The Long Shadow of the Spanish Civil War

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December 6, 2021

Motivation

- Civil conflicts are extremely common: more than half of all nations have suffered them (Blattman and Miguel 2010)
- They can profoundly shape how individuals interact with each other and their political identities

- Ongoing debate about the relationship between:
  1. Conflict and social capital (Bauer et al. 2016)
  2. Conflict and political identities (Lupu and Peisakhin 2017)

- How long do these effects last?

This paper

- Long-term effects of the **Spanish Civil War** (1936-39) on trust and voting
- **Data:** Survey data on contemporary trust, political outcomes, geo-located mass graves
- **Identification:**
  1. Routes taken by the troops, military plans of attack and historical (1931) highway network in an *IV setting*
  2. *Spatial RD* along the Aragon front
- **Results:**
  - Negative effects of political violence against civilians $\rightarrow$ *victimization type matters*
  - Long-lasting effects of political violence on voting patterns and political engagement
- Mechanisms of transmission: collective memory / salience

Outline

1. Literature
2. Historical Background
3. Conceptual Framework
4. Empirical Analysis
   - Effects on Trust
   - Effects on Voting
5. Mechanisms of Transmission
6. Conclusions

Literature on Conflict and Social Capital

Does war foster cooperation?

- Opposing views:
  1. Some studies have found a positive impact of conflict on cooperation (Bauer et al. 2006, Voors et al. 2012)
  2. Other papers have found negative effects on trust (Rohner et al. 2013, Cassar et al. 2013, Alacevich and Zejcirovic 2020)

- *Does the type of violence matter?*

- Most papers have focused on relatively recent conflicts

- *Do these effects persist in the long term?*
- *Do they translate into relevant political behavior?*

★ We distinguish the type of victimization, look at the long-term and examine voting patterns

Literature on Political Violence and Political Identities

Does political violence generate more or less political support for the perpetrator?

- *Indiscriminate* violence (based on collective markers) reduces political support for the perpetrator (Rozenas et al. 2017, Lupu and Peisakhin 2017)
- *Selective* violence (based on indidivual behavior) induces political loyalty
  - theoretical consensus (Lichbach 1987, Kalyvas 2006, Blaydes 2018)
  - mixed empirical findings (Bautista et al. 2021)

★ Dearth of well-identified empirical studies on the long-term impacts of selective violence

Literature on the Spanish Civil War

- Rich literature in *History* and *Political Science*
  - Thomas (2001), Beevor (1982, 2012), Preston (1996, 2007, 2012), Balcells (2011, 2012, 2017), Oto-Peralías (2015), Villamil (2020)

★ First paper in *Economics* to look at the long-term impact of the Spanish Civil War using newly available data and modern econometric techniques

Historical Background

- Second Spanish Republic (1931-1939)
- 1936 elections won by the *Popular Front* (leftist coalition)
- Right-wing forces mounted a coup against the government
  - coup d'etat on 17th-18th July, led by military commanders in North Africa
  - divided the armed forces and the Spanish territory fairly evenly
- The armed uprising became the Spanish Civil War (1936-1939) between pro-Republican and Nationalist forces

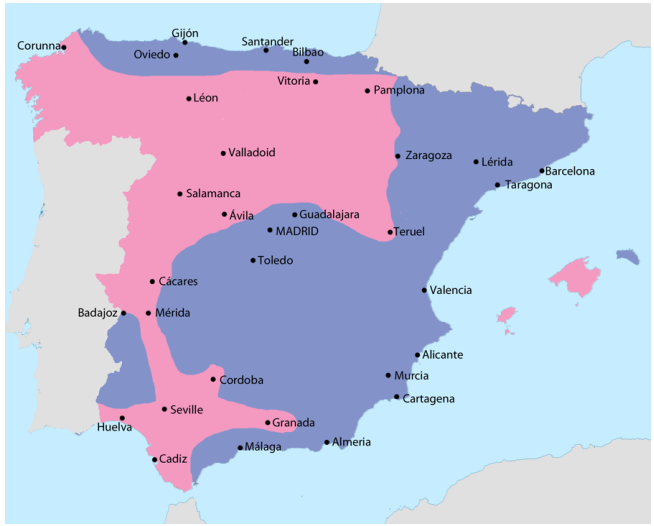


Figure: September 1936

Figure: October 1937

Figure: July 1938

Figure: February 1939

The territory under the control of the Nationalists is shown in pink, and under the control of the Republicans in blue. ▸ key moments

Victims of Spanish Civil War

- Estimated total toll: 600,000 casualties

Repression by the Nationalist	141,951 130,199	Prada Rodríquez (2010) Preston (2011)
Repression by the pro-Republicans	50,065 49,272	Prada Rodríquez (2010) Vera (2010)
Killed in combat	300,000	Preston (2011)
Population in 1930	23,614,418	Census

Notes: Population in 1930 includes Ceuta, Melilla and the Northern Africa territories. Data from "La España Masacrada" by Julio Prada Rodríguez, Alianza Editorial, 2010, and "The Spanish Holocaust: Inquisition and Extermination in Twentieth-Century Spain", Paul Preston, W.W. Norton & Company, 2011.

Historical Background

- War ended in 1939, won by the Nationalists
- General **Franco**, who became the leader of the military coup in the fall of 1936, established a **dictatorship** that ruled over Spain from 1939 until his death in 1975
- Repression and political propaganda continued during the dictatorship
- There has been no formal investigation of the war and dictatorship crimes

Political Violence in the SCW

1. **Massive** (1/3 of total casualties)
   - 52.4% of respondents reported at least one family member or close connection victimized as a consequence of the Civil War ▸ 2008 survey

2. **Targeted**
   - Nationalist repression mostly targeted citizens loyal to the *Popular Front*, also intellectuals, Basque and Catalan nationalists
     - ★ explicit desire for annihilation of "leftists" ▸ quote
   - Republican repression mostly targeted Catholic clergy and nobility, industrialists and conservatives

3. **Relied on a network of informants**
   - In order to target victims, authorities relied on reports. Individuals often informed against their neighbors to allay suspicions or avoid reprisals (Vico 1998)

Conceptual Framework

- **Models of parochial prosociality** (Bowles 2006; Choi and Bowles 2007; Boyd and Richerson 2005)
  - conflict fosters cooperation towards in-group members but not towards outsiders
  - *assumption*: clear boundaries between in-group and out-group members
- In our context, allies and enemies are not readily identifiable (as in Cassar et al. 2013)
- *Culture of denunciation* $\rightarrow$ *Culture of mistrust*
  - similar mechanism as in Nunn and Wantchekon (2011) and Litcher et al. (2021)

★ We expect to find less trust in places where repression was higher

Conceptual Framework (ctd)

- **Selective violence** is effective in achieving deterrence (Kalyvas 2006):
  - authorities need to cultivate a perception of credible selection
  - the use of local agents is essential in generating this perception
- In our context, evidence that individuals adjusted their behavior to the dictates of the ruling regime
  - E.g., after the Nationalist troops occupied an Aragonese town, religious practice—a proxy for support for the Nationalists—increased sharply (Lison-Tolosana, 2014)
- This **induced obedience** can translate into long-lasting political preferences

★ We expect to find voting patterns aligned with the political identity of the perpetrator

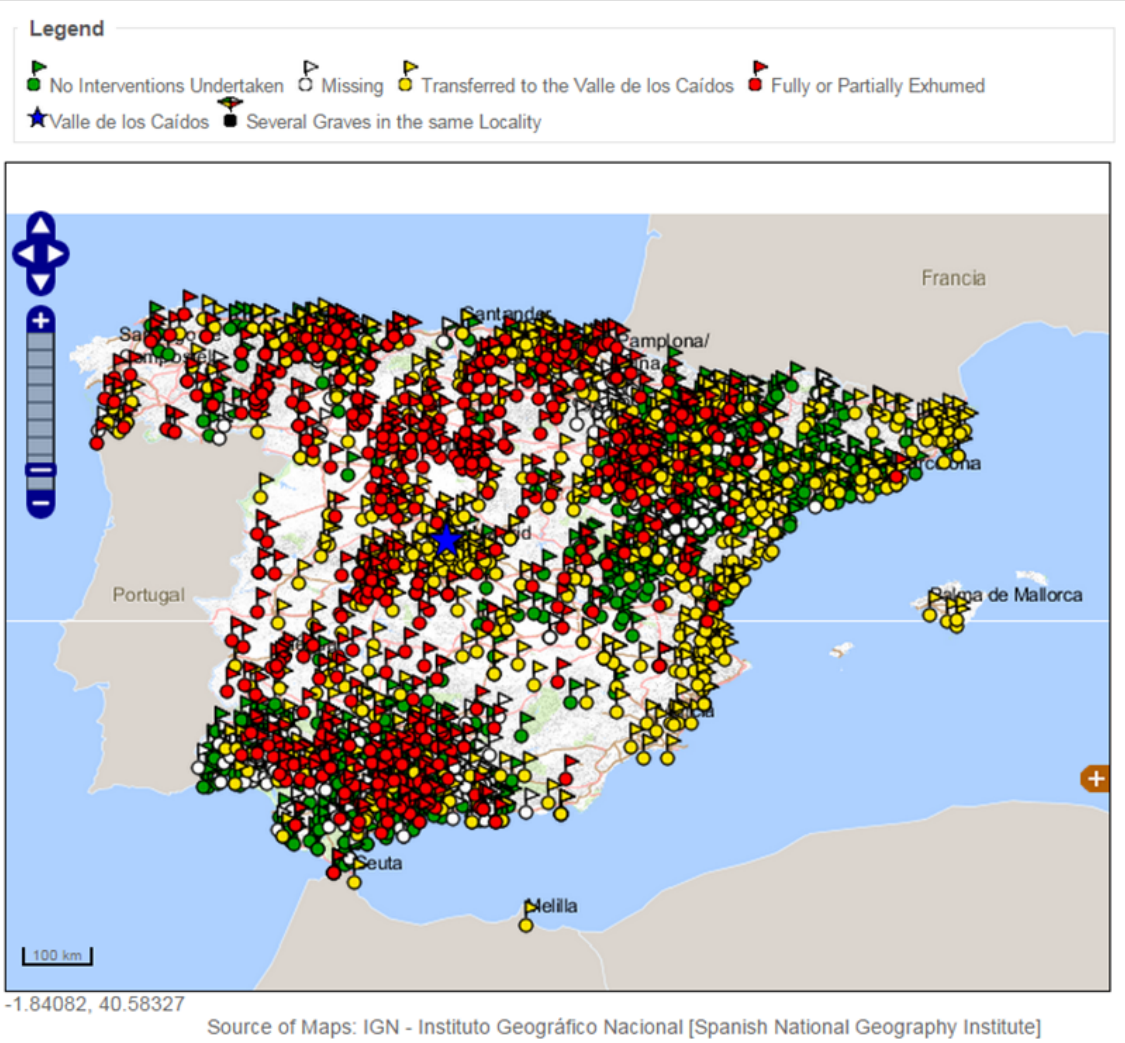
Effects on Trust

1. Data
   - On *conflict*: map of mass graves
   - On *trust*: survey data
2. Empirical strategy
   - OLS results
   - IV, using the deviations from initial plans of attack

Data

- **Conflict**: *map of mass graves* (Spanish Ministry of Justice)
  - complemented and updated with regional information and the universe of exhumed mass graves
- **Trust**: multiple cross-sectional individual-level surveys for the period 1998-2015 (Spain's Sociological Research Center, CIS) ▸ more
  - *generalized trust*, as well as other socio-demographic information at the individual level
  - partially anonimized to include information at the district level
- Other data sources:
  - historical maps: 1931 road network, military plans, troops' movements during the war
  - geographic and climatic variables

Map of Mass Graves



Notes: Raw mass grave data from the Spanish Ministry of Justice.

- A total of 2,458 mass graves that contain (estimated) 68,950 corpses

▸ more stats ▸ more maps

Types of Mass Graves and Victimization

- (Modern) **Exhumed**:
  - mostly political violence against *civilians* ▸ cause ▸ location ▸ burial date ▸ exhumation date
- (Exhumed and Transferred 1958-1983) **Transferred to Valley of the Fallen** (monument and mausoleum, promoted by Franco):
  - mainly *soldiers* + some *civilians* ▸ newspaper ▸ estimates
- **Not intervened**:
  - largely *soldiers* dead during military combat or in military hospitals
- **Missing**:
  - combination of the above

Empirical Specification

$$y_{idy} = \alpha + \beta x_d + \delta \boldsymbol{z}_{idy} + \gamma_r Region_r + \lambda_y Year_y + \epsilon_{idy}$$

- Trust (y_{idy}) for individual i, in district d, in year y on corpses in mass graves x_d (divided by 1930 district population)
- Control variables (z_{idy}) at the individual and district level
- Region (γ_r) and year (λ_y) FE

OLS Results on Generalized Trust

- **All mass graves** proxy for total deaths
- **Exhumed mass graves** proxy for political violence

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
All corpses/Population	-0.002***	-0.0008	-0.0004	-0.0004
	(0.0005)	(0.0005)	(0.0011)	(0.0010)
Exhumed corpses/Population	-0.0073***	-0.0068***	-0.0237***	-0.0225***
	(0.0023)	(0.0023)	(0.0058)	(0.0057)
Observations	38,287	38,275	36,159	35,839
Adj-R^2	0.03	0.04	0.05	0.07
Region and year FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Age and district controls	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Geographic and climatic	No	No	Yes	Yes
Education and employment	No	No	No	Yes
Observations	38,287	38,275	36,159	35,839
Mean dep. variable	4.86	4.86	4.85	4.85

Notes: The dependent variable takes values from 0 to 10, where 0 indicates that you need to be very careful when dealing with people and 10 that most people can be trusted. *All corpses(Exhumed corpses)/Population* is measured as the total (exhumed) number of corpses in all types of (exhumed) mass graves in each judicial district divided by the population that judicial district had in 1930 and multiplied by 1,000. All models include region and survey-year FE. *Age and district controls* includes FE for age groups, for current size of the municipalities, population in 1930 as well as in the survey year, and area at the district level. *Geographic and climatic* includes an index of caloric yield of the soil, ruggedness, average temperature and its standard deviation, distance to river and to coast, and landcover. *Education and employment* includes level of education and employment status of the individual. Robust standard errors in parentheses. * $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$.

Effects of Exhumation on Generalized Trust

Within district changes in trust after exhumation

	(1)	(2)
Post-Exhumation	0.066	0.051
	(0.0763)	(0.0772)
Post*Older65		0.073
		(0.0653)
Observations	34,377	34,377
Adj-R^2	0.10	0.10
Year FE	Yes	Yes
Judicial District FE	374	374
Mean dep. variable	4.9	4.9

The dependent variable takes values from 0 to 10, where 0 indicates that you need to be very careful when dealing with people and 10 that most people can be trusted. All models include judicial district, survey-year FE, FE for age groups, level of education and employment status of the individual. Model (2) includes an interaction term of post with being older than 65. Robust standard errors in parentheses. * $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$.

▸ Priaranza del Bierzo ▸ Restricted

Identification Strategy

- Potential endogeneity of conflict
  - communities might have been targeted according to their level of trust
  - unobservable factors related to conflict and trust

- **IV for conflict:** distance to the road taken by the Nationalist troops in their march to Madrid

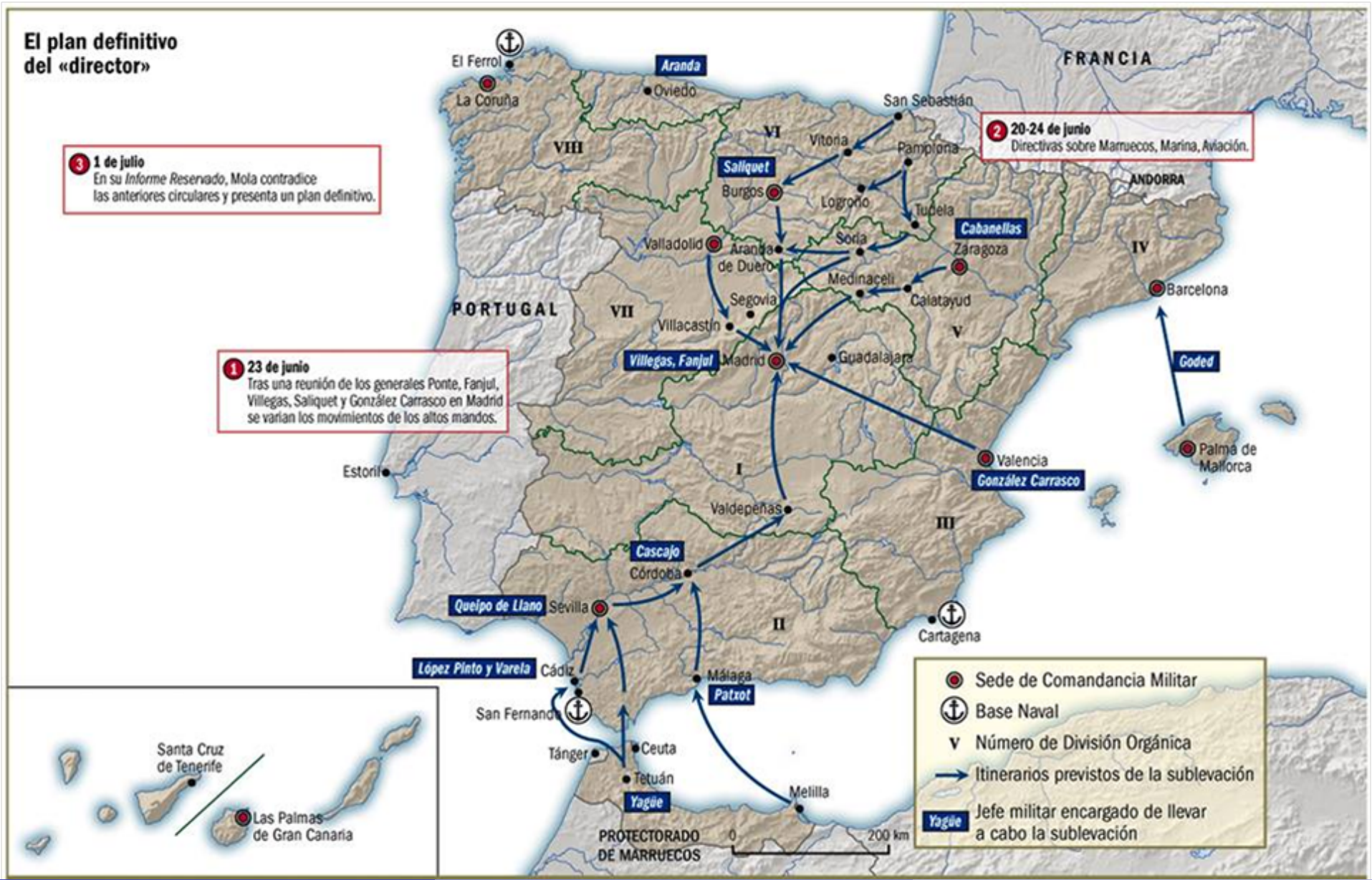
- We control for initial military plans of attack

- *Identifying assumption:* conditional on the initial plans, the actual routes taken are plausibly random (Card and Dahl, 2011)
  - deviations from these plans were due to unforeseen circumstances

    ▸ failed insurrections

- We further restrict to districts covered by the primary road network

General Mola's Plan



General Mola's Plan using 1931 Roads

▸ map districts

The Taking of Madrid using 1931 Roads

▸ map districts ▸ History ▸ heat map

IV Results: Exhumed Mass Graves on Trust

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
	Panel A: First-Stage Results			
Distance to the takeover of Madrid	-0.0081***	-0.0091***	-0.0047***	-0.0059***
	(0.00028)	(0.0003)	(0.0004)	(0.0004)
F-statistic	873.62	902.92	136.21	220.39
	Panel B: Second-Stage Results			
Exhumed corpses/Population	-0.098***	-0.088***	-0.203**	-0.187***
	(0.0333)	(0.0318)	(0.0863)	(0.0712)
Centered R^2	0.07	0.07	0.04	0.05
Region and Year FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Controls	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Restricted to primary road	No	Yes	No	Yes
Mola's Plan control	No	No	Yes	Yes
Observations	29,531	27,372	29,531	27,372
Mean dependent variable	4.83	4.86	4.83	4.86

Interpretation (based on 3): a one-standard-deviation in the corpses in exhumed mass graves is associated with a 0.37 of a one-standard-deviation decrease in generalized trust

Exhumed corpses/Population is measured as the total (and updated) number of corpses exhumed in each district divided by the population that district had in 1930 and multiplied by 1,000. The instrument is the nearest distance (in meters) from the district's centroid to the primary road that existed in 1931 that was taken in the advancement of the Francoist troops in the taking over Madrid. *Controls* include age-group, education and labor status of the individual fixed effects, current size of the municipality fixed effects, population in 1930 and in the survey year, area of the district, primary roads in 1931, ruggedness, mean temperature and its standard deviation, distance to river and to coast, an index of caloric yield of the soil, a landcover index, and distance to Madrid. *Mola's Plan control* measures the nearest distance (in meters) from the district's centroid to the primary road that existed in 1931 and that General Mola planned to use to take Madrid. Sample restricted to districts in Peninsular Spain, excluding Madrid. Robust standard errors in parentheses. * $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$.

▸ All ▸ OLS Restricted

IV Results: Exhumed, Robustness

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
	Panel A: First-Stage Results			
Distance to the takeover of Madrid	-0.013***	-0.007***	-0.0017***	-0.0017***
	(0.0006)	(0.0004)	(0.0001)	(0.0005)
F-statistic	466.77	388.9	493.14	13.39
	Panel B: Second-Stage Results			
Exhumed	-0.063*	-0.128**	-0.529**	-0.529*
	(0.0365)	(0.0567)	(0.2341)	(0.2895)
South only	Yes	No	No	No
Extensive Margin	No	Yes	No	No
Extensive (binary)	No	No	Yes	No
Cluster(region)	No	No	No	Yes
Observations	13,826	29,587	29,587	29,587
Mean dependent variable	4.65	4.83	4.83	4.83

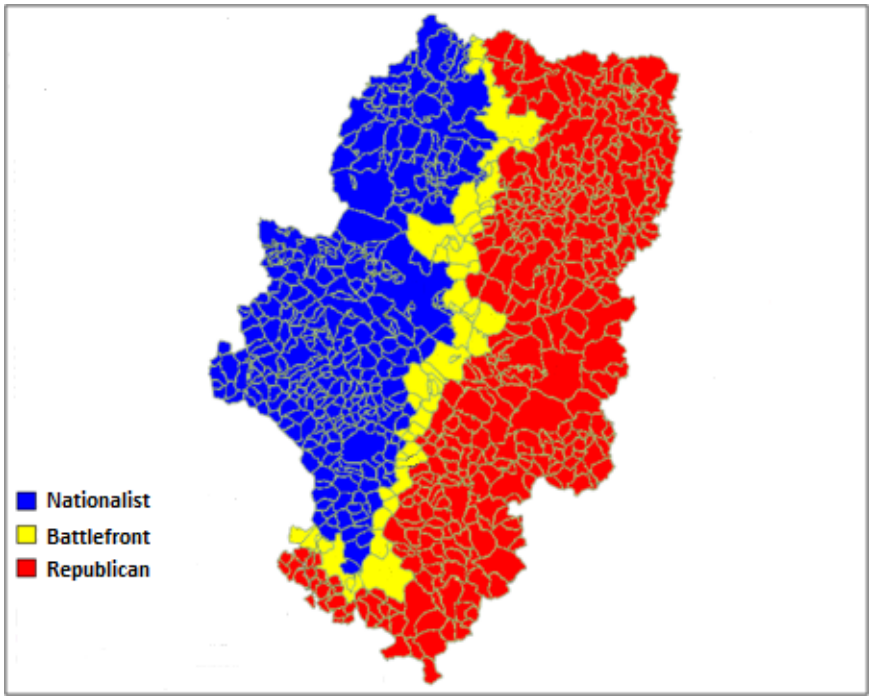
Exhumed is measured as the number of corpses exhumed in each district divided by the population that district had in 1930 and multiplied by 1,000 in Column 1. In Column 2 we use the total number of exhumed mass graves in each district. In Columns 3 and 4 we use a binary variable that takes the value 1 if in the district there is at least one exhumed mass grave and 0 otherwise. The instrument is the nearest distance (in meters) from the district's centroid to the primary road that existed in 1931 that was taken in the advancement of the Francoist troops in the taking over Madrid. *Controls* include region and year FE, age-group, education and labor status of the individual FE, current size of the municipality FE, population in 1930 and in the survey year, area of the district, primary roads in 1931, ruggedness, mean temperature and its standard deviation, distance to river and to coast, an index of caloric yield of the soil, a landcover index, and distance to Madrid. We further control for the *Mola's Plan control* measures the nearest distance (in meters) from the district's centroid to the primary road that existed in 1931 and that General Mola planned to use to take Madrid. Sample restricted to districts in the mainland, without Madrid. Column 1 further restricts the sample to individuals living in provinces in the southern half of mainland Spain. Robust standard errors in Columns 1, 2 and 3, and clustered at the Region level in Column 4, in parentheses. * $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$.

Effects on Voting

1. The Aragon Front
2. Data
   - On political repression
   - On voting: pre-war (1936) and democratic elections (1977-2016)
3. Empirical strategy: Spatial RDD
4. RD results

The Aragon Front

- One of the most important battlefronts of the Civil War
- Split the Aragon Region in half. Exact location random
- Lasted for almost two years (Spring 1936-July 1938)
- Political repercussions in a spatial RD setting (Fontana et al. 2017, Cannella et al. 2021)



Own elaboration based on Maldonado (2007).

▸ Aragon

Data

- Detailed **data on mass graves** with information about *which side* perpetrated the killings
- We focus on repression-related mass graves
  - 398 mass graves classified as Nationalist repression
  - 238 mass graves classified as Republican repression
- 1936 (pre-war) elections at the local level (Balcells 2011)
- Congressional (and municipal) elections at the municipal level for the period 1977-2019
  - We code the political ideology (left vs right) of the party
- Geographic and Infrastructure variables for smoothness checks

Empirical Strategy: Spatial RD

$$y_{ipt} = \alpha + \beta Nationalist_{ip} + f(DistanceFront)_{ip} + x'_{ip}\gamma + \delta_p + \zeta_t + \epsilon_{ipt}$$

y: voting results for municipality i in province p in election year t

$Nationalist_{ip}$: equal to one if fell in the Nationalist side and zero if in the Republican side

$DistanceFront$: distance to the front (in km)

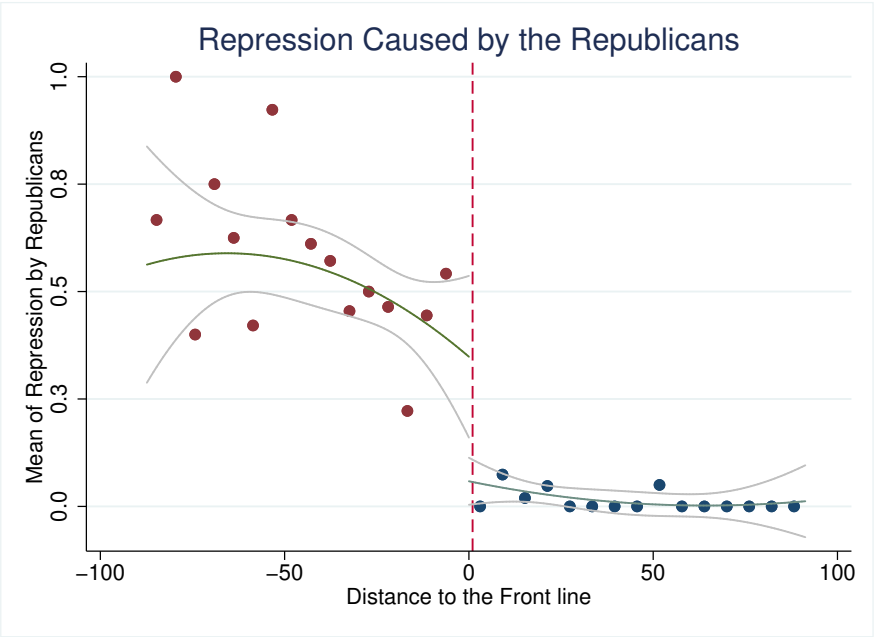
x'_{ip}: function of latitude and longitude as a control

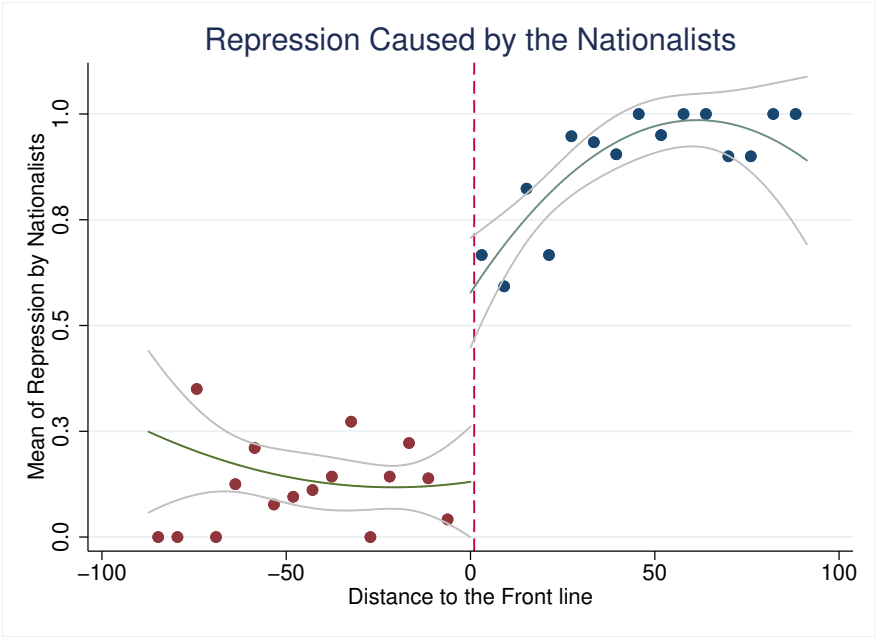
δ_p and ζ_t: province and election (year) FE

- We drop municipalities located at the frontline and run robustness tests that include them

- Distance to the front is positive for the Nationalist side, and negative for the Republican one

Political Repression

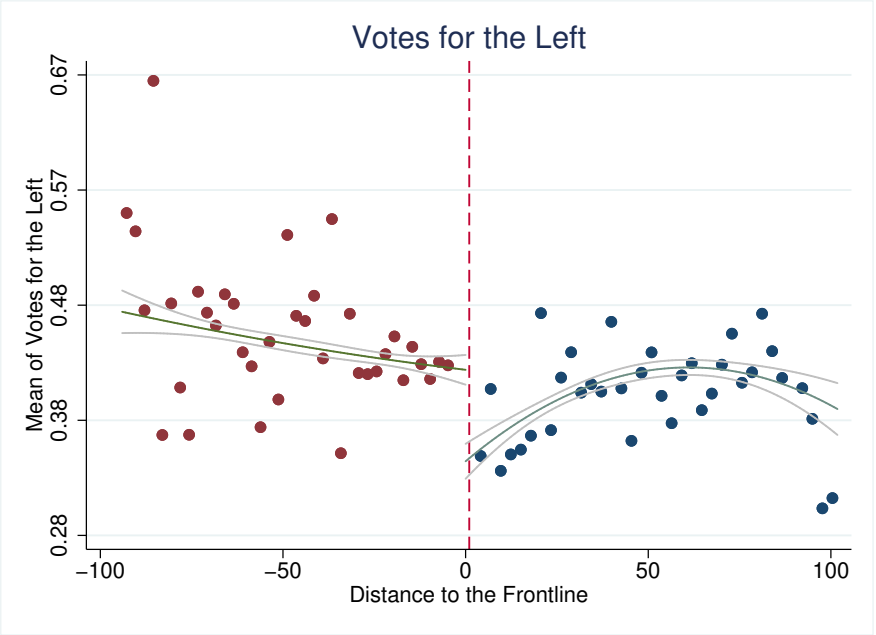


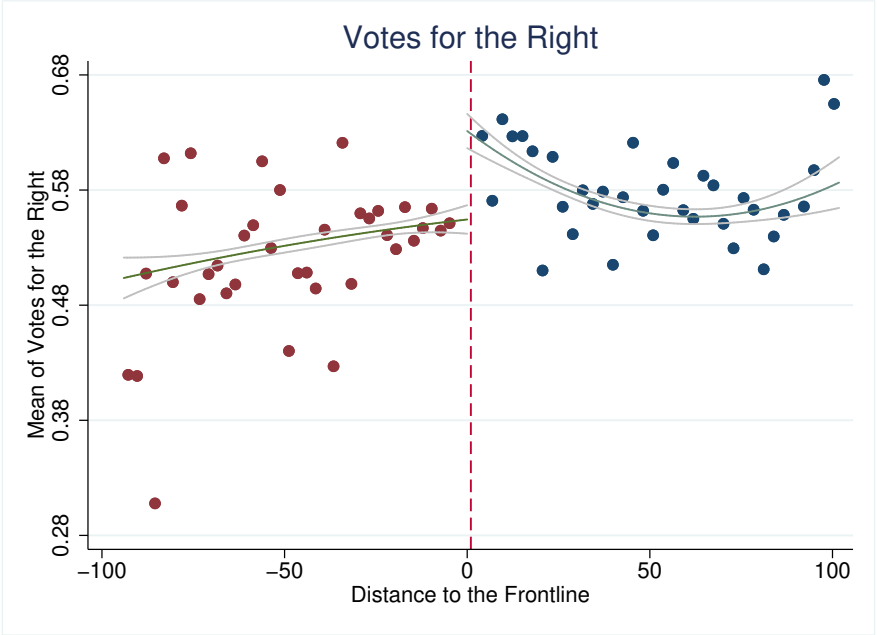


Repression is measured as the presence of mass graves that are due to repression by Republicans (left) or Nationalists (right) at a given distance. The dots show the mean of political repression conditional on distance to the front. The lines are quadratic best fits, with confidence intervals. Mass graves located within the front are excluded. We restrict to mass graves that are not missing, i.e., exhumed or localized. We compute distance to the frontline by using the geo-located information for the individual mass grave when available or the municipality centroid when missing. The frontline is computed by using information on the centroid of all 47 municipalities that comprised the frontline. Negative values of distance correspond to the Republican side. RD coefficient (st.error) is -0.75*** (0.250) for the left panel and 0.45* (0.263) for the right panel, using the `rdrobust` command. *** $p < 0.01$, * $p < 0.1$.

▸ Intensity ▸ Total ▸ Associations

Voting Results. Congressional 1977-2019. RD Graph





The dots show the means of votes for left-wing (left panel) or right-wing parties (right panel) for the Spanish Parliament elections to Congress 1977-2019, conditional on distance to the frontline. The lines are quadratic fits, with confidence intervals. Municipalities located within the front are excluded. Negative values of distance correspond to the Republican side. RD coefficients (st.error) are -0.07*** (0.0142) for the left and 0.07*** (0.0128) for the right, using the `rdrobust` command. *** $p < 0.01$.

- Similar patterns found with municipal elections
- Driven by moderate votes

▸ McCrary ▸ Moderates ▸ Municipal

Voting Results. Congressional 1977-2019. RD Table

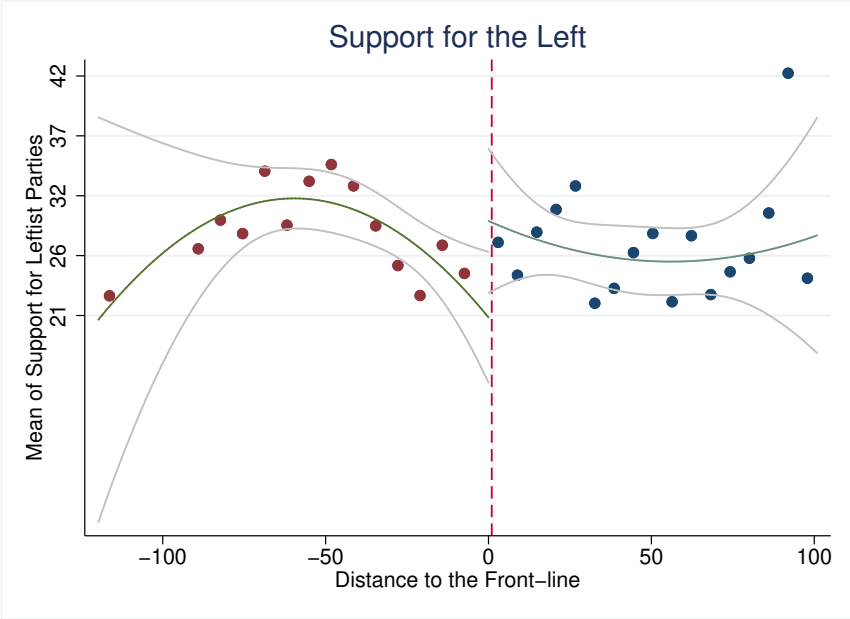
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
			Panel A: Votes for the Left		
RD coefficient	-0.069***	-0.20***	-0.078***	-0.090***	-0.097***
	(0.0142)	(0.0349)	(0.0153)	(0.0184)	(0.0173)
			Panel B: Votes for the Right		
RD coefficient	0.072***	0.20***	0.076***	0.072***	0.087***
	(0.0128)	(0.0359)	(0.0153)	(0.0147)	(0.0148)
Frontline municipalities	No	Yes	No	No	No
Latitude and Longitude controls	No	No	Yes	No	Yes
Province fixed effects	No	No	No	Yes	Yes
Observations	10,210	10,915	10,210	10,210	10,210

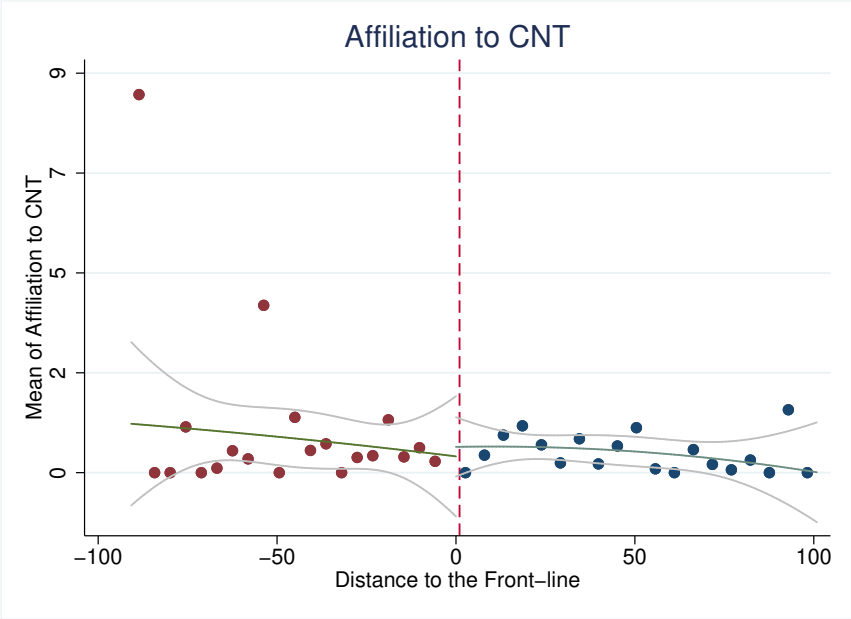
Notes: Coefficients display the difference among mean on the right and the left side of the front of Aragon. Conventional standard errors are displayed in parenthesis. All estimations are local RD using the `rdrobust` command. * $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$.

▸ robustness

Pre-war Political Attitudes: 1936 Left Votes and CNT Union Membership

- No evidence of discontinuities in ideology (left, anarcho-sindicalist union), political competition or pre-war violence





The dots show the average votes for leftist parties in the 1936 elections (left) and the average affiliation rate to the anarcho-sindicalist union (CNT, *Comite Nacional de Trabajadores*) in 1936 (right), both at the locality level and conditional of the distance to the front-line. The lines are quadratic fits, with confidence intervals. Municipalities located within the front are excluded. Negative values of distance correspond to the Republican side. RD coefficients (st.error) are -1.5 (7.76) (left) and -0.07 (0.42) (right), using `rdrobust` command.

▸ Political Competition 1936 and Pre-war Violence ▸ Balancedness

Mechanisms of Persistence

How could the political and cultural aftereffects been maintained long after the conflict ended?

1. **Anti-Francoist activity** in the Aragon region:
   - civilian collaborator networks may have continued even during later stages of the dictatorship ▸ more

2. **Spanish Civil War survey** in 2008:
   - individuals in areas more exposed to political violence participate less in politics ▸ more
   - and have a different opinion and recollection of the war ▸ more

3. **Francoist street names**:
   - municipalities closer to exhumed mass graves (our proxy for political violence) have more Francoist-named streets ▸ more

Conclusion

- **Spanish Civil War** (1936-1939) had significant *cultural* and *political* consequences, several generations after its official end
- Negative effect of political violence on generalized trust
- Areas historically occupied by the Republican side **vote** significantly more for the left today, while those occupied by Nationalist troops do so for the right
- **Selective political violence** as a driver of mistrust and political obedience
- Consistent with a **collective memory** mechanism of persistence