the two sources of data.

Identity	Vote	Constitutional	% CEO	% UOC
Yes	Yes	Yes	9%	15%
Yes	Yes	No	12%	4%
Yes	No	Yes	6%	14%
No	Yes	Yes	1%	2%
Yes	No	No	17%	13%
No	Yes	No	8%	6%
No	No	Yes	3%	6%

These percentages are represented in the form of circles, proportional to the relative weight of the population. Thus, the external circumference represents the total population (that is, the 100%) and the percentages for every intersection are calculated with regard to the total.

Graph 4. The three circles of nationalism (scale of self-government)

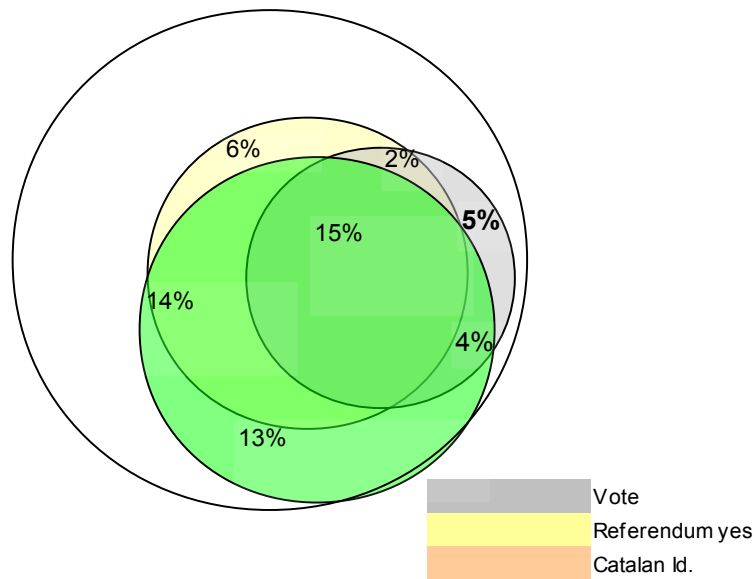


Source: CEO

The first graph is built upon the question where support to independence is one of four options in the self-government scale. The groups represented in the circles (nationalist vote, exclusive or predominant Catalan identity and support to independence) represent the 55% of the total population. The intersection of these three values, where the hypothesis of congruence is completely fulfilled, represents a 10% of the population. Thus, half of those supporting independence could be characterised as the expression of the maximum congruence, and almost one out of seven in this group do not express a predominant Catalan identity. Five subgroups have relevant weights, from those supporting independence and expressing a strong Catalan identity but not voting for nationalist parties to those groups not supporting independence. We see relevant groups with nationalist vote but neither the identity nor the constitutional preference for independence. In fact, the biggest group in the circles features a single marker; 14% of the population express a strong Catalan identity but not the nationalist vote or the support to independence. Even the

groups formed by those supporting independence without a predominant Catalan identity point at the existence of a small but interesting segment of population transcending the classical link with traditional identity factors accounting for their political preferences .

Graph 5. The three circles of nationalism (two-option referendum).



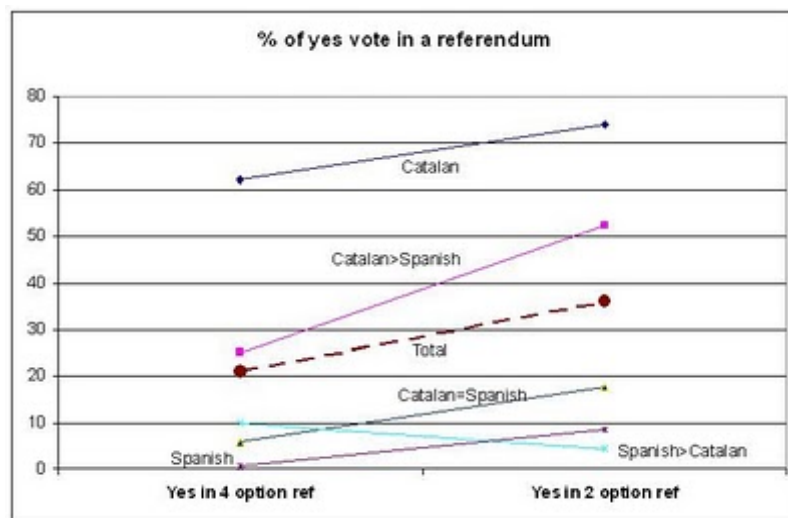
Representing the three circles with survey data on constitutional preferences based on a two-option question show a consistent pattern of distribution among the variables included. The higher percentage of population supporting independence generate rather similar proportion between segments and the external perimeter of the three circles account for a 59% of the population – compared with a 55% in the four-option scale of self-government in the previous figure. The main difference is found in the intersection between vote for nationalist parties and national identification, which is smaller in this second figure. This could indicate that those expressing a strong Catalan identity and voting for nationalist parties who do not support independence in a four-grade scale of self-government, may change and support it when formulated in dichotomic terms. Thus, the hypothesis of congruence remains a

relevant group either in the scale of self-government or the two-option referendum, but it does not encompass a clear majority of the population that share any of the ‘nationalist’ features as defined here, with the only exception of nationalist voters in the two-option referendum.

Is independence *just* a matter of identity?

Support to independence is associated with predominant Catalan identity. In the case of the scale of self-government, 85% of those supporting independence express a majoritarian or an exclusive Catalan identity. In the case of the two-option referendum question, predominant Catalan identities account for almost 80% of those supporting independence. The most significant variation comes from the group with predominant Catalan identity (more Catalan than Spanish). A significant variation is also found in the group expressing balanced dual identities, up to 17% of which would support independence in a referendum.

Graph 6. Support to independence within identity groups for alternative questions



Source: CEO and UOC

A simple calculation of odds ratio, that is, the probability for each of the identity groups to support independence both in the scale of self-government and the two-option referendum show significant increments for all of them, but still a clear divide can be seen between the groups with predominant or exclusive Catalan identity and those expressing balanced, predominant or exclusive Spanish identities. Particularly, those groups with balanced identities and a majoritarian Catalan identity show the biggest variation. Being the two main identity groups in Catalonia, this variation accounts for most of the difference between the 21% of independence support in the four-grade scale of self-government and the 36% in the two-option referendum.

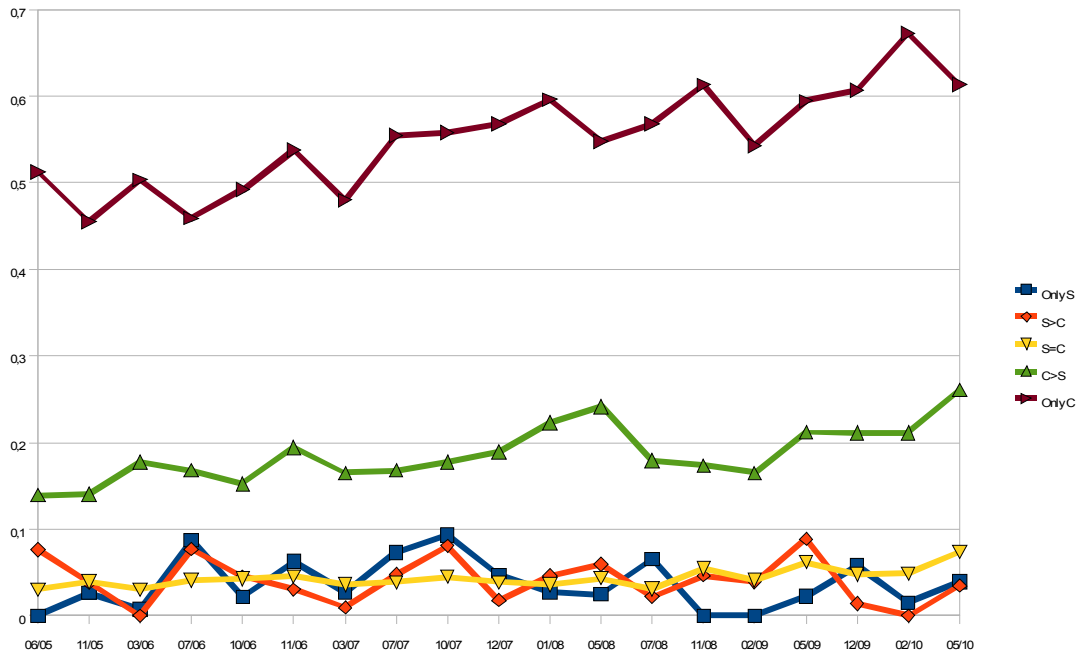
Table 9. Odds ratio of supporting independence by identity group

	Four option	Two options
Only Spanish	0.003	0.02
More Spanish than Catalan	0.017	0.067
Equally spanish and Catalan	0.077	0.199
More Catalan than Spanish	0.285	0.462
Only Catalan	0.657	0.749

Source: CEO 2009, UOC 2008.

Beyond this structural effect related to the constitutional available options, a second element about the temporal evolution of support to independence can be analyzed. If support to independence were to be less related to national identification than in the past, we should find an incremental evolution not only within groups with predominant Catalan identities but also in those groups with balanced or predominant Spanish identities.

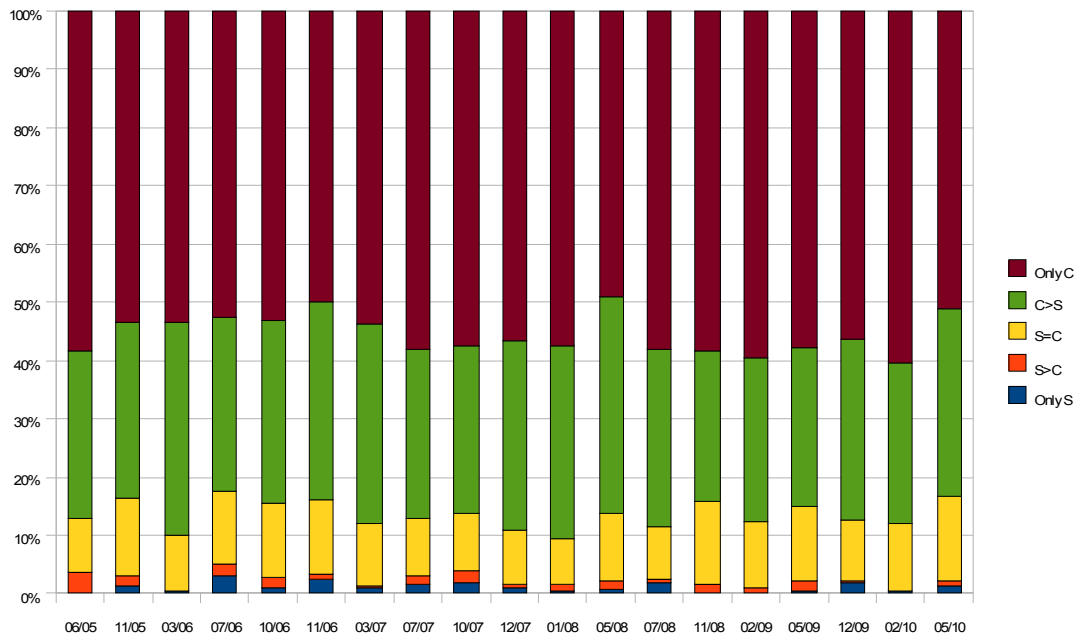
Graph 7. Support to independence within identity groups 2005-2010.



Source: CEO

The data for the last five years show an increasing trend in those groups with predominant Catalan identities, but for balanced and predominant Spanish identities the trend is of stability rather than change. It must be noted that, given the dimension of the balanced identity group, the slightly incremental trend represent between 10% and 15% of those supporting independence, but the internal composition of support to independence do not vary visibly in the last five years.

Graph 8. National identity composition of support to independence 2005-2010.



The most interesting conclusion at this preliminary stage is the fact that identity accounts for support to independence, but the trend shows how predominant Catalan identity is growing, and within them support to independence shows an incremental trend that would explain the evolution of support to independence in the last years.

Conclusions

The graphical representation of the data allow to draw some reflections on the traditional characterisation of Catalonia as the paradigm of dual identities which would generate a trend towards some sort of self-government short of independence. The political debate and the social basis of political preferences are dynamic rather than static, and the events of the last years in Catalonia invite, at least, to revisit some of the common assumptions made by the literature on nationalism in minority nations. A first interesting point to analyse

is to address the debate on constitutional preferences not only in the classical terms of a scale of self-government but also in the form of a two option referendum. The evidence available, though limited, shows an interesting pattern of change that can illuminate certain aspects such the reference to statehood in the four-grade scale of self-government or the analysis of constitutional preferences using alternative perspectives, which further research would allow to explore. Second, this exploratory exercise suggests that well-established conceptions such dual identities can be revisited. The politization of a social cleavage such national identification into constitutional preferences would be better analysed by an intermediate variable on nationalism, that is, measuring the intensity by which a social characterization is transformed into a particular political position. This intermediate variable could bring a better understanding of the extent to which national identity is, for instance, expressed in nested or exclusive terms and how it is associated with different constitutional preferences. The association between support for independence and a majoritarian Catalan identity -if broadly defined including those feeling more Catalan than Spanish and only Spanish- is found without this intermediate step, but the evidence suggest that, though there is an evident link between them, identity and constitutional preferences are related in a complex way. In other words, that a social position transforms into political preferences in a multifaceted way. Changes in support to independence increase for all national identity groups when constitutional preferences are reduced to a two-option referendum, being those feeling more Catalan than Spanish the group showing the biggest change. This general trend may explain why, while support to independence varies from 21% in the scale of self-government to a 36% in the two-option referendum, the internal composition in terms of national identification is more similar than expected if the options available had a relevant impact in the final results. Exclusive and predominant Catalan identity account for eighty-five per cent of those supporting an independent

state in the first case, while in the second case these two groups represent almost an eighty per cent of the total. From the perspective of dual identities, more than 40% of those supporting independence express some kind of dual identities (equally Spanish and Catalan, more Catalan than Spanish and more Spanish than Catalan) either in the two-option referendum or the four-grade scale of self-government. It could be argued that at the internal level of each of the three groups of dual identities we find relevant levels of support to independence, and moreover, a heterogeneity among these positions that goes beyond changes in support to self-government related to changes in national identity. However, further research will address the extent to which Catalonia is experimenting a process of constitutional and national polarization, as, while the preliminary evidence presented here does not contradict some of the classical contributions on nationalism in nations without states for the Catalan case, it shows the need to revisit the dynamics of how social divisions are transformed into political preferences, a fundamental element to understand contemporary debates and the future evolution of the national question in Catalonia and Spain.

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