

The Long-Term Electoral Legacies of Civil War in Young Democracies: Italy, 1946-1968

Comparative Political Studies

2019, Vol. 52(6) 927–961

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DOI: 10.1177/0010414018784057

journals.sagepub.com/home/cps

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Abstract

Are there long-term legacies of civil wars on the electoral geography of post-conflict democracies? We argue that parties derived from armed bands enjoy an organizational advantage in areas where they fought and won the war. Former combatants can create a strong local party organization that serves as a crucial mobilization tool for elections. Parties have strong incentives to institutionalize this organizational advantage and retain electoral strongholds over time. We test our theory on the case of Italy (1946–1968). Our findings indicate that, on average, the communist party managed to create a stronger organization in areas where its bands fought the resistance war against Nazi-Fascist forces—and left-wing parties had a better electoral performance in those areas in subsequent elections. A stronger party organization is correlated with a positive electoral performance for many years, while the direct effect of civil war on electoral patterns decays after few years.

Keywords

civil war, democratization and regime change, European politics, Italy, political legacies

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“Without a guiding organisation the energy of the masses would dissipate like steam not enclosed in a piston-box. But nevertheless what moves things is not the piston or the box, but the steam.”

—Leon Trotsky (1932)

Introduction

Do political parties that emerge from armed groups impact the electoral geography of post-civil war democracies? Patterns of electoral behavior can show distinctive and long-lasting geographical features (Agnew, 1996) and theories based on social capital postulate long-term stability of local political dynamics (Guiso, Sapienza, & Zingales, 2016; Putnam, Leonardi, & Nanetti, 1993). Nonetheless, civil wars seem likely to have a deep impact on the electoral geography of young democracies. Studying the electoral consequences of the resistance war in Italy, we show that armed groups who managed to transform their military presence into strong local party organization enjoy an electoral advantage for many years in areas where their bands fought and locally won the civil war. These effects remain even after the direct political effects of the conflict disappear.

Investigating the link between civil wars and the electoral geography of post-conflict democracies is relevant for contemporary politics because elections have become a fundamental tool to seal the outcome of civil wars and legitimize new political regimes. Since the end of World War II, 99 countries have seen an internal armed conflict come to a close. Post-conflict elections took place in 94 of these countries and 54 of them were deemed democratic, according to international standards, that election year.¹ In fact, democracy is usually adopted as the best nonviolent conflict resolution institution to address past and future grievances, which could lead to a resurgence of violent conflict (Przeworski, 2011).

However, few studies investigate the effects of civil wars on vote choice in the new post-conflict democracies. Such studies have investigated the direct effect of violence on the level of political participation (Bellows & Miguel, 2009; Blattman, 2009) and on the political preferences of individuals (Balcells, 2012; Rozenas, Schutte, & Zhukov, 2017) concentrating on the “demand side” of the political market, such as individual political preferences and how violence can alter these choices in post-conflict settings. Moreover, most of these studies focus on short-term effects and fixed points in time after the end of the conflict. Nonetheless, armed conflicts often have long-standing consequences on political communities. We acknowledge that

violence experienced directly and indirectly can affect post-conflict political behavior, but hold that the presence and activities of political parties (Shin, 2001) and, therefore, the “supply side” of politics (Costalli & Ruggeri, 2015a) also shape the post-conflict electoral geography. Thus, it is important to investigate the long-term impact of conflict on the political identities of communities, to fully understand and evaluate the effect of civil wars on the electoral geography of young democracies. Moreover, studies based on spatially and temporally disaggregated data have demonstrated that local factors are crucial in causing these conflicts (Cederman & Gleditsch, 2009) and shaping the dynamics of violence (Kalyvas, 2006). Therefore, we focus on subnational variation rather than cross-national comparisons because local electoral geography is likely to be strongly affected by the legacies of conflict. This article aims to assess the electoral legacies of civil wars and explain how parties that emerged from domestic struggle can shape the electoral geography of new democracies.

We argue that armed conflict can considerably change the relative power of political parties. These changes are related to the presence and actions of political personnel connected to armed groups during the conflict. Parties connected to armed bands enjoy an organizational advantage in their respective conflict areas, due to the presence and actions of former combatants who become political entrepreneurs. These individuals have an advantaged opportunity to build a strong party organization—usually through canvassing for local membership and creating political offices—and increasing post-conflict electoral support. Parties have strong incentives to institutionalize their organizational advantage and keep their electoral strongholds over the long term. Conversely, failure to transform the former combatants into political entrepreneurs and to institutionalize the organizational advantage does not allow parties to exploit the potential electoral benefit of winning the conflict.

We evaluate our theoretical propositions using new quantitative and qualitative archival data from Italy. Italy is a particularly appropriate case to test our hypotheses because it features both democratic elections before the civil war and a long series of democratic elections after the conflict. These data points allow us to measure the electoral impact of the civil war and evaluate how the preexisting local political milieu was influenced by the conflict. In addition, the Italian case provides detailed and fine-grained historical data, which allow us to acquire a “thick” knowledge of the case, in line with recent empirical studies on historical cases of civil wars (e.g., Balcells, 2012; Costalli & Ruggeri, 2015a; Grandi, 2013; Kalyvas, 2006a). The Italian resistance war is a major historical case of civil conflict, leading to 100,000 deaths in battle and more than 10,000 civilian casualties.² The political legacies of the conflict have been the subject of public debates in Italy (Pavone, 1994),

but have not been assessed systematically. We use new spatially disaggregated data on armed groups' location, episodes of violence, party membership figures, and the results of six rounds of national elections over more than 20 years (1946-1968).

This article focuses on Italian left-wing parties, who played a major role in the resistance movement. Our findings show that, while controlling for the pre-war political milieu, the Italian Communist Party (PCI) retained higher rates of membership and more local party offices in the provinces where the armed bands of the resistance movement were present during the conflict. Our research shows that the party organization exerted a remarkable effect on the vote share of the Italian Left until the end of the 1960s. Most importantly, the impact of PCI's organizational strength on the share of votes does not decrease over time, while the effect of the armed bands' presence during the civil war fades away in a short time. Thus, in the long run, the actions of individual former combatants turned local party activists are less important than the work of the party's organization.³

Our research makes two important contributions. First, it integrates the literature on the political consequences of civil war, usually based on micro-level explanations of individual preferences' change, with an organizational explanation based on a meso-level analysis. Second, it shows that local experience of violent and extraordinary politics can affect macro-level dynamics and shape structural features of political systems through the institutionalization of locally acquired skills and information.

Political Effects of Civil Conflict

Once civil wars come to an end, their legacies on post-conflict societies are essentially twofold: First, the memory of violence—either direct and/or indirect—for the victims of the conflict; second, the presence and actions of specific personnel who had fought during the conflict. Available findings on the relationship between conflict and social-political behavior appear contradictory. Bakke, O'Loughlin, and Ward (2009) find that personal experiences of violence decreased the propensity to forgive after the conflict in North Caucasus, while Hutchinson (2014) shows that civil conflict reduces social and political tolerance, key elements to sustain nonviolent politics.

A different strand of literature reports instances of increased prosocial behavior after exposure to violence. Some studies have found higher propensity for social and political involvement among individuals and communities most affected by war-related violence in Sierra Leone and Uganda (Bellows & Miguel, 2009; Blattman, 2009). Other contributions find that victims of violence show higher levels of trust and community engagement

compared with the average individuals in Nepal and Uganda (Bauer, Fiala, & Lively, 2017; Gilligan, Pasquale, & Samii, 2013). Cassar, Grosjean, and Whitt (2013) discover that victims of civil war violence in Tajikistan exhibit stronger kinship ties but lower trust and willingness to enter into economic transactions. However, the same individuals show higher propensity to participate in community and religious associations. Costalli, Moretti, and Pischedda (2017) assume different effects of violence on in-group and out-group trust, and find support for their hypothesis looking at the ethnic composition of conflict-ridden countries. Consistently, Bauer, Cassar, Chytilova, and Henrich (2014) find that greater exposure to war in Georgia and Sierra Leone spurred egalitarian motivations among children and young adults toward in-groups, but not out-groups. Differently, Balcells (2012) and Rozenas et al. (2017) investigate the long-term effects of violence on the political identities of the victims in Spain and Ukraine. In both cases, empirical evidence confirms that the victims of violence tend to reject the political identity of the perpetrators.

Thus, previous contributions concentrate on the impact of violence on individual social and political behavior. With specific reference to post-conflict political preferences, this is what we define as the “demand side” of the political market—the electorate’s political leanings and their possible post-conflict change. Moreover, with the exception of Rozenas et al. (2017), these contributions do not analyze electoral results and previous research has not used pre-conflict democratic elections as a reference point. Consequently, it is difficult to grasp how civil war shaped the electoral geography of the countries considered and the trajectory of civil war effects over time.

Legacies of Violence and Legacies of Armed Groups

Civil wars often show remarkable subnational variation and, therefore, influence the society heterogeneously. As a result, it is essential to concentrate on the subnational electoral geography of democracies that emerge from civil wars to discover the legacies of these wars on post-conflict nonviolent politics. We acknowledge existing “demand-side” explanations about the effects of violence on political behavior and we assume that episodes of massive violence against civilians shape collective memories of those who suffered. Collective memory can be transmitted over time and political parties representing an opposition to the perpetrators of violence are likely to enjoy relatively higher electoral support, even in the long term.

Nonetheless, we argue that conflict also shapes the “supply side” of the political market: the political parties. Parties are not only neutral transmission

belts between individuals and the institutions, but also agents molded by violent politics that work to increase their power in the new, nonviolent, context (Van Biezen, 2005). They can shape politics at the local level and substantively influence the electoral politics of new democracies. Classic work on voting behavior has highlighted how the “supply side” influences vote choice (Schattschneider, 1975) and recent studies have empirically shown changes not only in “demand side” (electorate characteristics) but also in the “supply side” crucially influence voting choices (Evans & Tilley, 2012).

Parties aim to dominate and transform the environment in which they operate, trying to achieve and preserve their own space among the rival parties (Panebianco, 1988). Thus, armed groups that transition into—or assist in forming—the local branches of political parties after the end of the conflict also seek to consolidate their control over the embattled territories and amid the resident population (Costalli & Ruggeri, 2015a). It is worth noting that the presence of armed groups is not a random phenomenon and while the distribution of armed groups may be related to structural variables such as geographical features, it is also driven by specific political issues. Particularly, previous studies have shown the importance of ethnic and ideological networks for armed mobilization (Cederman, Gleditsch, & Buhaug, 2013; Costalli & Ruggeri, 2015b). As a result, the parties that emerge, or are connected to, armed groups are not the product of a political vacuum, but are built on previous informal networks (Gould, 1991) and according to grievances activated and transformed into politically salient cleavages by ethnic or ideological networks (Tilly, 1978). We stress that, while the existence and the impact of this previous political mobilization needs to be considered when evaluating electoral support for political parties in post-war democracies, the experience of war has an independent and important effect on local electoral geography.

In fact, we know from civil war studies that territorial control of a specific group is deeply related with high-quality information about the population that inhabits the area (Kalyvas, 2006). Amid conflict, these armed groups increased their local knowledge through existing social networks; acquired specific information on the identities, behaviors, and living conditions of individuals and communities; and built a local network of informants (Kalyvas, 2006). As a result, they know the problems, attitudes, and the personal networks of the local population better than their competitors. These actors know how to mobilize them and can rely on high reputational benefits because they have fought in those areas against the previous regime (Walter, 2009). Armed groups emerging victorious from a civil war can count on an organized presence in the areas where their members have actively fought and have a clear interest in institutionalizing their control over those areas

once they transform into political parties (Rokkan & Urwin, 1983). Hence, our first theoretical proposition accounts for the role of political entrepreneurs:

Proposition 1: The organization of political parties descending from armed groups is stronger in areas controlled by the armed bands during the war.

Tavits (2013) claims that a strong organization is a decisive factor for the electoral success of parties in new democracies. Organizationally strong parties are more effective in reaching voters through more frequent contact and are found to be more persuasive in their appeals. The only available study that investigates this issue in the immediate aftermath of conflict shows that political entrepreneurs who fought in the armed groups and survived the harshness of the war constitute a crucial asset for the local branches of their parties (Costalli & Ruggeri, 2015a). In the first elections after the war, the Italian left-wing parties enjoyed a notable increase of their vote share in areas where their armed bands fought (and won) the civil war. Parties' organizational strength can be defined in many ways, but Tavits (2013) shows that three attributes achieve large consensus in the literature on this topic: professionalization of the central organization, organizational extensiveness, and membership size. By definition, the professionalization of the central organization cannot vary within the same party and in a research design that looks at the local level. Thus, we consider the other two dimensions.

Thanks to the presence and action of the skilled, professionalized political entrepreneurs who fought in the party's bands during the civil war, a party is able to increase its membership in the areas where its armed groups operated, relative to the other areas of the country. A large membership, in turn, provides the party with a large body of voters who consider themselves bound together by a "common fate" (Wellhofer, 1979). A large membership is also an important resource for keeping a party in touch with public opinion at the grassroots level and an important asset during electoral campaigns (Scarrow, 1994). Members can enlarge the party's electoral base through their contacts, conveying the message that the party is really close to the people and not just an elite-level entity. Moreover, a strong party organization at the local level can effectively translate ideas and ideologies into material and locally tangible issues relevant to their contacts and improve the party's fundraising (Scarrow, 1994).

Besides increasing the party's membership, the presence and action of the political entrepreneurs who derive from the armed bands can strengthen the

party organization on the ground by increasing the number of local offices in their areas. These local branches are electorally beneficial to parties in the new democracies because they provide the necessary structures to mobilize voters during elections and sustain mobilization over time (Wellhofer, 1979). The presence of local offices also increases the visibility of the party, communicates to the local electorate that the party cares about them, and creates an opportunity for local voters to approach the party with their problems or ideas (Tavits, 2013). Thus, our second theoretical proposition focuses on this organizational advantage:

Proposition 2: Electoral support for political parties that emerge from armed bands is higher in areas where their organization is stronger.

However, politics in new democracies does not stop at the first post-conflict elections and we know hardly anything about the long-term legacies of armed groups on the electoral landscape. We argue that the effects of civil war channeled by the “supply side” of the political market tend to stabilize and last long after the first post-conflict elections. The political parties that derive from the armed formations will not easily renounce to their strongholds and, on the contrary, will try to consolidate their local electoral strength. Setting up a strong party organization allows the political entrepreneurs who fought in the armed bands to institutionalize the organizational advantage of their party. The likely consequence is an improved ability to mobilize the electoral support of the population even over the long term.

A strong organization is also an essential tool to prolong the knowledge and skills obtained by former combatants within these local contexts. A large membership constitutes a body of particularly faithful voters (Scarrow, 2000), institutionalizing the situation that places their party in a vantage position relative to their competitors. A developed network of local offices can also stabilize the advantage of the party for identifying, targeting, and keeping a record of potential local supporters and using more effective face-to-face campaign tactics. Moreover, not only do local branches allow the party to stay in touch with their supporters during interelection periods, but also provide access to the entire community (Shin, 2001). Finally, if a party is successful in a particular place, it will be able to distribute benefits in multiple ways. For instance, activists can be rewarded with jobs and supporters with infrastructures for their community. This process can later become institutionalized as patronage, inducing the reproduction of active engagement in local party organization and voting behavior (Shin, 2001). Consequently, our final theoretical proposition concerns the institutionalization of the organizational advantage:

Proposition 3: The effect of the organizational strength on the electoral support for parties that derive from armed bands remains stable over time.

Although the scope of our argument does not apply to armed groups who suffered a complete defeat with subsequent disbandment of forces and were unable to protect the communities in areas where they fought, our argument does not demand that a group's victory be complete either. As we focus on local political dynamics and local electoral geography, armed groups must only have achieved local victory, even if their side was unable to achieve a national victory. Furthermore, while the relationship between insurgents and civilians is often ambiguous, for armed bands to profit by their organizational advantage they must have developed a positive relationship with the population, which seldom happens when armed groups are primarily supported by foreign states (Weinstein, 2007). In addition, members of the armed groups must have chosen to take up arms voluntarily. If armed groups relied heavily on forced conscription through abduction and violence, it is unlikely that individuals will decide to campaign for parties connected to their persecutors.

Thus, when local political entrepreneurs succeed in setting up a strong local organization, this allows their party to enjoy a strategic and organizational advantage over others. The party can institutionalize this advantage through the systematic establishment of local offices and membership campaigns, shaping the electoral geography of the new democracies that emerge from a civil war even in the long run, when the first political entrepreneurs will no longer be active.

The Italian Case

We study the case of the Italian civil war to evaluate our theory on the long-term electoral effects of civil war. In the Italian civil conflict, the armed bands of the resistance movement (the "partisans") fought against Nazi forces and Fascist militias between September 1943 and May 1945. Although rarely studied in political science, the Italian civil war is a notable historical conflict that led to 117,000 deaths in battle (Istituto Centrale di Statistica [ISTAT], 1957) and about 10,000 civilian victims of violence (Dondi, 1999, p. 23).

For the purpose of our research, some specific features of the Italian case allow to carefully evaluate the effect of civil war on the political systems of post-conflict democracies. First, we can rely on the presence of democratic elections both before and after the conflict. The last democratic elections before the Fascist regime were held in 1921, while the first democratic elections after the civil war (and World War II) occurred in 1946. Second, in Italy,

we can study the long-term electoral effects of civil conflict, thanks to repeated democratic elections. In all rounds of elections that we consider, both before and after the conflict, Italy voted using a proportional electoral law, ensuring that the results are comparable. Third, we can rely on data covering the whole country at local level, concerning essential features of the war, important social and economic indicators, and party organizational characteristics. Fourth, the Italian civil war led to the complete defeat to one of the parties in the conflict (the Nazi-Fascists) and the fighting groups were not linked to different ethnic groups. These two factors mitigated the impact of civil war on subsequent nonviolent politics, thus making Italy a hard case. In fact, the *de facto* absence of the defeated incumbents leaves voters to choose between political parties that were all “on the correct side” of the conflict, minimizing the influence associated with the main cleavages of the war. Furthermore, as none of the parties is inherently bound to a specific ethnic community, voters should assess the political programs of post-conflict parties without systematic bias—as a unified national political market.

The conflict began in September 1943, when the Italian king signed an agreement with the Allied Forces to withdraw Italy from World War II, prompting Nazi forces to rescue Mussolini and invade Italy to stop the advance of the Allies from the south. The German forces, paired with Fascist militias still loyal to Mussolini, created the Italian Social Republic (RSI), a puppet state that controlled Central and Northern Italy and was *de facto* administered by German occupiers. At the same time, an armed resistance movement began to form in the Italian regions occupied by the Nazis, intending to fight both the foreign occupiers and the new Fascist state. Political forces that inherited the cultures and identities of the pre-fascist parties began to take shape and sought to coordinate the partisan units and plan the war of resistance. The resistance movement was a composite phenomenon that included Catholic and liberal components, but the left-wing (mainly Communist) bands soon constituted the majority of the resistance forces.

As the movement and the intensity of the conflict grew, the newly formed parties increasingly organized armed bands along political and ideological lines. This process was due, in part, to different views about the strategies and behaviors to use in the conflict, and how best to prepare for the political competition that would follow the war. Showing the contribution of their party to the struggle against the Nazi-fascists became essential for the forces that wanted to be considered legitimate members of the future political system. All parties clearly knew that the last phases of the resistance were essential to prepare for the political struggle after the war (Gorrieri & Bondi, 2005) and the fact that many partisans were meant to become activists and local leaders of the party is captured in important documents of the PCI, whose bands

represented the main and best organized part of the resistance. The head of military affairs of PCI for north-western Italy during the civil war wrote to all political commissaries operating in the communist bands:

A new party elite and new political leaders for the local population have to emerge from the partisans. Tomorrow they will greatly facilitate our work of restructuring the nation upon new bases. All our fellow partisans need to understand their important function, which does not finish with their work in the bands, but it is strictly connected to all our future activities. (Carocci & Grassi, 1979, pp. 128-129)

Similarly, a document issued by the leadership of PCI on October 30, 1944 states, “The front of the partisan movement, where men show their qualities, their knowledge, their self-denial, their courage is the place where we can find the best energies for the future of our party” (Partito Comunista Italiano [PCI], 1944). The war officially ended on April 25, 1945, and on June 2, 1946, the elections to select the assembly charged with writing the new constitution took place. By April 1948, Italian citizens would vote in the first national elections under the new constitution. Following Costalli and Ruggeri (2015a), we focus on left-wing parties (communist and socialist), because the communist bands had a preponderant role in the resistance movement and it was common to find socialist partisans in mainly communist bands. As a result of our theory and considering the features of the Italian civil war, we formulate the following empirical hypotheses:

Hypothesis 1 (Political Entrepreneurs Hypothesis): The organization of the PCI is stronger in provinces that experienced partisan mobilization.

Hypothesis 2 (Organizational Advantage Hypothesis): Support for the Left is higher in provinces where the organization of the PCI is stronger.

Hypothesis 3 (Institutionalization of Organizational Advantage Hypothesis): The effect of PCI’s organizational strength on support for the Left is stable over time.

As other subnational studies based on a single conflict, this research design raises the issue of broad generalizability. However, considering the scant literature on the long-term electoral consequences of civil wars, we judge that bounding the empirical domain is an acceptable trade-off (Kalyvas, 2006, p. 248). In addition, our theory was not developed inductively from the data and we believe that it can provide useful guidelines in other and more recent cases. Critics might suggest that Italy is not representative of ethnic conflicts, as it was fought on ideological grounds. Nevertheless, we suggest

that the Italian civil war can also offer useful insights for cases of ethnic civil conflicts. In fact, recent research has convincingly showed that ethnic and ideological wars are not as different as it is often assumed by conventional wisdom. First of all, fundamental political grievances are also the main causes of ethno-nationalist conflicts (Cederman et al., 2013). Moreover, the relationship between violence and territorial control, including types of violence used to achieve control, the influence of control on violence and the consequences of violence on control can be similar in the two types of wars (Steele, 2011). Finally, in both ethnic and ideological conflicts, local cleavages and leaders are often crucial for explaining the dynamics of violence and tend to blur the distinction between the two types of civil wars. In both cases, macro cleavages are often invoked to justify actions that are mainly due to local issues (Kalyvas & Kocher, 2007).

However, if ethnic conflicts are characterized by harder identities, stronger connections between groups and territory, and a distinct tendency to establish the hegemony of a group over a region, the mechanism of post-conflict control consolidation that we present should be even stronger and clearer in such cases. Previous research has showed that armed groups in ethnic conflicts are strongly connected to specific territories and communities, and the dynamics of violence in such conflicts tend to extend their control over those areas (Costalli & Moro, 2012). Evidence from the political systems of countries emerging from ethnic conflicts shows that post-war political and electoral dynamics are strictly linked to the cleavages and the parties that derived from the armed groups (Manning, 2004).

Data and Methods

To evaluate our hypotheses, we have collected data on Italian parliamentary elections from 1946 to 1968. This means that we gauge the long-term effects of civil war for six rounds of elections (1946, 1948, 1953, 1958, 1963, 1968) covering a period of 22 years. In the first part of our analysis, we study party organizational strength and the province-year is the unit of analysis. Subsequently, we look at electoral performance and we use the province-election as our unit of analysis. Unfortunately, data on party organization are only available at the province level and therefore we could not descend to the level of municipalities.

Following the insight by Tavits (2013), we measure party strength through membership size and pervasion of the local branches. We have coded internal reports of the PCI on the party's organization for the years 1945-1968⁴ and we created two variables to measure party organizational strength. The first variable counts the number of party members per year in every Italian province,

while the second variable counts the number of local PCI offices in a given province. As of today, this is the most complete source of local organization of the PCI and this is, as far as we know, the first study to use this source. Moreover, as these reports were aimed at internal discussion and analysis—instead of external propaganda—we are confident the figures are not inflated.⁵ Our dependent variable, which measures the performance of the left-wing parties, is the vote share obtained by the PCI and the Italian Socialist Party (PSI). This is consistent with previous research that studies these political entities as “radical bloc” (Costalli & Ruggeri, 2015a; Galli, 1966). Moreover, as PCI and PSI ran under the same symbol in 1948, disaggregating the analysis of the two parties in following elections would oblige us to lose this critical election year. We use data from the *Historical Atlas of Italian Elections* (Corbetta & Piretti, 2009) to cover the elections from 1946 to 1968.⁶ For our argument on the role of the resistance in the creation of strong local parties, we use the presence of the armed bands between 1943 and 1945. A team of Italian historians reconstructed these data and the results of this research are published in the *Historical Atlas of the Italian Resistance* (Baldissara, 2000). The atlas contains a series of maps showing the location of the armed bands over the years of the resistance war. We have used this source to create a variable that detects the presence of armed bands’ operational bases in a given province between September 1943 and April 1945. Data concerning episodes of violence executed by the German and fascist troops against the civilian population come from different historical sources (Baldissara, 2000; Dondi, 1999) and we have used these sources to check the robustness of our results. For each source, the variables measure the number of events involving one-sided violence in a certain province in a given year (we cover 1943, 1944, and 1945).

Assessing whether the civil war and presence of local political entrepreneurs deriving from the armed bands exert real independent effects on the PCI’s organizational strength and electoral performance of the Left is critical. It would be plausible for our dependent variables, as well as the emergence of the armed bands, to be explained by the pre-war local political environment. The correlation between the vote share obtained by the Left in 1921, the last democratic elections before the rise of the fascist regime, and the presence of resistance bands is below 0.5. The correlation between the number of PCI members in 1946 and the vote share of the Left before Fascism is 0.56. We acknowledge that partisan bands are unlikely to be randomly distributed, and for this reason, we deal with possible nonrandom assignment using Coarsened Exact Matching (CEM), one of the most stringent and effective matching techniques (Iacus, King, & Porro, 2012). This semiparametric approach allows us to reduce treatment imbalance and estimate the effect of the presence of partisan bands on PCI’s organizational strength across provinces.

These are matched according to observable factors that could have influenced the presence of partisans, most importantly the vote share of the Left before Fascism and the number of Italian soldiers who died in World War II before September 1943 and were resident in a given province. These are the two key explaining variables in the most recent empirical study on armed mobilization in the Italian civil war (Costalli & Ruggeri, 2015b). Subsequently, we estimate the effect of local resistance on PCI organizational strength using negative binomial regressions, including the lagged dependent variable as well as political and social-economic variables among the covariates.

To gauge the effect of party organization on voting behavior, we use the number of PCI members or local offices the year before the national election and we expect a positive effect. Moreover, we control for the electoral results of the previous elections to explain both dependent variables. We use previous national elections except for the case of 1946, where we use the 1921 elections. Besides the autoregressivity when explaining votes, these variables are essential because before the decline of classic "cleavage politics" (Van der Eijk & Franklin, 2009), the political identities of the population tended to be extremely stable over time (Galli, 1966), even though the country had suffered 20 years of authoritarian rule and a destructive war. We do expect significant and positive coefficients of these variables for both dependent variables. Another essential factor to be considered is the vote of women. Women voted for the first time in 1946 and, therefore, we include the share of women over population of the province in our models (ISTAT, 1951). From the same source, we drew data on provincial population. We control for the share of mountainous territory, defined as territory above 800 m altitude, as electoral studies in Italy (Diamanti & Riccamboni, 1992) show the population of the rural areas tends to be more conservative and this could affect both party membership and voting patterns. We additionally control for socioeconomic features related to the working force structure, using the share of people employed in the agricultural and industrial sectors in the province. These variables are very important for the models that analyze PCI membership, because the structure of the labor force, and not the resistance experience, could affect party membership. A similar problem of omitted variable bias could occur in the models that analyze the vote share of the left-wing parties because the structure of the labor force, instead of party membership, could better explain the voting patterns. In these models, we also control for two additional fine-grained variables that could be linked with the emergence of resistance bands and left-wing votes: The members of left-wing trade-unions recorded before the advent of Fascism (1914) and the number of individuals surveilled by the Fascist political police because they were suspected of being communist or socialist.⁷ Finally, we control for internal migration in

Italy using the data compiled by Bonifazi and Heins (2000) and we introduce a temporal variable to take into account possible temporal trends (both linear and nonlinear) of the dependent variables.

We estimated our regression models on votes to the Left using a generalized linear model (GLM) estimator with logit link function, as our dependent variable is a percentage. For our models studying PCI organization, we employ a count model instead of an ordinary least squares (OLS) estimator, because using OLS produces inaccurate estimates (negative counts) for discrete count variables that are not independent of each other. Moreover, OLS is inefficient as an estimation method, as it fails to take into account the heteroskedastic nature of the event counts. Finally, a test of the overdispersion parameter alpha suggests that a negative binomial estimator is more appropriate than a Poisson regression. We model the variation of provinces' size by employing the population as exposure in the negative binomial equation (Cameron & Trivedi, 1998).⁸

In addition, and to tackle the challenge of distinguishing the effect of the civil war on left-wing parties' electoral performance—compared with the influence of pre-war loyalties—we resort to instrumental variable analysis. Thus, we looked for a source of variation in party membership, which is likely to influence left-wing parties' performance only through party organization. To this end, we used turnout in the 1921 elections as an instrumental variable for party membership. Areas with higher historical turnout show higher propensity of the inhabitants to engage in politics and therefore to join political parties, but this propensity should not be linked to any specific party (Galli, 1966). Although we estimate the two equations separately in our analysis based on matching, the instrumental variable approach allows us to estimate them together, through a two-stage approach.

Findings

Political Entrepreneurs

The following tables show models aimed at evaluating our first hypothesis. Table 1 includes negative binomial panel regressions on the first organizational variable: party membership. All models show that the presence of resistance bands significantly increases the number of PCI members, effectively strengthening the organization of the party. A local experience of resistance leads to a 14% change in expected number of party members. As was predictable, a higher share of left-wing votes in the latest elections tends to increase the number of PCI members, while Christian-democratic votes have a negative effect on PCI membership. Moreover, the effect of the presence of

Table 1. NBREG Regressions Members PCI—1945-1968.

	1	2	3	4
Resistance	0.133* (0.057)	0.120* (0.058)	0.122* (0.060)	0.116* (0.059)
PCI members $t - 1$	0.009*** (0.002)	0.007*** (0.001)	0.007*** (0.001)	0.007*** (0.001)
% Left votes $t - 1$	3.185*** (0.309)	3.891*** (0.290)	3.778*** (0.289)	3.881*** (0.291)
% DC votes $t - 1$	-0.957*** (0.278)	-0.507* (0.243)	-0.477 (0.250)	-0.496* (0.243)
PCI votes 1921			0.008 (0.005)	
Nazi violence 1944	0.005 (0.005)	0.007 (0.004)	0.008 (0.005)	0.007 (0.004)
% Mountains		-0.005* (0.002)	-0.005* (0.002)	-0.005* (0.002)
% Agriculture		0.005 (0.003)	0.007* (0.003)	0.006 (0.003)
% Industry		0.001 (0.003)	0.001 (0.004)	0.001 (0.003)
Inflow migration				1.978 (3.135)
Yearly trend		-0.010 (0.008)	-0.010 (0.008)	-0.012 (0.008)
Yearly trend squared		-0.001** (0.000)	-0.001** (0.000)	-0.001** (0.000)
Constant	-4.439*** (0.194)	-4.680*** (0.191)	-4.759*** (0.197)	-4.690*** (0.190)
BIC	41,225	40,400	40,012	40,405
N	2,060	2,060	2,038	2,060
χ^2	684.631	1,495.660	1,515.503	1,503.353

Clustered standard errors by province in parentheses. NBREG = Negative binomial regression(s); PCI = Italian Communist Party [*Partito Comunista Italiano*]; DC = Democrazia Cristiana; PCI members $t - 1$ = expressed in 1000; PCI members $t - 1$ = expressed in 1000; Population = expressed in 100,000; BIC = Bayesian information criterion.

* $p = .05$. ** $p = .01$. *** $p = .001$. Population as exposure.

resistance bands on PCI membership still holds when we control for the share of PCI votes in the last democratic elections before the Fascist era. This serves as a proxy for the long-term political culture of the area. We also control whether the massive internal migrations occurring in Italy between 1955 and the end of 1970s have any impact on the membership of PCI, given that most

internal migrants were poor workers from southern Italy moving to large cities in the North to work in industrial plants. We include the annual inflows of internal migrants in a given province in Model 4, but our results do not change.

We replicate the models of Table 1 for the second dependent variable on party organization, the number of local PCI offices, but we omit the table for reasons of space.⁹ Our first hypothesis is also supported using this alternative variable, as the variable indicating the presence of resistance bands provides positive and highly significant coefficients for all models except the one where we include the vote share of PCI in 1921. However, this additional control variable is not significant and its inclusion remarkably decreases the goodness of fit of the model. The share of left-wing votes in previous elections has a clear positive effect and the share of Christian-democratic votes does not affect the number of local PCI offices. Internal migration flows do not affect party organization in this case either.

In Table 2, below, we report models with similar specifications, but using a matched sample of observations. As we briefly discussed in our research design, we cannot assume that resistance bands were randomly assigned. Hence, following a recent contribution on the determinants of the Italian resistance, we compare provinces with similar voting behavior in 1921 and similar number of soldiers killed on the war front before the Armistice of 1943 (Costalli & Ruggeri, 2015b). We use the multivariate L1 distance to assess possible imbalance within our sample. The statistic L1 is an index that measures global imbalance between the units, ranging from 0 to 1 (Iacus et al., 2012). L1 is 1 if the two empirical distributions are completely separated, and it is 0 if the distributions coincide exactly. The value of L1 before matching was 0.74, signaling possible concerns for sample selection. Less than 28 % of the distribution of the covariates relative to the treated and control groups overlapped before matching, but CEM reduced the imbalance (L1 is 0.51), providing a more balanced sample. Table 2 shows that our results are robust even when we take possible selection issues into account.

The presence of resistance bands during the civil war remarkably increases the strength of party organization, both in terms of members and in terms of local offices. The other control variables show the expected results. Interestingly, in the matched sample, the experience of Nazi violence against civilians appears to be a determinant of party organizational strength. This finding seems to suggest that the violence of civil war has important effects on post-conflict politics and part of these effects do not directly influence the demand side of the political market through a change of individual preference. Instead, these effects shape the supply side of the political market, strengthening the organization of parties linked to the opponents of the perpetrators. This phenomenon could be explained through an emotional reaction to violence that pushes individuals to mobilize in

Table 2. Matched NBREG Regressions PCI—1945-1968.

	1	2	3	4
	Members	Members	Branches	Branches
Resistance	0.380* (0.191)	0.190* (0.095)	0.460*** (0.118)	0.382*** (0.097)
PCI members $t - 1$	0.024** (0.008)	0.012*** (0.003)		
PCI branches $t - 1$			0.002 (0.001)	0.002 (0.001)
% Left votes $t - 1$		2.303*** (0.340)		0.579* (0.295)
% DC votes $t - 1$		-1.200*** (0.193)		-0.659* (0.256)
Nazi violence 1944	0.016 (0.009)	0.014*** (0.004)	0.013** (0.004)	0.009** (0.003)
Yearly trend	0.004 (0.008)		-0.017** (0.006)	
Yearly trend squared	-0.001 (0.000)		0.000 (0.000)	
Constant	-4.038*** (0.105)	-4.113*** (0.143)	-8.771*** (0.126)	-8.773*** (0.177)
BIC	22,747	20,949	10,924	10,273
N	1,126	1,071	1,128	1,071
χ^2	369.027	952.080	202.207	303.581

Clustered standard errors by province in parentheses. NBREG = Negative binomial regression(s); PCI = Italian Communist Party [*Partito Comunista Italiano*]; DC = Democrazia Cristiana; PCI members $t - 1$ = expressed in 1000; BIC = Bayesian information criterion.

* $p = .05$. ** $p = .01$. *** $p = .001$. Population as exposure.

favor of alternative ideologies (Costalli & Ruggeri, 2015b). Hence, this further confirms that our research does not aim at substituting previous studies on the political consequences of civil war, but rather at providing an original and more complete picture.

Unfortunately, no systematic data exist on the share of party members with a background in the resistance movement, because parties did not record such information about their members. Yet, qualitative historical evidence confirms our quantitative findings on the importance of the supply side of the political market to fully explain the electoral consequences of the Italian civil war. For instance, a document of the communist leadership from February 1945 reports that at the end of 1944, the PCI counted 90,000 members in

northern Italy and more than 20,000 were fighting in the armed bands of the resistance movement (PCI, 1945). The most important work on the history of PCI explains how

the partisan bands provided a whole class of key members for the future life of the party. The ex-partisans—workmen, students, artisans, employees—were going to constitute the backbone of the intermediate ranks of the party, the new party officials. They were mostly young, a generation who succeeded the “old guard” in the actual conduction of the organizations, maybe ten years later. (Spriano, 1975, p. 476)

These young fighters who were bound to become the essential engine of the party for many years “were chosen and granted the party membership by the leaders of the party directly on the field” (Spriano, 1975, p. 476). An internal report of the PCI dated 1963 provides a concise idea of the close connection that existed between the resistance movement, the Italian left-wing parties, and their ruling class—the political entrepreneurs. Specifically, 66% of the communist members of the parliament elected in 1946 were former partisans, 55% in 1948, and 59% in 1953. In 1963, 43% of the communist members were former partisans, even though only 35% of them had previously been elected in 1946. This report underlined the strong connection between experience of the partisan bands and the ensuing political demographics, even among the youngest politicians (PCI, 1963, p. 78), and illustrates the long-term effects of armed mobilization on electoral geography.

Interviews with ex-partisans also confirm that many of them became active members of the parties and part of their local elite.¹⁰ Parties welcomed them for their local knowledge, their leadership, and their self-denial. E.Z. recalls how during the last part of the war he

understood that a new young wave was growing in the resistance movement and it was going to fill the structures of the PCI and of the other parties who contributed to the resistance. We held offices of great responsibility in the new republic, with intelligence, passion, and self-denial.¹¹

After the war, E.Z. worked for 2 years in the secretariat of the PCI in his town, Savona, then entered the managing board of a hospital in the same town and finally worked full-time for the left-wing trade union until the 1970s. He also mentions some of his fellow partisans that

brought their ideas in the parliament, in the trade unions, in the city councils. A.A. became mayor; P.M. was first mayor in a small town and then member of the regional council in Liguria between 1975 and 1985; A.M. was first a local

leader of the trade union, then member of the regional council and finally mayor.¹²

Similar stories are told by G.N., who “worked full-time for the PCI in Genoa until 1960, then two years in Rome and then in Savona until 1969, when I became vice-mayor until 1972. In 1972, I became member of the parliament until 1979.”¹³ After the war, N.V. became the leader of the left-wing trade union in the port of Savona until 1984 and recalls the trajectories of some of his fellows: “G.L. became member of the city council in Turin and the mayor of Turin was an ex-partisan as well. Even the commander in Turin, P.C., became member of the parliament.”¹⁴ After the war, R.C. became member of the city council in Savona and remembers that his vice-commander during the resistance, a catholic, became member of the city council too, but for the Christian Democrats.¹⁵ Naturally, only some ex-partisans reached national political offices, while the majority developed their political career at the local level. We often find ex-partisans in city councils and this is also the case of R.C., who became a town councilor for the Italian Socialist Party where he settled after the war. In fact, we can see that the strong involvement of ex-partisans in post-conflict politics is a phenomenon that spans through the whole political spectrum (with the exception of the small far-right party that remained in Italy after the war), but it is much more pronounced in the left-wing parties and especially in the PCI, because most of the armed bands were linked to the radical Left.

Studying post-conflict extrajudicial executions in two Italian provinces, Grandi (2013) indirectly supports our theory through additional historical documents and interviews with former combatants in other provinces of Italy. According to these sources, at the end of the conflict, the national party leaders looked for local cadres in the resistance movement and “many former resistance commanders sought their political future within the party, under whose banner they fought the anti-fascist war.” (p. 582) Analyzing electoral dynamics and party organization in post-war Bosnia and Herzegovina, a case of ethnic conflict that ended with a negotiated settlement, illustrating features opposite to the Italian case, Manning (2004) argues that “the wartime nationalist parties enjoy advantages in terms of organizational coherence relative to many of the newer, moderate parties” and that “in post-conflict settings, the belligerents tend to be the dominant parties” (p. 70).

Organizational Advantage and Its Institutionalization

If we now consider the effect of party organization on votes, we can see in Models 1 and 2 of Table 3 that a larger number of PCI members increases the vote share for the Left. We compute the marginal effect of PCI members and

Table 3. GLM Regressions Votes to Left, 1946-1968.

	1	2	3	4
% Left votes $t-1$	2.256*** (0.242)	1.986*** (0.289)	2.095*** (0.276)	2.251*** (0.250)
% DC votes $t-1$	-1.025*** (0.193)	-1.177*** (0.224)	-1.040*** (0.176)	-0.981*** (0.174)
PCI members $t-1$	0.004** (0.001)	0.003* (0.001)	0.004*** (0.001)	0.005* (0.002)
Resistance	0.094** (0.033)	0.106* (0.041)	0.260** (0.091)	0.093** (0.034)
Nazi violence 1944	0.003 (0.002)	0.001 (0.002)	0.003 (0.002)	0.003 (0.002)
Population	-0.015*** (0.004)	-0.014** (0.005)	-0.016*** (0.004)	-0.015*** (0.004)
Mountain %	-0.005*** (0.001)	-0.003* (0.001)	-0.005*** (0.001)	-0.005*** (0.001)
Women %	-0.038** (0.015)	-0.081** (0.028)	-0.043** (0.015)	-0.040** (0.015)
Yearly trend	0.020* (0.010)	0.021 (0.011)	0.021*** (0.004)	0.014*** (0.003)
Yearly trend squared	-0.000 (0.000)	-0.000 (0.000)		
Left members controlled 1922-1943		0.000 (0.000)		
Members left-wing trade union 1914		0.000 (0.000)		
Resistance \times Year Count			-0.012** (0.005)	
PCI Members $t-1 \times$ Year Count				-0.000 (0.000)
Constant	0.776 (0.797)	3.044* (1.486)	1.008 (0.802)	0.872 (0.798)
BIC	520.083	423.921	519.857	520.080
N	533	408	533	533
χ^2	1,775.402	1,497.838	1,897.785	2,364.522

Robust standard errors in parentheses. GLM = generalized linear model; DC = Democrazia Cristiana; PCI = Italian Communist Party [*Partito Comunista Italiano*]; PCI members $t-1$ = expressed in 1000; Population = expressed in 100,000; BIC = Bayesian information criterion. * $p = .05$. ** $p = .01$. *** $p = .001$.

find that we should expect 30% votes for the Left with PCI members at the low 25th percentile, 36.5% at the mean of PCI members, 37.1% at the 75th percentile of membership, and 41.5% votes at the 95th percentile of PCI membership.

Moreover, we show how the experience of the Resistance in 1944 influences the voting patterns in successive elections, as left-wing parties attained a greater share of the vote. The lagged dependent variable exerts a strong positive effect, while the share of Christian-democratic votes has a strong negative effect as expected. Looking at the other control variables, Nazi violence does not seem to have any direct effect on the vote share of the Left in the long-term. Mountainous areas and women tend to vote for other (mainly Christian-democratic) parties, as already found by previous studies (e.g., Costalli & Ruggeri, 2015a). Neither the strength of left-wing trade unions, nor the number of communists and socialist controlled by the Fascist political police has statistically significant effects and the effect of PCI members does not change.¹⁶

The organization of PCI provided effective electoral support through many activities. According to the party itself, the section “should represent a meeting place and the center of Communist activity and of the political, cultural, educational, recreational, and welfare activities of all of the workers in the area” (Galli & Prandi, 1970, p. 95). Baccetti (1997, pp. 143-144) explains that the PCI section was used “to educate politically and to integrate into the life of the party the grand mass of party members.” It

evolved around the “people” and was thought to exalt the expressive and associative function of the party, in order to maximize the capacities of propaganda and of mobilization in the great campaigns of agitation promoted from the [central party organization] and, above all, in election campaigns.

The PCI section was conceived as the “house of the people,” where the party had to confront the problems of the neighborhood and organize recreational and cultural activities (Shin, 2001).

Models 3 and 4 in Table 3 provide an analysis of the effect of Resistance and PCI membership over time. As we stated above, the effects that we have computed are a temporal average effect, as our models are estimated pooling together all elections. In Model 3, we show that the effects of resistance on the vote share of left-wing parties are conditional to time since the end of the Italian civil war. In fact, as we show in Figure 1, the effect of local resistance experience on the Left’s vote share decreases over time. In the pooled models, we found that local experience of resistance increased votes to left-wing parties by 3%. However, this 3% should be understood as

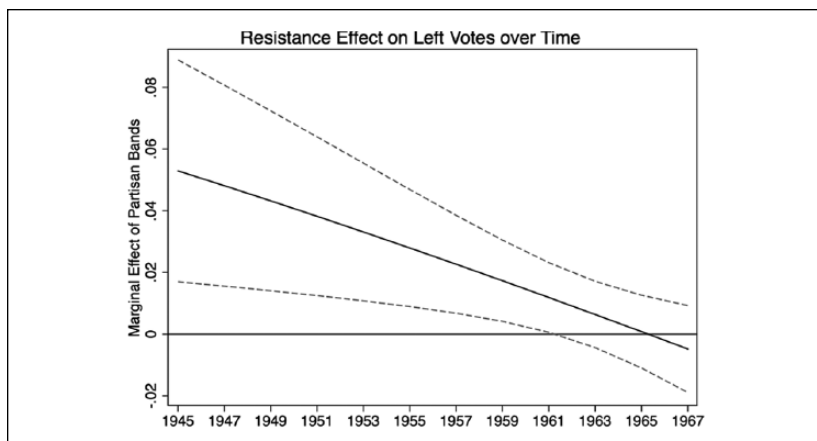


Figure 1. Effect of resistance on left-wing votes over time.

a temporally pooled average effect. In fact, we show that in the 1948 elections, the Left enjoyed an average 5% advantage in provinces with resistance experience. In the 1956 elections, the experience of resistance was worth 3% on average, but that dropped to just about zero, and no longer statistically significant, by 1968.

Model 4 shows a very important finding supporting our Hypothesis 3. Contrary to findings related to the simple presence of resistance bands during the civil war, the effect of PCI members, hence, the organizational aspect, is not conditional to time. Its positive effect on the vote share for left-wing parties remains stable. This finding, in combination with the previous one, suggests the resistance experience affects local voting, but mainly through the local organization of parties. Moreover, the effect of resistance fades away over time, whereas the effect of party organization is not affected by temporal dynamics. Summing up, the civil war had long-lasting effects on the Italian electoral geography and these effects passed through what we called the “supply side” of the political market, which is composed of political entrepreneurs who fought in the resistance bands, and by the local organizations of the parties who derive from those bands. This second component is especially important to institutionalize the organizational advantage the parties acquired during the conflict. In fact, while the simple presence of armed bands—and therefore of the first entrepreneurs—in an area loses its effect over time, the organizational strength of PCI maintains its positive effect on the vote share of the Left throughout all years included in our study.

We also found similar patterns in different conflicts. In Bosnia and Herzegovina, the local organizational strength of parties is illustrated by the members' ability, during the war, "to seize control of the most lucrative assets in their respective territories—including utilities, pension funds, transportation networks and viable industrial concerns" as even "[a]ccess to employment in them depends in part upon access to the political interests that control them." By voting for the prevailing nationalist party in a given area, people vote "for those they believe can best protect their interests under prevailing circumstances" (Manning, 2004, p. 68). A similar process seems to take place in Lebanon, where

postwar elections, far from expanding the parameters of accountability, representation and contestation, have instead restricted citizens' electoral and hence political choices. The elections have also served to consolidate an already-institutionalized confessional and clientelistic system, thus hardening, rather than ameliorating, sectarian cleavages. (Salloukh, 2006, p. 637)

Armed groups in Africa are often more personalized than in the Italian case, but the logics and behaviors of post-war electoral politics show some similarities. Local politics and power relations are key to understand the role played by former combatants in national politics. According to Themnér (2017), for some leaders of former armed groups, taking part in elections is even more important than succeeding, because it provides the opportunity to showcase their networks of clients, while using their credentials during war to attain a position of brokerage between the state and local communities. These former leaders of armed groups and their networks of local clients perform important bridging functions in post-war societies permeated by distrust and fear, but they manage to play this role and keep the local support acquired during the war only if they are able to reconfigure their organizations after the conflict to distribute concrete economic and social benefits (Themnér, 2017). For instance, RENAMO did not succeed in establishing a developed party organization after the end of the war and its base of support progressively disappeared (Vines, 2017).

In Table 4, we show that the size of PCI members is still positive and statistically significant, even when using matched samples (Model 1) and when the two dependent variables, PCI members and votes to the Left, are computed in the same equation using seemingly unrelated regressions (Model 2). Finally, Model 3 shows that our findings about the effect of party organization on post-conflict votes are confirmed even using an instrumental variable approach. The tests for instrument aptness echo empirically the theoretical insight of the instrument.

Table 4. Further Estimations: Robustness.

	M1-Matching	M2-Sureg 1	M2-Sureg 2	M3-IV Model
	DV: Left votes	DV: PCI members	DV: Left votes	DV: Left votes
% Left votes $t - 1$	1.846*** (0.457)	-3,621.32*** (1,222.20)	0.474*** (0.029)	0.177* (0.085)
% DC votes $t - 1$	-0.579 (0.317)	-5,438.57*** (1,085.99)	-0.248*** (0.027)	-0.185*** (0.048)
PCI members $t - 1$	0.010** (0.003)	1.026*** (0.007)	0.001*** (0.000)	0.005*** (0.001)
Resistance	0.129* (0.061)	859.06*** (330.17)	0.023*** (0.001)	0.013 (0.011)
Nazi violence 1944	-0.003 (0.004)	-24.85 (18.84)	0.000 (0.000)	-0.001 (0.001)
Population	-0.027* (0.011)		-0.004*** (0.001)	-0.013*** (0.003)
Mountains %	-0.007** (0.003)		-0.001*** (0.000)	-0.001* (0.000)
Women %	-0.072* (0.030)		-0.010*** (0.003)	-0.026*** (0.007)
Yearly trend	0.010 (0.017)		0.006*** (0.001)	0.000 (0.003)
Yearly trend squared	0.000 (0.001)		-0.000 (0.000)	0.000 (0.000)
Constant	2.453 (1.629)	2,970.38*** (629.58)	0.755*** (0.170)	1.621*** (0.355)
N	277	533	533	413
Breusch-Pagan Anderson LM statistic				33.362***
Sargan statistic				0.119

Standard errors in parentheses. PCI = Italian Communist Party [*Partito Comunista Italiano*]; PCI members $t - 1$ = expressed in 1000; Population = expressed in 100,000; DV = dependent variable.

* $p = .05$. ** $p = .01$. *** $p = .001$.

Failing to Institutionalize Organizational Advantage

The role played by party organizations in institutionalizing the advantage of their association with resistance bands is evident in those provinces where political entrepreneurs failed to organize a strong party after the electoral

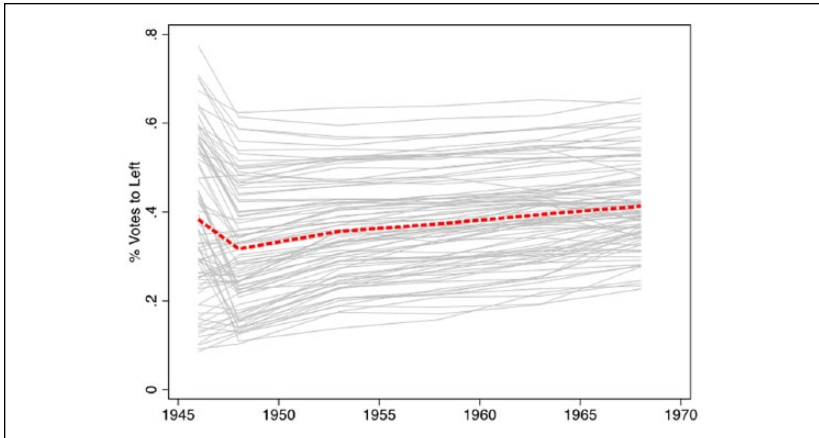


Figure 2. Failure of institutionalizing organizational advantage spaghetti graph votes trend.

success in the first elections. Whereas the vote share of left-wing parties remained constant between the first and the second elections after the conflict in areas that had not experienced the presence of resistance bands,¹⁷ in areas where the armed groups had been present during the conflict, but had not led to institutionalizing the party's position, the vote share for the Left decreases on average by more than 12%—in both the full and matched samples. This average loss is due to the fact that in some provinces, the parties failed to build a strong organization, thus dissipating the advantage enjoyed in the first elections and leading to a loss of 20% of vote share in the second elections. In Figures 2 and 3, we provide graphs using the full sample to help us process-trace cases where resistance bands were present, but the institutionalization of the organizational advantage failed.

Figure 2 shows a spaghetti graph on the electoral performance of the Left over six electoral rounds, each gray line is a province and the dashed red line is the national average. A first clear and sharp structural change in voting pattern is evident between the 1946 and the 1948 elections. Then, in the election of 1953, we can see an adjustment and the Left's vote share at provincial level reaches a quasi-stable equilibrium until the 1968 elections. Hence, the spaghetti graph indicates that failures of institutionalization mostly happened in the critical juncture between the first and second election.

In Figure 3, we combine two slope graphs to zoom in on these two specific elections. The slope graph above shows vote shares for the Left in 1946 and 1948, while the slope graph below shows the party's members per capita in

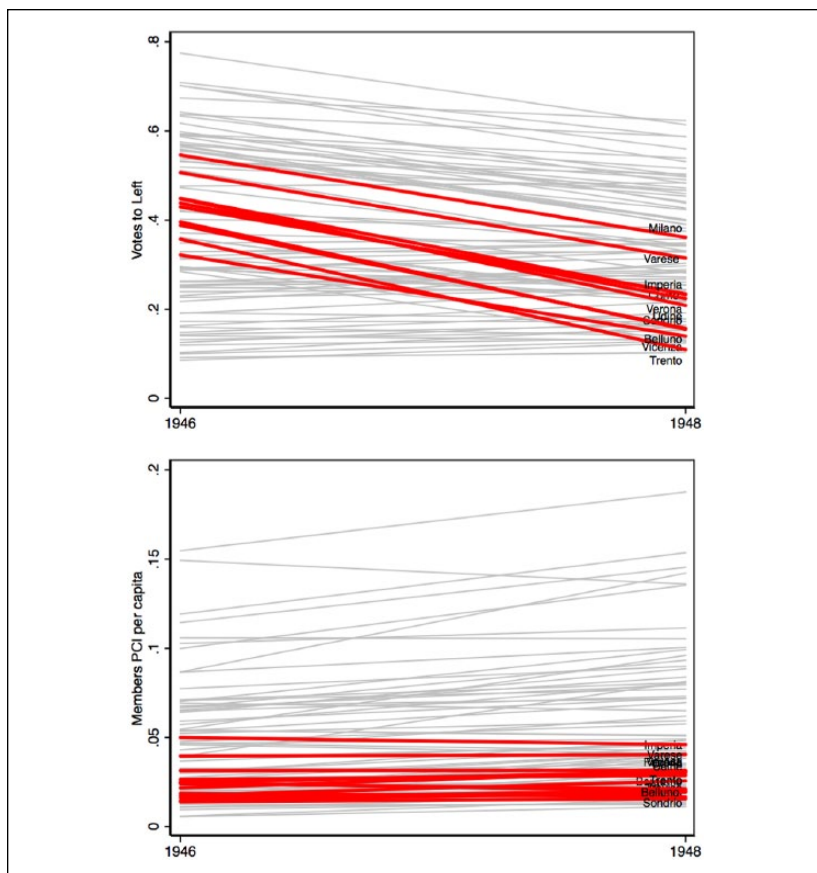


Figure 3. Failure of institutionalizing organizational advantage party members and votes in 1946 and 1948.

the same period. Moreover, we have highlighted in red the 10 worst performers in terms of lost votes: In these provinces, the Left lost between 18% and 25% of votes. Quite interestingly, these provinces appear to be in the lowest positions in terms of party membership per capita in the other slope graph. In addition, the slopes of their lines are almost horizontal, showing that there was no institutionalization of the organizational advantage. In fact, the 10 worst performers all had a local presence of partisan bands.¹⁸

In Figure 4, we provide a scatter plot of relative percentage change of votes between the two elections (y-axis) against Communist party members per capita (x-axis). Provinces with local experience of resistance are noted with red

attitudes of individuals toward politics through exposure to conflict-related violence affecting the “demand side” of the political market (Balcells, 2012; Bellows & Miguel, 2009; Blattman, 2009). In our research, we show that civil wars can shape the electoral geography of new democracies over an extended period. However, differently from conventional wisdom and expectations, the use of violence during the conflict—even in the form of massacres against civilians—does not seem to be the only cause of these long-lasting electoral consequences. Rather, the parties that emerge from the armed bands are likely to have a crucial role in shaping local politics both immediately after the conflict and in the following years. The local experience of violence and mobilization influences individuals’ preferences and, in turn, helps explain voting behavior. However, the organizational advantage acquired by local former-fighters and the institutionalization of such advantage have long-term impacts on democratic politics changing the “supply side” of the political market.

We provide a link between studies on civil war and the literature on the development of parties in new democracies. When armed groups demobilize and transform into political parties, they enjoy a strategic advantage in shaping the political markets of the areas they operated in during the conflict. The personnel selected during the war constitute an essential asset to create parties with a strong local organization, which is an important way to increase the party’s vote share, especially in young democracies (Tavits, 2013). The members of the resistance bands in Italy often became political entrepreneurs who actively mobilized support for the Left, thanks to immediate and frequent contacts with their local electorates.

Moreover, the parties that enjoy this organizational advantage can institutionalize these opportunities, transforming local allegiances and firsthand knowledge during wartime into a structural feature of the country’s electoral democracy. We show that in the case of Italy, the footprints of the civil war are still present and relevant in the electoral geography of the country 20 years after the end of the conflict and mostly through local organizational channels, not through the mere local experience of the civil war.

Clearly, our research shares all the limitations of single case studies, and we acknowledge the scope conditions imposed by the historical context—such as the need to focus on left-wing parties. However, this type of analysis is usually marked by challenges in data gathering with Italy offering one of the few cases in which researchers can adopt an appropriate research design, thanks to data on democratic elections before the conflict and to a long series of democratic elections afterward. Moreover, we support the use of historical cases to understand the consequences of civil war: “history is preoccupied with fundamental processes of change” (Carr, 1987, p. 171) and pushes us to

think about critical conjunctions. Hence, we are not simply using “older data” with contemporary methods; a historical “thicker approach” entails a deeper knowledge of a case, the richness of archival resources, and the insights from a developed historiography literature. In conclusion, this article provides an innovative theoretical framework and new original empirics, suggesting that the “supply side” of the political market seems crucial to fully understand the political effects of civil wars in young democracies. Going back to our initial quote, people clearly embody the “steam” of political change, but organizational structures are also crucial to fully explain the long-term influence of civil war on the political geography of democracies.

Acknowledgments

Among the many who helped us improve this article, we especially thank Ben Ansell, Kristin Bakke, Nancy Bermeo, Brian Burgoon, Maurizio Cotta, Ursula Daxecker, Lorenzo De Sio, Elias Dinas, Han Dorussen, Andy Eggers, Stathis Kalyvas, Kristian S. Gleditsch, Simone Neri Seneri, Stefanie Reher, Henry Thomson, and Henrik Urdal. Three anonymous reviewers helped us improve our argument and analysis, thanks to their comments and suggestions. We thank Frank Heins for sharing his data on migrations within Italy.

Declaration of Conflicting Interests

The authors declared no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

Funding

The authors received no financial support for the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

Supplemental Material

Supplemental material for this article is available online at the *CPS* website <http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/suppl/10.1177/0010414018784057>

Notes

1. Authors' data elaboration performed triangulating updated versions of the UCDP conflict termination data (Kreutz, 2010), elections' NELDA data (Hyde & Marinov, 2012), and POLITY IV data.
2. These figures are specifically about the Italian civil war and not about the international conflict.
3. In a recent working paper, Fontana, Nannicini, and Tabellini (2017) use a different research design and argue, instead, that the legacies of violence are especially important to explain the electoral effects of the Italian civil war.

4. We could not collect data for 1948, 1957, 1958, and 1966, as the original documents were missing. We have used different interpolation techniques on missing years but results do not vary.
5. Unfortunately, no systematic and comparable data are available on the organization of the socialist party. Moreover, the socialist party collapsed at the beginning of the 1990s and many documents have been dispersed. However, we believe that the data of Italian Communist Party (PCI) constitute a good proxy for both parties, because the PCI was remarkably larger than the socialist party, their partisans often fought in the same bands, the two parties remained allied until the 1960s, and in the elections of 1948, they even formed unified lists.
6. Graphical distributions of PCI membership and Left-wing vote over time are in our online appendix.
7. Casellario Politico Centrale, Archivio Centrale di Stato. <http://dati.acs.beniculturali.it/CPC/>
8. Results-based ordinary least squares (OLS) regressions for both dependent variables are available in the online appendix, Tables 6a and 7a; results do not change substantially.
9. See Table 1a in the online appendix.
10. We include some excerpts from interviews with ex-partisans who fought in Liguria and Piemonte. These interviews were recorded by the historians of the Institute for the History of Resistance in Savona and in Cuneo. The interviews are stored in their archives and have never been used in political science analyses so far.
11. Interview with E.Z., *Interviste e Testimonianze*, Istituto Storico della Resistenza di Savona, Savona, Italy.
12. Interview with E.Z., Savona.
13. Interview with G.N., Savona.
14. Interview with N.V., Savona.
15. Interview with R.C., Savona.
16. We do not show any model where we control for internal migrations because it would dramatically shrink the number of observations and it would introduce a problem of left censoring in the data. Moreover, the variable is not significant. Models are available upon request.
17. See Table 3a in the online appendix.
18. In Table 4a in the online appendix, we provide more information on these 10 worst performers.
19. See Table 5a in the online appendix where we provide models aiming to explain votes loss between 1946 and 1948 elections.

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