SURVEY ON POLARISATION AND COEXISTENCE IN CATALONIA 2020

BERTA BARBET PORTA

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A STUDY ON POLARISATION AND COEXISTENCE IN CATALONIA. WHY AND HOW?

Much has been said in recent years about polarisation and its consequences for the coexistence and democratic functioning of societies. The political crisis, clearly exacerbated by the 2008 economic crisis, has altered the political landscape of societies in many developed countries. Populist parties and voices that deny the principles of pluralism have forced their way into many institutions, and the feeling that societies are breaking down has appeared in the dominant discourse of institutions, media and society.

Even so, the perceptions and the analysis of polarisation have often been closely linked to what was happening among political elites and have largely ignored the societal situation and dynamics. This is surprising if we consider that, as we will see later, the perception among citizens is that society is less polarised than the political classes or the media. It is important to understand polarisation from a social perspective too, focusing on citizens' preferences and perceptions of the debates that divide society, the ways of solving them, and the perceptions of those who have different views.

Furthermore, such analysis must differentiate dynamics that are often confused in the public debate, but are quite different: ideological polarisation or the divisions arising from the disagreement over the policies and solutions that should be put forward by institutions; political or electoral polarisation, which can be defined as the division on perception of how far away from each other the different political groups are; and affective polarisation, which is the division arising from a lack of respect for those who defend positions that are different from their own. While all three dynamics pose important challenges to the governance of democratic institutions, not all of them pose the same kind of challenge to the principles of pluralism and institutional debate of democracy. Furthermore, it is also important to analyse how different types of polarisation are associated with different views of the political conflict management instruments available, and perceptions of trust and coexistence.

In order to do all this, the International Catalan Institute for Peace has carried out a survey on polarisation and coexistence in Catalonia (henceforth 'ICIP 2020'). The survey of a sample of 2,000 citizens of Catalonia through Netquest's online panel, between 27th and 30th July 2020. In order to guarantee the representativeness of the sample, apart from Netquest's experience in the selection of representative samples, quotas based on gender and age (crossed), and with territories and provinces (independent) were established. The survey questions were designed to provide an in-depth understanding of the different dimensions of polarisation, the perceptions of dialogue and the social situation regarding conflict and coexistence in Catalonia. They therefore allow for a complete and exhaustive picture of the Catalan public opinion to be seen three years after the Catalan conflict reached one of its most critical points, politically speaking, in autumn 2017.

This report starts with four sections that provide a detailed review of the state of ideological polarisation, electoral or partisan polarisation, affective polarisation, and the state of coexistence and social trust in Catalonia. Once the initial assessment has been made, the report devotes two more sections to analysing what the survey tells us about how this can be translated in terms of opportunities for and threats to a social dialogue that allows for finding shared solutions in Catalonia, especially in the territorial debate.

1 The territorial debate is the debate that most clearly divides Catalan society ideologically. Even so, this division of preferences in the territorial debate does not influence the other political debates. The positions defended on the territorial axis do not determine the positions in other debates which generate spaces for discussions in which the territorial divisions could be nuanced.

2 Electoral or partisan polarisation (perceiving important differences in the assessment of parties or of being at a great distance from most parties in the system) is high and aligned with the territorial debate. However, a comparison with other surveys shows that this is not a dynamic that is exclusive to Catalonia and that it could have declined since 2017.

3 Although the public debate may lead to think otherwise, affective polarisation or emotional distance from those who think differently is not a common phenomenon. The percentage of the population with more negative emotions than positive ones towards those who think differently is less than 30%, and 12% if we look at people with extremely negative emotional reactions. The Manichaean views of those who think differently are not in the majority either.

4 Those who are more ideologically and electorally polarised are not necessarily the most affectively polarised. Affective polarisation is more linked to a sense of threat than to extreme ideological or electoral standpoints.

5 Perceptions of coexistence are positive, with a mean of more than 7 out of 10. Social trust is also above the European average. However, there is a major gap between those with different national identities that seems to have worsened since 2018.

6 Feelings of aggression are not common in spaces of non-direct relationships. The perception of aggression in the personal sphere is limited, even among those who have networks where there is no ideological agreement. Although there is a minority of between 10% and 15%, 21.7% if we count digital networks, that have high levels of perceived aggression in these environments too, with ratings of perceptions of aggression in these personal spaces of more than a seven on a scale that ranges between 1 and 10. We do find a high and generalised perception of having

felt attacked by institutions, a perception of aggression that is highly associated with feeling a threat to one's own way of life and culture. In turn, this leads to more negative emotions towards those who think differently and to higher scepticism about solutions discussed.

7 Solutions that involve dialogue are preferred to those that do not, although there is no absolute disagreement with the fact that the dialogue is not without dangers. Part of the scepticism probably stems from the fundamental disagreement about whether dialogue should be without limits or within the limits of institutions, but we also observe an agreement with the general statement that points to reticence and the dangers of dialogue that is worrying. This reticence is strongly associated with affective polarisation, ideological polarisation, the feeling of having been attacked by an institution and, to a lesser extent, party disaffection.

8 The high levels of criticism of the Spanish government's actions among those opposed to independence is associated with a greater propensity to seek solutions through dialogue. On the pro-independence side, we find a lower level of criticism of the actions of the Catalan government. Moreover, this self-criticism is not associated with a greater preference for solutions that involve dialogue.

9 There is a significant over-representation of people who have felt attacked or have extreme positions in the debates. Discussions at work or with friends or family, on the other hand, are not affected by this problem, although there is an over-representation of people that agree with the others in this context, which can result in a not very pluralistic debate.

10 There is growing concern regarding problems of coexistence that are not related to the independence process. Especially with relation to problems of incivility, insecurity and those related to immigration and xenophobia.

IDEOLOGICAL POLARISATION: THE PERSISTENT DIVISION IN THE TERRITORIAL DEBATE IN CATALAN SOCIETY

In order to analyse the extent to which Catalan society and institutions are ideologically divided, the survey included two types of questions. Firstly, a set of questions regarding perceptions of levels of polarisation on the different issues and in the different spaces of Catalan society (questions 8 and 9 of the appendix). Secondly, a set of questions in which respondents had to position themselves in the different political debates (question 12). We can measure where Catalans perceive the biggest divisions with the first type of question. However, these perceptions can be wrong or conditioned by the debate in the media. In order to understand the issues that divide society more clearly, the second type of question allows us to observe the distribution of preferences between two poles among respondents, and therefore, allows us to assess to what extent there are large divisions in the population.

CONCLUSIONS OF THE SECTION

Both for the average perception of respondents and the dispersion of preferences, the territorial debate stands out for the level of division and perception of polarisation. Not only around half (50.5%) of the population perceive that society is highly polarised (perception above 7 on a scale from 1 to 10), but the people surveyed also hold much more separated positions from each other in this debate. As many as 44.4% are in the two most extreme positions of the scale (31% for independence and 12.8% for no self-government), 22.5% are in the two middle positions, 5 and 6. Only 33.3% of people consulted have positions that are not clearly at one end or in the middle, a situation that makes it difficult to create large majorities. We do not find these levels of division on any other of the topics studied, not even for the questions relating to the current hot topic: the management of the COVID situation.

To assess perceptions of polarisation, the survey included two sets of questions that asked respondents to rate the level of polarisation in Catalan society on different issues and in different spaces of debate on a scale from 1 (not at all polarised) to 10 (highly polarised). As figure 1 shows, opinions of the independence process are the item for which, on average, citizens perceive the greatest polarisation. 21% perceive the maximum level of polarisation and more than half of the people surveyed fall into the three most polarised categories of the scale. In contrast, less than 10% position such polarisation in the three least polarised categories. In the other debates, we find more people perceiving medium levels of polarisation. We do not find more than 10% of respondents stating perceptions of maximum levels of polarisation for any of the other potential issues of debate. The topics in which respondents perceive a lower level of polarisation are the language of common use and feminism, with only 22.5% and 12.6% of respondents in the three most polarised categories, respectively.
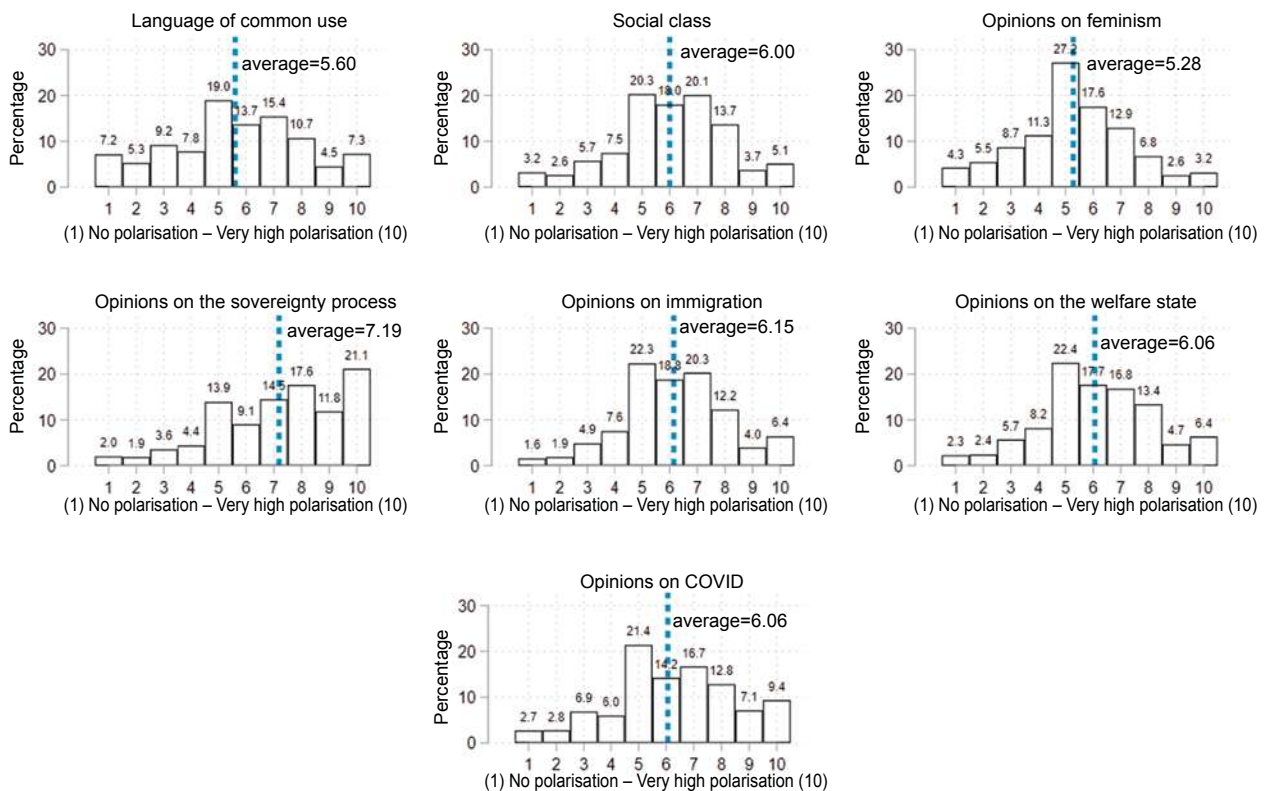
Figure 1: Distribution of the perceptions of citizens about the degree of polarisation in Catalan society in the different debates

Furthermore, when asked about the level of polarisation in the different spaces of debate (figure 2), citizens perceive much more polarisation between political parties (26.3% are positioned at the extreme end of most polarisation, and 61.3% fall under the last three categories of most polarisation) or in the media (16.5% in the most extreme category and 47.9% in the last three categories of most polarisation) than among society. In fact, the percentage of citizens who perceived polarisation in the highest category is just 6%, and only 24% place social polarisation above 7 on a scale of 1 to 10. The percentage of the population in the lowest categories of polarisation is also low, at 7.2%. On the other hand, we do find a significant percentage (23.8% of the sample) that also places the level of polarisation below a 4 on the scale.
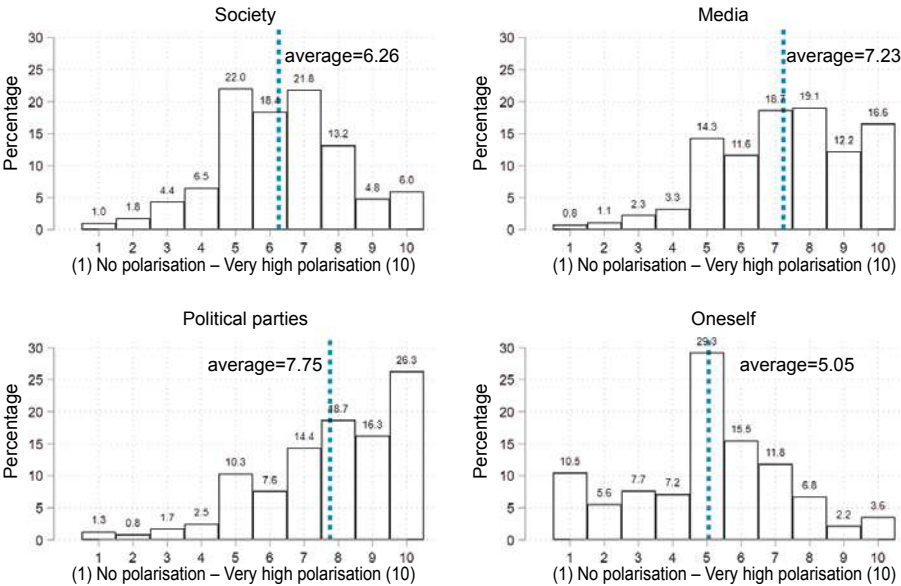
Figure 2: Distribution of respondents' perceptions of polarisation in different spaces
(Survey on Coexistence and Polarisation, ICIP 2020)

THE REALITY: HOW POLARISED IS THE POPULATION IN CATALONIA?

This perception that the territorial debate polarises the Catalan population more than the rest of the debates is quite consistent with the reality if we look at the positions taken in the different debates by the people surveyed. To measure ideological polarisation the survey asked the respondents for their standpoints between five pairs of political extremes: raising taxes or improving services, ensuring that immigrants adapt fully to the culture of their destination or maintain their culture of origin, protecting individual rights and freedoms or protecting traditional order and values, Catalonia's independence or eliminating self-government, and the assessment of the management of the COVID situation by the institutions as impeccable or disastrous.

As seen in figure 3, the territorial debate is the debate in which most people are at either one of the two extreme positions. 44.4% are in the one of the extreme positions on the scale (31% at the extreme for independence and 12.8% at the extreme in favour of no self-government). It is true that 22.5% of people surveyed are in the two central positions of the axis, but this is quite low compared to the more than 33% of citizens who have taken central positions in the other debates. In addition, the central positions are highly concentrated at a mid-point and there is no smooth transition between the different points of the scale. The positions in the debate seem clear and grouped in three large sections that do not connect in a smooth way.
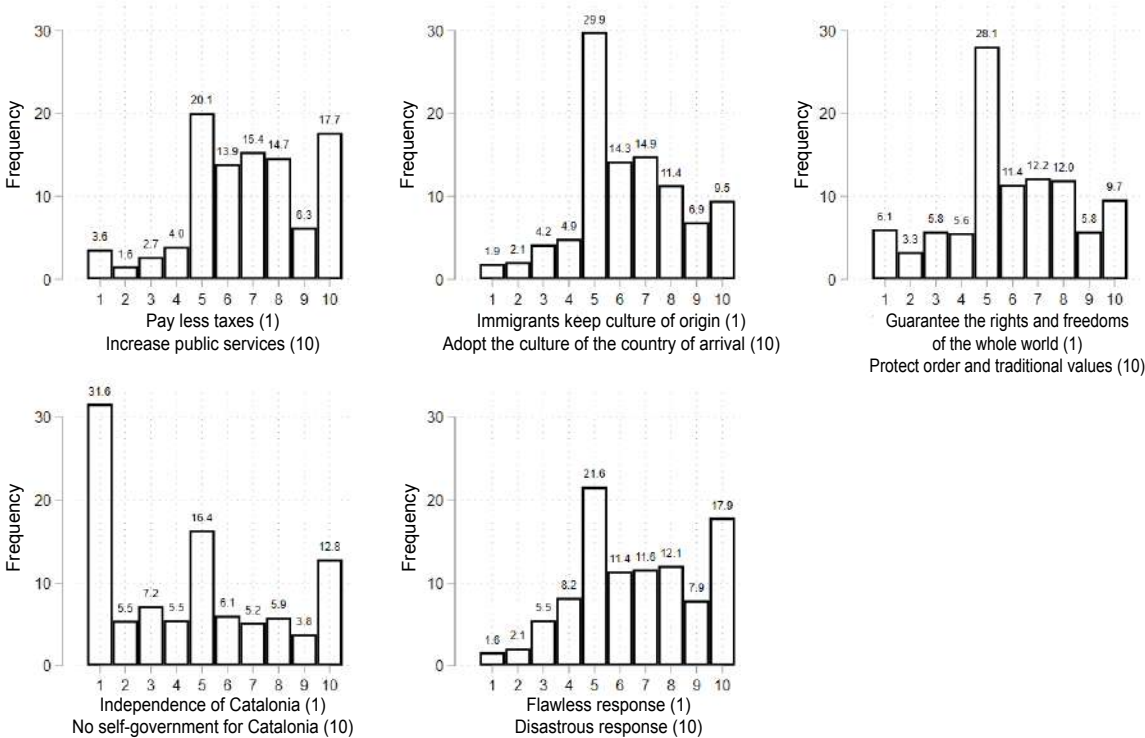
Figure 3: Distribution of the standpoints taken by citizens in the different debates

We also find quite a few extreme positions in the economic debate and in the debate over the management of the COVID situation (around 18% in both cases). But in these cases, one cannot speak of polarisation, since the majority of the survey's participants are situated around only one of the extremes. In other words, although there is a significant percentage of those survey that defend the most extreme position of increasing services even if this means raising taxes and that the management of the COVID situation has been disastrous, the extreme position is not very far from the majority of the population, as the majority of the population is located around these two ends of the debates. In these debates we find a large social majority around one of the two poles that leads to non-centred debate, but no major divisions among citizens.

Finally, in the debates around immigration and social policies (the debate that divides the responses between ensuring that everyone can have rights and freedoms of choice, or that as a society we protect traditional order and values), we find the lowest percentages of responses in the extreme positions and the highest percentages of population located in central positions. This dominance of central positions could be related, but could also explain the lack of partisan debates on these issues. In the case of immigration, the polarisation is slightly lower because, in addition to high number of central answers, in this debate people who do not have central positions find themselves rather more grouped on the side of immigrants having to adopt the culture of the place of destination. 42.7% of the 55.8% of the responses that do not fall into the two central categories are on this side of the axis, while only 13.1% of people deviate from the centre because they believe that immigrants should maintain their culture of origin. On the other hand, in the social debate, people who are not in the centre, even though there are few, are distributed a little more evenly in both directions (20.8% are on the side of the axis in favour of guaranteeing rights and freedoms and 39.6% are more in favour of maintaining order and traditions).
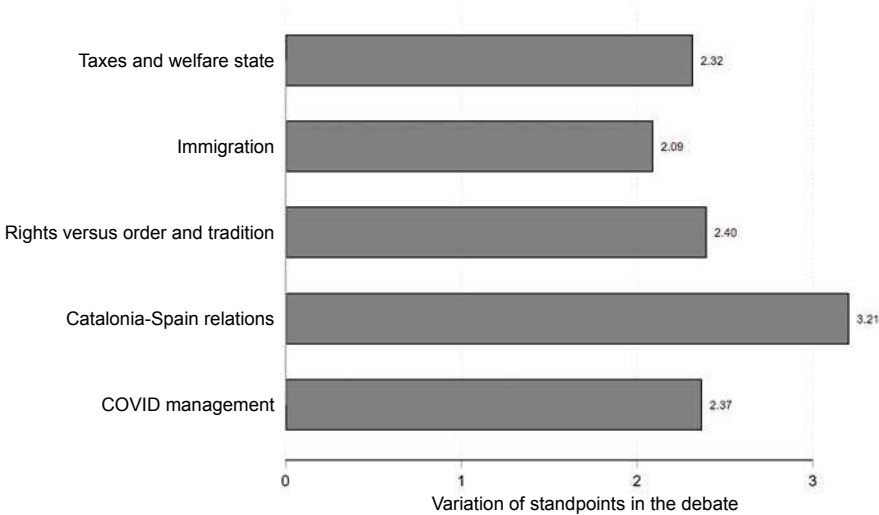
Figure 4: Measuring the level of dispersion of citizens' standpoints in the different debates

To give some context to the level of polarisation observed, we can analyse the spread of opinions in the Catalan survey with the spread of opinions found in other similar but different debates, measured for the electoral study of the European elections.[1] The comparison should be viewed with caution, as much because the differences may be due to real differences in levels of polarisation, but also may be due to differences in the wording of the question or the fact that

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1. The question on the economic debate does not refer to the dilemma between lowering taxes - improving services, but rather to the agreement with the fact that the state has to intervene in the economy. The question of immigration does not refer to whether the culture of the place of origin should be maintained or if one should adopt that of the place of destination, but rather to the agreement with a limiting immigration. The question measuring social policy preferences refers to the maintenance of the right to privacy, even if this makes fighting crime or limiting privacy difficult.

one survey was carried out in an electoral context and the other was not. Nevertheless, and while being cautious, we see that the ICIP 2020 data shows less variation in the positions in the debate on immigration and social policy (security, order and tradition versus rights and freedoms) than that observed in other European countries in the ESS data. The figures do not show a particularly high level of polarisation in the economic debate in Catalonia either. The territorial debate would then be the only debate in which the Catalans could be more highly polarised than citizens in surrounding countries.
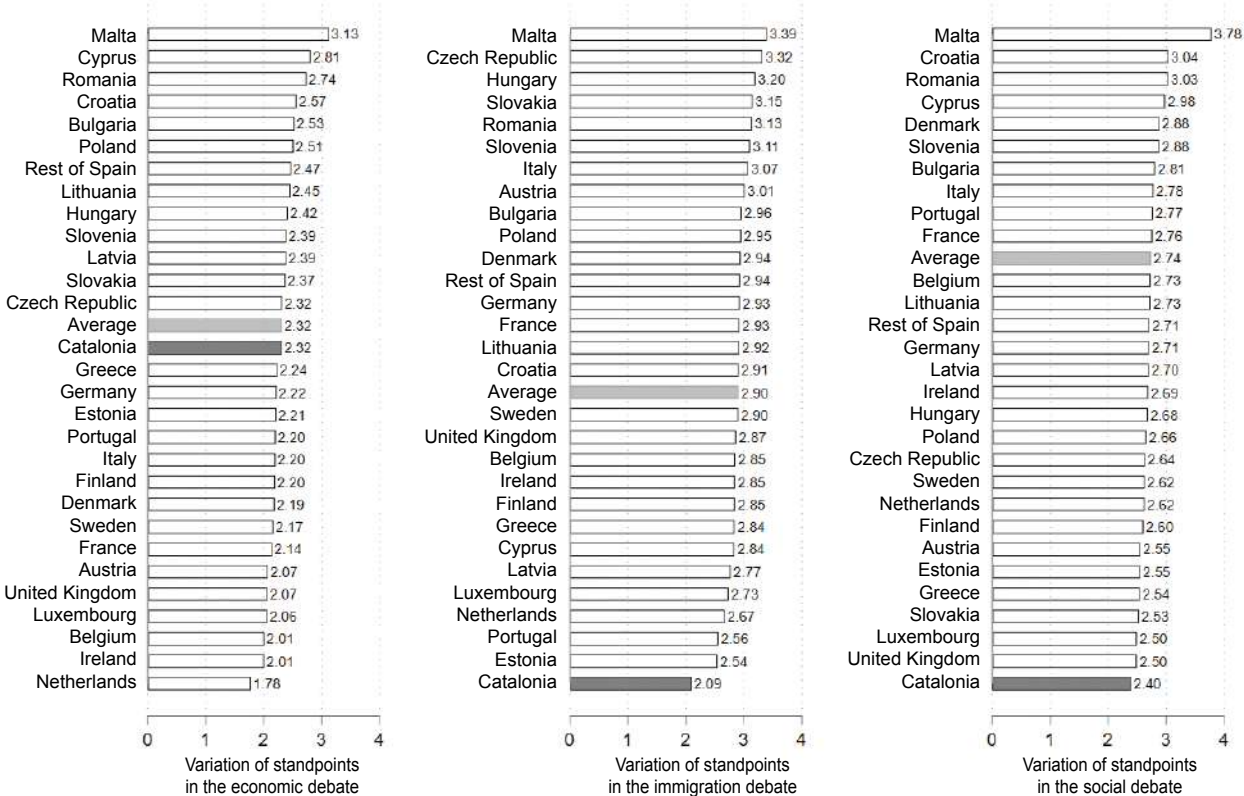
Figure 5: Dispersion of standpoints in the economic, immigration and social debate in different countries

(ICIP-2020 and ESS-2019 data[2])

We can therefore conclude that the ideological polarisation of Catalan society shows a society that is divided on the territorial debate, but with large majorities and limited divisions in the rest of the debates.

2. EES 2019: Schmitt, Hermann; Hobolt, Sara B.; van der Brug, Wouter; Popa, Sebastian Adrian (2020): European Parliament Election Study 2019, Voter Study. GESIS Data Archive, Cologne. ZA7581 Data file Version 1.0.0, https://doi.org/10.4232/1.13473

ELECTORAL OR PARTISAN POLARISATION: A SHARED PROBLEM

Beyond the preferences about the different ways in which politics can try to promote certain changes in society, another element in which we can find differences and political divisions is in the perceptions of the different political actors that represent these visions. Beyond the ideas they represent, political parties and groups are an important object of any political system. A political object around which people organise and, in some cases, divide themselves without a clear link to the political preferences behind them. As observed in other countries,[3] political conflict and polarisation between people can increase without major ideological movements only if citizens' political ideals become more clearly aligned with the parties, thus increasing the perceptions of differences between the parties.

This form of polarisation, which can be named electoral or partisan polarisation, is important because it conditions the form of electoral competition in a society and may result in very close political groups that feel quite far from each other. To capture this dimension of polarisation, the survey includes a set of questions about how far from the different parties citizens feel (question 19). This allows for an analysis of the extent to which the population perceives several political groups at the furthest distance from them and, therefore, we can test if individuals think there are many groups with which they might potentially be unwilling to negotiate, agree and take into account in the debate. Or if, on the contrary, citizens perceive all of the parties hold similar positions.

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3. Iyengar, Sood, and Lelkes, (2012) "Affect, Not Ideology: A Social Identity Perspective on Polarization." *Public Opinion Quarterly* 76(3):405-431

Although one must be careful with the different contexts of the data, perceptions of distance between groups and parties describe levels of electoral or partisan polarisation at levels comparable to other EU countries. However, we found significant levels of disaffection, with an average of almost 6 out of 10 parties perceived at the maximum distance by respondents.

Electoral polarisation is closely associated with the territorial debate. The positions in this debate explain the distance from the parties much better than the traditional economic debate. The data shows a significant association between electoral and ideological polarisation (those with more extreme positions perceive more distance between the political groups), although it is far from perfect and is not the same for all positions.

ELECTORAL POLARISATION: HOW FAR APART ARE THE POLITICAL GROUPS?

To study this electoral polarisation, two measures are defined which capture the distance between actors in a very different way. Firstly, the polarisation and distance between the groups is captured by the distance between the party perceived as the closest and the party considered as the furthest. This measure allows us to know if citizens perceive there are big distances between the political groups.

The mean of distances at which respondents perceive the closest and the furthest parties is 6.4 points on a 10-point scale. As figure 6 shows, on a scale from 1 to 10, on average respondents place the nearest party above 7, while they place the furthest party at the very far end, with a mean distance only one tenth above the end point of the scale. In other words, although the distance between groups is not extreme, this is more due to many people not feeling particularly close to any party than the lack of great distances between citizens and some of the political groups.
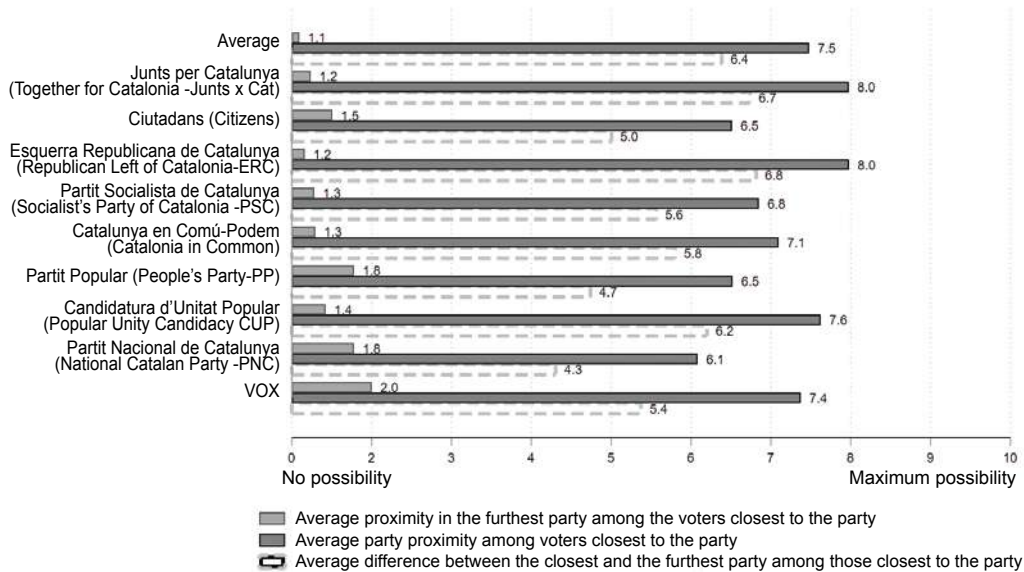
Figure 6: Average score of the nearest and furthest party by nearest party

Figure 6 also shows how these distances vary according to the party, or parties, that the respondent considers closest. People close to all parties perceive at least one party within a distance of at least 8 points on a 9-point scale (minimum proximity below 2). In other words, the perception that prevails amongst citizens is that there are political groups that defend views that are radically different or far from their own political views. People close to Vox, the Partit Popular or the Partit Nacionalista de Catalunya seem to perceive smaller distances to the parties that are furthest from them, but the difference is small and the average score is still below 2.

The figure does show differences among party supporters in the perception that there is a party clearly close to the individual. For example, people close to Junts per Catalunya and the Esquerra Republicana de Catalunya perceive these parties to be only 2 points away from them. On the contrary, those who perceive Ciutadans, the Partit Popular or the Partit Nacionalista de Catalunya as the closest party, place them at an average of over 3.5 points away.
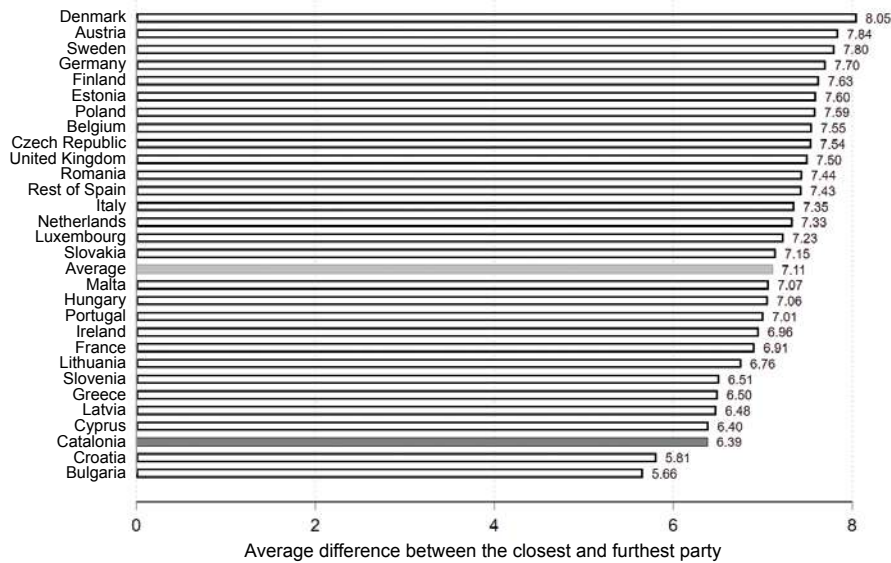
Figure 7: Distribution of the perceived average distances between the nearest and furthest party in different countries (ICIP-2020 and ESS-2019 data[4])

To give some comparative perspective to the numbers observed, figure 7 uses data from the 2019 European Electoral Study to check if the perception of distances from the parties is substantially different from that of other countries.[5] The data should again be viewed with caution because, as recent studies have shown, electoral or partisan polarisation is higher during an election period than outside it[6] and the data from Catalonia was collected outside an election period, while the European poll was conducted in the middle of an election period, even if it was a low-intensity election. Therefore, the data could be exaggerating the low level of electoral or partisan polarisation of Catalan citizens. However, the levels of electoral polarisation observed in the ICIP 2020 survey are clearly below the mean of the European countries, making it unlikely that Catalonia will have exaggeratedly higher levels of electoral polarisation than surrounding countries, even during an election period.

Another comparison that must be considered with caution, but which may give some perspective to the observed data, is the comparison with the electoral polarisation of the 2017 elections, a moment of particular tension in the Catalan territorial debate. To do this, figure 8 compares the average distance between the closest and furthest party in the July 2020 survey, and the data from the pre-election study of the 2017 regional elections conducted by the Centre for Sociological Research (CSR).

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4. EES 2019: Schmitt, Hermann; Hobolt, Sara B.; van der Brug, Wouter; Popa, Sebastian Adrian (2020): European Parliament Election Study 2019, Voter Study. GESIS Data Archive, Cologne. ZA7581 Data file Version 1.0.0, https://doi.org/10.4232/1.13473

5. The data has been adapted to make the scales comparable, which in one case were 11 points and in the other 10 points.

6. Hernández, E., Anduiza, E., and Rico,G. (2020) "Affective Polarization and the Salience of Elections." *Electoral Studies.*

The data shows that, on average, the distance at which citizens perceive the closest and furthest party has fallen by more than one point. We will have to wait until the next elections to test whether this drop is permanent and the result of a reduction in levels of tension, or whether it is only due to being not being an electoral period.[7] Either way, it is interesting to see that the drop in levels of electoral polarisation are observed for all parties except for the Candidatura d'Unitat Popular. The drop in distances is especially noticeable among people who consider themselves closest to Ciutadans, the Partit Popular and the Partit Socialista de Catalunya. It is also quite noticeable among the people closest to Junts per Catalunya, the Esquerra Republicana de Catalunya and Catalunya en Comú.
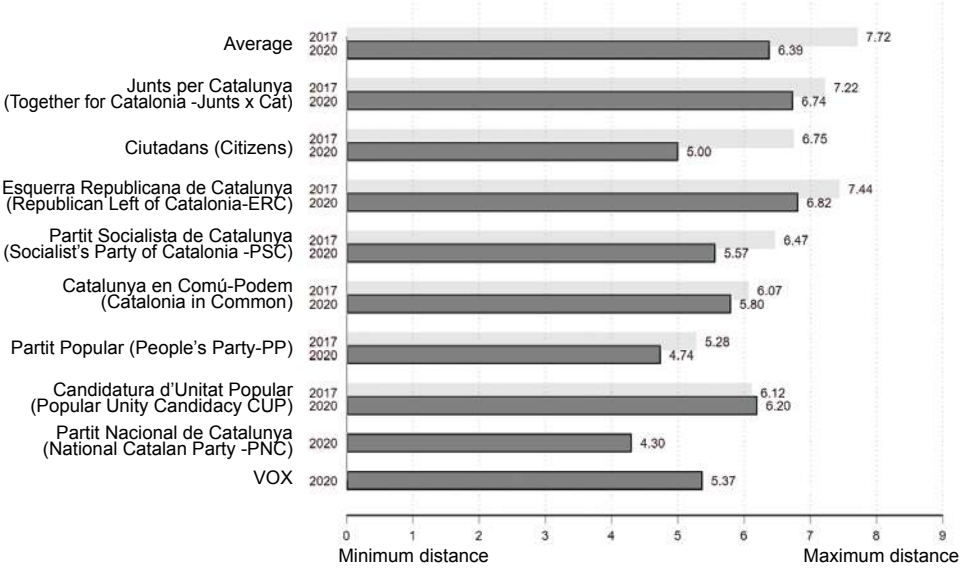
Figure 8: Distribution of the perceived average distance between the closest and furthest party

per survey year (ICIP 2020- CIS 2017 data[8])

ELECTORAL OR PARTY DISAFFECTION: HOW WIDESPREAD IS THE PERCEPTION OF DISAFFECTION TOWARDS CERTAIN POLITICAL GROUPS?

Although the measure of distance between the closest and furthest party has already painted a very interesting picture of the divisions between political groups in Catalonia, in a context like the Catalan one, where we can find up to ten parties with possibilities of representation, a measure that only considers two of the groups does not give a complete picture of the situation. For this reason, the study analyses a second aspect that can also be associated to electoral

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7. Hernández, E., Anduiza, E., and Rico,G. (2020) "Affective Polarization and the Salience of Elections." *Electoral Studies*
8. CIS 2017: Centro de investigaciones sociológicas (CIS). Estudio núm 3198. "Preelectoral de Catalonia. Elecciones autonómicas 2017". Available at: http://www.cis.es/cis/opencm/ES/2_bancodatos/Studies/listaMuestras. jsp?estudio=14373

polarisation or the gap between citizens and some political groups: the number of parties perceived to be at the maximum distance of the scale.

Figure 9 shows the distribution of the number of parties that respondents place at the lowest point of the scale. The figure shows that on average citizens place 5.78 parties at the lowest point of the scale. In other words, on average, the people surveyed place more than half of the parties at the maximum distance. Only 3.4% of individuals do not put any party at the maximum distance and 6.8% put them all at the maximum distance.
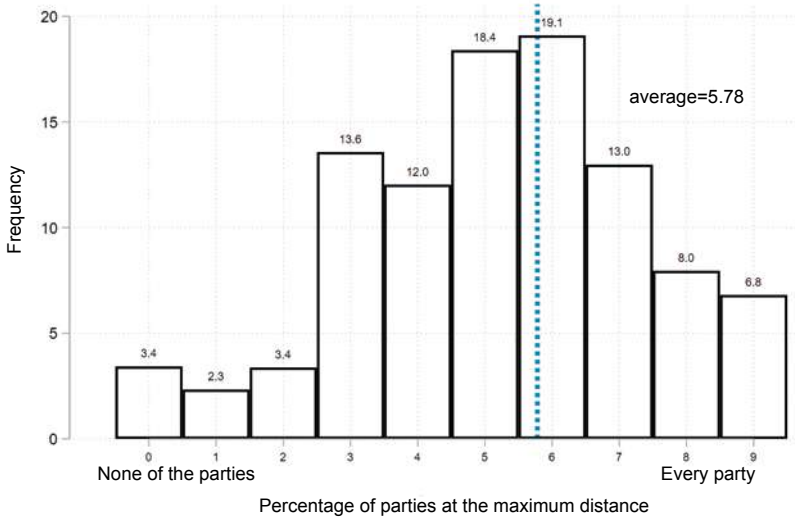
Figure 9: Distribution of the relative number of parties that citizens perceive at the maximum distance

If we compare this percentage with similar data from other European countries (figure 10), we find that the Catalan case is well above the European average, with an average of 58% of the parties at the maximum distance. Obviously, although the indicator controls for the number of parties (the average shown is the percentage of parties in the system that are at the maximum distance, not the number of parties), there is the risk that the high number of parties in the Catalan political system makes it possible for citizens to place a higher percentage of parties at the maximum distance. Once again it is necessary to look at the comparison with caution, but it is interesting to note that although in the measure of distance between parties the Catalan case did not seem to stand out on a European level, for the number of parties perceived at the furthest distance, the Catalan case is clearly an outlier.
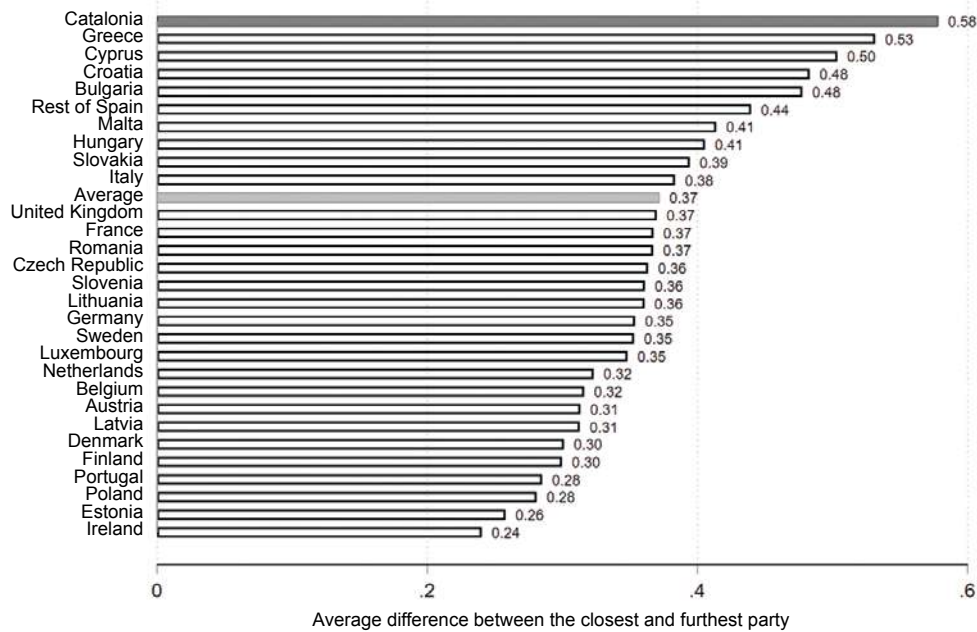
Figure 10: Average distribution of the number of parties that citizens place at the maximum distance by country (ICIP -2020 and European Election Studies 2019 data[9]))

To see how this disaffection affects the different parties, figure 11 shows the percentage of the sample that perceives each of the parties at the furthest (position 1 on a scale where 1 means that they would never vote for them) and the closest (10 on the same scale, where 10 means that they would always vote for them) positions. We observe that the percentage of citizens perceiving the party as extremely far is higher than the percentage of citizens perceiving them as extremely close in all cases. Nonetheless, there are important differences between the parties. Vox, Partit Popular and Ciutadans are the parties perceived as extremely far away by the largest percentage of respondents (over 80% in the case of the first two and 70% in the case of Citizens). On the other hand, 40% of respondents perceive the Esquerra Republicana de Catalunya as a party located at the maximum distance, while less than 50% think the same of Junts per Catalunya, the Partit Socialista de Catalunya/Partido Socialista Obrero Español and Catalunya en Comú. The Esquerra Republicana de Catalunya is also the party that the highest number of respondents consider extremely close, followed by Junts per Catalunya.

9. EES 2019: Schmitt, Hermann; Hobolt, Sara B.; van der Brug, Wouter; Popa, Sebastian Adrian (2020): European Parliament Election Study 2019, Voter Study. GESIS Data Archive, Cologne. ZA7581 Data file Version 1.0.0, https://doi.org/10.4232/1.13473
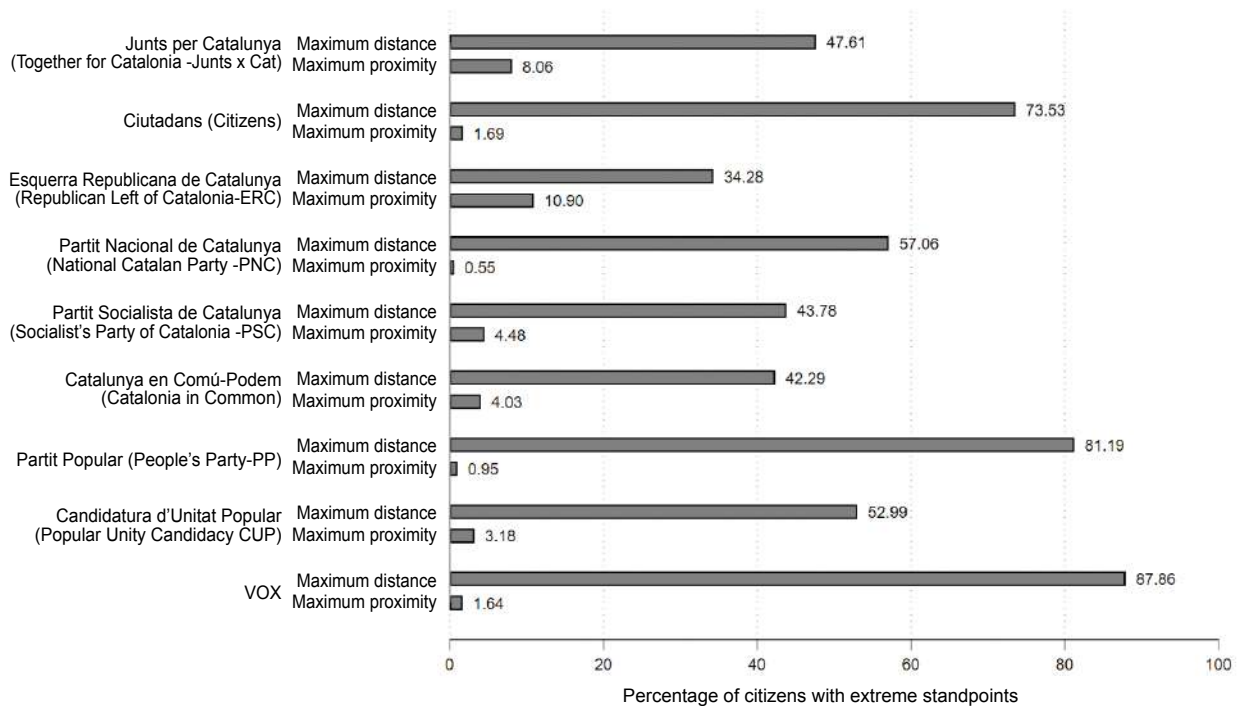
Figure 11: The percentage of the respondents located in the extreme positions of the proximity scales in the different parties

DISTANCE BETWEEN GROUPS AND POLITICAL DEBATES

An important element of the partisan or electoral polarisation is whether is aligns with any of the political debates. Figures 12 and 13 show the predicted value of the distance between citizens and each of the parties according to their preferences in the territorial and economic debates, the two most traditionally associated with the vote in Catalonia. The figures allow us to observe whether having certain positions in the different debates implies perceiving some parties at a different distance or if, on the contrary, these preferences are not at odds with having a similar vision to the parties. The predicted values are calculated with very simple regression models, with the perception of distance to the party as a dependent variable and the preferences in the debates according to the questions used to measure ideological polarisation. To allow for the effects to be non-linear, the model is calculated with the quadratic component of preferences.

Figure 12 shows that preferences in the territorial debate are clearly associated with differences in perception of distance to the different parties. This is a particularly common in Junts per Catalunya and the Esquerra Republicana de Catalunya, where the average proximity varies by more than 7 between those placed at point 1 of the territorial debate scale (extreme independence of Catalonia), a mean score below 4 among those placed between 5 or 6, and mean distance below 2 among those placed at the extreme end of no self-government. For the Popular Unity

Candidacy, the average distance also increases by more than three points on the scale between people who are in favour of independence and those that hold intermediate standpoints.
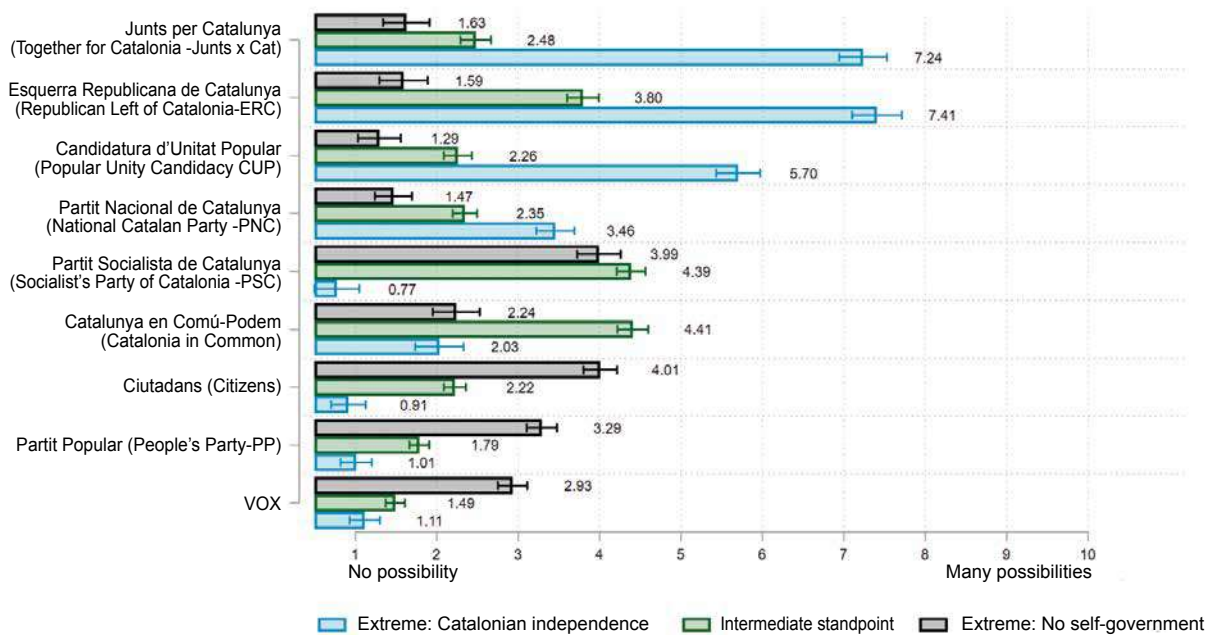
Figure 12: Prediction of distance in the political parties according to the standpoint in the territorial debate

Among the traditionally non-pro-independence parties we also find significant differences depending on the preferences in the territorial debate. In the case of the Partit Socialista de Catalunya/Partido Socialista Obrero Español, the distance in where the party is perceived is especially large between those who support independence and the rest, while among those who position themselves in the central points and those who are at the extreme of no self-government, the perception of distance is quite similar.

We also find differences for Ciutadans of almost two points between those that take central positions and those who are located at the extreme end of no self-government. For the Partit Popular and Vox we also perceive a noticeably smaller distance between people at the extreme end of no self-government than among those at other points on the scale. Although in the case of these two parties the perception of proximity does not exceed 3.5 on average. Catalunya en Comú is also perceived differently, depending on whether people are in the extreme positions (average proximity of 4.41), or at any of the two extremes (proximity of just over 2).

To compare this data with figures from the economic debate, figure 13 shows the predicted distance to the parties depending on the position in the economic debate. We also find some differences, but considerably smaller (all below two points). Moreover, in many cases the differences are not significantly different because of the large variation in perceptions of the

parties among the groups of individuals who share the same position in the economic debate. Thus, we find that those at the increasing taxes end perceive Junts per Catalunya as slightly further away, while those at the less taxes end perceive the Esquerra Republicana de Catalunya as further away than the rest, but the difference is just over one point. People at the better services end also perceive the Partit Socialista de Catalunya, Catalunya en Comú and Candidatura d'Unitat Popular as closer compared to those with intermediate positions or at the end in support of lowering taxes, while the latter perceive the Partit Popular and Vox as closer. The differences in all cases are, nonetheless, smaller than those seen in the previous figure.
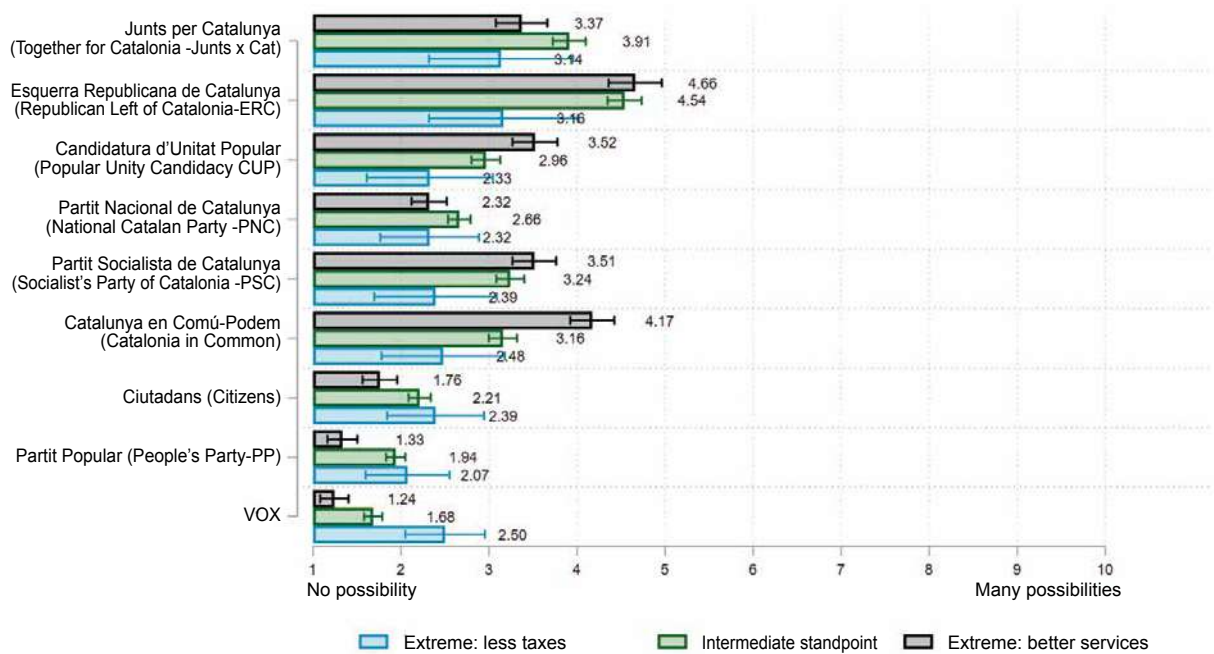
Figure 13: Distribution of perceptions of distance in political parties according to the standpoint in the economic debate

Therefore, we can conclude that perceptions of distances between political groups and the individual depend more on the positions defended by individuals in the territorial debate than the economic one. This finding confirms the intuition of the previous section that the Catalan political debate is more defined by the preferences in the territorial debate, a debate that clearly divides the population and that shapes perception of parties are closer to or further away from respondents.

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN IDEOLOGICAL AND ELECTORAL POLARISATION

The last important element for the understanding of electoral polarisation in Catalonia is its link with ideological polarisation. As we explained at the beginning of the section, studies conducted

in other contexts have found that the two types of polarisation are not always connected. They can have different dynamics, so it is important to know how the two are associated in the Catalan context.

Figure 14 shows the predicted level of partisan polarisation and party disaffection according to how extreme the positions defended by the individual are in the five debates (taxes versus services, freedoms versus order and traditions, independence versus no self-government, adaptation to the culture of immigrants versus maintaining the culture of origin, and disastrous management of the COVID crisis versus flawless management).[10] We can predict the average maximum perceived distance between parties depending on whether the individual always takes extreme positions (1 or 10), or central ones (5 or 6) in all the debates. A person who always takes the most extreme position (either 1 or 10) in all five debates will have a 5, and one who always takes the most central position (either 5 or 6) will have a 1. The positions between the two poles varies depending on whether individuals take more or less ideologically polarised positions on each of the debates. Here we show the predicted levels of polarisation and disaffection for rounded values only, although the variables are incorporated into the model as continuous variables with a quadratic component that allows for the effect to be non-linear. This means that the change from 1 to 2 is not necessarily as important as the change from 4 to 5.
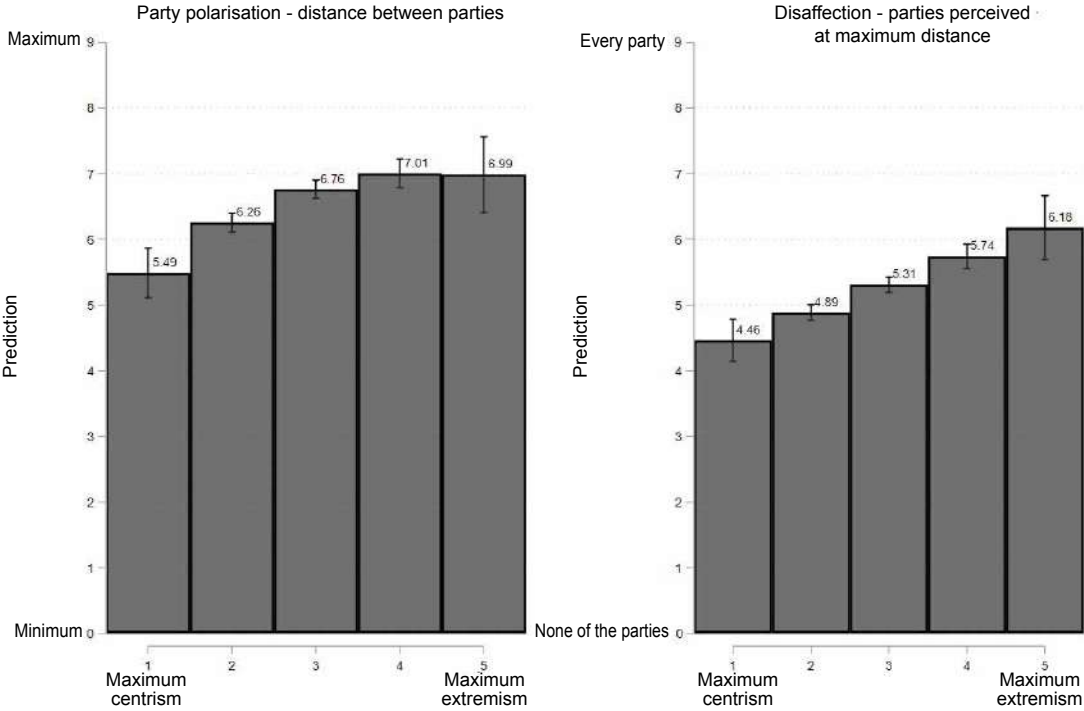
Figure 14: Predicted level of affective polarisation towards different political parties according to the level of ideological extremism

10. The models are always controlled by gender, national identification, age, language, educational level, geographical area and ideological composition of the environment.

Figure 14 shows that those with more extreme positions tend to perceive a greater distance between the closest and furthest away parties. Specifically, among those with extreme positions in all the debates the furthest away and closest parties are on average almost 7 points away (out of a maximum of 9). In addition, among those with central positions perceived differences between parties are on average, less than 6 points. In addition, those with extreme positions also tend to perceive more parties at the maximum distance. The predicted change goes from 4.5 parties at a maximum distance for the most central to more than 6 for those most extreme.
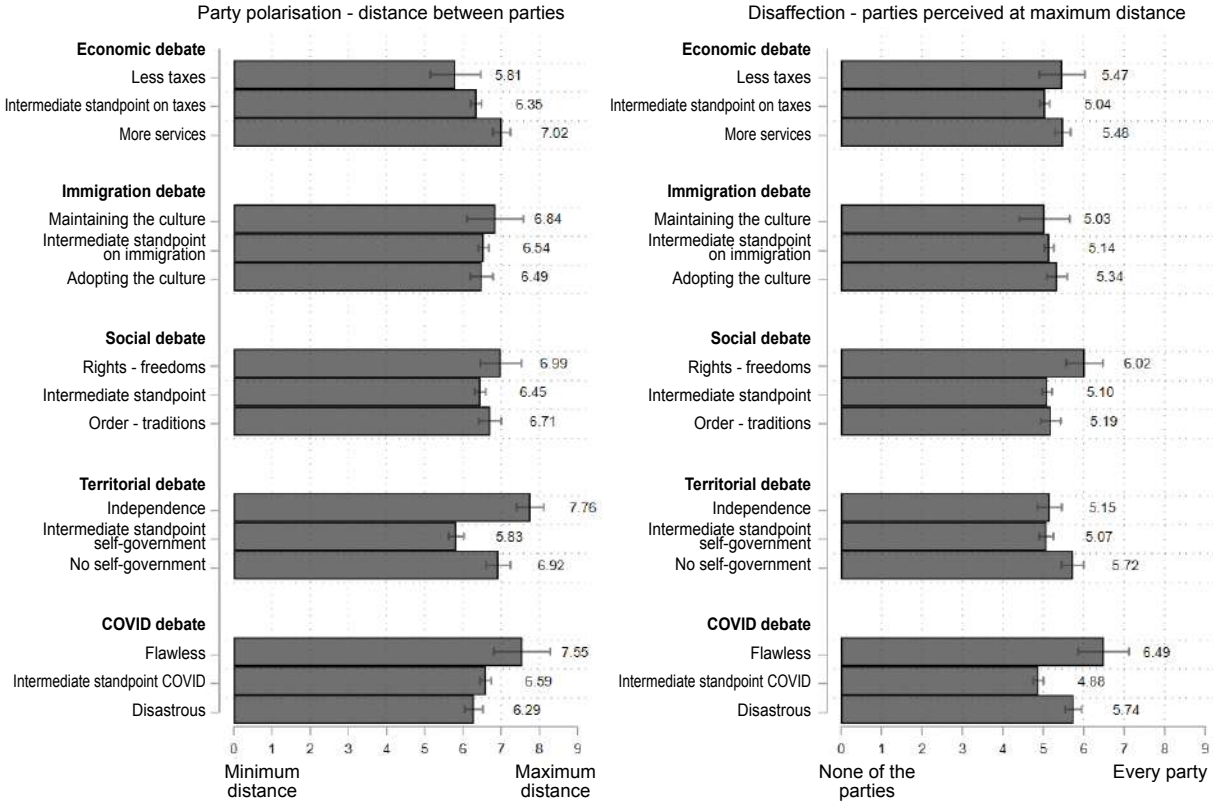
Figure 15: Predicted level of affective polarisation towards different political parties according to the position in the different debates

Figure 15 shows these differences by separating them according to the positions that can be taken for each of the debates separately. This allows for different extreme positions might have a different impact on perceptions of electoral polarisation. The coefficients come from a similar model to one shown in the previous graph, with the quadratic position in the different conflicts as an independent variable and different socio-economic controls. For example, in the figure we can see that electoral or partisan polarisation is especially common among people who have certain extreme positions, but not for others. For example, those at the increasing services and raising taxes extreme and those at the more pro-independence end perceive, on average, perceive much greater distances between parties, with differences of almost 2 points. At the

same time, those who believe that the management of the COVID crisis has been flawless, along with those who believe that rights and freedoms must be protected above order and traditions, are more likely to perceive more parties at the maximum distance (about 6 points on average).

To resume, we can say that ideological polarisation is associated with a greater perception of distances between and from political groups, but this association is not deterministic, since levels of electoral polarisation between those with central positions is not negligible, nor it is it equal for individuals defending all extreme positions.

EMOTIONAL POLARISATION:
A NOISY AND THREATENED MINORITY

Beyond the different visions of political objects, polarisation has often been associated with a specific way of evaluating objects perceived as distant and the people who defend them. This means that the democratic principle of respecting all views and considering them respectable and worthy of being taken into consideration is not being followed. We will refer to this element of polarisation (more harmful to democracy) as affective or emotional polarisation. This type of polarisation has less to do with potential distances between people and political objects, but is rather associated with an emotional reaction towards those who think differently, regardless of the distance or position they occupy.

CONCLUSIONS OF THE SECTION

The answers to these questions depict a society that mostly favours respect for those who think differently and does not consider them bad people, although there is some agreement with the fact that they are uninformed (soft Manichaeism). However, there is a group, which ranges between 15% and 30% of the sample, with clearly negative and/or stereotyped views about those who think differently. The percentage varies depending on the point in which we perceive attitudes towards others as problems. A more detailed analysis of the data also shows that these trends are not necessarily associated with ideological or partisan polarisation, but are associated with the perception of threats to the way of life and culture.

It is important to distinguish this polarisation, which is clearly harmful to democracy, from ideological or even partisan polarisation. Party, and above all, ideological differences can have a positive effect on democracy, such as encouraging participation or limiting political inequalities[11], even if they can lead to tensions. Conversely, emotional polarisation or perceiving those who think differently as less legitimate or emotionally distant questions the principles of pluralism and respect for those who think differently, something that clearly jeopardizes democracy. To capture these views, the survey included two questions that sought to measure emotional reactions (question 10) and cognitive or Manichaean reactions (the first two items of question 11) to those who think differently, respectively.

EMOTIONS TOWARDS THOSE WHO THINK DIFFERENTLY

To understand the emotional perceptions of those who think differently, the survey included a set of questions that asked respondents about the extent to which different positive and negative emotions were felt towards those who think different than themselves.

As shown in figure 16, according to survey responses to these items, the most common emotion among respondents is respect. 11% of respondents situate their levels of respect for those that think different at the top of the scale and 56.7% are in the upper half of the scale (higher than 6). Moreover, only 22.1% are below 5 for this emotion. The other two positive emotions (empathy and trust) are also common, although less clearly. 37.2% are closer to the pole of a lot of empathy than to the pole of no empathy, and the same applies for 27.3% of respondents with regards to trust. Nonetheless, it is important to highlight that 17.5% and 18.2% of the respondents claimed that they do not have any empathy or trust, respectively, towards those who do not think like them.

Although there is a large presence of positive emotions, if we look at negative emotions we find some worrying signs. Impotence is the main negative emotion felt by citizens towards those who think differently. 42.9% are positioned closer to the extreme end of much impotence than to the extreme of no impotence at all. Moreover, unlike other negative emotions, less than 20% declare they do not feel any impotence. This figure is quite far from the almost 30% who feel neither anguish, nor fear, nor contempt. Although is similar to the proportion of individuals who do not feel sadness.

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11. Hetherington, M. (2019) "Resurgent Mass Partisanship: The Role of Elite Polarization"; Sirin and Villalobos, "The Study of Discrete Emotions in Politics."
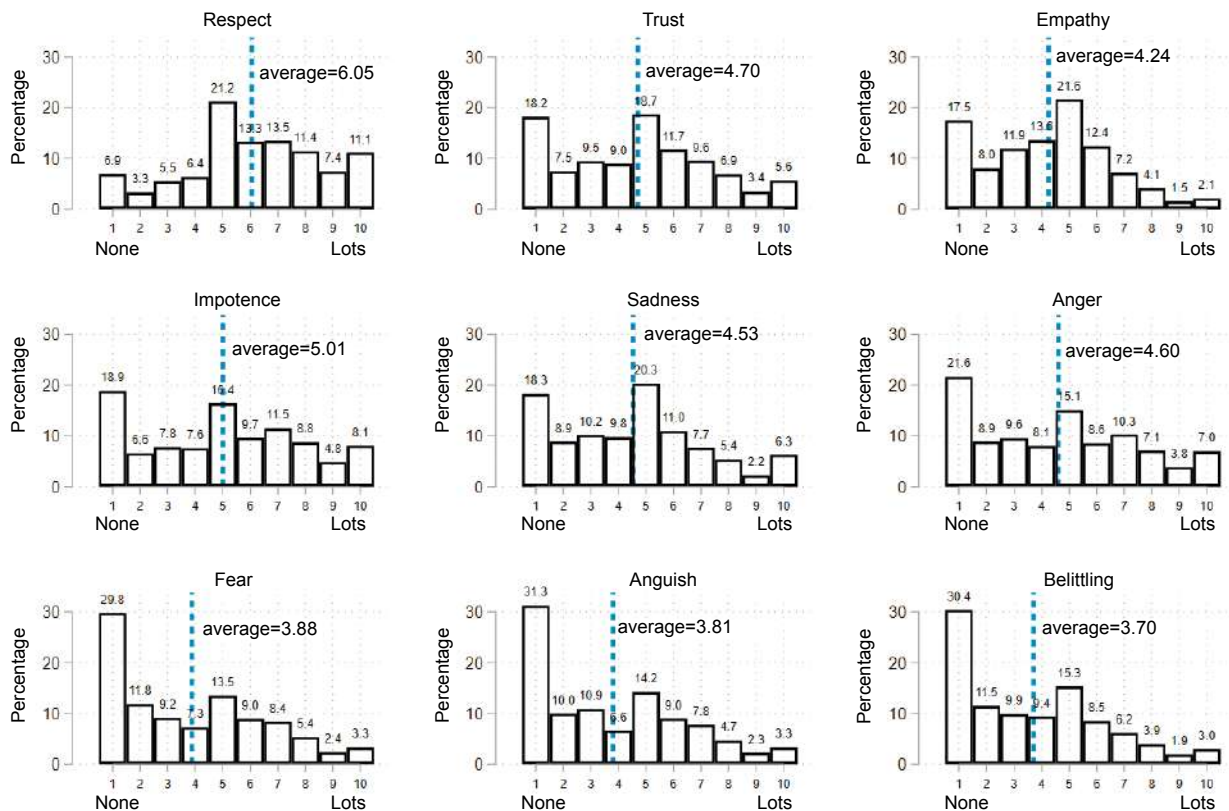
Figure 16: Distribution of perceptions of the extent to which the citizenship feels different emotions towards those who think differently

Two scales were created to see how people are distributed according to their combination of positive and negative emotions. On the positive emotions scale the average level of empathy and respect towards those who think differently is shown. On the scale of negative emotions, the average level of impotence, anger, fear, anguish and contempt was calculated. Sadness and empathy have been left out of the survey because they were not part of the same scale, according to the Mokken scale criteria.

If we look at the distribution of differences between the two scales (figure 17), we find that most people have a clear mix of emotions. Not even 1% of the population has only positive emotions or only negative emotions. However, we can see that the majority have more positive emotions than negative ones. Only 33.73% feel negative emotions towards those who think differently with more intensity than positive ones, and only 14.38% do so with a difference of more than two points. In contrast, almost 60% feel positive emotions more strongly than negative ones, and of these 34.63% do so with a difference of more than two points.

The distribution in figure 17 also shows that, although the majority feels more empathy and respect, there is a worrying minority of between 15 and 30% with significantly more negative than positive emotions towards those who think differently.
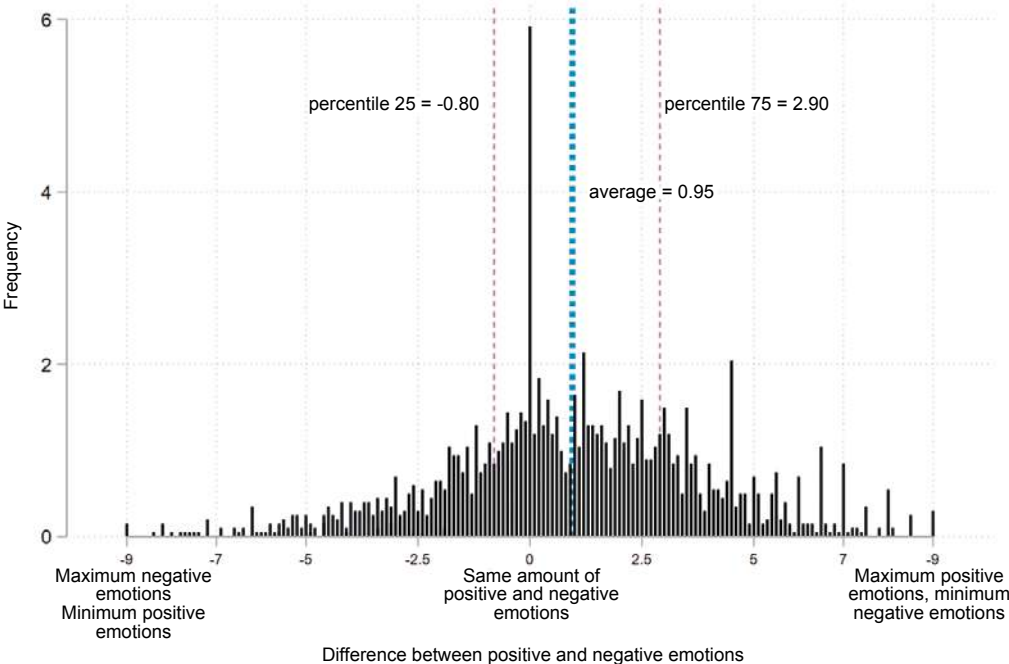
Figure 17: Distribution of the difference between the average level of positive emotions (respect and empathy) and the average level of negative emotions (impotence, sadness, anger, fear, anxiety, belittling)

MANICHAEISM IN THE FACE OF DIVERGENT OPINIONS

Besides emotions, respect for those who think differently can also be measured with Manichaeist indicators, or the notion that those who think differently do not do so legitimately, but because they are either, at worst a bad person, or at best, misinformed. As figure 18 shows, strong Manichaeism is clearly in the minority among the contacted population. Almost 60% of the respondents rated their agreement with the statement, written in the negative, as more than an 8, and only 12.6% position themselves closer to the pole of disagreement than to the pole of agreement with the sentence.

Less clear is the level of soft Manichaeism, although it could be in part due to the twist in the question, which requires one to disagree to not show Manichaeism. Regardless of the reason, responses to the item show that only 28.9% of the respondents are in the four categories that disagree completely with the statement that those who think differently are misinformed, and the percentage in the four most Manichean categories rises from 12.6% to 34.2%.
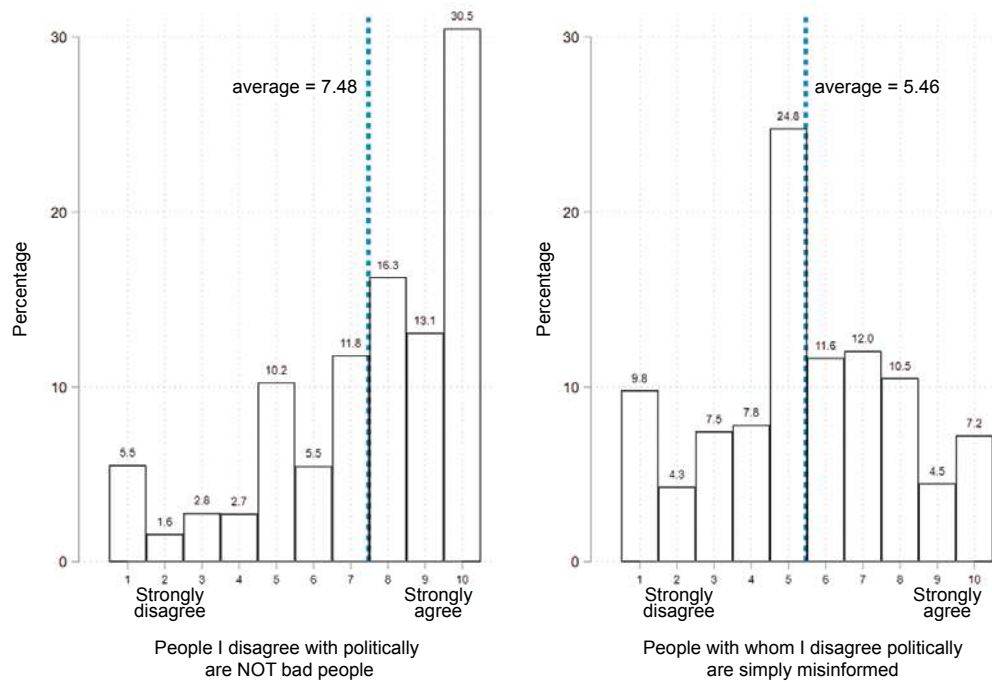
Figure 18: Distribution of perceptions on Manichean views towards those who think differently

If we consider that each 10-point scale can be divided into three groups: people on the Manichean side of the scale (categories 1 to 4 for the first question and 7 to 10 for the second), those in the two central positions (points 5 and 6) and those on the non-Manichean side (positions 7 to 10 of the first scale and 1 to 4 of the second), we can cross the two questions and create different profiles. These categories show that 21.13% of the population is not at all Manichean in either way. 30.73% are soft Manicheans and 12.63% of the respondents are strong Manicheans who consider that those who think differently to be bad people. The remaining 35.50% have intermediate standpoints. We then again find a social group of between 40% and 12% (depending on whether we find soft Manichaeism worrying) that shows worrying attitudes towards those who think differently, attitudes that could create dynamics of emotional polarisation.

In figure 19 we can see how the different profiles of emotional reaction and Manichaeism are combined. We can see that non-Manichean individuals are indeed much more likely to have more positive emotions. 53% of non-Manichean individuals are in this category and only 19% have more negative emotions. We can also see how strong Manicheans are more likely to have much more negative emotions (25% in this category), while soft Manicheans and uncategorised Manicheans are more likely to have a slightly but not significant different mix of positive and negative emotions.
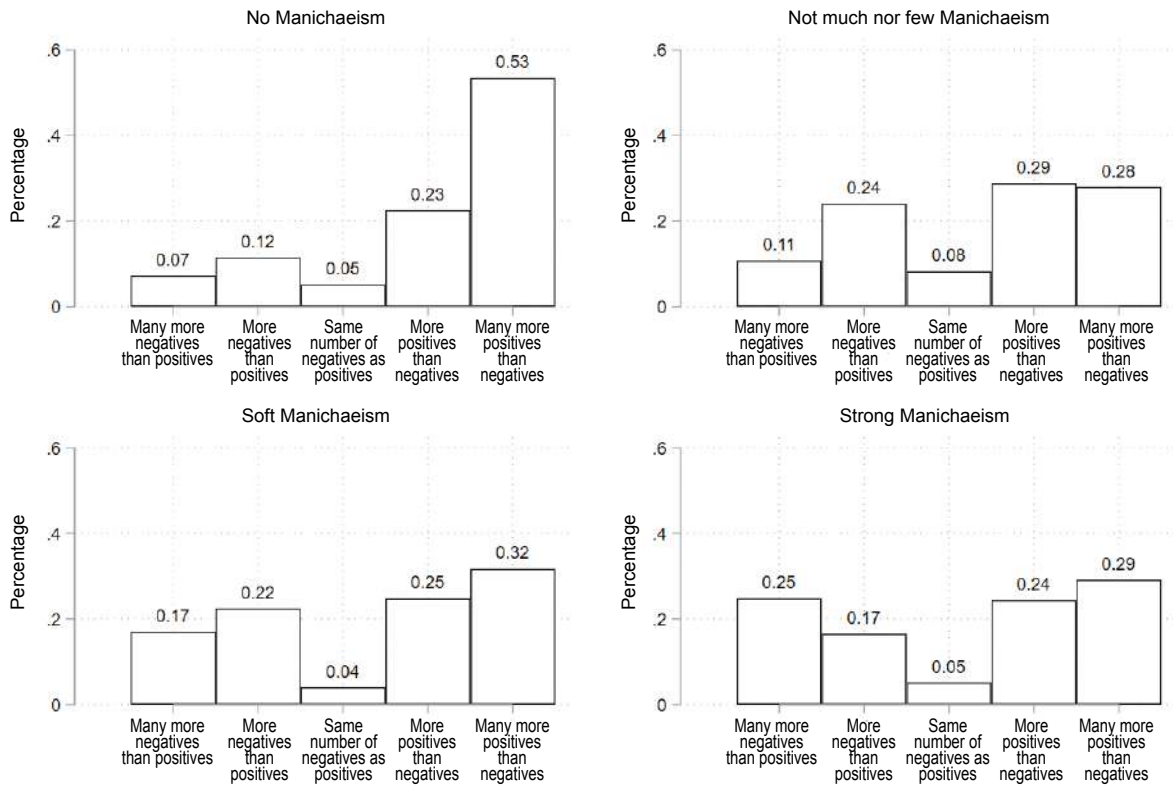
Figure 19: Distribution of emotions perceived towards those who think differently because of Manichaeism

A final important element in the understanding of emotional polarisation in Catalan society is the relationship it has with ideological and partisan polarisation. In the public debate, the concept of *polarisation* is used to refer to the three dynamics, as if they were the same thing. However, as the figures in this section show, this association is not very strong in the data. The results of the analysis show that the relationship between being ideologically and electorally polarised and being emotionally polarised is weak and even non-existent. All of the figures in this section show the predicted values of emotional polarisation according to the level of ideological or partisan polarisation. The values are calculated with models similar to those described in the section describing the relationship between ideological and partisan polarisation.

In figure 20 we can see that those who are take more extreme positions in the different debates are not more likely to have more negative emotions towards those who think differently and the difference in positive emotions is very small and statistically insignificant, and therefore probably non-existent.

Negative emotions

Positive emotions
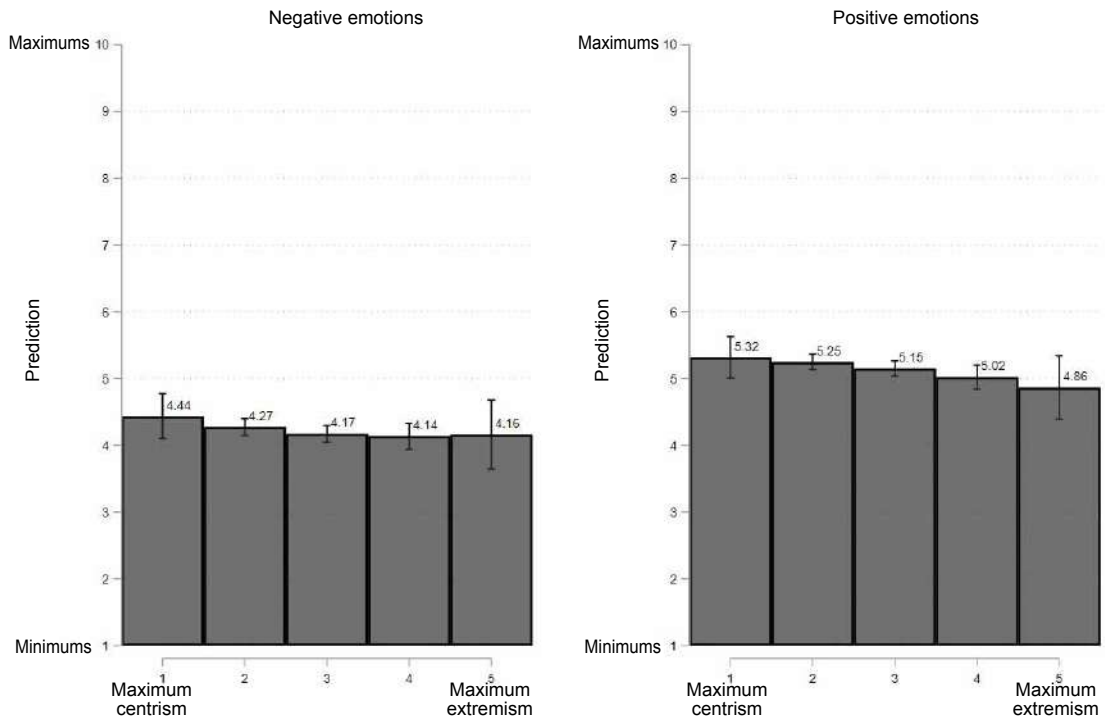
Figure 20: Predicted level of emotions towards those who think differently due to level of extreme ideological

Soft Manichaeism

Strong Manichaeism
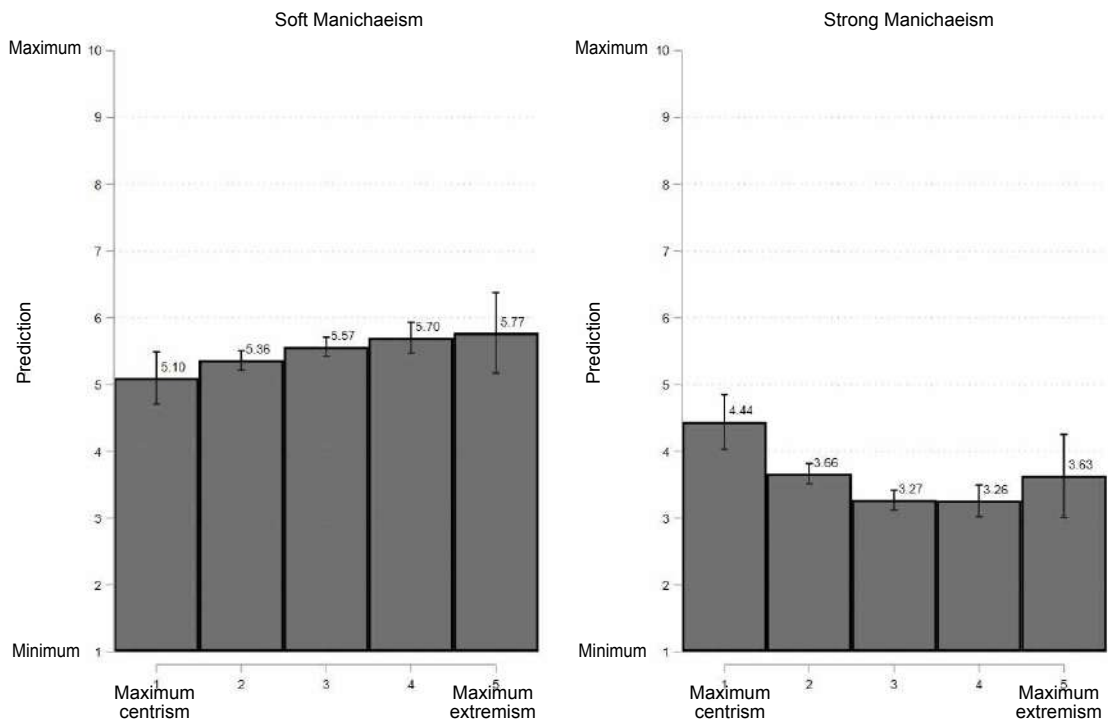
Figure 21: Predicted level of Manichaeism by level of extreme ideological

The differences between partisan and ideological polarisation and soft Manichaeism are also small and statistically insignificant (figure 21). The differences with regard to strong Manichaeism are slightly significant, but in this case we find that the effect is not as expected and is not linear. Those with more central positions are slightly more likely to disagree with the statement that those who think differently are not bad people than those who are on either side of the scale in the debate. The data is very similar if instead of looking at ideological polarisation we look at partisan polarisation, so graphs are not presented.

We also do not observe great differences in the type of emotions perceived towards those who think differently and towards Manichaeism either if, instead of analysing the average extremes of the debates, we look at the predicted values of emotional polarisation depending on the positions taken in the different ideological debates (the models are calculated in the same way as those in the section on partisan polarisation). As can be seen in figures 22 and 23, although there are small differences in the predicted values of individuals taking the different positions on the conflict, which is in some cases significant, the differences are very small and do not always imply that those with more extreme standpoints are the most emotionally polarised.
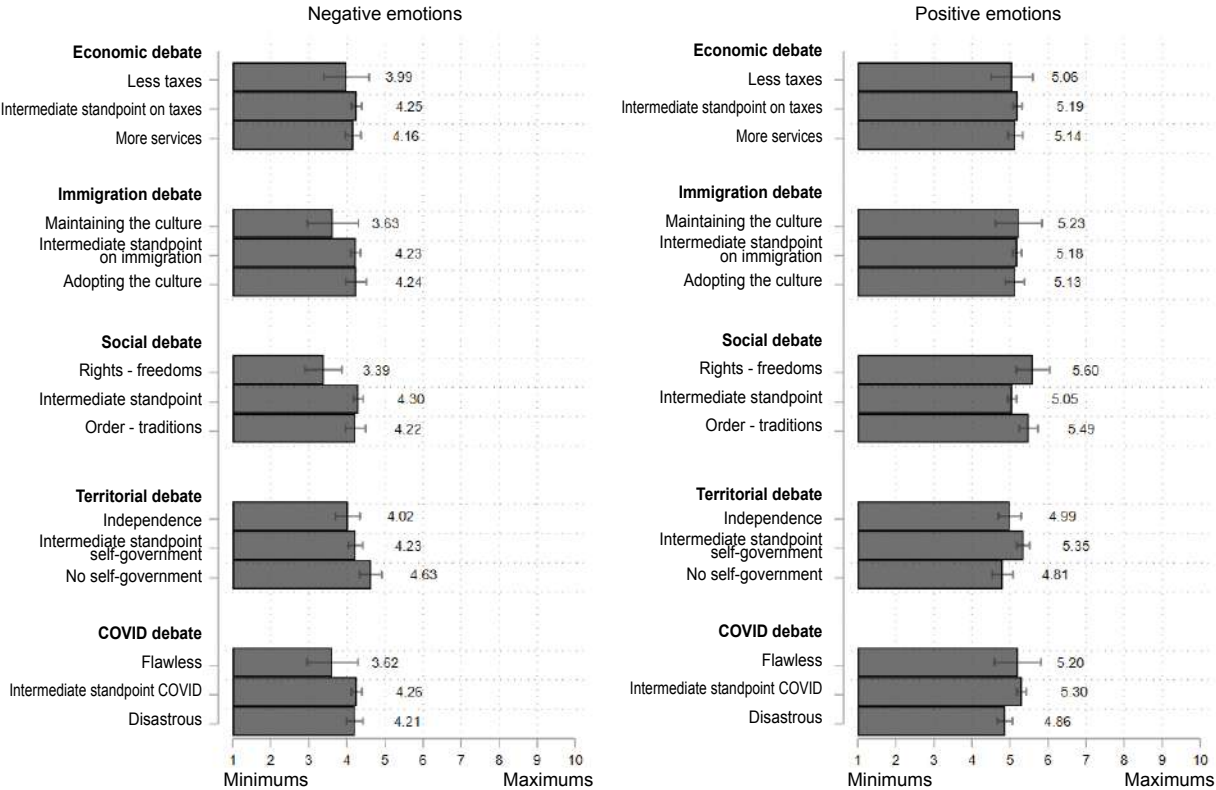
Figure 22: Predicted level of emotions towards those who think differently according to their ideological standpoint in the different debates

For example, those who are at the extreme end of protecting rights and freedoms in the social debate perceive, on average, almost one point less negative emotions towards those that think differently than those who are at the other pole or in central positions. Furthermore, those in favour of eliminating self-government seem to have more negative emotions towards those who think differently. Those in the extreme in favour of independence do not. Those in intermediate positions in the territorial debate are a little more likely to feel positive emotions towards those who think differently, while those with intermediate standpoints in the social debate are slightly less likely to do so. Although, in both cases, the differences are not very significant, politically speaking.

If we look at Manichaeism (figure 23), we find that those in favour of maintaining rights and freedoms and those with intermediate standpoints in the territorial debate are marginally less soft Manicheans. The latter, however, are also slightly stronger Manicheans.
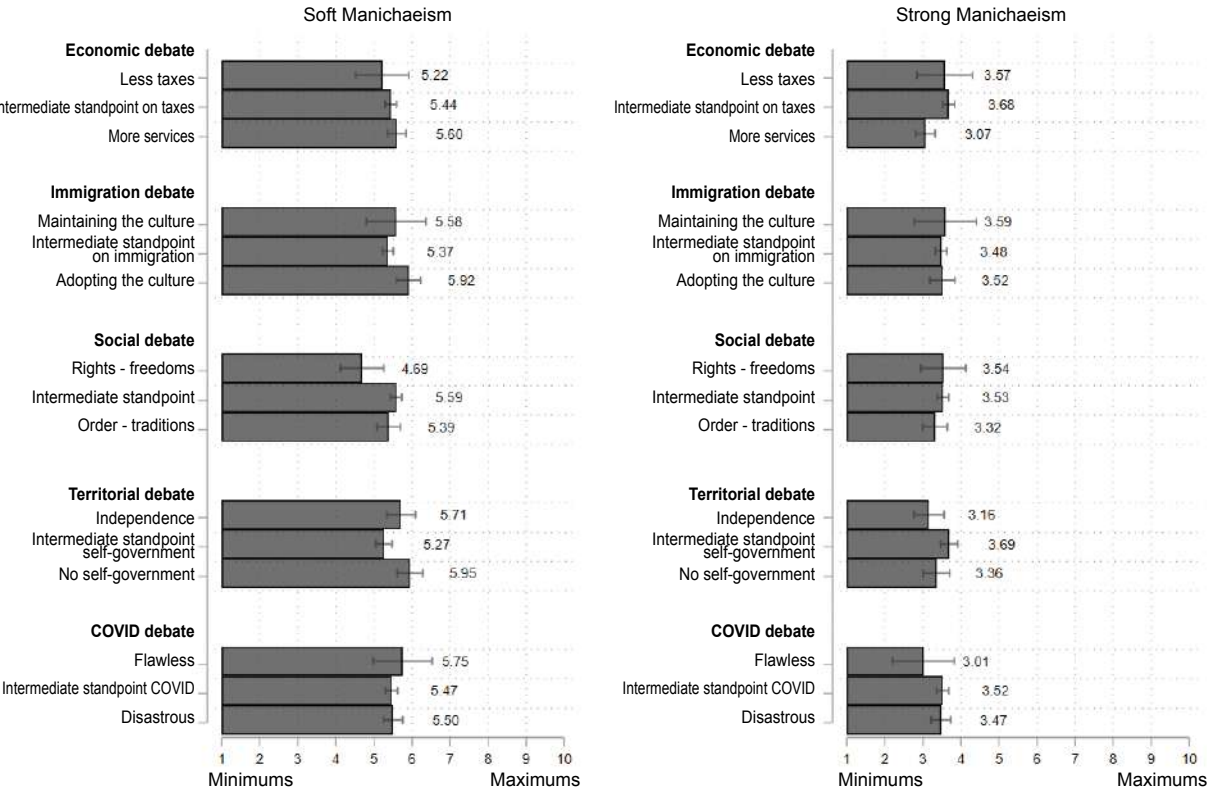
Figure 23: Predicted level of Manichaeism by ideological positions in the different debates

In general, we find that ideological polarisation does not explain the differences that we observe in the levels of emotional polarisation. So where does this emotional polarisation come from?

As shown in figures 24 and 25, emotional polarisation increases especially among those who perceive that their way of life and culture are being threatened (items 3 to 5 of question 11). The figures show the predicted levels of the emotional polarisation depending on the average responses in the set of questions designed to understand this perception of threat (we will describe them later).

For example, in figure 24 we can see that the difference between those who perceive no threats against their way of life and culture and those who feel very threatened represents an increase of almost 3 points (on a scale of 10) in negative emotions towards those who think differently, from an average of 2.34 to 5.27, in negative emotions. The threat also translates into a loss of almost half a point in positive emotions towards those who think differently.
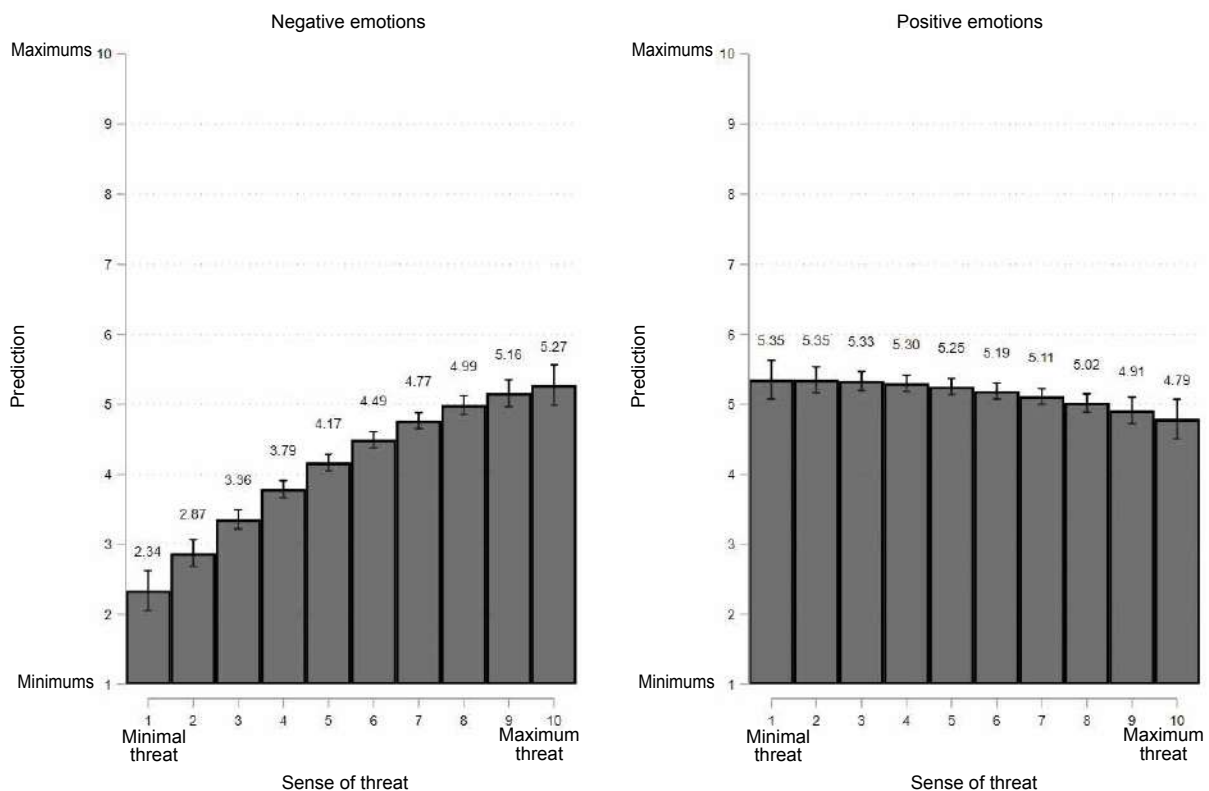
Figure 24: Predicted level of emotions towards those who think differently according to the sense of threat.

The sense of threat to the way of life and culture also increases the level of soft Manichaeism (figure 25). Feeling that culture and the way of living are at risk is associated with increasing the level of soft Manichaeism from 4.23 among those who do not feel threatened to more than a 6, on average, for those that feel threatened. The impact of threat on strong Manichaeism is less

evident, although the level of strong Manichaeism is almost 1 point higher on a scale of 1 to 10 (from 2.70 to 3.68) among people who feel threatened. However, the effect does not appear to be linear. Among those most threatened the level of strong Manichaeism is not much higher than among those with intermediate standpoints. In summary, among the Catalan population right now there seems to be more danger, in terms of democratic coexistence, from people feeling threatened than from people having extreme positions on political issues.
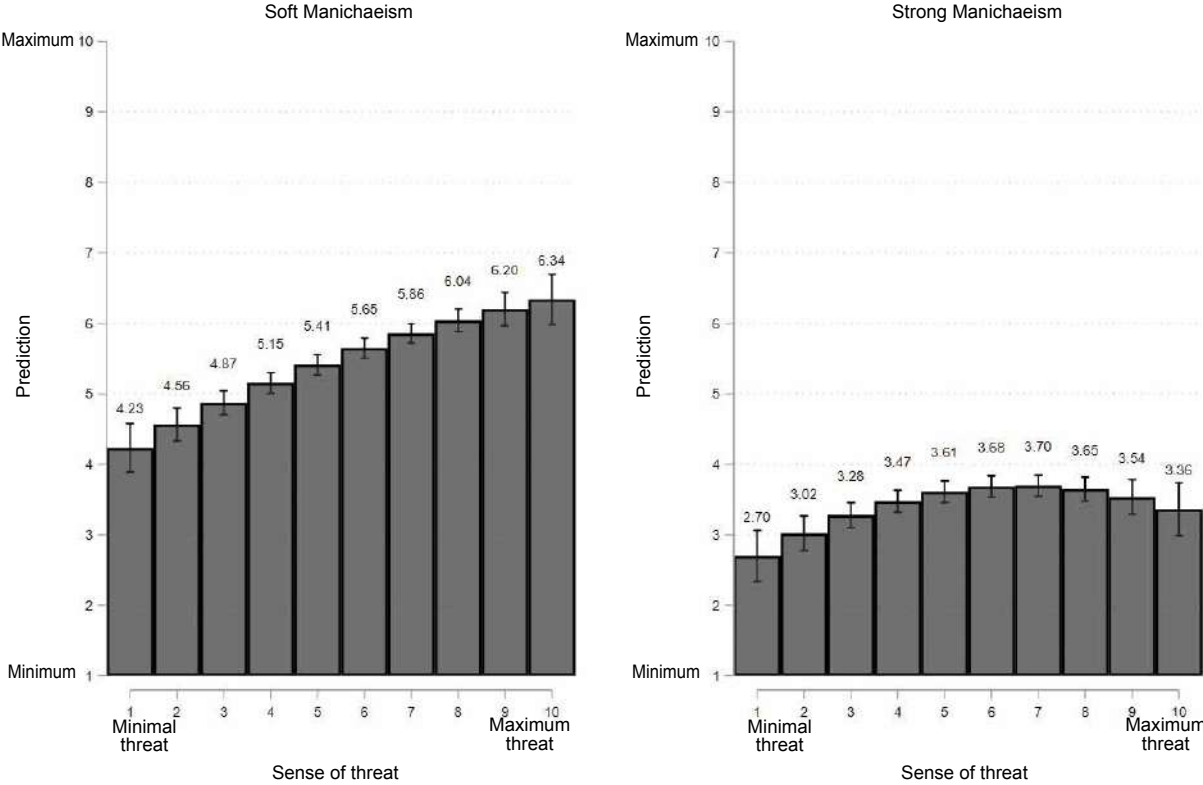
Figure 25: Predicted level of Manichaeism according to the sense of threat

SOCIAL COEXISTENCE AND TRUST: A GROWING GAP

The last relevant element for this first descriptive analysis on the state of polarisation in Catalan society is the translation of the three types of polarisation into the perceptions of coexistence and citizenship trust, which are important elements for understanding the extent to which political conflict has translated into a conflict in the social sphere and relations among citizens.

To measure this situation, we analyse two types of questions. Firstly, the questions on perceptions of coexistence in Catalonia and in the municipality (question 5), questions that were already included in the 2018 survey. Secondly, the social trust indicator (question 7), an indicator widely used in literature to capture the extent to which a society is broken in such a way that it cannot function efficiently.

CONCLUSIONS OF THE SECTION

Perceptions of coexistence and social trust are quite high. Coexistence in both the municipality and Catalonia receive an average mark of more than 7, and social trust is also above 5 (5.9).

We find an important gap in the perceptions of coexistence along national identity, with those more identifying more as Catalan perceiving coexistence as more than one point higher than those identifying more as Spanish. These differences have increased since 2018.

We also found a certain relationship between the perceptions of coexistence and emotional polarisation. There are worse perceptions of coexistence and social trust among those people who have more negative and less positive emotions towards those who think differently or are strong Manicheans. Ideological polarisation also seems to reduce perceptions of trust and coexistence, especially those that defend that immigrants have to adapt to the culture of destination in the debate on immigration and that perceive the management of the COVID situation as disastrous. The territorial and economic debate also has an impact on some of the variables, but not on others.

Figure 26 shows the distribution of answers to the questions asked in the 2020 survey about the overall assessment of coexistence in Catalonia, in the municipality or in the neighbourhood. The average of the answers to the same question asked in 2018 is also shown.

As seen in the figure, the perceptions of coexistence both in Catalonia and in the municipality have high ratings, with an average of more than 7 in both spheres. 46.9% of the people in the survey value the coexistence in Catalonia above 7 and 56.8% do so for the municipality. Furthermore, only 7.5% and 10.1% place coexistence below 5 for the municipality and Catalonia, respectively. However, it should be noted that the perceptions of coexistence have gotten slightly worse since 2018, a year with a great deal of territorial tension, although the fall in the perceptions is very subtle (the average mark for coexistence in Catalonia falls from 7.22 to 7.05 and that of the municipality from 7.82 to 7.47).
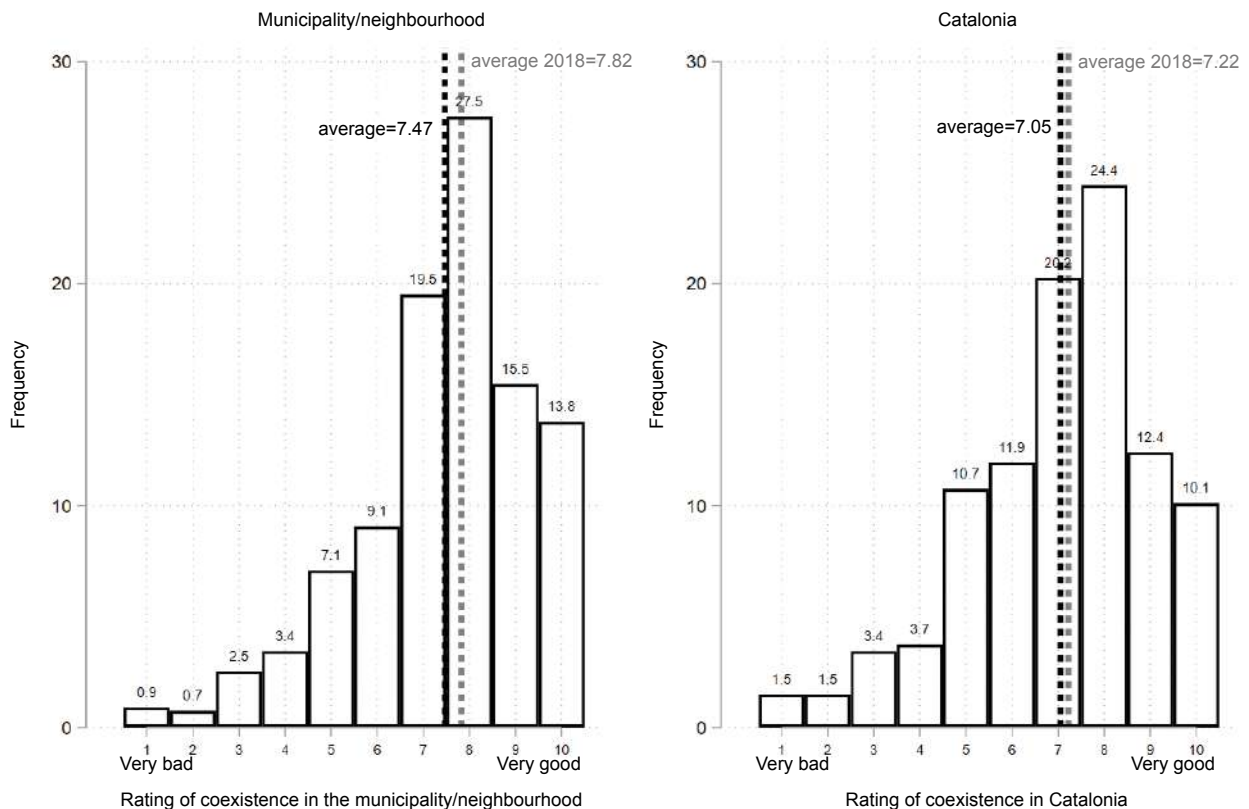
Figure 26: Distribution of the responses of the scale on coexistence in Catalonia and the municipality according to the year (ICIP 2018[12]-ICIP 2020 data)

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12. ICIP 2018: Percepció de la població de Catalunya sobre la convivència i la seguretat. Informes 15/2018. ICIP. Available at : http://icip.gencat.cat/web/.content/continguts/publicacions/documents_i_informes/2018/Informe-Enquesta.pdf

In addition, there are important differences in these perceptions by social groups (figure 27). The data in the graph is taken from prediction models made with the perceptions of coexistence as a dependent variable and the variables in the graph as controls and independent variables. The differences among groups are particularly evident with regard to national identity: among those people who identify as more Spanish or only Spanish perceptions of coexistence in the municipality are more than one point worse than among those who identify as only Catalan or more Catalan. A difference that reaches more than two points in the case of perceptions of coexistence in Catalonia. Moreover, the gap has widened on both levels since 2018.

The figure also shows some significant differences between territories in the perceptions of coexistence in the municipal sphere, differences that are not found in the Catalan sphere. In this sense, the people of Barcelona and its metropolitan area perceive coexistence in the municipality to be half a point below that of individuals living in the rest of the areas. Although the differences are small, the perceptions of coexistence in the two spaces also seem to have deteriorated more for people without studies than for people with university degrees and for people over 65 than for young people.
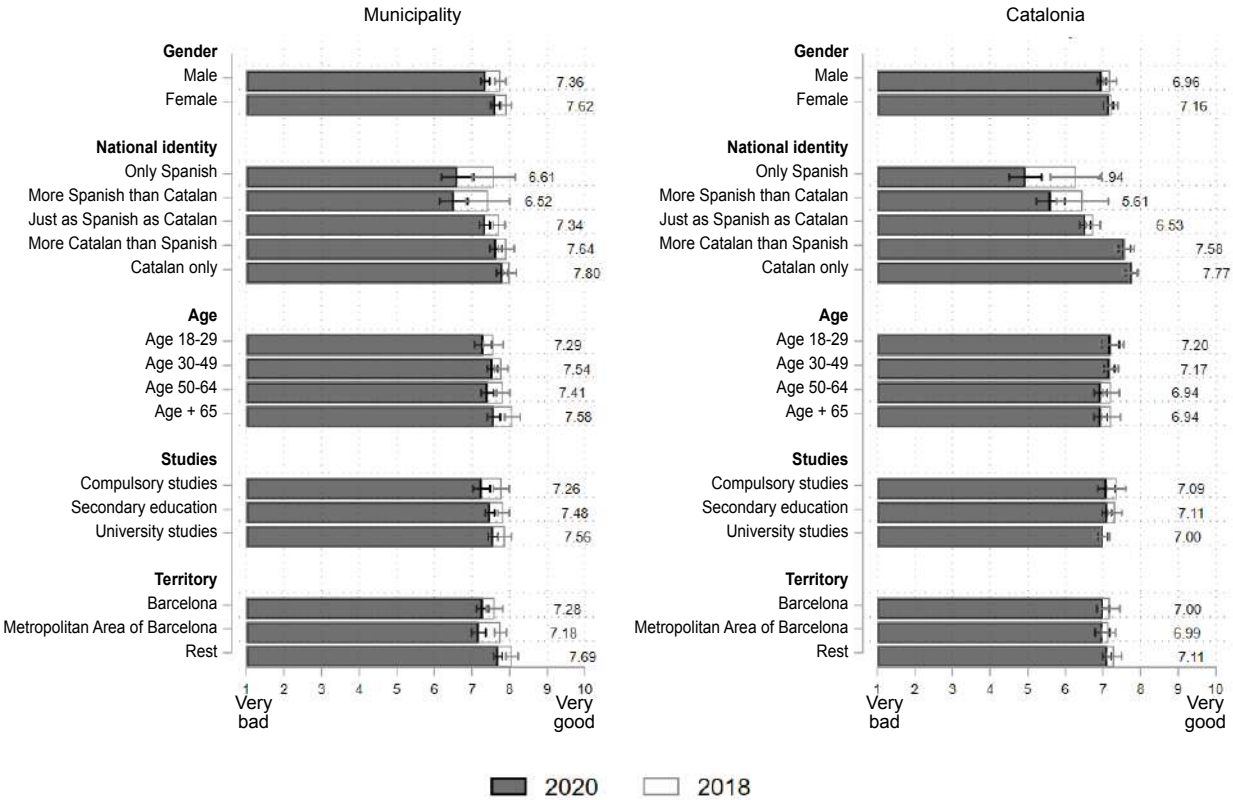
Figure 27: Predicted perceptions of coexistence for socio-economic characteristics

The second relevant element that can be taken into account when assessing the general perceptions of coexistence is the level of social trust, the general perception that one lives with people that can trusted. To analyse this indicator, the typical question of other comparative studies, such as the European Social Survey (ESS), has been used. As shown in figure 28, the vast majority of the population is located on the right-hand side of the midpoint in social trust, so despite the divisions and differences, the majority of the population continues to trust the rest of the citizens. In fact, on the scale only 17.6% of the population is on the side of mistrust.

To give some context to the indicator and taking advantage of the fact that the indicator is used in international projects, we can see if these levels of trust are comparable to neighbouring countries. This must always be viewed with caution as survey formats and question timings are not comparable. The data in figure 29 compares the answers to the question of social trust with the answers given by the citizens of different European countries in the ESS of 2018.[13]
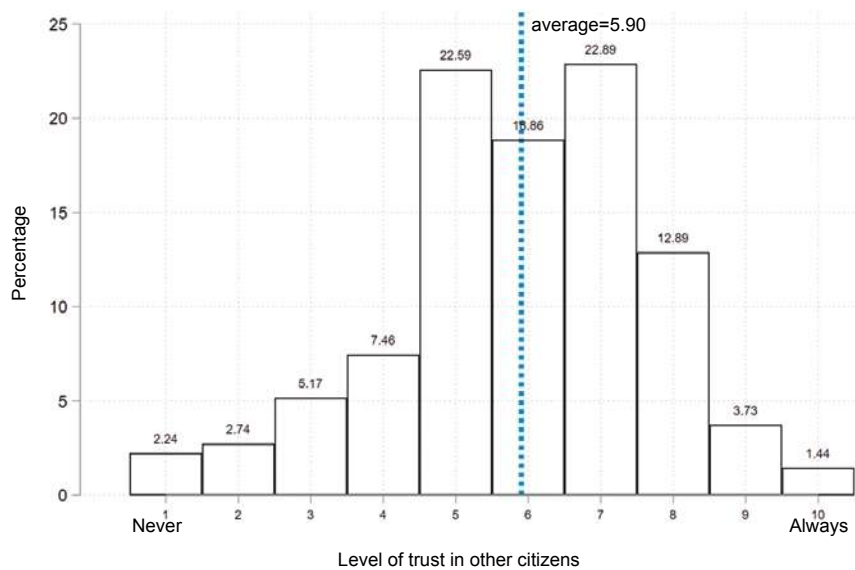
Figure 28: Distribution of responses on the social trust scale: 'People can be trusted...'

13. ESE 2018: ESS Round 9: European Social Survey Round 9 Data (2018). Data file edition 2.0. NSD - Norwegian Centre for Research Data, Norway – Data Archive and distributor of ESS data for ESS ERIC. doi:10.21338/NSD-ESS9-2018
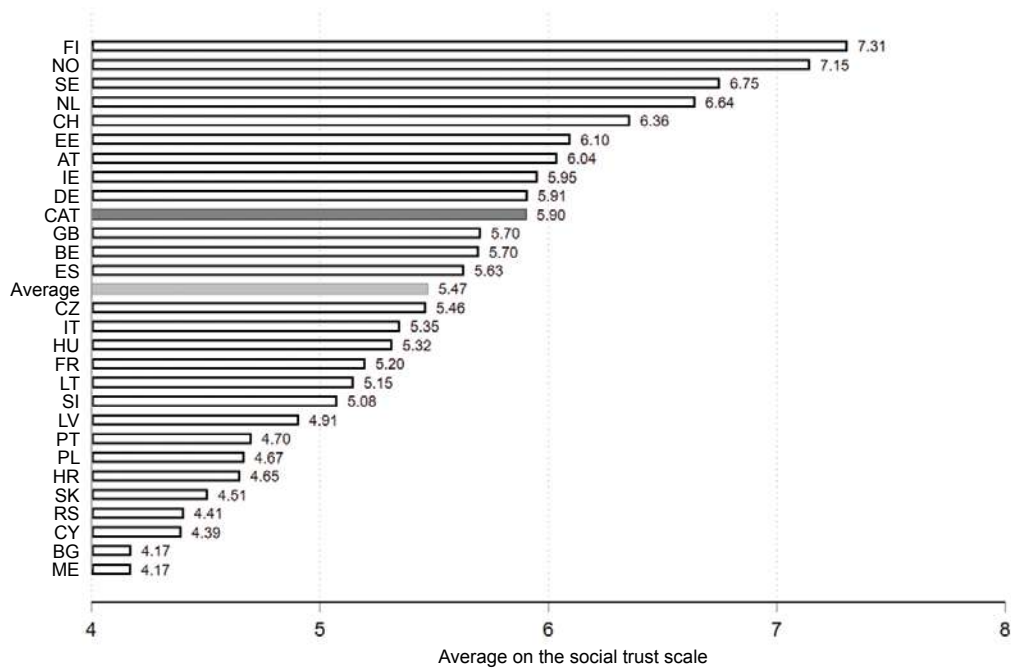
Figure 29: Average level of trust in the rest of the population on a scale of 1 to 10 per country

(ESS 2018[14] and ICIP 2020 data)

As can be seen in figure 29, the levels of trust among citizens according to ICIP 2020 are quite comparable to those found in other surrounding countries. We can therefore conclude that Catalan society has levels of social trust comparable to those of most European countries.

WHAT IS THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE PERCEPTIONS OF COEXISTENCE AND POLARISATION?

To conclude this chapter, it is important to analyse whether the perceptions of coexistence are linked to the different levels of polarisation of citizens. To analyse these dynamics, figure 30 shows the predicted perception of coexistence in Catalonia and in the municipality, depending on whether the person is very or not very polarised in the different dimensions reviewed.[15]

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14. ESE 2018: ESS Round 9: European Social Survey Round 9 Data (2018). Data file edition 2.0. NSD - Norwegian Centre for Research Data, Norway – Data Archive and distributor of ESS data for ESS ERIC. doi:10.21338/NSD-ESS9-2018.

15. The models are calculated with the variables of interest as a dependent variable and the values of ideology and partisan polarisation introduced in a quadratic way to capture non-linear effects. The models are also determined by gender, age, educational level and area of residence, although the coefficients are not shown.
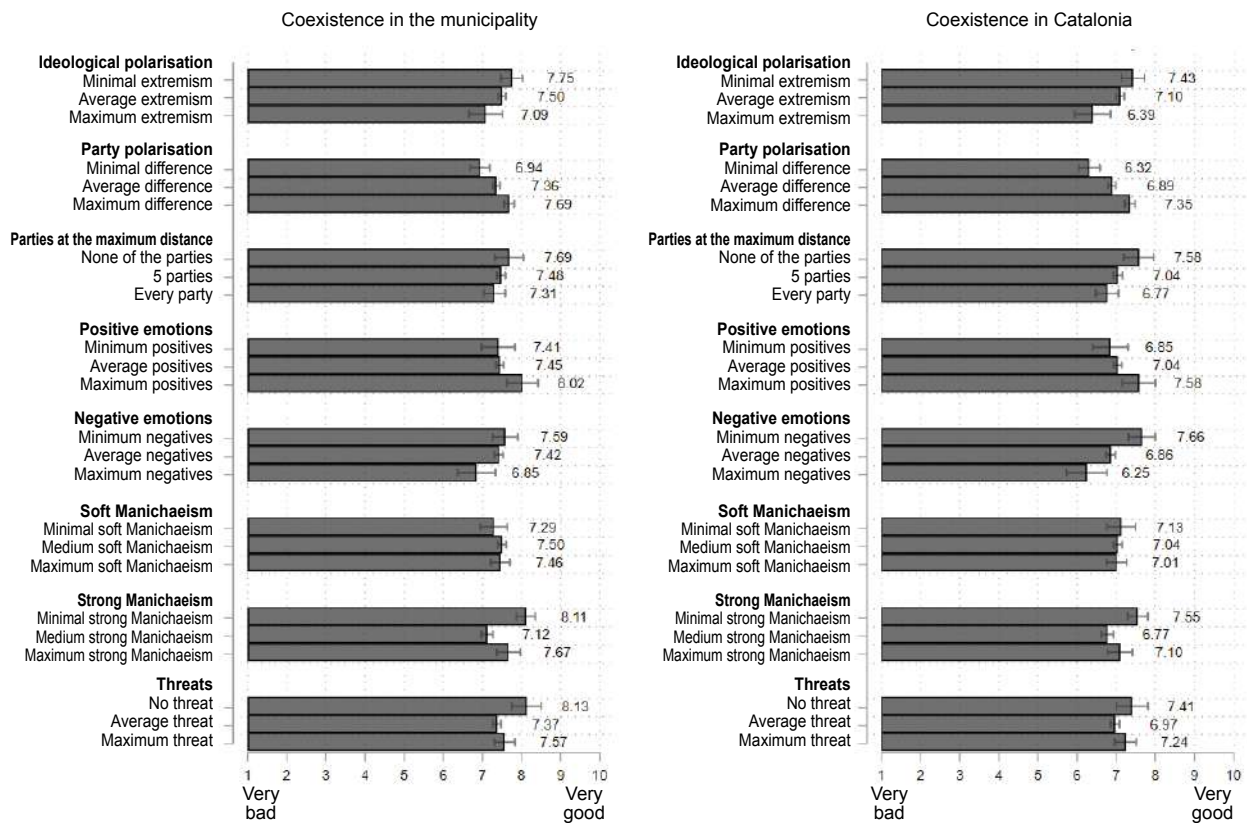
Figure 30: Predicted values of perception of coexistence for the different levels and types of polarisation

As can be seen in figure 30, although the differences are not big, polarisation has a certain impact on perceptions of coexistence. Those who are less ideologically polarised perceive coexistence in the municipality more than half a point higher than those who are more polarised, and the coexistence in Catalonia a whole point higher. Conversely, partisan polarisation has the opposite effect since when important differences between parties are perceived, the perception of average coexistence increases by almost one point on a scale of 1 to 10. Although, at the same time, perceiving few or no parties at the maximum distance improves the perception of coexistence by more than half a point, especially the perception of coexistence in Catalonia.

Having more positive emotions towards those who think differently, especially if they are high (above 5.5), increases the perception of coexistence in the two spaces by almost one point (from 7.41 to 8.02 in the case of the municipality and from 6.85 to 7.58 in the case of Catalonia). Negative emotions also worsen the perceptions of coexistence, especially perceptions of coexistence in Catalonia as a whole (from 7.66 to 6.25). Finally, those with minimal levels of strong Manichaeism or no perception of threat also perceive coexistence in the two spaces to be slightly better.

Coexistence in the municipality

Economic debate
- Less taxes — 7.68
- Intermediate standpoint on taxes — 7.36
- More services — 7.75

Immigration debate
- Maintaining the culture — 7.56
- Intermediate standpoint on immigration — 7.59
- Adopting the culture — 7.08

Social debate
- Rights - freedoms — 7.87
- Intermediate standpoint — 7.41
- Order - traditions — 7.62

Territorial debate
- Independence — 7.78
- Intermediate standpoint self-government — 7.41
- No self-government — 7.13

COVID debate
- Flawless — 7.49
- Intermediate standpoint COVID — 7.59
- Disastrous — 7.23

Very bad ... Very good

Coexistence in Catalonia

Economic debate
- Less taxes — 7.02
- Intermediate standpoint on taxes — 6.90
- More services — 7.41

Immigration debate
- Maintaining the culture — 7.16
- Intermediate standpoint on immigration — 7.15
- Adopting the culture — 6.73

Social debate
- Rights - freedoms — 7.51
- Intermediate standpoint — 6.96
- Order - traditions — 7.29

Territorial debate
- Independence — 7.46
- Intermediate standpoint self-government — 7.04
- No self-government — 6.22

COVID debate
- Flawless — 7.17
- Intermediate standpoint COVID — 7.27
- Disastrous — 6.55

Very bad ... Very good

Figure 31: Predicted values of perception of coexistence based on the ideological standpoints in the different debates

If we look at the exact impact of extremism on each of the ideological debates instead of looking at them in groups we observe two interesting differences (figure 31).[16] Firstly, as happened with identity, the people situated among the extreme independence side of the territorial debate perceive better coexistence in Catalonia than those who prefer no self-government (average rating of 7.46, for an average rating of 6.22 among those at the opposite end). Interestingly, we also observe this effect in the perceptions of coexistence in the municipality, although slightly smaller (a drop from 7.78 to 7.13 from one end of the axis to the other). In the debate on immigration those on the extreme end of adapting to the culture of the place of destination evaluated coexistence as worse. A fall in the perception of coexistence only observed among people who are at this extreme end; there are no differences between those positioned in the centre and those at the other end. It is important to realise that this also means that the perception of coexistence in Catalonia and in the municipality has gotten worse. People at the extreme end of more services also seem to have a slightly better perception of coexistence in Catalonia and in the municipality. Perceptions of coexistence are worse among those who think that the management of the COVID situation has been disastrous.

16. As in the previous case, the standpoint in the debates has been introduced in a quadratic way to allow for non-linear effects. It has also been determined by gender, age, educational level and area of residence.
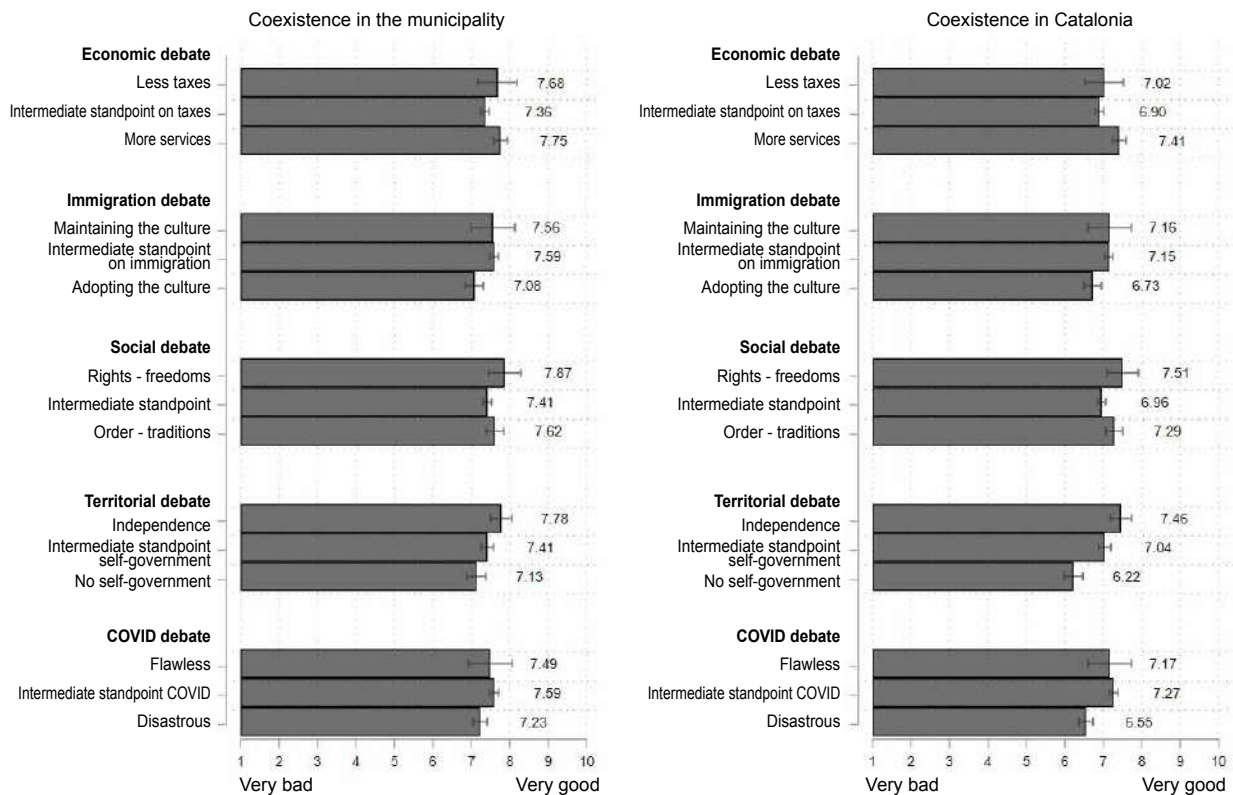
We also observe a certain impact of polarisation on the analysis of the impact of polarisation on social trust. Those who are more at the extreme end in the different debates are almost half a point (from 5.93 to 5.54) below those who have intermediate standpoints in the levels of social trust. We also observe that perceiving larger distances between parties increases social trust rather than reducing it, while perceiving many parties at the maximum distance slightly reduces trust levels (although the difference is less than 0.3 points). Having maximum positive emotions and minimum negative ones has an impact of almost half a point on the perceptions of trust among citizens. Finally, not being a strong Manichean and perceiving average levels of threat also leads to a slightly higher perception that others can be trusted.
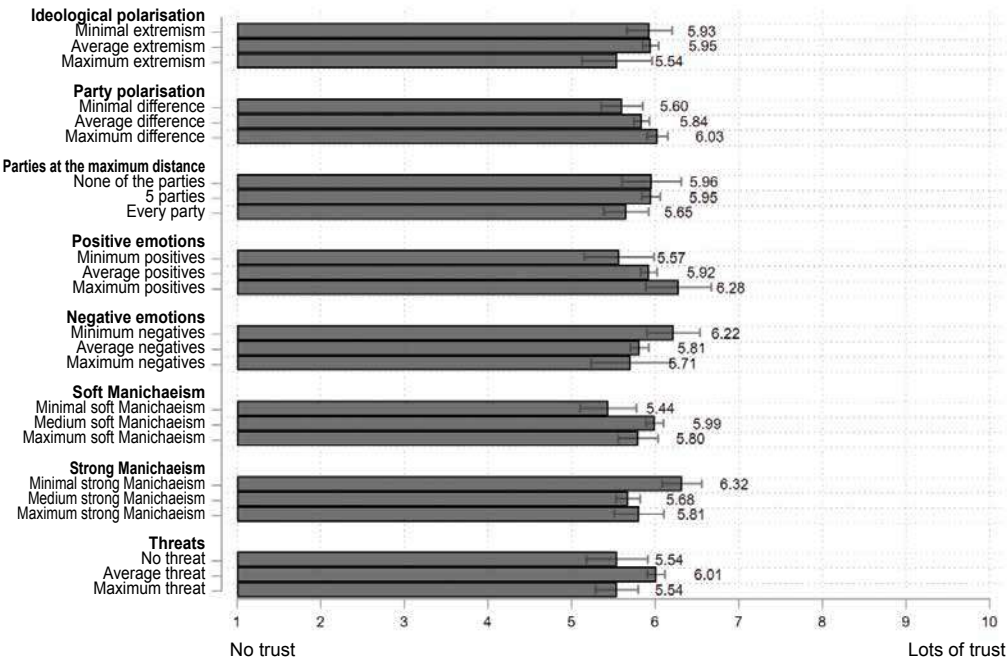
Figure 32: Predicted values of social trust for the different levels and types of polarisation

If we look at the impact of the different ideological debates separately (figure 33), we again find that people who want immigrants to adapt to the destination society have slightly lower levels of trust than the rest (from 6.07 to 5.42). Those who are on the extreme end of lowering taxes also have less social trust than those who would rather raise taxes, and those who believe that the management of the COVID situation has been disastrous trust other citizens less than the rest. On the contrary, we do not observe a clear impact of the positions in the territorial debate on social trust. Although there is a high level of division in the debate and its impact on perceptions of coexistence, the positions in the debate do not appear to weaken social trust.
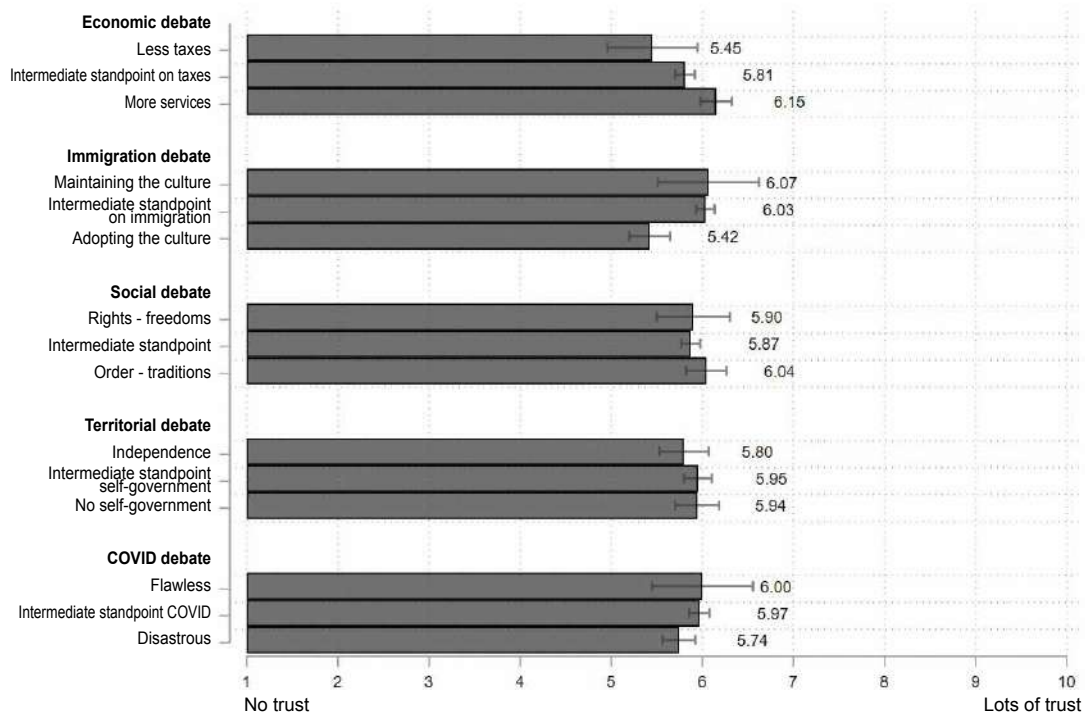
Figure 33: Predicted values of social trust according to the ideological standpoint in the different debates

OPPORTUNITIES FOR DIALOGUE

Once the picture of the state of polarisation in Catalonia has been drawn, it is also important envisage the opportunities for holding a productive debate between different parties, a debate that would allow to manage democratically, respectfully and efficiently the diversity of ideological positions that we have shown exist in Catalonia. Are there reasons to believe that this debate is possible and feasible in the current context? Or will the polarisation in Catalonia get worse in the coming years?

To answer these questions, apart from the questions already mentioned the survey includes different questions about aggressions (question 16), mistakes (question 15), possibilities for dialogue (question 14 and the last item of question 11) and political conversation (questions 20 to 23). These questions should help to better understand the opportunities in the debate and to guide the actions of the institutions when seeking solutions that help to facilitate dialogue, and reduce emotional polarisation and political conflict. In this section we will review these opportunities.

CONCLUSIONS OF THE SECTION

The results of the survey establish four features of the context that should help find solutions through dialogue rather than through polarisation: the fact that non-territorial debates could create different alliances that reduce tension created by the territorial debate; the fact that aggression in the immediate environment does not seem to be widespread; the fact that citizens have a clear preference for options that involve dialogue between institutions, although the format is not very clear; and that fact that citizens are highly critical of the actions of institutions, which is especially clear among individuals opposed to independence. The first two characteristics should facilitate productive debates among citizens through which they can get to understand the positions of supporters of the other parties without resorting to aggression, stereotyping or disrespect. The last two characteristics clearly point to the preference of a solution through dialogue between institutions despite the lack of productive dialogue until now. Therefore, it probably creates the right incentives for institutions to act in good faith and find real solutions to existing conflicts and divisions.

Although there are significant differences in the territorial debate, as we have seen in the first sections, these differences do not translate to the rest of the debates. The fact that the different debates do not overlap should lead to a positive scenario where no permanent losers are created, ideological sorting is avoided and polarisation can be contained.[17] Furthermore, the fact that there are debates in which one agrees with the opponent in other debates should also serve to create less distant and stereotyped views about people that think differently.

As shown in figure 34, being at one extreme or the other of the territorial debate does not significantly change the positions taken in other debates. The figure shows the distribution of positions taken in the different debates, separating them with different colours according to whether citizens are placed in the four categories closest to independence (1 to 4), in the two central categories (5 and 6), or in the four categories closest to the elimination of the self-government (7 to 10). As shown in the figure, the average position of the groups in the debates is very similar and the distribution of responses clearly overlaps. We can conclude that the positions in the territorial debate do not determine the standpoints in other debates.
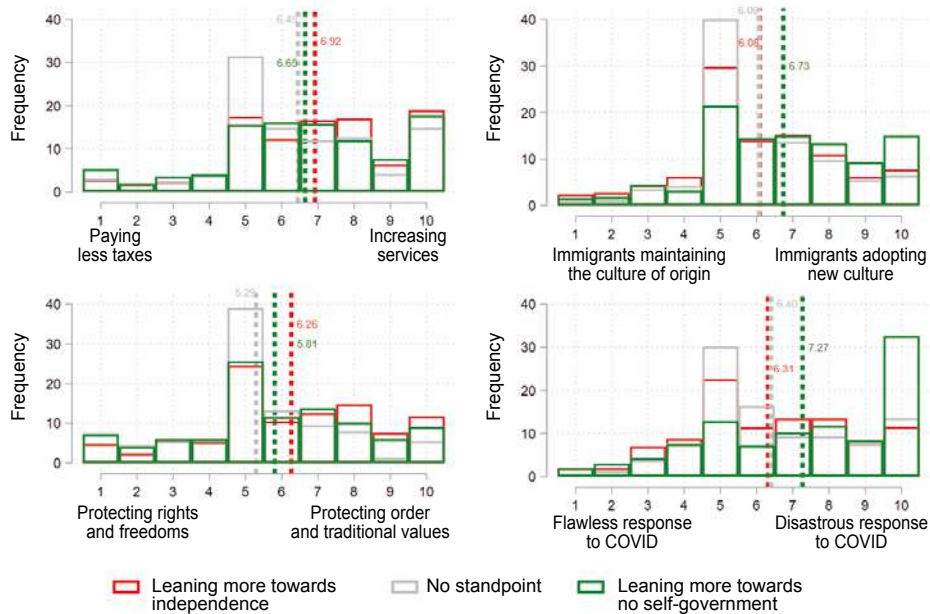

Figure 34: Distribution of standpoints in the different debates according to the standpoint in the territorial debate

17. Riker, W.H. (1988) *Liberalism against Populism: A Confrontation between the Theory of Democracy and the Theory of Social Choice*; Riker, W.H. (1986) *The Art of Political Manipulation*; Dahl, R. (1988) *On Democracy*.

We get a rather similar picture if, rather than comparing positions in the debates based on the stance in the territorial debate, we use the economic debate (figure 35). Being on one side or another of the economic policy scale does not clearly determine the preferences in the rest of the debates.

This lack of an overlap between one debate and the others should allow for dialogue to take place and for the typical group thinking dynamics to be avoided (such as stereotypes, or the bias of believing that differences between groups are bigger than they actually are and that groups are more homogeneous than they actually are). The crossover of the issues and the need to change allies in the different debates should lead to a more fluent debate in which it would be difficult for someone to become a perennial enemy, despite the large divisions in the territorial debate.
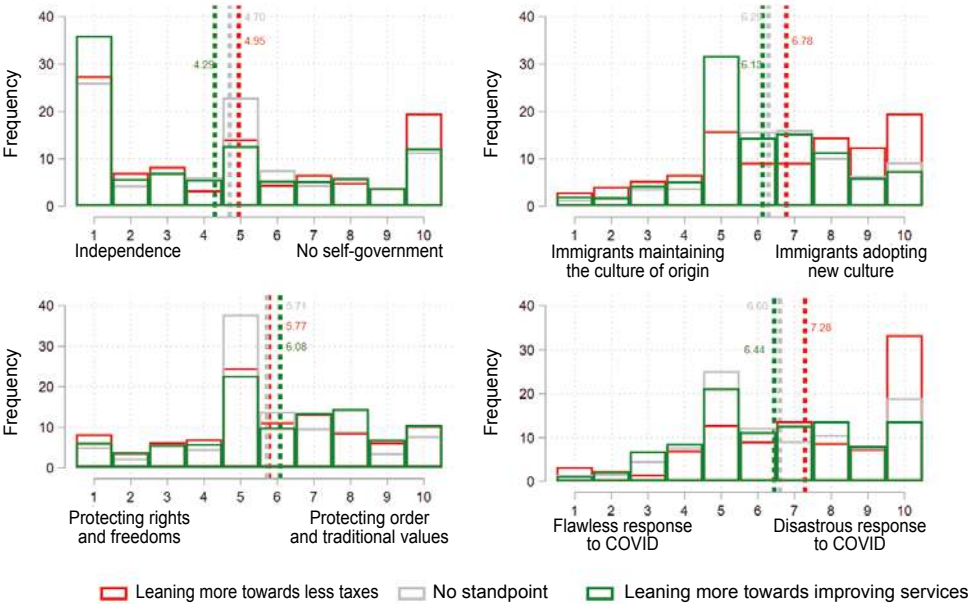
Figure 35: Distribution of standpoints in the different debates according to the standpoint in the economic debate

THE MINOR PRESENCE OF PERCEPTIONS OF AGGRESSION IN THE SOCIAL CIRCLE

A second element encouraging optimism and creating opportunities for a productive dialogue that avoids emotional polarisation and stereotyping, is the majority perception of not having felt threatened by those in the close network, not even among those living in environments where the majority does not share their opinion on the sovereignty process or independence. This situation implies that in most cases dialogue between people is possible without the risk of ending in aggressive and unproductive talks. Although there are 9.7% (family) and 15.77% (friends) of people who rate their perception of aggression in their immediate environment

higher than seven. It seems, therefore, that although they have been present, social fracture and problems related to the lack of respect between people who think differently have not been the norm in social group conversations.

Figure 36 shows the distribution of responses to a battery of questions in which respondents had to position themselves on a scale of 1 to 10 when asked whether they agreed with the statement 'During the sovereignty process you have felt attacked by…'. This way we can clearly see and compare the places where people have felt attacked.

According to the data, 49.3% have not felt attacked by family members, 38.7% have not felt attacked by colleagues and 36.1% have not felt attacked by any friend. On the other hand, less than 5% of those surveyed felt that they had been very attacked by members in these spaces of everyday life. However, 15.77%, 12.93% and 9.7% of those surveyed are at or above 7 on this scale. The levels of aggression are clearly organised on a single Mokken scale. Therefore, we can conclude that around 20% of the population has felt attacked in some way by friends, colleagues or family members, respectively, even if aggressions in personal relationships are not a widespread phenomenon.

Slightly different are attacks on social networks, where, although the majority continue to position themselves closer to the 'not at all attacked' end than to the 'very attacked' end, the percentage of people surveyed who claim they have felt attacked rises to 6.1%. Furthermore, only 26.7% claimed they have not felt attacked at all, and the percentage that position themselves above the 6 on the scale of attacks rises to 29.7%.
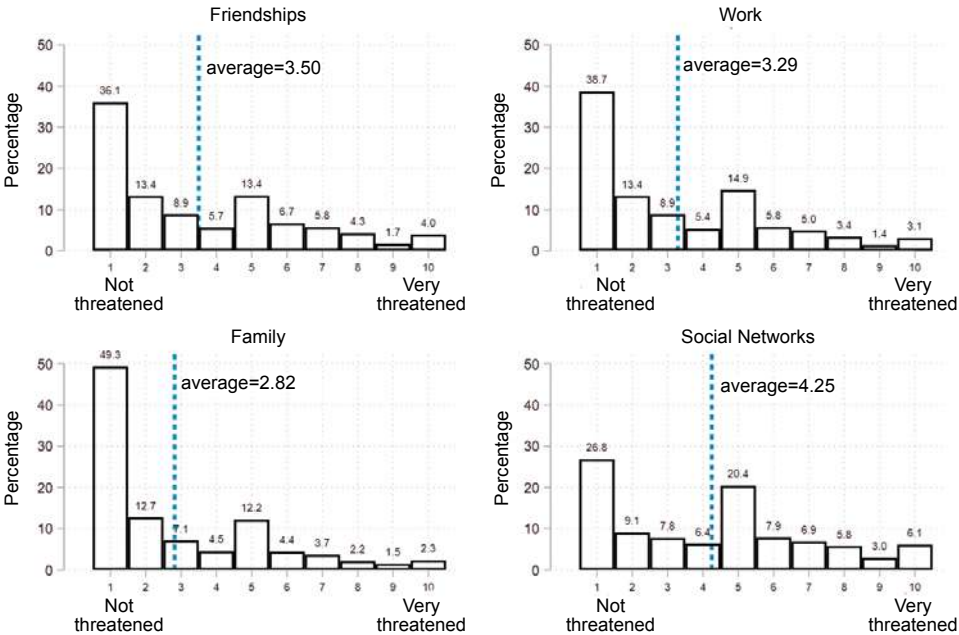

Figure 36: Distribution according to the statement 'During the sovereignty process you have felt threatened by…'

One element that could explain the limited perception of aggression in the social sphere is the potential lack of relationships with people who think differently. If people only interact with people who think like them, it could be that the lack of aggressions is merely a result of society breaking up into groups rather than dialogues in these spheres being more respectful compared to what seems to take place in public spaces.

As shown in figure 37, this is only part of the story. This figure shows the predicted value of perceived aggression in different spaces depending on whether the respondent's network has similar ideas to the person (the coefficients are calculated controlling for gender, national identification, language, age, education and geographic area). As seen in the figure, having a network that mostly agrees with the respondent significantly reduces the level of perceived aggression. This is a frequent dynamic, especially in families and at work. However, taking these differences into account, those with mostly disagreeing networks rate the level of aggression below 5 on average in all the spaces where direct contact is involved, which means that those with homogeneous environments have felt less threatened compared to those living with people who mostly think differently from them, but on average even the latter perceive relatively low levels of aggression.
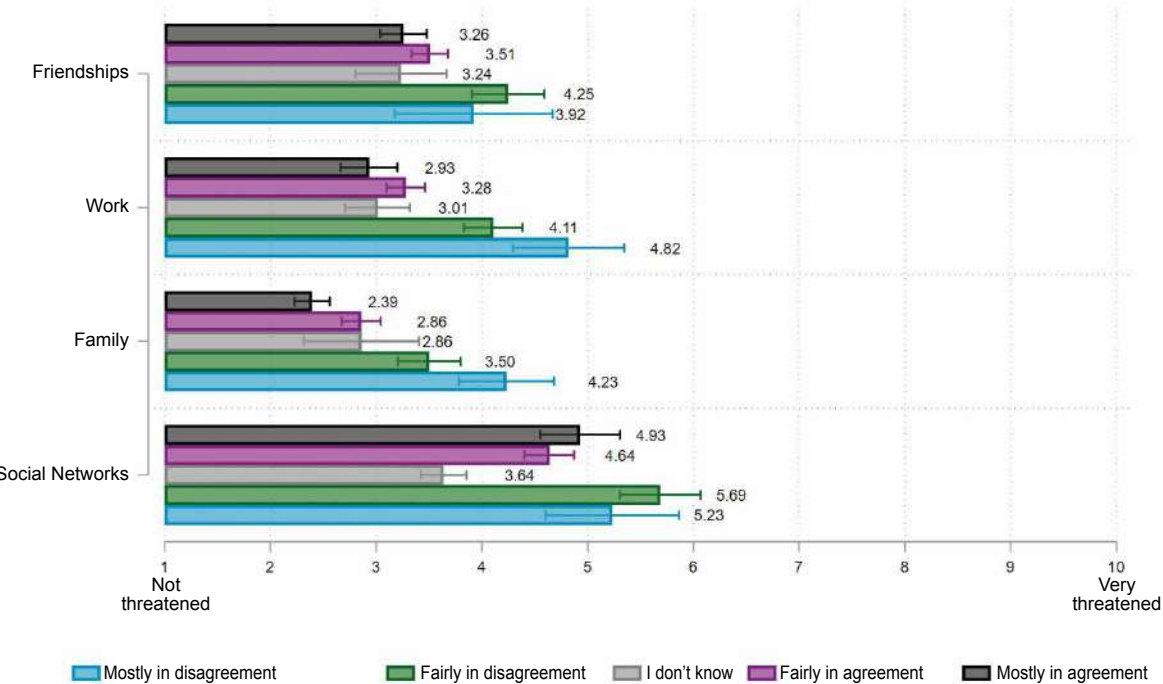

Figure 37: Average level of agreement with the statement about the level of aggression of the space according to the level of ideological agreement in this space

Social networks are a place where even people with largely similar networks have felt attacked, probably since it allows having conversations with strangers from outside the network. In this

case, those who have felt the least attacked are those who are unaware of what their social network contacts think. This dynamic is probably explained by the fact that these spaces tend to see a lot of debates about non-political issues.

The fact that the majority has not felt attacked by their closest networks, together with what will be explained below on the sense of threat and aggressions by institutions, opens an opportunity in the form of a space to hold debates that are more productive and respectful than those that take place in more institutionalised environments. An opportunity that arises from the combination of the few perceived aggressions and a majority of people who are a not very emotionally polarised.

OPTIONS WITHOUT DIALOGUE RECEIVE VERY LIMITED SUPPORT

Focusing less on the possibilities of dialogue between people and more on the possibilities of dialogue between institutions, the survey also includes a question (question 14) that evaluates the preferred solutions for the territorial conflict. The responses in figure 33 show that there is very clear minority support for options that do not involve institutional dialogue. Only 11.49% are in favour of unilateral action by the Catalan government, and 5.32% are in favour of the Spanish government taking a heavy-handed approach. The remaining 78.76% are in favour of options that involve dialogue between institutions. The majority of the latter is in favour of dialogue without limits, although a certain division is observed since 28.71% believe that the dialogue should be limited to the content of the Constitution.
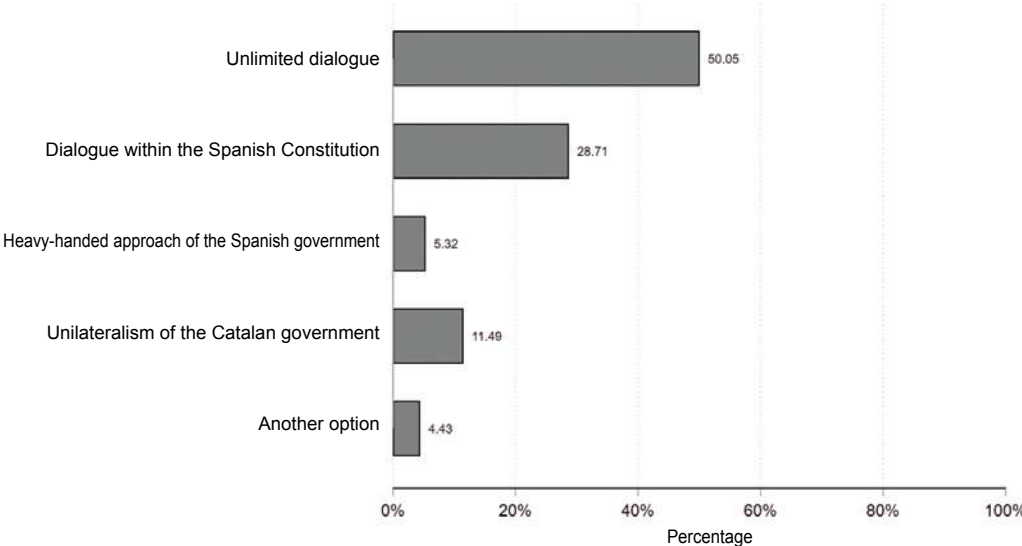

Figure 38: Distribution of preferences for different ways of solving the territorial conflict

The preference between a dialogue that is either without limits or within the Spanish Constitution are strongly influenced by national belonging, as can be seen in figure 39.

Figures 39 and 40 show the number of people surveyed who can be expected to support each of the four proposed solutions, according to their national identification, mother tongue, age, gender and education. The coefficients come from models that include all the variables mentioned, together with the geographical area (provinces and dividing Barcelona into city, metropolitan area and the rest) and an average of whether the person's environment thinks mostly in a similar way to them, is heterogeneous, or thinks mostly in a different way about the territorial debate.
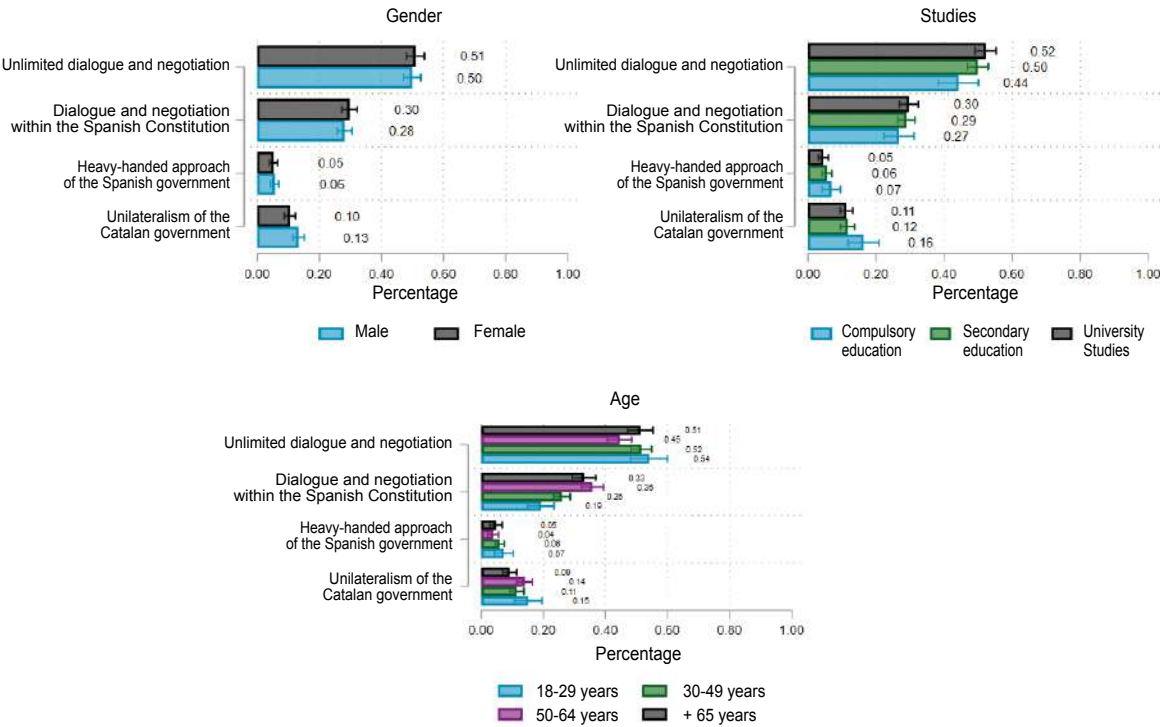
Figure 39: Percentage of respondents predicted to prefer the different solution options
according to gender, studies and age

As can be seen in figure 40, identifying as a Catalan and/or Spanish clearly shapes preferences. More than 70% of the people who identify themselves more as Catalan than Spanish would prefer a dialogue without limits. This percentage drops below 14% among those who identify themselves more as Spanish, 5% if we consider those who only identify themselves as Spanish. On the other hand, those who identify themselves more or only as Spanish mostly opt for dialogue within the Constitution (more than 60% of this group is predicted to have this preference), while only 14% of those who feel more Catalan opt for this alternative, less than 3% if we consider those who identify themselves only as Catalan. These dynamics are reproduced more clearly in the two options that do not involve dialogue. Language has a similar impact,

but in a way that is a clearly more nuanced. Identity is therefore a stronger conditioning factor of preference than language.

If we look at other characteristics that predict preferences for different options (figure 39), we find a few differences based on gender, although men have a slight greater preference for the unilateral independence of the Catalan government. Those who are less educated also seem to have slightly more preference for options that do not involve dialogue, while young people tend to have less preference for dialogue that remains within the Constitution, but none of these preferences change the order of preference in any of the groups. Identity is the only factor that affects preferences so greatly.
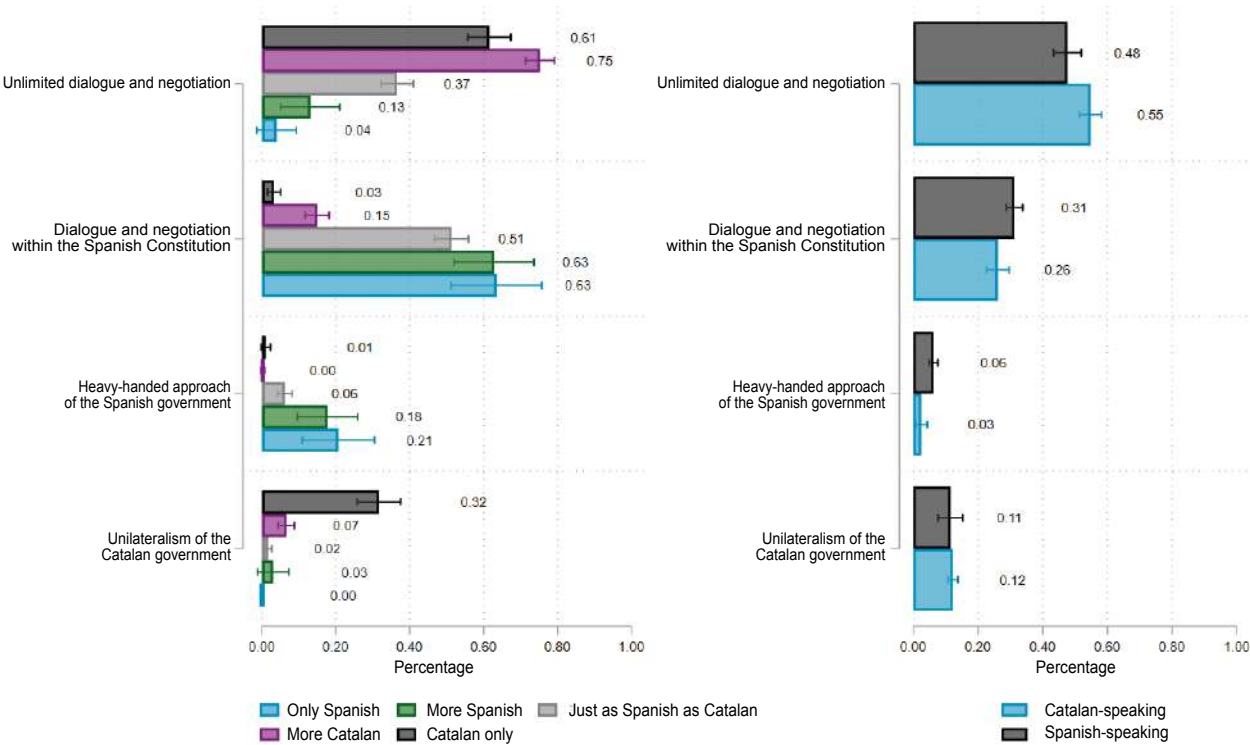
Figure 40: Percentage of respondents predicted to prefer the different solution options
according to their national identification and language

SELF-CRITICISM

The last important factor that we can identify as an opportunity to facilitate a dialogued solution to the divisions in Catalonia is the high level of recognition of the mistakes made by both governments that have made it more difficult to find a solution to the sovereignty process conflict on behalf of citizens.

As shown in figure 41, on a scale from 1 to 10, where 1 is a total disagreement with the statement 'The government has made mistakes that have made it more difficult to solve the conflict' and 10 is a total agreement, the average response is 7.97 for mistakes by the Spanish government and 7 for mistakes by the Catalan government.

The two scores that are clearly higher than the middle position. Furthermore, 26% of the people surveyed locate the agreement with mistakes being made at the highest category in the case of the Catalan government and 40.4% in the case of the Spanish government. We can conclude that there is a widespread feeling that mistakes have been made and that the situation has not been well managed.
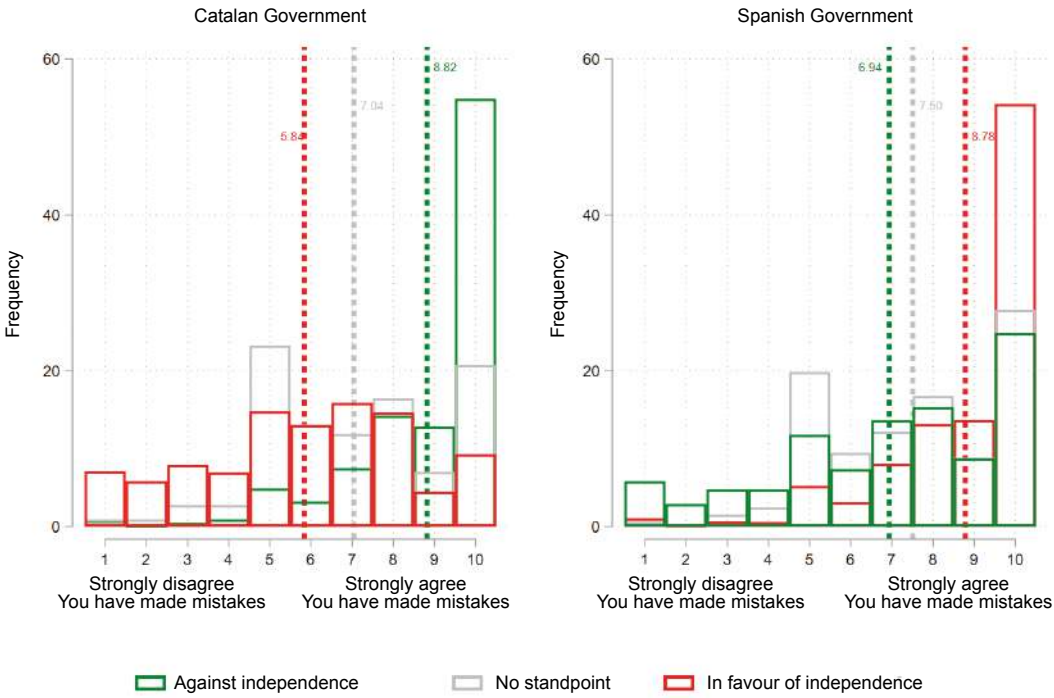
Figure 41: Distribution according to the statement 'During the sovereignty process, the _____ government has made mistakes that have made it more difficult, rather than easier, to find a solution' according to the position in the territorial debate

As can be seen in the same figure 41, criticism of the government's approach is conditioned by the preferences about independence. People who are in favour of independence are much more critical of the Spanish government while those who are against it are more critical of the Catalan government. Nevertheless, the level of self-criticism is high. On average, those in favour of independence are almost at a 6 (5.84) in their perceptions of the mistakes made by the Catalan government, a figure which, although far from the 7.04 of those who are not positioned or the 8.82 of those who are not in favour, clearly places them closer to being in agreement rather than disagreement with the statement.

Those who are against independence are even more critical of the Spanish government's actions, with an average agreement with the sentence of 6.9 on the scale, a figure that, although lower than those who are not positioned (7.5) and those in favour of independence (8.78), is considerably higher than the opinion of those against independence regarding the Catalan government.

Besides more agreement with the claims, we can also see how criticisms are distributed among the two governments: whether a similar level of mistakes is perceived at both levels, or whether there is a very large percentage that blames one of the two levels disproportionately. Figure 42 shows the distribution of the difference in standpoints regarding the mistakes by the Spanish government and the standpoints regarding the mistakes by the Catalan government. As can be observed, 37.8% attribute a similar percentage of blame to both levels. Moreover, among these, 76.18% (28.82% of the total sample) believe that there are many of these mistakes (above 7 on the scale), while only 28.82% (9% of the total) believe that both have made few mistakes. Of the remaining 62.2%, 42.89% think that the Spanish government has made more mistakes (33.99% of these, or 14.58% of the total, also rate the mistakes of the Catalan government above 7). Lastly, 19.30% believe that the Catalan government has made more mistakes (35.57%, or 6.87% of the sample, also rate the mistakes of the Spanish government above 7). The opinion that both governments have made mistakes is widespread.
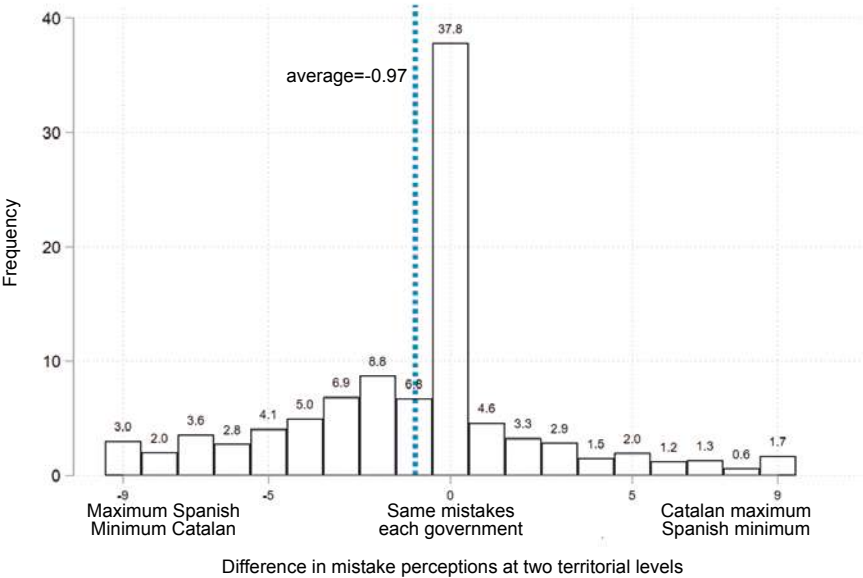
Figure 42: Distribution difference between the perception of mistakes of the Catalan and Spanish governments

The survey does not include questions that would help verify whether the perceived mistakes are linked to not having promoted dialogue and respect with other groups. Therefore, some respondents may consider that the mistakes of the institutions are a consequence of their unwillingness to take a more heavy-handed approach, or not pursuing independence

unilaterally. However, a simple bivariate analysis gives us confidence that most of the mistakes are perceived in another direction.

Thus, we see that among those who prefer the unilateral solution the perception of mistakes by the Catalan government is 5.58, while among those who would opt for a solution through dialogue he perception is between 6 and 8. Similarly, among those who believe that the government should take a heavy-handed approach the perception of mistakes made is 5.72, while for those who would prefer some form of dialogue it is higher than 7.

If we carry out a more complex analysis and look at the effects of mistake perceptions based on different variables, such as socio-economics (gender, age, education, geographical area and left-right political views), polarisation (ideological, electoral and of the four measures of emotional polarisation), the feeling of threat or of having been attacked and independence preferences (figure 43), we see that the high levels of self-criticism of the governments are associated with a greater propensity to prefer dialogue-related options outside of the dominant format in the group, although there is also a certain increase in the propensity to prefer unilateral options.
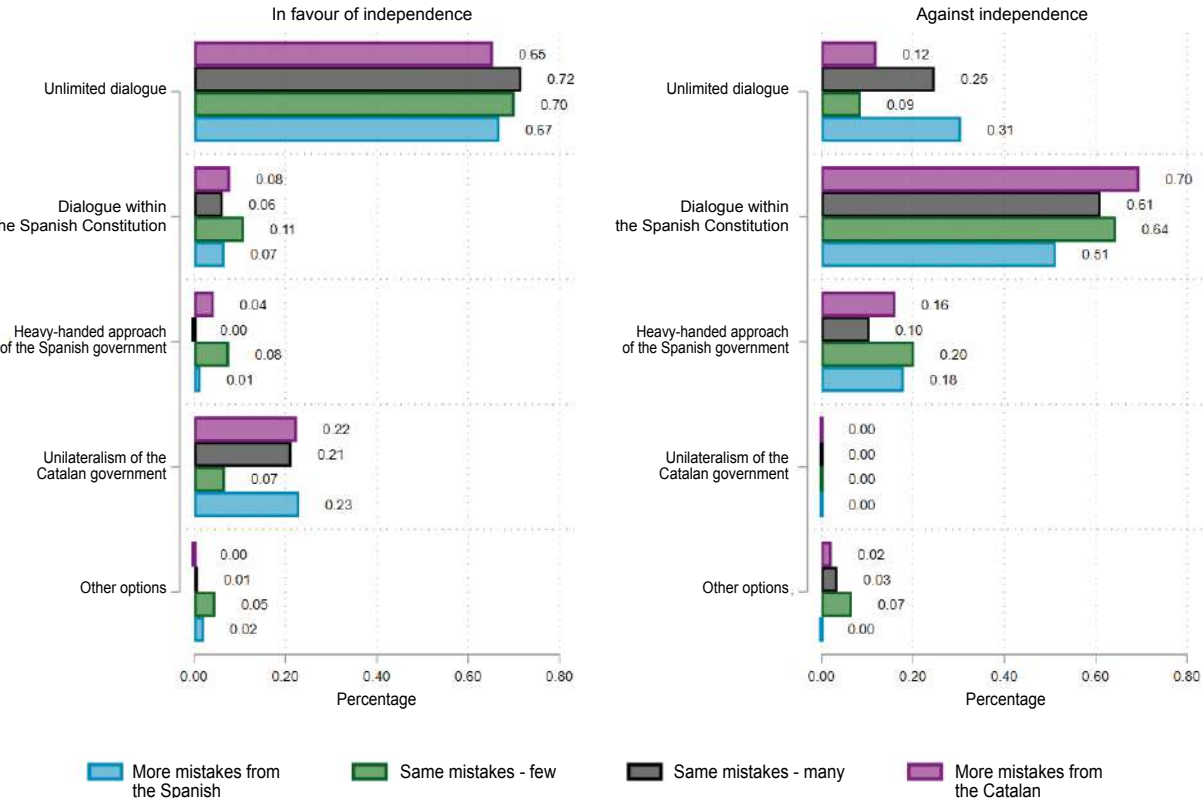
Figure 43: Predicted preferences for different solution options based on the level of criticism in the actions of the two governments

Thus, those who are against independence and believe that either the Spanish government or both governments have made many mistakes, are much more likely to be in favour of a dialogue without limits. Those who believe that the two governments have made few mistakes are more likely to want the Spanish government to take a heavy-handed approach, or for the dialogue to remain within the Constitution. In the case of the pro-independence side on the other hand, the perception that both governments have made many mistakes increases the likelihood of preferring dialogue without limits, though also slightly increasing preferences for unilateral options.

THREATS TO DIALOGUE

Despite the stated opportunities, the responses to the survey questions also illustrate certain dynamics that could pose a threat to dialogue and options for a pluralistic, non-polarised management of diversity of opinions. This section reviews the main threats identified using the same questions as the previous section.

CONCLUSIONS OF THE SECTION

The results of the survey present four elements of the context that can make debating and finding dialogued solutions very difficult. These are, firstly, the percentage of the population that feels their way of life or culture is threatened and the connection that this idea has with perceptions of aggressions from institutions, pointing to institutions generating more anxiety than security for citizens. Secondly, the presence of a widespread agreement on the risks for society of a dialogue solution, a scepticism closely linked to polarisation. Thirdly, the existence of a debate, particularly on social networks, with a significant over-representation of people with extreme positions, perceptions of threat and more Manichaeism than the rest of the population. Finally, the increase in perceptions of problems not linked to the territorial debate.

THE SENSE OF THREATS AND INSTITUTIONAL AGGRESSIONS

The first major threat is the fact that a significant percentage of people have responded positively to questions about the feeling that their own culture or way of life is at risk due to threats or social changes. As can be seen in figure 44, more than 9% of the people surveyed placed themselves in the position that show extreme perceptions of threats (which are 10 in the first

two questions and 1 in the third), a percentage that rises above 35% if we include those who are in the four categories closest to the end of the scale indicating a sense of threat. This is a similar percentage to that those located in the opposing four categories that indicate a lack of a sense of threat.

When combining the answers to the three questions, we find that 27.21% is below 4 on a scale of 1 to 10 from a minimum to maximum perception of threat, but also that, on average, 25% is above 7 on this scale.
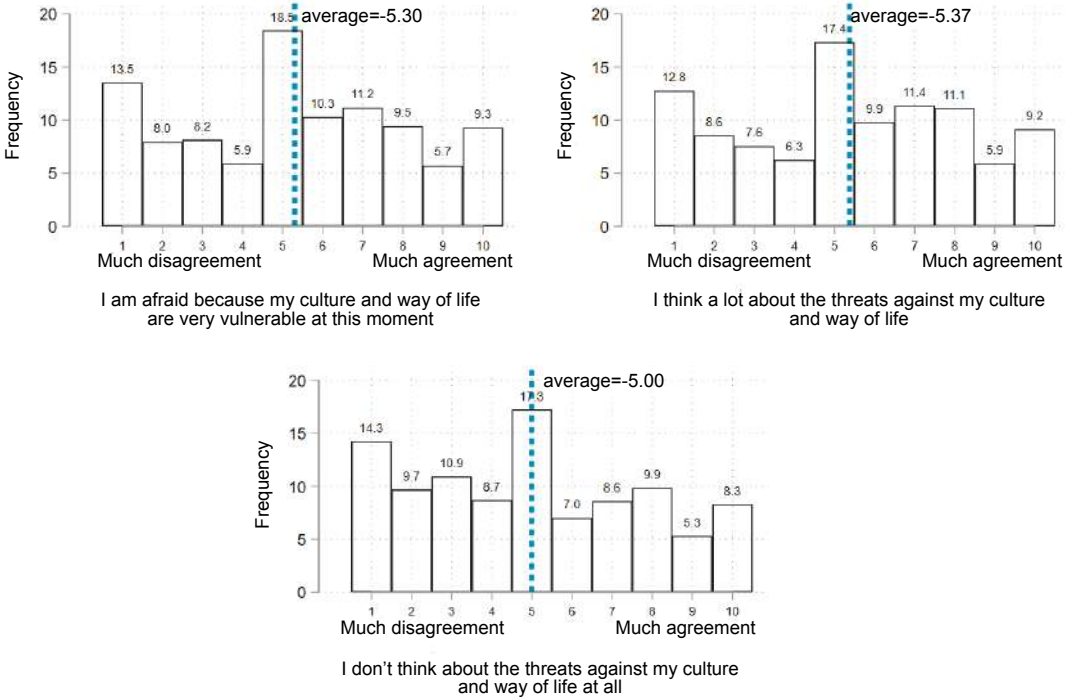

Figure 44: Distribution of the level of agreement with statements about perceptions of threat to the way of life and culture
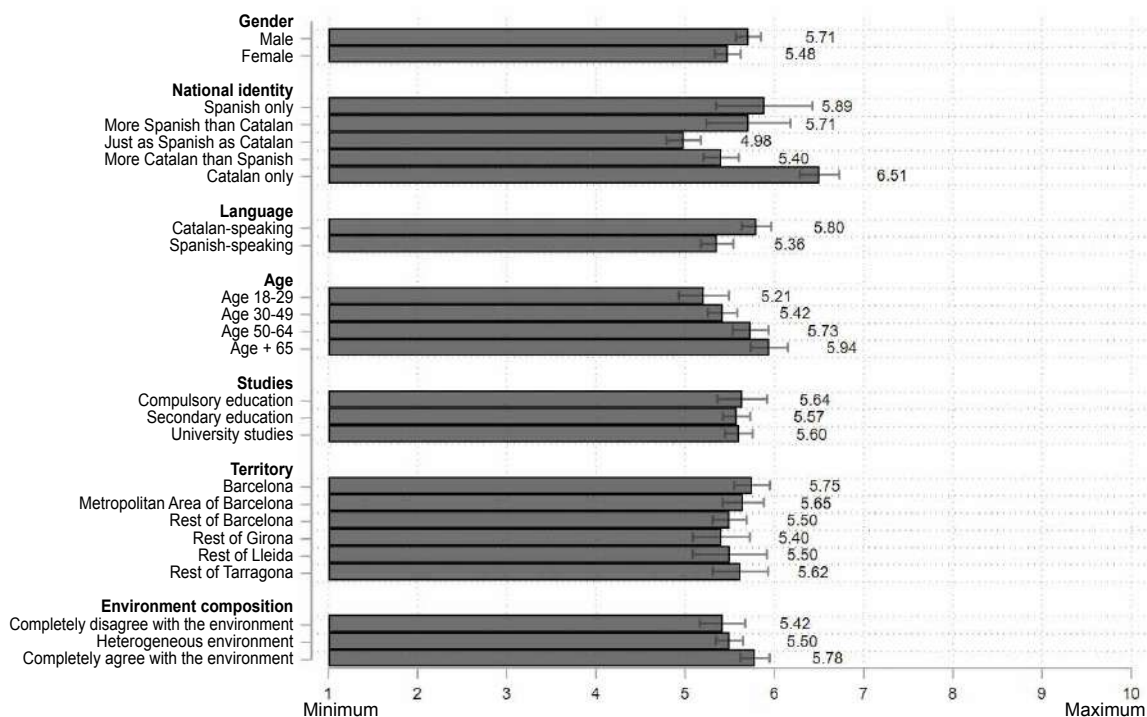
Figure 45: Predictions of threat levels on culture and the way of life for different socio-economic groups

In order to understand which groups feel particularly threatened, figure 45 shows the predicted values for different socio-economic variables (the coefficients are taken from models in which all the variables in the graph are included as independent variables while the average feeling of threat is included as a dependent variable). The coefficients show that the sense of threat is closely linked to the territorial debate. People who identify as only Catalan, or identify more Spanish than Catalan perceive almost a full point more on the scale in terms of the sense of a threat. Those who speak Catalan also feel slightly more threatened than those who speak Castilian Spanish. There is, therefore, a feeling among those people with a stronger national identity that the culture and the way of life is not protected enough which, as we have seen in the section on emotional polarisation, creates more negative emotions and Manichaeism towards those who think differently. A fact that probably makes dialogue difficult.

Besides the national component, the sense of threat also seems to be higher among men and older people. These differences could be related to the territorial debate itself, but could also be due to the appearance of social changes that make certain social groups feel uncomfortable. Moreover, it is interesting to see that those people with fairly homogeneous environments in which the majority thinks like them, both in the independence debate and in the feminist debate (the two debates for which data is available), also feel slightly more threatened than those who live in contexts in which the majority thinks in a different way. The lack of diverse environments could be an additional threat.

As we will see below, this is closely related to the high perceptions of aggressions by institutions. Unlike what happened in more personal relationship environments, or even on social networks, where the majority did not perceive significant aggressions, the percentage of citizens that have felt attacked by an institution is very high (figure 46). 22% of those surveyed claimed they perceived the highest level of aggression; 46.2% are in the four categories closest to the end of the scale of feeling very attacked, while only 35% are in the four categories at the opposite end.

As shown in figure 47, which is similar to figure 45 but for the perception of institutional aggression, the perception of aggression by an institution is two points higher among those who feel only Catalan, compared to those who feel both Catalan and Spanish (from an average of more than 7 on a scale from 1 to 10, to an average of below 5) and more than one point higher among those who feel only Spanish compared to those who feel both, which means that these aggressions are very much linked to the territorial debate and non-dual identities.
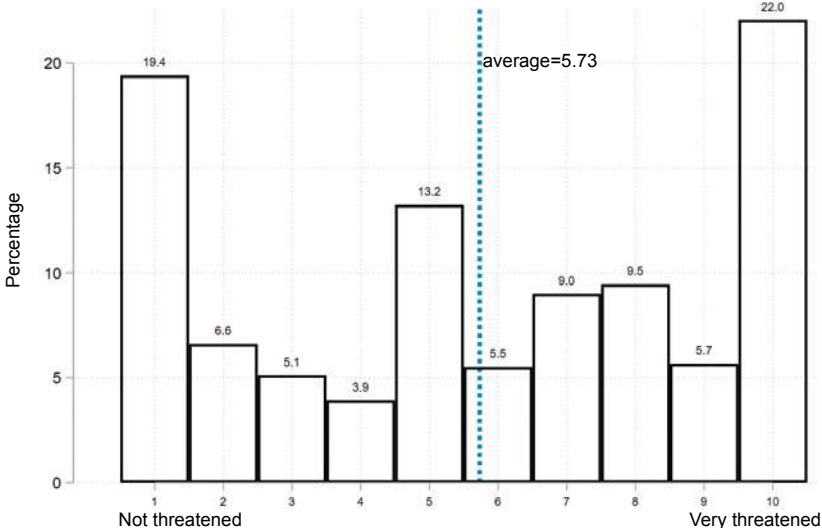

Figure 46: Distribution of the agreement with the statement 'During the sovereignty process, you have felt threatened by an institution'
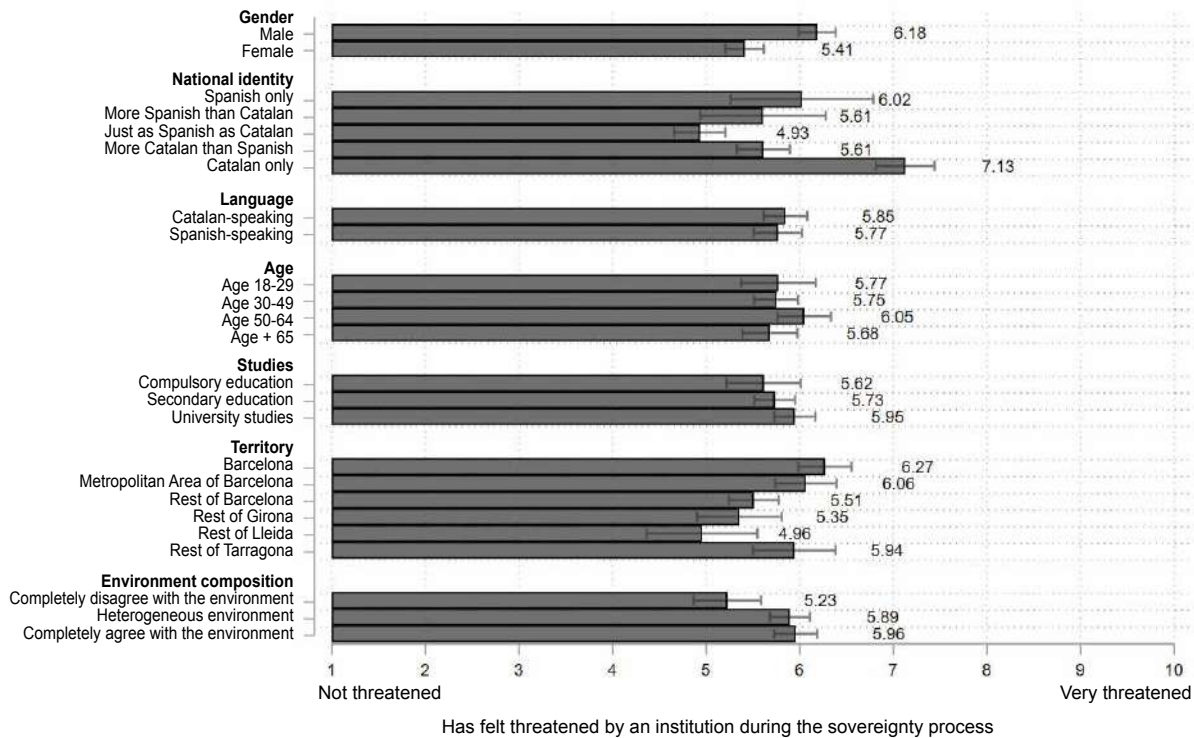
Figure 47: Predictions of the threat levels of an institution perceived by the different socio-economic groups

Furthermore, the figure also shows that, as with the feeling of threat, men perceive almost one point more aggression than women on average, and people from networks that think differently perceive less aggressions from institutions. We also found that people with university degrees, those between 50 and 64 years old and those living in Barcelona, Tarragona or the Barcelona metropolitan area perceive aggressions slightly more frequently than individuals living in other areas.

This feeling of institutional aggressions is important because, as shown in figure 48, they have a great impact on emotional polarisation; an impact that, we do not find for aggression from within networks. Figure 48 shows the predicted value of key variables for good coexistence, such as the feeling of threat, variables related to emotional polarisation (positive and negative emotions, Manichaeism and social trust) and the agreement with the statement that those who defend dialogue are deluded or do not know what is at stake, for individuals with different perceptions of aggression in different spaces. Specifically, the figure shows the value for the variables according to the position on aggression controlling for socio-economic variables (gender, age, studies and geographical area), ideology (left, right, in quadratic and opinions on independence) and level of ideological, electoral and emotional polarisation (always for the variable that is being predicted), and aggression by other parties.

Institutional threats

	value 1	value 2
Feeling of threat	6.17	4.79
Negative emotions	4.38	4.04
Positive emotions	5.16	5.15
Social Trust	5.84	6.06
Manichaeism	4.48	4.56
Scepticism towards dialogue	5.24	4.70

Social network threats

	value 1	value 2
Feeling of threat	5.77	5.46
Negative emotions	4.59	3.97
Positive emotions	5.08	5.21
Social Trust	5.94	5.93
Manichaeism	4.70	4.37
Scepticism towards dialogue	5.08	4.96

Environmental threats

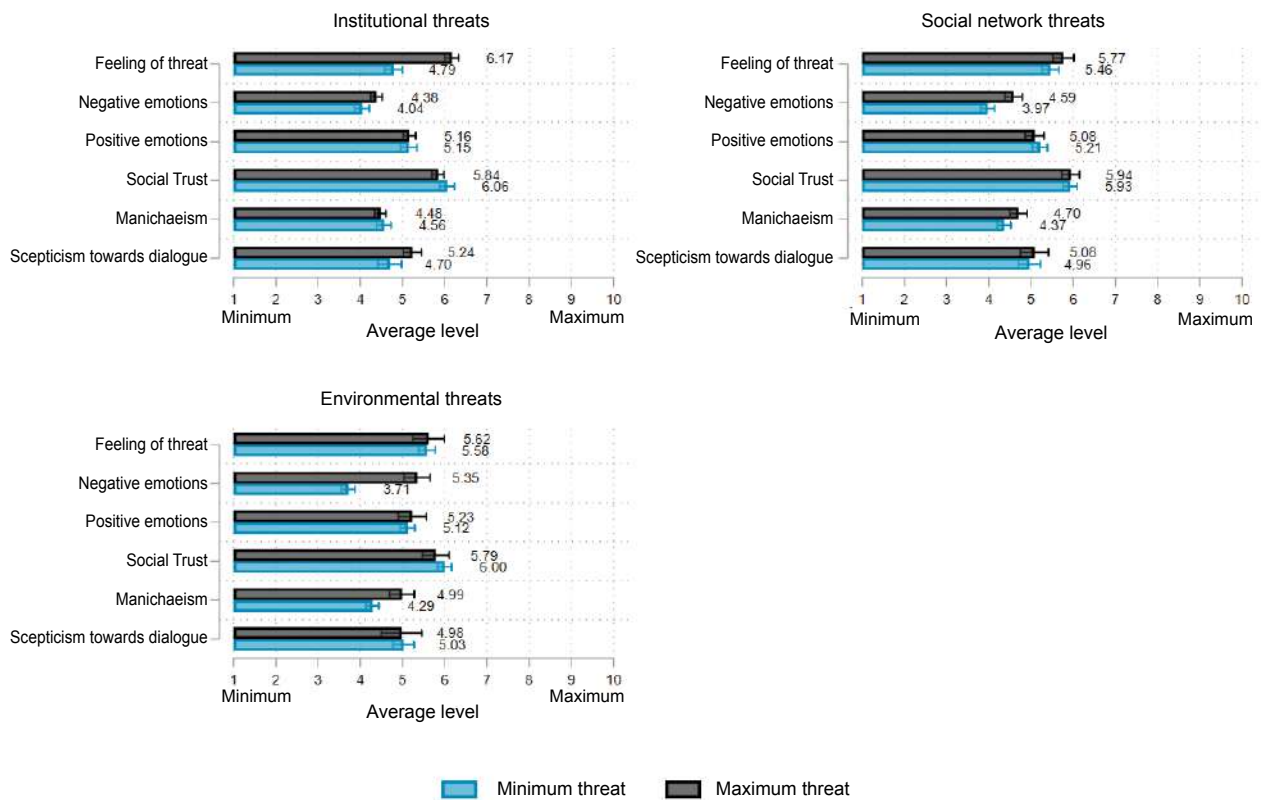|	value 1	value 2
Feeling of threat	5.62	5.56
Negative emotions	5.35	3.71
Positive emotions	5.23	5.12
Social Trust	5.79	6.00
Manichaeism	4.99	4.29
Scepticism towards dialogue	4.98	5.03

Minimum threat — Maximum threat

Figure 48: Impact of the aggressions in the different contexts on the predicted values of different variables

As seen in the figure, people who have felt very attacked by an institution feel more than one point more sense of threat than those who have not felt attacked by an institution, a difference that we do not see in aggressive behaviour on social networks or in the personal networks. These perceptions of aggression also have an impact on Manichaeism and on negative emotions towards those who think differently. Therefore, we can conclude that aggressions by institutions rather than aggressions by personal networks trigger the sense of threat to the way of life and culture and emotional polarisation among citizens, a phenomenon that should be managed wisely to avoid the risk of worsening emotional polarisation.

SCEPTICISM TOWARDS INSTITUTIONS AND DIALOGUE

A second cause for concern is the scepticism among citizens about the dialogue-based solution. While, as we have seen in the section on opportunities, solutions through dialogue are preferred by the vast majority, it is also true that it is quite easy to create doubts when the problems and risks of a dialogued solution are mentioned.
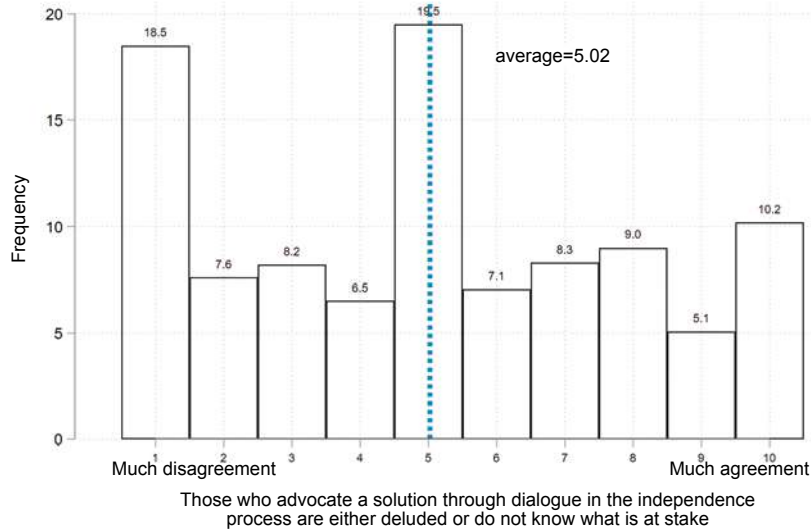
Figure 49: Distribution of the level of agreement with the statement on scepticism in solutions through dialogue

This scepticism is observed in the question asking about the level of agreement with the statement 'Those who defend a dialogued solution are very naive or dos not know what is at stake'. As shown in figure 49, only 10.2% of the sample strongly agrees with the statement while 18.5% strongly disagree with this statement. The remaining 71.3% take intermediate positions that imply having certain doubts about dialogue when the reasons were pointed out.

The result of this logic is that 20.78% of people are in favour of dialogue without limits and 35.26% of those who defend dialogue within the Constitution position their agreement with the statement at 7 or above. Dialogue is therefore the preferred option, but citizens also have reservations about the risky and/or naivety it implies. Without a proper management of these concerns that avoids the appearance of voices that exploit these fears and scepticism of dialogue, the chances of a successful dialogue taking place could be in jeopardy.
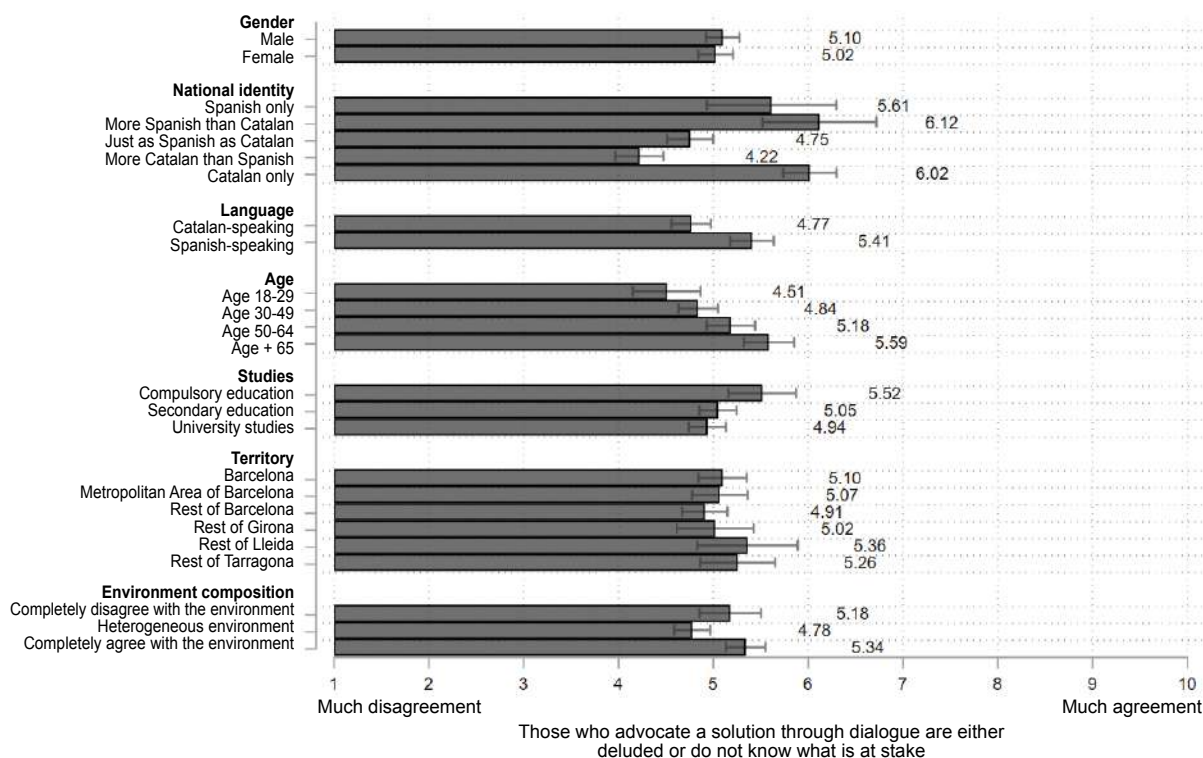
Figure 50: Predictions of the support levels with the sceptical statement for the different socio-economic groups

To see what groups are most affected by this scepticism, in figure 50 we can observe the predicted values on the scale for the different groups. The coefficients come from models similar to those in figures 45 and 48. The figure shows that those with only Catalan or Spanish identities and those with more Spanish than Catalan identities are on average one point closer to the agreement with the sceptical statement, while those who feel more Catalan than Spanish are the least sceptical. It also shows that the older the person, the more they agree with the statement. The difference between people agreeing with the sentence among those under 30 and those over 65 is a full point. People that have completed compulsory education are also slightly more critical of the statement, but this is a minimal difference. Lastly, those who are surrounded by people who think alike but different to themselves are slightly more sceptical about the possibilities of a dialogue solution.

In figure 51, we can see the same predicted values of agreement with the statement, but instead of looking at the differences between socio-economic groups, it looks at the differences on polarisation levels. The coefficients come from models that are controlled by variables of the three types of polarisation, the sense of threat and also, although not shown, age, gender, educational level and area of residence. The polarisation and threat coefficients have a quadratic component to allow for non-linear effects.

This figure shows that ideological polarisation and emotional polarisation are the elements that have the biggest impact on the level of scepticism of dialogue. Thus, the average level of agreement with the statement about dialogue goes from 4.4 among those who have more central positions to 6.88 among those who have more extreme stances. In a similar manner, the agreement moves from 4.62 among those who do not have any negative emotions leaning towards those who think differently, to 5.95 among those who have many. There is also a difference of more than one point on the scale between those who are not soft Manicheans at all (3.93) and those who are very soft Manicheans (5.57). We find fewer differences along the levels of strong Manichaeism, levels of positive emotions or partisan polarisation. The sense of threat, once again, is a clear obstacle for productive dialogue between the parties. While those who do not feel threatened at all have an average agreement with the sentence of 4.4, those who do feel threatened are predicted to have an agreement of 6.03.
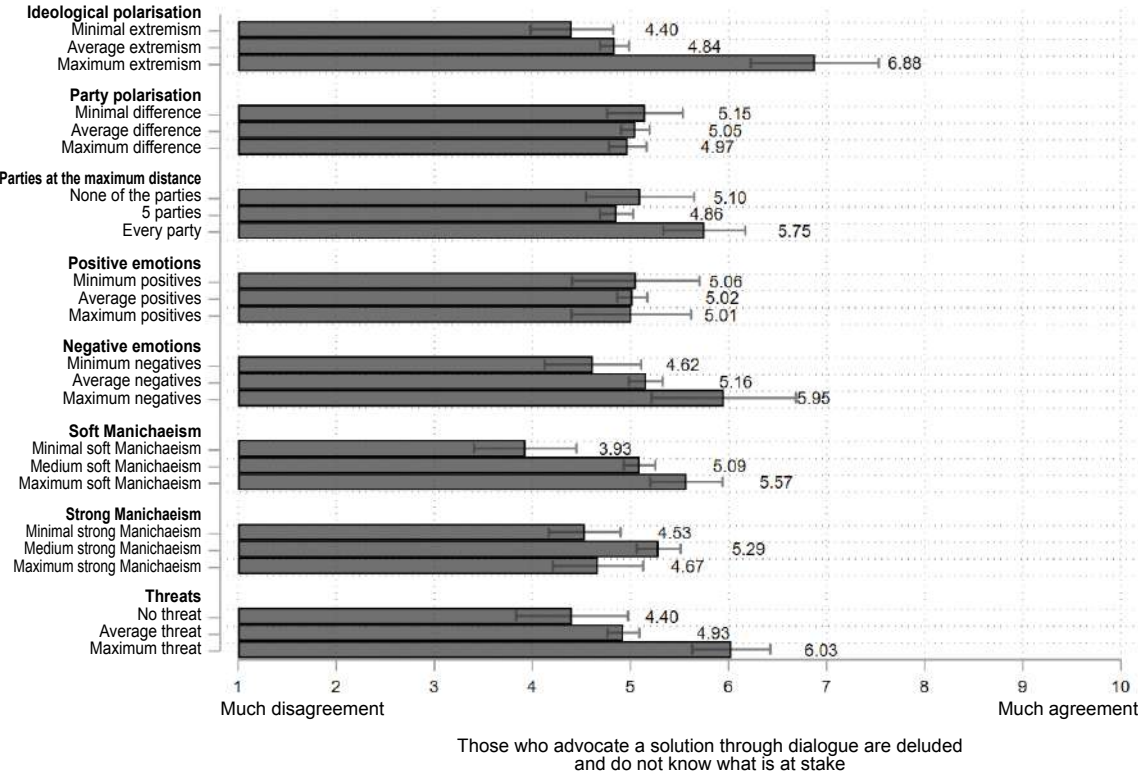
Figure 51: Predictions of the levels of agreement with the sceptical statement

for different levels and types of polarisation

Results of an analysis of the impact on the views on dialogue of positions on the different debates (figure 52) demonstrates that those with extreme positions in the territorial debate are mainly those more sceptical about dialogue. In the rest of the debate, having non-central positions increases agreement with the statement by little more than one point at the most.

On the contrary, in the territorial debate, those who position themselves towards the end in favour of independence reach a level of agreement of 6.16 and those who position themselves towards the

end of self-government agree with the statement with almost a 7 (6.86) on average, while those with a central position in the territorial debate show a level of agreement with the sentence of 4 (4.1).
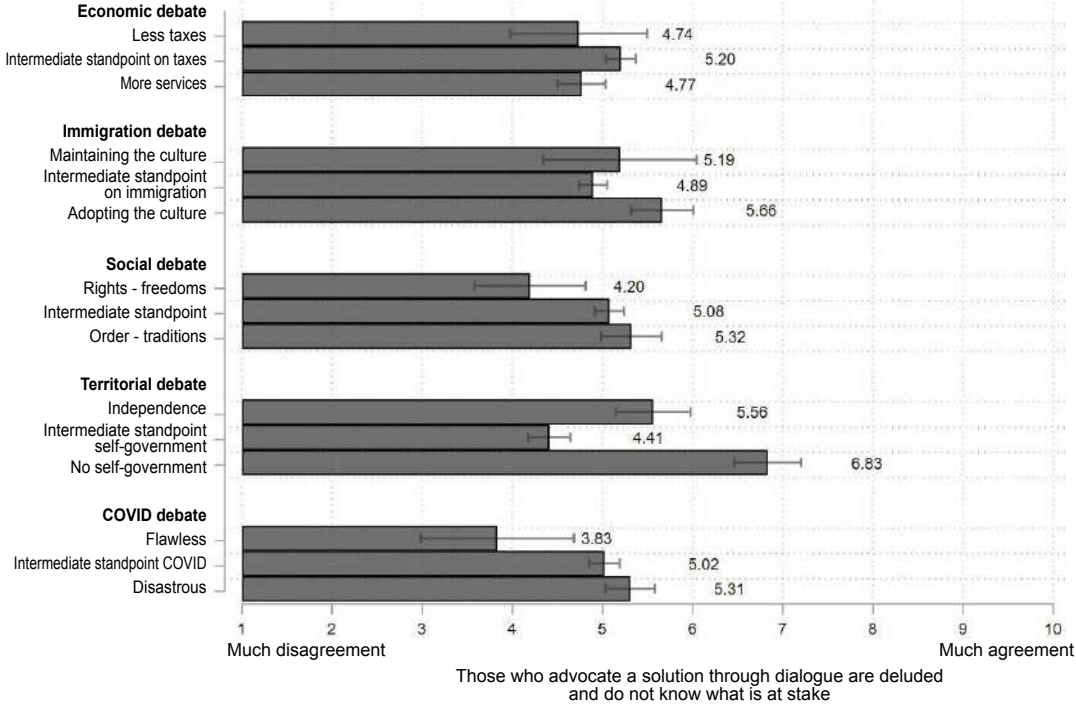

Figure 52: Predictions of the level of agreement with the sceptical statement based on the standpoint in the different political debates

The two concerns in the previous sections become exacerbated by a third threat that can be identified in the survey questions: the fact that those who feel the most threatened and are more Manichean are more likely to be willing to speak about the territorial conflict on social networks. This situation could create a false impression in the public debate, since the polarisation would appear out of control. In addition, there are also certain risks linked to the fact that debates in personal environments such as at work, with friends and family are greatly over-represented by people who for the most part think similarly to their networks and this leaves little room for the expression of pluralism, which could lead to a more comprehensive and open debate.

As can be seen in figure 53, the percentage of the population that is very willing to talk about the territorial issue in different spaces has fallen considerably since 2015. A dynamic that is especially noticeable on social networks, among neighbours and at work, where the percentage of those who are very willing to discuss it has fallen by more than 10 points. This implies that less than 25% are very or fairly willing to have a debate on independence. In fact, we only find percentages of more than 50% willing to speak in the cases of family and friends.
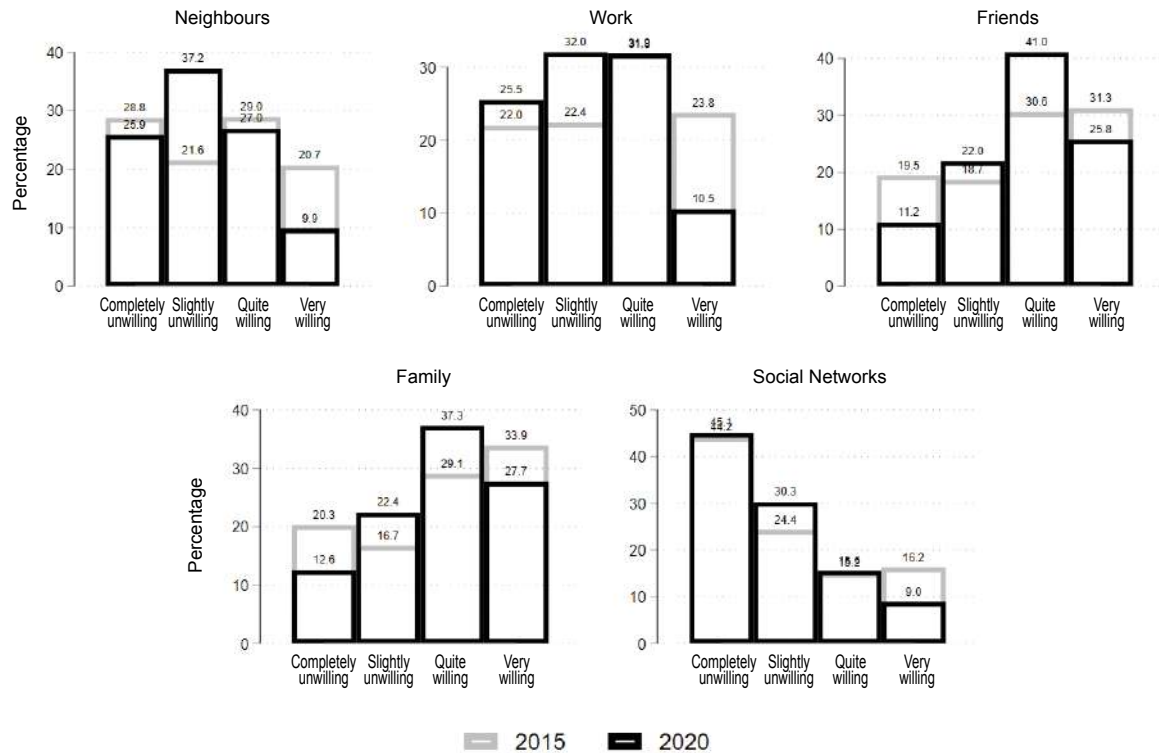
Figure 53: Comparison of the distribution of responses regarding the willingness to discuss the independence in different spaces per year (data: Centre d'estudis d'Opinió - CEO 2015[18] ICIP 2020)

This difference in the willingness to participate would not be a concern if those who declared they are not willing to participate in the debate were similar to those who were willing and would not lead to an over-representation of polarisation that would not exist if the rest of the population participated. Nonetheless, as figures 63 to 65 show, this is not the case. Especially on social networks those who are more polarised and Manichean, those who perceived more threats to their own way of life and more aggressions and those who live in environments that think in a similar way, are more likely to want to participate in debates. A situation that surely leads to a more polarised and Manichean public debate than the one we could have if of debate were more pluralistic.

The figures show the predicted proportion of people that are very or fairly willing to take part in discussions on independence in the different spaces according to their levels of polarisation, aggression and threat.

The coefficients are calculated with logistic models with being predicted as very or fairly willing to talk as a dependent variable, and the variables of polarisation, aggression, composition of the environment and sense threat as explanatory variables. In addition, the models are also controlled by gender, age, level of education and area of residence.

18. CEO (2015) "Xarxes socials i política catalana" Available at: https://ceo.gencat.cat/ca/estudis/registre-estudis-dopinio/estudis-dopinio-ceo/societat/detall/index.html?id=5670
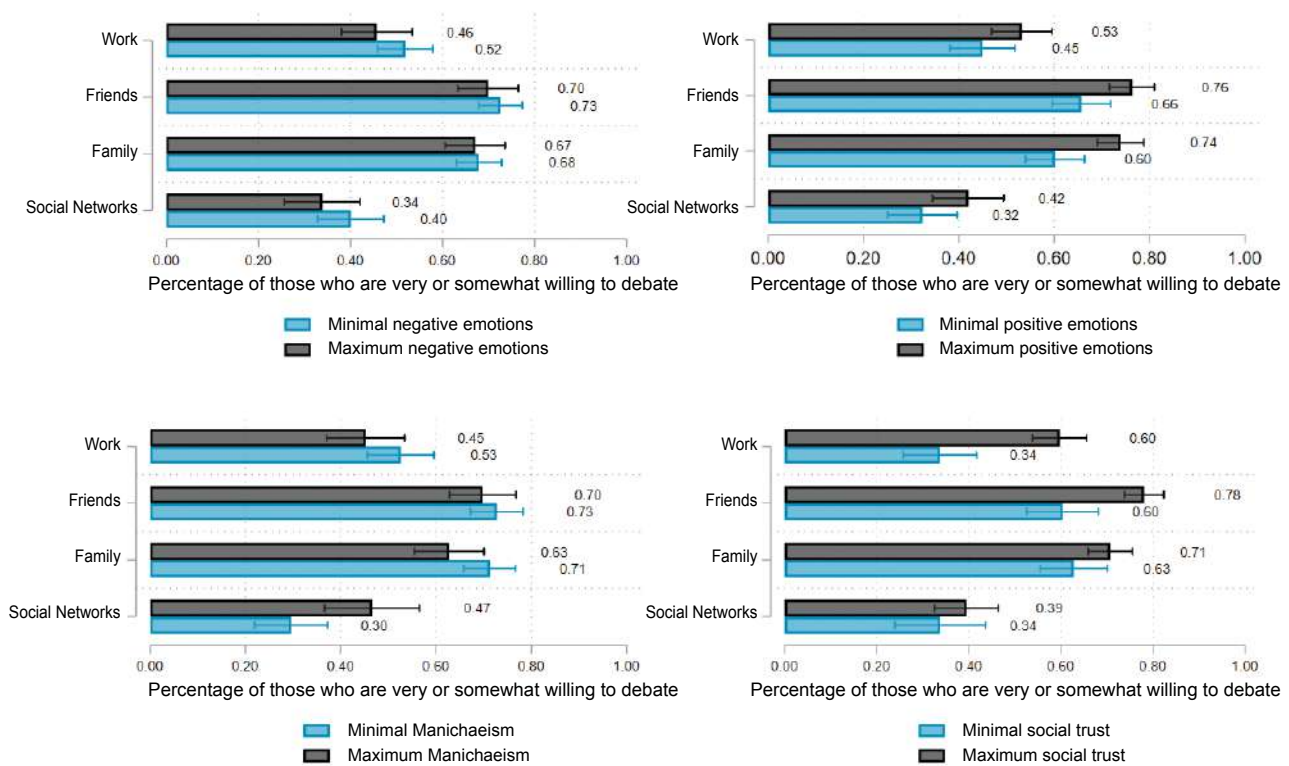
Figure 54: Predicted percentage of those who are very or fairly willing to participate in debates in each space according to the citizen's level of electoral and partisan polarisation

In figure 54 we can see that, among those with moderate positions in all debates, the percentage that are willing to participate in independence debates on social networks is less than 30%, while the percentage among those who are more polarised is higher than 45%. People who are polarised are also a little more likely to be willing to participate in independence debates at work. In contrast, we found no significant differences in the willingness to participate in debates with friends or family. Partisan polarisation also increases the likelihood of wanting to participate in independence debates. The percentage of people willing to participate in debates increases as the perceived distance between parties increases from 15 percentage points (on social networks) to over 30 (with friends and family). The debate on social networks is then over-represented by profiles with very clear ideas and that perceive great differences between political parties, something that also happens in certain personal environments.

Although the differences are smaller, we also observe a significant over-representation on social network debates by Manichean people (figure 55) who are 16 percentage points more likely to want to participate in debates on social networks than those who are not Manichean. In contrast, we do not observe an over-representation of emotionally polarised profiles in other spaces of debate. Manichean people and people with more negative emotions are not more likely to participate in debates with friends, family or colleagues. In these spaces there seems

to be a certain over-representation of profiles that are affectively less polarised. People with more social trust are 20 points more likely to participate in debates at work or with friends compared to people with less social trust, while people with more positive emotions towards those who think differently are over 10 points more likely to participate in debates with family or at work. The idea mentioned in the opportunities section, about personal networks being a good opportunity to ease tensions in discussions and being opportunities for a productive and respectful dialogue is confirmed.

Figure 55: Predicted percentage of people who are very or fairly willing to participate in debates in each space according to the citizen's level of emotional polarisation

Finally, figure 56 shows how aggressions, threats and the composition of the environment can affect willingness to participate in the different debates. As can be seen in this figure, those who feel that their way of life and their culture are in danger are more likely to participate in debates in all spaces. These differences mean that people who feel attacked are over-represented in the debates by more than 15 percentage points. There is also an over-representation of those who have felt attacked by an institution of between 10 and 30 points. This dynamic is completely reversed when instead of looking at the aggressions of the institutions we look at the aggression by members of the particular space of debate. Above all, in environments of personal relationships the vast majority of people who show a willingness to participate in debates do so because they have not felt attacked by members of that space, whether they are friends, colleagues or family members. This is not the case, however, for social networks. Once again, we

find that social networks are a space where Manichean profiles and those who have felt attacked, both by institutions and by members of the same space, participate in more in dialogue, a dynamic that can generate a tenser debate compared to the one we would have if everyone participated. Finally, in all places of dialogue we observe a significant over-representation of people who think like the members of that space. Although debates in personal environments are a good opportunity to hold productive and respectful discussions, it is still difficult to find voices with conflicting standpoints; an element that surely does not contribute to having a complete debate that allows everyone to be involved in the discourse and solutions.

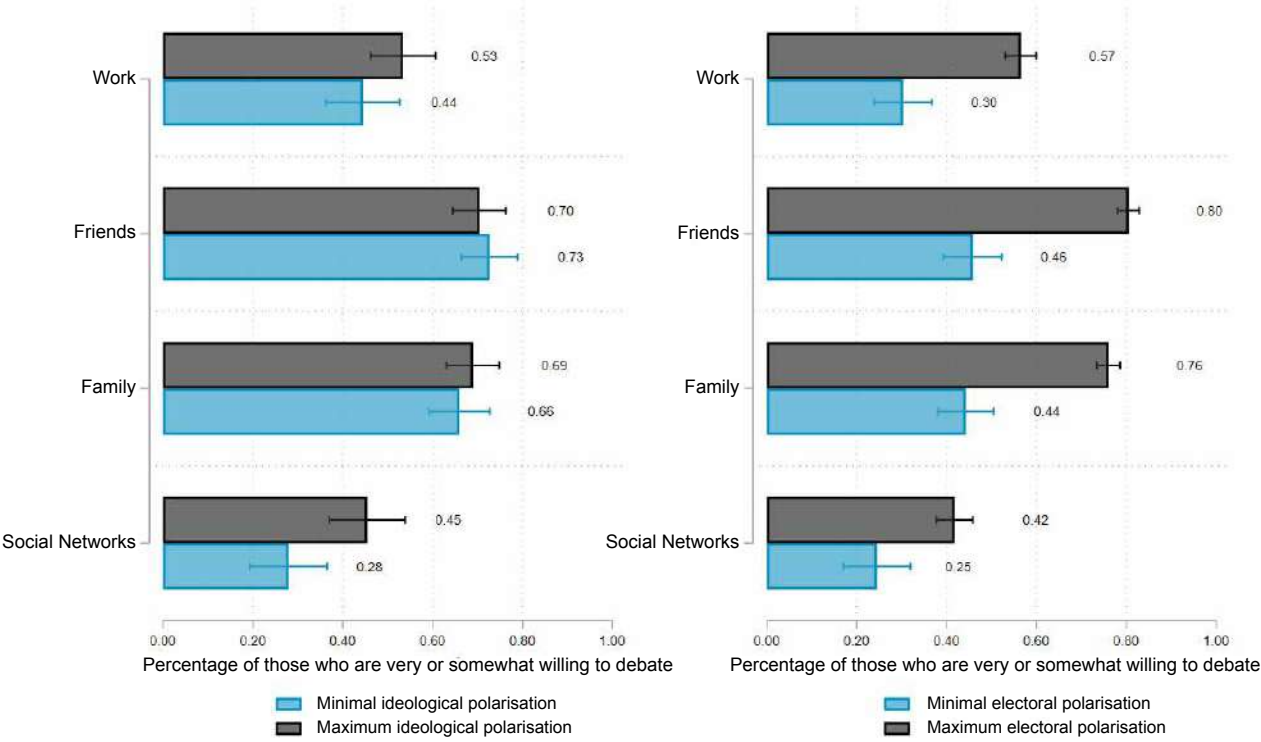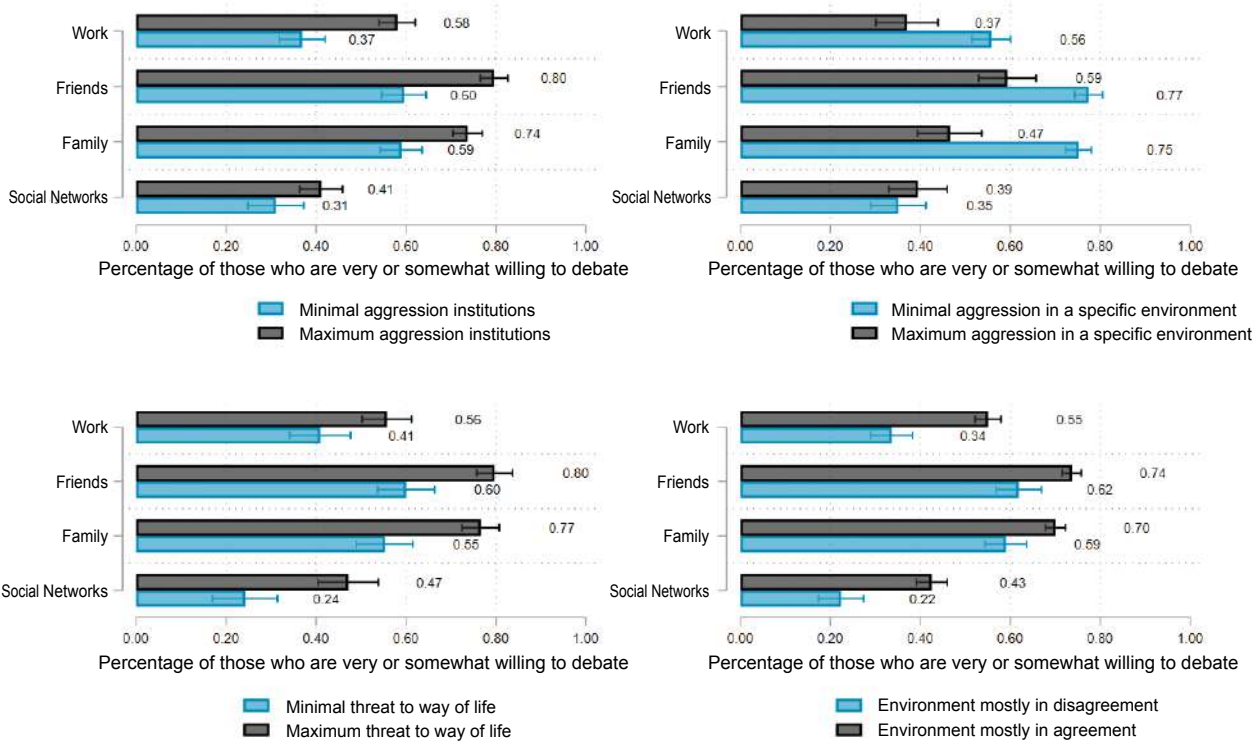
Figure 56: Predicted percentage of people that are very or fairly willing to participate in debates in each space according to the level of threat and aggression

We can conclude that although there are many opportunities for dialogue and solutions, the survey also draws attention to the danger of a debate in which the conversation is deteriorated due to increasing lack disrespect and an over-representation of those who promote it. This could lead to aggressions and threats being perceived more dominantly, a dynamic that could end up worsening the levels of emotional polarisation and consequently, one of the principles of coexistence and democracy.

Finally, there is one last element that if not dealt with could also endanger coexistence in Catalonia: the appearance of coexistence problems unrelated to political polarisation that create concerns among some citizens.

Figure 57: Distribution of responses regarding the existence of different problems of coexistence in Catalonia by year (ICIP 2018[19]-ICIP 2020 data)

As figure 57 shows, although perceptions of coexistence have not seen a significant decrease since 2018, the perceptions of different coexistence problems have clearly gotten worse. The percentage of citizens that did not perceive any incivility-rela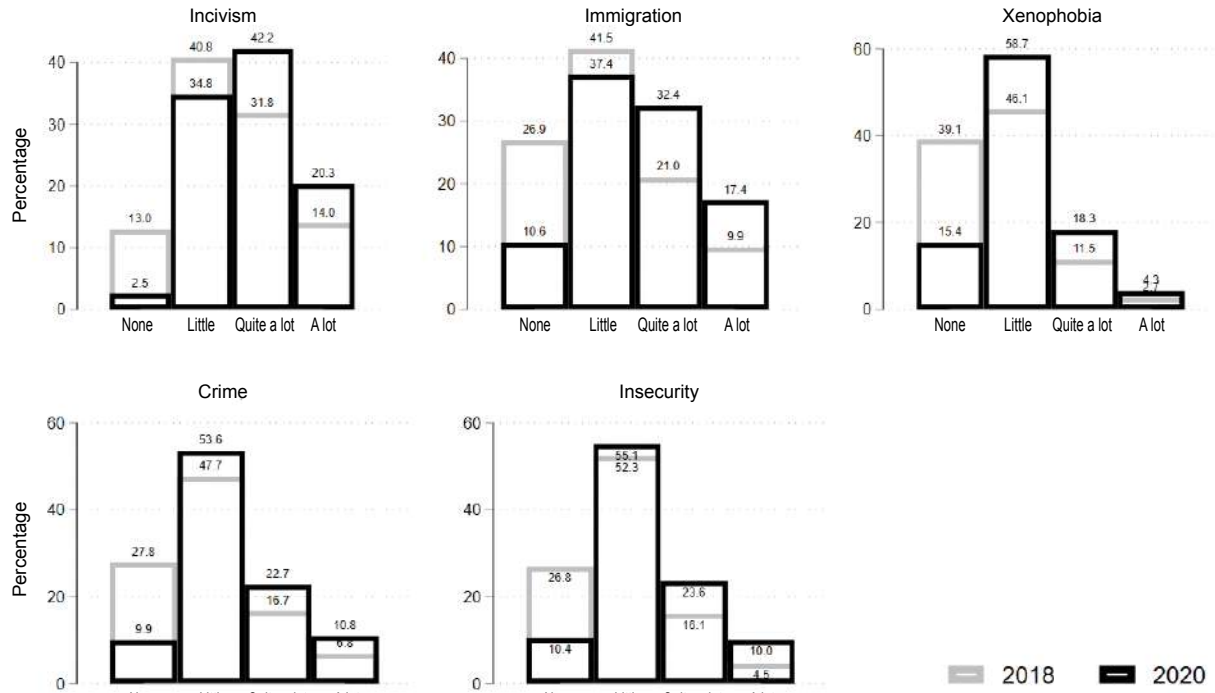ted problems has fallen from 13% to 2.5% and those who perceived fewer has moved from 40.8% to 34.8%. This means that in 2020, 15% more of the population perceives many or quite a few problems of incivility. The changes in problems related to xenophobia are even more evident: in 2020, 15.4% does not perceive them compared to 39.1% in 2018. We also find noticeable increases in the percentage of citizens that do not perceive any crime and insecurity-related problems, since more than 25% did not perceive any in 2018, while in 2020 this percentage is at around 10%. Problems related to immigration are particularly worrying, not only because of the drop of more than 15 points in the percentage of individuals who do not perceive these problems, but also because the percentage of those perceiving a lot of them rises from 9.9% to 17.4%.

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19. ICIP 2018: Percepció de la població de Catalunya sobre la convivència i la seguretat. Informes 15/2018. ICIP. Available at : http://icip.gencat.cat/web/.content/continguts/publicacions/documents_i_informes/2018/Informe-Enquesta.pdf

In figures 58 and 59, we can see how the profile of those who perceive quite a few or many problems on the different issues has changed. The increase is quite widespread and there has been a clear reduction in many of the differences linked to gender, age and educational level that existed in 2018. Many of the differences in national identity have also disappeared, but there is still a greater tendency of perceiving coexistence problems in Barcelona and its metropolitan area than in the rest of the territory.
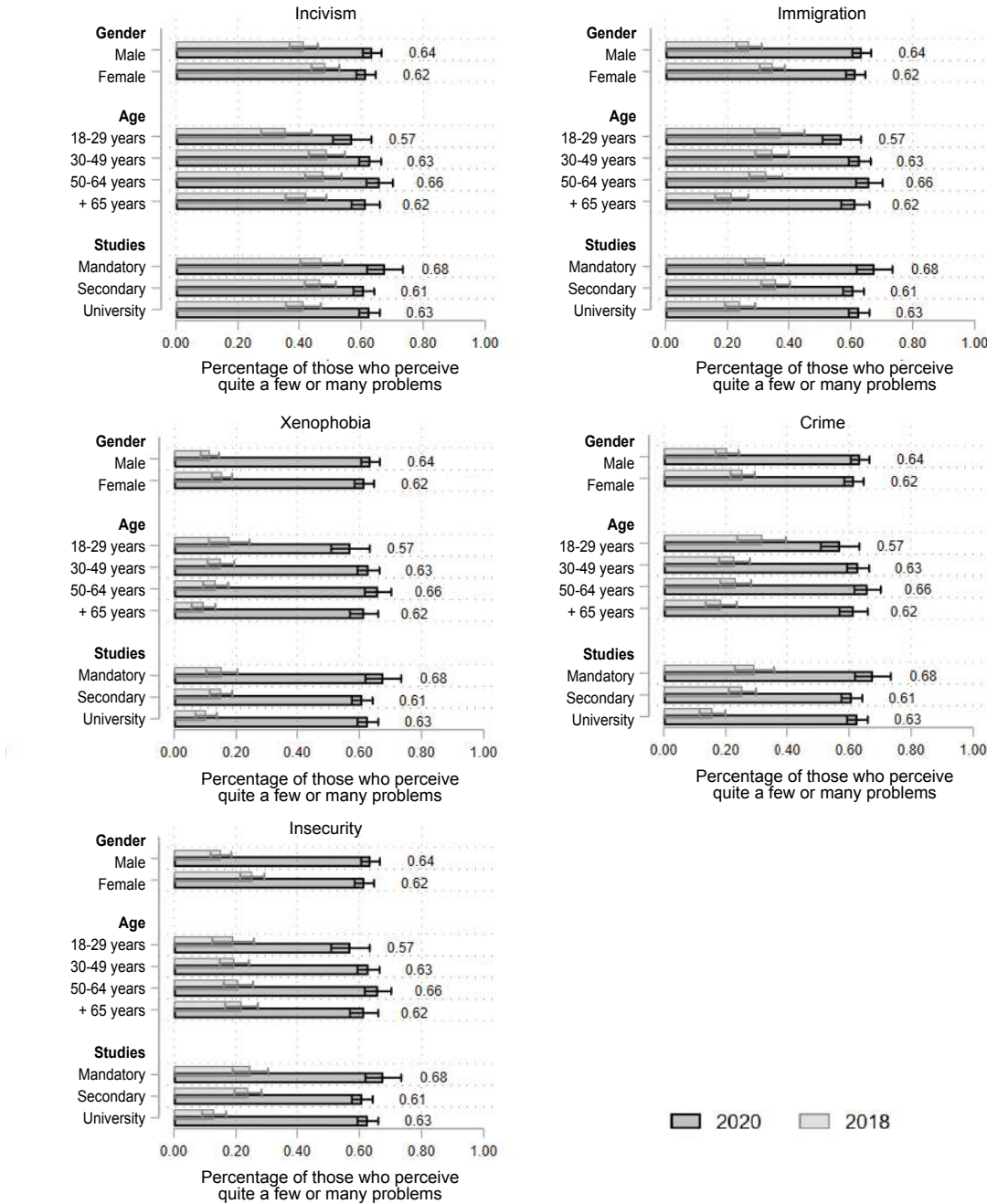
Figure 58: Predicted percentage of those people who perceive many or quite a few coexistence problems according to age, gender and educational level (ICIP 2018[20]-ICIP 2020 data)

20. ICIP 2018: Percepció de la població de Catalunya sobre la convivència i la seguretat. Informes 15/2018. ICIP. Available at : http://icip.gencat.cat/web/.content/continguts/publicacions/documents_i_informes/2018/Informe-Enquesta.pdf
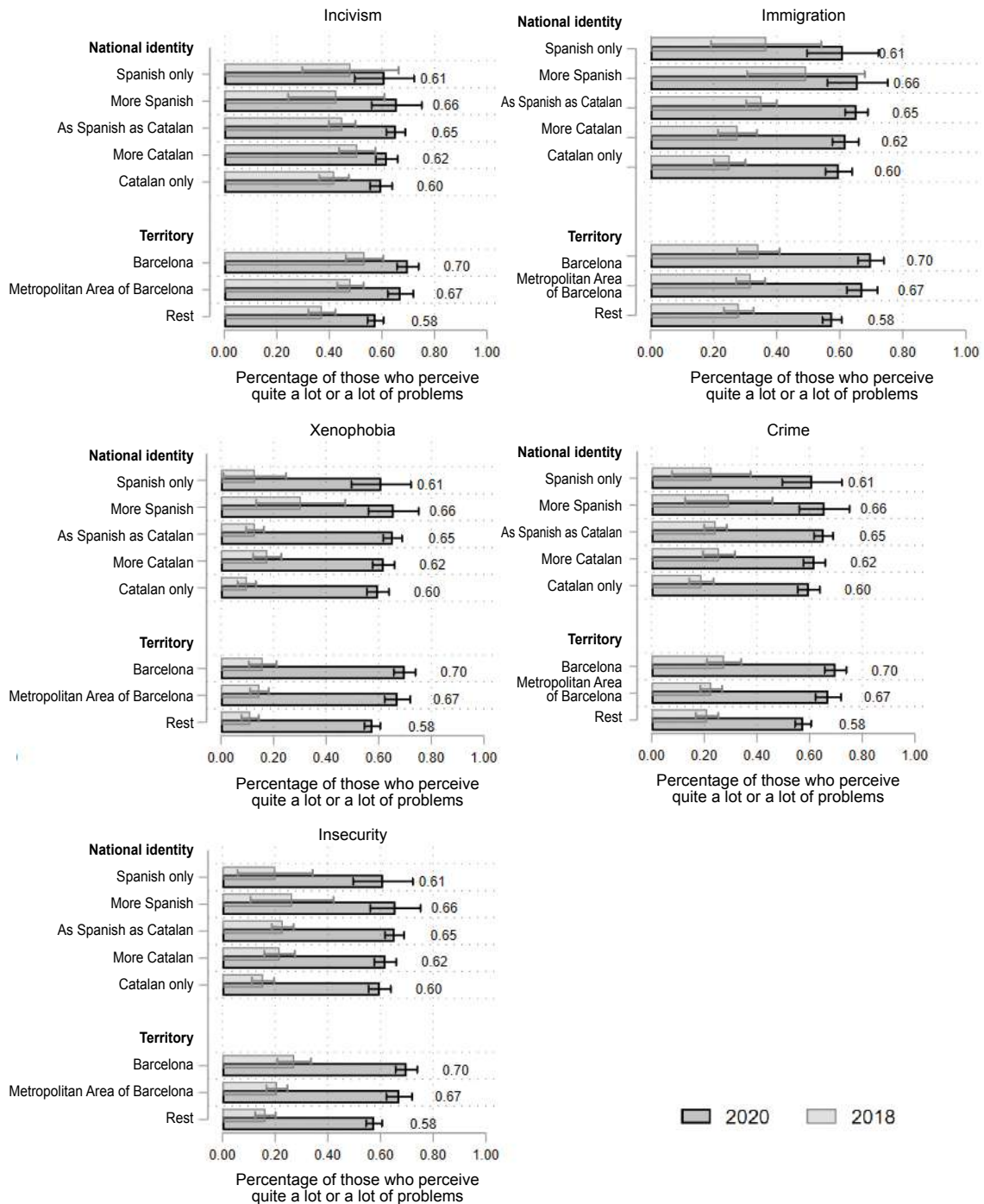
Figure 59: Predicted percentage of those people who perceive many or quite a few coexistence problems according to national belonging and area of residence (ICIP 2018[21]-ICIP 2020 data)

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21. ICIP 2018: Percepció de la població de Catalunya sobre la convivència i la seguretat. Informes 15/2018. ICIP. Available at : http://icip.gencat.cat/web/.content/continguts/publicacions/documents_i_informes/2018/Informe-Enquesta.pdf

ANNEXES

ANNEX 1: QUESTIONNAIRE

1. En quin idioma prefereixes omplir el qüestionari?/ In which language would you prefer to fill in the questionnaire?

    Catalan

    Spanish

2. Gender

Male	1
Female	2

3. Could you tell me your age?

_____   [   ]

4. What is the municipality of your residence?

Make the list of municipalities appear. Spontaneous.

5. What is the highest level of your completed studies?

No studies	1
Primary education or similar	2
Compulsory secondary education or similar	3
High School Graduate (High School Degree, Medium Level Vocational Training or similar)	4
Higher vocational training	5
Undergraduate university studies (degree or diploma)	6
Postgraduate university studies (master's or doctorate)	7

6. On a scale of 1 to 10 where 1 is 'VERY BAD' and 10 is 'VERY GOOD', how would you rate the coexistence in your municipality/neighbourhood? And in Catalonia?

	Very bad									Very good
Coexistence in your municipality/ neighbourhood	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Coexistence in Catalonia	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

7. To what extent do you perceive the following problems of coexistence in your municipality/ neighbourhood?

	None	Few	Quite a few	Many	NR/DK
Incivism: Dirt, noise, dog excrement in the street, etc.					
Immigration					
Xenophobia/Discrimination					
Crime, drug problems					
Insecurity					

8. On a scale of 1 to 10, where 1 means you can never be too careful when dealing with others and 10 means you can trust most people, where would you place yourself?

       1_____10

9. As you know, in recent years there has been a lot of talk about political polarisation in Catalonia, that is, about the growing distance that is separating certain Catalans from others. To what extent do you think Catalan society is polarised according to the following criteria?

	Not polarised at all (1)		Highly polarised (10)
Language of common use			
Social class			
Opinions on feminism			
Opinions on the independence process			
Opinions on immigration			
Opinions on taxes and the welfare state			
Political response to the COVID19 pandemic			

10. In terms of polarisation, how would you rate the degree of polarisation in the following areas?

	Not at all (1)		A lot (10)
Society at large			
Political Parties-Political Class			
Media			
Myself			

11. Considering those people who, politically, think very differently from you, could you tell me to what extent you perceive the following emotions?

	Not at all (1)		A lot (10)
Anguish			
Impotence			
Fear			
Sadness			
Anger			
Belittling			
Trust			
Respect			
Empathy			

12. To what extent do you agree with the following statements?

	Strongly disagree (1)		Strongly agree (10)
People I disagree with politically are not bad people			
People with whom I disagree politically are only misinformed			
I am afraid because my culture and my way of life are very vulnerable at the moment			
I think a lot about the threats to my culture and way of life			
I never think about the threats to the survival of my culture and my way of life			
Those who defend a solution to the sovereignty process through dialogue are either deluded or do not understand what is at stake			

13. How would you position yourself according to the following scales?

Paying less tax, even if public services are reduced								Improving public services, even if taxes are increased
Immigrants should maintain their culture of origin and not adopt the culture of the country they have arrived in								Immigrants should have to abandon their culture of origin and adopt the culture of the country they have arrived in
Everyone's rights and freedoms must be guaranteed, even if traditional order and values are not protected								Traditional order and values must be protected, even if some rights or freedoms are lost
Independence for Catalonia								No self-government for Catalonia
The political response to the COVID19 situation has been flawless								The political response to the COVID19 situation has been disastrous

14. Thinking about the independence of Catalonia. You are...

- Completely in favour
- Mostly in favour
- Mostly opposed
- Completely opposed
- Indifferent
- I prefer not to answer

15. Regarding the current stance of the Catalonia-Spain relations, what would you say the priority is?

- A policy of dialogue and negotiation without limits
- A policy of dialogue and negotiation within the framework of the Constitution
- A "heavy-handed" policy by the Spanish government
- A unilateral policy by the Government of Catalonia
- Another option

16. To what extent do you agree with the following statements?

	Strongly disagree (1)		Strongly agree (10)
During the Sovereignty process, the Catalan government has made mistakes that have made it more difficult to find a solution, not easier			
During the Sovereignty Process, the Spanish government has made mistakes that have made it more difficult to find a solution, not easier			

17. During the sovereignty process, did you feel threatened by:

	Strongly disagree (1)		Strongly agree (10)
An institution			
Your friend environment			
Your work environment			
Your family environment			
People you follow on social networks			

18. Which of the following statements do you identify with the most? I feel...
Only one answer

Spanish only	
More Spanish than Catalan	
As Spanish as Catalan	
More Catalan than Spanish	
Only Catalan	
Do not know/ Do not answer	

19. When talking about politics, the expressions left and right are usually used. Using this scale, where would you place yourself?

Extreme Left 0_____10 Extreme Right

20. On a scale from 1 (minimum) to 10 (maximum) how would you rate your chances of voting for the following parties?

	None (1)		Many (10)
Junts per Catalunya (Together for Catalonia -Junts x Cat)			
Ciutadans (Citizens)			
Esquerra Republicana de Catalunya (Republican Left of Catalonia-ERC)			
Partit Nacional de Catalunya (National Catalan Party -PNC)			
Partit Socialista de Catalunya (Socialist's Party of Catalonia -PSC)			
Catalunya en Comú-Podem (Catalonia in Common)			
Candidatura d'Unitat Popular (Popular Unity Candidacy CUP)			
Partit Popular (People's Party-PP)			
VOX			

21. If the topic of Catalan independence were to come up in the following places, would you be willing to join the conversation?

	Very willing	Quite willing	Quite unwilling	Not at all willing
Conversation with the neighbours				
At work				
Conversation with friends				
Conversation with relatives				
Social networks				

22. To what extent do you think the following people in your environment share your views on the independence of Catalonia?

	Mostly agree	Somewhat agree	Somewhat disagree	Mostly disagree	Have none	I don't know how they think
Your partner						
The other members of the family						
Work colleagues						
Your neighbours						
Friend circle						
People who follow you on social networks						

23. If the topic of feminism were to come up in the following spaces, would you be willing to join the conversation?

	Very willing	Quite willing	Quite unwilling	Not at all willing
Conversation with the neighbours				
At work				
Conversation with friends				
Conversation with relatives				
Social networks				

24. To what extent do you think the following people around you share your views on feminism?

|	Mostly agree	Somewhat agree	Somewhat disagree	Mostly disagree	Have none	I don't know how they think
Your partner						
The other members of the family						
Work colleagues						
Your neighbours						
Friend circle						
People who follow you on social networks						

ANNEX 2: TECHNICAL DATA ABOUT THE SURVEY

- Universe: Population over 18 years of age.
- Scope: Catalonia.
- Methodology: Quantitative.
- Fieldwork dates: 27-30 July 2020.
- Collection of information: Online.
- Size of the sample: 2,010 respondents.
- Sample rates: Gender and age group (crossed) and Territory (independent)
- Affiliation: Proportional in the universe.
- Duration: 12 minutes (two languages).
- Sample error: +3.16% for the reference population, under the assumption of maximum indetermination (p=q=0.5) and for a 95.5% confidence level (z=2).
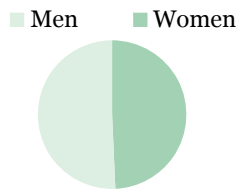
ANNEX 3: SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE

TERRITORY (%)

Scope	Survey	%
Barcelona City	523	26,0
Rest of the Barcelona Metropolitan Area	384	19,1
Rest of the province of Barcelona	568	28,3
Girona	200	10,0
Lleida	118	5,9
Tarragona	217	10,8
	2010	
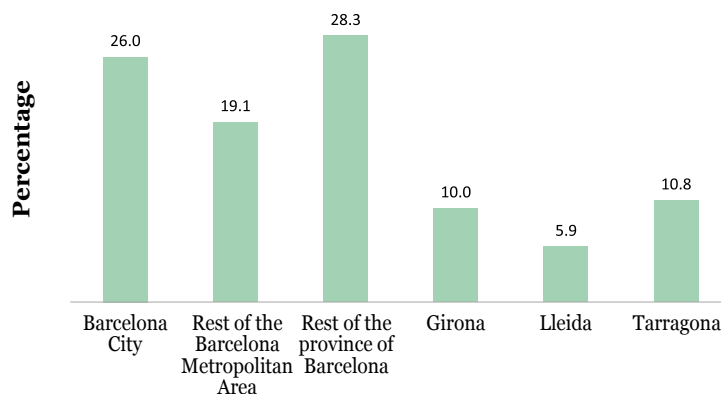
AGE AND GENDER

Age	Gender		Total
	Men	**Women**	
De 18 a 24	72	61	133
De 25 a 29	65	70	135
De 30 a 34	80	69	149
De 35 a 39	101	88	189
De 40 a 44	120	100	220
De 45 a 49	111	100	211
De 50 a 54	101	91	192
De 55 a 59	83	81	164
De 60 a 64	73	71	144
65 i més	213	260	473
TOTAL	**1.019**	**991**	**2.010**

Gender (%)

■ Men ■ Women

Age (%)

$\bar{X}$ = 49.3 years

18-24	25-29	30-34	35-39	40-44	45-49	50-54	55-59	60-64	65 i +
6.6	6.7	7.4	9.4	11.0	10.5	9.6	8.2	7.2	23.5

LEVEL OF COMPLETED STUDIES

Percentage

No studies	Primary education	Secondary education	High School Graduate	Higher vocational training	Undergraduate university studies (degree or diploma)	Postgraduate university studies (master's or doctorate)
.2	2.9	10.3	24.4	19.1	30.6	12.5