Why Do Rich Regions Try To Secede?: Text Analysis of Minority Regions in Spain and the UK 1999-2017

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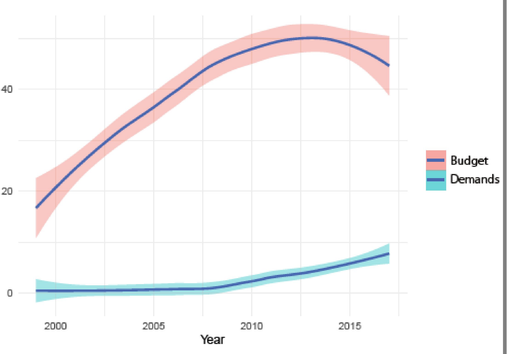
Funding and Demands Over Time (All Regions)



Data and Methods

- Use text analysis of local parliament speeches in Catalonia, Scotland and the Basque regions (over 5000 sessions) from 1999 to 2017.
- Counts secessionist, stem words "secession" and "self-determination" by month.
- Use Poisson regression to compare funding with funding amount.

Introduction

Demands for independence often occur in poor and marginalized, minority regions, so why do they happen in rich, democratic and wealthier ones? This paper argues that regional funding is inversely related to secessionist demands. When funding is cut, regional elites demand secession.

Results

- Secessionist demands significantly increase secession referendums.
- Decreases in funding significantly increase secession demands.
- Relationship was much stronger in Spain (Catalonia, Basque) than in the UK (Scotland).

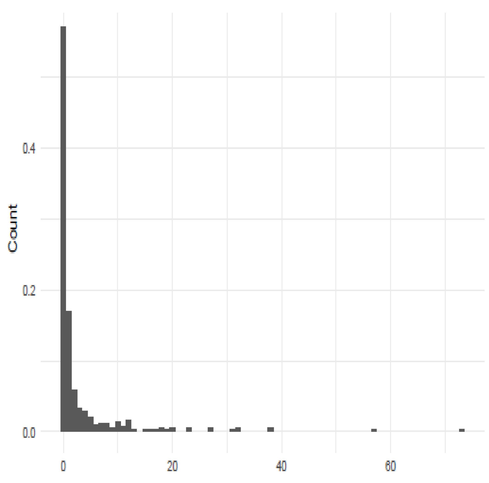
Demands Increase Chances of Secession Referendums

	Estimate	Std. Error	t value	Pr(>|t|)
(Intercept)	0.003267	0.004139	0.7894	0.4303
Demands	0.001386	0.0005703	2.431	0.0155

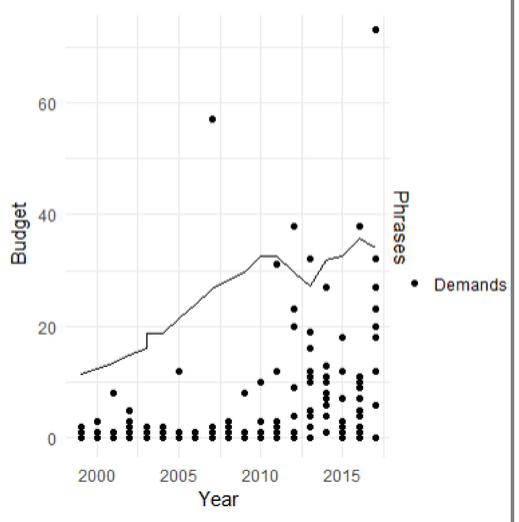
Conclusion

- Funding affects secession demands.
- Creates putative explanation for why rich regions try to secede (especially recently)
- Contributes to civil conflict literature for high income countries..

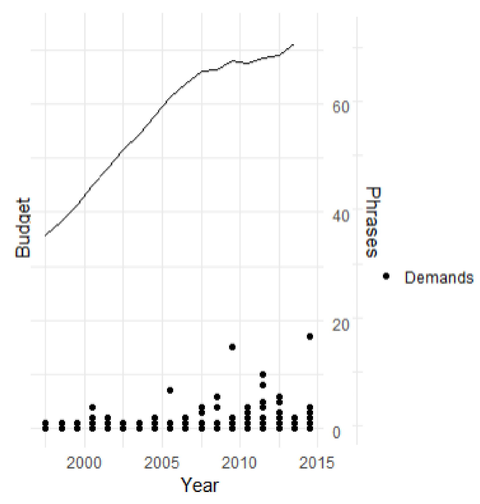
Secession Phrases Used Monthly



Funding and Demands Over Time (Catalonia)



Funding and Demands Over Time (Scotland)



Main Findings

	Estimate	Std. Error	z value	Pr(>|z|)
(Intercept)	1.663	0.2559	6.497	8.172e-11
Budget	-0.01938	0.005839	-3.318	0.000905

	Estimate	Std. Error	z value	Pr(>|z|)
(Intercept)	-1.043	0.525	-1.986	0.04704
Budget	0.05454	0.0239	2.282	0.0225
Supreme Court Ruling	0.8039	0.4626	1.738	0.08226
Mas speech	0.8008	0.4056	1.975	0.04832

Acknowledgment

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