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War violence, nationalism, and party support: Evidence from Italy

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WIDER Working Paper 2023/22

War violence, nationalism, and party support

Evidence from Italy

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Abstract: Under what conditions can legacies of past violence shape political behaviour? We propose a theory of how war victimization defines attitudes over the long run, and how these can be activated by changes in the political environment. We argue that exposure to violence by members of a different ethnic group generates hostility that spills over other outgroups; this latent hostility resonates with nationalist appeals to ingroup (national) identity against non-nationals. As a result, nationalist appeals transform latent attitudes into political support, leading to different behavioural patterns among victimized communities. To test our theory, we use a historical case of indiscriminate violence against civilians by French colonial troops in central Italy during the last phase of World War II. Using data on electoral outcomes and party platforms over the full post-war period from 1948 to 2018, we show that parties which increase the nationalist content of their electoral manifesto gain more votes in formerly victimized communities, compared to otherwise similar communities. We also discuss these dynamics in qualitative case studies of party repositioning, such as the transformation of the regionalist party Northern League into a radical right party with strong nationalist appeals. We show that the results are not driven by pre-war differences in political preferences, or in socio-economic characteristics.

Key words: historical political economy, World War II, legacies of violence, nationalism, observational data

JEL classification: D72, D74, N44

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1 Introduction

The influence of violent historical events on long-run social and political outcomes is widely acknowledged in social science.¹ Traumatic experiences of conquest, repression, or subjugation determine differences in economic development (Nunn 2008), social preferences (Nunn and Wantchekon 2011), and political identities (Lupu and Peisakhin 2017). While early contributions have focused on identifying aggregate long-run effects, recent literature has suggested that the *observed* political consequences of violence on behaviour may manifest at certain historical junctures: this ‘mobilization of the past’ is influenced by the entry of new political actors (Cantoni et al. 2019), the changing salience of collective memories (Charnysh 2015; Fouka and Voth 2022), or political opportunities (Rozenas and Zhukov 2019). Understanding the conditions under which historical legacies of violence inform political behaviour is thus an open question and an important goal for research.

This paper studies how political rhetoric can reactivate legacies of violence, and translate them into voting behaviour. Conceptually, we distinguish between the effects of violence on attitudes, which may be transmitted by the initial victims along generations, and the political mobilization of these attitudes, i.e. their *activation*. While transmission through families and communities ensures that attitudes are locally persistent over time, we argue that political activation requires historical divisions (e.g. between two sides of a conflict, or victims and perpetrators) to map into contemporary divisions in the political system, such as left and right, centralism and regionalism, globalism and nationalism. The absence of a clear mapping between the actors involved in the violence and the post-conflict political parties may hinder the transformation of historical experiences into observable political behaviour. Yet, the past is more likely to guide political behaviour when the party system is *perceived* to represent more closely conflict divisions.

We test this theory using the case of a historical instance of war violence against civilians. In World War II, during the Italian campaign of the Allied forces and after the collapse of the Nazi defensive line at Cassino, south of Rome, colonial troops within the French Army’s *Corps Expéditionnaire Français* (CEF) committed widespread acts of violence and brutality against the population of many rural villages.² Historical accounts indicate that thousands of people across villages were victims of sexual violence or homicide (Baris 2003). For many civilians, these events were the first instance of contact with people of African origin, and the post-war collective memory associated the brutalities of those days with the troops’ ethnic origin. However, CEF violence was not politicized in the post-war party system, and the memory of these episodes remained local (Baris 2003). Our focus is on the long-run effects of violence by members of an ethnic outgroup (CEF soldiers) on attitudes toward minorities in the victimized community, and how those attitudes translate into support for nationalist political actors who propose an exclusionary concept of national identity. Building on research on the effects of first contact on perceptions of outgroups (Stephan et al. 2009), we argue that experiences of violence perpetrated by CEF soldiers strengthened group identity and prejudice towards outgroups. Prejudice extends beyond the ethnic group originally responsible for violence, to others that are perceived as similarly distant (Boin et al. 2021). Then, we argue that these attitudes can be politically mobilized by elite cues and propaganda that promote a nationalist view of society, where the outgroup is framed as anyone who does not correspond to the ethnic prototype of the nation. The main empirical implication of this theoretical argument is that communities which have experienced violent inter-ethnic contact will give more support to parties that embrace a nationalist rhetoric, compared to communities that were not exposed

¹ Our use of the word violence is broad, and encompasses wars and state repression. We occasionally use the expression ‘conflict’ to express the contraposition between who perpetrates violence and who suffers from it, that is, not in strict military terms.

² In this research we do not take stances on the actual motivations of violence, nor on who had direct responsibilities on the ground.

to violence. Importantly, this mechanism does not require that specific acts of violence from the past be deliberately invoked in campaigning or political communication, a strategy that is sometimes adopted in elections (Ochsner and Roesel 2019). We expect that nationalist appeals resonate with latent negative attitudes towards minorities that have persisted in the aftermath of the conflict.

To study the political legacies of CEF violence, we compile lists of towns exposed to violence from various historical sources, and construct a panel dataset of municipal-level voting outcomes covering 70 years and 18 parliamentary elections in the three regions most affected by CEF activities. To complement the analysis and address selection issues, we collect a vast range of data on pre-war social and demographic variables, and violence during Nazi occupation. We link those data to information on the nationalist content of party manifestos.

In our main analysis, we study the effect of changes in nationalist appeals, measured by the content of manifestos, on voting behaviour in towns that were exposed to CEF violence. Specifically, we estimate the heterogeneous treatment effect of nationalist shifts, which are arguably exogenous to local conditions, across communities that were exposed to CEF violence, and otherwise similar communities that were not exposed to violence. In our preferred specification, we study all post-war parliamentary elections, comparing the performance of the same parties in the same municipalities over time. This strategy allows to account for the propensity of the electorate of a given municipality to support the same party across elections. We show that right-wing parties whose manifesto shifts to the right on the nationalism dimension gain more support in municipalities exposed to CEF violence relative to comparable, non-victimized ones. These results are robust to several changes in model specification and placebo checks, and are not explained by differential trends in voting behaviour induced by pre-treatment characteristics.

A qualitative inspection of trends in nationalist appeals and electoral support for two major right-wing parties support our interpretation of the results. For instance, the Northern League/League in 2014 switched from a mostly regionalist and federalist platform to a nationalist and radical right one, focused on opposing irregular immigration from the Middle East and Africa. We show that after this repositioning, support for the League increased more in victimized communities, relative to neighbouring non-victimized ones.

We then provide correlational evidence in favour of a mechanism of attitude transmission in the long run. Using data from national surveys, we show that residents of municipalities exposed to CEF violence whose families are from the same area, and thus likely exposed first hand, have worse attitudes towards immigrants compared to residents of other municipalities. Moreover, we show that municipalities exposed to violence are less likely to host a refugee reception centre today, an infrastructure for which initiative of the local government is necessary. They also have less residents born abroad, after accounting for correlates of local labour market conditions.

These results contribute to understanding the long-term political consequences of violence and their mechanisms. Our main contribution is threefold. First, we show that the evolution of the political system post-violence can be a crucial moderator of collective victimization, by generating political conflicts which can mobilize collective memories. In this respect, we are most closely related to research on the activation of latent attitudes (Charnysh 2015; Cantoni et al. 2019; Fouka and Voth 2022). Adding to existing work, this paper analyzes the trajectories of support for different parties over time. Second, we highlight how the ‘attitudinal legacies of violence’ (Charnysh 2015) do not necessarily lead to distinct partisan identities, but rather lead to vote shifts at distinct points in time. This result expands the existing empirical literature, which has often focused on cases in which there was some continuity between conflicting factions and post-conflict parties (Balcells 2012; Rozenas et al. 2017; Tur-Prats and Valencia Caicedo 2020; Martínez 2021). It also expands the empirical literature on war legacies in post-war politics in Italy, which have demonstrated the consequences of Nazi occupation on the stable success of

parties that embody the Resistance movement (Costalli and Ruggeri 2015, 2019; Fontana et al. 2018; Cannella et al. 2021). Finally, we contribute to the scholarship on the social roots of support for radical anti-immigration parties in contemporary Europe: by focusing on the conditional legacies of World War II violence, we highlight that historical experiences of war may shape the voting predisposition of local communities, although in possibly unexpected ways.

2 Theoretical framework

2.1 Contingency of legacies of violence on politics

The social science literature has documented the causal pathway between conflict-related historical shocks and future political outcomes in different contexts. In particular, a body of work shows that violence has profound consequences on the development of affected communities. Suffering from violence induces self-identification with the category of victim, as opposed to the oppressor, therefore, shaping individual political identity to reflect this contraposition (Balcells 2012). When victimization affects entire social groups or communities, the shared experience of adverse circumstances can also bond people to their group, fostering the development of a collective identity. Thus, violence with an ethnic component can leave a legacy of ethnic parochialism and mistrust towards outgroup members (Nunn and Wantchekon 2011; Besley and Reynal-Querol 2014; Lupu and Peisakhin 2017; Hadzic et al. 2020; Hiers et al. 2017; Soehl and Karim 2021), and distinct patterns of political behaviour (Rozenas et al. 2017; Fontana et al. 2018; Cannella et al. 2021; Martínez 2021).

While the study of those political legacies has often highlighted their stability and consistency over time, the concept requires distinct processes to take place: the formation of attitudes and preferences, which may or may not be political, as consequences of violence, their transmission in the community and across generations, and their translation into observable behaviour such as voting.

These processes can take place within relatively short time windows, when conflict divisions between the oppressor and the victim are perpetuated in the democratic party system that emerges in the aftermath of the conflict (Balcells 2012; Rozenas et al. 2017; Fontana et al. 2018; Martínez 2021): in these settings, social categories such as that of victim become political categories and inform partisanship and vote choice. Yet, those processes can also be temporally disjoint: violence may not be immediately politicized after conflict, and the categories of victim and perpetrator may not map clearly into the forces competing for popular representation under democracy. In such cases, the experience of violence may influence the formation of attitudes and collective identities at the local level, but not predict voting or other political behaviour, until these attitudes become politically relevant. For example, increasing the salience of the original perpetrator of violence in public discourse can mobilize behaviour where the memories of the original violence are stronger (Fouka and Voth 2022). In other cases, latent opposition to the perpetrator persists, but victims can deliberately conceal their attitudes to avoid further violence (Rozenas and Zhukov 2019). Politicians can also have a role in the mobilization of ‘attitudinal legacies’ (Charnysh 2015). For example, political rhetoric may use cues that resonate with the transmitted attitudes of certain social groups (Charnysh 2015; Cantoni et al. 2019); or politicians may directly frame issues in terms of the historical experiences of segments of the electorate in order to attract them (Ochsner and Roesel 2019).

We expand this recent line of research in the literature on legacies in two ways. We first show that locally persistent attitudes can be mobilized at different points in time according to changes in rhetoric adopted by political parties. Second, we argue that this mechanism can be in place even absent any direct reference to past violence by parties.

2.2 Violence, attitude generalization, and mobilization

Our focus is on violence perpetrated by members of ethnic outgroups. We expect this type of violence to shape the attitudes of victims towards the group associated with its perpetration. Indeed, research in social psychology has shown that traumatic experiences with outgroup members induce perceptions of threat and inter-group anxiety (Stephan et al. 2009). This in turn can lead to negative attitudes about the outgroup, especially if the initial trauma was the result of a first contact (Stephan and Stephan 1985; Stephan 2014).

A second, important part of our argument posits that violence-induced attitudes can be extended to other outgroups beyond those associated with the initial contact. Work in social psychology has shown that individuals tend to extend their perception of people they enter in contact with to others that are deemed similar (Pettigrew 2009; Boin et al. 2021). We expect this mechanism to apply in the case of ethnic prejudice arising from a traumatic experience.

We expect that nationalist rhetoric which proposes an ethnically defined and exclusionary concept of nation can activate generalized feelings of threat and ethnic prejudice which persist in historically victimized communities. Nationalist rhetoric emphasizes the prominence and superiority of a community (which coincides with the nation) against other outgroups (Bonikowski 2016). Nationalist appeals can thus increase individual pride in the ingroup (nation) and derogation of outsiders (Mummendey et al. 2001). Thus, communities where violence has left a heritage of ethnic prejudice can be more likely to respond positively when politicians' rhetoric frames the nation in exclusionary terms, especially when the outsiders are defined ethnically.

3 Historical background

3.1 The final phases of World War II in central Italy

In July 1943, after having landed in Sicily, the Allied troops invaded Italy. In the following weeks, the fascist government crashed, and Benito Mussolini was arrested; an interim military government later signed an armistice with the Anglo-Americans. The armistice marked the end of the previous alliance with Nazi Germany, and was followed by the immediate occupation of the country by the German army. While state institutions collapsed, Italy's territory was contended: the Allies advanced from the south, while the central and northern regions were controlled by the *Wehrmacht*, with the support of Italian fascists loyal to Mussolini.

The Germans established a fortified line of defense in October 1943, called the Gustav line, running coast to coast from the south of the Lazio region (close to the border with the Campania region) to the Abruzzi: breaking it was necessary for the Allies to advance towards Rome. The Gustav line ran across a highly irregular and mountainous territory. The town of Cassino, in Lazio, was a crucial defensive stationing due to its position over the surrounding valleys, thus Cassino and its area became the epicentre of military operations in this phase.

The series of attacks on Cassino was called Operation Diadem. Four corps took part in the operation: the 2nd Corp of the Vth US Army, the 13th British Corp, the Polish Corp, and the France Libre Corp, also called CEF (*Corps Expéditionnaire Français*). The CEF operating in Italy was composed of soldiers from colonial units of the French Army recruited in North Africa (mostly Morocco and Algeria). The role of the CEF was to circumvent the Gustav line along the Liri Valley and attack Germans on their side, thus allowing the British troops to attack frontally. The operation, which also involved massive aerial bombings and costed thousands of victims, was eventually successful and the Gustav line was taken in May 1944.

3.2 Violence against civilians

In the immediate aftermath of the Battle of Cassino, CEF soldiers committed several acts of violence against civilians living in the area. Multiple reports indicate that, in the three days after the battle, groups of soldiers attacked individuals, looted family houses, and sexually abused women (Baris 2007; Le Gac 2013). In some villages alone, hundreds of women were victims of rape, while several men were beaten, killed, and, occasionally, sexually abused (Baris 2007; Gershovich 2016). After a few days, CEF troops moved towards the north, where other episodes of violence against civilians were reported in the Tuscany region (Baris 2003). Some historians suggest that these acts may have been facilitated by military commanders on the ground, who loosened discipline on CEF in the aftermath of the battle, since the troops had suffered heavy losses and many of them had committed acts of heroism (Baris 2003; Gershovich 2016).³

A precise count of the victims of CEF violence has not been carried out, due to the collapse of the state in this phase of the war, and to the sexual nature of most of the abuses, which many preferred not to report to authorities for fear of social stigma. Existing estimates based on reports to the Italian police and the Allied commands, and on local doctors' documents, indicate that the total amount of victimized women could be as large as 12,000 (Baris 2007). Episodes of violence by the CEF were reported also in the Campania region, in the period preceding the Battle of Cassino, even though most of the victims belonged to the villages in the Lazio area close to the Gustav line.

3.3 Memory and post-war politicization

The experience of CEF occupation was deeply traumatic for the population involved. Interviews with civilian residents in the Gustav line area conducted by Baris (2003) reveal that the memories of violence committed by Allied soldiers were considerably more salient than those of the previous Nazi occupation. Some respondents even tended to portray the behaviour of occupying German forces as correct and fair relative to that of the CEF, despite the well-documented killings and massacres committed by Nazi troops in the area (Gentile 2015).

The social consequences of these episodes were important and far-reaching. In addition to the individual and health consequences on affected individuals, the trauma of violence and victimization led to the crisis and disruption of entire families. For the rural population of central Italy, the encounter with CEF soldiers was virtually the first personal contact with individuals of African origin. In the local collective memory, traits associated with ethnicity were associated with the actions of violence. In the recollections of the survivors, CEF soldiers are referenced to as 'Moroccans' (Baris 2003) and in popular culture the episodes of violence came to be referred to as 'Marocchinate', a vernacular expression for 'Moroccan deeds' (Gershovich 2016). In the words of one witness, '*we were waiting for the liberators, [but instead] people from another race came*' (Baris 2003: 95).⁴

Despite the social consequences in the affected areas, the memory of these events was not clearly politicized in the post-war period. The process of construction of a national memory of World War II in Italy pivoted around the contraposition between Fascist and Nazi violence and the Partisans' Resistance struggle: memory of the violence committed by soldiers on the Allies' side hardly achieved national recognition.⁵ A political debate on CEF violence began in the aftermath of the war, and focused on

³ Historical accounts of French military history highlight how, despite a rhetoric of republican egalitarianism, hierarchical relations within the army were informed by racial and religious prejudice (Fogarty 2008). In this work, we take this context as given and do not aim at explaining the antecedents of violence within the French army.

⁴ Authors' translation.

⁵ This has partially changed after 2000, when some municipalities affected by CEF acts received official honours granted by the Italian state to communities that endured hard sufferings in their history.

the appropriation of public pensions and monetary reparations to the victims.⁶ The allocation of public money to rural communities, however, did not significantly affect political allegiances, as it was mediated by local notables according to the local patronage structures (Baris 2003). Similarly, episodes of social unrest related to the demand for recognition were circumscribed to the immediate post-war period and were never fully politicized by the main parties that had emerged from the war: the Communists and the Christian Democrats.

Overall, episodes of CEF violence were not forgotten, and could even find their way into the national culture.⁷ However, their memory was not institutionalized by the state for most of the post-war period, nor absorbed by the key post-war political identities.

4 Empirical strategy

4.1 Data

Historical violence

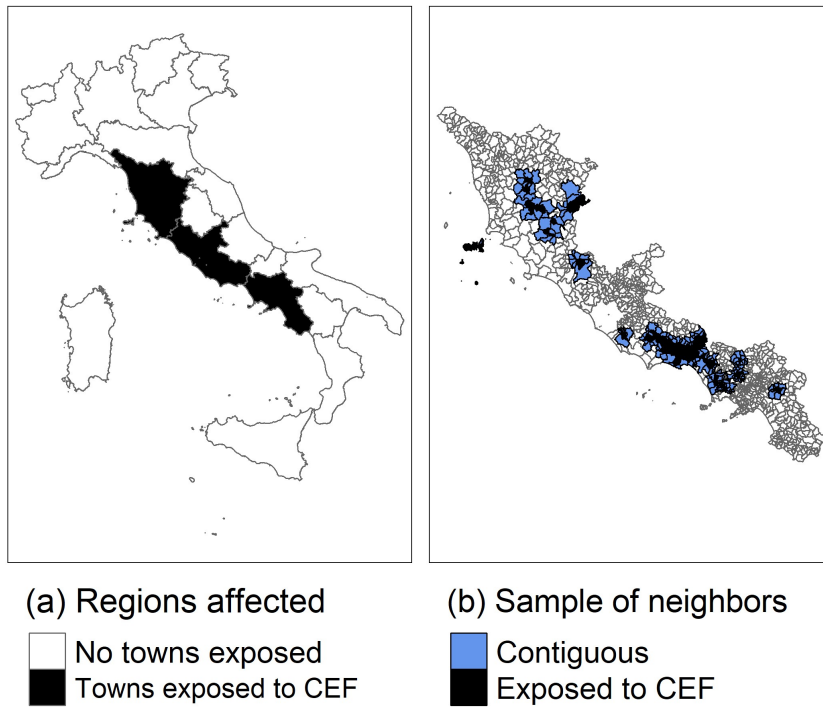
We compile a list of municipalities exposed to violence collecting data from several different sources. We start from historical accounts (Baris 2007), and complement them with lists of municipalities enumerated in parliamentary debates over war reparations. When possible, we cross-check those lists with municipalities that received official honours (*Medaglie*) by the Italian state, as recognition of their victimization during World War II.⁸ The full list of municipalities in Tuscany, Lazio, and Campania for which we found mentions of CEF violence is reported in Appendix Section F2. The same sources also report cases of victimization in two additional municipalities, one in Sicily and one in the Umbria region; we discard these observations to ensure some minimum degree of variation in treatment status within region. Figure 1 shows the geographic scope of our study: left panel (a) plots the three regions in the sample with towns affected by episodes of CEF violence; right panel (b) shows the municipalities exposed to violence within these regions and the set of contiguous municipalities, which we use as control group in the main analysis of the paper. As explained above, measuring the intensity of violence at the municipal level is extremely difficult, as reliable data have not been consistently collected. For this reason, in the analysis we use a simple binary variable that takes value 1 if a town is reported to have had episodes of violence: we refer to this indicator as a measure of ‘exposure’ to violence.

⁶ See for instance, Parliamentary session, April 7 1952.

⁷ For instance, the celebrated novel *Two Women* (1957), by writer Alberto Moravia and its movie adaptation in 1961.

⁸ These acts of recognition are available from the Italian government gazette.

Figure 1: Exposure to CEF violence in regions and towns and sample of neighbours



Source: authors' elaboration based on data stated in text.

Political outcomes

Our main outcome are electoral returns in post-war and contemporary parliamentary elections in Italy at the municipality level. The data come from the online archives of the Italian Ministry of the Interior. We use electoral results for the main right-wing Italian parties during the full republican period (1948 to 2018, 18 elections) in the three regions with reported episodes of CEF violence, i.e. Tuscany, Lazio, and Campania. The sample includes the following parties: *Movimento Sociale Italiano* (MSI), *Democrazia Cristiana* (DC), *Partito Liberale Italiano* (PLI), *Forza Italia* (FI),⁹ *Lega Nord* (LN),¹⁰ and *Fratelli d'Italia* (FdI). The first five parties are generally considered the most relevant parties of the centre-right in the post-war Italian party system (Ignazi 2020); we also include FdI because, despite their scant support at the national level during the period of the analysis, they enjoyed strong local support in the Lazio region.

Nationalism

We measure the nationalist content of party manifesto using data from the Comparative Manifesto Project (CMP) (Merz et al. 2016). The CMP database provides human coding of party manifestos that quantifies how much parties talk about certain topics as well as their position on those topics (positive or negative). Specifically, for a set of pre-defined items/positions, CMP provides the share of sentences dedicated to those items in a given manifesto. Following Lowe et al. (2011) and Colantone and Stanig (2018), we focus on four items (*national way of life*, *traditional morality*, *law and order*, and *multicul-*

⁹ In 2008 and 2013 FI runs under the name of *Popolo della Libertà* (PdL), which absorbed FI and *Alleanza Nazionale*, i.e. the right-wing party that succeeded to MSI. FI ran again under its original name in 2018. We treat PdL as FI for these two election rounds. Results are unchanged if PdL is coded as a distinct party.

¹⁰ LN changed name in 2013 to become *Lega*. We consider *Lega* to be in perfect continuity with LN, while we leverage the party repositioning effort to gauge variation in nationalistic messages.

turalism) to produce a time-consistent nationalism score for the main right-wing Italian parties over the period 1948–2018. Then, the nationalism score is measured as:

$$\text{Nationalism}_{p,t} = \log\left(0.5 + \sum_{m^+} \text{Score}_{m^+,p,t}\right) - \log\left(0.5 + \sum_{m^-} \text{Score}_{m^-,p,t}\right) \quad (1)$$

where $\text{Score}_{m^-,p,t}$ measures how often party p in election t talks negatively about item m , according to CMP. Similarly, $\text{Score}_{m^+,p,t}$ measures how often party p in election t talks positively about item m .

Appendix Section E1 reports additional details on the measure. For each party, we standardize its nationalism score across different elections, by subtracting its mean and dividing by the standard deviation. This allows to express changes in the nationalism score as deviations from the average nationalist content of the party.

Pre-1948 municipality characteristics

We collect census data on the social, demographic, and economic characteristics of municipalities in the pre-1948 period, collected from the Italian statistical institute (ISTAT). In particular, we obtain legal population and literacy rate by gender from the 1921 census, legal population by gender, resident population, and employment by economic sector from the 1936 census. For each municipality in our sample, we collect data on the number of battle casualties in World War I from the digitized registry *Albo dei Caduti Italiani della Grande Guerra*. We collect data on civilian massacres by Nazi troops during occupation from the online *Atlante delle Stragi Naziste e Fasciste in Italia*. We compute geographic variables such as elevation and distance from large cities using ISTAT data and functions for spatial analysis in R. Finally, for each municipality we calculate the smallest distance from Gustav line. Details of the data sources are provided in Appendix Section F1.

4.2 Research design

Our research design isolates the effect of shifts of nationalist scores on party support. Specifically, we are interested in understanding how municipalities that were exposed to CEF violence react to party nationalism, compared to similar municipalities that were not exposed. The key empirical challenge is to be able to attribute the observed heterogeneity in reaction to nationalism to past exposure to violence. Indeed, while national changes in party platforms are plausibly exogenous to local community preferences, the patterns of war violence are not randomly distributed in space. Even though historical accounts suggest that violence was not targeted at specific communities, exposure to violence was not ‘incidental’. As the position of troops on the ground depends on several factors, including potentially local geography, distance to the front lines, and other characteristics, towns that are eventually exposed to violence may differ from non-exposed town in some meaningful way. Such imbalances within the sample would be problematic to the extent that they generate different time trends in potential outcomes across sub-groups. To address this challenge, we estimate panel data models on samples constructed to minimize covariates imbalance.

Sample

In the main analysis, we use a sample comprised of municipalities exposed to CEF violence and municipalities that either border them or whose centroid lays within 10 kilometres. Since exposure to violence depends on the position of troops, conditional exogeneity of violence with respect to local characteristics is more plausible between neighbours than non-neighbours.¹¹ Moreover, more distant units may also

¹¹ A similar point to the one made by Keele and Titiunik (2016) in the case of administrative boundaries.

differ in the overall war experiences, which could affect their post-war development. In Appendix Table D1, we provide descriptive statistics for socio-economic characteristics of municipalities in our sample. Appendix Table D2 shows that municipalities exposed to CEF violence are similar to non-exposed municipalities laying within 10 kilometers, with respect to their geographic and socio-demographic characteristics, as well as war-related variables.

Identification

We are interested in evaluating the effect of nationalist appeals on electoral outcomes, across municipalities exposed to CEF violence, and non-exposed municipalities. Our research design exploits the fact that party manifestos are decided by the central party administration, and aimed at a national audience. To the extent that changes in the ideological orientation in national elections is not affected by political preferences in victimized municipalities, these shifts can be considered exogenous to local municipality characteristics. Two main reasons speak in favour of this assumption. First, CEF violence has rarely received attention in national politics (e.g. it is never mentioned in party manifestos); second, CEF-exposed municipalities affected by CEF violence are small and mostly located in rural areas.

We estimate the following regression model:

$$V_{ptc} = \alpha + \beta Nat_{pt} \times Violence_c + \gamma Nat_{pt} + \mathbf{X}_{ct} + \tau_{pct} + \rho_{ptc} \quad (2)$$

where V_{pct} is vote share for party p , in election t , in municipality c , Nat_{pt} is the nationalism score for party p , in election t (as in equation 1), $Violence_c$ is a dummy equal to one for municipalities that have been exposed to violence, X is a vector of time-varying controls, τ_{pct} is, depending on the specification, a vector of fixed effects for region, municipality, party, and election year. In our main specification, τ_{pct} includes municipality-party and election year fixed effects. Controlling for municipality-party fixed effects implies that the regression coefficients capture changes in the electoral support for the same party in a municipality over time. The γ coefficient hence captures the effect of changes in a party's nationalist score on its electoral support in municipalities non-exposed to violence. The β coefficient should then be understood as the additional effect of nationalist score change in victimized municipalities. To account for the fact that the status of violence exposure is constant within municipalities and that the content of party manifestos is constant within parties in the same year, we use two-way clustering of the standard errors by municipality and party-year.

5 Results

5.1 Descriptive trends

As a first descriptive exercise, we show two examples that illustrate our main argument, using two parties, MSI and LN (Figure 2). The examples are useful because MSI and LN are probably the two parties more on the right on the nationalism issue, respectively in the so-called Italian First Republic (1948–92) and in the Second Republic (since 1994).¹² The plots show the trends in the nationalist score of the two parties over post-war elections as dashed lines. The overlaid solid lines represent instead the difference in vote share for the parties between CEF-exposed municipalities and non-exposed contiguous municipalities.

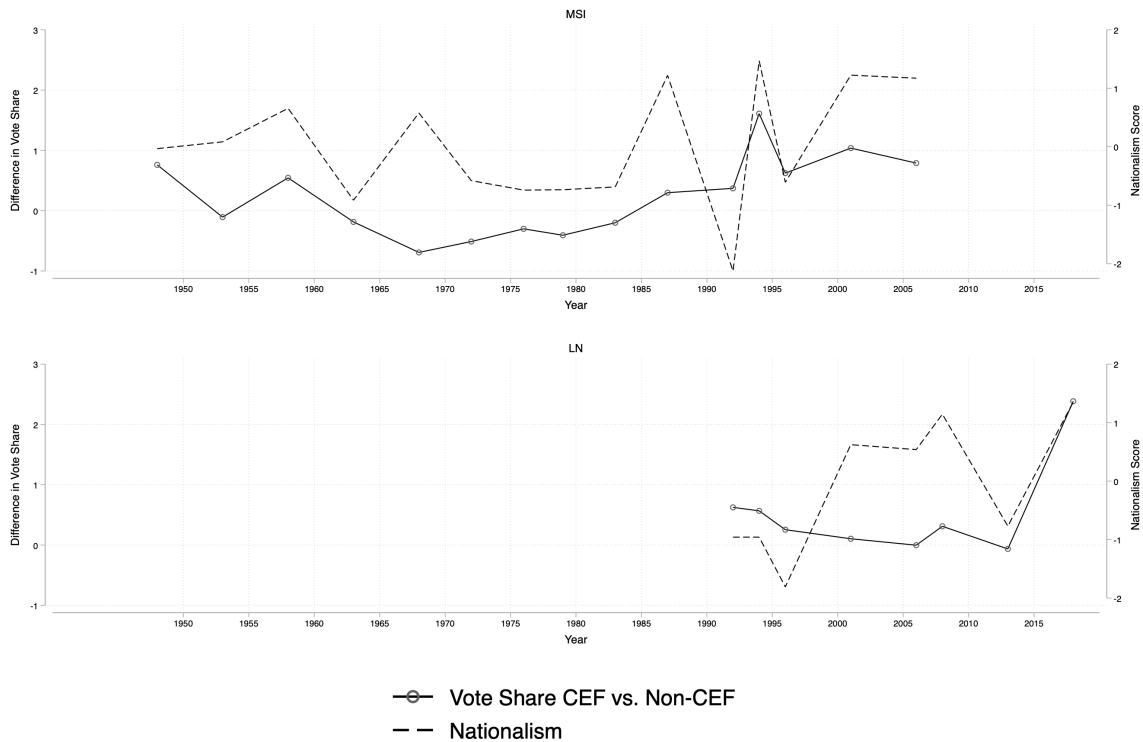
¹² The break between these two phases consisted in a major political corruption scandal in 1992-94, which resulted in a complete renewal of the party system.

The top panel in Figure 2 represents MSI. MSI was founded in 1946 by formerly fascist militants, as a post-fascist party: since its foundation, it was characterized by strong nationalist and anti-system stances. The early manifestos (e.g. 1953 and 1958) denounced the widespread ‘crises of moral and political values’, and called for a ‘firm protection of national values’ through the restoration of the ‘authority of the state’.¹³ Similar stances can be found in 1987, when the main priorities were the restoration of the state as ‘order and justice’, and the nation, defined as based on national traditions. In 1992, in the wake of the corruption scandal, MSI’s manifesto was charged with anti-system rhetoric. Since 1994, with the rise of the Second Republic and the first significant migration flows in Italy, immigration emerges as an issue among right-wing parties. MSI’s manifesto in 1994 pointed to the risk of an ‘uncontrolled invasion of extra-EU immigrants’ as one of the main national emergencies that could reduce security, alongside with drugs and prostitution. In the 1996 election, the party rejected for the first time its links with fascism and changed the name to *Alleanza Nazionale*. The manifestos abandoned the anti-system rhetoric but continue to focus strongly on irregular immigration. The 2001 manifesto championed the need for security amidst an ‘increase in criminal activity due to illegal immigration’. The 2006 manifesto focused on ‘protecting our [Italians’] identity’, traditions and values, ‘defending the Christian origins of Europe [...] religious values and moral principles, defending family and our roots’, and imposing respect of national traditions on newcomers. As Figure 2 shows, the difference in MSI vote share between CEF-exposed and non-exposed towns is close to 0 or negative in the first elections after the war, then starts to increase after 1983, when the nationalism content increases markedly, and jumps after 1992, when immigration becomes an important political issue and the MSI proposes a hard line against it.

The bottom panel in Figure 2 shows similar dynamics at play for LN. Founded in the early 1990s, this party was initially a regionalist party representing the interests of the wealthy and industrial regions of the north. It demanded autonomy from the central government and less fiscal transfers from the north to the south. In its early manifestos of 1994 and 1996, LN called for a simplified taxation system, the strengthening of national interests in industrial policy, and federalist reforms. While the party initially did not have a clear left–right placement, starting from the early 2000s it became a stable part of the right-wing coalition. As stressed above, in the Second Republic immigration had an important role in the programmes of the right-wing parties. In 2008, LN presented an independent manifesto where 25 per cent of the available space was devoted to how to tackle ‘savagely and illegal’ immigration and the related security threat. Importantly, in these years the LN did not run in the whole country, but only in the north and in some central regions. It did not run in Lazio or Campania, and therefore the difference in performance between CEF-exposed and non-exposed municipalities depicted refers to Tuscany only. In 2013, following an internal scandal, the party founder and leader Umberto Bossi resigned in favour of Matteo Salvini. Under Salvini’s leadership, the party quickly abandoned its regionalist orientation and transitioned to a full-fledged radical right platform: it prioritized issues such as crime and immigration and abandoned its north-based rhetoric in favour of a strongly nationalist platform. Salvini adopted a populist rhetoric of national unity against external actors, including immigrants and the European Union. This transition is captured in the party manifestos. While the 2013 manifesto mostly covered economic and institutional issues, in the 2018 manifesto security and immigration appear among the party’s first six priorities. Alongside with the crafting of a new nationalist platform, the League tried to expand beyond its traditional northern electoral base. The national elections of 2013, still under the leadership of Bossi, were the first ones where the League presented candidates in all Italian electoral districts. In this election, LN was on the ballot in all CEF-exposed towns, and the difference relative to contiguous towns was virtually zero. In 2018, after a few years of Salvini’s anti-immigration campaign and nationalist rhetoric, the vote share in CEF-exposed towns was about two percentage points higher than in geographic neighbours.

¹³ All the quotes from manifestos are taken from the original raw manifesto documents available from the CMP database. Authors’ translations.

Figure 2: Trends in nationalism and vote share differentials for MSI and LN



Source: authors' elaboration based on data cited in text.

5.2 Regression results

We now move to a more formal analysis of the effects of nationalist score shifts on party support. Table 1 reports the results of the regression analysis illustrated in Section 4.2. All columns report the estimated coefficients obtained regressing the vote shares for any given party in an election on an indicator for CEF violence in the municipality, the party nationalism score in the given election, and their interaction.

Column 1 reports the estimated coefficient of a model specification that includes year and region fixed effects. This strategy allows to estimate support for nationalist platforms netting out regional fixed characteristics as well as temporal cycles. The estimated coefficient of *CEF* is positive and statistically significant. This suggests that, for an average party nationalist score (i.e. when standardized *Nationalism* = 0), municipalities exposed to CEF violence have higher electoral support for right-wing parties compared to neighbouring municipalities. The non-significant coefficient of *Nationalism* suggests that those parties do not benefit from becoming more nationalist in municipalities non-exposed to CEF violence. Yet, taken two municipalities that belong to the same region, the average victimized municipality rewards more nationalist parties by an additional 0.26 percentage points relative to a non-victimized municipality. This represent a 1.6 per cent increase over the mean vote share in the sample.

Table 1: Effect of nationalist shifts on vote shares in municipalities exposed or not to violence

Vote share	Fixed effects strategies			Sociodemographic trends		War events trends		
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
CEF	0.884*** (0.309)							
Nationalism	-1.042 (1.948)	-1.043 (1.948)	-1.121 (1.448)	-1.121 (1.447)	-1.119 (1.447)	-1.126 (1.450)	-1.121 (1.448)	-1.124 (1.448)
Nationalism × CEF	0.259*** (0.061)	0.259*** (0.054)	0.245*** (0.009)	0.247*** (0.035)	0.240*** (0.026)	0.257*** (0.019)	0.238*** (0.019)	0.253*** (0.009)
Observations	13,129	13,129	13,129	13,129	13,129	13,129	13,129	13,129
R-squared	0.090	0.112	0.807	0.807	0.807	0.807	0.808	0.807
Mean of DV	16.17	16.17	16.17	16.17	16.17	16.17	16.17	16.17
Year FE	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Region FE	✓							
Municipality FE		✓						
Mun-party FE			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Geography × t				✓				
Demography × t					✓			
Gustav line × t						✓		
WWI victims × t							✓	
Nazi massacres × t								✓

Note: each coefficient is the result of regressing vote shares for party p , in election t , in municipality c on a dummy equal to one for exposure to CEF, the (standardized) *Nationalism* score for the party-year, and their interaction. The sample is composed of all municipalities exposed to CEF violence, and non-exposed municipalities that lay within 10 kilometres. All columns include year fixed effects. Column 1 also includes region fixed effects; column 2 includes municipality fixed effects; columns 3 to 8 include municipality-party fixed effects. *Geography*, *Demography*, *Gustav Line*, *WWI victims*, *Nazi massacres* include time trends interacted with, respectively, average altitude (lhs), distance from Rome (lhs); literacy rate in 1921, population in 1921, and agricultural employment in 1936; minimum distance from the Gustav Line (lhs); number of WWI military casualties (lhs); number of Nazi massacres in the municipality (lhs). Standard errors are clustered at the municipality and party-year level. *, **, *** denote significance at the 10%, 5%, and 1% levels, respectively.

Column 2 reports the estimates obtained including municipality fixed effects. This specification isolates the effect of nationalism scores on the vote shares of different parties within a given municipality over time. In other words, we hold fixed all time-invariant municipality characteristics, including the victimization status. Those estimates remain virtually unchanged.

To isolate the effects of party shifts towards more nationalism over time, we turn to municipality-party fixed effects, in column 3. In this case, the regression coefficients are estimated from variation in vote shares over time for the same party in a municipality, as the nationalist content in the party manifesto changes. By leveraging within municipality and party variation in vote shares, this specification captures the specific reaction of the local electorate to shifts in party nationalist messages. Here the coefficient of *Nationalism* can be interpreted as the electoral repose to changes in parties' nationalist appeals over time in non-exposed municipalities, netting out local time-invariant factors and year-specific events. The coefficient implies that one standard deviation increase in nationalism decreases the party vote share by about one percentage point in municipalities that have not been exposed to violence, although the coefficient is not statistically significant. Victimized municipalities respond to nationalism with an additional increase of 0.26 percentage point in support.

Our fixed-effect strategy controls for all municipality time-invariant characteristics, including having been exposed to violence, local average predisposition to vote for a given party, as well as local party

organization. Yet, one alternative explanation to our findings is that municipalities exposed to CEF violence differ from non-exposed municipalities along some pre-exposure characteristics, and that those characteristics induce divergences in electoral behaviour trends which coincide spuriously with periods of parties' nationalist shifts. Our sample selection strategy is intended to minimize this problem by design, by including municipalities that were on average similar to each other before the war. To further alleviate remaining concerns, in columns 4 to 8 we report a battery of robustness checks that add controls for pre-violence variables interacted with time trends, thus allowing municipalities with different baseline characteristics to follow different trends in voting behaviour. Column 4 includes trends by geographic characteristics (average altitude and distance from Rome, which are proxies for remoteness). Column 5 includes trends for pre-war socio-demographic characteristics (literacy rate in 1921, population in 1921, the share of people employed in agriculture in 1936). Column 6 includes trends by the distance from the Gustav line, which proxies material destruction during the war. Column 7 includes trends by casualties in battle during World War I, a predictor of fascist activity (Acemoglu et al. 2022). Finally, column 8 includes trends by the number of massacres perpetrated by Nazi occupiers during the war, a predictor of communist support (Costalli and Ruggeri 2019; Fontana et al. 2018). In each case, the coefficients of nationalism score and its interaction with exposure to violence remain remarkably stable.

5.3 Identification checks

In the Appendix, we report further robustness checks that support our interpretation of the results. First, we provide additional supporting evidence on the exogeneity of the nationalism score. Appendix Table A1 reports a placebo specification where we regress vote shares for parties in year t on their nationalism score in year $t + 1$. The estimated coefficients are nearly zero in magnitude, and not statistically significant. The null effect suggests that our estimates do not capture differential trends in support for nationalist parties in victimized and non-victimized municipalities, but rather a differential reaction to changes in nationalism. Second, we further confirm the role of past violence in explaining the heterogeneity in treatment effects. Appendix Table A2 reproduces the main results after controlling for the interaction of the nationalism score with pre-exposure municipality characteristics, leaving our main results virtually unchanged. This further reassures that observable characteristics before violence cannot explain differential party support. Third, we use stratification on the predicted probability of being exposed to violence to control more flexibly for pre-exposure municipality characteristics that may have affected exposure and political behaviour in the following decades (Rosenbaum and Rubin 1984). More specifically, among all geographic, demographic, and war-related variables, we select through Lasso those which best predict exposure to CEF, and we use them to estimate a propensity score for violence. We then include quantiles (strata) of the propensity score in a regression with region and year fixed effects, as in column 1, Table 1. Results are unchanged (Appendix Table A6).

5.4 Specification checks

Next, we perform some robustness checks to ensure that our results are not sensitive to specification choices. Appendix Table A3 shows the robustness of the results to alternative clustering of the standard errors. Appendix Figure A1 shows that the positive and significant coefficient estimated on $Nationalism \times CEF$ is not driven by any one victimized municipality in particular, and that dropping each one of them sequentially does not affect the results. Appendix Figure A2 shows that effect estimates are also stable to the sequential exclusion of specific election years. Appendix Table A4 reports the results of estimating our main specification on different samples of municipalities. In particular, while our main specification includes only municipalities affected by CEF violence and neighbouring ones, we show that including municipalities within larger buffer zones does not affect the results. We also show that the estimates are robust to excluding neighbouring municipalities, hence alleviating concerns that results may be driven by spillover effects across neighbouring municipalities.

5.5 Additional results

To further elaborate on the main results, we estimate our main specification in different subsets of the data. First, we show results estimated separately for different parties rather than by aggregating them. Appendix Table B1 shows that most parties in our sample enjoy an electoral gain in victimized municipalities, compared to non-victimized ones, when they become more nationalist. Yet the result is mostly driven by extreme right-wing parties—MSI, LN, and FDI—and the centrist party DC. The two remaining centre-right parties—PLI and FI—do not show the same effect. Second, Appendix Table B3 shows that changes in nationalism in left-wing party manifestos do not produce the same effects, yielding null or negative effect estimates. In other words, nationalist shifts are never rewarded for left-wing parties, and they result in losing support in both exposed and non-exposed municipalities. Third, Appendix Table B2 reports the results of estimating our main specification with individual components of the nationalism score, and suggests that all individual components are positively associated with and increase in electoral support in victimized municipalities, with the single exception of *law and order* whose effect is not statistically significant.

6 Additional evidence on the mechanisms

Our argument hinges on the hypothesis that areas most exposed to CEF violence have worse average attitudes towards ethnic outgroups than comparable areas. In Appendix C we report some correlational findings that are at least suggestive of the hypothesis’s plausibility.

First, we draw from the Italian National Election Study (ITANES). This is a recurring survey which measures attitudes and political preferences of Italians across a variety of topics. We use the survey waves of 2001, 2008, 2013, which contain the municipality of residence of respondents. We find that ‘long-term’ residents of victimized municipalities (i.e. respondents who live in a town exposed to CEF violence and whose parents were born in the same region) have more negative self-reported attitudes towards immigrants than residents of the same municipalities whose families were not from there (and thus were likely not first-hand exposed to violence) (Table C1).¹⁴ However, the use of ITANES in this context has limitations, because the surveys are nationally representative, and the number of respondents at this level of disaggregation is small: therefore, these results should be taken with caution.

In addition to self-reported outcomes, we collect indirect measures of local attitudes towards immigrants. Our first variable is the distribution of refugee reception centres at the municipality level. These centres are part of the Italian system of refugee reception and allocation (SPRAR), and their purpose is to distribute refugees across the country after their arrival. As noted in previous work, opening such a centre is an initiative of municipal governments (Gamalerio et al. 2021; Pulejo 2021); therefore, the presence of a SPRAR centre can be used as a proxy for the willingness of local governments and communities to host undocumented immigrants, most often from Africa or the Middle East. Lists of SPRAR centres are available from annual reports released by the Italian government: we collect information on the location of all SPRAR centres for the period 2005–20. From ISTAT, we also collect yearly data on foreign residents at the municipal level for the period 2002–18. This variable captures a different quantity, namely the propensity of documented immigrants who regularly live in Italy to choose to live in a given municipality. The intuition is that if in a geographic area the perceived risk of discrimination is higher, while keeping fixed variables possibly correlated with the local labour market, the amount of people of foreign nationality who choose to move there should be lower. In Figure C1 we report regression-adjusted differences in means for these variables across CEF-exposed and contiguous towns:

¹⁴ As outcomes, we use the self-reported agreement with two statements: whether immigrants have to adapt to Italian culture and whether immigrants are bad for the economy.

after controlling for region fixed effects, historical and geographic characteristics, and current town population, CEF towns have a lower propensity of hosting a SPRAR centre and a lower average share of foreign residents.

We maintain that these results are correlational: however, taken together, they are consistent with the hypothesis that, in localities affected by past violence, attitudes towards immigrants and minorities are worse than in comparable localities.

7 Conclusions

In this paper, we investigate the circumstances under which long-lasting legacies of violence can be mobilized into political behaviour. Building on work in comparative politics and social psychology, we argue that memories of traumatic inter-ethnic contact can lead to inter-ethnic prejudice, and that these latent attitudes can lead to differential support for politicians and parties which make appeals to the national community against outgroups. Our empirical findings support this hypothesis, using both panel data for the Italian party system over decades and specific case studies. When post-war politics becomes more nationalistic, municipalities exposed to indiscriminate violence by members of ethnic outgroups are more likely to turn to parties that shift towards more nationalist positions. This reactivation mechanism does not pass through an instrumental use of memory by politicians, nor a shock in its presence in public discourse.

These results have implications for the growing social science literature on the long-run consequences of violence for politics. In particular, they suggest that differences in attitudes due to past violence may not necessarily predict voting behaviour if the original contraposition between perpetrator and victim is not reflected in the party system. However, these attitudes may be mobilized by different parties when changes in the external context lead to the emergence of cleavages which resonate with the initial attitudes. They also have consequences for understanding the legacies of World War II in Europe, as they show how war violence may influence politics over time, beyond initial support for parties which emerged after the conflict.

This paper focuses on a specific case study, where the mobilization of local memories is not an explicit strategy of parties. Other potential aspects and mechanisms of activation of historical legacies are left unexplored, such as the construction of collective memories through education or the moderating role of national institutions in shaping the interpretation of historical experiences and the attitudes associated to them. We leave these questions for future research.

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Appendix

A Robustness of the main results

A1 Placebo

Our result may be explained by reverse causality, if parties adapt their manifesto content to the nationalist preferences of their local base in victimized municipalities. If that is the case, we should observe that vote shares in t anticipate higher nationalism in $t + 1$. Table A1 reports a placebo specification where we regress vote shares for parties in year t on their nationalism score in year $t + 1$. The estimated coefficients are nearly zero in magnitude, and not statistically significant. The null effect further suggests that our estimates do not capture differential trends in support for nationalist parties in victimized and non-victimized municipalities, but rather a differential reaction to changes in nationalism.

Table A1: Base model with future nationalist scores (placebo)

Party vote share	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
CEF	0.981*** (0.329)							
Nationalism _{$t+1$}	2.124 (3.314)	2.120 (3.314)	-0.612 (0.672)	-0.615 (0.672)	-0.612 (0.675)	-0.612 (0.670)	-0.611 (0.673)	-0.613 (0.672)
Nationalism _{$t+1$} × CEF	-0.037 (0.060)	-0.033 (0.060)	-0.074 (0.213)	-0.063 (0.202)	-0.076 (0.211)	-0.077 (0.214)	-0.078 (0.213)	-0.069 (0.213)
Observations	11,129	11,129	11,129	11,129	11,129	11,129	11,129	11,129
R-squared	0.100	0.124	0.868	0.868	0.868	0.868	0.868	0.868
Mean of DV	17.12	17.12	17.12	17.12	17.12	17.12	17.12	17.12
Year FE	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Region FE	✓							
Municipality FE		✓						
Mun-party FE			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Geography × time				✓				
Demography × time					✓			
Gustav line × time						✓		
WWI victims × time							✓	
Nazi massacres × time								✓

Note: each coefficient is the result of regressing vote shares for party p , in election t , in municipality c on a dummy equal to one for exposure to CEF, the (standardized) Nationalism score for the party-year, and their interaction. The sample is composed of all municipalities exposed to CEF violence, and non-exposed municipalities that lay within 10 kilometres. *Nationalism* is the nationalist score in party manifesto one election year in the future. All columns include year fixed effects. Column 1 also includes region fixed effects; column 2 includes municipality fixed effects; columns 3 to 8 include municipality-party fixed effects. *Geography*, *Demography*, *Gustav Line*, *WWI victims*, *Nazi massacres* include time trends interacted with, respectively, average altitude (lhs), distance from Rome (lhs); literacy rate in 1921, population in 1921, and agricultural employment in 1936; minimum distance from the Gustav Line (lhs); number of WWI military casualties (lhs); number of Nazi massacres in the municipality (lhs). Standard errors are clustered at the municipality and party-year level. *, **, *** denote significance at the 10%, 5%, and 1% levels, respectively.

A2 Fully interacted model

Table A2 reports the results of estimating our main specifications, after adding the interaction of the nationalism score with municipality characteristics among the controls.

Table A2: Base regression with interactions between nationalism score and historical covariates

Party vote share	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Nationalism	3.083 (2.506)	-1.565 (1.273)	-0.887 (2.173)	-0.809 (1.950)	-0.926 (1.506)
Nationalism \times CEF	0.154* (0.081)	0.240*** (0.037)	0.238*** (0.083)	0.245*** (0.048)	0.217*** (0.015)
Observations	13,129	13,129	13,129	13,129	13,129
R-squared	0.808	0.807	0.808	0.808	0.808
Mean of DV	16.17	16.17	16.17	16.17	16.17
Year FE	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Mun-party FE	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Geography \times time	✓				
Demography \times time		✓			
Gustav line \times time			✓		
WWI victims \times time				✓	
Nazi massacres \times time					✓

Note: each coefficient is the result of regressing vote shares for party p , in election t , in municipality c on a dummy equal to one for exposure to CEF, the (standardized) *Nationalism* score for the party-year, and their interaction. The sample is composed of all municipalities exposed to CEF violence, and non-exposed municipalities that lay within 10 kilometres. All columns include year and municipality-party fixed effects. *Geography*, *Demography*, *Gustav Line*, *WWI victims*, *Nazi massacres* include time trends interacted with, respectively, average altitude (lhs), distance from Rome (lhs); literacy rate in 1921, population in 1921, and agricultural employment in 1936; minimum distance from the Gustav Line (lhs); number of WWI military casualties (lhs); number of Nazi massacres in the municipality (lhs). Standard errors are clustered at the municipality and party-year level. *, **, *** denote significance at the 10%, 5%, and 1% levels, respectively.

A3 Results with different clustering

Table A3 reproduces the main results with standard errors clustered at the municipality level.

Table A3: Main results with clustering at the municipality level

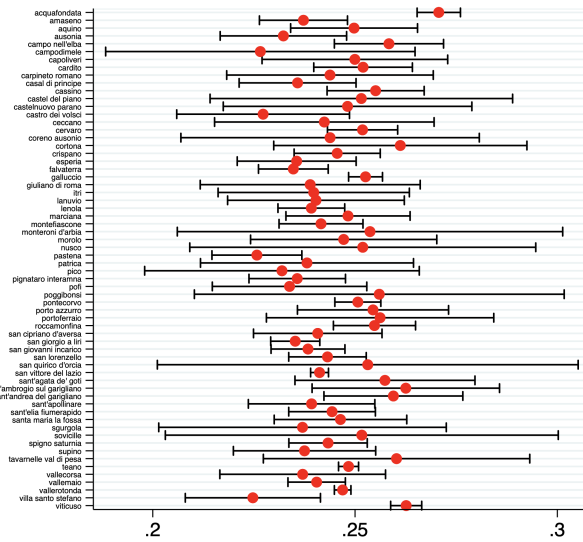
Vote share	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
CEF	0.884*** (0.434)							
Nationalism	-1.042*** (0.089)	-1.043*** (0.089)	-1.121*** (0.081)	-1.121*** (0.081)	-1.119*** (0.081)	-1.126*** (0.081)	-1.121*** (0.081)	-1.124*** (0.081)
Nationalism × CEF	0.259*** (0.088)	0.259*** (0.088)	0.245** (0.095)	0.247*** (0.094)	0.240** (0.095)	0.257*** (0.096)	0.238** (0.096)	0.253*** (0.097)
Observations	13,129	13,129	13,129	13,129	13,129	13,129	13,129	13,129
R-squared	0.090	0.112	0.807	0.807	0.807	0.807	0.808	0.807
Mean of DV	16.17	16.17	16.17	16.17	16.17	16.17	16.17	16.17
Year FE	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Region FE	✓							
Municipality FE		✓						
Mun-party FE			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Geography × time				✓				
Demography × time					✓			
Gustav line × time						✓		
WWI victims × time							✓	
Nazi massacres × time								✓

Note: each coefficient is the result of regressing vote shares for party p , in election t , in municipality c on a dummy equal to one for exposure to *CEF*, the (standardized) *Nationalism* score for the party-year and their interaction. The sample is composed of all municipalities exposed to CEF violence, and non-exposed municipalities that lay within 10 kilometers. All columns include year fixed effects. Column 1 also includes region fixed effects; Column 2 includes municipality fixed effects; Columns 3 to 8 include municipality-party fixed effects. *Geography*, *Demography*, *Gustav Line*, *WWI victims*, *Nazi massacres* include time trends interacted with, respectively, average altitude (lhs), distance from Rome (lhs); literacy rate in 1921, population in 1921 and agricultural employment in 1936; minimum distance from the Gustav Line (lhs); number of WWI military casualties (lhs); number of Nazi massacres in the municipality (lhs). Standard errors are clustered at the municipality and party-year level. Standard errors are clustered at the municipality level. *, **, *** denote significance at the 10%, 5%, and 1% levels, respectively.

A4 Sensitivity to single units and years

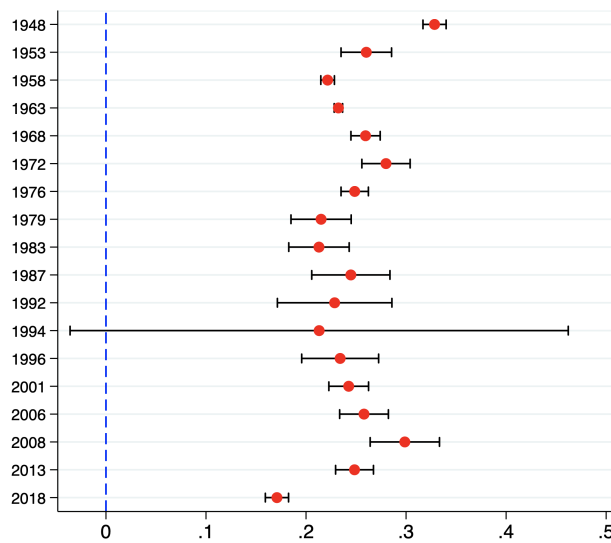
Figure A1 reports the coefficient of the interaction between CEF and Nationalism, estimated by dropping one CEF-exposed municipality at time. Figure A2 instead reports the coefficient of the interaction between CEF and Nationalism, estimated by dropping one election sequentially.

Figure A1: Robustness of interaction coefficient to sequential exclusion of victimized municipalities



Note: each point is a point estimate of the interaction term $Nationalism * CEF$ in equation 2, when the corresponding town on the y-axis is excluded from the sample. Each specification includes party-by-municipality and year fixed effects. Standard errors are clustered at the municipality and party-year level. 95% confidence intervals reported.

Figure A2: Robustness of interaction coefficient to sequential exclusion of elections



Note: each point is a point estimate of the interaction term $Nationalism * CEF$ in equation 2, when the corresponding election year on the y-axis is excluded from the sample. Each specification includes party-by-municipality and year fixed effects. Standard errors are clustered at the municipality and party-year level. 95% confidence intervals reported.

A5 Robustness to different samples

Table A4 reports the results of estimating the main specification on different samples of municipalities. Results in column 1 refer to our main sample, that is municipalities affected by CEF violence, and municipalities whose centroid lays within 10km from an affected municipality. In models in columns 2 to 4, we progressively expand the buffer to include municipalities within 15, 20, and 30 kilometres, respectively. The robustness of the results to different sample specifications suggests that those are not driven by the characteristics of contiguous municipalities. In column 5 we only include municipalities affected by CEF violence, and municipalities laying between 10 and 30 kilometres away from affected municipalities. This reduces the concerns that the effects are due to spillovers across neighbouring municipalities. We also repeat the estimation using all municipalities in the provinces where some town was affected by CEF violence (column 6) and all municipalities in the regions affected by CEF violence (column 7).

Table A4: Main results estimated on different samples

Party vote share	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)
Nationalism	-1.121 (1.448)	-1.102 (1.458)	-1.019 (1.462)	-0.974 (1.423)	-0.917 (1.416)	-1.004 (1.419)	-0.944 (1.434)
Nationalism × CEF	0.245*** (0.009)	0.212*** (0.015)	0.157*** (0.021)	0.140*** (0.029)	0.092** (0.040)	0.159*** (0.052)	0.141*** (0.050)
Sample	< 10km (Main Sample)	< 15km	< 20km	< 30km	> 10km < 30km	Province	Region
Observations	13,129	17,918	23,480	34,765	25,014	44,711	63,024
R-squared	0.807	0.808	0.810	0.813	0.815	0.808	0.801
Mean of DV	16.17	16.33	16.37	16.19	16.25	15.84	15.81

Note: each coefficient is the result of regressing vote shares for party p , in election t , in municipality c on a dummy equal to one for exposure to CEF *Violence*, the (standardized) *Nationalism* score for the party-year, and their interaction. The sample is composed of all municipalities exposed to CEF violence, and non-exposed municipalities that lay within 10 kilometres in column 1 (the same sample used in Table 1); within 15, 20, and 30 kilometres in columns 2, 3, and 4, respectively; in provinces where at least one municipality has been exposed to CEF violence in column 5; in regions where at least one municipality has been exposed to CEF violence in column 6. All columns include year and municipality-party fixed effects. Standard errors are clustered at the municipality and party-year level. *, **, *** denote significance at the 10%, 5%, and 1% levels, respectively.

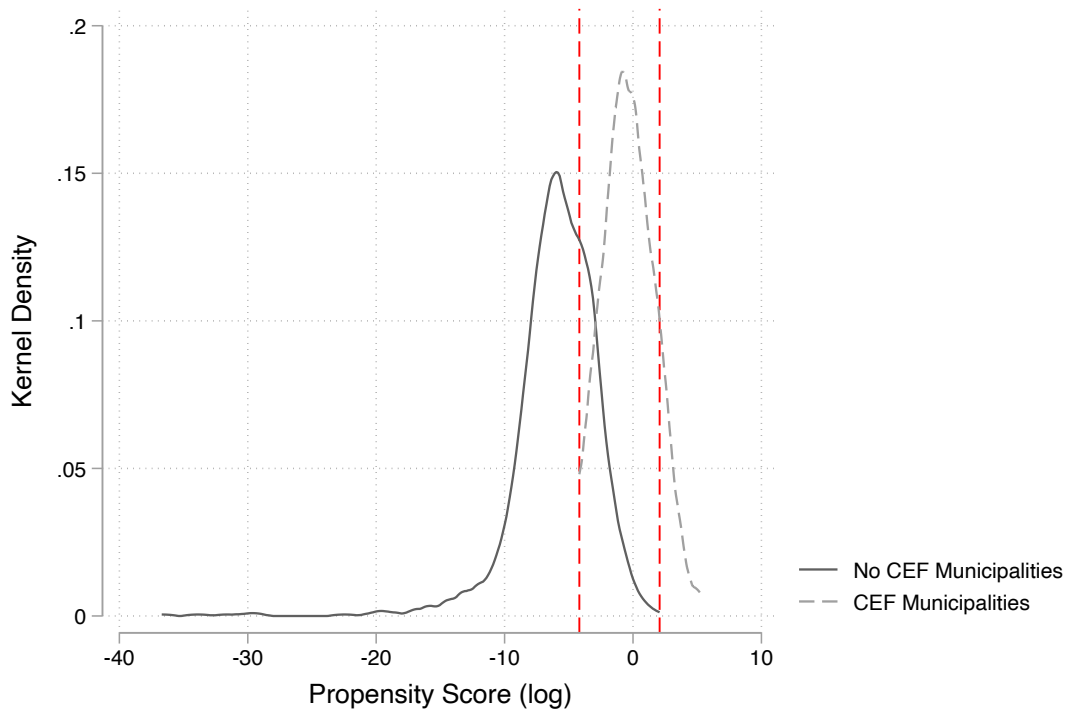
A6 Stratification on the propensity score

In this section, we provide additional evidence that the main results are unlikely to be driven by differential trends in observable characteristics between municipalities that have been exposed to violence and their neighbouring municipalities. In particular, we estimate the propensity score of exposure to violence, i.e. the conditional probability of exposure given pre-existing municipality characteristics. Then, we use the propensity score to control more flexibly for observable characteristics correlated with selection into violence and, potentially, voting behaviour.

We start by estimating the probability of being exposed to violence, based on pre-war characteristics. In order to do that, we leverage on the full set of available pre-1948 covariates: geographic characteristics (mean altitude, distance from Rome), socio-demographic characteristics (legal population in 1921 -male and female, literacy rate in 1921 -male and female, legal population in 1936 -male and female, change in population between 1921 and 1936, resident population in 1936, employment by economic sector in 1936), variables related to war involvement (minimum distance from the Gustav line, number of WWI military casualties, number of Nazi massacres in the municipality). To avoid any arbitrary selection of covariates, we regress a dummy variable equal to 1 for municipalities exposed to CEF violence on

all covariates and their two-way interactions. Next, we estimate a Lasso penalized regression model, and use it to select the most significant predictors of being exposed to CEF violence. We run a logistic regression model to predict the probability of being exposed to violence, based on the Lasso selected predictors. The logit of the propensity score (i.e. the log of the odds-ratio, following Rosenbaum and Rubin 1985) is plotted in Figure A3, for exposed and non-exposed municipalities. The plot reveals that indeed pre-exposure covariates predict selection into exposure to violence: exposed municipalities (dashed gray line) have higher predicted probability of being exposed than non-exposed municipalities (black solid line). Yet, there is an area of common support, where municipalities that are eventually exposed or not have similar ex-ante probability (area delimited by the two dashed vertical lines).

Figure A3: Propensity score (log odds-ratio) of being exposed to CEF violence, for exposed and non-exposed municipalities



We use the propensity score to conduct a stratification analysis. Following Rosenbaum and Rubin (1984), we divide our municipalities into quintiles of the propensity score. Table A5 reports the average difference in pre-exposure characteristics between CEF and non-CEF municipalities, within quintiles of the propensity score. While stratification on the propensity score is generally successful in providing balance in pre-existing characteristics, three variables still appear to be unbalanced: industry employment in 1936, distance from the Gustav line, and Nazi violence.

Table A5: Balance in pre-exposure characteristics within propensity score quintiles

	Mean in CEF municipalities	Mean in non-CEF municipalities	P-value
Altitude (asinh)	-0.03	-0.10	0.615
Distance from Rome (asinh)	-0.24	-0.09	0.254
Population in 1921	-0.08	-0.04	0.721
Male population in 1921	-0.24	-0.09	0.278
Female population in 1921	0.24	0.09	0.278
Illiteracy rate in 1921	0.18	0.17	0.903
Male illiteracy rate in 1921	0.23	0.14	0.508
Female illiteracy rate in 1921	0.12	0.18	0.710
Change in population 1936-1921	-0.05	-0.05	0.992
Legal population in 1936	-0.08	-0.05	0.818
Population in 1936	-0.08	-0.05	0.826
Agricultural employment 1936	0.21	0.10	0.424
Industry employment 1936	-0.39	-0.08	0.028
Transport employment 1936	-0.25	-0.11	0.312
Trade employment 1936	-0.19	-0.11	0.573
Banking employment 1936	-0.15	-0.04	0.387
Independent employment 1936	-0.18	-0.10	0.607
Public employment 1936	-0.04	-0.09	0.680
Private employment 1936	0.05	-0.06	0.449
Home employment 1936	-0.14	-0.05	0.526
Artisan employment 1936	-0.33	-0.13	0.148
Inactive 1936	0.04	-0.04	0.593
Distance from Gustav line	-1.07	-0.31	0.000
Number of WWI casualties	0.33	0.44	0.408
Nazi massacres	0.09	0.40	0.020

Note: balance in pre-exposure characteristics, for municipalities exposed to CEF violence and non exposed municipalities in the same regions. Means are calculated within quintiles of the propensity score. All variables are standardized by subtracting the mean and dividing by the standard deviation.

We run our main regression analysis within strata of the propensity score. Results are reported in Table A6, for the full sample of municipalities in the three affected regions (columns 1 to 4) and in our main sample (columns 5 to 8). Column 1 reports the simple regression of vote shares on our main predictors, conditional on region and year fixed effects. Columns 2 to 4 include fixed effect for strata of the propensity score. As the strata become more narrow, the difference in the propensity to vote for right-wing parties in exposed and non-exposed municipalities disappears (*CEF*); yet, the differential responsiveness to nationalism remain unaffected. We obtain similar results in our main samples, that confirms the findings reported in Table 1.

Table A6: Stratification on the propensity score for being exposed to violence

Party vote share	All municipalities in affected regions				Exposed and contiguous municipalities (Main Sample)			
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
CEF	0.803** (0.324)	0.715** (0.305)	0.108 (0.261)	-0.340 (0.323)	0.884*** (0.309)	0.852** (0.332)	0.479 (0.294)	0.180 (0.311)
Nationalism	-0.580 (1.939)	-0.579 (1.939)	-0.579 (1.939)	-0.579 (1.939)	-1.042 (1.948)	-1.042 (1.949)	-1.042 (1.949)	-1.041 (1.950)
Nationalism × CEF	0.134* (0.067)	0.132* (0.069)	0.133* (0.070)	0.130* (0.068)	0.259*** (0.061)	0.258*** (0.064)	0.258*** (0.067)	0.256*** (0.071)
Strata 5		✓				✓		
Strata 10			✓				✓	
Strata 20				✓				✓
Observations	63,028	62,731	62,731	62,731	13,129	13,129	13,129	13,129
R-squared	0.077	0.077	0.077	0.078	0.090	0.091	0.092	0.094
Mean of DV	15.81	15.80	15.80	15.80	16.17	16.17	16.17	16.17

Note: each coefficient is the result of regressing vote shares for party p , in election t , in municipality c on a dummy equal to one for exposure to CEF Violence, the (standardized) *Nationalism* score for the party-year, and their interaction. In columns 1 to 4, the sample is composed of all municipalities in regions exposed to CEF violence. In columns 5 to 8, the sample is composed of all municipalities exposed to CEF violence, and non-exposed municipalities that lay within 10 kilometres (the main sample used in Table 1). Columns 2 and 6 include dummies for five strata of the propensity score; columns 3 and 7 include dummies for ten strata of the propensity score; columns 4 and 8 include dummies for five strata of the propensity score. All columns include year and region fixed effects. Standard errors are clustered at the municipality and party-year level. *, **, *** denote significance at the 10%, 5%, and 1% levels, respectively.

B Additional results

B1 Results by party

Table B1 reports the main results, sub-setting the data for different parties that appear at least in two elections in our dataset. The results suggest that a nationalist shift is almost always rewarded in our sample, including for left-wing parties.

Table B1: Results for individual parties

Party vote share	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
	MSI	DC	PLI	FI	LN	FDI
Nationalism \times CEF	0.322*** (0.118)	0.606** (0.240)	-0.081 (0.155)	-0.216 (0.299)	0.544** (0.247)	0.313* (0.174)
Observations	3,731	3,231	2,731	1,750	1,186	500
R-squared	0.790	0.822	0.464	0.860	0.774	0.705
Mean of DV	8.067	38.05	2.932	26.38	2.886	3.274
Year FE	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Mun FE	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Note: each coefficient is the result of regressing vote shares for party p , in election t , in municipality c on a dummy equal to one for exposure to CEF, the (standardized) *Nationalism* score for the party-year, and their interaction. The sample is composed of all municipalities exposed to CEF violence, and non-exposed municipalities that lay within 10 kilometres. The sample is restricted to vote outcomes for *Movimento Sociale Italiano* in column 1; *Democrazia Cristiana* in column 2; *Partito Liberale Italiano* in column 3; *Forza Italia* in column 4; *Lega* in column 5; *Fratelli d'Italia* in in column 6. All columns include year and municipality fixed effects. Standard errors are clustered at the municipality level. *, **, *** denote significance at the 10%, 5%, and 1% levels, respectively.

B2 Results with disaggregated nationalism scores

Table B2 reports the effect of changes in individual components of the nationalist score on vote shares for the same party-year. All of the nationalist score components positively affect party vote shares when interacted with violence, and most of them are statistically significant. It is worth noticing that ‘law and order’ only accepts positive values, highlighting how negative connotations attributed to this item are not captured by the CMP. Column 5 proposes then an alternative aggregate measure of nationalism that only includes ‘traditional morality’, ‘national way of life’, and ‘multiculturalism’.

Table B2: Results for individual dimensions of the nationalism score

Party vote share	Traditional morality (1)	National way of life (2)	Anti multiculturalism (3)	Law and order (4)	Aggregate (5)
Score	-2.734 (3.005)	-0.706 (2.574)	0.500 (2.599)	-0.064 (2.344)	-1.685 (2.455)
Score \times CEF	0.106** (0.052)	0.215*** (0.078)	0.263*** (0.052)	-0.044 (0.079)	0.296*** (0.037)
Observations	13,129	13,129	13,129	13,129	13,129
R-squared	0.120	0.111	0.111	0.110	0.114
Mean of DV	16.17	16.17	16.17	16.17	16.17
Year FE	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Municipality FE	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Note: each coefficient is the result of regressing vote shares for party p , in election t , in municipality c on a dummy equal to one for exposure to CEF , the (standardized) $Score$ for the party-year, and their interaction. The sample is composed of all municipalities exposed to CEF violence, and non-exposed municipalities that lay within 10 kilometres. All columns include year and municipality-by-party fixed effects, like in Table 1, column 3. In each column, $Score$ refers to a different component of the Nationalism score used in Table 1. It refers to *Traditional Morality* in column 1, to *National Way of Life* in column 2, to *Opposition to Multiculturalism* in column 3, to *Law and Order* in column 4, the aggregation of the first three components in column 5. Standard errors are clustered at the municipality and party-year level. *, **, *** denote significance at the 10%, 5%, and 1% levels, respectively.

B3 Results for left-wing parties

Table B3 reports our main specification estimated on left-wing parties. We included the parties that are most long-lived in our sample, namely: *Partito Comunista Italiano* (PCI), *Partito Repubblicano Italiano* (PRI), *Partito Socialista Democratico Italiano* (PSDI), *Partito Socialista Italiano* (PSI). We report results for each party individually (columns 2 to 5) and their aggregation (column 1). The results suggest that a nationalist shift is never rewarded for left-wing parties, providing for additional support to our interpretation.

Table B3: Results for left-wing parties

Party vote share	(1) All	(2) PCI	(3) PRI	(4) PSDI	(5) PSI
Nationalism	-1.413*** (0.089)				
Nationalism \times CEF	-0.073 (0.099)	-0.011 (0.241)	-0.436** (0.214)	-0.057 (0.177)	0.168 (0.197)
Observations	10,929	3,481	2,722	2,238	2,488
R-squared	0.149	0.878	0.541	0.529	0.576
Mean of DV	10.94	23.37	2.115	3.809	9.600
Year FE	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Municipality FE	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Note: each coefficient is the result of regressing vote shares for party p , in election t , in municipality c on a dummy equal to one for exposure to CEF , the (standardized) $Nationalism$ score for the party-year, and their interaction. The sample is composed of all municipalities exposed to CEF violence, and non-exposed municipalities that lay within 10 kilometres. The sample is restricted to vote outcomes for all left-wing parties in column 1, *PCI* in column 2, *PRI* in column 3, *PSDI* in column 4, and *PSI* in column 5. All columns include year and municipality fixed effects. Standard errors are clustered at the municipality and party-year level. *, **, *** denote significance at the 10%, 5%, and 1% levels, respectively.

C Results on mechanisms

C1 Italian electoral survey

In this section we provide first descriptive evidence on the relationship between exposure to CEF violence and attitudes towards immigrants. We draw from the ITANES surveys to investigate how attitudes differ across residents of victimized and non-victimized towns. We use the surveys conducted in 2001, 2008, and 2013, as they locate respondents at the municipality level. We restrict the sample to respondents in Lazio, Campania, and Tuscany. To measure attitudes towards immigrants, we use the responses to two questions that are present in all waves. The first question asks to express agreement with the statement ‘Immigrants have to adapt to Italian culture and traditions’. The second question asks to express agreement with the statement ‘Immigrants are bad for the economy’. We regress individual answers on a dummy equal to one for respondents who declare living in a municipality that was exposed to violence, and demographic controls.

Columns 1 and 5 in Table C1 report the results of this first analysis. Both columns show that there is not statistical difference in reported immigration attitudes across respondents in municipalities that were exposed or not to violence. However, if violence has a lasting effect on attitudes, we are more likely to find it among long-term residents of a territory, as transmission of values and memories mostly takes place at the family and community level. Therefore, we test for the existence of sub-group differences across residents of victimized municipalities whose families did and did not emigrate from different regions. Intuitively, attitudinal legacies of violence should be observed, or be stronger, among respondents whose families were more likely to be directly exposed to violence. For this analysis we restrict the sample to the 2001 wave, where the survey asks respondents whether they live in the same region as their father when he was a child. We use this variable (*Stable*) as a proxy for a higher probability of actual violence experience in the family. Columns 2 to 4 and 6 to 8 in Table C1 report the results of regressing immigration attitudes on a dummy for victimized municipalities, an indicator for long-term residents and their interaction. The positive and significant interaction coefficient suggests that residents of victimized municipalities whose families are from the same area have significantly worse attitudes towards immigration than residents who live there after migration. They also have worse attitudes than ‘stable’ residents of non-exposed towns.

Table C1: Anti-immigration sentiment in long-term residents

	Immigrants have to adapt to Italian culture				Immigrants are bad for the economy			
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
<i>Goumiers</i>	-0.124 [0.280]	-0.921*** [0.189]	-1.171** [0.455]	-0.614 [0.437]	-0.234 [0.215]	-0.868** [0.379]	-0.643 [0.548]	0.014 [0.440]
<i>Goumiers</i> × <i>Stable</i>		0.768*** [0.198]	0.739*** [0.193]	0.734** [0.289]		0.684*** [0.221]	0.647*** [0.193]	0.633*** [0.201]
<i>Stable</i>		0.092 [0.119]	0.117 [0.119]	0.102 [0.122]		0.075 [0.108]	0.081 [0.104]	0.055 [0.108]
Region FE	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Individual	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Geography			✓	✓			✓	✓
Demographic				✓				✓
Mean of DV	2.45	2.40	2.40	2.40	2.59	2.57	2.57	2.57
Observations	1859	790	790	790	1851	791	791	791
R-squared	0.03	0.09	0.10	0.14	0.04	0.11	0.15	0.18

Note: each coefficient is the result of regressing the individual responses on a dummy equal to 1 if the respondent lives in a municipality exposed to CEF violence (CEF), a dummy equal to 1 if the respondent lives in the same region as her father when he was 14 (*Stable*), and their interaction. The dependent variable agreement (1 to 4) with the statement 'Immigrants have to adapt to Italian culture and traditions' in columns 1 to 4, and with 'Immigrants are bad for the economy' in columns 5 to 8. All specifications include region fixed effects. *Individual* indicates individual level controls for age, age squared, gender, education; *Geography* indicates controls for minimum and maximum altitude (log), distance from Rome (log), minimum distance from a large city (log); *Demographic* includes municipality level controls for total population, population density, literacy, high school education, university education, employment in manufacturing, agriculture, and service sector. Standard errors are clustered at the municipality level. *, **, *** denote significance at the 10%, 5%, and 1% levels, respectively.

C2 Preferences for immigration and refugees

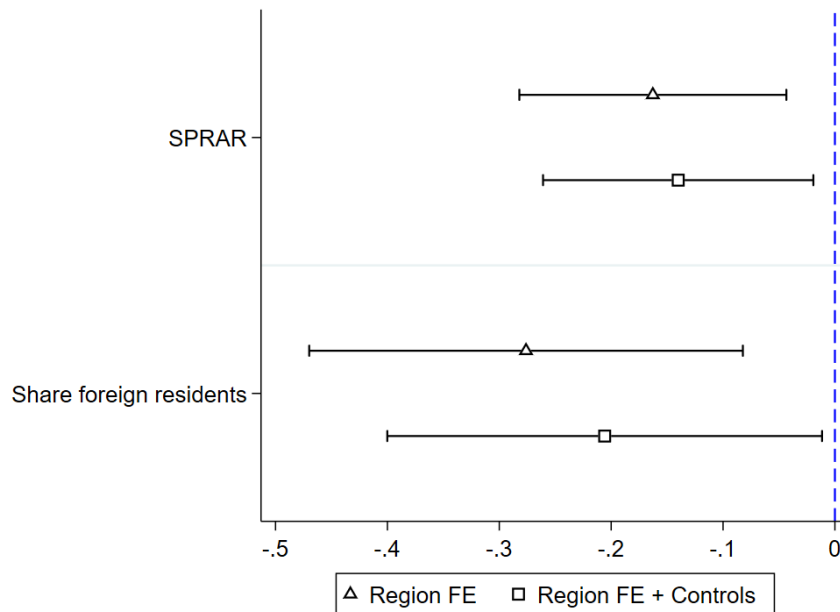
In this section we present the results on mechanisms based on revealed preferences for immigration. Our first variable is the presence of centres for reception of refugees, within the System of Protection for Asylum Seekers and Refugees (SPRAR) of the Italian government. Our sources are the annual reports of the SPRAR system published by the Italian governments between 2005 and 2020. These reports contain a list of all SPRAR centres, together with the municipality in which they are located. Since our goal is to measure average, relatively time-invariant attitudes at the local level, we ignore the time dimension and generate a dummy variable equal to 1 if a municipality has hosted a SPRAR centre at some point in the reference period of time. In some cases, the authority which opens the SPRAR centre is not a single municipality but a consortium of municipalities. For these cases, we collect information on the municipalities forming the consortium from local governments' websites and assign the centre to all municipalities. This is also the approach used in the existing literature (Gamalerio et al. 2021; Pulejo 2021).

The second measure we use is the share of foreign residents at the municipal level. Here, instead of the decennial censuses, we rely on yearly population figures at the municipal level by ISTAT, between 2002 and 2018. The yearly figures are estimates, based on the population data measured by the decennial censuses and yearly data on births, deaths, and migrations. For each year, we compute the municipal share of residents with a foreign nationality over the total population, and use the average of this share across years as a measure.

We use each of these two measures as outcomes in a regression on the dummy variable for CEF, the average total population 2002–18, the mean altitude (Ihs), distance from a regional capital (Ihs), population and share of illiterates in 1921, share of employed in agriculture in 1936, and distance from the Gustav line (Ihs), as well as regional fixed effects. We use heteroskedasticity-robust standard errors. Figure

C1 plots the coefficient of the CEF dummy variable from these regressions. After adjusting for the historical and geographic variables, both measures are lower in CEF-exposed towns relative to contiguous towns.

Figure C1: Differences in refugees reception centres and immigrant population



Note: each point is a point estimate of the coefficient of *CEF* in a regression where the outcome is indicated on the y-axis. Each regression includes region fixed effects. Regressions with controls also include average total population 2002–18, mean altitude (lhs), distance from a regional capital (lhs), population in 1921, share of illiterates in 1921, share of employed in agriculture in 1936, and distance from the Gustav line (lhs). Standard errors are heteroskedasticity-robust. 95% confidence intervals reported.

D Summary statistics

D1 Pre-violence municipality characteristics

Table D1 reports the summary statistics of the main pre-violence variables, for victimized municipalities, contiguous non-victimized municipalities, and all municipalities in Lazio, Tuscany, and Campania.

Table D1: Summary statistics for the analysis sample

	CEF Municipalities		Contiguous Municipalities		All Municipalities in Affected Regions	
	Mean	sd	Mean	sd	Mean	sd
Mean height	474.688	258.885	375.392	288.298	495.803	307.445
Distance from Rome	132.973	44.638	155.257	50.846	175.568	84.975
Area	47.719	47.877	46.721	57.658	44.779	61.237
Residing pop. 1921	4218.328	4153.127	9130.758	45666.24	8969.834	49916.52
Residing M pop. 1921	2084.5	2164.454	4560.446	23219.1	4465.601	25083.34
Residing F pop. 1921	2133.828	2004.156	4570.312	22448.17	4504.233	24847.04
Illiterates 1921	.454	.128	.461	.115	.429	.134
Illiterates M 1921	.397	.118	.398	.11	.367	.127
Illiterates F 1921	.507	.145	.519	.128	.488	.148
Pop. diff 1936-1921	1562.203	2318.099	6286.806	39386.02	3932.701	39364.42
Residing Pop. 1936	5780.531	5572.521	15417.57	84681	12902.54	79134.14
De facto pop. 1936	5635.453	5448.013	15431.67	86407.1	12885.68	80666.88
Employed agriculture 1936	.332	.099	.291	.114	.309	.109
Employed industry 1936	.051	.038	.068	.039	.069	.048
Employed transports 1936	.008	.007	.01	.008	.01	.009
Employed commerce 1936	.019	.016	.023	.014	.021	.014
Employed credit 1936	0	.001	.001	.001	.001	.001
Self-employed 1936	.003	.003	.004	.004	.004	.005
Employed public admin. 1936	.011	.009	.013	.012	.012	.01
Employed private admin. 1936	.001	.004	.001	.001	.001	.002
Household workers 1936	.006	.004	.007	.005	.007	.005
Artisans 1936	.032	.014	.04	.018	.037	.017
Inactive 1936	.568	.064	.581	.071	.565	.068
WWI deaths	84.828	98.892	98.247	108.296	89.537	240.564
Nazi massacres	1.156	1.929	1.554	2.353	1.302	3.756

D2 Balance in pre-exposure characteristics

Table D2 reports the regressions of our indicator for exposure to violence on several pre-exposure historical variables. In particular, we look at whether our indicator variables correlate with indicators of geographic features (column 1), socioeconomic characteristics (column 2), and war-related variables (column 3). Column 4 includes all variables in the same regression. While the binary indicator is uncorrelated with most pre-period municipal characteristics, a few covariates are significant at the 5 per cent level, as one would expect due to chance. Our main specification captures those variables by including municipality fixed effects and allowing for different trends in voting behaviour across municipalities with similar pre-exposure characteristics.

Table D2: Correlates of CEF exposure

CEF	Main sample				Full sample			
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
Mean height	0.000 (0.000)			0.000 (0.000)	-0.000** (0.000)			-0.000*** (0.000)
Distance from Rome	0.002** (0.001)			0.003** (0.001)	0.000* (0.000)			0.002*** (0.000)
Surface (squared Km)	-0.001 (0.001)			-0.000 (0.001)	0.000 (0.000)			0.000 (0.000)
Residing population 1921		0.000 (0.000)		0.000 (0.000)		0.000 (0.000)		-0.000 (0.000)
Residing male population 1921		0.045 (2.429)		1.094 (2.471)		-0.544 (0.763)		0.424 (0.891)
Illiterates 1921		12.562 (17.600)		10.619 (15.788)		5.464 (5.436)		5.140 (5.698)
Illiterates M 1921		-4.998 (8.427)		-4.184 (7.578)		-2.157 (2.646)		-2.159 (2.770)
Illiterates F 1921		-7.611 (9.167)		-6.640 (8.197)		-3.065 (2.800)		-2.996 (2.932)
Residing population 1936		-0.000 (0.000)		0.000 (0.000)		0.000 (0.000)		-0.000 (0.000)
De facto population 1936		0.000 (0.000)		-0.000 (0.000)		-0.000 (0.000)		0.000 (0.000)
Employment agriculture 1936		-0.457 (0.488)		-0.520 (0.493)		-0.142 (0.100)		-0.027 (0.100)
Employment industry 1936		-2.185 (1.490)		-2.016 (1.508)		-0.523*** (0.174)		-0.558*** (0.182)
Employment transports 1936		-3.784 (3.856)		-4.811 (3.668)		-0.491 (0.748)		-0.351 (0.735)
Employment commerce 1936		4.271 (2.927)		3.431 (3.071)		0.815 (0.933)		0.503 (0.906)
Employment credit 1936		-96.320** (40.046)		-82.037** (39.143)		-14.678 (9.353)		-10.132 (8.875)
Self-employment and priests 1936		-3.457 (8.634)		-0.699 (7.883)		-2.381 (1.596)		-2.019 (1.429)
Employment public admin. 1936		1.969 (2.990)		1.718 (3.408)		0.768 (0.777)		0.682 (1.185)
Employment private admin. 1936		7.422 (10.589)		15.362 (9.350)		3.650 (6.742)		5.268 (6.103)
Household workers 1936		4.418 (9.120)		6.734 (9.414)		0.652 (1.974)		0.021 (2.047)
Artisans 1936		-2.572 (2.110)		-3.002 (2.134)		-0.260 (0.418)		-0.265 (0.421)
Minimum distance from Gustav line			-0.002** (0.001)	-0.002** (0.001)			-0.001*** (0.000)	-0.002*** (0.000)
WWI victims			-0.000 (0.000)	-0.000 (0.000)			0.000* (0.000)	0.000 (0.000)
Nazi massacres			0.002 (0.013)	-0.000 (0.018)			-0.004** (0.002)	-0.001 (0.002)
Observations	250	250	250	250	1,195	1,202	1,202	1,195
R-squared	0.145	0.193	0.148	0.233	0.035	0.073	0.102	0.191

Note: each column reports the regression of an indicator variable equal to 1 for municipalities exposed to CEF violence. Standard errors are clustered at the municipality and party-year level. *, **, *** denote significance at the 10%, 5%, and 1% levels, respectively.

E Details of the nationalism score

E1 Individual components

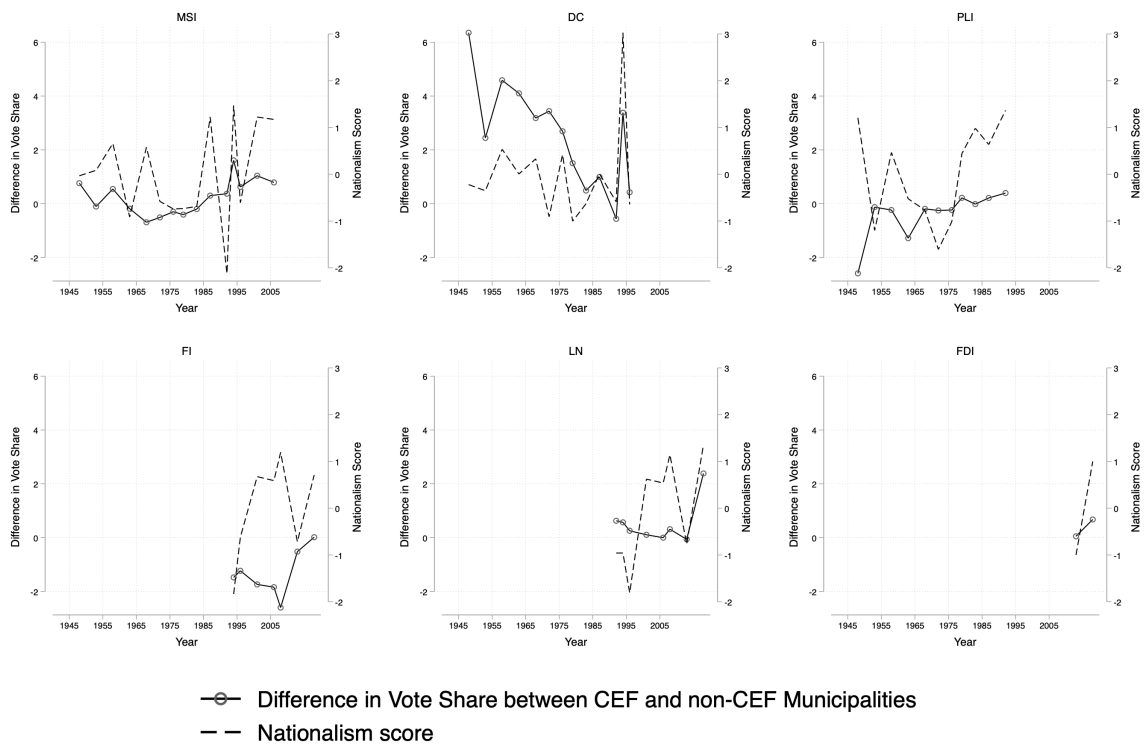
The nationalist score combines different individual scores from the Comparative Manifesto Project. Following Colantone and Stanig (2018), we use the following elements from *Domain 6: Fabric of Society*:

- per601 National Way of Life: Positive
- per602 National Way of Life: Negative
- per603 Traditional Morality: Positive
- per604 Traditional Morality: Negative
- per605 Law and Order: Positive
- per607 Multiculturalism: Positive
- per608 Multiculturalism: Negative

E2 Trends in nationalism and vote share differentials for all parties

Figure E1 reports descriptively the evolution of the difference in vote shares for different parties between victimized and non-victimized municipalities over time, against the changes of nationalist score of the party manifesto over time.

Figure E1: Trends in nationalism and vote share differentials by violence exposure



Note: evolution over time of the average vote share for different parties, across towns exposed to CEF violence and non-exposed towns in the contiguity sample.

F Additional data information

F1 List of data sources

- Atti Parlamentari, available at http://legislature.camera.it/_dati/leg01/lavori/stenografici/sed0890/sed0890.pdf
- Interrogazione parlamentare 20/5/2016, seduta n.628
- Baris (2007)
- Storico Elezioni, available at <https://elezionistorico.interno.gov.it/>
- Comparative Manifesto Project, available at <https://manifestoproject.wzb.eu/>
- National Censuses of 1921, 1936, available at <https://ebiblio.istat.it/SebinaOpac/.do>
- *Albo dei Caduti Italiani della Grande Guerra*, available at <https://www.cadutigrandeguerra.it/>
- *Atlante delle Stragi Naziste e Fasciste in Italia*, available at <https://www.straginazifasciste.it/>
- Reports of SPRAR system, available at <https://www.retesai.it/pubblicazioni/>
- Yearly population estimates, available at http://dati.istat.it/Index.aspx?DataSetCode=DCIS_RICPOPRES2011
- ITANES surveys, available at <http://www.itanes.org/dati/>

F2 List of municipalities affected by CEF violence

Table F1 shows the list of municipalities exposed to CEF violence according to the sources consulted in this study.

Table F1: List of municipalities exposed to CEF violence

Municipalities exposed to CEF violence

Acquafondata	Poggibonsi
Albanova	Pontecorvo
Amaseno	Porto Ferraio
Aquino	Porto Longone
Ausonia	Roccamonfina
Capizzi	Sant' Ambrogio
Campodimele	Sant' Andrea
Capodivieri	Sant' Apollinare
Cardito	Sant' Elia F. Rapido
Carpineto Romano	San Giorgio a Liri
Castel del Piano	San Giovanni Incarico
Castelnuovo Parano	Santa Maria la Fossa
Castro dei Volsci	San Vittore nel Lazio
Ceccano	San Quirico
Cerasola Polega	San Giuliano di Teano
Cervaro	San Leucio
Coreno Ausonio	San Lorenzello
Crispano	Sant' Agata dei Goti
Esperia	Sant' Angelo
Falvaterra	Sgurgola
Farneta	Sociville
Galluccio	Spigno
Giuliano di Roma	Supino
Itri	Tavernelle
Lanuvio	Teano
Lenola	Vallecorsa
Marciana	Vallemaio
Marina di Campo	Vallerotonda
Montefiascone	Villa Santo Stefano
Monteroni d'Arbia	Viticuso
Morolo	
Nusco	
Pastena	
Patrica	
Pico	
Pofi	
Pignataro	
Piscinola	
