Identities in between: Political conflict and ethno-national identities in multicultural states

Abstract

This paper examines how political conflict shapes ethno-national identities in contexts where a national group coexists with territorially concentrated ethnic minorities, and qualifies the view that conflict polarizes identities. An often-overlooked fact is that large numbers of citizens in these contexts identify simultaneously with both groups. Based on research about cross-pressures, we claim that dual identifiers react differently to conflict than exclusive identifiers. We predict that political disputes harden and polarize identities, but only among citizens at the extremes. Heightened conflict should not alter the identity of dual identifiers, but lead them to withdraw from politics. The setting of our study is Catalonia, a territory with numerous dual identifiers and an intense non-violent political conflict. Results from two survey experiments, qualitative interviews, and public opinion surveys confirm that heightened political conflict only produces polarization at the extremes, but dual identifiers do not exhibit this reaction. Our findings have implications for policy interventions, as they suggest that strengthening dual identities may assuage the polarizing effects of conflict.

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Woman born in 1953, Catalan resident, feels only Catalan

"Look, I am going to confess you something. Those issues related to self-government and Catalan politics bore me to death."
Woman born in 1956, Catalan resident, feels as Catalan as Spanish

Introduction

One of the most common types of ethnic conflict occurs when a group with a majority status within a multi-cultural state, henceforth the national group, confronts a territorially concentrated ethnic group that demands more self-government or secession. The ethnic group's perceived or actual economic advantage or grievances, and the mismatch between the economic and political development of the ethnic group can spur ethno-national conflicts and secessionist movements (Gourevitch 1979, Gurr 1994, Collier and Hoeffler 2002, Jenne et al 2007, Boylan 2015).

Decentralization has been traditionally considered as the most appropriate institutional device to appease these conflicts (Lijphart 1977, Horowitz 1985, Linz and Stepan 1996, Sambanis 2000, Saideman et al. 2002). However, the ability of institutional designs to accommodate these conflicts remains disputed (Lustick, Miodownik and Eidelson 2004, Miodownik & Cartrite 2010). Decentralization empowers cultural minorities and regional parties by providing them with more resources to engage in collective action, ethnic conflict and secessionism (Bracanti 2006). Political entrepreneurs on the two sides of the conflict have electoral incentives to mobilize their bases. In the process, opposing identities are activated, and ethno-national conflicts can escalate into intense political conflict (e.g. Catalonia, nowadays) or even violence (e.g. Yugoslavia).

The interplay of conflict and identity polarization is relevant in these cases because it can generate vicious circles (Sambanis and Shayo 2013). Conflict can lead to a hardening or polarization of pre-existing identities (Fearon and Laitin 2000, Horowitz 1985, Kaufman 1996, Rohner et al. 2013). In turn, polarized identities can increase the likelihood and harshness of conflict (Montalvo and Reynal-Querol 2005, Esteban and Ray 2008).

Ethno-national conflicts are distinct from other types of ethnic conflict in an often-overlooked respect: When a national and an ethnic group coexist, large numbers of individuals identify with both groups. Ethno-national identities occur in a continuum. At the extremes, individuals with exclusive identities identify only with the nation or with the ethnic group. Individuals with dual identities identify with both groups to the same extent or to different degrees. Linz and Stepan (1996) already emphasized this fact, yet most studies on this issue focus on situations that confront individuals who belong *either* to the majority group *or* to the minority group (Fearon and Laitin 2000, Horowitz 1985, Esteban and Ray 2008, Caselli and Coleman 2012, Sambanis and Shayo 2013, Hale 2004).

This paper examines the relationship between identity and conflict in a context with a large share of dual identifiers, and with an ethno-national conflict that has intensified in the last ten years: Catalonia. The paper makes two contributions to existing research.

First, it makes a theoretical contribution by arguing that the reaction of dual identifiers to conflict is distinct from the reaction of exclusive identifiers. Dual identifiers are a large but understudied constituency, and we know little about how conflict affects their identity. Two possibilities stand out with very different political implications. A first possibility is that the dynamics of conflict push dual identifiers to align with one or other side of the cleavage, establishing priorities among their loyalties (Lipset and Rokkan 1967). If conflict forces

individuals with dual identities to take sides, once confrontation has started it may become increasingly difficult to stop identity polarization. A second possibility is that duals do not take sides or modify their identities, but disengage and withdraw from politics. This possibility builds on the idea that cross-pressures demobilize and deter political participation (Mutz 2002b, Thierrault et al. 2015). Like other cross-pressured individuals, dual identifiers receive conflicting messages from political entrepreneurs in the national and the ethnic group. These cross-pressures produce distress, and dual identifiers try to avoid it distancing themselves from its source, i.e. politics. Disengagement does not only protect dual identifiers from cross-pressures, but it also releases them from the decision to choose between one and the other identity.

Second, the paper contributes to studies of how conflict shapes identity using two original survey experiments. Because of the interplay of conflict and identity, concerns about reverse causality plague observational research. In spite of the rise of experiments in comparative politics, no experimental study has specifically examined how political conflict affects ethno-national identities. By examining the effect of randomly assigned conflict primes on identity, the experimental design allows us to address concerns about causality. Qualitative evidence, and the analyses of observational data from two surveys conducted in a period of low and a period of intense political conflict provide additional evidence in support of the cross-pressures theory.

The experimental, qualitative and observational data are all consistent with the claim that the recent upsurge in conflict has affected the ethno-national identification and the attitudes towards politics of different groups in heterogeneous ways. In both experiments we observe that the treatments mostly affected the identities of citizens at the extremes, while dual identifiers were less reactive. Two considerations need to be kept in mind when

interpreting the results. First, the sample in our study has been very extensively pre-treated. The Spanish-Catalan conflict is a salient issue and receives daily media coverage. Because previous exposure to the conflict has already affected identities, the effect of our prime shall not be interpreted as the total effect of the treatment but as the average marginal effect of an additional treatment (Gaines and Kuklinski 2011). In addition, because more dogmatic individuals (individuals at the extremes) are in general less reactive in the presence of pre-treatment (Druckman and Leeper 2012), finding an effect at the extremes but not at the middle of the identification scale is quite remarkable. Second, identity is a very stable individual trait and hence we should expect small treatment effects which in small samples will be imprecisely estimated. Even constructivist perspectives agree that large changes in core identities rarely occur at high-speed (Chandra 2013). Short-term changes in individuals' ethnic and national identification are hardly ever observed or reported. Taking this into account, the results from our two experiments are even more noteworthy.

Our findings have important real world implications. They suggest that the demographics of pre-existing identities, i.e. the numbers of exclusive or dual identifiers in a population, are politically relevant, and can determine the way in which conflicts evolve. Furthermore, they suggest that political elites should not expect to significantly alter dual identities by intensifying conflict, at least in the short-run.

The findings also contain an applied lesson on how inter-group conflict can be mitigated. Recent studies have suggested that one way to ameliorate conflict between groups and improve inter-ethnic relations is to develop policies that increase identification with the overall national group (Robinson 2012, Sambanis and Shayo 2013). Our results cast doubt on this recommendation. Proposals intended to strengthen a national identity can backfire if they activate ethno-national conflict. Moreover, increasing the share of citizens who only

identify with the overarching nation may result in a larger constituency susceptible to becoming polarized. On the contrary, as some scholars have argued before, promoting dual identities may be better policy advice (Linz and Stepan 1996, Linz 1997). If dual identifiers are sheltered from the polarizing effects of conflict on identity, they can become a constituency in favor of ending a confrontation that is particularly painful for them. Individuals with dual identities can be in a privileged situation to build bridges between the groups even after the conflict has started. This optimistic view must, however, be qualified as well. The protection against polarization granted by dual identities may come at the cost of increasing attitudes such as cynicism and lack of interest in politics. Citizens who withdraw from politics can hardly kick-start reconciliation efforts. They may applaud such efforts, but are unlikely to take the lead.

Conflict and identity change among exclusive and dual identifiers

Individuals can identify with multiple social categories at the same time (gender, class, occupation, religion, nationality, ethnicity, etc.), although not all categories are equally salient for all individuals or in all circumstances.[1] National identification is an important category for the majority of people, something explained by the fact that the modern state is a powerful agent that shapes how individuals categorize and identify (Brubaker and Cooper 2000). In societies with territorially concentrated ethnic groups, identification with the nation often coexists with identification with an ethnic group.

Ethno-national identities can be thought as occurring in a continuum. At the extremes of this continuum, ethnic and national identities are exclusive; in intermediate positions identities are compatible and inclusive.

This characteristic sets apart ethno-national identities from other identities that exist in a binary way, so that identification with a group precludes identification with equivalent groups (e.g. identification as “Protestant” precludes identification as “Catholic”).

Dual ethno-national identities are very frequent in the regions where ethnic groups concentrate. In fact, they are often the modal form of identification (Stepan et al. 2011). For instance, in Flanders in 2010, dual identifiers were the largest category of identification: 42 percent of the population felt just as Belgian as Flemish, as compared to the next largest category where 28 percent felt more Flemish than Belgian (De Winter and Baudewyns 2014). In Quebec in 2011, the largest category, 35 percent, felt as Canadian as Quebecois and 31 percent felt more Quebecois than Canadian (Blais 2015). In the Basque Country in 2012, 39 percent of the population felt as Spanish as Basque and 23 percent felt more Basque than Spanish (Centro de Investigaciones Sociológicas). In Catalonia in 2013, 33 percent of the population saw themselves as both Spanish and Catalan and 27 percent as more Catalan than Spanish (Centre d’Estudis d’Opinió). In Scotland in 2013, 29 percent of the population defined themselves as equally Scottish and British and 29 percent as more Scottish than British (Scottish Social Attitudes Survey).

Family origin, parents’ purposive ethnic and national socialization, the language spoken at home, and experiences in the neighborhood influence the development of dual identities (Chernyha and Burg 2012, Barceló 2014, Hierro 2015). Once formed, identification with one’s ethnic or national group becomes stable, but not inalterable. Institutional reforms, such as educational reforms, can modify the demographics of ethnic and national identifiers across generations (Aspachs-Bracons et al. 2008, Clots-Figueras and Masella 2013). Identities can also change over the life course due to shifts in citizenship laws (Laitin 1998), electoral competition (Chandra 2004, Chandra and Boulet 2012, Miguel, Eifert and Posner 2010),

violent conflicts (Kaufman 1996, Fearon and Laitin 2000, Kalyvas 2008, Rohner et al. 2013, Sambanis and Shayo 2013), riots (Wilkinson 2012), or threats of inter-state conflict (Gibler et al 2012).

Until now, the literature has argued that violent conflict shapes identities in a specific way: "Violence has the effect, intended by the elites, of constructing group identities in more antagonistic and rigid ways" (Fearon and Laitin 2000, 846). Although the effects of conflict on identity increase with the intensity of violence (Balcells 2012, Rohner et al. 2013), non-violent political conflict between ethnic groups can also be expected to polarize ethno-national identities. This idea is also supported by classic social psychology studies, which suggest that even minimal forms of categorization and conflict have polarizing effects (Sherif et al. 1961, Tajfel et al 1971). Competition between groups reinforces the "us" and "them" distinction, hardening rival identities.

Building on this previous research, we expect that non-violent conflicts polarize the identities of people with an original weak identification with the out-group, i.e. exclusive identifiers. The effects on individuals with dual identities are less straightforward and have not been explored in previous research. Individuals may react to political conflict in two different ways: by taking sides and prioritizing between their two identities or by withdrawing from the situation of conflict. The first possibility, that dual identifiers choose between their two identities, is consistent with the predictions of the literature on political cleavages, which suggests that party competition along the ethno-national cleavage contributes to reproducing and crystallizing the identities of both groups, and pushes individuals in between to choose among their loyalties (Lipset and Rokkan 1967). This would imply that individuals with dual identities prioritize one of their identities when these clash.

The literature on cross-pressured voters suggests a different reaction: that dual identifiers do not prioritize one identity, but withdraw from politics instead. Cross-pressures appear when individuals belong to two or more social groups with conflicting values or preferences, and receive opposing pressures from these groups (Lazarsfeld et al. 1944, Berelson et al. 1954, Mutz 2002b, Brader et al 2014). Dual identifiers can be seen as cross-pressured individuals at times of heightened ethno-national conflict. They experience social pressures coming from the ethnic and the national group, and they are conflicted by the opposing political interests and preferences of the two groups.

Cross-pressures have been found to have two simultaneous different effects. First, cross-pressured individuals exhibit a greater understanding of the motives of both groups, and hence higher political tolerance than other citizens (Mutz 2002a). They engage in more intra-personal and inter-personal dialogue between different points of view and experience both perspectives in a dispute as their own (Mutz 2002a). Because of their in-between position, dual identifiers should be also able to empathize with the two sides in the conflict and, consequently, understand their motives. Second, cross-pressured individuals demobilize politically by participating less frequently in elections and other political activities (Berelson et al. 1954, Mutz 2002b, Therriault et al 2014). Different factors lead to demobilization: ambivalence regarding their political stands (Mutz 2002b, Jang 2009); a psychological need to avoid conflict leading individuals to retreat from political discussion and resulting in lower political interest (Jang 2009, McClurg 2006); and the distress produced by being forced to choose between two stands (Mutz 2002b). We contend that duals find themselves in a similar situation to cross-pressured voters. Torn by the political conflict that confronts the two groups they belong to, dual identifiers should react by distancing themselves from the source of conflict (i.e. politics) and becoming less interested and more distrustful of politics.

None of the aforementioned processes, namely the development of increased tolerance, and the growing estrangement from identity politics, are expected to lead dual identifiers to change their identities when exposed to conflict. Instead, we hypothesize that dual identifiers retreat from the political domain in order to avoid the discomfort derived from cross-pressures, and become more disinterested and cynical about politics. Once they are disengaged from the conflict, they are also released from the two groups' request to choose between the two conflicting identities.

In sum, we expect that the dynamics of conflict in a context with dual identities result in a polarization of identities at the extremes and absence of change, but a disengagement from politics of citizens with positions in between.

Case Study

Catalonia is an appropriate case study for examining the impact of ethno-national conflict upon the identification of exclusive and dual identifiers. The region hosts an intense ethno-national conflict and a large number of dual identifiers. Some people identify with Spain, but not with Catalonia. Other people identify only as Catalan and not as Spanish. Dual identifiers identify simultaneously with Spain and with Catalonia, and often to varying degrees.[2]

Catalan identity is a very relevant identity in Catalonia, and has language as its core ethnic attribute (Conversi 1997). Political conflict between Spain and Catalonia has a long history that dates back to the end of the 19th century. After the end of Franco's dictatorship and the advent of democracy in Spain, Catalonia recovered its political autonomy in 1977. Self-government was granted to Catalonia in the 1978 Spanish Constitution, and in the 1979

Statute of Autonomy (i.e. regional constitution). Since 1979, Catalan political parties have pushed to enlarge Catalonia's self-government powers. Statewide Spanish parties, in turn, have fought back to secure the status quo, arguing that Catalonia had been granted enough autonomy. In 2005, the conflict became more pronounced when the Catalan Parliament sponsored a new Statute of Autonomy with enhanced self-government responsibilities. The reform process was surrounded by divisive campaigns and negative statements made by political elites on both sides. After being approved in a referendum in 2006, the new statute was curtailed by a ruling of the Spanish Constitutional Court in 2010, which prompted Catalan civic organizations and political parties to start actions pushing for self-determination and secession from Spain. In the years since, the debate about secessionism has become the central issue in Catalan politics.

Alongside self-government, one of the most contentious issues in Catalan-Spanish relations has been the linguistic model in schools, which establishes Catalan as the main language of instruction. Criticisms against the model have mainly focused on the idea that it downplays the Spanish language, restricts the freedom of parents to choose their children's language of instruction, and it is detrimental for students' learning of Spanish.

Despite the environment of political confrontation, dual identities are very widespread in Catalonia. Mixed family origins, socialization in the two languages, exposure to the two cultures, or contact with out-group members are some of the reasons why people develop a dual identity. According to a representative survey of approximately 2000 individuals administered in June 2013, the two largest groups in the population are those who feel "as Spanish as Catalan" (35 percent), i.e. pure duals identifiers, and the "only Catalan" (32 percent). They are followed by those who feel "more Catalan than Spanish" (26 percent). The percent of individuals who identify as "only Spanish" and as "more Spanish than

Catalan" are about 3 in this survey. Table 1 presents the socio-demographic characteristics of each group using this study.

(Table 1 here)

Dual identifiers are quite similar to the rest of the groups in their age and sex composition, but they are in between Catalan and Spanish identifiers in other respects. Descent and use of language are the clear markers of exclusive identifiers, but the values of these variables are quite diverse for dual identifiers. First, dual identifiers' origin is mixed: 31 percent were born in other regions of Spain, 32 percent were born in Catalonia to Spanish parents, and a noteworthy 22 percent were born in Catalonia to Catalan parents. Second, 57 percent of dual identifiers are Spanish speakers, but fully 27 percent are Catalan speakers and 14 percent speak Spanish as frequently as Catalan. There is a strong correlation between socio-economic status and ethno-national identification. Exclusively Catalan identifiers are significantly better educated and have higher incomes than average. 'Spanish only' identifiers have lower levels of income and education. These differences are related to the socio-economic origins of the 'only Spanish' group, which mainly consist of low-educated and unskilled Spanish immigrants who arrived in Catalonia between the mid 40's and the mid 70's. Generally, dual identifiers are a quite heterogeneous group in the most adscriptive determinants of identity (origin and language).

Qualitative evidence: Hardening among some, disenchantment among others

Do non-violent conflicts polarize identities? Do citizens with dual identities experience conflict differently than citizens who identify mostly with one group? We conducted 38 semi-structured interviews to explore how the Spanish-Catalan conflict affects the ethno-national identities of residents in Catalonia. The interviews were carried out in the province

of Barcelona over the summer of 2008, the fall of 2010, and the winter of 2012. The quota sample design takes into account the origin of the respondents and their parents, their age group, and educational level in order to get a typological representation of the population.[3] The interviews were structured in the following way: At the start, we asked respondents general questions about their biography, socialization, and social background. At the middle of the interview they were asked about their national identification using the five-point scale and were invited to elaborate on their ethno-national identity and what it meant to them. The next section of the interview was about salient episodes in Catalan-Spanish relationships. Then respondents answered a brief questionnaire. This section briefly illustrates different reactions in dual and exclusive identifiers and motivates our experiments.

The qualitative evidence suggests that duals had remarkably different discourses and attitudes toward the conflict than exclusive identifiers. People who mostly identify with one of the groups have "hot" reactions in the interviews: they are often aroused and angry about Spanish-Catalan relations when speaking about this topic. In sharp contrast to this, dual identifiers have "cold" reactions: They report feelings of disengagement and claimed that conflict has not affected their identities but has turned them away from politics.
The theme of identity hardening dominates among exclusive identifiers and it also appears among some respondents who feel more Catalan than Spanish. The dominant narrative among this group, which we call "reactive reaffirmation", can be summarized as follows: some conflictive events in Spanish-Catalan relationships are experienced as an attack to the in-group and the perception of being attacked makes people feel more distant from the out-group and more identified with the in-group. Many respondents, both Spanish and Catalan, explicitly state that they have changed and hardened their identity in recent years as a reaction to perceived attacks and mistreatment from the other side:

- The (Constitutional Court) Ruling on the Statute, and the attitude that the central government is having regarding Catalonia's financial system and other issues, I consider these serious injuries to the Catalan people, that is, to us (…) The Catalan part of my identity is the one that has felt more attacked.
[Interview 37, woman, one parent born in Catalonia couple, Catalan speaker, born in 1949]

- Every time I feel more Catalan because every time they harass us more and more.
[Interview 17, woman, both parents born in Catalonia, Catalan speaker, born in 1954]

- As I've become aware of the hatred, of the anger against Catalonia, as I was feeling these attacks, my Catalan identity became ingrained in me.
[Interview 25, woman, both parents born in other regions of Spain, Catalan speaker, born in 1953]

- I became a member of the Union of Extremadura [a cultural association of immigrants from Extremadura in Catalonia] *because I felt rejected by a region of Spain* [Catalonia]. *I didn't feel part of Catalonia because of the way things were being done*.
[Interview 13, man, born in other region of Spain, Spanish speaker, cannot speak Catalan, born in 1951]

Among dual identifiers, by contrast, the theme of disengagement and alienation from politics dominates. When asked how the conflict between Catalonia and Spain has changed their views, members of this group provided dispassionate answers. The ethno-national conflict had led them to withdraw from politics and focus on their private lives.

- Look, I am going to confess something to you. Those issues related to self-government and regional politics bore me a lot. I mean, I understand that laws need to be agreed on, but most of the time I skip this news in the newspaper. (…) Issues related to our own politics bore me a lot.
[Interview 22, woman, born in other region of Spain, bilingual, born in 1956]

- The problem between Catalonia and Madrid are the politicians. Technicians have no problems because one meter is the same in Catalonia and Madrid, and one kilogram weighs the same in Madrid as in Catalonia.
[Interview 33, man, both parents born in Catalonia, Catalan speaker, born in 1929]

Experimental evidence: The heterogeneous effect of conflict on identities

The qualitative evidence appear to suggest that political conflict polarizes ethnic identities only among people with pre-existing exclusive identifications with one of the groups and has no effect on dual identifiers. Testing this expectation empirically is challenging because

concerns about omitted variables and reverse causality seriously limit our ability to draw inferences from observational data.

In Catalonia, the rise in political conflict since 2005 has coincided in time with other factors that may have affected ethno-national identification independently. For instance, the economic crisis initiated in 2008 may have reduced the appeal of the Spanish identity relative to the Catalan identity because Catalonia is richer and is perceived as less responsible for the economic crisis than Spain. Because ethno-national conflict, the economic crisis, and other contextual factors follow similar trends over time, it is difficult to disentangle the effect of each on identity.[4] A different version of this concern relates to reverse causality. For instance, some media are more likely to report on the conflict than others, and individuals with different ethno-national identities may choose to consume different media or no media at all. In that case, ethno-national identification would drive exposure to conflict.

In order to overcome the limitations of observational studies to address our research question, we designed two survey experiments that prime the Spanish-Catalan conflict to assess its effect on the identities of prior exclusive and dual identifiers. In order to judge the magnitude of the treatment effects we need to consider the stability of the dependent variable and the nature of the treatment. First, identification is a stable individual trait difficult to change in the short-term, and we do not expect dramatic shifts due to the treatment. Second, the magnitude of the stimulus effect must be read as the marginal effect of one additional exposure to a conflict prime, and not as the full effect of conflict on identity. As already discussed in the introduction, our sample has been very extensively pretreated on the Spanish-Catalan conflict due to its salience and wide coverage in the media, and we only expect small effects of one additional exposure to conflict.[5] The

marginal effect of exposure is generally much smaller than the overall effect of the variable of interest (Druckman and Leeper 2012).

These characteristics of the dependent variable and the treatment have important implications for the interpretation of our results. Very large samples are necessary in order to detect small effects as the ones we expect. In our case, the problem of statistical power is compounded because we are interested in heterogeneous treatment effects between subgroups. As the American Statistical Association recommends in a recent statement (2016), when interpreting the results we evaluate p-values in relation to the size of the subgroups and the magnitude of the effects.

Experiment 1: Priming the Catalan-Spanish conflict

We embedded our main experiment, which primes conflict between Spain and Catalonia, in an online survey fielded by Netquest, a commercial polling company. Respondents were selected from a large panel using age, gender, region, and education quotas. To be eligible for the survey, respondents had to live in Catalonia and hold the Spanish nationality. The fieldwork was completed in July 2013 and interviewed 794 respondents.

We randomly assigned half of the sample to receive a prime about Catalan-Spanish conflictual episodes.[6] The priming treatment consisted of administering a block of survey questions to one group of respondents, with the aim of making the topic easily accessible in working memory. The design and the strength of this treatment are similar to other primes used in previous research (e.g. Kuo and Margalit 2012). The control group was not administered any of the questions. The four priming questions, administered as a block to all respondents in the treatment condition in the same order, concerned four well-known episodes in recent Catalan-Spanish relations about self-government and linguistic policy. The

first question reminded respondents of a campaign against the Statute of Autonomy of Catalonia. The second priming question was about the 2010 Spanish Constitutional Court ruling that declared some articles of the Statute unconstitutional. The third and fourth priming question referred to conflicts about the language of instruction in schools. We provide the question wording in the appendix.

To test our theory, we need to examine the impact of the conflict prime on identity polarization. The expectations drawn from our theory do not refer to the impact that conflict has on Catalan or Spanish identification, but on the difference between the two identities. In the online survey, two separate questions asked to what extent respondents identify with Catalonia and with Spain. The two questions were deliberately placed one after the other (in the same screen). This implies that respondents' answers to the two questions cannot be detached. The response options for these two variables range from 1 "not at all identified" to 10 "very identified." We subtract responses to the two variables to construct our measure of polarization. A value of 0 in this variable indicates that the respondent feels just as Spanish as Catalan, and that polarization is not present.[7] A positive value implies that the respondent identifies with Catalonia to a larger extent than with Spain, such that the larger the value, the larger the identification differential, which indicates a high level of polarization. For instance, a respondent who reports being very identified with Catalonia but not at all identified with Spain has a score of 9 (10-1). Conversely, negative values indicate that respondents identify to a larger extent as Spanish than as Catalan, up to -9.

We expect heterogeneous effects of the conflict prime depending on preexisting identification with Spain, Catalonia, or both. In order to test this prediction, we use an indicator of ethno-national identities placed at the beginning of the questionnaire as a moderator. The indicator is an anchored scale with five response categories: "only Spanish"

(4 percent), “more Spanish than Catalan” (6 percent), “as Spanish as Catalan” (37 percent), “more Catalan than Spanish” (28 percent), and “only Catalan” (25 percent).[8] Because the two first categories contain very few cases, we collapse them in the analyses and create a category labeled “Primarily Spanish.”[9]

We examine if conflict polarizes identities by assessing whether the treatment had an effect on the identification differential, while sub-setting on preexisting identities.[10] Table 2 reports the mean scores of the relative identification variable in the treatment and the control conditions. The difference in these scores is the treatment effect.

(Table 2 here)

The results clearly suggest that the conflict treatment made respondents who identify only with Catalonia, as measured at the beginning of the survey, become even more extreme in their exclusive ethno-national identification. The average score of the identification differential variable (our proxy for polarization) is 7.5 in the control group, but 8.1 (with an upper limit of 9) in the treatment group and the difference is statistically significant ($p= 0.0234$, two-tailed t-test). This change represents about 28 percent of a standard deviation, a very substantial change for a stable variable in a population that has been extensively pre-treated, and in spite of ceiling effects due to the high value of the dependent variable in the control group. When focusing on respondents who report feeling primarily Spanish at the beginning of the survey, we observe a change in their relative identification in the opposite direction. The magnitude of the difference is even larger than for the Spanish only identity group (-2.5 compared to -3.5). This effect is about one third of a standard deviation. Despite the higher magnitude of the treatment effect in this group, we do not find statistical significance using a two-sided t-test, although this can be attributed to the small number of

cases in the group comparison (35 cases in the control condition and 46 cases in the treatment condition). Among the groups in between the extremes, which have a much larger number of cases and hence are better powered, those with a purely dual identity and those who feel more Catalan than Spanish, the treatment does not appear to have any effect.

Taking into consideration the extensive pretreatment of the sample and the existence of floor and ceiling effects at the extremes it is remarkable to find any effect at all in these groups. It is also noteworthy too that the identification differential remains very close to 0 also in the treated group of pure dual identifiers. This result is consistent with the claim that duals continue to self-identify as duals even after being exposed to the conflict.

One concern with this analysis is that the conflict prime may affect the identities of dual identifiers, albeit in different directions such that the contradictory effects cancel out on the aggregate. To assess this possibility, we examine if the distribution of responses is more spread and the standard errors of the dependent variable are larger in the treatment condition than in the control condition for dual identifiers, but we fail to find evidence consistent with this. More importantly, the null result is robust to sub-setting dual identifiers by their origin (if they were born in Catalonia or not) or knowledge of Catalan. The effect of the treatment is somewhat larger among those not born in Catalonia than among those born in Catalonia (0.5 and 0.2), which is in fact counterintuitive. However, none of the differences are statistically significant and the fact that the sign is positive for both groups suggests that it is not the case that contradictory effects cancel each other. Altogether, the additional analyses subsetting between different types of dual identifiers suggest that their identities are not moved by the prime.

Experiment 2: Criticism or praise of the school language model in the news

We also examine if conflict polarizes identities using a different approach in a second experiment embedded in an online survey administered by Netquest using the same selection procedure as the previous experiment. The fieldwork was conducted between April and May 2012 and 1500 citizens residing in Catalonia completed the survey.

Respondents read a piece of news in which an expert expressed an opinion either favorable or unfavorable to the Catalan linguistic model of education. The control condition describes a scenario with a lower level of conflict by presenting the linguistic model in a positive light. The treatment condition primes conflict by reminding respondents of one of the main arguments used against the model, namely that teaching in Catalan reduces students' proficiency in Spanish. Specifically, in the control condition, a linguistics professor "manifests his support to the Catalan model of education" and claims that this model "does not undermine the learning of Spanish." In the treatment condition, he uses the reverse argument.[11] (See question wording in the appendix).

The dependent variable, polarization, and the moderating variable are measured as in the first experiment.[12] Again, few respondents identify as only Spanish (6 percent) or more Spanish than Catalan (6 percent), and we collapse both categories. Table 3 presents the values of polarization measured in a scale that ranges from -10 to 10, subsetting by level of ethno-national identification.

(Table 3 here)

We find the exact same pattern as in the previous experiment. In the control condition, which describes a low-conflict situation, respondents who identify as primarily Spanish at

the beginning of the questionnaire had an average differential identification score of -2.8, but this value was -3.6 in the treatment condition. This suggests that the conflictual message hardens the identity of respondents with a pre-existing Spanish identity. The difference is statistically significant at 10 per cent (p= 0.090) using a two-tailed test and the increase amounts to 27 percent of a standard deviation. Conversely, respondents who identified as feeling solely Catalan earlier in the questionnaire were more likely to have a larger differential in the treatment condition (8.7) than in the control condition (8.2), which is a statistically significant difference (p= 0.027) of moderate magnitude (23 percent of a standard deviation). We find no effect of the conflict treatment on the two groups with ethno-national identities in between the extremes. Again, the results support the hypothesis that conflict hardens the ethnic identities of people at the extremes, and suggest that conflict has no effect on the identities of people in between.

The first experiment primes the Catalan-Spanish conflict directly while the second experiment uses a more indirect and subtle treatment. Strikingly, in spite of using two rather different treatments and extensive pretreatment, we are able to replicate the same results in both experiments: political conflict hardens pre-existing identities among exclusive identifiers, but has no any apparent effect on duals. It is very unlikely that our results are an artifact of the design. There is nothing in the design that would lead us to expect heterogeneous effects among duals. Replication across experimental treatments increases our confidence in the validity of our conclusions.

Observational survey data: Attitudes as a mechanism

Because the experiments did not ask about feelings towards politics they do not provide direct evidence about our main alleged psychological mechanism. The qualitative evidence

reveals a prevalence of cynicism in the discourses of dual identifiers. This section mobilizes further observational data from public opinion surveys to explore whether the proposed psychological mechanism is at play.

The main implication of our theoretical argument is that disengagement towards politics has increased among dual identifiers as conflict has intensified. To examine this prediction, we employ data from two separate surveys conducted in moments with a low (2002) and high level of conflict (2013) in Catalan-Spanish relations. [13]

This section also addresses one criticism to our argument, which is that a general aversion to conflict may drive both dual identification and differential reactions to conflict. In this case, dual identification would not *shelter* people from the polarizing dynamics of conflict. Rather, it would itself be a manifestation of a general reluctance to get involved in conflict. This criticism does not undermine the validity of our experimental results, but it modifies their interpretation. If dual identifiers are more averse to conflict in general, we should observe that they are always more disengaged from politics than citizens in other identity groups, even before the increase in Catalan-Spanish conflict. Conversely, if cross-pressured individuals only became disengaged after the rise of ethno-national conflict, as we hypothesize, we should observe that dual identifiers are more disinterested and distrustful about politics in the more recent period.[14]

We use two surveys that include questions about attitudes toward politics conducted in 2002 and 2013 by the Institut de Ciències Polítiques i Socials (ICPS), a public research institution in Catalonia. Importantly, 2002 was a year with little conflict about ethno-national issues but ripe with other types of political conflict. There was intense controversy about issues such as the possibility of Spain participating in the Iraq war, a general strike, a

reform of universities, and an oil spill off the Galician coast. These issues were hotly contested and many cities hosted demonstrations attended by hundreds of thousands of people. Hence, the level of conflict was high in the two periods but the content changed over time.

The two representative surveys consist of 2000 and 800 respondents, respectively. The survey includes an item asking respondents which two feelings best describe their attitudes towards politics. The answer options were: enthusiasm, compromise, interest, indifference, boredom, distrust, and anger. In our analyses, we focus on the feelings of more analytical interest for the claim that conflict leads dual identifiers to disengage from politics: interest and distrust.

We estimate four logistic regressions with interest and distrust in 2002 and 2013 as the dependent variables and identification with Spain and Catalonia as our key independent variable.[15] In agreement with our hypothesis that duals should turn less interested and more distrustful in 2013 as compared to exclusive identifiers, we model the relationship between identification and our dependent variables as curvilinear. We include socio-demographic controls.[16] Table 4 presents the four logistic models.

(Table 4 here)

To ease the interpretation of these results, we estimate the probabilities of reporting feelings of interest and distrust in 2002 and 2013 by individuals' identification.

(Figure 1 here)

The results confirm our expectations, especially for distrust. The relationship between identification and feelings toward politics is markedly different in 2002 and 2013. Dual identifiers were not disengaged from politics in 2002, and their attitudes towards politics were more similar to the attitudes of exclusive identifiers. However, in 2013, and compared to the exclusive identifiers groups, dual identifiers display a low level of interest on politics. The pattern is the opposite for distrust: with no group differences in 2002, and a significant inverted U-shaped relationship in 2013. Specifically, dual identifiers have an increase of 0.25 in the predicted probability of mentioning this attitude towards politics, compared to lower changes in the other groups. These results imply that cynicism attitudes were similarly present in all identification groups in 2002, but in 2013 dual identifiers show higher levels of distrust.

These findings demonstrate that dual identifiers do not have a stable psychological trait that moves them away from politics. Rather, the results are consistent with our argument that disengagement in the recent period is driven by the ethno-political conflict.[17]

Conclusions

This paper has argued that political conflict affects the ethno-national identities of exclusive and dual identifiers in heterogeneous ways. Individuals at the poles turn even more distant to the out-group when conflict intensifies. By contrast, dual identifiers, defined as individuals who identify with both the national group and the ethnic group to a similar extent, do not appear to be influenced by conflict in the same way. The experimental, qualitative, and survey evidence presented here broadly supports this claim. Using different conflict manipulations, our survey experiments show that exclusive identifiers become more extreme in their identification when they are reminded of episodes of conflict between Catalonia and Spain. A similar process, however, is not observed among those who feel as

Spanish as Catalan. The qualitative and survey evidence suggest that disengagement from politics is a common reaction to conflict among this cross-pressured group.

Ethno-national identities are politically relevant. A broad literature in comparative politics finds that ethnic and national identities strongly influence individuals' political behavior and political preferences (e.g. Blais and Nadeau 1992, Chernyha and Burg 2012, Clots-Figueras and Masella 2013, Muñoz and Tormos 2014, Henderson et al. 2015, Balcells et al 2015). Some of these studies admit that ethno-national identities are endogenous to the political context, but few test how the political context or, more specifically, the ethno-national conflict affects identity. Our paper has sought to do so; hence contributing to the research agenda that sees identity as a consequence, rather than just as a cause, of conflict. Most of this latter research has focused on studying the effects of violent conflicts (Kaufman 1996, Fearon and Laitin 2000, Kalyvas 2008, Balcells 2012, Rohner et al. 2013). Unlike these, our paper has studied the effect of non-violent conflict, an inherent feature of democratic politics, on ethnic and national identity. Our research suggests that violence is not necessary to polarize identities; intense non-violent political conflicts also polarize people with identities at the extremes.

In addition, the paper has paid attention to an important group that has been disregarded by this literature: individuals with dual identities. Some previous authors have stressed the political importance of dual identifiers, a numerous group in contexts with ethno-national cleavages, in preventing these societies to be torn apart (Linz and Stepan 1996, Linz 1997, Stepan et al. 2011). However, this important claim has remained largely untested. Our research adds both empirical substance and some cautionary nuance to the claim that duals are key in preventing multi-cultural societies to separate. On one hand, our results suggest that, to the extent that dual identifiers do not polarize as a result of conflict, they are an

important group that can hold the social fabric of a multi-cultural society together. On the other hand, the fact that duals become more disengaged from politics at times of heightened conflict may perhaps limit the possibility that this group counteracts the polarization of divided societies. Despite being well placed to do so, dual identifiers in Catalonia have failed to get organized and play a visible mediator role in the conflict between Spain and Catalonia so far. A similar situation can be found in other contexts with an intense ethno-national conflict (e.g. Scotland, Flanders).

As concerns to scope conditions, our theory applies mainly to contexts where ethno-national identities coexist. These include not only multi-cultural states, but also immigrant societies where dual or hyphenated identities are frequent. First generation immigrants who have been living in the country for many years can identify with the receiving society while keeping their original attachments. Second generations and children of mixed couples are also brought up with two identities. Future research should also investigate whether our finding for dual identifiers travel to other contexts with violent conflicts.

Our paper also raises also interesting questions about the role of emotions in the processes of identity hardening, and duals' political disengagement. Annoyance and anger appear in many of the discourses of people experiencing processes of identity reaffirmation, suggesting that hatred might play a key role, a claim that has been also stressed in previous studies (Balcells 2012, Petersen 2013). Research on cross-pressured voters claims, in turn, that cross-pressured individuals might feel that conflict threatens the harmony of their social relations (Mutz 2002). Fear, therefore, could be the emotion driving dual identifiers' retreat from conflict. Extensive research provides rational choice underpinnings to the process of identity change, but identification implies an affective and not just instrumental attachment

to a group. Our research tentatively suggests that emotions and psychological mechanisms may have an independent role in driving identity change.

Endnotes

[1] Identity is a multilayered individual trait hard to grasp empirically (Brubaker and Cooper 2000). To overcome this problem, our paper moves from the concept of identity to the concept of identification. Group Identification is defined as the subjective attachment that individuals develop towards a group, in this case, the national or the ethnic group.

[2] Dual identifiers can think Spanish and Catalan communities as independent or they can think Catalan community to be nested in the Spanish community.

[3] Further details are provided in the appendix.

[4] We examine the evolution of aggregate identification with Spain and Catalonia over time using observational data in the appendix.

[5] Pre-treatment produces a downward bias in the estimate of the effect (Gaines, Kuklinski and Quirk 2006).

[6] The characteristics of respondents in our sample are balanced across the treatment and the control group.

[7] Dual identifiers who report that they do not identify strongly with either group (and hence score low on both variables) may be different than dual identifiers who identify more intensely with both groups. Our results are however robust to excluding the small number of people (35 respondents) who report that they do not identify to a large extent with either group, defined as those with scores lower than five in both variables.

[8] Ideally, we would have preferred to have the same indicator of ethno-national identification at the beginning, and at the end of the survey. This would have allowed us assessing whether the conflict prime causes intra-individual changes in identification. However, memory effects advise against the use of within subject designs in short surveys. Because of this, we chose to use a five-point anchored scale at the start of the questionnaire to measure individuals' identification with Spain and Catalonia.

[9] We follow Rico and Jennings (2012) who also collapse these two categories in their study of the inter-generational transmission of identities in Catalonia due to the small number of cases. Further

analyses using the five disaggregated groups reveal that the results do not differ greatly between the two groups.

[10] In the supplementary materials we report results of multivariate analyses including interactions between treatment condition and the moderating variable. These multivariate analyses have been conducted merging the data from the two experiments presented in this section. This is because, given that our effects are mostly small and some subgroups have few cases, we need to increase statistical power when conducting tests about the differences in the magnitudes of coefficients between specific subgroups.

[11] We also varied whether the linguistics professor was of Catalan or Spanish origin and the language in which the piece of news was administered to the respondents. We collapse the different conditions into just two because the other treatments did not have any clear effect.

[12] The response options in this case ranged from 0 (not at all identified) to 10 (very identified), instead of from 1 to 10, and hence the difference ranges from -10 to 10, instead of from -9 to 9.

[13] Obviously, politics deals with many issues. Therefore, it could be claimed that dual identifiers should only disengage from the part of politics that involves identity. However, in the case of Catalonia, conflict between Spain and Catalonia has become more and more prevalent in the media. People not interested in this debate may still be interested in other topics, but many of these are not present in the public debate. This reduction in salience may have led to even more disengagement.

[14] In this section, we treat identity as an independent variable informing individuals' attitudes towards politics. This could be understood as contracting our claim that Even identities change in response to contextual changes, e.g. political conflict. Nevertheless, we also conceive identity as a relatively stable trait with explanatory leverage on attitudes preferences and people's behavior.

[15] Between 2002 and 2013, there is a slight decrease in the overall levels of political interest (1.4 percentage points), and a significant increase in the percent of individuals who feel distrust towards politics (19.22 percentage points). This general increase in the levels of distrust could be attributed to factors other than the ethno-national conflict (e.g. perception of corruption). What it is striking is that

this increase is not equivalent across groups, but that compared to exclusive identifiers, dual identifiers experience a significant higher increase.

[16] Four dummies classify individuals according to their origin: individuals born in Catalonia to Catalan parents, individuals born in Catalonia to mixed couples, individuals born in Catalonia to parents born in other regions of Spain, and individuals born in other regions of Spain. Education is coded in four categories: no studies or incomplete primary studies, primary, secondary, and university. For subjective social class, the categories are low/medium-low, medium, and medium-high/high. The size of the municipality is a continuous variable with six categories going from less than 2000 individuals to more than a million.

[17] Alternatively, it could be argued that differences in the levels of political interest and distrust between 2002 and 2013 are related to a self-selection process. According to this, the more interested and less distrustful people would have moved from the dual categories in 2002 to the more Catalan-oriented categories in 2013. The absence of panel data for the period of interest hinders the test of this alternative explanation, but the theoretical rational for claiming that distrust should lead to dual identities is unclear.

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Tables and Figures

Table 1: Socio-demographic characteristics by ethno-national identification

		Only Spa.	Spa>Cat	Spa=Cat	Cat>Spa	Only Cat.
Gender	Female	50.83	59.58	53.53	52.57	50.15
Age	Age	**58.58**	46.42	48.41	49.43	48.50
Origin	Born in other regions of Spain	**82.46**	**53.28**	30.81	**8.28**	**3.19**
	Both parents born in other regions of Spain	**7.33**	25.08	31.73	**18.64**	**8.88**
	One parent born in Catalonia	**4.30**	11.27	15.95	**20.62**	17.43
	Both parents born in Catalonia	**5.92**	**10.37**	21.52	**52.46**	**70.50**
Most often used language	Spanish	**83.83**	**83.20**	57.42	**11.44**	**5.05**
	Catalan	**5.45**	**9.59**	27.03	**76.53**	**91.62**
	Both	**4.60**	7.21	14.90	11.72	**3.28**
Education	Primary or less	**66.75**	42.18	48.77	**36.08**	**31.24**
Household income	<1000 €	**38.29**	19.81	16.64	14.03	**9.79**
	1000-2000 €	41.07	42.10	40.63	**33.51**	**33.81**
	2000-3000 €	**6.05**	24.93	28.40	30.95	30.34
	>3000 €	14.59	13.15	14.32	**21.51**	**26.06**
Observations	N	(65)	(50)	(595)	(507)	(640)

Note: The entries are weighted column percentages and mean scores. Only individuals whose parents and themselves were born in Catalonia or in other regions of Spain are included in the analyses. Significant differences in the comparison to duals are marked in bold.
Source: CEO Barometer, June 2013.

Table 2: The effect of priming conflict on ethno-national identification (experiment 1)

		No prime	Conflict prime	Difference
Primarily Spanish	Identification	-2.54	-3.46	-0.91
	Std. Er.	(0.51)	(0.42)	(0.65)
	N	35	46	
As Spanish as Catalan	Identification	0.29	0.55	0.27
	Std. Er.	(0.12)	(0.15)	(0.19)
	N	144	150	
More Catalan than Spanish	Identification	4.87	4.79	-0.09
	Std. Er.	(0.21)	(0.20)	(0.29)
	N	111	113	
Only Catalan	Identification	7.50	8.12	0.62**
	Std. Er.	(0.22)	(0.14)	(0.27)
	N	105	91	

Note: + p<0.1, * p<0.05, ** p<0.01, *** p<0.001, two-tailed significance tests. The entries are the values of the identification differential (standard errors), in which 0 means as Catalan as Spanish (and hence holding a dual national identity) and higher or lower values imply a more exclusive identity.

Table 3: The effect of messages about the linguistic model on ethno-national identification (experiment 2)

		Low conflict over linguistic model	High conflict over linguistic model	Difference
Primarily Spanish	Identity	-2.84	-3.59	-0.75*
	Std. Er.	(0.29)	(0.33)	(0.44)
	N	94	86	
As Spanish as Catalan	Identity	0.59	0.77	0.18
	Std. Er.	(0.10)	(0.10)	(0.15)
	N	275	280	
More Catalan than Spanish	Identity	4.90	4.77	-0.13
	Std. Er.	(0.16)	(0.17)	(0.24)
	N	241	223	
Only Catalan	Identity	8.19	8.69	0.49**
	Std. Er.	(0.17)	(0.14)	(0.22)
	N	151	150	

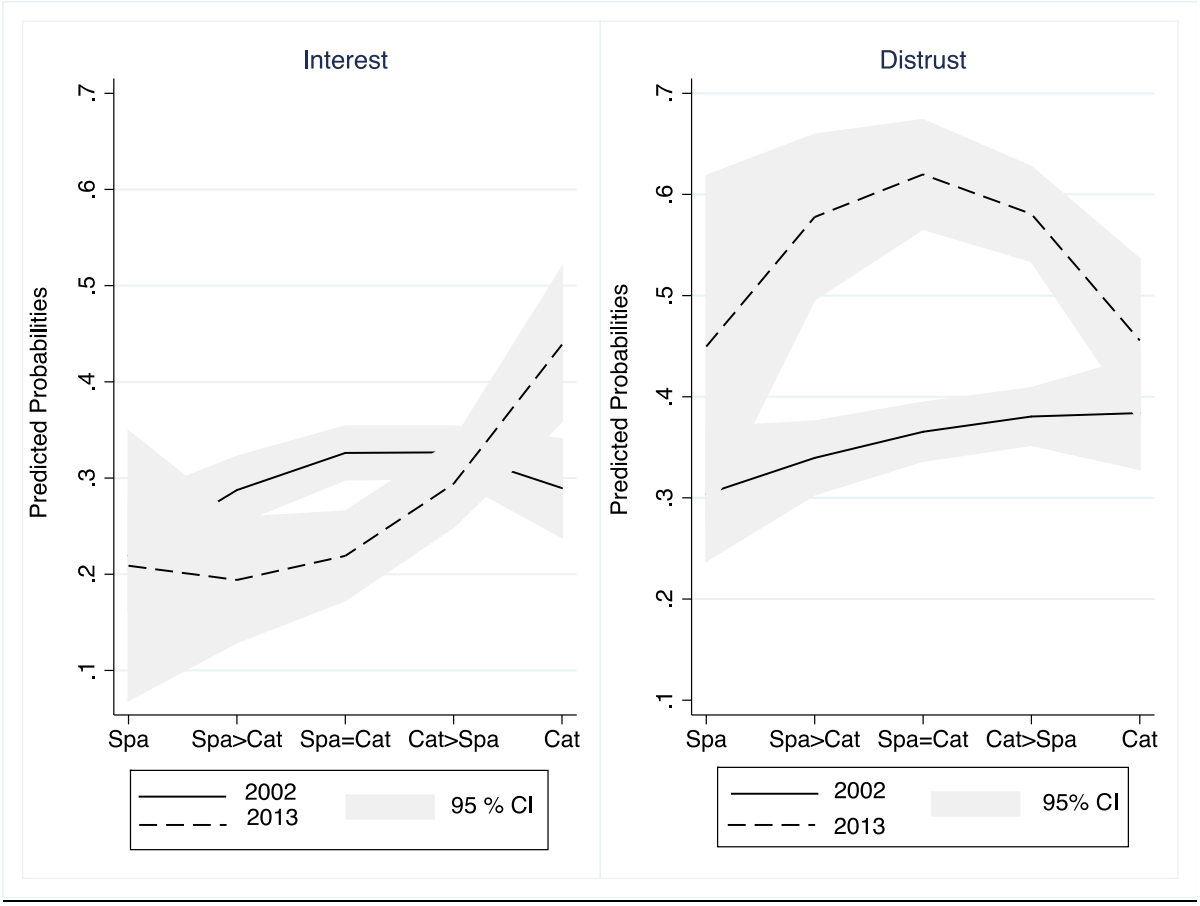
Note: + p<0.1, * p<0.05, ** p<0.01, *** p<0.001, two-tailed significance tests. The entries are the values of the identification differential variable (standard errors), in which 0 means as Catalan as Spanish (and hence holding a dual national identity) and higher or lower values imply a more hardened identity.

Table 4. Logistic regression Political Interest and Distrust in 2002 and 2013

	Interest 2002	Interest 2013	Distrust 2002	Distrust 2013
Identification	0.66**	-0.49	0.24	1.10**
	(0.22)	(0.49)	(0.20)	(0.41)
Identification Sq.	-0.09**	0.13	-0.03	-0.18**
	(0.03)	(0.07)	(0.03)	(0.06)
Male	0.38***	0.29	-0.07	-0.41*
	(0.10)	(0.19)	(0.10)	(0.17)
Age	0.06***	-0.00	0.00	0.05
	(0.02)	(0.03)	(0.02)	(0.03)
Age Sq.	-0.00**	0.00	-0.00	-0.00*
	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)
Education				
Primary	-0.31*	0.37	-0.48***	-0.71*
	(0.15)	(0.36)	(0.14)	(0.30)
Secondary	0.45**	0.90***	-0.15	-0.10
	(0.15)	(0.26)	(0.14)	(0.22)
University	0.81***	1.26***	-0.00	-0.22
	(0.16)	(0.29)	(0.16)	(0.26)
Size of Municipality	0.07*	0.01	-0.06	0.13*
	(0.03)	(0.07)	(0.03)	(0.06)
Descent				
Child of mixed couple	0.02	0.24	-0.07	-0.40
	(0.18)	(0.26)	(0.17)	(0.24)
Second Generation	0.03	0.35	-0.01	-0.07
	(0.16)	(0.29)	(0.15)	(0.26)
Immigrant	0.16	0.11	0.03	-0.37
	(0.15)	(0.32)	(0.14)	(0.28)
Subjective social class				
Medium-low	0.25	0.39	0.08	-0.15
	(0.27)	(0.47)	(0.25)	(0.37)
Medium	0.18	0.76	-0.17	-0.49
	(0.26)	(0.45)	(0.24)	(0.36)
Medium-High/High	-0.21	1.08	0.19	-0.26
	(0.36)	(0.59)	(0.33)	(0.52)
Constant	-4.33***	-2.80*	-0.54	-1.47
	(0.60)	(1.22)	(0.52)	(1.02)
Observations	1,896	603	1,896	603
Log Likelihood	-1116	-332.2	-1227	-386.8
McFadden's adjusted	0.029	0.045	-0.002	0.020
LR Chi2 (df)	105.60 (15)	70.83(15)	31.95 (15)	54.80 (15)
Prob Chi2	0.00	0.00	0.01	0.00

Note: * p<0.05, ** p<0.01, *** p<0.001.
Standard errors in parentheses

Figure 1: Political engagement and identification in 2002 and 2013



Supplementary material: Online appendix

A1. Qualitative evidence

For the qualitative research, we plan to conduct a number of 30 interviews. Quotas were established according to three different criteria: cohort, education and individuals' descent. Each quota was assigned a number of interviews to assure the typological representation of the population. In the course of the fieldwork, we learned that respondents' left-right ideology was also a relevant criterion to ensure the typological representation of the Catalan population. Accordingly, ad-hoc corrections were introduced in the recruitment process in a next stage. Participants were carefully chosen so they met the study criteria. Interviews were carried out until we got theoretical saturation. Due to this, the final number of implemented interviews went up to 38.

Table A1 describes the background characteristics of the interviewees. The identification column reports their identification with Spain and Catalonia. Interviewees' identification was asked in the middle of the interview using the standard five-categories question. This question followed a series of open-ended questions on interviewees' biography and social background (family and school socialization, experiences in the university, if applied, and mass media consumption). The scale was also included in a short closed questionnaire at the end of the interview. For all interviewees we code their viewpoints in questions about politics, about the Catalan-Spanish conflict, and how it affects their identities. This variable is reported in the last column. When no dominant theme emerges or the response is very mixed, we leave the values empty.

Table A1. Characteristics of the interviewees and reported experience

Id	Sex	Birth year	Education	Descent	Vote in last election	Identification	Experienced process
13	Male	1951	Secondary	Born in other regions of Spain	PSOE	Spa	Hardening
20	Male	1975	University	Both parents born in other regions of Spain	ICV/EUiA	Spa	Hardening/Cynicism
24	Female	1932	No studies	Born in other regions of Spain	Ciutadans	Spa	----
38	Male	1983	University	Both parents born in other regions of Spain	Ciutadans	Spa>Cat	No change/Alienation
6	Male	1946	University	Born in other regions of Spain	PSOE	Spa>Cat	No change
14	Male	1940	Secondary	Born in other regions of Spain	PP	Spa>Cat	No change
1	Female	1979	University	Both parents born in other regions of Spain	PSC	Spa=Cat	----
2	Male	1948	Secondary	Born in other regions of Spain	PP	Spa=Cat	----
3	Male	1987	University	One parent born in Catalonia	IU	Spa=Cat	----
4	Female	1952	Secondary	Born in other regions of Spain	PSOE	Spa=Cat	----
7	Male	1980	University	Both parents born in other regions of Spain	ICV	Spa=Cat	----
8	Female	1956	No studies	Born in other regions of Spain	PSOE	Spa=Cat	----
9	Male	1970	University	Both parents born in other regions of Spain	PSOE	Spa=Cat	----
10	Female	1940	Primary	Born in other regions of Spain	PSUC	Spa=Cat	----
12	Female	1976	University	Both parents born in other regions of Spain	PSOE	Spa=Cat	----
15	Male	1972	Secondary	One parent born in Catalonia	CiU	Spa=Cat	Less Catalan, less Spanish
22	Female	1956	University	Born in other regions of Spain	ICV	Spa=Cat	No change/Alienation
23	Female	1971	Secondary	Both parents born in other regions of Spain	PSOE	Spa=Cat*	No change/Alienation
26	Female	1957	Secondary	Both parents born in other regions of Spain	PP	Spa=Cat	No change/Alienation
27	Female	1958	Primary	Born in other regions of Spain	CiU/PP	Spa=Cat*	Cynicism
32	Male	1937	No studies	Born in other regions of Spain	CiU	Spa=Cat	No change
33	Male	1929	University	Both parents born in Catalonia	CiU	Spa=Cat	No change
35	Male	1951	University	Both parents born in other regions of Spain	PP	Spa=Cat	No change
11	Female	1965	University	One parent born in Catalonia	ICV	Cat>Spa	Less Catalan, less Spanish
16	Male	1981	University	Both parents born in Catalonia	ICV	Cat>Spa	Hardening
19	Female	1981	University	One parent born in Catalonia	ICV/IU	Cat>Spa	Hardening
21	Male	1974	University	Both parents born in Catalonia	CiU	Cat>Spa	----
36	Female	1944	Primary	Both parents born in Catalonia	PSC	Cat>Spa	Hardening

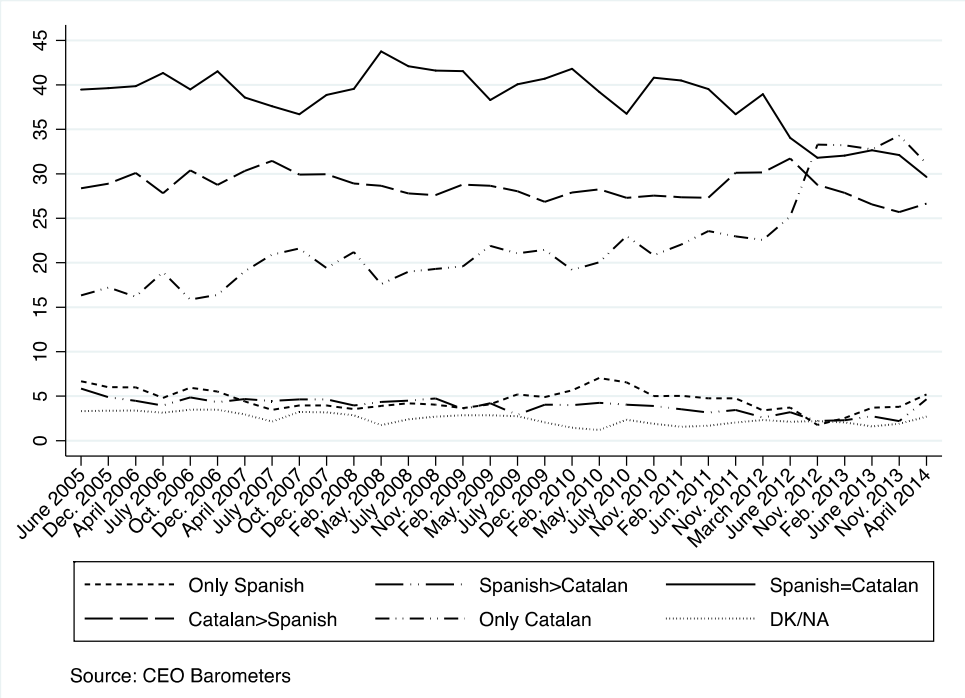
5	Female	1947	University	Born in other regions of Spain	ERC/CiU	Cat	Hardening
17	Female	1954	University	Both parents born in Catalonia	ERC	Cat	Hardening
18	Male	1940	Secondary	Born in other regions of Spain	PSC	Cat	Hardening
25	Female	1953	Secondary	Both parents born in other regions of Spain	ERC	Cat	Hardening
28	Male	1968	Secondary	Both parents born in Catalonia	ERC	Cat	Hardening
29	Female	1980	Primary	Both parents born in other regions of Spain	ERC	Cat	Hardening
30	Male	1978	Secondary	Both parents born in other regions of Spain	PSOE	Cat	Hardening
31	Male	1983	University	Both parents born in Catalonia	CiU	Cat	Hardening
34	Female	1931	Primary	Both parents born in Catalonia	CiU	Cat	Hardening
37	Female	1949	University	One parent born in Catalonia	ERC	Cat	Hardening

* These interviewees claim that their identification with Spain and Catalonia is mild. Instead they consider themselves global citizens.

A2. Aggregate trends in identification with Spain and Catalonia

The surveys of the Center for Sociological Research (Centro de Investigaciones Sociológicas, CIS), the opinion polls of the Political and Social Science Institute (Institut de Ciències Polítiques i Socials, ICPS) and the barometer of the Opinion Studies Centre (Centre d'Estudis d'Opinió, CEO) provide long series of aggregate data on identification with Spain and Catalonia covering the period between the mid-eighties and today. Here we reproduce the data of the CEO's barometer, which is the one with more information for the period under consideration.

Figure A1. Aggregate identification with Spain and Catalonia 2005 – 2014.



Source: CEO Barometers

Our main claim in the paper is that conflict leads to a polarization of individuals with pre-existing exclusive identification, but does not affect dual identifiers. The observational data are partially consistent with the predictions of our theory, but the results are ambiguous and inconclusive.

We observe three main patterns that are difficult to reconcile with any single interpretation. This suggests that different processes are simultaneously at play. The first pattern is a slow but steady increase in the share of exclusive Catalan identifiers in the whole period. The second, a sharp change in dual and catalan-oriented identities between late 2011 and early 2012. The third, the stability of the 'only Spanish' and 'more Spanish than Catalan' groups.

To account for these patterns, it is necessary to notice that identity can change due to long-term trends, such as population replacement, mid-range trends, institutional changes, and specific shocks, economic crisis. We offer here some speculative thoughts, but with the available data it is not possible to disentangle the effects of each type of factor on identity for the different groups.

First of all, conflict between Spain and Catalonia intensified around 2005 and has increased afterwards. If our theory is right, we should observe a progressive increase in the share of exclusive identifiers over time. Consistent with this prediction, we do find a long-term trend towards a growth in Catalan only identification. However, we do not find a similar increase in the percentage of Spanish only identifiers. A confounded long-term trend in the same period is an overall Catalanization of the population, what obscure the independent effects of conflict on polarization. In particular, older, more Spanish-oriented cohorts are being replaced by younger, more Catalan-oriented cohorts, who were socialized in Catalan-speaking schools after the introduction of the Catalan linguistic model in 1983 (Aspachs-Bracons, Costa-Font, Clots-Figueras, and Masella 2008). In the observed period, moreover, identifying as partly or only Spanish may have become less attractive due to the lasting economic and institutional crisis Spain has suffered since 2008. Both trends may have counter-acted the polarization at the extremes predicted by our theory.

The most puzzling pattern, however, is the sharp change in identification observed between late 2011 and early 2012. This period did not see any particular event in the Catalan-Spanish conflict. The most remarkable political event happened during that period was that the Spanish socialist party (PSOE) lost a general election to the conservative Popular Party (PP) (November 2011). The ethno-national conflict, however, was not a political priority for the PP in this time; political debate centered on the economic crisis instead. Although what drives the change is unclear, we can speculate that the symbolic meaning of what being "Spanish" means changes when the PSOE or the PP are in power. The PSOE is a state-wide party that has traditionally had a more plural vision of Spain, whereas the PP holds a more unitary view of Spain. The change in government may produce a symbolic shift in the meaning of the "Spanish" label in Catalonia. The label adopts a more conservative centralist meaning associated with the PP. This change in meaning may have produced the diminshed attachment to the Spanish identity among some segments of the population observed in the data from late 2011 onwards.

As this discussion makes clear, the aggregate observational data simply cannot confirm or disconfirm theories about identity change because several events happen at the same time and it is not possible to disentangle the effect of each for different groups of respondents. This difficulty makes it particularly pressing to use experimental evidence, as this research does.

A3. Full text of the treatment in English and Spanish

We report in this section the full text of the two experimental treatments in English and Spanish.

Experiment 1: Conflict primes

Ahora quisiéramos hacerte unas preguntas sobre algunos hechos pasados y otros más recientes.

P.1. En 2006, el PP llevó a cabo una campaña en la que se recogieron 4 millones de firmas en contra del Estatut de Cataluña. Algunas personas entendieron esta campaña como una expresión de anticatalanismo. Otras personas consideraron que todos los españoles debían poder opinar sobre el Estatut.

En relación a estos dos puntos de vista, ¿dónde te sitúas tú?

Expresión de anticatalanismo						Todos deben opinar
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

P.2. En junio de 2010, el Tribunal Constitucional dictó una sentencia que declaraba inconstitucionales algunos artículos del Estatut. Como sabrás, el Estatut había sido aprobado en referéndum cuatro años antes por los ciudadanos de Cataluña. En su momento, ¿la decisión del Tribunal Constitucional te pareció correcta o incorrecta?

- Muy correcta
- Bastante correcta
- Ni correcta ni incorrecta
- Bastante incorrecta
- Muy incorrecta

P.3. Recientemente, el Tribunal Superior de Justicia de Cataluña ha dictado un auto que obliga a cambiar la lengua de enseñanza en una clase, del catalán al castellano, si uno de los alumnos lo solicita. En relación a este acto, estás…

- Muy a favor
- A favor
- Ni a favor ni en contra
- En contra
- Muy en contra

P.4. El proyecto de Ley Orgánica de Mejora de la Calidad Educativa, conocido como Ley Wert, establece que la administración catalana debe garantizar la oferta de educación en castellano como lengua vehicular. Si no la garantiza, deberá asumir los costes derivados de la escolarización en castellano en centros privados. ¿Hasta qué punto estás de acuerdo o en desacuerdo con esta medida?

- Muy de acuerdo
- De acuerdo
- Ni de acuerdo ni en desacuerdo
- En desacuerdo
- Muy en desacuerdo

English version

Now, we would like to ask some questions about some past and current events.

P.1. In 2006, the Popular Party collected 4 million signatures in a campaign against the Catalan Statute of Autonomy. Some people saw this campaign as an expression of anti-Catalanism. Others thought that all Spanish people should have a say about the Statute. Where do you place yourself regarding these two points of view?

Expression of anti-Catalanism						All must have a say
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

P.2. In June 2010, the Constitutional Court declared unconstitutional some articles of the Statute. As you probably know, Catalan citizens had approved the Statute in a referendum four years earlier. In that moment, did you think that the decision of the Constitutional Tribunal was correct or incorrect?

- Very correct
- Quite correct
- Neither correct nor incorrect
- Quite incorrect
- Very incorrect

P.3. Recently, the Catalan High Court of Justice dictated a sentence that forced schools to change the language of instruction in a class from Catalan to Spanish if one student asks for this. Regarding this decision are you…

- Very much in favor
- In favor
- Neither in favor nor against
- Against
- Very much against

P.4. The Project of the Organic Law to Improve Education Quality, known as Wert Law, establishes that the Catalan government must warrantee that Spanish is offered as the main language of instruction. If this is not guaranteed, the Catalan government must cover the expenses of education in private schools. Regarding this proposal are you...

- Very much in favor
- In favor
- Neither in favor nor against
- Against
- Very much against

Experiment 2: News about language policy[1]

El director del Instituto de Fomento de la Lengua, se manifiesta [en contra/a favor] del modelo educativo catalán

"El modelo educativo de Cataluña [perjudica/no perjudica] la enseñanza del castellano" ha afirmado el lingüista José María Rubio.

El Instituto, dedicado a difundir la lengua y cultura, no se había posicionado hasta ahora. La opinión del director se suma a la manifestada ya por otros lingüistas y reabre la polémica.

15 Comentarios

English version

The director of the Institute for the Promotion of Language, declares his [support/opposition] to the Catalan education model

"The Catalan education model [hinders/does not hinder] the teaching of Spanish" stated the linguist José María Rubio.

The institute, dedicated to the promotion of language and culture, had not yet taken a position. The opinion of the director adds to the views of other linguistics and reopens the debate about this issue.

15 Comments

A4. Balance tests

This section presents the balance tests of the two experiments reported in the paper. We perform t-tests to check if the values of some possible confounders for which we have the exact same wording in both surveys are balanced across the control and the treatment groups. We estimate the mean and standard deviations in each group and present the p-value of the difference. The results suggest that the covariates were balanced across the treatment and control groups.

Table A4.1. Balance tests of the first experiment

	Control group			**Treatment group**			
	Mean	Std Dev	N	Mean	Std Dev	N	p-value
Male	0.45	0.50	395	0.50	0.50	403	0.20
Age (years)	40.2	12.73	395	40.38	13.85	403	0.84
Education (3 cat)	2.08	0.87	395	2.04	0.85	403	0.47
Ideology	3.66	2.32	395	3.93	2.65	403	0.13
Political knowledge	1.34	0.95	395	1.26	0.90	403	0.22
Born in Catalonia	0.86	0.35	395	0.85	0.36	403	0.70

Table A4.2. Balance tests of the second experiment

	Control group			**Treatment group**			
	Mean	Std Dev	N	Mean	Std Dev	N	p-value
Male	0.50	0.50	761	0.49	0.50	739	0.64
Age (years)	39.29	13.19	761	40.21	13.55	739	0.18
Education (3 cat)	2.08	0.86	761	2.02	0.87	739	0.22
Ideology	3.96	1.86	761	3.93	1.88	739	0.77
Political knowledge	2.41	1.26	761	2.45	1.26	739	0.56
Born in Catalonia	0.89	0.32	761	0.88	0.33	739	0.54

A5. Multivariate models of the experimental results

In this section we run multivariate analyses of our experiments. We pool the data from the two experiments in order to increase the statistical power and be able to test if the differences in effect sizes are significantly different between specific subgroups. Because some of the subgroups have small sample sizes and the expected magnitude of the treatment effects is small, as we have extensively discussed, large sample sizes are necessary to test specific hypotheses about heterogeneous treatment effects. Specifically, pooling allows us to obtain a larger number of respondents who identify as "Only Spanish" and "More Spanish than Catalan." In the pooled dataset, these categories contain 129 and 132 cases, respectively.

In the first model reported in Table A5, we interact the conflict treatments with the five-point national identification scale introduced as a continuous variable. As already explained, this moderator was measured at the beginning of the survey what allows us to test if the treatment had different effects conditional on the previous ethno-national identification of the respondent. The dependent variable is the difference in the self-reported identification with Catalonia and Spain. The models include controls for the wave of the survey as well as the age, sex, education and origin of the respondent.

The second column presents the results of a model which includes separate interactions with each level of the five-point identification scale, using the category "as Catalan as Spanish" as reference. This allows us to test non-parametrically if the treatment had different effects on dual identifiers than on exclusive identifiers.

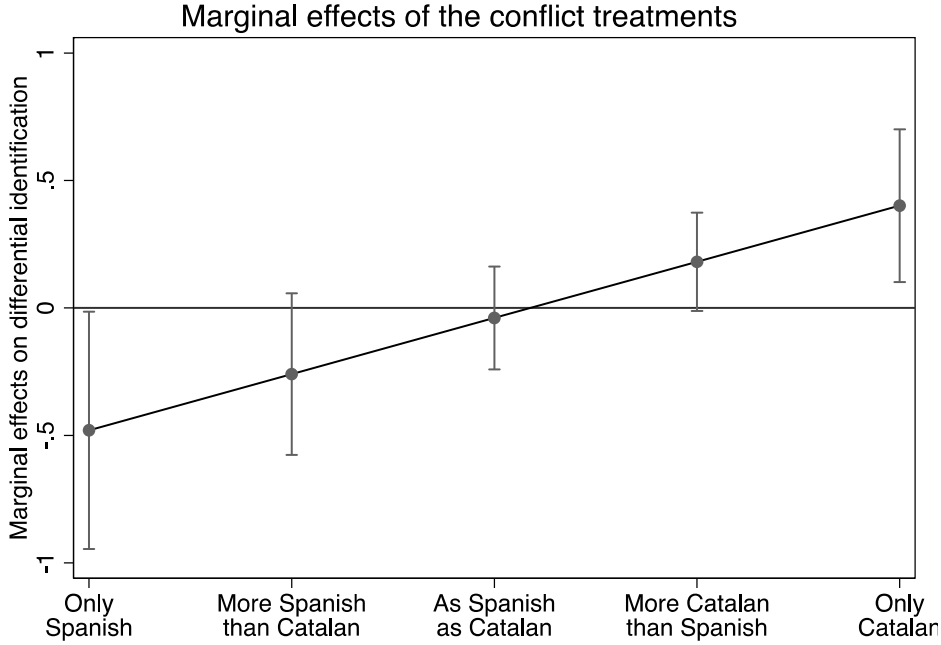
Table A5. Multivariate analyses of the experimental results

	Interaction with continuous measure	Interaction with dummy variables
Conflict treatment	-0.70*	0.16
	(0.32)	(0.15)
Five-point identification scale	3.18***	
	(0.07)	
Treatment * Five-point scale	0.22*	
	(0.09)	
Only Spanish		-3.93***
		(0.31)
More Spanish than Catalan		-2.54***
		(0.27)
More Catalan than Spanish		4.20***
		(0.16)
Only Catalan		7.14***
		(0.18)
Treatment * Only Spanish		-1.00*
		(0.40)
Treatment * More Spanish than Catalan		-0.64
		(0.40)
Treatment * More Catalan than Spanish		-0.26
		(0.22)
Treatment * Only Catalan		0.40+
		(0.24)
Constant	-7.47***	1.25**
	(0.50)	(0.44)
Controls	Yes	Yes
R-Squared	0.738	0.753
Obs.	2294	2294

Note: + p < 0.1, * p<0.05, ** p<0.01, *** p<0.001. Standard errors in parentheses. The models include controls for survey wave, age, age squared, sex, education, and family origin. In model 2, the category 'as Catalan as Spanish' is the reference.

The results confirm that the conflict treatments had heterogeneous effects depending on the prior ethno-national identification of the respondents. The first model suggests that the treatment made exclusive Spanish identifiers become even more exclusive in their ethno-national identification. The positive and significant interaction term implies that the effect was diminished and eventually reversed among respondents who identified as Catalan at the start of the questionnaire, such that exclusive Catalan identifiers became even more extreme. Figure A5 estimates the marginal effects of the treatment at different levels of ethno-national identification as measured at the start of the questionnaire.

Figure A5: Marginal effect of the conflict treatments on differential identification



Note: Treatment effects with 95 percent confidence intervals estimated from Model 1 in Table A5.

The graph suggests that the conflict treatment affected exclusive Catalan and Spanish identifiers in opposite ways, such that each group became even more extreme in its prior identification. This is what the standard literature about identity hardening predicts: when ethnic groups are in conflict, they become more distant from each other. It is noteworthy that we find a marginal effect in a population that has been as extensively pre-treated as the population residing in Catalonia, a context in which ethno-national conflict has been salient for years at the time of taking the survey. The results also suggest that there is no such effect among dual identifiers, who do not change their differential identification in the treatment conditions.

Model 2 in table A5 tests the hypothesis that exclusive identifiers have different reactions than dual identifiers in a non-parametric specification. We find that, when compared to dual identifiers, exclusive Spanish identifiers become even more differentially identified with

Spain. The effect is statistically significant at the 95 percent level. When comparing dual identifiers with exclusive Catalan identifiers, we find that Catalan identifiers who receive treatment increase their identification differential more than dual identifiers. The effect is significant at the 90 percent level. Again, we need to take into account that the population has been extensively pre-treated. In this case, exclusive Catalan identifiers in the control condition have a high score in the dependent variable such that there was relatively little room to find treatment effects due to ceiling effects.

All in all the multivariate results confirm that the effect of the conflict treatments was heterogeneous conditional on prior ethno-national identification.

Endnotes

[1]As we discuss in the text, we also varied whether the Institute was devoted to the defense of Catalan or Spanish. However, we do not find any differences in responses across groups, so we collapse the conditions into a high conflict condition, which criticizes the Catalan education model, and a low conflict condition, which does not criticize it.