

Subsidies and Secession Demands:
Text Analysis of Regional Parliaments in Spain and
the United Kingdom 1999-2017

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Research Question

- Why do secessionist demands happen in rich, relatively affluent, non-deprived, democratic (RRANDDD) minority regions?
 - Specifically demands by *government officials* in ethnic minority, regional governments.
 - Not protests or violence.
- Use computational text analysis of regional parliaments for secessionist demands of Spain (Catalonia, Basque Country) and the UK (Scotland, Wales)

Literature Review

- Previous ethnic conflict literature has trouble addressing why RRANDD regions make demands.
- Relative deprivation theory (Horowitz 1981; Gurr 1970):
 - Ethnic groups rebel when they are poorer than the rest, discriminated against or under state violence
 - None of this is true in RRANDD regions
- Relational Materialist theory:
 - Robert Hale (2008) argues regions secede when economically they will be better off
 - Estimates show that in all regions they will be the same or worse off if they were independent.

Literature Review (cont).

- Globalization theory (Hopkins 2014):
 - Argues that regions threaten to secede because of economic integration and increased austerity (ie spending cuts)
 - But cannot explain why some regions try to secede and others do not in the same country.
- No theory has fully explained this phenomenon yet.

Theory

- Secession is result of elite and public discontent *specific* to each region.
 - Conventional story: funding cuts lead to anger among public.
 - Fiscal appeasement theory suggests that funding is actually *co-opting* officials from seceding and thus funding cuts is ending co-optation.
- Many factors can be analyzed in a model for this.

Model

- $$Y_{\text{Demands}} = B_0 + B_1 \text{SecessionPolls} + B_2 \text{NationalistVote} + B_3 \text{RegionalFunding} + \epsilon$$

Model (cont).

- Also considering doing an instrumental variable for when central government tax revenue
 - Based on logic of bargaining (Putnam 1988) it assumes that regional officials not demand it if the government doesn't have funding to give them.
 - But, if it is co-optation, (and they want their own state) then they will not reduce demands.
 - If goal is to start their own country, not funding.

Research Design

- Use computational text analysis on minority parliament speeches in Spain and the UK
 - Looks at *local* parliaments of each region.
 - Use “secessionist” regions (Catalonia, Scotland) that had referendums for it
 - Also use “control” minority regions which did not have secessionist referendums (Basque Country, Wales).

Research Design (cont).

- Text analysis will look for secessionist stem words like “secession” and “independence” in both the majority and regional minority language (English/Spanish, Catalan/Gaelic/Welsh)
- This is the *dependent* variable
- Will use a word count of these phrases by month from 1999 to 2017.
 - $N = 228$
- These are proxies for number of demands made in these parliaments
- Because demand phrases are rare events I will use a poisson regression.

Conclusion

- I will use text analysis and instrumental variables to measure secessionist demands in RRANDDD regions of Europe.
- It will use parliamentary speeches and test various ways for how funding might affect secessionist demands.