

# Bella Ciao! The Political Legacy of Women in the Italian Resistance\*

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## Abstract

What happens when women join the fight? This paper studies the Italian Resistance in World War II, when thousands of women took on political and military roles within clandestine networks. Using a novel micro-level dataset on the members of the Resistance ( $\approx 240\,000$ ), I uncover the long-run political effects of women's wartime agency. Across municipalities, higher female Resistance translated into more women running for national office and stronger support for women's rights, with effects persisting to this day. Identification relies on extensive prewar controls and an instrumental variable strategy based on terrain ruggedness, which increased reliance on local women to sustain Resistance cells. By stepping into roles traditionally reserved for men, these women catalyzed a cultural transformation. The findings shed new light on how brief, salient shocks can update beliefs about gender roles and permanently alter the trajectory of women's empowerment.

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# 1 Introduction

Throughout history, pivotal moments have reshaped women's roles in society, challenging traditional gender norms and paving the way for greater equality. Among these transformative events, conflicts stand out as powerful catalysts of societal change. Most notably, based on the seminal work of [Goldin \(1991\)](#), a growing body of research shows how, during world wars, the mass absence of men created opportunities for women to enter roles once reserved for men. This disruption sparked shifts in social attitudes around gender roles, with effects that persist to this day ([Colombo et al., 2025](#), [Di Addario et al., 2025](#), [Gay, 2023](#), [Goldin and Olivetti, 2013](#), [Acemoglu et al., 2004](#), [Fernández et al., 2004](#)).

Yet most of the literature looks at women as secondary to conflict, stepping into male-dominated roles only in response to men's absence, with the large-scale deployment of women into the labor force as the most visible example. But what happens when women are not just substitutes for absent men, but central players in the struggle itself? Despite the stark gendering of warfare, history records societies that placed women at the heart of organized struggles ([Goldstein, 2003](#)). From the all-women wing of the Dahomey Kingdom to contemporary guerrilla armies, women have at times moved far beyond conventional duties. Evidence on the consequences of such participation, however, remains rare and limited to a handful of qualitative case studies<sup>1</sup>.

This paper fills this gap to provide the first causal evidence on how women's active participation in conflict can shape their political representation and societal attitudes over the long run. I leverage the Italian anti-fascist Resistance movement (1943-45) during World War II, when tens of thousands of women entered clandestine networks

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<sup>1</sup>In El Salvador, [Viterna \(2013\)](#) shows that wartime roles translated into postwar civic and political agency; elsewhere, women influenced peace negotiations ([Thomas, 2024](#)) and shifted attitudes toward gender equality, particularly when women were killed in battle ([Cohen et al., 2021](#)). See also [Eslava \(2024\)](#) on female commanders and conflict violence, [Wood and Allemand \(2022\)](#) on combatants and conflict length, [Loken and Matfess \(2022\)](#) on post-conflict trajectories, and [Viterna \(2006\)](#) for early work on the drivers of women's mobilisation.

and armed formations. The Resistance against Nazi-Fascist occupation placed women in roles that directly defied entrenched social norms<sup>2</sup>, marking an unprecedented rupture in the gender order ([Slaughter, 1997](#)). Over twenty months, these women operated under conditions of exceptional personal risk and operational responsibility. They moved people, arms, and intelligence across enemy lines, ran clandestine supply and communication networks, sheltered fugitives and the wounded, and planned and executed guerrilla and propaganda operations ([Bravo and Bruzzone, 2000](#)).

Wartime experience yields clear political dividends for men, often launching careers in offices ([Teigen, 2018](#), [McDermott and Panagopoulos, 2015](#)). This “bullets to ballots” path aligns with Bourdieu’s notion of symbolic capital: publicly recognized honor that can be converted into authority and office ([Bourdieu, 1983](#)). For women, participation in conflict may be even more transformative, not only for those directly involved but also for society at large, as both the stakes and the setting can be fundamentally different. In the setting of prewar Italy, women could neither vote nor run for office, and public life was an exclusively male domain. The Fascist regime, installed in 1922, had further entrenched this exclusion, celebrating women’s role as wives and mothers.

Against this backdrop, women’s participation in the Resistance was “the first historical occasion for democratic politicization” ([Serra, 1977](#)), a visible rupture with prevailing gender norms, and with potential for enduring effects. Historians have emphasized the immediacy of this recognition: within months of the Nazi-Fascist defeat, women gained the right to vote and stand for office, and took part in Italy’s first democratic elections in 1946 ([Bravo and Bruzzone, 2000](#), [Slaughter, 1997](#)). That same year, the Constituent Assembly, the body charged with drafting the Constitution of the new Italian Republic, formalized this turn. Of its twenty-one women members, at least fourteen had documented ties to the Resistance, and eleven had actively served

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<sup>2</sup>Italy barred women from the regular armed forces. Similar restrictions held in Yugoslavia, Greece, France, Poland, and Denmark, where women also joined Resistance movements under comparable constraints ([Goldstein, 2003](#)).

in its clandestine cells<sup>3</sup>. In the wake of the war, these same women converted their wartime agency into constitutional guarantees, laying the legal foundations of women's emancipation and gender equality ([Gabrielli, 2009](#), [Morelli et al., 2007](#)).

Existing sources offer partial coverage of the actors of the Resistance, falling short of a comprehensive census. I assembled the first micro-level, near-universal dataset of the members of the Resistance, the *partisans*, by digitizing the full collection of their official recognition files. These dossiers, previously unexplored, are housed at the *Ricompart* fund at the Italian Central State Archives, and record each recognized partisan with detailed personal and service information. From more than 700 000 raw files, careful cleansing and harmonization yield, in line with historical counts, more than 240 000 partisans. The data contribution is twofold. Beyond delivering the first micro-level census of the movement, the granularity of the data makes gender visible, enabling the first systematic and quantitative assessment of the female Resistance.

I link women's participation in the Resistance to post-war political outcomes. I merge partisan records with the roster of parliamentary candidates, elected and not, from the first post-war legislature in 1948 to 2022. For each municipality and legislature, I observe the number of women who ran for Parliament. I then turn to revealed-preference measures of gender attitudes, using municipal vote shares in two nationwide referenda on women's rights: the 1974 divorce and the 1981 abortion referendum.

Prewar attitudes toward women may undermine a causal reading. Despite evidence that female partisans were drawn from across the social spectrum ([Slaughter, 1997](#)), we cannot rule out the threat of selection. Municipalities with more progressive views may still have recruited more women and supported them more strongly in later decades.

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<sup>3</sup>Adele Bei, Bianca Bianchi, Laura Bianchini, Maria Federici, Angela Gotelli, Nilde Iotti, Teresa Mattei, Lina Merlin, Angiola Minella, Teresa Noce, and Elettra Pollastrini were formally enrolled in Resistance formations and active in clandestine operations. Filomena Delli Castelli served as a Red Cross nurse and organized refugee relief; Nadia Gallico Spano acted as the Communist Party's national organizer for women and edited the clandestine press; Angela Maria Guidi Cingolani built the Christian Democratic women's network and hosted clandestine meetings. All biographical details are from [Camera dei deputati \(2023\)](#).

In that case, correlations would capture long-standing attitudes rather than the legacy of mobilization. I rule out these confounding effects with two main strategies.

The first strategy compares municipalities within provinces and holds a rich prewar profile fixed. I proxy local gender norms with female employment. Reasonably, left-leaning municipalities held more progressive views on women, while Catholic strongholds emphasized family-traditional roles. I capture political culture with 1921 municipal vote shares for the Socialist–Communist bloc and the Catholic party, together with an indicator for early Fascist presence. In addition, I absorb labor unrest with the industrial employment share, since the 1943–44 factory strikes mobilized many women and forged ties with the Resistance. Beyond these dimensions, I control for population size along with a standard set of prewar socioeconomic covariates and conflict characteristics to net out remaining baseline differences. Reassuringly, the prewar picture is flat and barely moves with female Resistance.

Of particular note, the granularity of my data allows me to observe the number of male partisans in each municipality, offering a direct measure of overall Resistance capacity. Because men and women often operated together, places that mobilized more men could also have mobilized more women. Failing to adjust for this correlation would risk conflating the strength of the Resistance with the female contribution. Conditioning on male participation ensures that comparisons are between municipalities with similar partisan infrastructure but different exposure to women.

I then complement the analysis with an instrumental variable strategy that leverages variation in terrain ruggedness. The idea echoes [Nunn and Puga \(2012\)](#): rugged terrain offered cover to men at risk of deportation, forced labor, or punishment for draft evasion by Nazi Fascist forces. In Italy, these hideouts were known as the *macchia*<sup>4</sup>, hard-to-access areas that became natural partisan bases. When men fled to the *macchia*,

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<sup>4</sup>*Macchia* literally refers to dense scrub. During the Resistance, the idiom *darsi alla macchia* came to denote clandestine hiding in inaccessible areas. The usage became so widespread that French partisans were known as the *maquis*, a French calque of the Italian term, and the label was later applied to anti-Francoist guerrillas in Spain. In nineteenth-century Southern Italy, the *macchia* denoted a natural refuge for brigands ([Ruzzante and Pizzimenti, 2025](#)).

survival depended on steady flows of food, medicine, weapons, and intelligence from nearby towns. Keeping those lines open required two things: intimate knowledge of the terrain and the ability to move without arousing suspicion. Local women combined both. Unlike men, women remained in their home villages. Being locally born, they knew the tracks and safe spots, and, as women, were less likely to be stopped by Nazi–Fascist patrols. This made them central to clandestine operations wherever ruggedness created viable hideouts. Providing aid to those in hiding became their entry point into the Resistance.

Drawing on this channel, I instrument female mobilization with the topographic ruggedness within the municipal buffer. The first stage is strong and aligns with the mechanism: more rugged surroundings predict more locally born female partisans. The result holds with the full prewar profile, and when conditioning on male Resistance strength. The second stage links the geography-induced component to women’s later political engagement in candidacies, seats, and referendum support.

The results are economically meaningful and persistent. In OLS, moving from zero to one female partisan yields 0.04 more female candidates and 0.02 more female MPs per municipality per legislature. These correspond to about 25% of the candidate mean and slightly above the MP mean. Consistent with diminishing returns, marginal gains are largest at low baselines and flatten as female networks grow. IV estimates confirm the pattern, implying roughly 0.11 more candidates and 0.03 more MPs. On referenda, OLS shifts are modest, while IV effects equal 34% and 19% of the mean vote to keep the divorce and abortion laws, respectively. Extending the analysis to national referenda without a gender content shows no comparable effects, and post-war party vote shares reveal no left–right realignment, ruling out a generic ideological drift.

A natural next step is then to ask who drove this effect. I separate former partisans who entered office themselves from spillovers that drew new women in. In the first postwar legislatures, the evidence points to a brief phase of direct entry by ex-partisans. However, starting from the late 1960s, the effect scales horizontally, ruling out a role-

model story driven just by a handful of former partisans. Part of the reason the Resistance reached women beyond those who fought lies in organizations. I focus on the *Unione Donne Italiane* (UDI, “Italian Women’s Union”), founded in 1945 from women’s Resistance networks and later Italy’s leading association for emancipation. In the data, municipalities with a UDI branch translate the same wartime stock into more female candidates and seats. By training newcomers, mentoring them, and giving parties credible signals about quality, UDI lowered women’s entry costs into politics, including women who did not serve in the Resistance.

The final question is how the legacy of the female Resistance endured through these days. I study collective memory through streets named after female partisans. Street names inscribe women’s role in the Resistance into everyday space and signal to later cohorts that women acted as political agents in the making of democracy. This view builds on theories of cultural transmission, where visible cues sustain norms across cohorts (Bisin and Verdier, 2001, Giuliano and Nunn, 2021, Valencia Caicedo, 2019), and on evidence that salient role models can shift aspirations and choices (Porter and Serra, 2020, Baskaran and Hessami, 2018, Ladam et al., 2018, Beaman et al., 2012). The results suggest that commemoration amplifies the political supply of women, keeping alive the networks and narratives that ease women’s entry into politics.

This paper contributes to the literature on the historical roots and persistence of gender norms (Bagnato et al., 2022, Giuliano and Nunn, 2021, Hager and Hilbig, 2019, Tur-Prats, 2019, Alesina and Giuliano, 2014, Alesina et al., 2013, 2011). Within this field, a growing body of work shows how shocks can durably shift entrenched norms (Xue, 2024, Bazzi et al., 2023, Grosjean and Khattar, 2019, Teso, 2019). In particular, I directly speak to research on women and world conflicts, where men’s mobilization pulled women into the labor force and left durable marks (Colombo et al., 2025, Di Addario et al., 2025, Gay, 2023, Goldin and Olivetti, 2013, Acemoglu et al., 2004, Fernández et al., 2004). I move beyond this substitution view by studying women as active agents in the struggle, and shift the focus from labor markets to political inclusion.

The paper thus also advances work on the drivers of women's political representation. Under-representation often reflects bias by voters and parties (Le Barbanchon and Sauvagnat, 2022, Esteve-Volart and Bagues, 2012). Institutional reforms such as gender quotas lower entry barriers (Bagues and Campa, 2021, Lassébie, 2020, Baltrunaite et al., 2019, Geys and Sørensen, 2019, Casas-Arce and Saiz, 2015, De Paola et al., 2010). I add a historical driver: women's mobilization in the Resistance. Municipalities with greater mobilization later field more female candidates, and the effects grow where communities keep that history visible through street names. The pattern fits role-model dynamics, where visible predecessors shift aspirations and choices (Porter and Serra, 2020, Baskaran and Hessami, 2018, Ladam et al., 2018, Beaman et al., 2012). This provides novel quantitative evidence of political role-model effects from historical female combatants.

Finally, the paper opens a new chapter in research on the Italian Resistance. Historians have highlighted the immediate post-war recognition of women's contributions, including their enfranchisement and early democratic participation (Slaughter, 1997, Bravo and Bruzzone, 2000). Economics has focused on media coordination (Gagliarducci et al., 2020), political legacy of conflicts (Fontana et al., 2023, Acemoglu et al., 2022, Cannella et al., 2021), and memory construction (Cremaschi and Masullo, 2023). Yet, the literature offers no quantitative evidence on women in the Resistance or on its long-run consequences. By bringing new data and causal evidence, this paper uncovers how women's mobilization in the Italian Resistance reshaped political trajectories and left a durable mark on gender equality.

The paper is organized as follows. Section 2 illustrates the historical background. Section 3 details the data used in the analysis. Section 4 lays out the empirical design and presents the main results. Section 5 tests the channels of transmission. Section 6 concludes.

## 2 Historical Background

### 2.1 The Italian Resistance Movement (1943-1945)

On 8 September 1943, Italy publicly announced an armistice with the Allies. This act formally ended the Italian alliance with Nazi Germany and turned the country into a co-belligerent against its former partner ([Smith, 1989](#)). In response, the German army sent additional troops to northern and central Italy and rescued Mussolini from prison. The invading forces set Mussolini up in a puppet fascist regime based in the North, the Italian Social Republic (RSI), and along with the collaborationist fascists occupied and attempted to control the Italian peninsula<sup>5</sup>.

Against this backdrop, a bottom-up Resistance began to emerge. Its first members were mostly military personnel who escaped capture after the armistice, along with young men who resisted conscription into the RSI. Brutal nazi-fascist reprisals soon provoked mass reactions, and civilians began to join ([Peli, 2014](#)). The movement brought together people from diverse backgrounds and across the political spectrum. Communists, Socialists, Christian Democrats, and Liberals all coexisted within it ([Ginsborg, 2003](#)), held together by a common goal: the final defeat of fascism and Nazism.

Meanwhile, the Allied campaign in Italy (1943–45) advanced from the southern landings toward the north at a measured pace, constrained by the Apennines and by the German Gustav and Gothic defensive lines. In this period, the Resistance grew stronger and refined its propaganda, sabotage, and guerrilla warfare across the valleys, mountains, and cities of central and northern Italy. By early 1945, the conflict between partisan formations and Nazi-fascist forces had taken the form of a civil war ([Pavone, 2010](#)), which continued until Allied forces entered the North in April 1945<sup>6</sup>.

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<sup>5</sup>See [Klinkhammer and Panzieri \(1993\)](#) for a definitive account of the German occupation and the institutional relationship between Reich authorities and RSI.

<sup>6</sup>See Appendix Figure [A1](#) for a schematic map of the Allied campaign in Italy (1943–45) and Appendix Table [A1](#) for the timeline.

By the end, about 250,000 partisans had joined ([Battaglia, 1964](#)). Their actions were decisive in shaping the course of the war in Italy. They liberated several northern and central cities even before the Allies arrived. By disrupting supply lines and sustaining constant guerrilla operations, they forced German divisions to remain stationed in Italy, weakening the enemy's capacity on other fronts.

## 2.2 The Female Resistance

Out of the 250 000 Italians recognized as members of the Resistance, about 55 000 were women. Though most accounts focus on a few celebrated heroines with prior antifascist experience, these women were only the tip of the iceberg ([Hellman, 1987](#)). Drawing on a representative sample, [Slaughter \(1997\)](#) shows that female partisans mirrored the female population at large. Most had no political background and came from ordinary lives as housewives, agricultural laborers, factory workers, clerks, and students. Their participation grew less from ideology than from daily disruptions. Bombings, hunger, deportations, and resentment toward Fascist rule fueled discontent, often turning into activism when opportunity and need converged, such as providing support to veterans and draft evaders.

Indeed, at the outset, many women entered the movement by hiding deserters and carrying supplies to men in the mountains. These early tasks became the entry point into organized Resistance activity ([ANPI, 1947](#)), which echoes the mechanism behind the instrumental-variable strategy in Section 4.2. Male partisans, initially reluctant to include women in their units, soon found them indispensable ([Alloisio and Beltrami, 2003](#)). As trust grew, women expanded their remit, adding operational and leadership responsibilities. Most women kept serving as *staffette* (couriers), but while at first they moved food and medicine, very quickly they also moved weapons and explosives, carried documents, gathered intelligence, and kept communications running between dispersed units ([D'Amelio, 2001](#)). Their ability to pass checkpoints enabled dense and vital networks linking civilians and fighters. The risks were extreme: capture meant

torture, sexual violence, deportation, or execution. Nor did women confine themselves to courier work, as they took part in every aspect of the Resistance, often shifting between functions ([Slaughter, 1997](#)). They fought in combat, commanded squads, and in some cases formed all-female units, with several eventually attaining political and military rank.

By carrying weapons, planning sabotage, and leading partisan units, women shattered roles long defined as male prerogatives ([Bravo and Bruzzone, 2000](#)). The Resistance was therefore a profound break in women's lives. What began as a response to war and survival became, for many, their first political experience. It was not only a contribution to the war effort but also a collective entry into public life. For the first time, large numbers of women acted as citizens, organizing, deciding, and commanding in the public sphere. This short-lived rebellion, born of immediate needs, opened the possibility of long-term change in women's lives. To pursue it, they had to confront not only Fascist enemies but also male comrades and their parties. What would it mean to be a woman in a world without fascism and war?

## 3 Data

### 3.1 The Italian Partisans Archive

My primary data contribution is the first micro-level, near-universal census of Italian *partisans*. Shortly after the war, Legislative Decree 518/45 established a nationwide procedure for the official recognition of participation in the Resistance. Survivors could apply directly, and relatives could file applications on behalf of those who had died. Recognition was not merely symbolic: it conferred legal status and material benefits, including pensions and compensation to the families of fallen partisans. To administer the process, the decree established regional commissions tasked with verifying the claims. These commissions were set up in regions with substantial Resistance activity, covering all of Northern and Central Italy, as well as Campania. Elsewhere in the

South, where the Nazi–Fascist occupation had been brief, no equivalent bodies were formed.

Official recognition as a partisan required meeting strict statutory criteria. Applicants had to serve at least three months in an armed Resistance unit and take part in a minimum of three combat or sabotage operations. Exceptions were made only for those wounded, imprisoned, or deported for more than three months as a direct result of their Resistance activities. These rules ensured that recognition went only to individuals who had engaged in sustained, high-risk operations, excluding those whose contribution was limited to peripheral civilian assistance.

The commissions' records are now housed in the *Ricompart* fund at the Central Archives of the Italian State. The collection comprises 703 716 recognition files and is the most complete official record of the Italian Resistance. I am the first to digitize the entire archive from the public online portal *I Partigiani d'Italia* ([ICAR, 2024](#)). Transcription of raw images combined advances in machine learning–based optical character recognition (OCR) for handwritten and typewritten records, together with large-scale web scraping. Appendix Figure [B1](#) shows an example of an original record, documenting how personal information and partisan qualifications were recorded.

Each dossier reports the key identifiers: partisans' full name, date of birth, and birthplace<sup>7</sup>. I use these to infer gender and age at the time of activity and to geolocate every individual to the municipality of birth. The files also record the period of activity, brigade affiliation, and specific roles and duties within partisan units, along with any injuries resulting in disability or mutilation. Where relevant, they describe the circumstances of death and the individual's military status as of September 8, 1943. The record closes with the outcome of the commission's evaluation, specifying whether

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<sup>7</sup>A subset of files additionally lists parents' names and, for survivors, post-war residence and occupation. Given limited and uneven reporting, I do not use these fields in the analysis.

and how the applicant's partisan qualifications were officially recognized<sup>8</sup>.

Starting from the universe of recognition files, I then remove appeals, drop duplicates, and retain the records that can be geolocated, reconciling municipalities to ISTAT boundaries. As some foreign fighters also joined the Italian Resistance, I explicitly restrict the analysis to Italian nationals. Finally, I keep only applicants officially recognized by the commissions, dropping unrecognized, revoked, or unspecified outcomes. The resulting dataset covers 242,175 individuals. I then aggregate the individual records to the municipality level, which is the unit of observation in my analysis. For each municipality I count women and men recognized as partisans, constructing municipality-level measures of Resistance participation by gender.

### 3.2 Outcome variables

**Women's Political Representation.** To capture municipalities' propensity to produce women politicians at the national level, I construct a novel panel dataset combining multiple sources on parliamentary candidates and elected officials. I begin with data from the official *Eligendo* Open Data portal of the Italian Ministry of the Interior, which provides detailed information on both elected and non-elected candidates to the Chamber of Deputies and the Senate across all 19 Republican legislatures, from 1948 to 2022. However, these records do not include candidates' birthplaces before 1992. To address this limitation, I extract biographical data from the official database of the Italian Chamber of Deputies<sup>9</sup>, which contains birthplace information for all elected members of the lower house across the entire post-war period. This allows me to recover the municipality of birth for all elected MPs in the Chamber of Deputies since 1948.

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<sup>8</sup>Commissions conferred five different statuses: (i) *Partigiano Combattente*, met statutory thresholds for sustained service and actions or equivalent criteria including decorations, wounds in action, command or service roles, imprisonment for Resistance activity, or exceptional deeds; (ii) *Caduto per la lotta di liberazione*, died as a consequence of Resistance activity; (iii) *Mutilato o invalido*, permanent disability from Resistance activity; (iv) *Patriota*, support or service below the combatant thresholds; (v) *Benemerito*, meritorious assistance without combatant status.

<sup>9</sup>[dati.camera.it](http://dati.camera.it)

For the remaining unmatched cases of the non-elected candidates to the Chamber and all Senate candidates before 1992, I leverage individual identifiers across legislatures (e.g., recurring candidacies, future election wins, or name-party-year combinations) to infer birthplace information where not explicitly recorded. Through this process, I recover the municipality of birth for 88 599 out of 147 306 candidates, covering approximately 60% of all individuals who ran for national office in the postwar period. dici che farai un robustness.

The resulting dataset provides a municipality-by-legislature panel of female political activity at the national level. My main outcome variables are count measures of (i) the number of female candidates and (ii) the number of elected female officials born in each municipality and running for national office during each legislative term.

**Support for Women's Rights.** To capture local attitudes toward women's rights, I use data from two pivotal referenda: the 1974 divorce and the 1981 abortion referendum. The two ballots asked Italian voters to repeal the divorce and the abortion law, respectively. In both votes, a "Yes" sought to repeal the existing law, whereas a "No" signaled support for retaining it, thus indicating a more liberal stance on women's autonomy. I use municipal-level results, obtained from the Italian Ministry of the Interior, to construct the two outcome variables *Divorce (1974, %)* and *Abortion (1981, %)*. These variables measure the share of "No" votes, over total valid ballots, in the 1974 and in the 1981 referendum, respectively.

For falsification, I extend the dataset to all major national referenda with municipality-level coverage outside the gender domain, starting from the 1946 institutional referendum (*Monarchy vs. Republic*). For abrogative referenda, I code outcomes uniformly as the share of "No" over valid ballots, as for the divorce and abortion ballots. For 1946, I define the outcome as the share voting for the Republic over valid ballots. Table B1 reports the institutional details for all referenda used.

### 3.3 Historical Variables and Terrain Ruggedness

I draw on [Fontana et al. \(2023\)](#) for a rich set of prewar political and socioeconomic covariates, and for postwar party vote shares at general elections. They compile a comprehensive municipality level dataset that brings together pre-regime and post-war elections, wartime exposure, political violence and deportations, and the local footprint of Fascist and Resistance organizations, including front lines.

For party preferences I use municipal vote shares from the 1921 general election, the last nationally competitive contest before Fascist rule. I track the Socialist–Communist bloc and the Popular Party.<sup>10</sup> Because the Communist Party was still small in 1921, the authors pooled its votes with the Socialist share to improve precision. A clean right-wing vote share is not identifiable in 1921 because Fascists often ran within liberal lists, so I proxy local right-wing organization with the presence of a Fascist branch in 1921. For complementary tests, I also use municipal vote shares from all general elections between 1946 and 1987.

For socio-economic conditions, I use the 1921 ISTAT Census measures: population size, population density, and the illiteracy rate defined as the share of residents who cannot read or write. For industrial structure, I rely on the industrial workforce share from the 1927 Industrial Census, the earliest comprehensive measure at scale. I favor 1921 indicators to anchor baseline conditions before regime consolidation, and for industry, I use 1927 as the closest pre-consolidation snapshot. Finally, I use years under Nazi and Fascist occupation at the province level to capture wartime exposure. In addition to these historical variables, I digitized 1921 Census tables reporting the population over age ten, categorized by occupation and by gender. Because detailed municipal data exist only for towns above 15 000 inhabitants, coverage is limited at the local level. I therefore aggregate the employed and total population counts to the *Circondario* level, an administrative subdivision below the province in early 20<sup>th</sup>-century Italy, to

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<sup>10</sup>The Fascist regime disbanded the Italian Popular Party in 1926, and Christian Democracy reemerged in 1943.

construct gender-specific employment rates.

To construct the instrumental variable, I use the standard deviation of the Topographic Ruggedness Index at the municipal level. The indicator comes from the morphometric indices to describe Italian territory ([ISTAT, 2024](#)), which computes morphometric measures from the NASADEM digital elevation model on the Eurostat 1-km grid and provides municipal aggregations. The Topographic Ruggedness Index is computed on a  $3 \times 3$  moving window as the elevation difference between each cell and its neighbors. Its standard deviation at the municipal level captures fine-scale heterogeneity, where steep folds lie next to gentler ground. Such variation in natural relief created settings where concealment was available in close proximity to terrain that remained traversable on foot or by bicycle, conditions that sustained Resistance courier and supply lines.

### 3.4 Transmission Channels

**Women's association.** To measure organizational presence, I exploit the Chronological Archive of the “Unione Donne Italiane” (UDI)<sup>11</sup>. The archive lists all the inventories of the association from 1943 to 1980, held at the national headquarters. Among others, the archive describes correspondence, activity reports, questionnaires, and bulletins sent by municipal branches. These entries explicitly name the localities involved. I construct a municipality-level indicator that equals one if a municipality appears at least once as a UDI local branch, and zero otherwise.

**Street names.** To better understand the persistence of the results, I explore mechanisms related to collective memory. I construct a new dataset on the commemorative toponymy of Italian municipalities, drawing on street registers provided by ANNCSU (*Archivio Nazionale dei Numeri Civici delle Strade Urbane*), the national archive of official street names maintained by ISTAT and the Italian Revenue Agency ([Agenzia delle](#)

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<sup>11</sup>The Chronological Archive is available at <https://www.udinazionale.org/archiviocronologico.html>. All references come from “Archivio Centrale dell’UDI – Unione Donne in Italia”. Reproductions are used by kind permission of “UDI – Unione Donne in Italia”.

[Entrace and ISTAT, 2025](#)). From these registers, I extract all municipal street names and match them against the universe of female partisans contained in the Italian Partisans Archive. The matching is performed at the individual level. I then aggregate the matches at the municipal level and construct an indicator of whether a municipality has at least one street named after a female partisan. This measure captures the extent to which female partisan memory has been institutionalized in local public space, and provides a window into how partisan legacies, specifically women's contributions, were inscribed and transmitted across generations.

**ITANES (1992–2013).** To study voting patterns at the individual level, I use ITANES (Italian National Election Studies), nationally representative post-election surveys around Italian general elections. I assemble the 1992–2013 waves, the only ones whose granularity permits assignment at the municipal level. The outcome is the respondent's reported vote in the most recent national election. I code a dummy equal to one if the respondent voted for a left-wing party, and similarly for right-wing parties. Covariates include sex, year of birth, education, employment status, and religiosity. The classification of parties in the political spectrum follows Appendix [B.2](#).

### 3.5 Sample

The analysis covers municipalities in Northern, Central Italy, and Campania, the regions covered by the commissions that verified partisan status. I align the data to this archival coverage and keep all recognized partisans born in these regions. I exclude regions without an organized Resistance. After the armistice, many Italian soldiers found themselves far from home, joined nearby partisan units, and likely returned to their birthplaces after the war. Including those regions would inflate male counts in places with no local networks and leave almost no female partisans.

Indeed, for most individuals, the data do not record their post-war residence, but only their birthplace and the region where they fought. Institutional frictions curtailed

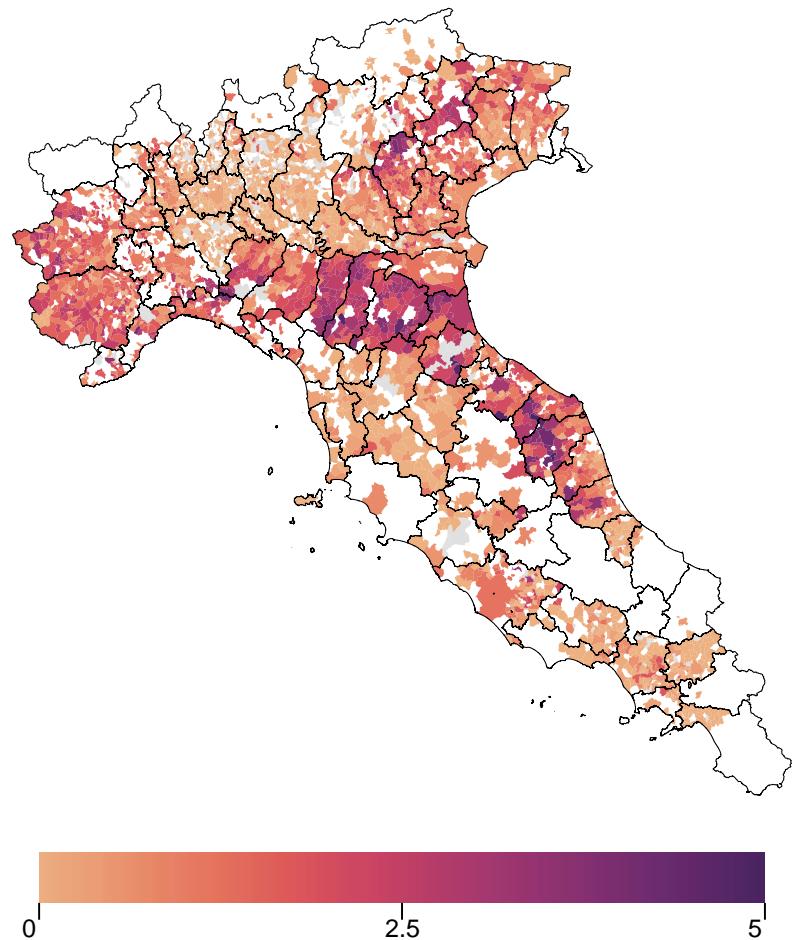
formal internal migration from the advent of the Fascist regime through 1961. The regime explicitly opposed urbanization and promoted rural permanence: oversight of internal movements began in 1926, anti-urban provisions were formalized in 1939, and the planning framework was consolidated in 1942. These constraints remained in force until 1961<sup>12</sup>, making birthplace a reasonable anchor for home-community ties in the early post-war years.

Next, I restrict the sample to municipalities that produced at least one male partisan, excluding fewer than 1% of observations. This allows for conditioning on male mobilization throughout the analysis, ensuring identification comes from variation in the female component, rather than overall Resistance capacity. Figure 1 maps the final sample, consisting of all shaded municipalities. Namely, the map plots the inverse hyperbolic sine of the number of female partisans born in municipality  $m$ , scaled per 1 000 resident women in 1921. Darker colours indicate higher values, and lightest tones include zeros.

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<sup>12</sup>"Provvedimenti contro l'urbanesimo": Law no. 1092/1939; "Legge urbanistica": Law no. 1150/1942; "Abrogazione della legislazione sulle migrazioni interne e contro l'urbanesimo nonche' disposizioni per agevolare la mobilita' territoriale dei lavoratori": Law no. 5/1961.

Figure 1. Female partisans per 1 000 women



*Notes:* The mapped value is the inverse hyperbolic sine of the number of female partisans born in municipality  $m$  per 1 000 resident women in  $m$  (1921). Darker colours indicate municipalities with more female partisans, lighter tones include zeros. All shaded municipalities belong to the analytical sample: towns within the archival coverage that produced at least one male partisan, as explained in Section 3.5. Provincial boundaries are outlined in black.

## 4 Effects of Female Resistance on Political Empowerment

The key challenge is to rule out that the link between women's participation in the Resistance and later political activity reflects pre-existing differences across municipalities. For example, more progressive communities may have been more likely to produce female partisans, and they may have supported women more strongly in the years that followed. In this case, the observed relationship would not capture the legacy of mobilization, but simply the persistence of long-standing attitudes.

To address this concern, I take two complementary approaches. First, I compare municipalities within provinces controlling for a rich set of covariates that could have jointly driven female Resistance and postwar outcomes. Second, I exploit geography as a source of exogenous variation. Rugged terrain provided natural hideouts and secure supply routes. Where the terrain was more rugged, local partisan groups had stronger incentives to recruit women. I use this geography-driven reliance as an instrument to isolate the component of female mobilization that is orthogonal to underlying attitudes.

### 4.1 Controlling for Observables

The main omitted variable concern is prewar heterogeneity in norms about women's roles. If municipalities that later generated more female partisans were already more receptive to women before the conflict, estimates might falsely attribute to the female Resistance what belongs to initial conditions. In this setting, the ideal prewar measure would be women's political participation. However, Italy shut women out of formal politics before the conflict. I therefore condition on a vector of prewar, municipality-level covariates that proxy both the level of gender-progressive attitudes and the local forces that shaped them. Unless noted otherwise, I use 1921 Census measures: because 1921 precedes Fascist consolidation, it avoids the endogeneity and ideological coding issues that affect later enumerations.

I begin with a direct proxy for gender norms: the female employment rate, measured as the share of employed women among the female population over age ten. Female labor-force integration is a standard, validated proxy for local views on women's roles (Fernández, 2013, Blau et al., 2011, Fernández and Fogli, 2009, Fortin, 2005, Antecol, 2000). A second natural proxy is the literacy environment. It summarizes prewar human capital, information diffusion, and civic capacity. Schooling also shifts social attitudes, including views on gender (Rivera-Garrido, 2022, Du et al., 2021). I capture this dimension with the illiteracy rate, defined as the share of residents who cannot read or write.

Equally important, I adjust for prewar party cultures. Catholic traditions leaned toward family-traditional roles, whereas the left articulated more progressive views on women's public engagement (Campa and Serafinelli, 2019, Huber and Stephens, 2000). If, for example, more left-wing municipalities were also more likely to recruit women into the Resistance, estimates would reflect pre-existing ideology rather than a causal link. I therefore include 1921 municipal vote shares for the Socialist–Communist bloc and for the Catholic Party. I use 1921 because it is the last competitive national election before Fascist changes and coercion. Since the ballot does not isolate a right-wing share, I also add an indicator for the presence of a local Fascist headquarters in the early 1920s.

I then turn to economic structure, and in particular to the share of industrial workers from the 1927 industrial Census. In 1943–44, the major factory strikes saw women at the forefront on picket lines, logistics, and shop-floor coordination. Those actions forged leadership, clandestine skills, and ties to Resistance organizations (Ferretti, 2025), raising the likelihood that industrial municipalities both recruited more women into the Resistance and later sustained higher political engagement.

Scale and social interaction also mediate both treatment and outcomes. I therefore include the natural log of the population size and of the population density (inhabitants per km<sup>2</sup>). Size proxies for the mechanical pool of potential activists and for the

urban–rural gradient in social attitudes. Density captures interaction intensity: it lowers mobilization costs, thickens networks, and strengthens political monitoring, which can amplify both recruitment and diffusion of ideas (Campante and Do, 2014). Figure 2 assesses balance on all of the above baseline covariates. Across politics, socioeconomic structure, and geography, estimates are not significant and cluster around zero, ruling out selection on prewar fundamentals as the main driver of the results. The sole shift is mechanical, with more populous municipalities producing more partisans.

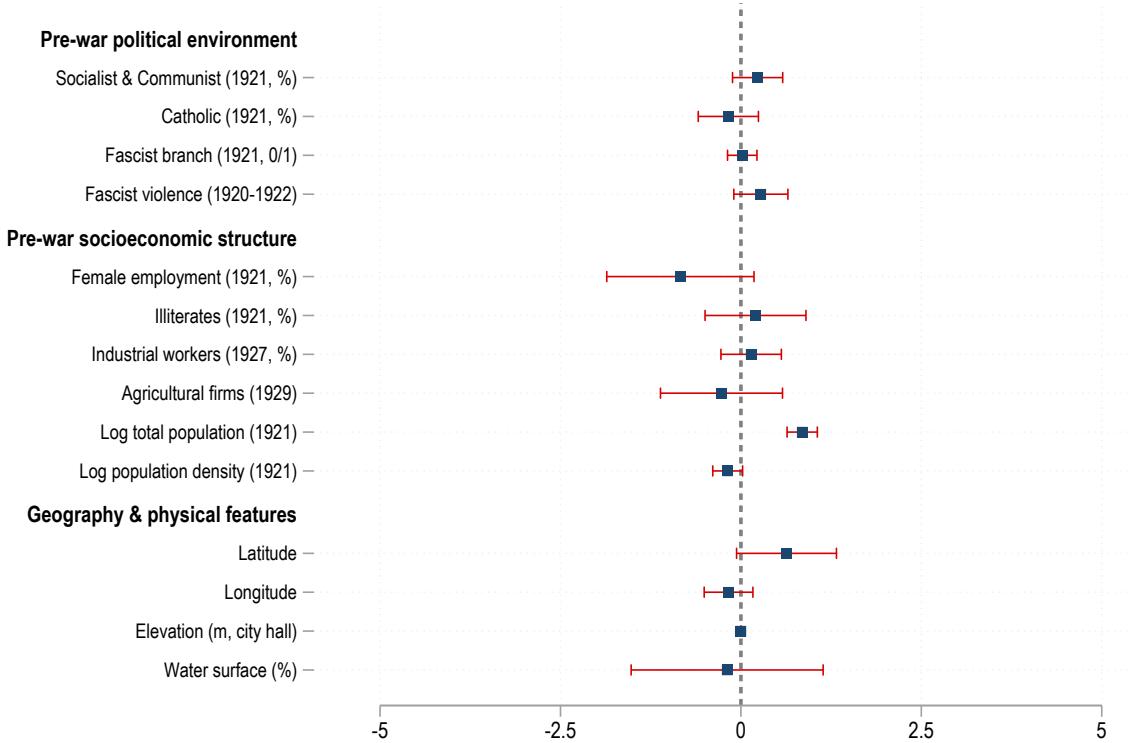
Finally, to net out the general Resistance strength, I hold constant the intensity of the male Resistance, measured as the number of male partisans. Places that produced more female partisans often hosted more male partisans as well (Appendix Figure F1): without adjustment, estimates could reflect the overall Resistance or its male networks rather than the female component. Holding constant the number of male partisans allows for comparing municipalities with similar Resistance capacity but different exposure to women’s participation. In addition, I include years under Nazi–Fascist occupation. The conflict durably shifted local political equilibria (Fontana et al., 2023): absorbing the occupation intensity removes a broad channel through which the war could affect subsequent political behaviour and, in turn, local gender ideology.

Formally, the estimating equation is:

$$Y_{mpt} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 \text{FemalePartisans}_{mp} + \beta_2 X_{mp} + \gamma_p + \delta_t + \epsilon_{mpt} \quad (1)$$

where  $m$  indexes municipalities,  $p$  provinces, and  $t$  legislatures. The political-representation outcomes are (i) the number of women born in  $m$  and running in  $t$ , and (ii) the number of women born in  $m$  and elected in  $t$ . Because these counts are non-negative and highly skewed with many zeros, I transform both outcomes using the inverse hyperbolic sine. The function mimics a log for large values, yet is approximately linear near zero, so it accommodates zeros without adding arbitrary constants and stabilizes the influence

Figure 2. Balance across baseline covariates



*Notes:* The observation unit is a municipality. The graph plots OLS estimates and 95% confidence intervals from the regression of the inverse hyperbolic sine of the number of female partisans born in municipality  $m$  on the listed covariates, conditioning on province fixed effects. *Political environment* includes the vote shares for Socialist–Communist and Catholic parties in the 1921 general election, an indicator for the presence of a local Fascist branch in 1921, and an index of Fascist violence over 1920–1922. *Socioeconomic structure* comprises the 1921 female employment rate and illiteracy rate, the share of industrial workers in 1927, the number of agricultural firms in 1929 (scaled per population), and the natural logs of total population and population density in 1921. *Geography and physical features* report latitude and longitude (degrees), the elevation of the city hall (meters), and the share of municipal area covered by inland water. Standard errors are clustered at the province level.

across the distribution (Pence, 2006, MacKinnon and Magee, 1990, Burbidge et al., 1988). When I turn to referenda, the outcome variable is the municipal share of “No” votes (divorce, abortion, separately) and the time effects  $\delta_t$  drop out.

The main regressor  $\text{FemalePartisans}_{mp}$  is the number of locally born women who joined the Resistance. Since male partisans enter to net out general Resistance capacity,  $\beta_1$  compares municipalities with similar overall Resistance infrastructure but different exposure to women’s participation. To address the mass at zero and right skewness of both female and male partisan counts, I mirror the outcome transformation and include both variables in their inverse hyperbolic sine form. The vector  $\mathbf{X}_{mp}$  adds the historical controls discussed above. Finally,  $\gamma_p$  are province fixed effects and  $\delta_t$  are legislature fixed effects (included only in the representation panel). Standard errors are clustered at the province level to adjust for within-province correlation. To address residual spatial correlation, I also calculate Conley (1999) standard errors.

**Women’s Political Representation.** Table 1 reports OLS estimates of equation (1). The dependent variable is the inverse hyperbolic sine of the number of women born in  $m$  who either run for national parliament (1)-(2) or are elected (3)-(4) in legislature  $t$ . All specifications include the full set of historical covariates. Columns (2) and (4) further include province and legislature fixed effects. Standard errors clustered at the province level are reported in parentheses, while Conley (1999) standard errors with a 50-km uniform kernel are reported in square brackets. The similarity of clustered and Conley standard errors reassures that spatial correlation at this scale does not affect inference.

Across all specifications, the coefficients on female partisans are positive and precisely estimated. In the preferred specification with province and legislature fixed effects, the estimated coefficient equals 0.0448 for the number of female candidates and 0.0162 for the number elected. Interpreted in levels and evaluated at the sample means of female candidates (0.21) and female partisans (5.72), the coefficients imply that moving from a municipality with no female partisan to one with a single female partisan increases the

Table 1. Effect of Female Resistance on Women in Parliament

	All candidates		Elected candidates	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Female partisans	0.0322*** (0.0071) [0.0076]	0.0448*** (0.0078) [0.0091]	0.0126*** (0.0032) [0.0036]	0.0162*** (0.0040) [0.0047]
Dep. Var. Mean	0.08	0.08	0.01	0.01
Historical Controls	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Prov. & Legisl. FE	No	Yes	No	Yes
Observations	50 046	50 046	50 046	50 046

*Notes:* The observation unit is a municipality and legislature. The dependent variable is the inverse hyperbolic sine of the number of women born in  $m$  who (1)-(2) run for the national parliament and (3)-(4) are elected. Columns (1) and (3) include the following prewar controls: 1921 female employment and illiteracy rates; vote shares for Socialist–Communist and Catholic parties in the 1921 general election; a 1921 indicator for the presence of a local Fascist branch; the 1927 share of industrial workers; and the logs of 1921 population and population density. They further include the inverse hyperbolic sine of the number of male partisans born in  $m$  and years under Nazi–Fascist occupation. Columns (2) and (4) add province and legislature fixed effects. The main regressor is the inverse hyperbolic sine of the number of female partisans born in  $m$ . Two standard errors are shown below each coefficient: parentheses report standard errors adjusted for clustering at the province level; square brackets report Conley (1999) standard errors adjusted for spatial correlation, computed via GMM with a uniform kernel and a 50 kilometers distance cutoff. \*  $p < 0.1$ , \*\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.01$ .

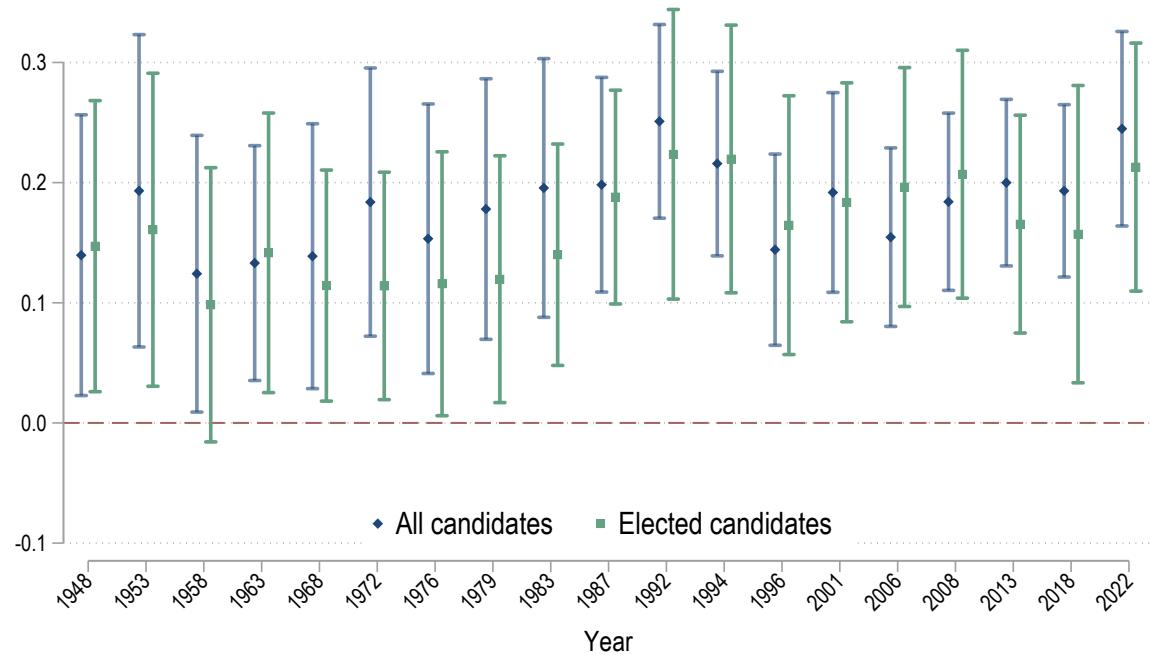
expected number of women candidates by about 0.04, roughly 20 percent of the sample mean. The implied marginal effect at the mean is smaller, about 0.007, reflecting diminishing returns as the stock of female partisans rises. For elected women, whose sample mean is 0.02, the same zero-to-one shift corresponds to an increase of about 0.014 female MPs, roughly 70 percent of the mean. The marginal effect at the mean equals 0.003, again suggesting that most of the effect operates where female partisan presence was initially scarce. Section D.1 offers a detailed derivation of the mapping from coefficients to level effects, including the discrete interpretation and the marginal effect evaluated at the mean.

Figure 3 then explores how the relationship between female Resistance and women's political representation evolved, from the first postwar legislature onward. Each point reports a standardized coefficient from a separate regression, estimated with the full set of historical controls and with province fixed effects. Estimates remain consistently positive across the postwar period. There is no systematic attenuation or reversal, suggesting that the link between female wartime mobilization and subsequent political engagement persisted well beyond the immediate aftermath of the Resistance.

**Support for Women's Rights.** Table 2 reports OLS estimates using as outcomes the share of votes against repealing the 1974 divorce law and the 1981 abortion law, as shown in the column headings. All regressions include the same set of historical covariates, while province fixed effects are added in columns (2) and (4). Analogously to the previous table, standard errors clustered at the province level are shown in parentheses, and Conley (1999) standard errors are in square brackets. As in previous results, clustered and Conley standard errors are very similar. For the remainder of the article, I report standard errors clustered at the province level.

The estimates indicate that municipalities with stronger female Resistance expressed more supportive attitudes toward gender-related rights in the referenda. In the full specifications with province fixed effects, the estimated coefficients are 0.0087 for the 1974 divorce referendum and 0.0050 for the 1981 abortion referendum. Because the

Figure 3. Effect of Female Resistance on Women in Parliament, by Legislature



*Notes:* The observation unit is a municipality. The figure shows standardized OLS coefficients with 95% confidence intervals from separate by-legislature regressions. Outcomes are the inverse hyperbolic sine of women born in  $m$  who run for national parliament in  $t$ , and women born in  $m$  elected in  $t$ , as from the legend below the graph. The regressor is the inverse hyperbolic sine of locally born female partisans. Specifications include the following prewar controls: 1921 female employment and illiteracy rates; vote shares for Socialist–Communist and Catholic parties in the 1921 general election; a 1921 indicator for the presence of a local Fascist branch; the 1927 share of industrial workers; and the logs of 1921 population and population density. It further includes the inverse hyperbolic sine of the number of male partisans born in  $m$  and years under Nazi–Fascist occupation, together with province fixed effects. Standard errors are clustered at the province level. To make estimates comparable across legislatures, coefficients are standardized within legislature by rescaling the raw estimate by the ratio of the standard deviations of the regressor and the outcome, and confidence intervals are rescaled accordingly. The horizontal axis reports the first election year of each legislature.

Table 2. Effect of Female Resistance on Referendum Support

	Divorce (1974, %)		Abortion (1981, %)	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Female partisans	0.0093 (0.0058) [0.0074]	0.0087*** (0.0031) [0.0031]	0.0068 (0.0055) [0.0069]	0.0050** (0.0025) [0.0023]
Dep. Var. Mean	0.52	0.52	0.57	0.57
Historical Controls	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Province FE	No	Yes	No	Yes
Observations	2 623	2 623	2 623	2 623

*Notes:* The observation unit is a municipality. The dependent variable is the share of votes against repealing the divorce (1974) and abortion (1981) laws over the total number of voters, as from column headers. Columns (1) and (3) include the following prewar controls: 1921 female employment and illiteracy rates; vote shares for Socialist–Communist and Catholic parties in the 1921 general election; a 1921 indicator for the presence of a local Fascist branch; the 1927 share of industrial workers; and the logs of 1921 population and population density. They further include the inverse hyperbolic sine of the number of male partisans born in  $m$  and years under Nazi–Fascist occupation. Columns (2) and (4) add province fixed effects. The main regressor is the inverse hyperbolic sine of the number of female partisans born in  $m$ . Two standard errors are shown below each coefficient: parentheses report standard errors adjusted for clustering at the province level; square brackets report Conley (1999) standard errors adjusted for spatial correlation, computed via GMM with a uniform kernel and a 50 kilometers distance cutoff. \*  $p < 0.1$ , \*\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.01$ .

dependent variable is expressed as the share of “No” votes over registered voters, the coefficients can be interpreted directly in percentage points. Evaluated at the baseline means, an additional female partisan increases the “no-repeal” vote share by approximately 0.008 p.p. in 1974 and 0.004 p.p. in 1981, about 1.5% and 0.8% of the respective means. These magnitudes are modest but consistent with a broad-based electoral channel: exposure to female partisan mobilization not only fostered women’s entry into politics but also strengthened community support for gender equality in the decades that followed. The formal derivation of the level effects, including the discrete and marginal interpretations of the coefficients under the inverse hyperbolic sine transformation, is provided in Appendix D.2.

## 4.2 Instrumental Variable Approach: the "Macchia"

As from Section 2.1, after the armistice in September 1943, German troops intensified their occupation of central and northern Italy, freed Mussolini, and set up the Italian Social Republic (RSI), a German-backed regime. The RSI and its German allies needed men to rebuild military units, hold territory, and feed labour into the German war economy. Conscription proclamations followed, ending with decrees that punished draft evasion and desertion with death<sup>13</sup>. Many men at risk of deportation, forced labour, or prosecution for draft evasion escaped to hide in rugged areas, which afforded natural protection. However, survival in these hideouts crucially depended on the steady flow of weapons, explosives, food, medicine, and information from adjacent towns. Maintaining these supply lines demanded two things. First, an intimate knowledge of the terrain: the location of hideouts, the network of unmarked tracks leading to them, and the routes that stayed open through the seasons. Second, the freedom to move without drawing the attention of Nazi–Fascist patrols.

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<sup>13</sup>The so-called “Bandi Graziani” were a series of conscription proclamations issued by the RSI under Minister Rodolfo Graziani. The first *bando*, dated November 9, 1943, applied to the classes of 1923–1925. A subsequent decree of February 18, 1944 mandated the death penalty for deserters and draft evaders. Despite their severity, these measures had limited success and ultimately strengthened partisan recruitment (Battistelli and Molinari, 2007, Klinkhammer, 2007, Milza et al., 2005).

It was local women who held both advantages. Having grown up in the area, they had detailed knowledge of local routes and terrain, and as women, they were far less likely to be stopped. Patrols concentrated on men of combat age, while women's movements for work or family purposes attracted less attention. This relative freedom of movement allowed them to travel repeatedly between towns and hideouts, often bypassing inspections altogether or receiving only cursory checks. Contemporary accounts vividly illustrate how women's perceived harmlessness enabled them to perform tasks impossible for men yet critical to Resistance operations. [Pesce \(1972\)](#) recalls two young female partisans:

"Sandra and Narva, with their youthful appearance and cork-soled high heels, cycled repeatedly to Rho carrying explosives. The soldiers, recognising them from their frequent trips, responded to their smiles without inspecting the bags; on occasion, a gallant policeman even carried the explosives for them."

In just a few weeks, Sandra and Narva transported some 200 pounds of TNT into partisan hands.

The *staffetta* was the role most women took on. While this relative invisibility increased their chances of success, it did not eliminate risk: if intercepted or betrayed, they faced arrest, torture, sexual violence, and execution. As the conflict intensified, many women who gained trust within their units widened their activities, planting explosives, scouting enemy positions, and even leading fighters.

This geography-driven reliance on local women motivates the instrumental variable approach. Higher surrounding ruggedness increases the likelihood that nearby terrain could host hideouts, raising demand for supply lines from the closest municipality. Given women's central role in operating these lines, higher ruggedness should be positively correlated with the probability that a municipality is the birthplace of female partisans.

I begin by estimating a first stage that maps ruggedness into historical female participation. Let  $\text{FemalePartisans}_{mp}$  denote the inverse hyperbolic sine of the number of female partisans born in municipality  $m$  of province  $p$ . I regress  $\text{FemalePartisans}_{mp}$  on the standard deviation of the Topographic Ruggedness Index (TRI) within municipality  $m$ , controlling for the full set of baseline covariates  $\mathbf{X}_{mp}$  discussed in the previous section, and province fixed effects  $\gamma_p$ :

$$\text{FemalePartisans}_{mp} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 \text{TRI}_{mp} + \beta_2 \mathbf{X}_{mp} + \gamma_p + \epsilon_{mp}. \quad (2)$$

The coefficient  $\beta_1$  captures how rugged terrain, by providing natural hideouts and secure routes for clandestine activity, systematically predicts the emergence of locally born female partisans. This first stage thus isolates the historically rooted channel through which geography facilitated women's entry into collective political struggle. In the second stage, I exploit this source of variation to study the long-run effects of female partisanship on women's political engagement. Specifically, I estimate a two-stage least squares model that instruments measures of female political activity with the fitted values from equation (2):

$$Y_{mpt} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 \widehat{\text{FemalePartisans}}_{mp} + \beta_2 \mathbf{X}_{mp} + \gamma_p + \delta_t + \epsilon_{mpt}. \quad (3)$$

Again,  $Y_{mpt}$  denotes outcomes capturing women's subsequent political participation and influence: (i) the inverse hyperbolic sine of the number of locally born female candidates (both elected and non-elected) who run in legislature  $t$ ; (ii) the inverse hyperbolic sine of the number of women ultimately elected to parliament in  $t$ ; and (iii) the extent of support for women's rights, proxied by the municipality-level share of "No" votes in key gender-related referenda. As in the first stage, I control for the full vector of baseline covariates and province fixed effects, and I additionally include legislature fixed effects  $\delta_t$  whenever the data exhibit a time dimension i.e., for candidacy and election outcomes. Standard errors are clustered at the province level.

**IV Estimates.** Table 3 reports IV estimates for each of the four measures of women’s political empowerment. All specifications include the full set of historical covariates, province fixed effects and, when applicable, legislature fixed effects. The first-stage estimates, reported in the bottom panel, show that within-municipality ruggedness is a strong predictor of the number of locally born female partisans. The coefficient on the Ruggedness Index is positive and strongly significant, and suggests that a one standard-deviation increase in ruggedness raises the number of female partisans by around 2%. The  $F$ -statistic is around 27, confirming the strength of the instrument. For comparability, each first-stage column is estimated on the exact sample used in its corresponding second-stage. As these samples are virtually the same, the estimates align across the four specifications. A natural concern is that ruggedness might also proxy for male partisan activity. Appendix Figure E1 runs a placebo and repeats the same first-stage exercise using male, rather than female, partisans as the dependent variable on the Ruggedness Index. The resulting relationship is almost flat, with a near-zero correlation and an  $F$ -statistic of around 4.

The top panel reports 2SLS effects of female Resistance on later political outcomes. Estimates are positive and overall significant, pointing in the same direction as the evidence in Section 4.1. Moving from zero to one female partisan increases the number of locally born female candidates by about 0.11, approximately half of the sample mean, and the number of women elected by about 0.03. However, the latter effect is less precisely estimated and calls for a more cautious reading. As in OLS results, marginal effects at the mean are smaller, about 0.02 for candidacies and 0.01 for MPs, consistent with diminishing returns as local female Resistance deepens. For the referenda, the 2SLS coefficients are again positive and statistically significant. Starting from zero female partisans, the implied increase in the “no-repeal” vote share amounts to about 0.17 percentage points in the 1974 divorce referendum ( $\approx 34\%$  of the mean) and 0.11 percentage points in the 1981 abortion referendum ( $\approx 19\%$  of the mean).

The IV estimates closely trace their OLS counterparts but are slightly larger in mag-

Table 3. IV Estimates of the Effect of Female Resistance

<i>Panel A. Second stage</i>				
	All candidates (1)	Elected candidates (2)	Divorce (1974, %) (3)	Abortion (1981, %) (4)
Female partisans	0.1169*** (0.0379)	0.0321* (0.0185)	0.2005*** (0.0471)	0.1219*** (0.0299)
Dep. Var. Mean	0.08	0.01	0.52	0.57
<i>Panel B. First stage</i>				
Ruggedness Index	0.0192*** (0.0037)	0.0192*** (0.0037)	0.0192*** (0.0037)	0.0192*** (0.0037)
Dep. Var. Mean	1.14	1.14	1.14	1.14
K-P rk Wald F	27.2	27.2	26.9	26.9
Historical Controls	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Fixed effects	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Observations	50 046	50 046	2 623	2 623

Notes: The observation unit is a municipality. *Panel A (Second stage)* reports 2SLS estimates where the endogenous regressor is the inverse hyperbolic sine of the number of locally born female partisans, instrumented with the within-municipality standard deviation of the Topographic Ruggedness Index. Outcomes are listed in the column headers. *Panel B (First stage)* shows the corresponding regressions of the endogenous regressor on the instrument, estimated on the same samples used in the top panel. All columns include the full set of prewar covariates: 1921 female employment and illiteracy rates; vote shares for Socialist–Communist and Catholic parties in the 1921 general election; an indicator for the presence of a local Fascist branch in 1921; the 1927 share of industrial workers; and the logs of 1921 population and population density. They further control for the inverse hyperbolic sine of the number of male partisans born in  $m$  and years under Nazi–Fascist occupation. Province fixed effects are included throughout; legislature fixed effects are added in columns (1)–(2). Kleibergen–Paap rk Wald F statistics are reported. Standard errors, in parentheses, are adjusted for clustering at the province level. \*  $p < 0.1$ , \*\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.01$ .

nitude. Part of this gap might stem from measurement error in the historical data: archival records compiled from handwritten and sometimes incomplete sources attenuate OLS coefficients, naturally inflating IV estimates. At the same time, returns to female mobilization might vary across places. Where ruggedness most increased women’s participation, typically in more traditional municipalities, an extra partisan woman could plausibly generate larger downstream effects because she relaxed tighter social and organizational constraints on women’s collective action. Finally, if women’s participation in the Resistance partly reflected pre-existing local attitudes toward female civic engagement, the IV strategy may still capture a composite of historical mobilization and underlying social predispositions. Overall, however, the estimated magnitudes remain within plausible bounds and align with OLS results. For completeness, Appendix E replicates the full set of exercises discussed throughout the paper with 2SLS estimates.

### 4.3 Auxiliary Results and Robustness

**Restricting to the 1992–2022 Sample.** As discussed in Section 3.2, coverage of candidates’ birthplace before 1992 relies on partial reconstruction exercises. As a conservative check, I replicate the analysis on political representation using data from the 1992–2022 legislatures, with birthplaces systematically recorded for all candidates. This restriction removes any inference and bases every municipality–legislature cell on directly observed administrative data.

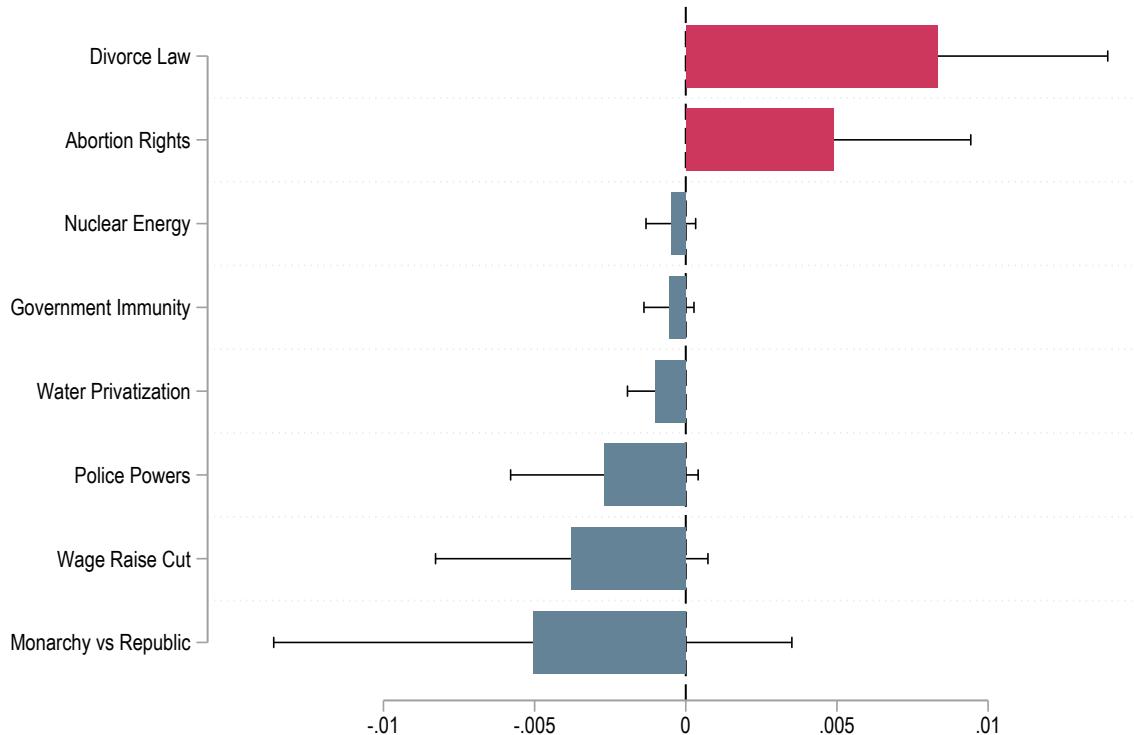
Table F1 reports the results from the restricted sample. Although estimates look larger than in the core analysis, proportional effects track closely once we account for the higher means. Magnitude and precision line up with the baseline, indicating that the results do not hinge on reconstruction and that the relationship is structural rather than mechanical. Taken together, this evidence strengthens the credibility of the empirical findings and the historical link between wartime female participation and later representation.

**Falsification on Broader Referendum Support.** To test whether the main results reflect broader policy preferences rather than a gender-specific legacy, I extend the analysis to all major national referenda with municipality-level data. These include the main repeal referenda that shaped Italy’s postwar trajectory, spanning a broad set of topics, alongside the 1946 choice between Monarchy and Republic. Appendix B.2 provides full details on each referendum, including its historical context and the construction of the variables.

Figure 4 plots the results. Each bar shows the effect of female Resistance on support for the referendum listed on the vertical axis. The pattern is stark. Female Resistance raises support only on gendered ballots: the 1974 divorce law and the 1981 abortion law. For all other issues, estimates are small and statistically indistinguishable from zero. These findings rule out a broad ideological tilt and point to a shift in local gender norms rather than general policy views.

**Stability of Party Preferences.** To rule out a broad ideological channel, I test whether female Resistance predicts left-right shifts in voting. First, I pool municipal vote shares from all general elections between 1946 and 1987 and group parties into three blocs following Fontana et al. (2023): *Left-Wing* (Communist and Socialist lists), *Catholic*, and *Right-Wing*. Second, I turn to ITANES, the nationally representative post-election surveys, and use the 1992–2013 waves that report respondents’ municipality. For each respondent, I code the individual vote for the Chamber of Deputies and build left and right indicators, with party classification detailed in Appendix B.2. Results are reported in Appendix Tables F2 and F3. In both exercises the estimates are not statistically significant. Appendix F reports additional heterogeneity checks and confirm the absence of effects. The mechanism narrows further: the legacy does not realign party preferences, yet it raises the supply of women in office and increases support on gendered ballots, without moving the electorate left or right.

Figure 4. Effects of Female Resistance on Referendum Support



*Notes:* The observation unit is a municipality. Each bar reports the OLS coefficient from a separate regression at the municipality level. The dependent variable is the share of "No" votes in the indicated referendum, except for the "Monarchy vs Republic" referendum, where it denotes the share of ballots cast in favor of the Republic. Bars indicate 90% confidence intervals. The regressor of interest is the inverse hyperbolic sine of the number of female partisans born in municipality  $m$ . All estimates include the following prewar controls: 1921 female employment and illiteracy rates; vote shares for Socialist–Communist and Catholic parties in the 1921 general election; a 1921 indicator for the presence of a local Fascist branch; the 1927 share of industrial workers; and the logs of 1921 population and population density. They further include the inverse hyperbolic sine of the male partisans born in  $m$  and years under Nazi–Fascist occupation. Standard errors are clustered at the province level.

## 5 Mechanisms

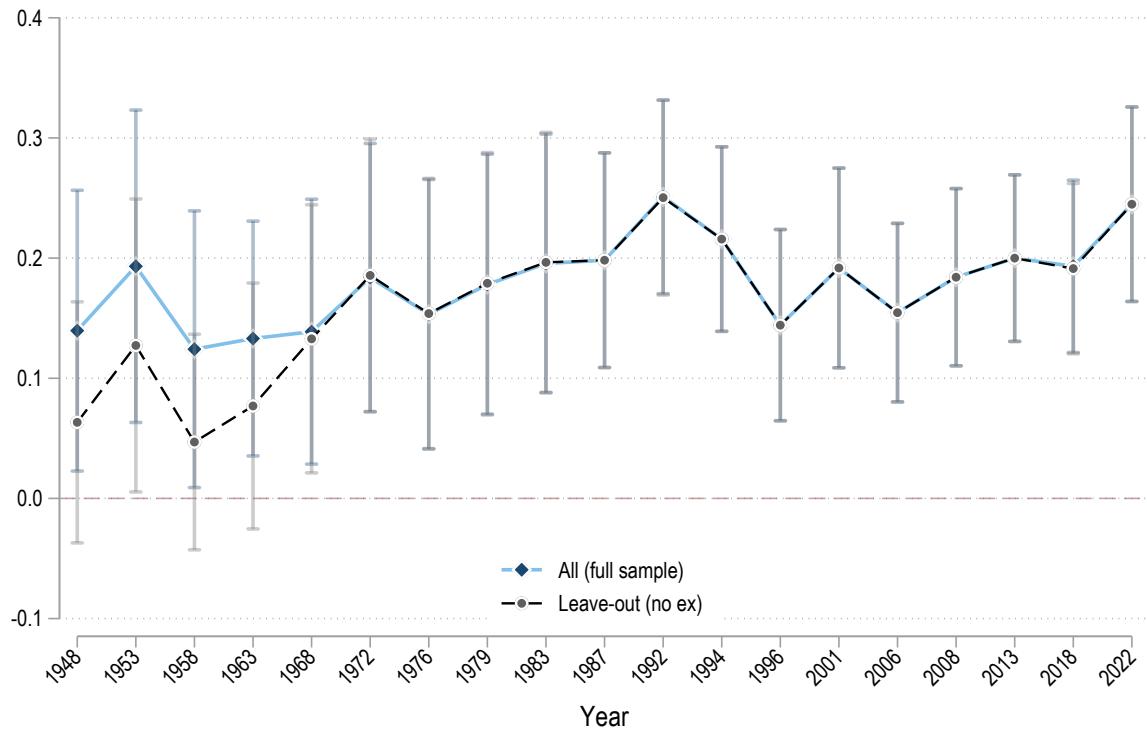
### 5.1 Direct Pipeline vs Spillovers: Are Ex-Partisans Driving the Effect?

This section tests whether the estimated results reflect a direct pipeline of former partisans entering politics themselves, or broader spillovers that encouraged new women to run. I isolate these channels by implementing a leave-out design: in each legislature, I remove municipality–legislature cells in which a female partisan appears on the ballot (Figure 5) or is elected (Figure 6). The dashed black line shows the resulting “leave-out” coefficients, while the blue line reproduces the baseline estimates using all observations. Both series are standardized within legislature to ensure comparability over time.

In the immediate postwar legislatures, leave-out coefficients are consistent with a direct pipeline: a subset of former partisans stepped into politics and contributed to the initial increase in female candidacies. Yet precision in those early years is low, reflecting the scarcity of women running at the time. If the composition channel were the dominant force throughout, excluding ex-partisans would compress the entire series. Instead, from the late 1960s onward, the two paths converge. The leave-out and full-sample estimates track each other closely, with overlapping confidence intervals and nearly identical magnitudes. Because the leave-out design mechanically removes the direct ex-partisan channel, the persistence of the effect indicates that it does not arise solely from the same women moving from the Resistance into office.

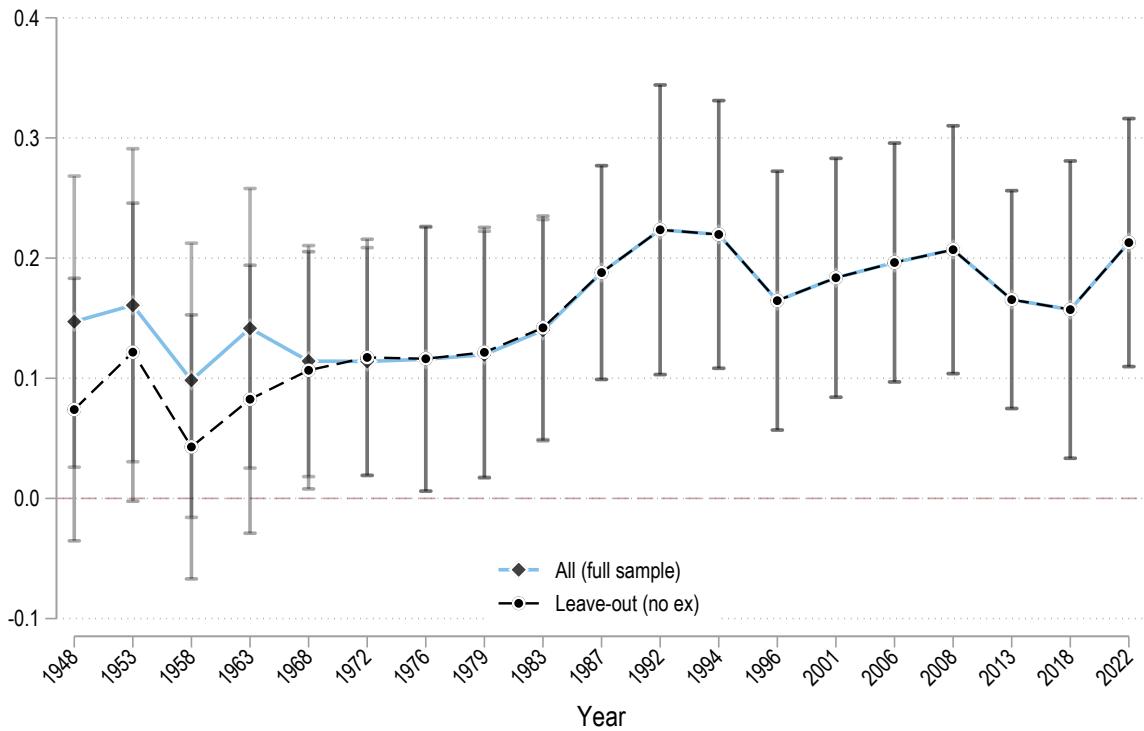
From the late 1960s onward, the direct participation of wartime cohorts naturally fades, yet the association between female Resistance and women’s political entry remains. The persistence of the effect suggests that the underlying mechanism operates through broader local spillovers rather than a narrow ex-partisan channel. A remaining concern, however, is that the same municipalities that produced women who later entered politics may still drive the results. These places might continue to differ from

Figure 5. Are Ex-Partisans Driving the Effect on Female Candidacies?



*Notes:* The observation unit is a municipality. The figure plots two series: *All (full sample)* uses all observations; *Leave-out (no ex)* drops observations in which a female partisan born in  $m$  is a candidate in legislature  $t$ . Dots report standardized OLS coefficients with 95% confidence intervals from separate by-legislature regressions of the inverse hyperbolic sine of women born in  $m$  who run for national parliament in legislature  $t$  on the inverse hyperbolic sine of female partisans born in  $m$ . Specifications include the following prewar controls: 1921 female employment and illiteracy rates; vote shares for Socialist–Communist and Catholic parties in the 1921 general election; a 1921 indicator for the presence of a local Fascist branch; the 1927 share of industrial workers; and the logs of 1921 population and population density. It further includes the inverse hyperbolic sine of the number of male partisans born in  $m$  and years under Nazi–Fascist occupation, together with province fixed effects. Standard errors are clustered at the province level. To make estimates comparable across legislatures, coefficients are standardized within legislature by rescaling the raw estimate by the ratio of the standard deviations of the regressor and the outcome, and confidence intervals are rescaled accordingly. The horizontal axis reports the first election year of each legislature.

Figure 6. Are Ex-Partisans Driving the Effect on Female MPs?



*Notes:* The observation unit is a municipality. The figure plots two series: *All (full sample)* uses all observations; *Leave-out (no ex)* drops observations in which a female partisan born in  $m$  is elected in legislature  $t$ . Dots report standardized OLS coefficients with 95% confidence intervals from separate by-legislature regressions of the inverse hyperbolic sine of women born in  $m$  elected to national parliament in legislature  $t$  on the inverse hyperbolic sine of female partisans born in  $m$ . Specifications include the following prewar controls: 1921 female employment and illiteracy rates; vote shares for Socialist–Communist and Catholic parties in the 1921 general election; a 1921 indicator for the presence of a local Fascist branch; the 1927 share of industrial workers; and the logs of 1921 population and population density. It further includes the inverse hyperbolic sine of the number of male partisans born in  $m$  and years under Nazi–Fascist occupation, together with province fixed effects. Standard errors are clustered at the province level. To make estimates comparable across legislatures, coefficients are standardized within legislature by rescaling the raw estimate by the ratio of the standard deviations of the regressor and the outcome, and confidence intervals are rescaled accordingly. The horizontal axis reports the first election year of each legislature.

others, not because ex-partisans themselves ran, but because having once generated a female candidate could shape local norms, networks, or party structures.

To address this, I exclude all municipalities that ever produced a woman who was both a partisan and later a candidate, regardless of legislature. The remaining sample thus isolates municipalities exposed to female Resistance but without any subsequent ex-partisan political figures. Results, reported in Table 4, show that the estimated effects remain positive and precisely estimated, with magnitudes only moderately reduced relative to the baseline. Even after excluding all such municipalities, exposure to female Resistance continues to predict higher female political participation. The evidence thus rules out both a compositional and a role-model explanation confined to a few birthplace localities. The partisan legacy appears to have operated through a deeper shift in civic norms and local opportunities for women, expanding the potential supply of female politicians well beyond the initial cohort of ex-partisans.

## 5.2 Women's association: UDI (*Unione Donne Italiane*)

The previous section showed that the legacy of the female Resistance outlived the direct pipeline of former female partisans. What then explains the persistent entry of new women into politics? In this setting, mass associations could provide the missing infrastructure. By training new cohorts and providing credible signals to parties, unions can convert a short, high-stakes mobilization into a durable supply response of women on ballots<sup>14</sup>. The *Unione Donne Italiane* (UDI, "Italian Women's Union") was founded in 1945 and emerged from the *Gruppi di Difesa della Donna* (GDD), an all-women partisan brigade active during the Resistance. The purpose of UDI was to develop solutions to women's problems on a national scale. To extend its reach, UDI organizers typically leveraged the GDD base and contacted known local female partisans to seed a branch with recognized leadership (Slaughter, 1997). UDI

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<sup>14</sup>See Satyanath et al. (2017) on local associations as recruitment infrastructure; Valencia Caicedo (2018) on long-run persistence via associative institutions; and Iannaccone and Berman (2006) for a club-good view of organizations that reduce free-riding and enhance capacity.

Table 4. OLS Estimates: Effect on Women in Parliament (Full vs Trimmed Sample)

<i>Panel A. Full sample</i>				
	All candidates		Elected candidates	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Female partisans	0.0322*** (0.0071)	0.0448*** (0.0078)	0.0126*** (0.0032)	0.0162*** (0.0040)
Dep. Var. Mean	0.08	0.08	0.01	0.01
Observations	50 046	50 046	50 046	50 046
<i>Panel B. Trimmed sample</i>				
	All candidates		Elected candidates	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Female partisans	0.0270*** (0.0065)	0.0359*** (0.0072)	0.0095*** (0.0027)	0.0109*** (0.0034)
Dep. Var. Mean	0.08	0.08	0.01	0.01
Observations	49 818	49 818	49 818	49 818
Historical Controls	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Prov. & Legisl. FEs	No	Yes	No	Yes

*Notes:* The observation unit is a municipality and legislature. *Panel A. Full sample* uses the full municipality-legislature panel. *Panel B. Trimmed sample* drops the municipalities that ever fielded a female partisan as a candidate or MP. The dependent variable is the inverse hyperbolic sine of the number of women born in  $m$  who (1)-(2) run for the national parliament and (3)-(4) are elected. Columns (1) and (3) include the following prewar covariates (1921): female employment rate; illiteracy rate; vote shares for Socialist–Communist and Catholic parties in the 1921 general election; an indicator for the presence of a local Fascist branch; the share of industrial workers (1927); log population and log population density; the inverse hyperbolic sine of the number of male partisans born in  $m$ ; and years under Nazi–Fascist occupation. Columns (2) and (4) additionally include province and legislature fixed effects. The main regressor is the inverse hyperbolic sine of the number of female partisans born in  $m$ . Standard errors are reported in parentheses and are adjusted for clustering at the province level. \*  $p < 0.1$ , \*\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.01$ .

branches were therefore most likely to emerge where female Resistance networks already existed. By the early 1950s, UDI became the biggest Italian organization for women's emancipation, and emerged as the new vehicle for the continued political participation of women ([Beckwith, 1981](#)).

To test this channel, I interact female partisan mobilization with an indicator for a UDI branch. Table 5 displays the results and shows large and highly significant interaction terms. For candidacies, the semi-elasticity rises by about 0.1312 in UDI municipalities, compared with a baseline of 0.0122. For elected MPs, the response is even stronger and it mainly concentrates in UDI municipalities: the baseline effect is small and significant only at 10% level, while the interacted coefficient is more precisely estimated and equals 0.056, far above the stand-alone effect of 0.0037. This suggests that, conditional on the same stock of female partisans, municipalities with a UDI branch converted that legacy into many more women on the ballot and more women in parliament.

To test whether UDI also shifted mass attitudes, I interact the number of female partisans with the branch indicator in the referendum regressions. Table 6 shows no amplification: the interaction is not significant and estimated around zero for both divorce and abortion outcomes. Female partisan activity is positively associated with liberal votes overall, but UDI does not strengthen this relationship. These results align with historical accounts in [Slaughter \(1997\)](#). Despite its large mass base, UDI was most effective as a recruitment and apprenticeship platform for party politics, while it did not generate profound changes in voter preferences.

### 5.3 Collective memory: Female Partisans' Street Names

A final question is how the legacy of the female Resistance persisted across generations, even as associations lose reach. One plausible channel is collective memory. I study this mechanism using data on streets named after female partisans. Street names embed history in the urban landscape and transform symbolic capital into a durable infrastructure of memory ([Tur-Prats and Valencia Caicedo, 2025](#), [Williams, 2021](#), [Mask,](#)

Table 5. Women's association: Women in Parliament and UDI

	All candidates		Elected candidates	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Female partisans	0.0362*** (0.0064)	0.0122** (0.0051)	0.0126*** (0.0031)	0.0037* (0.0021)
Female partisans × UDI		0.1312*** (0.0246)		0.0560*** (0.0150)
Dep. Var. Mean	0.06	0.06	0.01	0.01
Historical Controls	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Province FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Legislature FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Observations	50 046	50 046	50 046	50 046

Notes: The observation unit is a municipality and legislature. The dependent variable is the inverse hyperbolic sine of the number of women born in  $m$  who (1)-(2) run for the national parliament and (3)-(4) are elected. All columns include province and legislature fixed effects, and the full set of prewar covariates (1921): female employment rate; illiteracy rate; vote shares for Socialist–Communist and Catholic parties in the 1921 general election; an indicator for the presence of a local Fascist branch; the share of industrial workers (1927); log population and log population density; the inverse hyperbolic sine of the number of male partisans born in  $m$ ; and years under Nazi–Fascist occupation. Female partisans (IHS) is the inverse hyperbolic sine of the number of female partisans born in  $m$ . UDI is an indicator variable that equals one if  $m$  hosted a local branch of the Unione Donne Italiane (UDI). Standard errors are reported in parentheses and are adjusted for clustering at the province level. \*  $p < 0.1$ , \*\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.01$ .

Table 6. Women's association: Referendum Support and UDI

	Divorce (1974, %)		Abortion (1981, %)	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Female partisans	0.0087*** (0.0031)	0.0091*** (0.0032)	0.0050** (0.0025)	0.0051** (0.0025)
Female partisans × UDI		-0.0051 (0.0043)		-0.0036 (0.0035)
Dep. Var. Mean	0.5232	0.5232	0.5666	0.5666
Historical Controls	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Province FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Observations	2 623	2 623	2 623	2 623

*Notes:* The observation unit is a municipality. The dependent variable is the share of votes against repealing the divorce (1974) and abortion (1981) laws over the total number of voters, as from column headers. All columns include province fixed effects and the full set of prewar covariates (1921): female employment rate; illiteracy rate; vote shares for Socialist–Communist and Catholic parties in the 1921 general election; an indicator for the presence of a local Fascist branch; the share of industrial workers (1927); log population and log population density; the inverse hyperbolic sine of the number of male partisans born in  $m$ ; and years under Nazi–Fascist occupation. Female partisans (IHS) is the inverse hyperbolic sine of the number of female partisans born in  $m$ . *UDI* is an indicator variable that equals one if  $m$  hosted a local branch of the Unione Donne Italiane (UDI). Standard errors are reported in parentheses and are adjusted for clustering at the province level. \*  $p < 0.1$ , \*\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.01$ .

2020, Rose-Redwood et al., 2018, Light and Young, 2015, Azaryahu, 1996). In this setting, commemoration does more than preserve memory: it keeps alive the story of women who assumed overtly political roles in the struggle. Having a street named after a female partisan signals to successive cohorts that women were not only present in war but also central actors in the making of democracy. This echoes theories of cultural transmission, where recurring public signals reinforce norms across cohorts (Giuliano and Nunn, 2021, Valencia Caicedo, 2019, Bisin and Verdier, 2001). It also connects to evidence that female role models expand opportunities in ways that affect not only women's aspirations but also their concrete outcomes (Porter and Serra, 2020, Baskaran and Hessami, 2018, Ladam et al., 2018, Beaman et al., 2012).

Table 7 shows that women's political representation responds far more strongly to partisan mobilization in municipalities that commemorate female partisans. The semi-elasticity of female candidates with respect to mobilization rises from about 1.9% in municipalities without commemorative streets to 14.6% in those with them. At the mean, this corresponds to an increase of 0.020 versus 0.154 candidates. For elected women, the gap is 0.5% against 6.1%, or 0.005 versus 0.061 additional women at the mean. These magnitudes are consistent with a supply-side channel: commemoration sustains networks, mentoring, and recruitment pipelines that lower entry costs and amplify the translation of past mobilization into present representation.

By contrast, Table 8 shows no parallel effect for referenda. The interaction with street naming is small but negative and significant for divorce, and not significant for abortion. This pattern suggests that commemorative toponymy strengthens political supply but does not shift mass attitudes on contested moral issues. A plausible interpretation is that commemoration anchors memory in civic identity and local narratives, which support candidate pipelines but do not necessarily alter the preferences of the median voter.

Taken together, the results indicate that inscribing the Resistance into everyday urban space magnifies the long-run political supply of women but leaves mass opinion

Table 7. Collective Memory: Women in Parliament and Street Names

	All candidates		Elected candidates	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Female partisans	0.0362*** (0.0064)	0.0190*** (0.0058)	0.0126*** (0.0031)	0.0052** (0.0025)
Female partisans × Street		0.1266*** (0.0236)		0.0553*** (0.0149)
Dep. Var. Mean	0.06	0.06	0.01	0.01
Historical Controls	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Province FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Legislature FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Observations	50 046	50 046	50 046	50 046

*Notes:* The observation unit is a municipality and legislature. The dependent variable is the inverse hyperbolic sine of the number of women born in  $m$  who (1)-(2) run for the national parliament and (3)-(4) are elected. All columns include province and legislature fixed effects, and the full set of prewar covariates (1921): female employment rate; illiteracy rate; vote shares for Socialist–Communist and Catholic parties in the 1921 general election; an indicator for the presence of a local Fascist branch; the share of industrial workers (1927); log population and log population density; the inverse hyperbolic sine of the number of male partisans born in  $m$ ; and years under Nazi–Fascist occupation. Female partisans (IHS) is the inverse hyperbolic sine of the number of female partisans born in  $m$ . *Street* is an indicator variable that equals one if  $m$  has at least one street named after a female partisan. Standard errors are reported in parentheses and are adjusted for clustering at the province level. \*  $p < 0.1$ , \*\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.01$ .

Table 8. Collective Memory: Referendum Support and Street Names

	Divorce (1974, %)		Abortion (1981, %)	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Female partisans	0.0087*** (0.0031)	0.0091*** (0.0031)	0.0050** (0.0025)	0.0051** (0.0024)
Female partisans × Street		-0.0067** (0.0032)		-0.0031 (0.0025)
Dep. Var. Mean	0.52	0.52	0.57	0.57
Historical Controls	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Province FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Observations	2 623	2 623	2 623	2 623

*Notes:* The observation unit is a municipality. The dependent variable is the share of votes against repealing the divorce (1974) and abortion (1981) laws over the total number of voters, as from column headers. All columns include province fixed effects and the full set of prewar covariates (1921): female employment rate; illiteracy rate; vote shares for Socialist–Communist and Catholic parties in the 1921 general election; an indicator for the presence of a local Fascist branch; the share of industrial workers (1927); log population and log population density; the inverse hyperbolic sine of the number of male partisans born in  $m$ ; and years under Nazi–Fascist occupation. Female partisans (IHS) is the inverse hyperbolic sine of the number of female partisans born in  $m$ . *Street* is an indicator variable that equals one if  $m$  has at least one street named after a female partisan. Standard errors are reported in parentheses and are adjusted for clustering at the province level. \*  $p < 0.1$ , \*\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.01$ .

largely unaffected. Commemoration works as a mnemonic infrastructure that is visible, durable, and locally embedded. Its impact is strongest where memory operates through role-model salience and network activation, not through broad changes in voter attitudes.

## 6 Conclusion

This paper provides novel evidence on the long-term effects of female participation in the Italian Resistance, illustrating how historical events can reshape gender dynamics over time. Identification rests on the comparison of municipalities under a rich prewar profile, and on the use of local terrain ruggedness as an instrumental variable strategy. The findings consistently point in the same direction. Municipalities with more female partisans later supplied more women to politics, and backed divorce and abortion rights by larger margins.

The impact of female Resistance can be traced back to the nature of their participation in the movement. Women stepped into traditionally "masculine" roles, performing activities that demanded extraordinary courage, strength, and risk. The experience of defying norms in such a visible and consequential manner likely empowered them and their communities to challenge gender inequality in the post-war period. This aligns with broader theories of cultural persistence and emphasizes the role of historical shocks in shaping preferences and social structures.

The persistence of the effects points to transmission across cohorts. I examine the collective memory channel through streets named after female partisans. Street naming keeps the Resistance visible in daily life and locally anchors symbolic capital. Municipalities that commemorate these women show larger gains in female political representation. The pattern fits a mechanism where memory sustains networks and narratives, elevates role models, and lowers entry costs into politics.

Methodologically, this study relies on a novel dataset that combines granular infor-

mation on over 240 000 recognized partisans with detailed municipality-level data on historical, political, and socio-economic characteristics. This dataset, the result of extensive digitization and integration, allows for an unprecedented level of precision in analyzing the long-run effects of the Resistance. The analysis demonstrates how localized shocks, such as female partisan activity, can produce effects that extend far beyond their immediate context, offering a replicable framework for studying similar dynamics in other historical settings.

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# Appendix

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# A Historical Background

## A.1 The Italian Campaign

Figure A1. The Italian Campaign: Allied Advance (1943–1945)



Notes: Allied advance in Italy (1943–45), from south to northern Italy. Gustav and Gothic defensive lines highlighted; main events shown in square boxes. Source: U.S. Army Center of Military History.

Table A1. Italian Campaign Timeline (1943–45)

Date	Key Event / Phase
10 Jul 1943	• <i>Operation Husky</i> . Allied landings in Sicily establish the opening front.
3 Sep 1943	• <i>Operation Baytown</i> . Eighth Army crosses into Calabria.
9 Sep 1943	• <i>Operation Avalanche</i> . Main landing at Salerno; Naples secured in early October.
9 Sep 1943	• <i>Operation Slapstick</i> . Seizure of Taranto/Brindisi to consolidate the south.
Winter 1943–44	• <i>Gustav Line</i> . Stalemate along the Garigliano–Sangro belt (Cassino/Anzio operations).
4 Jun 1944	• <i>Rome Liberated</i> . Allied advance pushes toward the Arno.
Aug 1944	• <i>Gothic Line Established</i> . Continuous defenses across the Northern Apennines.
Sep 1944	• <i>Apennine Passes</i> . Fights at Futa and Il Giogo slow the advance.
Apr 1945	• <i>Spring Offensive &amp; Uprisings</i> . Breakthrough into the Po Valley; urban insurrections on 25 April.
2 May 1945	• <i>German Surrender in Italy</i> . Campaign ends.

## B Data

### B.1 Data Sources and Construction

**6 - PARTIGIANO**  
Commissione Regionale Abruzzese per l'Accertamento della qualifica di partigiano  
AQUILA - Via Indipendenza, 13

**SCHEDA N. 1018**

Nome S. Bartolo Cognome Tronchetti  
Paterno Tronchetti Materno Lebardi Nascita Salerno  
Luogo nascita Salerno Data nascita 10 gennaio 1918  
Residenza Nocera Luogo nascita Salerno Data nascita 10 gennaio 1918  
Numero di appartenenza 1018 Città Salerno  
Se in servizio militare alla data dell'1 ottobre 1943, quale comando Reggimento Terzo  
corpo Alpino qualità soldato  
Se non in servizio militare alla data dell'1 ottobre 1943, quale comando Reggimento Terzo  
di tale data Reggimento Terzo qualità soldato  
corpo Alpino qualità soldato  
Se mai in servizio militare, a nome, indirizzo - Data - AERONAVALE

Dati riferinti al periodo di attività partigiana

dal	<u>3 settembre</u>	al	<u>8 ottobre 1943</u>
lavoro	<u>- Salvatore e Giacomo -</u>		
Se catturato per la lotta	data	<u>12/10/1943</u>	<u>Campo Salvo</u>
di liberazione	lavoro	<u>lavoro per attività partigiana</u>	
Se militare, ferito	data	<u>28/10/1943</u>	
ferito a morte per	lavoro		
la lotta di liberazione	lavoro		

Se premuto per rispondere ai vostri quesiti, per esempio \_\_\_\_\_

**Giudizio della Commissione:**  
**CADUTO PER LA LUTTA DI LIBERAZIONE**

*[Handwritten signature]*

Figure B1. Sample Archival Record

## B.2 Outcome Variables and Coding

Table B1. Referenda Used in the Analysis

Year	Content
1946	• <i>Monarchy vs Republic.</i> The ballot asked voters to cross an empty square next to each option on the form of State: Republic or Monarchy. Outcome: share voting <i>Republic</i> over valid ballots.
1974	• <i>Divorce Law.</i> Referendum on the repeal of the divorce law (No. 898 of 1 December 1970, ‘Regulation of the dissolution of marriage’). Outcome: share of “No” over valid ballots.
1978	• <i>Police Powers.</i> Referendum on police powers/public security provisions (repeal of Law No. 152 of 22 May 1975, ‘Measures for the protection of public order’). Outcome: share of “No” over valid ballots.
1981	• <i>Abortion Rights.</i> Referendum on repeal of the abortion law (No. 194 of 22 May 1978, ‘Provisions for the social protection of motherhood and on the voluntary termination of pregnancy’). Outcome: share of “No” over valid ballots.
1985	• <i>Wage Raise Cut.</i> Referendum on the decree reducing automatic wage indexation (partial repeal of Law Decree No. 10 of 15 February 1984, ‘Urgent measures concerning [...] cost-of-living allowances’). Outcome: share of “No” over valid ballots.
2011	• <i>Nuclear Energy.</i> Referendum on provisions enabling a return to nuclear power (partial repeal of Law Decree No. 34 of 31 March 2011, ‘Urgent provisions [...] on a nuclear moratorium [...]’). Outcome: share of “No” over valid ballots.
2011	• <i>Water Privatization.</i> Referendum on rules mandating private management of local water utilities (partial repeal of Law Decree No. 152 of 3 April 2006, ‘Environmental provisions’). Outcome: share of “No” over valid ballots.
2011	• <i>Government Immunity.</i> Referendum on the law allowing the Prime Minister/Ministers to postpone trials for official duties (repeal of Law No. 51 of 7 April 2010, ‘Provisions on legitimate impediment to appear in court’). Outcome: share of “No” over valid ballots.

**ITANES (1992–2013).** This section documents the classification of the ITANES reported vote into *Left* and *Right* across survey waves from 1992 to 2013. The outcome is a binary indicator coded from the party voted for the Chamber of Deputies in the most recent general election. Throughout, the following principles are applied:

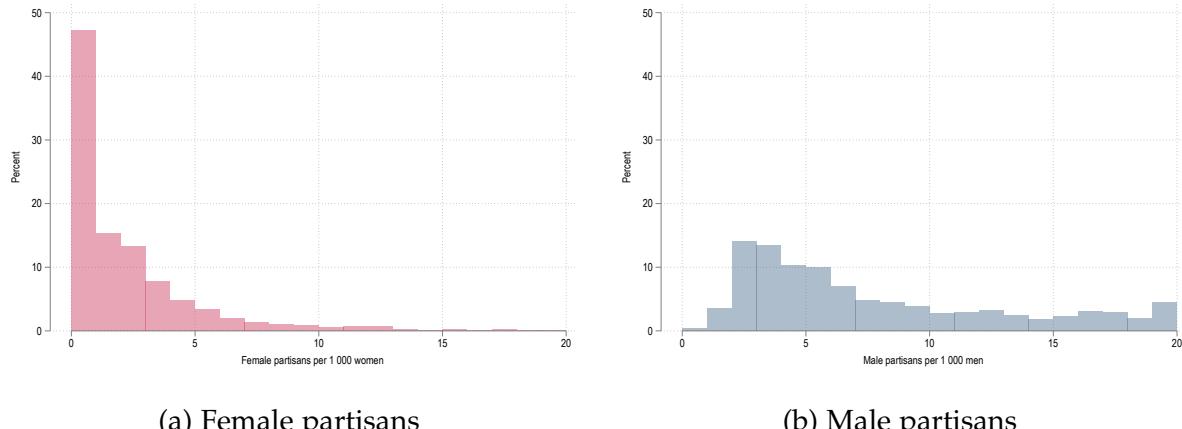
1. **Coalition anchor.** Lists are classified by the coalition they ran with: *L'Ulivo/Unione/Centrosinistra* ⇒ Left; *Casa delle Libertà/Centrodestra* ⇒ Right.
2. **Lineage over labels.** Successor parties inherit family when platforms and alliances are continuous (e.g., PDS → DS → PD on the Left; MSI → AN → PdL/FI/FdI on the Right).
3. **Centrists & regionals.** Christian-democratic centrists and regional-autonomist lists are coded *Other* in the baseline and included in robustness variants.
4. **Wave consistency.** The mapping is wave-specific but follows consistent party families over time.

Table B2. Left/Right classification by ITANES wave

Wave	Left	Right	Other
1992	PCI/PDS; PSI; Verdi	MSI-DN	DC; PRI; PLI; PSDI; regional lists (SVP, UV, Psd'Az); Pensionati; Pannella/Referendum; Automobilisti; Caccia-Pesca
1994	PDS; PRC; Verdi; <i>L'Ulivo</i>	Forza Italia; AN; Lega Nord; CCD-CDU; <i>Centrodestra/Casa delle Libertà</i>	DC residuals/centrists; Radicali; Rete; regional
1996	<i>L'Ulivo</i> ; PDS; PRC; Verdi	Forza Italia; AN; Lega Nord	Dini-Rinnovamento; UDC/centrists; regional
2001	<i>Centrosinistra/L'Ulivo</i> ; DS; Verdi; IdV; Bonino; Margherita	<i>Casa delle Libertà</i> ; Forza Italia; AN; Lega Nord; CCD-CDU/UDC	Democrazia Europea (D'Antoni); regional
2006	<i>L'Unione</i> ; DS; PRC; Verdi; IdV	<i>Casa delle Libertà</i> ; FI; AN; Lega; UDC	Regional/centrists
2008	PD; IdV; PSI; Sinistra Arcobaleno (far left)	PdL; Lega Nord	UDC; MPA; Ferrara list
2013	PD; SEL; <i>Centrosinistra</i> ; Rivoluzione Civile (far left)	PdL/FI; Lega Nord; FdI; <i>Centrodestra</i> ; Fare; FLI; MIR; Grande Sud-MPA	M5S; Scelta Civica; UDC; SVP; Pensionati; GPL; regional

## C Descriptive statistics

Figure C1. Distribution of partisans across municipalities, by gender



*Notes:* The figure reports the municipality-level distribution of recognized partisans per 1,000 residents (1921 base), by gender. Panel(a) shows women, (b) men. Values are discretized so that municipalities with zero partisans appear at 0, while any positive intensity is rounded up to the next integer. Bars plot the percent of municipalities in each bin. For readability, the horizontal axis is truncated at the 99th percentile of the female distribution; the same cutoff is applied to the male panel.

## D Hyperbolic transformations

This section derives the mapping from the estimated coefficients in the main specification to (i) a discrete effect corresponding to an increase from 0 to 1 female partisan in a municipality, and (ii) the marginal effect evaluated at the sample means (MEM).

### D.1 Arsinh-Arsinh

Let  $m$  index municipalities and  $t$  legislatures. The empirical specification used for political representation results can be written as:

$$\text{arsinh}(Y_{mpt}) = \beta_0 + \beta_1 \text{arsinh}(\text{FemalePartisans}_{mp}) + \beta_2 X_{mp} + \gamma_p + \delta_t + \epsilon_{mpt} \quad (4)$$

For ease of exposition, keep  $X_{mp}$ ,  $\gamma_p$  and  $\delta_t$  fixed and define

$$\kappa_{mpt} \equiv \beta_0 + \beta_2 X_{mp} + \gamma_p + \delta_t.$$

Then (4) can be written as

$$\text{arsinh}(Y_{mpt}) = \kappa_{mpt} + \beta_1 \text{arsinh}(X_{mp}),$$

where  $X_{mp} \equiv \text{FemalePartisans}_{mp}$ , and  $\text{arsinh}(\cdot)$  is the inverse hyperbolic sine function, defined as:

$$\text{arsinh}(z) = \ln\left(z + \sqrt{z^2 + 1}\right), \quad z \in \mathbb{R}.$$

Applying its inverse function  $\sinh(\cdot)$  to both sides in (4):

$$Y_{mpt} = \sinh(\kappa_{mpt} + \beta_1 \text{arsinh}(X_{mp})). \quad (5)$$

Now differentiate (5) with respect to  $X_{mp}$ . Let

$$g(X_{mp}) \equiv \kappa_{mpt} + \beta_1 \text{arsinh}(X_{mp}).$$

Equation (5) is  $Y_{mpt} = \sinh(g(X_{mp}))$ , so by the chain rule:

$$\frac{\partial Y_{mpt}}{\partial X_{mp}} = \cosh(g(X_{mp})) \cdot \beta_1 \cdot \frac{d}{dX_{mp}} \text{arsinh}(X_{mp}). \quad (6)$$

Since

$$\frac{d}{dX} \operatorname{arsinh}(X) = \frac{1}{\sqrt{1+X^2}},$$

(13) becomes

$$\frac{\partial Y_{mpt}}{\partial X_{mp}} = \cosh(g(X_{mp})) \cdot \beta_1 \cdot \frac{1}{\sqrt{1+X_{mp}^2}}. \quad (7)$$

Finally, because  $Y_{mpt} = \sinh(g(X_{mp}))$ , we can use the hyperbolic identity

$$\cosh(z) = \sqrt{1 + \sinh^2(z)}$$

to rewrite  $\cosh(g(X_{mp}))$  as  $\sqrt{1 + Y_{mpt}^2}$ . Substituting into (7) yields the compact expression

$$\boxed{\frac{\partial Y_{mpt}}{\partial X_{mp}} = \beta_1 \frac{\sqrt{1 + Y_{mpt}^2}}{\sqrt{1 + X_{mp}^2}}} \quad (8)$$

which is the marginal effect in levels implied by (4).

**The 0→1 change.** To quantify the change associated with an increase from 0 to 1 female partisan, we can evaluate the marginal effect in (8) at  $X_{mp} = 0$  and  $Y_{mpt} = \bar{Y}$ :

$$\left. \frac{\partial Y_{mpt}}{\partial X_{mp}} \right|_{X_{mp}=0, Y_{mpt}=\bar{Y}} = \beta_1 \sqrt{1 + \bar{Y}^2}. \quad (9)$$

The change in the regressor induced by moving from  $X_{mp} = 0$  to  $X_{mp} = 1$  is not 1 but  $\operatorname{arsinh}(1) \approx 0.8814$ . Hence the corresponding discrete approximation is

$$\Delta Y_{mpt}^{0 \rightarrow 1} \approx [\beta_1 \sqrt{1 + \bar{Y}^2}] \times 0.8814 \quad (10)$$

**MEM.** Finally, to obtain the marginal effect evaluated at the mean (MEM), we can evaluate the marginal effect in (8) at the baseline means  $X_{mp} = \bar{X}$  and  $Y_{mpt} = \bar{Y}$ :

$$\left. \frac{\partial Y_{mpt}}{\partial X_{mp}} \right|_{Y_{mpt}=\bar{Y}, X_{mp}=\bar{X}} = \beta_1 \frac{\sqrt{1 + \bar{Y}^2}}{\sqrt{1 + \bar{X}^2}}.$$

## D.2 %-Arsinh

Let  $m$  index municipalities. The empirical specification used for referenda results can be written as:

$$Y_{mp} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 \text{arsinh}(\text{FemalePartisans}_{mp}) + \beta_2 X_{mp} + \gamma_p + \epsilon_{mp} \quad (11)$$

For ease of exposition, keep  $X_{mp}$ ,  $\gamma_p$  and  $\delta_t$  fixed and define

$$\kappa_{mpt} \equiv \beta_0 + \beta_2 X_{mp} + \gamma_p + \delta_t$$

Then (11) can be written as

$$Y_{mpt} = \kappa_{mpt} + \beta_1 \text{arsinh}(X_{mp}), \quad (12)$$

Now differentiate (12) with respect to  $X_{mp}$ :

$$\frac{\partial Y_{mpt}}{\partial X_{mp}} = \beta_1 \cdot \frac{d}{dX_{mp}} \text{arsinh}(X_{mp}). \quad (13)$$

Since

$$\frac{d}{dX} \text{arsinh}(X) = \frac{1}{\sqrt{1+X^2}},$$

(13) becomes

$$\frac{\partial Y_{mpt}}{\partial X_{mp}} = \beta_1 \cdot \frac{1}{\sqrt{1+X_{mp}^2}} \quad (14)$$

which is the marginal effect in levels implied by (11).

**The 0→1 change.** To quantify the change associated with an increase from 0 to 1 female partisan, we can evaluate the marginal effect in (14) at  $X_{mp} = 0$ :

$$\left. \frac{\partial Y_{mpt}}{\partial X_{mp}} \right|_{X_{mp}=0, Y_{mpt}=\bar{Y}} = \beta_1 \quad (15)$$

The change in the regressor induced by moving from  $X_{mp} = 0$  to  $X_{mp} = 1$  is not 1 but  $\text{arsinh}(1) \approx 0.8814$ . Hence the corresponding discrete approximation is

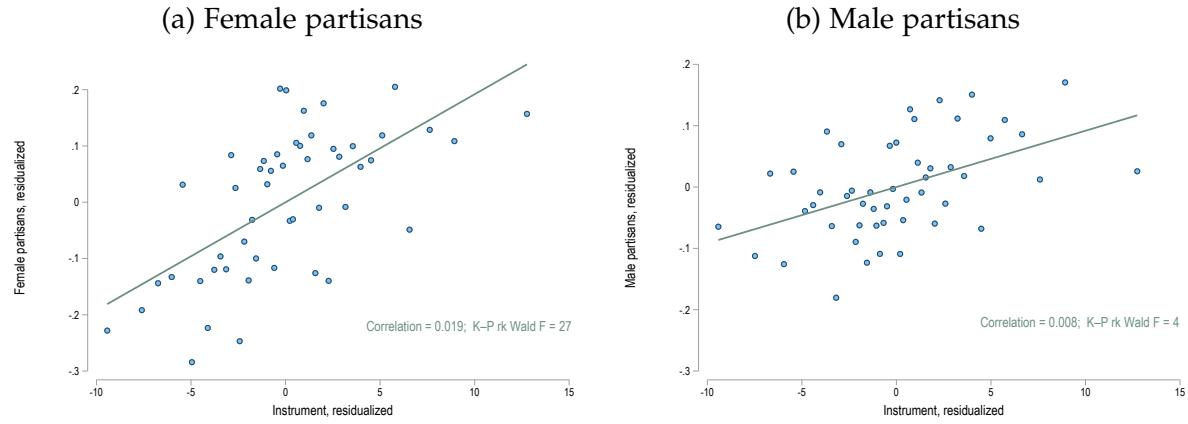
$$\Delta Y_{mpt}^{0 \rightarrow 1} \approx \beta_1 \times 0.8814 \quad (16)$$

**MEM.** Finally, to obtain the marginal effect evaluated at the mean (MEM), we can evaluate the marginal effect in (8) at the baseline mean  $X_{mp} = \bar{X}$ :

$$\frac{\partial Y_{mpt}}{\partial X_{mp}} \Big|_{Y_{mpt}=\bar{Y}, X_{mp}=\bar{X}} = \beta_1 \frac{1}{\sqrt{1 + \bar{X}^2}}.$$

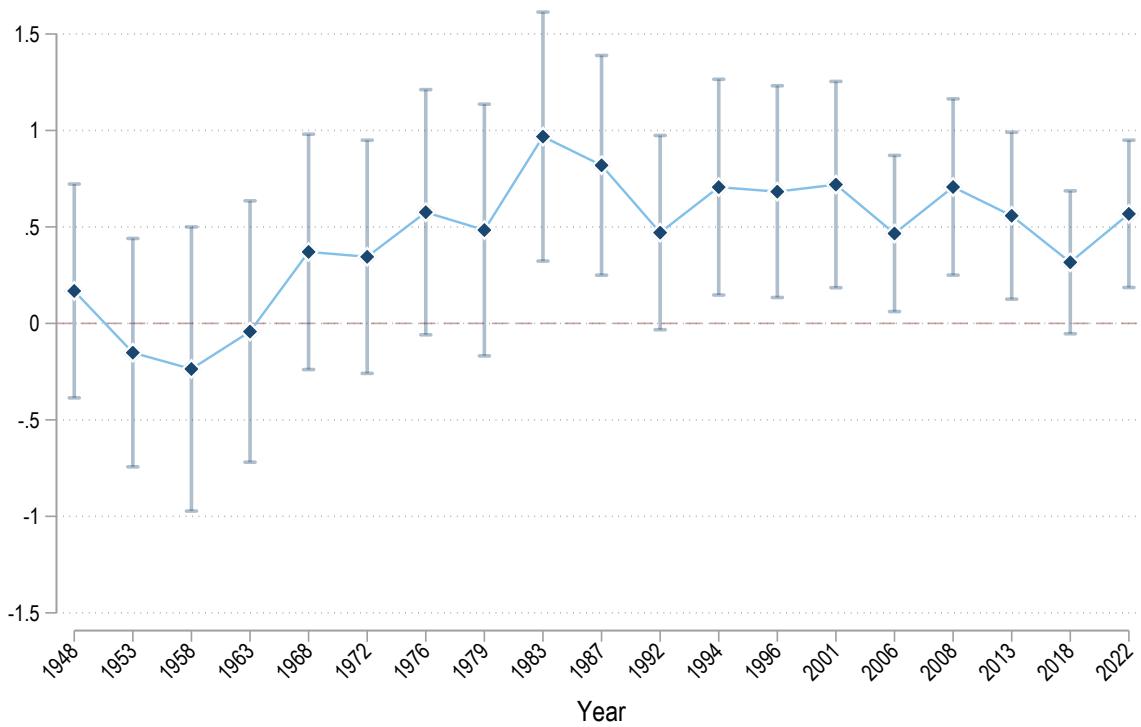
## E Instrumental Variable Strategy

Figure E1. First-Stage Placebo: Female vs. Male Partisans



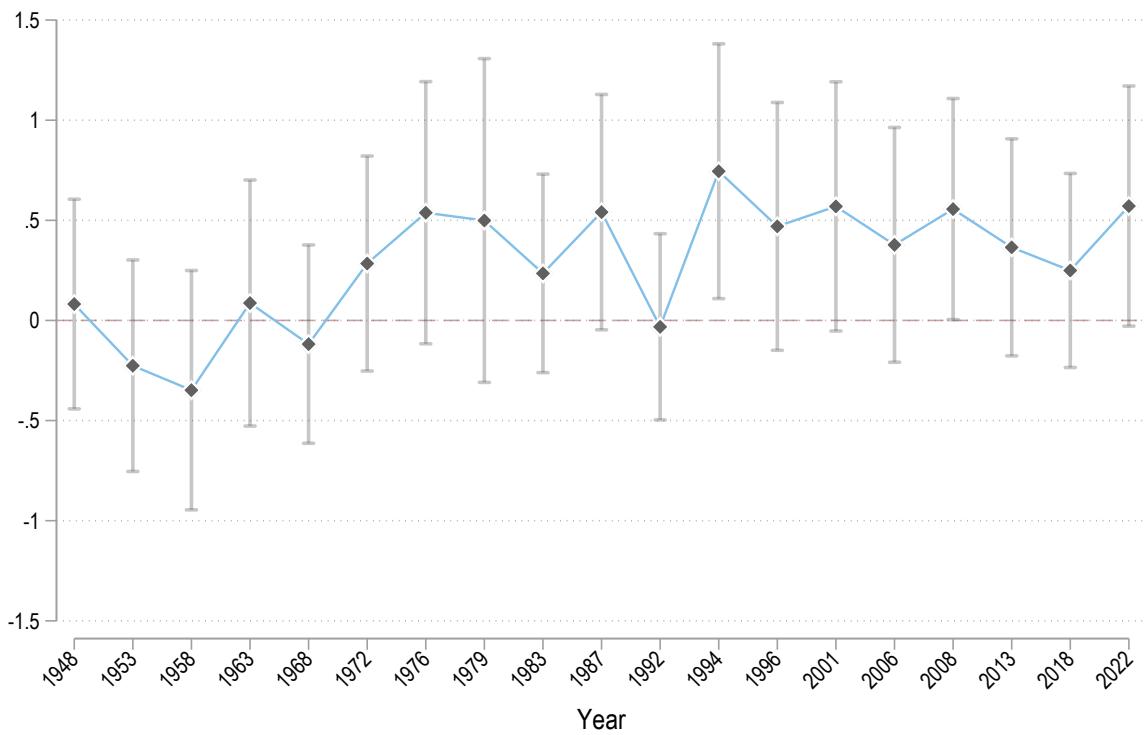
*Notes:* The figure shows a binned scatter of the first-stage regression in equation (2). The vertical axis reports the inverse hyperbolic sine of the number of (a) female and (b) male partisans born in municipality  $m$ . The horizontal axis reports the standard deviation of the Topographic Ruggedness Index of  $m$ . Variables are residualized with respect to the full set of historical covariates: 1921 female employment and illiteracy rates; vote shares for Socialist–Communist and Catholic parties in the 1921 general election; a 1921 indicator for the presence of a local Fascist branch; the 1927 share of industrial workers; years under Nazi–Fascist occupation; and the logs of 1921 population and population density, together with province fixed effects. Panel (a) additionally partials out the inverse hyperbolic sine of male partisans; Panel (b) partials out the inverse hyperbolic sine of female partisans. Each dot represents approximately 2% of the sample. The fitted line is the OLS fit to binned means. The annotation reports the partial correlation between the residualized variables and the Kleibergen–Paap rk Wald  $F$ -statistic from the corresponding first-stage regression, with standard errors clustered at the province level. The observation unit is a municipality.

Figure E3. IV Dynamic Estimates: Effect on Female Candidacies



*Notes:* The observation unit is a municipality. The figure shows standardized 2SLS coefficients with 95% confidence intervals from separate by-legislature regressions of the inverse hyperbolic sine of women born in  $m$  who run for national parliament in legislature  $t$  on the inverse hyperbolic sine of female partisans born in  $m$ , instrumented with the standard deviation of the Topographic Ruggedness Index. Specifications include the following prewar controls: 1921 female employment and illiteracy rates; vote shares for Socialist–Communist and Catholic parties in the 1921 general election; a 1921 indicator for the presence of a local Fascist branch; the 1927 share of industrial workers; and the logs of 1921 population and population density. It further includes the inverse hyperbolic sine of the number of male partisans born in  $m$  and years under Nazi–Fascist occupation, together with province fixed effects. Standard errors are clustered at the province level. To make estimates comparable across legislatures, coefficients are standardized within legislature by rescaling the raw estimate by the ratio of the standard deviations of the regressor and the outcome, and confidence intervals are rescaled accordingly. The horizontal axis reports the first election year of each legislature.

Figure E4. IV Dynamic Estimates: Effect on Female MPs



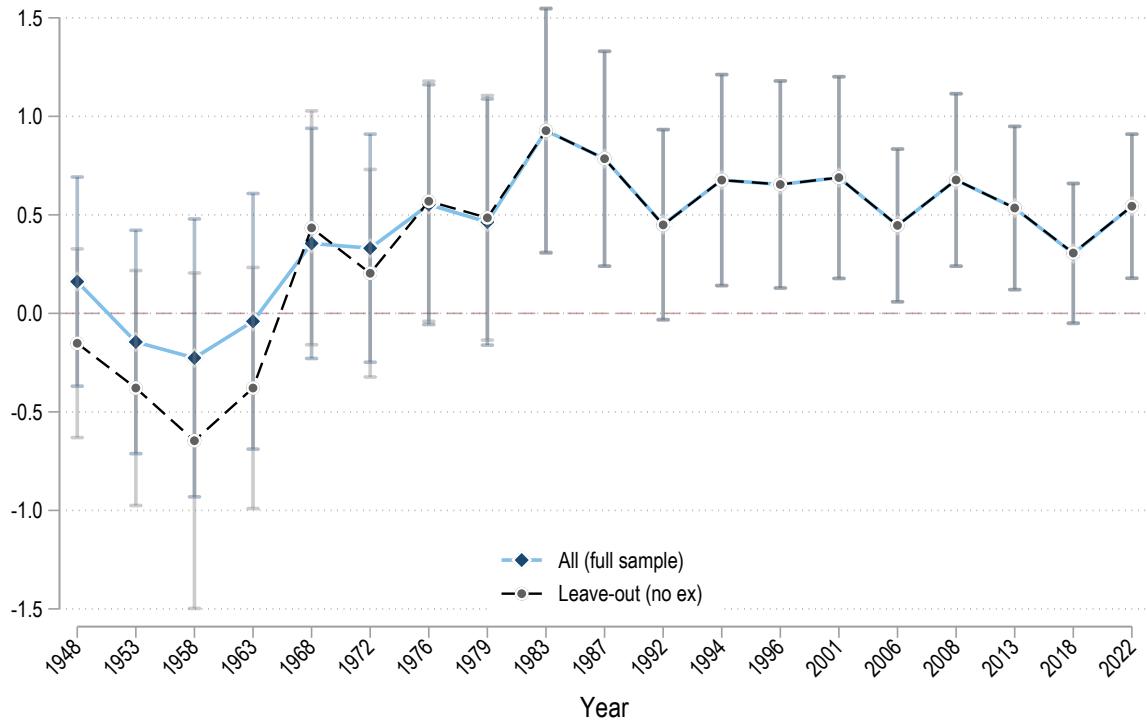
*Notes:* The observation unit is a municipality. The figure shows standardized 2SLS coefficients with 95% confidence intervals from separate by-legislature regressions of the inverse hyperbolic sine of women born in  $m$  elected to national parliament in legislature  $t$  on the inverse hyperbolic sine of female partisans born in  $m$ , instrumented with the standard deviation of the Topographic Ruggedness Index. Specifications include the following prewar controls: 1921 female employment and illiteracy rates; vote shares for Socialist–Communist and Catholic parties in the 1921 general election; a 1921 indicator for the presence of a local Fascist branch; the 1927 share of industrial workers; and the logs of 1921 population and population density. It further includes the inverse hyperbolic sine of the number of male partisans born in  $m$  and years under Nazi–Fascist occupation, together with province fixed effects. Standard errors are clustered at the province level. To make estimates comparable across legislatures, coefficients are standardized within legislature by rescaling the raw estimate by the ratio of the standard deviations of the regressor and the outcome, and confidence intervals are rescaled accordingly. The horizontal axis reports the first election year of each legislature.

Table E1. IV Estimates: Effect on Women in Parliament (1992–2022)

	All candidates		Elected candidates	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Female partisans	0.3112** (0.1340)	0.2050*** (0.0649)	0.0640* (0.0377)	0.0501* (0.0275)
Dep. Var. Mean	0.16	0.16	0.02	0.02
K-P rk Wald F	10.3	26.8	10.3	26.8
Historical Controls	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Prov. & Legisl. FEs	No	Yes	No	Yes
Observations	23 715	23 715	23 715	23 715

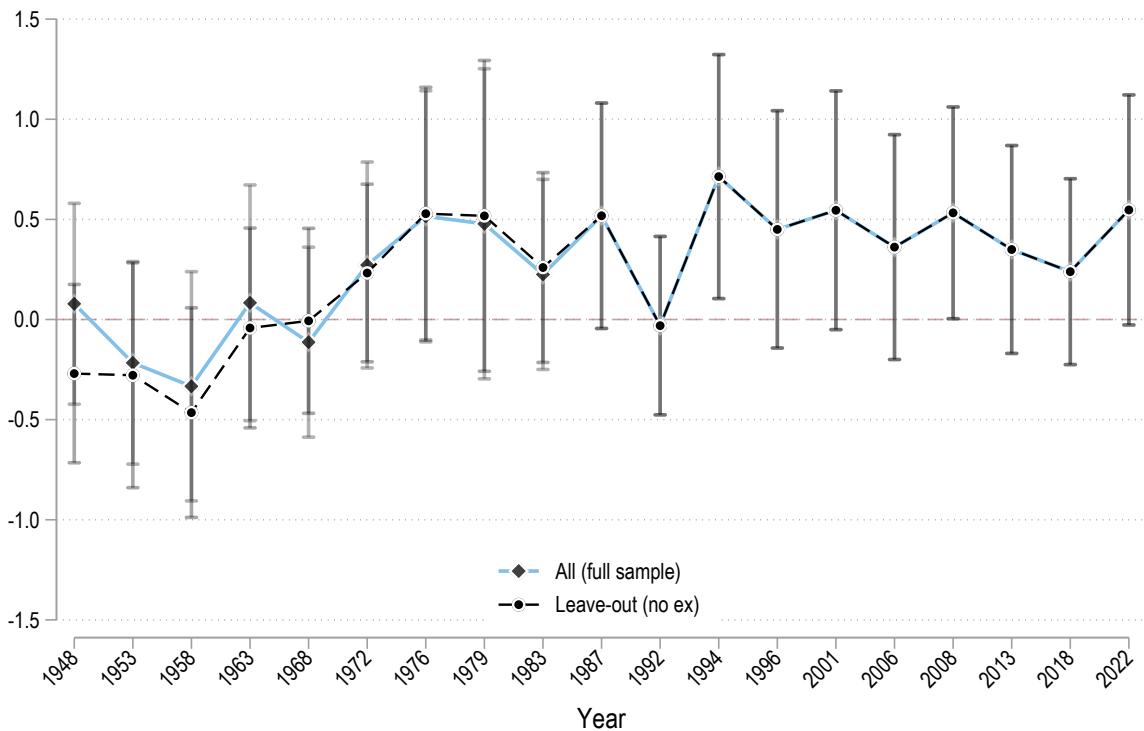
*Notes:* The observation unit is a municipality and legislature. The dependent variable is the inverse hyperbolic sine of the number of women born in  $m$  who (1)–(2) run for the national parliament and (3)–(4) are elected. Columns (1) and (3) include the following prewar covariates (1921): female employment rate; illiteracy rate; vote shares for Socialist–Communist and Catholic parties in the 1921 general election; an indicator for the presence of a local Fascist branch; the share of industrial workers (1927); log population and log population density; the inverse hyperbolic sine of the number of male partisans born in  $m$ ; and years under Nazi–Fascist occupation. Columns (2) and (4) additionally include province and legislature fixed effects. The main regressor is the inverse hyperbolic sine of female partisans born in  $m$ , instrumented with standardized TRI. Kleibergen–Paap rk Wald  $F$  statistics are reported. Standard errors are reported in parentheses and are adjusted for clustering at the province level. \*  $p < 0.1$ , \*\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.01$ .

Figure E5. IV Dynamic Estimates (All vs Leave-out): Effect on Female Candidacies



Notes: The observation unit is a municipality. The figure plots two series: *All (full sample)* uses all observations; *Leave-out (no ex)* drops observations in which a female partisan born in  $m$  is a candidate in legislature  $t$ . Dots report standardized 2SLS coefficients with 95% confidence intervals from separate by-legislature regressions of the inverse hyperbolic sine of women born in  $m$  who run for national parliament in legislature  $t$  on the inverse hyperbolic sine of female partisans born in  $m$ , instrumented with the standard deviation of the Topographic Ruggedness Index. Specifications include the following prewar controls: 1921 female employment and illiteracy rates; vote shares for Socialist–Communist and Catholic parties in the 1921 general election; a 1921 indicator for the presence of a local Fascist branch; the 1927 share of industrial workers; and the logs of 1921 population and population density. It further includes the inverse hyperbolic sine of the number of male partisans born in  $m$  and years under Nazi–Fascist occupation, together with province fixed effects. Standard errors are clustered at the province level. To make estimates comparable across legislatures, coefficients are standardized within legislature by rescaling the raw estimate by the ratio of the standard deviations of the regressor and the outcome, and confidence intervals are rescaled accordingly. The horizontal axis reports the first election year of each legislature.

Figure E6. IV Dynamic Estimates (All vs Leave-out): Effect on Female MPs



Notes: The observation unit is a municipality. The figure plots two series: *All (full sample)* uses all observations; *Leave-out (no ex)* drops observations in which a female partisan born in  $m$  is a candidate in legislature  $t$ . Dots report standardized 2SLS coefficients with 95% confidence intervals from separate by-legislature regressions of the inverse hyperbolic sine of women born in  $m$  elected to national parliament in legislature  $t$  on the inverse hyperbolic sine of female partisans born in  $m$ , instrumented with the standard deviation of the Topographic Ruggedness Index. Specifications include the following prewar controls: 1921 female employment and illiteracy rates; vote shares for Socialist–Communist and Catholic parties in the 1921 general election; a 1921 indicator for the presence of a local Fascist branch; the 1927 share of industrial workers; and the logs of 1921 population and population density. It further includes the inverse hyperbolic sine of the number of male partisans born in  $m$  and years under Nazi–Fascist occupation, together with province fixed effects. Standard errors are clustered at the province level. To make estimates comparable across legislatures, coefficients are standardized within legislature by rescaling the raw estimate by the ratio of the standard deviations of the regressor and the outcome, and confidence intervals are rescaled accordingly. The horizontal axis reports the first election year of each legislature.

Table E2. IV Estimates: Effect on Women in Parliament (Full vs Trimmed Sample)

<i>Panel A. Full sample</i>				
	All candidates		Elected candidates	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Female partisans	0.1740** (0.0759)	0.1169*** (0.0379)	0.0387 (0.0255)	0.0321* (0.0185)
Dep. Var. Mean	0.08	0.08	0.01	0.01
Observations	50 046	50 046	50 046	50 046

<i>Panel B. Trimmed sample</i>				
	All candidates		Elected candidates	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Female partisans	0.1292** (0.0584)	0.0842** (0.0328)	0.0140 (0.0168)	0.0153 (0.0141)
Dep. Var. Mean	0.08	0.08	0.01	0.01
Observations	49 818	49 818	49 818	49 818
Historical Controls	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Prov. & Legisl. FEs	No	Yes	No	Yes

Notes: The observation unit is a municipality and legislature. *Panel A. Full sample* uses the full municipality-legislature panel. *Panel B. Trimmed sample* drops the municipalities that ever fielded a female partisan as a candidate or MP. The dependent variable is the inverse hyperbolic sine of the number of women born in  $m$  who (1)-(2) run for the national parliament and (3)-(4) are elected. Columns (1) and (3) include the following prewar covariates (1921): female employment rate; illiteracy rate; vote shares for Socialist–Communist and Catholic parties in the 1921 general election; an indicator for the presence of a local Fascist branch; the share of industrial workers (1927); log population and log population density; the inverse hyperbolic sine of the number of male partisans born in  $m$ ; and years under Nazi–Fascist occupation. Columns (2) and (4) additionally include province and legislature fixed effects. The main regressor is the inverse hyperbolic sine of female partisans born in  $m$ , instrumented with standardized TRI. Kleibergen–Paap rk Wald  $F$  statistics are reported. Standard errors are reported in parentheses and are adjusted for clustering at the province level. \*  $p < 0.1$ , \*\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.01$ .

## F Auxiliary Results and Robustness

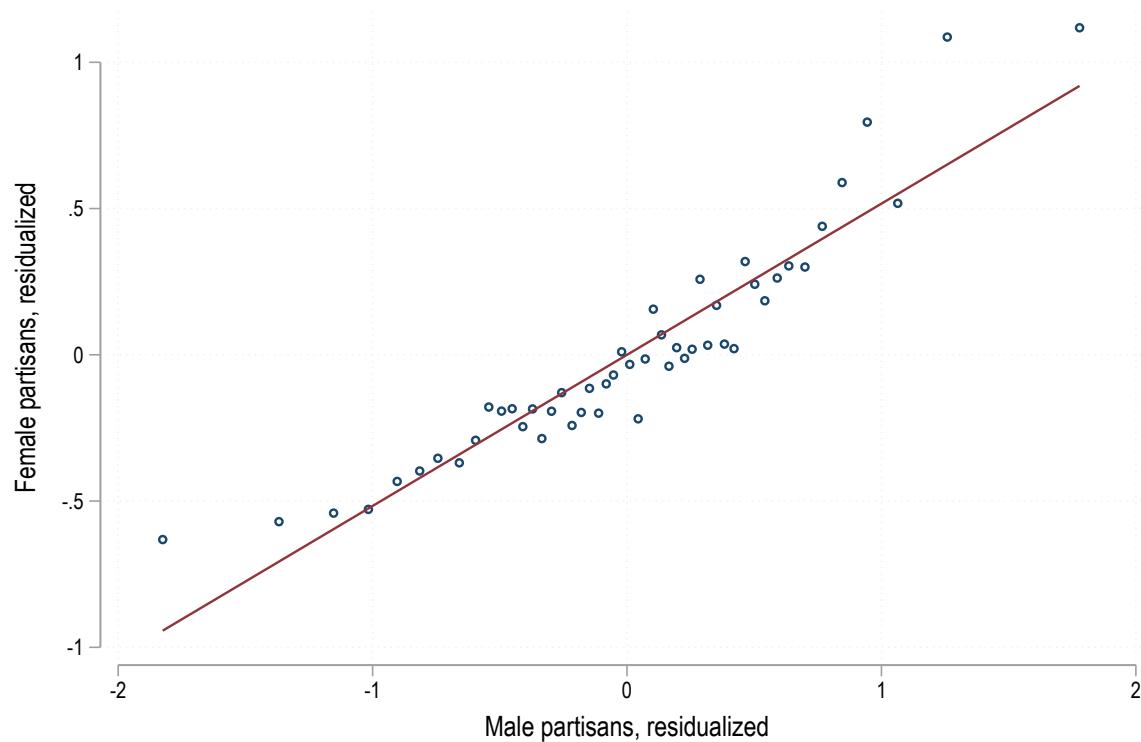


Figure F1. Correlation between male and female partisans

*Notes:* The observation unit is a municipality. The figure shows a binned scatter with an OLS fit of residual partisan counts by sex. The vertical axis is the inverse hyperbolic sine of the number of female partisans born in municipality  $m$ , and the horizontal axis is the inverse hyperbolic sine of the number of male partisans born in  $m$ . Both variables are residualized on 1921 log population and province fixed effects. The fitted line has slope 0.518 and  $R^2 = 0.205$ . Each dot is 2.5% of the sample. SEs clustered by province.

Table F1. Effect of Female Resistance on Women in Parliament  
(1992–2022)

	All candidates		Elected candidates	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Female partisans	0.0544*** (0.0128)	0.0781*** (0.0125)	0.0181*** (0.0044)	0.0235*** (0.0055)
Dep. Var. Mean	0.16	0.16	0.02	0.02
Historical Controls	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Prov. & Legisl. FE	No	Yes	No	Yes
Observations	23 715	23 715	23 715	23 715

*Notes:* The observation unit is a municipality and legislature. The sample is restricted to the 1992–2022 legislatures. The dependent variable is the inverse hyperbolic sine of the number of women born in  $m$  who (1)–(2) run for the national parliament and (3)–(4) are elected. Columns (1) and (3) include the following prewar covariates (1921): female employment rate; illiteracy rate; vote shares for Socialist–Communist and Catholic parties in the 1921 general election; an indicator for the presence of a local Fascist branch; the share of industrial workers (1927); log population and log population density; the inverse hyperbolic sine of the number of male partisans born in  $m$ ; and years under Nazi–Fascist occupation. Columns (2) and (4) additionally include province and legislature fixed effects. The main regressor is the inverse hyperbolic sine of the number of female partisans born in  $m$ . Parentheses report standard errors adjusted for clustering at the province level. \*  $p < 0.1$ , \*\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.01$ .

Table F2. Political Vote Shares (1946–1987)

	Left-Wing (1)	Catholic (2)	Right-Wing (3)
Female partisans	0.3425 (0.3167)	-0.3867 (0.3120)	-0.0004 (0.0575)
Dep. Var. Mean	37.47	45.86	3.66
Historical Controls	Yes	Yes	Yes
Province FE	Yes	Yes	Yes
Observations	2 623	2 623	2 623

*Notes:* The observation unit is a municipality. The dependent variable is the vote share in 1946–1987 national elections for (1) *Left-Wing*: Socialist plus Communist (2) *Catholic*: Christian Democracy (3) *Right-Wing*: post-fascist Italian Social Movement (MSI) and small pro-monarchy parties. All columns include province fixed effects and the full set of prewar covariates (1921): female employment rate; illiteracy rate; vote shares for Socialist–Communist and Catholic parties in the 1921 general election; an indicator for the presence of a local Fascist branch; the share of industrial workers (1927); log population and log population density; the inverse hyperbolic sine of the number of male partisans born in  $m$ ; and years under Nazi–Fascist occupation. *Female partisans* is the inverse hyperbolic sine of the number of female partisans born in  $m$ . Standard errors are reported in parentheses and are adjusted for clustering at the province level. \*  $p < 0.1$ , \*\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.01$ .

Table F3. ITANES (1992–2013): Left/Right Vote

	Left-wing vote		Right-wing vote	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Female partisans	0.0051 (0.0158)	0.0044 (0.0157)	-0.0083 (0.0149)	-0.0079 (0.0146)
Dep. Var. Mean	0.48	0.48	0.46	0.46
Historical Controls	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Individual Controls	No	Yes	No	Yes
Prov. & Wave FEs	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Observations	4 399	4 399	4 399	4 399

*Notes:* The observation unit is an individual respondent from the ITANES post-election surveys (1992–2013), geo-located at the municipality of residence. The dependent variable is a dummy for the party voted in the most recent national election: columns (1)–(2) report *Left-wing vote*; columns (3)–(4) report *Right-wing vote*. Party classification follows Appendix B.2. All columns include province and survey-wave fixed effects, together with the full set of prewar covariates (1921): female employment rate; illiteracy rate; vote shares for Socialist–Communist and Catholic parties in the 1921 general election; an indicator for the presence of a local Fascist branch; the share of industrial workers (1927); log population and log population density; the inverse hyperbolic sine of the number of male partisans born in *m*; and years under Nazi–Fascist occupation. Columns (2) and (4) additionally include respondent's sex, education, and employment status. *Female partisans* is the inverse hyperbolic sine of the number of female partisans born in *m*. Standard errors are reported in parentheses and are adjusted for clustering at the province level. \*  $p < 0.1$ , \*\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.01$ .

Table F4. ITANES (1992–2013): Left/Right Vote by Cohorts

<i>Panel A. Left-wing vote</i>				
	$\leq 1945$ (1)	1946–60 (2)	1961–75 (3)	$\geq 1976$ (4)
Female partisans	-0.0044 (0.0205)	0.0211 (0.0276)	-0.0109 (0.0207)	0.0261 (0.0404)
Dep. Var. Mean	0.43	0.51	0.48	0.50
Observations	1 158	1 152	1 273	802
<i>Panel B. Right-wing vote</i>				
	$\leq 1945$ (1)	1946–60 (2)	1961–75 (3)	$\geq 1976$ (4)
Female partisans	0.0075 (0.0191)	-0.0227 (0.0248)	0.0000 (0.0169)	-0.0218 (0.0395)
Dep. Var. Mean	0.49	0.42	0.46	0.47
Observations	1 158	1 152	1 273	802
Historical Controls	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Individual Controls	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Prov. & Wave FEs	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

*Notes:* The observation unit is an individual respondent from the ITANES post-election surveys (1992–2013), geo-located at the municipality of residence. The dependent variable is an indicator for the party voted in the most recent national election: *Panel A* reports left-wing votes, *Panel B* right-wing votes. Party classification follows Appendix B.2. Each column restricts the sample to a different birth cohort, as indicated in the headers. All columns include province and survey-wave fixed effects, together with the full set of prewar covariates (1921): female employment rate; illiteracy rate; vote shares for Socialist–Communist and Catholic parties in the 1921 general election; an indicator for the presence of a local Fascist branch; the share of industrial workers (1927); log population and log population density; the inverse hyperbolic sine of the number of male partisans born in  $m$ ; and years under Nazi–Fascist occupation. Respondent's sex, education, and employment status are included throughout. *Female partisans* is the inverse hyperbolic sine of the number of female partisans born in  $m$ . Standard errors are reported in parentheses and are adjusted for clustering at the province level. \*  $p < 0.1$ , \*\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.01$ .