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JEL Classification: D72, N44, P16

Keywords: anti-fascism, right-wing parties, Political Preferences, Voting behaviour

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Historical anti-fascism and right-wing voting in Italy*

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July 10, 2022

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1 Introduction

Historical experiences in fascist Europe reverberate through political preferences until the present. For example, Nazi elites who fled the Soviets after WWII established local party branches that preserved far-right ideologies in Austria (Ochsner and Roesel, 2020); German municipalities that supported the Nazi party are more likely to vote for populist right-wing parties today (Cantoni, Hagemeister, and Westcott, 2020); and the foundation of Mussolini’s New Towns before WWII affects political attitudes in democratic Italy (Carillo, 2022).

While these papers, among others, emphasize *positive* historical determinants of support for right-wing ideologies in democratic elections, we study *negative* historical determinants. We show that stronger opposition to the fascist regime during Mussolini’s dictatorship negatively affects political preferences for right-wing parties in Italy throughout the period between the first post-war general election in 1948 and the most recent general election in 2018, with stronger effects for the party that sprung from the dissolved *Partito Nazionale Fascista* (i.e., the *Movimento Sociale Italiano*, later renamed *Alleanza Nazionale*).

Combining economic theory with a new data set assembled from historical sources, this paper makes a threefold contribution. First, we construct a novel measure of anti-fascism from individual-level information on the universe of opponents to the fascist regime recorded in the *Casellario Politico Centrale* (Central Political Register, henceforth CP). This source allows us to observe the number of new recorded opponents between 1926 – when the so-called *leggi fascistissime* came into effect and Italy became a *de facto* fascist dictatorship – and 1943 – when the regime fell.

Second, we derive a microfounded econometric specification that links historical anti-fascism and post-war voting behavior. Our model sheds light on the simultaneity between the supply of opponents and the demand for their repression. This identification problem is a manifestation of the classical simultaneity problem: we observe the equilibrium number of recorded opponents, not the supply and demand schedules; thus, a higher number of recorded opponents may reflect a larger supply of opponents or a larger demand for repression. The model also suggests a class of instruments that can solve this problem, namely shocks to expected sentences for anti-fascists that would plausibly shift supply but not demand.

Third, in order to construct such an instrumental variable, we also digitize information from all the sentences issued by *Tribunale speciale per la difesa dello Stato* (Special tribunal for the defense of the State, henceforth TS) – the judicial institution for crimes against the fascist regime that operated in Italy in 1926-1943 – and we leverage the essentially random assignment of judges to each case. The TS judging panel was composed of a president and five additional judges who were selected out of a large pool based on availability, thus inducing quasi-random variation in a panel’s propensity to inflict heavier or lighter sentences across similar cases. Such “judge stringency” or “judge fixed effects” identification strategy, which was pioneered by Kling (2006) and Sunstein, Schkade, Ellman, and Sawicki (2006) and is now commonly used in economics,¹ allows us to isolate the causal effect of historical anti-fascism on post-war, right-wing voting until the present. To the best of our knowledge, ours is the first application of this identification strategy that uses historical judicial data.

The first stage of our 2SLS econometric model indicates that in provinces where regime opponents were tried by more severe judges in 1926-1934 (as measured by average residual judge stringency), opposition to the fascist regime was weaker in the subsequent 1935-1943 period, consistent with the idea that past sentences influence expectations about future sentences via social learning. Judge stringency is instead unrelated to predetermined historical variables, a necessary condition for the validity of our identification strategy. In the second stage, we find that opposition to the regime (number of opponents per 10,000 adults in a province) as predicted by average judge stringency, reduces the vote shares of the *Movimento Sociale Italiano* and *Alleanza Nazionale* by between about 0.3 and 1.2 percentage points (between 3% and 13% of these parties’ vote shares). Weaker effects are detected for mainstream, conservative right-wing parties founded after 1992 (*Forza Italia*, *Popolo della Libertà*, and *Fratelli d’Italia*) with no direct ties with the PNF. A placebo experiment shows that these results vanish altogether if the wrong timeline is imposed, i.e., if one relates judge stringency in 1935-1943 to opposition to the fascist regime in 1926-1934.

These results confirm in a new setting that historical experiences may have long-lasting consequences on the functioning of modern democracies. Our research is also related to a

¹Frandsen, Lefgren, and Leslie (2019) provide a succinct review of 25 articles that exploit the random assignment of judges for identification. See also Bonica and Sen (2021) for a complementary overview.

large literature that documents the historical determinants of support for or opposition to fascist ideologies. Russo (2020) and Acemoglu, De Feo, De Luca, and Russo (2022) argue that given the chaos and mismanagement of WWI and the consequent rise in support for the Italian Socialist Party, the external threat of a socialist revolution (the “Red Scare”) facilitated the initial rise of Mussolini. Gagliarducci, Onorato, Sobbrío, and Tabellini (2020) point out the role of externally-led communication, namely the counter-propaganda of the BBC, in motivating the masses against the Nazi-fascist regime during WWII. Satyanath, Voigtländer, and Voth (2017) document that social capital – in the form of both civic and militaristic associations – positively predicts Nazi Party penetration in German states that were politically unstable.

Scholars have also shown that notable historical events can influence voting behavior many years into the future. For example: in Germany, pogroms against Jews during the Black Death predict votes for the Nazi Party (Voigtländer and Voth, 2012); in the United States, historical lynching of Blacks dilutes voter turnout today (Williams, 2022); in Taiwan, historical political favoritism towards loyalists to the ruling elite polarizes political views in the present (Cheng and Swee, 2021).

Finally, our work is tangentially related to a theoretical and experimental literature that studies the nexus between identity and inter-group relations on the one hand, and political conflict on the other. Gennaioli and Tabellini (2019), for example, show that when political conflict is built on a set of latent social groupings — characterized along economic and cultural traits — exposure to globalization or cultural changes may induce voters to switch identities, dampening their demand for redistribution and exacerbating conflicts in other social dimensions. Besley and Persson (2019) develop a dynamic model of multi-dimensional politics to explain how economic shocks can reinvigorate nationalist sentiments.

The rest of the paper proceeds as follows. Section 2 provides some historical background on fascism and the repression of its opponents (including details on our novel data sources, the *Casellario Politico Centrale* and the *Tribunale speciale per la difesa dello Stato*), and on right-wing voting in Italy. Section 3 illustrates the theoretical model that structures our empirical analysis and its takeaways for the econometric model. The data are presented in Section 4, the econometrics in Section 5, and the results in Section 6. Section 7 concludes.

2 Historical background and historical data sources

2.1 Fascism and the repression of anti-fascism in Italy

Italian fascism originates from a movement (*Fasci Italiani del Combattimento*) founded by Mussolini in 1919 from the hotbed of nationalist and reactionary ideologies (Alatri, 1965). In 1921 the movement turned into a political party, the *Partito Nazionale Fascista* (PNF). An alliance with liberal, democratic and nationalist parties under the umbrella of the National Blocs in the 1921 elections allowed the PNF to enter parliament. In 1922, following the March on Rome, King Vittorio Emanuele III officially transferred political power to the fascists by appointing Benito Mussolini as the new prime minister.² The political monopoly of the PNF developed within the monarchy, whose institutions remained in place but were devoid of any effective form of power (Gentile, 2008, p.12).

Since its inception as a movement, fascism embraced violence as a means to repress opponents, using militia squads, the *Squadrisimo*, also known as the “blackshirts”, as one of the cardinal strategies to fight for power (Alatri, 1965, p.10). As early as 1922, the first Mussolini government established the *Milizia Volontaria per la Sicurezza Nazionale* (the “Militia”), which represented the regime’s first active line of defense. This paramilitary force was structured into *legioni*, *coorti*, and other smaller armed units, and was present in every region, with different intensity (Valleri, 1980). The totalitarian control of the masses, aimed at transforming people’s character and behavior to “mould” them into PNF supporters, was a cornerstone of the fascist ideology (Gentile, 2008). The early years of the fascist regime were not characterized by major changes in the control of political dissent relative to Italy’s liberal period 1861-1925 (Tosatti, 1997, p.231).³

The crucial discontinuity with the liberal institutions occurred in 1926, when the regime issued a set of authoritarian laws known as *leggi fascistissime* (“hyper-fascist” laws).⁴ These

²The march on Rome led to the resignation of prime minister Luigi Facta.

³During the transition from the Giolitti era to fascism the “bolshevik danger” constituted the key threat to public security, and particularly the relationship between the PCI (Italian Communist Party) and the communist International.

⁴The liberal era laid the foundation of an extensive and centralized system of control over new centers of political participation and social activity (Tosatti, 1997). While the fascist regime exacerbated the authoritarian and repressive structures of the liberal era, it is widely accepted that the two regimes were qualitatively different (Gentile, 2008).

laws gave complete power to the executive (and therefore to Mussolini), which could issue laws (decrees) without parliamentary approval. The role of parliament became symbolic. The executive used these decrees to limit freedom of speech, press freedom, political freedom, and the right to strike. Any political party other than the PNF became unlawful, non-fascist trade unions were suppressed, and the *Tribunale speciale per la difesa dello Stato* – the institution that plays a key role in the present research – was established to try political opponents. Moreover, all civil servants without full pro-fascist credentials were dismissed.

Therefore, by 1926 all anti-fascist activities became clandestine (Alatri, 1965, p.34) and any form of opposition became unlawful (Dal Pont and Carolini, 1980). A decree instituted the police-mandated deportation and isolation of the most dangerous political opponents, a form of internment that came to be known as *confino*. The repression of political dissent became institutionalized, both legally and in administrative and police practice, also by violent means. The use of violence as a repression tool was a method to eradicate opposition quickly but also a strategy of power legitimization (Aquarone, 1979). Repression was entrusted not only to the police, which acted under the responsibility of prefects – the “secular arm of the dictatorship” (Tranfaglia, 1995); it was diffused throughout the state/regime structure, from the judiciary to youth movements, to fascist trade unions, to the bureaucracy, and of course the army. Repression targeted political activity as well as all forms of association, publishing, and culture.

The two key institutions created to target repression were the Political Police and the *Opera Vigilanza Repressione Antifascismo* (Organization for the Vigilant Repression of Anti-Fascism, hencefort OVRA), a secret police that depended directly from on the Ministry of the Interior (i.e., Mussolini himself). OVRA was created with the specific aim of fighting against the communist party, but its target was then extended to all forms of anti-fascism, including those that did not engage in any political activity but that were in disagreement with the fascist ideology (the so called “existential anti-fascism” (De Luna, 1995)) and to ethnic minorities (Tosatti, 1997). It is the pervasiveness of the control exerted by the PNF and its efforts to transform the masses through fascist ideology to create a “new society” that made Italian fascism a form of totalitarianism (Gentile, 2008).

2.2 The *Casellario Politico Centrale* (CP)

Opposition to the fascist regime was systematically recorded in the CP, a centralized catalog instituted in 1894 to monitor subversives (Tosatti, 2011) and that was used more intensely for mass filing of political opponents after the establishment of Mussolini’s dictatorship. A total of 151,980 individuals were recorded in the CP between 1894 and 1943, of whom 40,493 until 1922 (about 1,400 per year, on average) and 111,487 between 1923 and 1943 (about 5,300 per year, on average). The CP contains personal files of anarchists, socialists, republicans, communists, liberals, and dissidents. The CP’s definition of a dissident (*antifascista*) was very broad: it included militants and non-militants who opposed the fascist regime but did not belong to any notable political group. Even unorganized, unintentional, or indirect actions against the regime could lead to arrest and punishment (Ambrosio, 2013).⁵ As such, the anti-fascists listed in the CP can be broadly considered individuals characterized by distaste for fascism and, as a consequence, victims of political persecution.

Being recorded in the CP implied continuous police surveillance: all forms of travel, movements, meetings, and conversations were constantly monitored. Beyond surveillance, the punishments for political opponents ranged from warnings (*ammonizione*) to internment (*confino*), to being listed in the border index (*rubrica di frontiera*) to being referred to the *Tribunale speciale per la difesa dello Stato*, as described in more detail in what follows. The punishment was decided by a committee that was chaired by the prefect, following charges from the local commissioner (*questore*) or the police (Luigi, 2015, ch. 5). The pervasiveness of police measures that bypassed judiciary procedures is a testament to Italy’s police state during the fascist dictatorship and bear many similarities with those implemented in Germany during Hitler’s regime (Luigi, 2015, ch. 5). An individual could also be removed from the CP if he/she was considered no longer a threat to the regime, although all records survive to the present day. CP data are publicly available from the [Archivio Centrale dello Stato](#), which we scraped to assemble a data set that is amenable to statistical analysis.

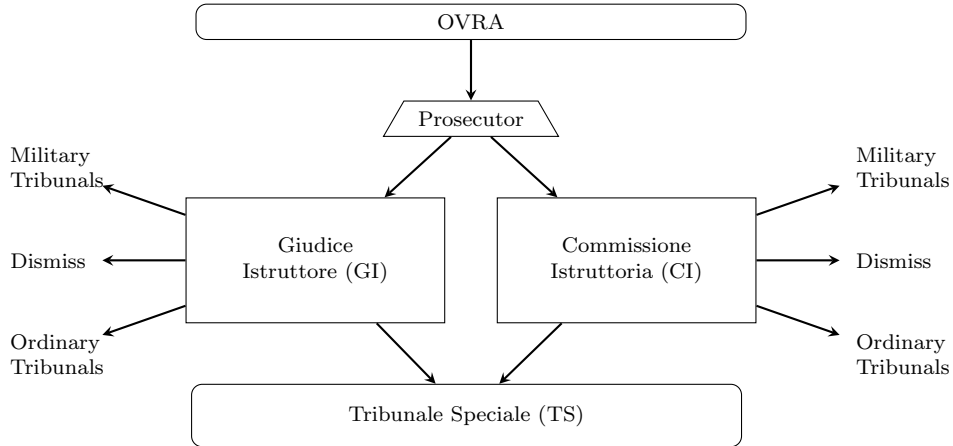
⁵For example, a woman named Maria Materassi from Città di Castello (Perugia) was brought to the Special Tribunal for singing *Bandiera Rossa* (a communist song) in her own home on 14 July 1927; and a man named Pietro Tagliaferri, from Piacenza, underwent a trial on 9 June 1928 as he was allegedly heard saying “I’m sorry that it was not successful” when talking about the failed assassination attempt against Mussolini in Milan (Dal Pont and Carolini, 1980, Vol. I).

2.3 The *Tribunale speciale per la difesa dello Stato* (TS)

The creation of the TS was triggered by three separate attempts to Mussolini's life in 1926, which accelerated a set of measures to repress anti-fascism (Vinci, 2016). Fascist state officials, freed from parliamentary opposition, made profound changes to the penal code in order to strengthen the regime and bolster Mussolini's power. On November 25, 1926, the regime introduced a new set of crimes and punishments to repress opposition. Jurisdictional competence was entrusted to the newly-created TS, which followed rules of criminal procedure that apply to the army during wartime and so its decisions could not be appealed (Marques, 2015). The TS base structure was in fact that of a military court. However, a number of professional categories outside the army were involved, in then attempt to absorb them in the regime apparatus (Longhitano, 1995, p. 79). The president, appointed by the Minister of War, was chosen from among the generals of the Army, Navy, Air Force, or the Militia. In addition to the president, there were five judges (plus three substitutes) chosen from the officers of the Militia and a Judge-Rapporteur without vote rights, so that each case was dealt with by a panel of six judges. This apparatus was complemented by: (i) the Prosecutor, also appointed by the Minister of War, (ii) the *Giudice Istruttore* (GI), chosen from a list of professions (magistrates, officials, university professors, generals, lawyers), and (iii) the *Commissione Istruttoria* (CI), composed of a president, chosen from the pool of generals, and two judges chosen from the Militia officers. The appointment was determined by loyalty to the regime more than by technical competence: a judicial background was not necessary.

As illustrated in Figure 1, the process started with the OVRA (see Section 2.1), which in collaboration with the *Carabinieri* and the Militia investigated and reported cases to the Prosecutor. The Prosecutor would then send the criminal proceedings to the GI or, for most serious cases, the CI which, in turn, would assess the political relevance of the crime. Cases that didn't fall under the competence of the TS would be re-directed by the GI or the CI to ordinary tribunals, the military tribunal, or dismissed. All other cases were sent to the TS (Dal Pont and Carolini, 1980, Vol. I). As for the sentencing decision, the prosecutor team would discuss the cases and submit the proposed sentence to the president of the TS that would then discuss it with the judging panel and issue the final verdict.

Figure 1: How cases reached the Special Tribunal



Notes: The figure illustrates the judicial process that followed investigations by the Organization for Vigilance and Repression of Anti-fascism (OVRA).

The panel for each TS trial is available from the Military Library of the Italian Ministry of Defense. We collected and digitized these data for the first time. Of the 101,270 individuals recorded in the CP between 1926 (the year the TS was created) and 1943, 10,855 entered the judicial process represented in [Figure 1](#), and, of these, 6,929 ended up in front of the TS.

Except for the president, whose appointment would last for many years, the composition of the judging panel changed from one case to another. During 1926-1943 there were 91 distinct TS judges, and in any given year there were an average of 20 distinct judges out of which the panel could be chosen. For each case, a different panel of six judges was formed. Until 1931 the panel was chosen by the Minister of War; after 1931 it was chosen directly by Mussolini upon suggestion by the TS president. In either case, the choice was based on the availability of judges and substitutes on the day ([D’Alessandro, 2020](#)). Thus, each judge dealt with multiple cases, and defendants from a given province were assigned multiple, distinct six-judge panels in an essentially random fashion. The historical narrative ([Longhitano, 1995](#); [Lacchè, 2015](#); [D’Alessandro, 2020](#)) suggests that it was not the case that specific judges were assigned to specific cases, and our statistical evidence below supports this conjecture. This institutional feature is the source of our identification (see [Section 3](#)). Following the procedure pioneered by [Kling \(2006\)](#), we construct in [Section 4.2](#) a measure of “residual judge stringency” in each province in 1926-1934, to be used as a shifter of the supply of opposition to the fascist regime across provinces in 1935-1943.

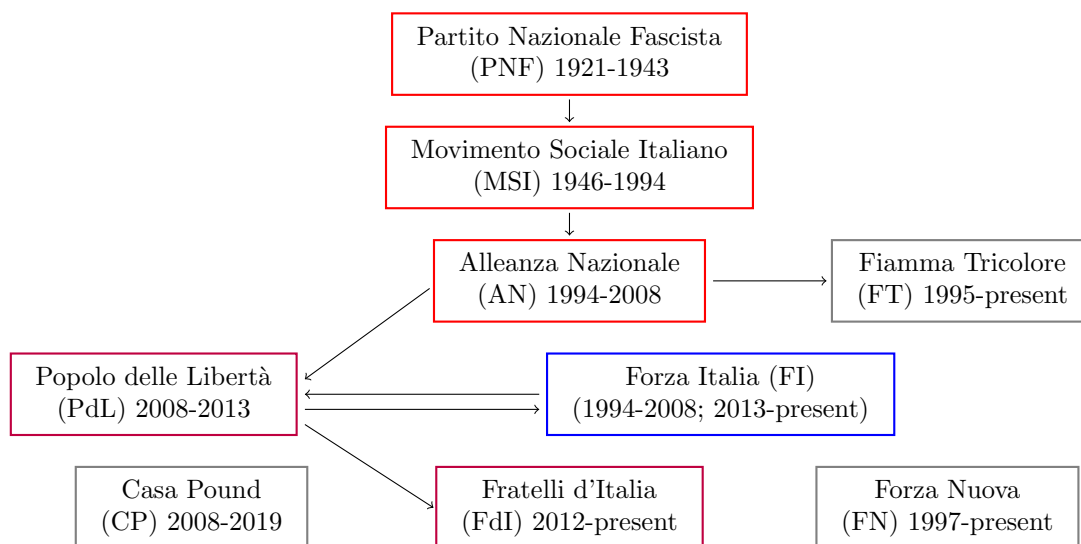
2.4 Right-wing parties in Italy since 1946

For almost fifty years since the end of WWII, the only political party in Italy that defined itself as “right wing” was the *Movimento Sociale Italiano* (MSI). The MSI was founded by former members of the PNF and the fascist *Repubblica Sociale Italiana* in 1946 circumventing a constitutional ban on reorganizing “under any form whatsoever, the dissolved Fascist party”. Given its origin, the MSI was ostracized by mainstream political parties and was never part of any government coalition, with the exception of indirect support to a short-lived government led by the Christian Democrats in 1960. The MSI collected a small share of votes in all post-war elections, fluctuating around 5% and reaching a peak of about 9% in 1972, when it absorbed the monarchic party and extended its name to MSI-National Right. Yet, it never gained substantial votes outside its strongholds in Southern Italy, thus remaining a marginalized party (Ruzza and Schmidtke, 1996).

This situation changed dramatically after 1992, when the old party system collapsed following magistrates’ crackdown on political corruption. The MSI gained “legitimacy” by joining a coalition led by Berlusconi’s *Forza Italia* (FI) movement in the run-up to the 1994 general election. Such endorsement involved an identity transformation: the MSI was dissolved into a less ideologically distinctive *Alleanza Nazionale* (AN), which committed to the principles of liberal democracies (Bull and Newell, 2005). A small group of dissenters left AN and founded the *Movimento Sociale Fiamma Tricolore*, a marginal far-right party that never gained any parliamentary representation. AN instead shifted towards the ideological center, with the ambitious aim of becoming the dominant force of the conservative right in the new, post-1993 Italian political system (Ignazi, 2005; Ruzza and Schmidtke, 1996). AN was the first party with roots in the interwar-era fascist ideology to achieve a place in government since WWII. Indeed, AN political personnel reproduced with only minor variations the MSI’s political class (Ignazi, 2005). By changing its image from a neo-fascist Mussolini-era holdover to a post-fascist, conservative European-style party, AN consistently outperformed its predecessor MSI. It mobilized new voters and former supporters of the Christian Democrats and the Italian Socialist Party (Shin and Agnew, 2007). It collected more than 13% of votes in the 1994 general election, reaching a peak of almost 16% in

1996. Over time, AN tried to cut ties with its fascist heritage, abandoning most of the right-extremist traits that characterized its early history. This transition was epitomized by Gianfranco Fini’s visit to Israel in 2003, when he declared that fascism was “an absolute evil”. Nevertheless, this ideological shift by the party leadership remained at odds with the party cadres and voters, whose ideological stance was still in line with the old post-fascist values. For example, survey data documenting AN electorates’ values between 1995 and 2001 indicated that a significant share of them: displayed the highest sympathy towards the fascist regime; embraced xenophobic attitudes; were anti-Semitic; believed in the existence of superior and inferior races (Ignazi, 2005, pp. 340-2). In 2008, AN and Berlusconi’s more moderate FI merged into a new party called *Popolo della Libertà* (PdL). As illustrated in Figure 2, this event marks the end of a direct line connecting the *Partito Nazionale Fascista* with a right-wing party in Italy.

Figure 2: Genealogy of right-wing parties in Italy since 1921

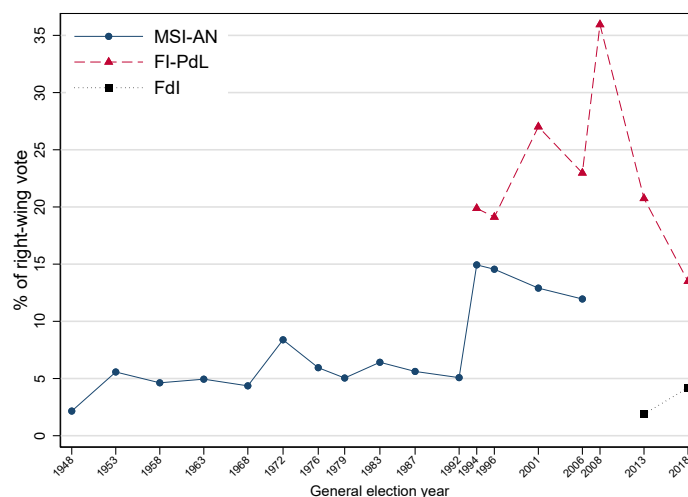


Notes: The figure illustrates the genealogy of right-wing parties in Italy since 1921.

Our main analysis is focused on a narrow definition of right-wing voting: vote shares received by the MSI in the 1948-1992 general elections and by AN in the 1994-2006 general elections, a period when the offshoot of the fascist party is clearly identifiable. These shares are represented in Figure 3. General elections in Italy have the largest turnout; we consider votes for Lower House representative because they are associated with the largest suffrage.

We will also present results based on a broader definition of right-wing voting, namely support to FI, PdL, and *Fratelli d'Italia* – three conservative and interconnected right-wing parties whose vote shares are also reported in Figure 3. FI was founded in 1994 in the wake of the aforementioned collapse of the old party system, and became the catchment party for conservative voters who had supported the Christian Democrats and also the atypical Italian Socialist Party until 1992. As mentioned above, FI was dissolved into PdL in 2008 and was then restored as a party in 2013. *Fratelli d'Italia* instead was founded in 2012 from right-wing leaders that left PdL, based on a conservative post-fascist platform. It attracted votes from many members of the post-fascist right who had supported MSI and AN, but also more moderate FI voters. FdI does not explicitly repudiate the historical experience of fascism and uses the MSI’s symbol, the Tricolour Flame, as part of the party’s emblem (De Giorgi and Tronconi, 2018). While the slogans used by FdI on immigration and other social issues are not very far removed from those of small extreme right political groups (Koopmans and Statham, 2010), its political platform differs from the extreme right in its willingness to align to the political mainstream. It is the rising right-wing force in Italy. Our analysis ignores instead the residual, marginal far-right parties represented in Figure 2 (FT, FN, and CP), which never gained parliamentary representation, as well as populist forces like *Lega Nord* and *M5S*, in consideration of the different nature of ideology and populism.

Figure 3: Right-wing voting in Italy between 1948 and 2018



Notes: The figure reports the share of votes obtained in Italian general elections (Lower House) by the right-wing post-fascist party (*Movimento Sociale Italiano* until 1992, *Alleanza Nazionale* from 1994 to 2006), by the more mainstream conservative right-wing party (*Forza Italia* between 1994 and 2006 and since 2013), and by the right-wing populist party (*Fratelli d'Italia*, since the 2013 general election). Source: Italian Ministry of the Interior.

3 Theoretical framework

There is a population of overlapping generations indexed by t . An individual is identified by the family of origin, i . Let θ_{it} denote the distaste for right-wing ideologies (“fascism” henceforth) of an individual from family i in generation t . This trait, which is endogenously determined by a process of cultural transmission within the family and the community to be specified below, is the realization of random variable θ , whose support is $[0, b_t]$. Large values of θ indicate strong distaste for fascism, while $\theta = 0$ is associated with the strongest possible taste for fascism. The geographic level of our analysis is the province (the “community”) and the distribution of θ in a given province in generation t is denoted by $F_t(\theta)$. The province index is omitted here and in the rest of this section to simplify the notation, but it is understood that the theoretical analysis is for a given province.

Given their political preference θ , individuals may choose to (i) actively oppose fascism; (ii) persecute anti-fascists; or (iii) do nothing (i.e., to be inactive). The expected utility from opposing fascism is $\pi_t(u(\theta_{it}) - \hat{s}_t) + (1 - \pi_t)u(\theta_{it})$, where $\frac{\partial u(\theta_{it})}{\partial \theta_{it}} > 0$, π_t denotes the probability of being arrested, and \hat{s}_t is the *expected* sentence inflicted as a result of an arrest. Expected sentence is common across individuals in the community and is affected, via social learning, by past cases involving opponents from the community. Persecuting anti-fascists, on the other hand, confers net utility $v(\theta_{it}) - c_t$, where $\frac{\partial v(\theta_{it})}{\partial \theta_{it}} < 0$ and c_t is the cost of persecuting an anti-fascist for individuals in generation t . The technology of repression is such that an individual can persecute at most another individual. Finally, inactive individuals receive a fixed utility \bar{u} . Without loss of generality, we specify $u(\theta_{it}) = \theta_{it}$, $v(\theta_{it}) = \theta_{it}^{-1}$, and $\bar{u} = 0$.

For our model to generate meaningful variation (i.e., neutrality is a non-empty set), both the expected punishment $\pi_t \hat{s}_t$ and the cost of persecuting anti-fascists c should be sufficiently high. To this end, we assume that in the support of θ_{it} there is a $\tilde{\theta}_t$ such that the following bounding condition holds,

$$c_t^{-1} < \tilde{\theta}_t < \pi_t \hat{s}_t. \quad (1)$$

3.1 Supply of opposition to fascism

Individuals who choose to oppose fascism must satisfy two incentive compatibility conditions, so that the utility of opposing fascism exceeds that of being neutral as well as that of persecuting anti-fascists. However, assumption (1) implies that $\theta_{it}^{-1} < \tilde{\theta}_t^{-1} < c_t$, which in turn reduces incentive compatibility to a single condition $\theta_{it} \geq \pi_t \hat{s}_t$. Put simply, individuals with sufficiently high distaste for fascism will become anti-fascists. Thus, the fraction of anti-fascists in generation t , denoted A_t , is given by

$$A_t = 1 - F_t(\pi_t \hat{s}_t). \quad (2)$$

3.2 Demand for repression of anti-fascists

Similarly, individuals who opt to persecute anti-fascists must receive at least as much utility as from being inactive or active opponents. Here, assumption (1) tells us that $\theta_{it} < \tilde{\theta}_t < \pi_t \hat{s}_t$, so incentive compatibility will again be reduced to a single condition $\theta_{it} \leq c_t^{-1}$, i.e., individuals with sufficiently low distaste for fascism will become persecutors. As a result, the fraction of the population that engages in repression of active opponents is equal to the arrest rate π_t , which in turn is given by

$$\pi_t = F_t(c_t^{-1}). \quad (3)$$

3.3 Equilibrium

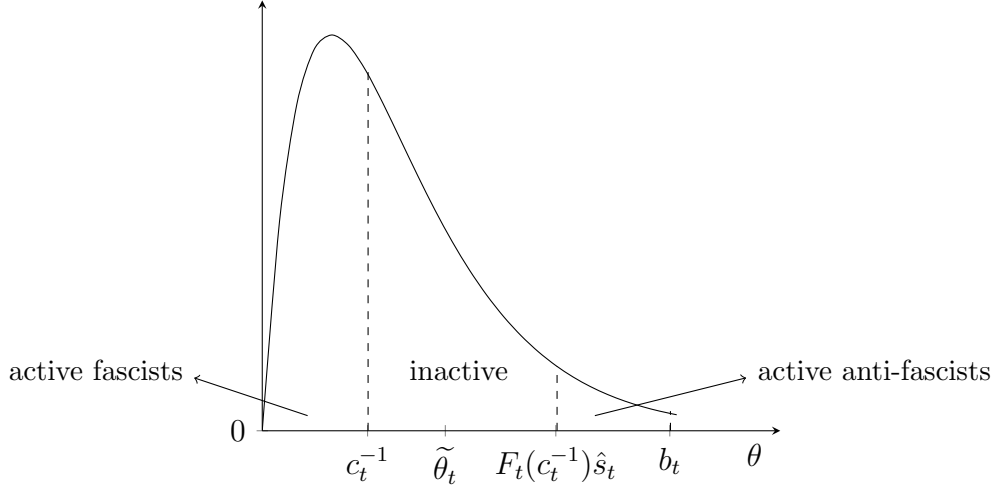
In equilibrium, there will be three groups of individuals, as illustrated in [Figure 4](#): the active anti-fascists, the active fascist who engage in repression activity, and an intermediate group of inactive individuals with distaste parameters such that $c_t^{-1} < \theta_{it} < \pi_t \hat{s}_t$.⁶ Thus, parameter $\tilde{\theta}$ that was introduced in assumption (1) serves as a convenient cutoff: individuals characterized by $\theta_{it} < \tilde{\theta}_t$ never consider becoming anti-fascists – these individuals like fascism enough to never oppose it – while individuals characterized by $\theta_{it} \geq \tilde{\theta}_t$ never consider becoming repressors – these individuals have a strong enough distaste for fascism that they never persecute anti-fascists. Combining equations (2) and (3), the equilibrium opposition rate to

⁶We also assume, implicitly, that there exist values in the support of θ_{it} such that $\pi_t \hat{s}_t \leq \theta_{it} \leq c_t^{-1}$, which will ensure that all three groups are non-empty sets.

fascism in the province is given by

$$A_t = 1 - F_t(F_t(c_t^{-1})\hat{s}_t). \quad (4)$$

Figure 4: Density of θ and equilibrium partition of the population



Notes: The figure illustrates a hypothetical density function associated with the cumulative distribution function $F(\theta)$ with support $[0, b_t]$, and the equilibrium partition of the population into three mutually exclusive groups: the active fascists (those with sufficiently low distaste for fascism θ), the active anti-fascists (those with sufficiently high distaste for fascism θ), and inactive individuals (those with intermediate values of distaste for fascism θ).

3.4 Intergenerational transmission of anti-fascist culture

Drawing from the economics of transmitting a continuous cultural trait (Bisin and Topa, 2003), we assume that an individual's distaste for fascism is determined by the family (vertical transmission) and by social influences (horizontal transmission),

$$\theta_{it+1} = d_{it}\theta_{it} + (1 - d_{it})\bar{\theta}_t, \quad (5)$$

where $d_{it} \in [0, 1]$ is the direct socialization effort chosen by parents and $\bar{\theta}_t \equiv \mathbb{E}_t(\theta)$. That is, a young generation's distaste for fascism (θ_{it+1}) results from a "race" between the parental trait (θ_{it}) and the average trait in the community ($\bar{\theta}_t$). We assume that parents would like their children to have the same distaste for fascism that they have, but they are in competition with social influences and can affect the outcome of the race via costly socialization effort, thus increasing the probability that their children's distaste for fascism is similar to theirs.

Denoting by $c(d_{it})$ a convex cost function, the solution to the parents' problem is

$$d_{it}^* = \arg \min_{d_{it} \in [0,1]} |\theta_{it} - \theta_{it+1}| + c(d_{it}). \quad (6)$$

It is convenient to assume that $c(d_{it}) = \frac{1}{2\phi} d_{it}^2$, in which case the interior solution is

$$d_{it}^* = \begin{cases} \phi(\theta_{it} - \bar{\theta}_t) & \text{if } \theta_{it} > \bar{\theta}_t \\ -\phi(\theta_{it} - \bar{\theta}_t) & \text{if } \theta_{it} < \bar{\theta}_t. \end{cases} \quad (7)$$

Thus, socialization effort depends on whether parents are more or less anti-fascist than the average parents in the community. As the social environment becomes more anti-fascist, parents who are more anti-fascist than average reduce effort in transmitting their distaste for fascism to their children. Symmetrically, parents who are less anti-fascist than average exert lower socialization effort when their children grow up in a less anti-fascist milieu. In other words, socialization effort is subject to cultural substitution (Bisin and Verdier, 2011). Parameter ϕ determines family i 's cost of transmitting the parental trait and thereby the speed of reversion to the societal mean. That is, if direct socialization within the family is costly (small ϕ), then the child's distaste for fascism will tend to follow social influences; on the other hand, if direct socialization comes at low cost for parents (large ϕ), then the child's distaste for fascism will deviate away from social influences and move towards the parental trait. Therefore, for each family i , ϕ effectively governs the speed of convergence to the average anti-fascism in the community. This can be seen by replacing the solution into equation (5), which yields the law of motion of distaste for fascism across generations,

$$\theta_{it+1} = \begin{cases} \bar{\theta}_t + \phi(\theta_{it} - \bar{\theta}_t)^2 & \text{if } \theta_{it} > \bar{\theta}_t \\ \bar{\theta}_t - \phi(\theta_{it} - \bar{\theta}_t)^2 & \text{if } \theta_{it} < \bar{\theta}_t. \end{cases} \quad (8)$$

Thus, noting that the equilibrium opposition rate is proportional to the average distaste for fascism so that $\mu_t A_t = \bar{\theta}_t$ for some scalar $\mu_t > 0$, the average trait for generation $t + 1$ is

$$\bar{\theta}_{t+1} = \mu_t A_t + \phi \int_{\mu_t A_t}^{b_t} (\theta_{it} - \mu_t A_t)^2 dF_t(\theta) - \phi \int_0^{\mu_t A_t} (\theta_{it} - \mu_t A_t)^2 dF_t(\theta), \quad (9)$$

which implies that the average political preference for right-wing ideology in a province at $t+1$ reflects the equilibrium incidence of active anti-fascism in that province at t . The direction of

this relationship is determined by the distribution of political preferences at t . The ambiguity in equation (8) due to cultural substitution is then transferred to the relation between voting behavior and historical anti-fascism that we wish to estimate.

Denote by Y_{t+1} the average propensity of individuals in the post-WWII generation to vote for right-wing parties in a given province, which we assume to be decreasing in the average unobserved distaste for fascism $\bar{\theta}_{t+1}$. Since the latter depends, via equation (9), on the population share of active anti-fascists during WWII, A_t , the relation of interest is given by $Y_{t+1}(A_t)$, which may be a decreasing or increasing function.

3.5 Model takeaways for the empirical analysis

Given this theoretical relation $Y_{t+1}(A_t)$, the goal of our empirical analysis is to estimate how the cross-province conditional mean $\mathbb{E}(Y_{t+1}|\cdot)$ changes with $\pi_t A_t$, which is the observed fraction of the population that was “arrested”, i.e., recorded in the CP for anti-fascist activity. Our simple theoretical framework delivers two main points for this analysis.

First, we face an identification problem because, using equations (3) and (4), the population share recorded in the CP as regime opponents is given by

$$\pi_t A_t = F(c_t^{-1})(1 - F(F(c_t^{-1})\hat{s}_t)). \quad (10)$$

This equation illustrates that our measure of opposition to the regime is a conflation of supply and demand factors: is a higher $\pi_t A_t$ in a certain province the result of a large supply of opponents or of apathetic policing reflecting a weak demand for repression? Equation (10) also suggests that this problem can be resolved by employing a class of instruments that are associated with expected punishment \hat{s}_t ; any exogenous shock to \hat{s}_t induces variation in the arrest rate that reflects supply factors only, because \hat{s}_t enters equation (2) but not (3). The “judge stringency” identification strategy that we adopt solves this problem and enables us to identify the Local Average Treatment Effect (LATE) of historical anti-fascism on current right-wing voting.⁷ As discussed in greater detail in [Section 4.2](#), we postulate that the decision to become an active anti-fascist in 1935-1943 (as measured by CP data)

⁷Bisin and Moro (2021) offer an excellent discussion of the interpretation of the LATE in historical studies that employ instrumental variables.

varies across provinces *also* because the observed punishments inflicted by TS judges to anti-fascists in 1926-1934 – and so expected sentences via social learning from past cases – does. Our identification strategy exploits the exogenous variation in expected sentencing that is generated by the random assignment of judges with different severity to similar cases.

Second, we can derive our econometric specification as an approximation of the model’s solution. Assume for simplicity that the average propensity of individuals in the post-war generation $t + 1$ to vote for right-wing parties in province p is a linear decreasing function of their average unobserved distaste for fascism in that province, $Y_{t+1,p} = a_{t+1,p} - g\bar{\theta}_{t+1,p}$, with $g \geq 0$. Since we only have one instrumental variable for the opposition rate, we use a first-order Taylor expansion of equation (9) around the cross-province grand mean \bar{A}_t ,

$$\bar{\theta}_{t+1,p}(A_{t,p}) \approx k_{0t,p} + k_{1t,p}A_{t,p}, \quad (11)$$

for province-level scalars $k_{0t,p}$ and $k_{1t,p}$.⁸ Then the structural equation is

$$Y_{t+1,p} = \alpha_{t+1,p} + \beta_{t+1,p}A_{t,p}, \quad (12)$$

where $\alpha_{t+1,p} = a_{t+1,p} - gk_{0t,p}$ and $\beta_t = -gk_{1t,p}$. This is a microfounded linear regression equation that expresses a causal relation between historical anti-fascism and post-war voting behavior. This relation is negative (i.e., $\beta_{t+1} < 0$) if the higher socialization effort exerted by low- θ parents in a high- θ community does not dominate the outcome of cultural substitution by high- θ parents, i.e., if the change in the difference between the two integrals on the RHS of equation (9) in response to a higher A_t does not offset the increase in the first term.

However, we do not observe the share of anti-fascists in province p , $A_{t,p}$, only the population share recorded in the CP, i.e., $\pi_{t,p}A_{t,p}$. Thus, the empirical analysis is based on

$$Y_{t+1,p} = \alpha_{t+1,p} + \tilde{\beta}_{t+1,p}(\pi_{t,p}A_{t,p}), \quad (13)$$

where $\tilde{\beta}_{t+1,p} = \beta_{t+1,p}/\pi_{t,p}$. The effect of stronger recorded opposition during generation t on generation $t + 1$ ’s voting behavior is heterogeneous across provinces, and the 2SLS estimator identifies $\mathbb{E}(\tilde{\beta}_{t+1,p})$, i.e., the LATE.

⁸E.g., $k_{0t,p} = \frac{1}{3}\phi b_{t,p}^{-1} [(b_{t,p} - \mu_{t,p}\bar{A}_{t,p})^3 - (\mu_{t,p}\bar{A}_{t,p})^3] - \mu_{t,p}\phi b_{t,p}^{-1} [(b_{t,p} - \mu_{t,p}\bar{A}_{t,p})^2 + (\mu_{t,p}\bar{A}_{t,p})^2] \bar{A}_{t,p}$ and $k_{1t,p} = \mu_{t,p} \{1 - \phi b_{t,p}^{-1} [(b_{t,p} - \mu_{t,p}\bar{A}_{t,p})^2 + (\mu_{t,p}\bar{A}_{t,p})^2]\}$ if F_t is uniform.

4 Data

We employ three different data sources: (i) the *Casellario Politico Centrale* (CP) for recorded opponents to the fascist regime; (ii) the *Tribunale speciale per la difesa dello Stato* (TS) records for judge stringency; (iii) 1948-2018 general election records for right-wing parties' vote shares. We combine these data to create a province-level cross-sectional data set at 1936 census boundaries.⁹ After discarding territories that became part of Yugoslavia after WWII (except for Trieste province, which returned to Italy in 1954), we are left with 91 provinces. We use the province as the geographic level of analysis because this is the lowest level of aggregation that enables the definition of our instrument for almost all spatial units. Although we observe the origin municipality of both opponents recorded in the CP and TS defendants, out of the nearly 8,000 municipalities of Italy, less than 4,000 have cases that ended up in front of the TS and therefore a judge stringency measure. Province-level aggregation allows us to define judge stringency for virtually all of the opponents recorded in the CP, at the cost of enlarging the boundaries of social interactions from the municipality (where such interactions are plausibly stronger) to the province (where they are more diluted). We also use three ancillary, historical data sources for checks of our identifying assumptions: (i) voting data from the last pre-regime free elections (1921), available from [Corbetta and Piretti \(2009\)](#); (ii) historical data containing pre-determined variables collected by [Acemoglu, De Feo, De Luca, and Russo \(2022\)](#) and available in their replication files; (iii) the number of Militia *coorti* in each province in the early 1920s, which can be obtained from the [Regio Esercito website](#).

4.1 Opposition rate

From CP records, we extract information on an individual's place of birth, place of residence, charges, and punishment type. We take an individual's province of birth as the relevant community where that individual's anti-fascism exerted a cultural influence because the province

⁹Currently, Italy has about 100 provinces, an administrative unit that is comparable to counties in the UK or the USA. We take extra care to assign information from non-1936 periods to provincial boundaries in 1936, by distributing data at the municipality level before re-aggregating them to the provincial level. For example, the province of Caserta was dissolved in 1927, and its municipalities were assigned to the provinces of Benevento, Campobasso, Frosinone, Latina, and Naples.

Table 1: Summary statistics from the *Casellario Politico Centrale* (CP)

	1926-1934		1935-1943	
	Mean	Std. dev.	Mean	Std. dev.
Crime type				
Dissident	0.24	0.42	0.57	0.50
Communist	0.37	0.48	0.30	0.46
Socialist	0.24	0.43	0.09	0.28
Anarchist	0.08	0.27	0.03	0.17
Republican	0.04	0.19	0.01	0.10
Punishment or status				
Non-missing	0.74	0.56	0.79	0.60
<i>Tribunale Speciale</i> (TS)	0.10	0.30	0.12	0.32
<i>Internment</i>	0.09	0.29	0.27	0.44
<i>Warned</i>	0.10	0.30	0.19	0.39
<i>Fugitive</i>	0.38	0.48	0.42	0.49
<i>Discharged</i>	0.40	0.49	0.07	0.25
Individuals	65,006		24,823	

Notes: The table reports statistics computed from *Casellario Politico Centrale* data. The shares of non-missing punishment types do not sum to one because it was possible to receive multiple punishments.

of residence may be affected by unobserved individual characteristics and by opposition to fascism. In our analysis, we consider the 89,829 individuals (out of a total of around 152,000 found in the CP) who were born in Italy (excluding its colonies at the time) and who were registered in the CP in the 1926-1943 period as opponents to the fascist regime.

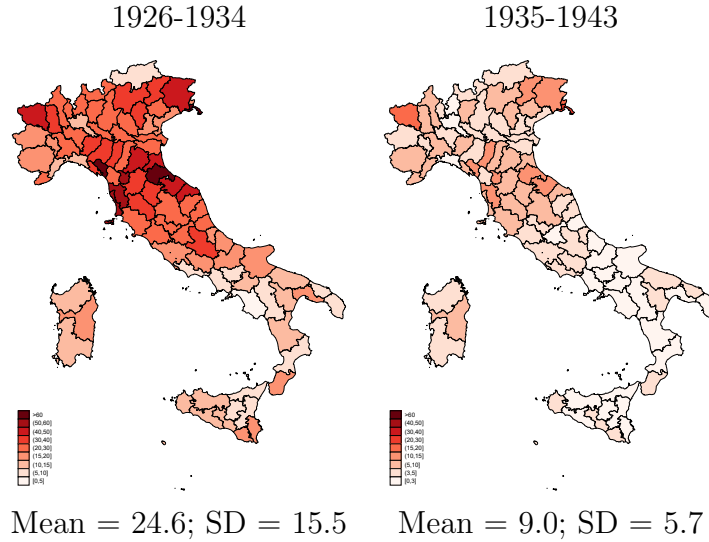
Table 1 reports summary statistics for the two periods that are relevant in our analysis: 1926-1934 and 1935-1943. The top panel refers to the type of “crime” recorded in the CP. In the first period, the most common types of opponents were members of outlawed left-wing parties (communists and socialists) and dissidents without a specific political affiliation.¹⁰ There were also sizable minorities of anarchists and republicans, and residual groups of trade unionists and subversives (not reported in the table because they make up less than 1%) who engaged in acts of violence against the regime. Most individuals were recorded with only one crime type.

¹⁰Table 1 may suggest important compositional changes, with the share of dissidents increasing and the incidence of socialists and communists declining between the two periods. However, this evolution is likely reflecting a change in labeling by CP maintainers than an actual shift in opponent types, because the dissident (*antifascista*) label was given to any opponent who did not belong to a notable political group.

The bottom panel of [Table 1](#) shows that among the opponents whose punishment type was recorded, many were fugitives and so were listed in the *rubrica di frontiera*, a list established in 1926 by the Ministry of Interior that contained information on wanted individuals who escaped abroad or who were no longer present at their place of residence. These individuals could be minor offenders or more dangerous opponents who had committed major political crimes, including spies ([Luigi, 2015](#)). About 10% were referred to the *Tribunale Speciale*. Note that not all of these ended up being actually tried by the TS. As reported in [Table 2](#), only 2,218 opponents did in 1926-1934. Opponents could also be simply warned (*diffidato*) or interned in detention camps (*confino*). Receiving warnings represented the weakest form of punishment: it involved special surveillance for two years (which could be extended by an additional two years) and particular restrictions to individual freedoms, such as firearm possession ban, or prohibition to attend public places and to associate with people with a criminal record, and a personal curfew. The punishment of *confino* was instead a form of political isolation reserved to those who disrupted (or attempted to disrupt) the “public, economic or social order”, typically by engaging in anti-fascist propaganda, criticizing the regime, and offending Mussolini. These regime opponents were transferred to penal colonies located in remote villages (mostly in southern Italy), often on small islands, where they had to remain for up to 5 years, with possible extensions. Finally, opponents could be discharged at the end of their sentence (*radiato*), although their record would remain in the CP. [Table 1](#) shows that the incidence of these cases drops dramatically in 1935-1943, which suggests stronger control of anti-fascists at the peak of the dictatorship.

From these CP data, we compute the number of recorded anti-fascists per 10,000 adults in a province to generate our measure of opposition to the regime, which corresponds to model variable $\pi_t A_t$. This measure is illustrated in [Figure 5](#), which shows that opposition was more intense during the nine years between 1926 and 1934 than in the subsequent nine years until the collapse of the regime. It is normal that the number of political opponents declines as a regime becomes entrenched. In our case, this decline could be the effect of harsher punishment in the second period (as documented below) or a consequence of the repression of early opponents – it is plausible that punishment during the first period was setting expectations about the consequences of opposing the regime in the second period.

Figure 5: Anti-fascism rate between 1926 and 1943



Notes: The figure reports the opposition rate to fascism across Italian provinces (1936 boundaries) in 1926-1934 (left) and in 1935-1943 (right), defined as the number of new individuals recorded in the *Casellario Politico Centrale* per 10,000 adults in a province. This measure corresponds to model variable $\pi_t A_t$.

4.2 Judge stringency

From TS records, we extract an opponent’s province of birth, judging panel, charges, and sentence. After removing foreign-born individuals and cleaning the data for missing judge identity or defendant’s birth province, we are left with 5,113 cases out of the 6,929 individuals who were tried by the TS during 1926-1943. A defendant could be acquitted, face prison sentences up to life sentence or even capital punishment. We quantify a life sentence as 100 years in prison; this outcome is observed in 18 cases out of 5,113. Death sentence was inflicted to anyone who had carried out (or attempted to) an attack against Mussolini or top fascist officials, or those who had endangered national independence or revealed state/military secrets. A total of 31 opponents receive a death sentence in our TS data.¹¹ These relatively few cases are not considered in the construction of our judge stringency measure. Table 2 summarizes TS data for the two periods considered in Table 1. Affiliation with leftist parties and subversive activity were the most common charges. Although the acquittal rate is the same between the two periods, both the number of individuals tried by the TS and the average sentence increased considerably.

¹¹This figure matches exactly Dal Pont and Carolini’s (1980) estimate of executions during the dictatorship.

Table 2: Summary statistics from the *Tribunale speciale per la difesa dello Stato*

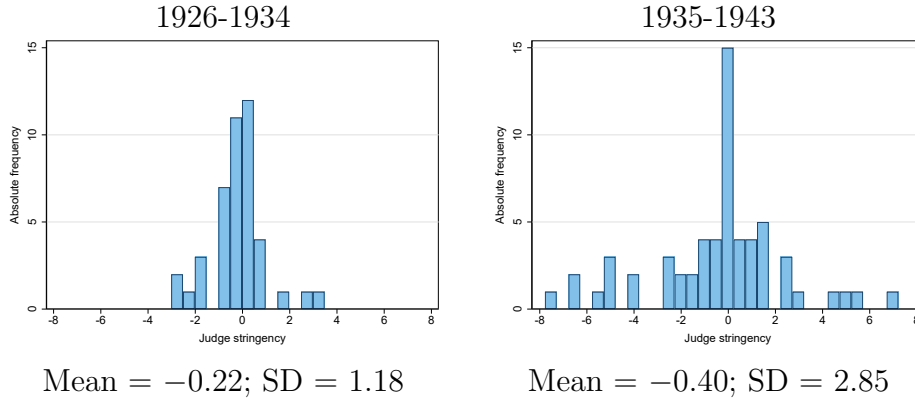
	1926-1934		1935-1943	
	Mean	Std. dev.	Mean	Std. dev.
Crime type				
Communist or Socialist	0.77	0.42	0.73	0.44
Subversive	0.69	0.46	0.45	0.50
Offenses to institutions	0.10	0.30	0.11	0.31
Terrorist attacks	0.03	0.17	0.03	0.16
Punishment				
Years of sentence	3.97	5.30	5.88	9.70
Non-zero sentence	0.75	0.43	0.75	0.43
<i>Years of sentence</i>	5.27	5.51	7.85	10.49
<i>Death sentence</i>	0.005	0.069	0.011	0.102
Individuals	2,219		2,894	
Judges	43		62	

Notes: The table reports statistics computed from *Tribunale speciale* data. The shares of crime type do not sum to one because it was possible to be imputed multiple crimes.

The random assignment of judges to the TS panel (see [Section 2.3](#)) allows us to construct a judge stringency instrumental variable for the recorded opposition rate $\pi_t A_t$ and to resolve the identification problem discussed in [Section 3.5](#). Recall that each judge dealt with multiple cases and that defendants from a given province were assigned multiple, distinct six-judge panels. These features generate as-good-as random variation in average stringency of the panel across provinces. In the “judge fixed effects” literature, researchers often simply take averages of past decisions as a measure of a judge’s stringency. This procedure is appropriate in the absence of both time trends in sentences and heterogeneity of cases, which [Table 2](#) indicates are instead present in our context. We circumvent this problem by netting out the effect of time and crime type, at which point the instrument is in line with the literature.

Specifically, our judge stringency measure is constructed as follows. First, for each case judged by the TS, we regress years of sentence on year and crime dummies. The regression residuals are a measure of how tough the judging panel was in that case. Each judge in the panel is imputed that toughness for that particular case. We then create for each judge an individual toughness measure that is given by the average of a judge’s toughness across all cases heard by the judge. This is done separately for the 1926-1934 and 1935-1943 periods.

Figure 6: Residual, individual judge stringency between 1926 and 1943



Notes: The figure reports the distribution of residual judge stringency across 43 (left) and 60 (right) distinct judges that composed the *Tribunale Speciale per la difesa dello Stato* judging panel in 1926-1934 (left) and 1935-1943 (right). Source: authors' calculations based on data from the Military Library of the Italian Ministry of Defense. The right panel excludes two outliers with values of 19.7 and 64, which is irrelevant because our instrument is the measure reported in the left panel.

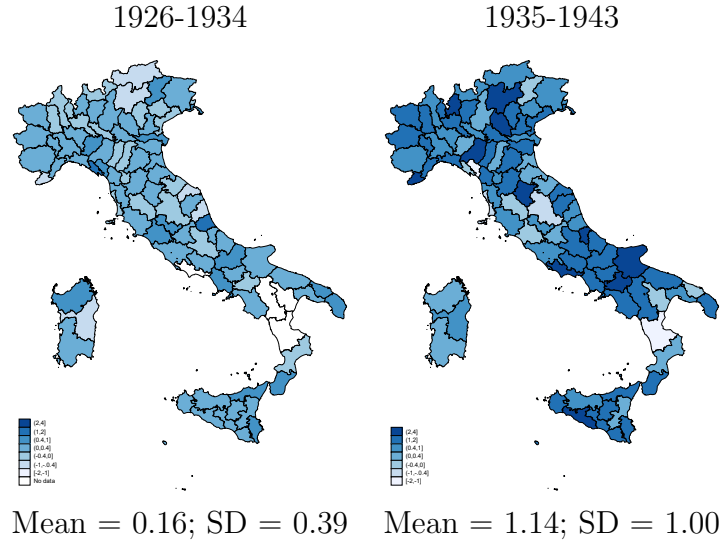
Figure 6 shows the distribution of the resulting judge-specific variable after removing two outliers out of 62 judges in the 1935-1943 period.¹² Finally, we compute for each province the weighted average of judge stringency experienced by TS defendants born in that province, across all judges, with weights given by the share of matches between a judge and a province. The distribution of this variable across Italian provinces is illustrated in Figure 7. Between 1926 and 1934, four provinces – Cosenza, Latina, Matera, and Potenza – had no anti-fascists that ended up being deferred to the TS and so for these provinces there is no IV and they will be dropped in the 2SLS estimation. Average, cross-province judge stringency is higher and exhibits more dispersion between 1935 and 1943 than in the earlier period, in line with the increased standard deviation of sentence years displayed in Table 2. Note that there is no spatial pattern in Figure 7, which is a necessary condition for judge stringency to be as good as randomly assigned.¹³

In what follows we label the recorded opposition rate (variable $\pi_t A_t$ in the model) as *OppRate*, and the province-level average judge stringency reported in Figure 7 (the variable

¹²This is irrelevant for the construction of our instrument, which is based on the 1926-1934 period only. The two outliers are judges Mario Ciani and Michele Leonardi, who judged only one and three cases (respectively) that ended up with very severe sentences: 28 years for the case judged by Ciani, and two life sentences and a 11-year sentence for the cases judged by Leonardi.

¹³Yet, if judges are supposed to be as good as randomly assigned across provinces, one may wonder why we observe variation in Figure 7. While the Law of Large Numbers implies a uniform average stringency across provinces as the within-province number of TS sentences diverges to infinity, in a finite sample it is of course possible to observe such variation.

Figure 7: Residual, average cross-province judge stringency between 1926 and 1943

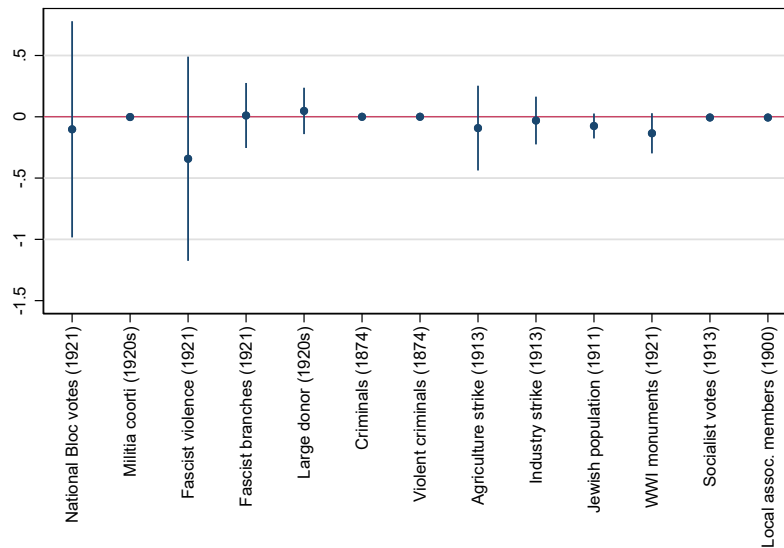


Notes: The figure reports the weighted average of residual judge stringency across Italian provinces (1936 boundaries) in 1926-1934 (left chart) and in 1935-1943 (right chart), with weights given by the frequency distribution of judges across cases involving defendants born in each province, computed from data on the universe of sentences of the *Tribunale Speciale per la difesa dello Stato*. Source: authors' calculations based on data from the Military Library of the Italian Ministry of Defense.

that implements our judge fixed-effects identification strategy) as *JudgeFE*. Our explanatory variable in the regression analysis that follows is *OppRate* in 1935-1943 (right panel of Figure 5) and the instrument is *JudgeFE* in 1926-1934 (left panel of Figure 7). This way we impose the natural timeline that defines the causal effect of the instrumental variable on the instrumented variable. We also engineer a placebo by flipping this timeline, i.e., by using *OppRate* rate in 1926-1934 as the explanatory variable, to be instrumented by *JudgeFE* constructed using TS sentences in 1935-1943. It is reassuring that there is no placebo effect (see Section 6.3 for details).

To further boost the credibility of *JudgeFE* in 1926-1934 as an instrument for *OppRate* in 1935-1943, we regress the instrument on thirteen pre-determined covariates: the National Bloc's vote share (which included the PNF) in 1921 elections, an information that is available for 66 of the 87 provinces for which *JudgeFE* in 1926-1934 is available; the number of *Milizia coorti* (see Section 2) in the early 1920s, which is available for 83 of those provinces; and eleven historical variables that we merge into our data set from Acemoglu, De Feo, De Luca, and Russo's (2022) replication files (we are able to match 61 provinces across the two data sets): acts of fascist violence per 1000 inhabitants in 1920-1922, the presence of

Figure 8: Projection of judge stringency in 1926-1934 on 13 predetermined variables



Notes: The figure reports point estimates and robust 95% confidence intervals from univariate linear regressions of *JudgeFE* in 1926-1934 on the following variables: National Bloc's vote share in 1921 elections, number of *Milizia coorti* in the early 1920s, acts of fascist violence per 1000 inhabitants in 1920-1922, the presence of a fascist local branch at the end of 1921, the presence of large donors to the fascist party between 1919 and 1925, the crime and violent crime rates in 1874, the occurrence of strikes in agriculture and industry in 1913, the fraction of Jewish citizens, the presence of World War I monuments, the socialist vote share in 1913, and the per-capita number of members of local associations.

a fascist local branch at the end of 1921, the presence of large donors to the fascist party between 1919 and 1925, the crime and violent crime rates in 1874, the occurrence of strikes in agriculture and industry in 1913, the fraction of Jewish citizens, the presence of World War I monuments, the socialist vote share in 1913, and the per-capita number of members of local associations. The results of univariate regressions, reported in Figure 8, indicate that our IV is not significantly correlated with any of these variables. In a multivariate regression (which is feasible in a subset of 48 provinces), the F -stat for the null hypothesis that the coefficients on these thirteen variables are all zero is 0.58, with a p -value of 0.85.

4.3 Post-war election data

Finally, we use post-war election data that is publicly available from the [Eligendo archive](#) maintained by the Italian Ministry of the Interior. As explained in Section 2.4, we consider general elections for the Italian parliament's Lower House (*Camera dei Deputati*) since 1948 because these elections maximize both suffrage and turnout. Our main analysis is based on a narrow definition of right-wing voting that reflects the direct lineage between the PNF

and post-fascist parties in democratic Italy represented in [Figure 2](#). Thus, in the first part of the empirical analysis we use election data between 1948 (the first year that the MSI participated in a general election) and 2006 (the last year that AN did). We then extend the analysis to a broader definition of right-wing voting using election data between 1994 (the first year that conservative *Forza Italia* participated in a general election) and 2018 (the last general election year to date).

5 Econometric framework

In light of the theoretical model that was presented in [Section 3](#), we employ the following linear regression model to study empirically the relationship between historical anti-fascism and right-wing votes at the province level in the post-war period,

$$Y_{p,e} = \alpha_e + \beta \cdot OppRate_p + \gamma X_p + \epsilon_{p,e}, \quad (14)$$

where $Y_{p,e}$ is the share of right-wing votes in province p in election e , $OppRate_p$ is the number of regime opponents per 10,000 adults in province p between 1935 and 1943, and X_p is a vector of province-level covariates. Two variables are included in X_p : (i) the province-level share of punishment types inflicted on political opponents, as recorded in the CP (“weak” if warned or distrusted, “strong” if tried by the TS or by another tribunal, detained, or interned), a conditioning variable that ensures that our results are not driven by cross-province variation in punishment types; (ii) the province-level distribution of reasons for being recorded in the CP; we aggregate this information into two categories reflecting the nature of anti-fascists: the share of left-wing opponents (i.e., those affiliated with the Communist or Socialist parties) and the share of dissidents (i.e., opponents who do not belong to a notable political group).

We estimate equation (14) by OLS (for comparison) and by 2SLS, using judge stringency as an instrument to resolve the identification problem (see [Section 3.5](#)). The first- and second-stage equations are:

$$Y_{p,e} = \alpha_e + \beta \cdot \widehat{OppRate}_p + \gamma X_p + \epsilon_{p,e}, \quad (15)$$

$$\widehat{OppRate}_p = \hat{a} + \hat{b} \cdot JudgeFE_p + \hat{c} X_p, \quad (16)$$

where $JudgeFE_p$ is the average, residual judge stringency experienced in 1926-1934 by TS defendants born in province p , and \hat{a} and \hat{b} are first-stage coefficients. Among the 91 provinces in our matched data set, we drop one outlier with a large value of $OppRate$ (the province of Trieste, a city that became part of Yugoslavia at the end of WWII before returning to Italy in 1954) and the four provinces with no anti-fascists deferred to the TS in 1926-1934, so our OLS and 2SLS regressions are based on 90 and 86 provinces, respectively.

In the presence of spatial autocorrelation of unobservables, historical correlations may be spurious statistical relations (Kelly, 2019). In order to guard against such peril, we also report in the Appendix the largest Conley (1999) standard error from a set of varying distance thresholds and distance metrics, following the recommendation of Colella, Lalive, Sakalli, and Thoenig (2019). Specifically, we consider three distance thresholds – 58km (which is the average “length” of a province in our sample), 100km, and 200km – and in each case, we compute distance cutoffs geodesically or with a linear decay. It turns out that these more conservative standard errors do not alter the precision of our estimates.

6 Results

6.1 Narrow definition of right-wing voting

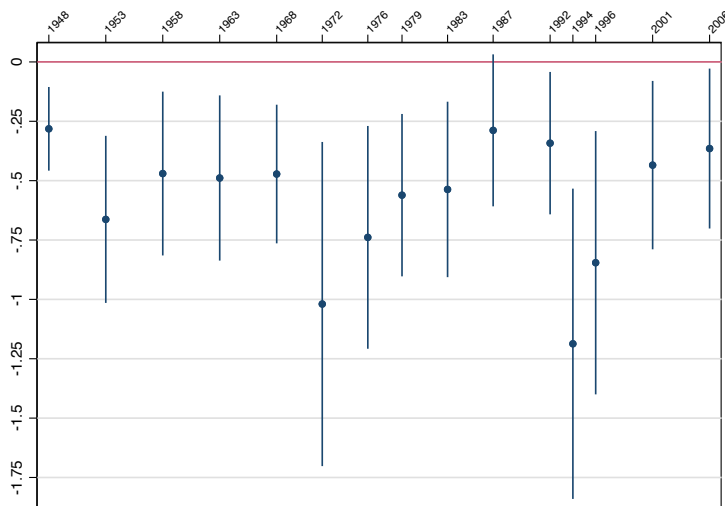
Table 3 reports results for selected election years that are about 30 years apart: 1948, 1976, and 2006. A summary of results for all election years between 1948 and 2006 is reported in Figure 9. All estimates of β are negative, which in the light of our theoretical model means that stronger historical anti-fascism in a province induced sufficiently strong social effects that resulted in lower propensity to vote for right-wing parties. The 2SLS results indicate that one additional regime opponent every 10,000 adults in a province in 1935-1943 decreases the support for MSI by about 0.3 percentage points (p.p.) in 1948, which is about 13% of its vote share in that year. The corresponding effect at the 1976 general election is about 0.7 p.p., also about 13% of MSI’s share (middle panel of the table). These are large, yet not implausible effects: with a standard deviation of 4.6 opponents per 10,000 adults in the estimation sample, our estimates imply that an additional standard deviation of regime

Table 3: Results for general elections 1948, 1976, and 2006 (narrow right-wing definition)

	OLS [1]	OLS [2]	2SLS [3]	2SLS [4]
Dep. var.: Right-wing party votes (%)				
Election year 1948	Mean of dep. var.: 2.079			
<i>OppRate</i> (1935-1943)	-0.177 (0.025)	-0.181 (0.029)	-0.241 (0.088)	-0.282 (0.090)
Anderson-Rubin $\chi^2(1)$			5.05	5.02
<i>p</i> -val			0.025	0.025
Election year 1976	Mean of dep. var.: 5.535			
<i>OppRate</i> (1935-1943)	-0.361 (0.054)	-0.349 (0.060)	-0.665 (0.225)	-0.739 (0.239)
Anderson-Rubin $\chi^2(1)$			6.41	5.07
<i>p</i> -val			0.011	0.024
Election year 2006	Mean of dep. var.: 11.727			
<i>OppRate</i> (1935-1943)	-0.139 (0.089)	-0.122 (0.100)	-0.338 (0.167)	-0.365 (0.172)
Anderson-Rubin $\chi^2(1)$			4.58	3.75
<i>p</i> -val			0.032	0.053
First stage (any election year); Dep. Var: <i>OppRate</i>				
<i>JudgeFE</i> (1926-1934)			-3.522 (1.005)	-3.283 (1.098)
<i>F</i> -stat, excluded IV			12.28	8.94
Covariates	No	Yes	No	Yes
<i>N</i>	90	90	86	86

Notes: The table reports the effect of the opposition rate to the fascist regime (number of anti-fascists per 10,000 adults) in 1935-1943 on right-wing voting narrowly defined (% of votes for the MSI until 1994 and AN thereafter) in Lower House general elections across provinces, estimated via OLS or 2SLS (using average province-level judge stringency as an instrument). Heteroskedasticity-robust standard errors are reported in parentheses. Covariates: province-level shares of: (i) “weak” and “strong” punishments, as recorded in the CP, (ii) left-wing opponents (i.e., those affiliated with the Communist or Socialist parties), and (iii) dissidents (i.e., opponents who do not belong to a notable political group).

Figure 9: Results for general elections 1948–2006 (narrow right-wing definition)



Notes: The figure reports 2SLS estimates of the effect of opposition rate to the fascist regime (number of anti-fascists per 10,000 adults) in 1935-1943 on right-wing voting (% of votes for the MSI until 1994 and AN thereafter) in post-war Lower House general elections across provinces, using average province-level judge stringency in 1926-1934 as an instrument. The bars represent 95% confidence constructed using heteroskedasticity-robust standard errors.

opponents in *every* province would have resulted in a much stronger anti-fascist culture in Italy and a decreased support for MSI in the order of nearly 70% in both 1948 and 1976. The point estimate is smaller, about 0.4 p.p., in 2006 (3.4% of AN’s vote share; bottom panel of the table). These results are robust to using Conley standard errors, see Table A1.

Considering the results for post-war elections up to 2006 in Figure 9 (which plots 2SLS coefficients from the specification with covariates and 95% confidence intervals), we conclude that this negative effect of historical anti-fascism on right-wing voting in post-war Italy is observed systematically, with magnitudes between 0.3 and 1.2 p.p. (the mean is -0.6 p.p.).

The first-stage results at the bottom of Table 3 are the same for any election year because *OppRate* and *JudgeFE* are historical variables that do not vary across post-war elections. The coefficient indicates that one additional year of average judge stringency in a province in 1926-1934 (about 2.5 standard deviations, see Figure 7) is associated with about 3.3 fewer opponents per 10,000 adults in that province in 1935-1943 (about 60% of a standard deviation, see Figure 5). The F -stat is slightly above 10 when not conditioning on covariates and slightly below when conditioning. In such borderline situations of a potentially weak instrument, the Anderson-Rubin test is more reliable than the 2SLS t -test (Moreira, 2009;

Angrist and Kolesár, 2021; Keane and Neal, 2021; Lee, McCrary, Moreira, and Porter, 2021). The p -values from this test in Table 3 indicate that this is actually not a concern.

Note that the 2SLS estimates are larger (in absolute value) than the OLS estimates. This gap reflects two phenomena that cannot be disentangled at this level of analysis: (i) a classical measurement error in *OppRate*, which introduces attenuation bias in the OLS estimate; (ii) the simultaneity between the supply of opposition to the regime and the demand for repression of opponents, which introduces negative omitted variable bias in the OLS estimate (since we expect the demand for repression to be positively correlated with right-wing voting but negatively correlated with *OppRate*).

Furthermore, the fact that 2SLS identifies the LATE, which in this case is the effect of a stronger historical supply of anti-fascism in provinces where this stronger supply was induced by more lenient TS judges, we expect our 2SLS coefficients to represent a lower bound of the true average effect. This is because the LATE relies on opponents who responded to relatively more lenient sentencing (“compliers”), and not on hardcore anti-fascists who would have opposed anyway (“always-takers”) and who presumably would have made a stronger impact on right-wing voting.

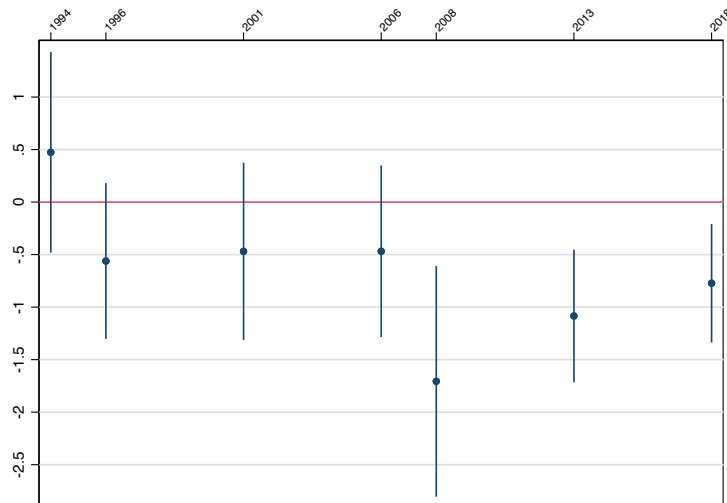
6.2 Broader definition of right-wing voting

We next repeat this analysis relaxing our narrow definition of right-wing voting. It is of interest to understand whether historical anti-fascism also affects the support for conservative right-wing parties that have no direct connection with the PNF. In analogy to Figure 9, we plot in Figure 10 the 2SLS coefficients and the associated 95% confidence intervals when the dependent variable is voting for FI or PdL at general elections between 1994 and 2018. Although a negative effect is visible from the 1996 general election onward, such effect becomes stronger in 2008, when conservative PdL absorbs the post-fascist party.

Finally, we report in Table 4 2SLS results when the dependent variable is voting for the small but rising right-wing party FdI, which so far participated only in 2013 and 2018 general elections (see Table A2 for results using Conley standard errors). First-stage results are of course the same as in Table 3. A modest negative effect that is significant only at the 90% confidence level is detected for the 2013 elections (when FdI received vote shares that are

similar to what MSI got in 1948). However, the effect is virtually zero in the 2018 election, when FdI shifted towards a more openly populist platform. These results suggest that there is a tenuous connection between ideological voting and populist voting.

Figure 10: Results for general elections 1994–2018 (broader right-wing definition)



Notes: The figure reports 2SLS estimates of the effect of opposition rate to the fascist regime (number of anti-fascists per 10,000 adults) in 1935-1943 on right-wing voting (% of votes for FI between 1994 and 2006, and PdL thereafter) in Lower House general elections across provinces, using average province-level judge stringency as an instrument. The bars represent 95% confidence constructed using heteroskedasticity-robust standard errors.

Table 4: Results for general elections 2013 and 2018 (*Fratelli d'Italia*, FdI)

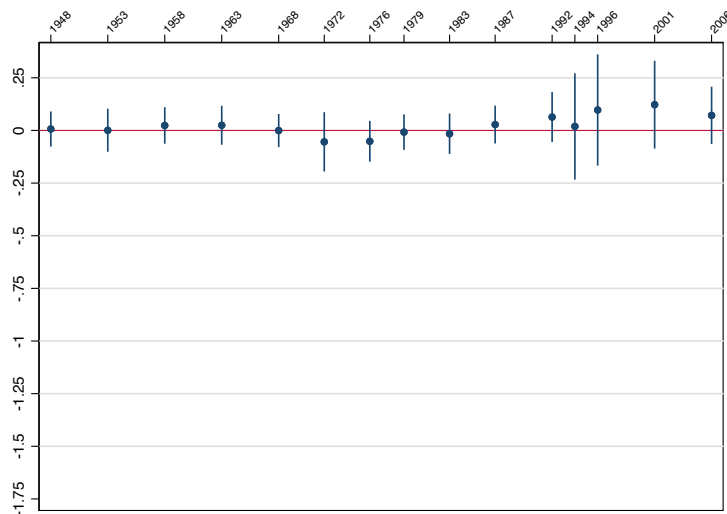
	[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]
	<u>Election year 2013</u>		<u>Election year 2018</u>	
<i>OppRate</i> (1935-1943)	-0.303 (0.162)	-0.352 (0.205)	-0.090 (0.073)	-0.100 (0.075)
Mean of dep. var.	1.913		4.084	
First stage F-stat	12.28	8.94	12.28	8.94
Anderson-Rubin $\chi^2(1)$	4.77	5.70	1.66	1.79
<i>p</i> -val	0.03	0.02	0.20	0.18
Covariates	No	Yes	No	Yes
<i>N</i>	86	86	86	86

Notes: The table reports 2SLS estimates of the effect of the opposition rate to the fascist regime (number of anti-fascists per 10,000 adults) in 1935-1943 on voting for FdI in 2013 and 2018 Lower House general elections across provinces, estimated via OLS or 2SLS (using average province-level judge stringency as an instrument). Heteroskedasticity-robust standard errors are reported in parentheses. Covariates include the province-level shares of: (i) “weak” and “strong” punishments, as recorded in the CP, (ii) left-wing opponents (i.e., those affiliated with the Communist or Socialist parties), and (iii) dissidents (i.e., opponents who do not belong to a notable political group).

6.3 Placebo and robustness checks

We conducted a placebo test consisting of inverting the timing of our experiment, i.e., we used the opposition rate in 1926-1934 as the explanatory variable and judge stringency in 1935-1943 as the instrument. No effect should be detected in this specification, and this is in fact the case. Figure 11 illustrates. This figure should be contrasted with Figure 9 – we use the same vertical scale to facilitate this contrast.

Figure 11: Placebo effect for general elections 1948–2006 (narrow right-wing definition)



Notes: The figure reports 2SLS estimates of the effect of opposition rate to the fascist regime (number of anti-fascists per 10,000 adults) in 1926-1934 on right-wing voting (% of votes for the MSI until 1994 and AN thereafter) in post-war Lower House general elections across provinces, using average province-level judge stringency in 1935-1943 as an instrument, i.e., imposing the *wrong* timeline. The bars represent 95% confidence constructed using heteroskedasticity-robust standard errors.

Another possible concern is that there are underlying ideological or anti-establishment tendencies that predate the rise of fascism. These may be associated with the development of anti-fascism and, by extension, with right-wing voting. While our 2SLS estimates are robust, in principle, to the influence of such pre-existing factors, we can mitigate their effects by introducing more historical control variables at the cost of a reduced sample size. To this end, we employ two sets of controls. First, to measure ideology in the general population, we use voting data from the 1913 and 1921 elections; the latter represent the last free election, shortly before Mussolini seized power, held in 1921. Second, to capture province-level variation in anti-establishment activity, we use the number of political opponents recorded in the CP *before* 1922. The two measures complement each other by absorbing the impact of pre-existing factors from the general population as well as from active political opponents.

Specifically, we use the vote share of the Socialist Party in 1913 and that of the Socialist and Communist parties in 1921, to quantify general support for the radical left, and the vote share of the *Blocco Nazionale* – a coalition that included the young PNF, and that was established to oppose the rise of communism and socialism – to measure electoral consensus for the right and for Mussolini before the establishment of his regime. Adding the vote shares for the left and right that predate the rise of fascism as well as the number of pre-1922 opponents as conditioning variables in our 2SLS regressions is a convenient way of taking into account initial political conditions since pre-existing political ideology may represent an important omitted variable. As shown in Table 5, our results are robust to this specification (see Table A3 for results using Conley standard errors).¹⁴

Table 5: Results for elections 1948, 1976, and 2006, conditioning on pre-existing ideology

	[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]	[5]	[6]	[7]	[8]	[9]	[10]	[11]	[12]
	Dep. var.: Votes for the right-wing party (%)											
	Election year 1948				Election year 1976				Election year 2006			
<i>OppRate</i>	-0.291 (0.086)	-0.173 (0.108)	-0.276 (0.092)	-0.277 (0.117)	-0.662 (0.253)	-0.536 (0.263)	-0.739 (0.236)	-0.874 (0.333)	-0.531 (0.218)	-0.584 (0.229)	-0.383 (0.185)	-0.441 (0.218)
Nat. Bloc vote share (1921)	1.145 (1.110)				1.014 (1.895)				7.115 (2.925)			
Left vote share (1921)		-4.085 (1.151)				-6.166 (2.200)				3.944 (2.730)		
Pre-1922 opponents			-0.000 (0.000)				0.000 (0.001)				0.000 (0.001)	
Socialist vote share (1913)				-0.003 (0.005)				0.032 (0.014)				-0.009 (0.031)
First stage F-stat	7.70	6.17	8.52	6.03	7.70	6.17	8.52	6.03	7.70	6.17	8.52	6.03
Anderson-Rubin $\chi^2(1)$	7.85	1.57	4.54	3.34	4.13	2.43	5.08	4.30	6.17	5.79	3.94	3.49
<i>p</i> -val	0.01	0.21	0.03	0.07	0.04	0.12	0.02	0.04	0.02	0.02	0.05	0.06
Covariates	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
<i>N</i>	66	79	86	81	66	79	86	81	66	79	86	81

Notes: The table reports 2SLS estimates of the effect of the opposition rate to the fascist regime (number of anti-fascists per 10,000 adults) in 1935-1943 on right-wing voting narrowly defined (% of votes for the MSI until 1994 and AN thereafter) in Lower House general elections across provinces. National Bloc votes share (1921) and Left vote share (1921) are the vote shares received by the National Bloc, and by the Communist and Socialist party combined in the 1921 elections, respectively. Pre-1922 opponents refer to all political opponents recorded in the CP before 1922. Socialist vote share (1913) measures the support to the Socialist Party in 1913. Heteroskedasticity-robust standard errors are reported in parentheses. Covariates include the province-level share of: (i) “weak” and “strong” punishments inflicted on political opponents, as recorded in the CP, (ii) left-wing opponents (i.e., those affiliated with the Communist or Socialist parties), and (iii) dissidents (i.e., opponents who do not belong to a notable political group).

¹⁴Due to missing information in Corbetta and Piretti (2009) and Acemoglu, De Feo, De Luca, and Russo (2022) – which are the sources of the elections data – we are only able to create a province-level data set that contains a lower number of provinces than the 86 that were employed in our 2SLS analysis. We are therefore cautious with the results because our conclusions will hold only if the provinces with missing elections data do not have their pre-existing ideology connected to right-wing voting in ways other than anti-fascism.

7 Conclusions

To what extent did historical anti-fascism influence the support for post-WWII, right-wing political parties in Italy? We provided an answer to this question by assembling a novel data set of opponents to Mussolini’s fascist dictatorship from the *Casellario Politico Centrale* and by teasing out exogenous variation from it using the random assignment of judges of the *Tribunale speciale per la difesa dello Stato*. We found weaker support for right-wing parties that stem directly from the dissolved *Partito Nazionale Fascista* in provinces with stronger opposition to fascism. Similar effects, but of smaller magnitudes, were also found for conservative parties emerged after 1994 with no direct ties with the PNF.

Voters in many European countries are still expressing strong support for right-wing political parties, and many theories have been proposed to explain this fact. For example, import competition and refugee crises are believed to have exacerbated anti-immigrant sentiments, which in turn fuel the right-wing rhetoric.¹⁵ Our paper emphasizes an opposing force to the phenomenon, showing that historical resistance to fascism works to dampen the rise of right-wing political parties decades later and even, to a lesser extent, conservative right-wing parties that share little ideological connection with fascism.

On top of historical relevance, our findings imply that modern right-wing platforms may have a reduced appeal among voters who are culturally connected to an anti-fascist tradition that was violently repressed. By extension, a similar force may be (or could be, in the future) at play in places – such as former communist countries – where dictatorships with different ideological roots than fascism have repressed political dissent. Considering the message delivered in this paper, one may wonder, for example, whether there is a parallel between, on the one hand, the strength of right-wing parties in several Eastern-European countries during the past two decades and, on the other hand, the strength of left-wing parties in post-WWII Western-European countries that experienced fascist rule. The political consequences of such historical experiences, in turn, may still affect public policy. These are interesting questions for future research.

¹⁵See, for example, Barone, D’Ignazio, de Blasio, and Naticchioni (2016), Halla, Wagner, and Zweimüller (2017), Dustmann, Vasiljeva, and Piil Damm (2018), Edo, Giesing, Öztunc, and Poutvaara (2019), Caselli, Fracasso, and Traverso (2020), Steinmayr (2021), and Moriconi, Peri, and Turati (2022).

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8 Appendix

Table A1: Results for general elections 1948, 1976, and 2006 (narrow right-wing definition)

	OLS [1]	OLS [2]	IV [3]	IV [4]
Dep. var.: Right-wing party votes (%)				
Election year 1948	Mean of dep. var.: 2.079			
<i>OppRate</i> (1935-1943)	-0.177 (0.038)	-0.181 (0.045)	-0.241 (0.086)	-0.282 (0.087)
Election year 1976	Mean of dep. var.: 5.535			
<i>OppRate</i> (1935-1943)	-0.361 (0.084)	-0.349 (0.089)	-0.665 (0.219)	-0.739 (0.232)
Election year 2006	Mean of dep. var.: 11.727			
<i>OppRate</i> (1935-1943)	-0.139 (0.098)	-0.122 (0.106)	-0.338 (0.224)	-0.365 (0.235)
First stage (any election year); Dep. Var: <i>OppRate</i>				
<i>JudgeFE</i> (1926-1934)			-3.522 (1.198)	-3.283 (1.219)
<i>F</i> -stat			12.28	8.94
Covariates	No	Yes	No	Yes
<i>N</i>	90	90	86	86

Notes: The table reports the effect of the opposition rate to the fascist regime (number of anti-fascists per 10,000 adults) in 1935-1943 on right-wing voting narrowly defined (% of votes for the MSI until 1994 and AN thereafter) in Lower House general elections across provinces, estimated via OLS or 2SLS (using average province-level judge stringency as an instrument). The largest Conley s.e standard errors from a set of varying distance thresholds (58km, 100km, 200km, with and without Bartlett correction) are reported in parentheses. Covariates: province-level shares of: (i) “weak” and “strong” punishments, as recorded in the CP, (ii) left-wing opponents (i.e., those affiliated with the Communist or Socialist parties), and (iii) dissidents (i.e., opponents who do not belong to a notable political group).

Table A2: Results for general elections 2013 and 2018 (right-wing, populist FdI)

	IV [1]	IV [2]	IV [3]	IV [4]
	Election year 2013		Election year 2018	
<i>OppRate</i> (1935-1943)	-0.303 (0.171)	-0.352 (0.208)	-0.090 (0.097)	-0.100 (0.107)
Mean of dep. var.	1.913		4.084	
First stage F-stat	12.28	8.94	12.28	8.94
Covariates	No	Yes	No	Yes
<i>N</i>	86	86	86	86

Notes: The table reports the effect of the opposition rate to the fascist regime (number of anti-fascists per 10,000 adults) in 1935-1943 on voting for right-wing, populist FdI in 2013 and 2018 Lower House general elections across provinces, estimated via OLS or 2SLS (using average province-level judge stringency as an instrument). The largest Conley s.e standard errors from a set of varying distance thresholds (58km, 100km, 200km, with and without Bartlett correction) are reported in parentheses. Covariates include the province-level shares of: (i) “weak” and “strong” punishments, as recorded in the CP, (ii) left-wing opponents (i.e., those affiliated with the Communist or Socialist parties), and (iii) dissidents (i.e., opponents who do not belong to a notable political group).

Table A3: Results for elections 1948, 1976, and 2006, conditioning on pre-existing ideology

	IV [1]	IV [2]	IV [3]	IV [4]	IV [5]	IV [6]	IV [7]	IV [8]	IV [9]	IV [10]	IV [11]	IV [12]
	Dep. var.: Votes for the right-wing party (%)											
	Election year 1948				Election year 1976				Election year 2006			
<i>OppRate</i>	-0.291 (0.082)	-0.173 (0.107)	-0.276 (0.089)	-0.277 (0.114)	-0.662 (0.254)	-0.536 (0.256)	-0.739 (0.228)	-0.874 (0.322)	-0.531 (0.212)	-0.584 (0.239)	-0.383 (0.245)	-0.441 (0.268)
Nat. Bloc vote share (1921)	1.145 (1.376)				1.014 (2.261)				7.115 (3.540)			
Left vote share (1921)	-4.085 (1.188)				-6.166 (2.350)				3.944 (4.688)			
Pre-1922 opponents	-0.000 (0.000)				0.000 (0.001)				0.000 (0.001)			
Socialist vote share (1913)	-0.003 (0.008)				0.032 (0.016)				-0.009 (0.035)			
First stage F-stat	7.70	6.17	8.52	6.03	7.70	6.17	8.52	6.03	7.70	6.17	8.52	6.03
Covariates	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
<i>N</i>	66	79	86	81	66	79	86	81	66	79	86	81

Notes: The table reports the effect of the opposition rate to the fascist regime (number of anti-fascists per 10,000 adults) in 1935-1943 on right-wing voting narrowly defined (% of votes for the MSI until 1994 and AN thereafter) in Lower House general elections across provinces. National Bloc votes share (1921) and Left vote share (1921) are the vote shares received by the National Bloc, and by the Communist and Socialist party combined in the 1921 elections, respectively. Pre-1922 opponents refer to all political opponents recorded in the CP before 1922. Socialist vote share (1913) measures the support to the Socialist Party in 1913. The largest Conley s.e standard errors from a set of varying distance thresholds (58km, 100km, 200km, with and without Bartlett correction) are reported in parentheses. Covariates include the province-level share of: (i) “weak” and “strong” punishments inflicted on political opponents, as recorded in the CP, (ii) left-wing opponents (i.e., those affiliated with the Communist or Socialist parties), and (iii) dissidents (i.e., opponents who do not belong to a notable political group).