

# Trust Issues: How Unveiling Organized Crime Infiltration in Politics Increases Abstention<sup>\*</sup>

## *Preliminary Draft*

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### Abstract

This paper examines the consequences of anti-organized crime interventions targeting local governments on voter participation. Leveraging the staggered implementation of city council dismissals for mafia infiltration in Italy within a difference-in-differences framework, we find that these interventions lead to a persistent decline in voter turnout of approximately two percentage points in national, regional, and provincial elections. We interpret this effect as the result of an informational shock: the public revelation of collusion between organized crime and elected officials undermines political trust and lowers the perceived efficacy of voting. The effect extends to neighboring municipalities, not directly treated but exposed to the news, and it is stronger in contexts where mafia-related events are more salient and less anticipated by the public. While city council dissolutions are effective in disrupting criminal governance and strengthening state capacity, our findings highlight an unintended cost: a decline in democratic participation.

**Keywords:** Organized Crime, Government Trust, Voter Behavior

**JEL Classification:** D72, D73, K42

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# 1 Introduction

Organized crime (OC) undermines economic and social welfare (Pinotti, 2015; Acemoglu et al., 2020), yet it remains established in many regions across the world. A key factor behind this persistence is its symbiotic relationship with legal institutions (Accardo et al., 2022). On the one hand, OC both substitutes (Gambetta, 1996) and complements (Blattman et al., 2024) the state as a provider of security, contract enforcement, and dispute resolution through the use of force. On the other hand, it seeks to influence the state’s action through bribery and coercion (Dal Bó et al., 2006). In Italy, 388 city councils were dismissed between 1991 and 2023 due to OC infiltration. City council dismissals (CCDs), introduced under the Law act 164/1991, represent an aggressive but successful policy against OC. They led to reduction in OC activity, higher economic growth (Fenizia and Saggio, 2024), and positive, demand-driven, political turnover (Daniele and Geys, 2015; Baraldi et al., 2022; Fenizia and Saggio, 2024) in the affected municipalities. However, the impact of CCDs on citizens’ institutional trust and political participation remains unexplored. This aspect is especially important in OC-permeated regions, where civil engagement is central in challenging criminal influence – e.g. through crime reporting or political supervision. While scholars have connected long-term exposure to OC-related violence with the erosion of institutional trust and political participation (Blanco and Ruiz, 2013; Blanco, 2013; Rolla and Justino, 2022), and punctual, experimental exposure to OC-related violent images with strengthened support for state authority (Campedelli et al., 2023), we study the impact of an anti-OC policy that concurrently targets OC and exposes its entanglement with public institutions.

This paper investigates how city council dismissals (CCDs) in Italian municipalities infiltrated by the organized crime (OC) affect voter participation. Specifically, we are interested in the role of trust in political institutions as a driver of political participation. Political trust can be conceptualized as the feeling that the “own interests would be attended to even if the authorities were exposed to little supervision or scrutiny” (Easton, 1975). Theoretically, trust in political institutions can affect the benefit side of the typical Downsian voting equation (Downs, 1957; Riker and Ordeshook, 1968), as the lack of credibility in institutions lowers the expected return of the preferred electoral outcomes as well as the expressive benefit from the act of voting.<sup>1</sup> CCDs may affect political trust in, at least, two counteracting ways. On the one hand, the unveiling of the city council infiltration by the OC might represent an informational shock for the local voters, disclosing the collusion between OC and legal institutions, thus reducing political trust and, in turn, political participation. On the other hand, CCDs may be seen as the intervention of higher-level governmental institutions to solve a – possibly known – situation of local collusion, and may thus spur trust in the state and political participation.

Our empirical approach aims at showing which effect of the CCDs dominates in shaping political trust and political participation. We leverage the timing of the dismissals in an event study design and estimate its effect on voter turnout. To isolate the demand-driven impact on citizens’ participation, we measure turnout at institutional levels higher than municipal elections. This minimizes contamination from other political consequences of the dismissal at the municipal level that may affect voter turnout, such as candidates supply. In our main estimation, we combine legislative elections at the national- (Chamber

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<sup>1</sup> The Downsian framework models turnout as a random utility trade-off in which the voter balances her ability to influence the outcome, her voting costs, and her expressive utility from voting. Hooghe (2018) and Devine (2024) provide a good overview of the correlational literature linking political trust to electoral turnout.

of Deputies), regional- (Regional Council), and provincial level (Provincial Council) in an aggregate turnout measure. In case multiple elections were held in the same time unit, we hierarchically select the turnout in the election at the higher geographical level.

We construct a dataset containing information on municipalities in central and southern Italy between 1970 and 2024. First, we collect data on the dissolution of Italian municipal councils from the Department of Internal and Territorial Affairs (DAIT, 2024). The dataset includes a list of municipalities, the year of dissolution, and the corresponding reason for the 1991-2023 period. We merge this dataset with municipal-level data on voter turnout in municipal, provincial, regional, national, and European elections from the Department of Internal and Territorial Affairs (Eligendo, 2024) and the Sicilian Electoral Service (Sicilian Electoral Service, 2024) in the 1970-2024 period. Finally, we complete the dataset with census information on population, age and gender distribution, educational attainment, and unemployment for the years 1991, 2001, 2011 and 2021 (ISTAT, 2024). The final dataset used in the main estimation consists of 45,387 municipality-year observations in the 1987-2024 period. Municipalities whose city council was dismissed due to organized crime infiltrations make about 2.2% of the sample.

Using a staggered difference-in-differences design, we find that, on average, voter turnout drops by approximately 2 percentage points in municipalities where the city council was dismissed due to mafia infiltration. The effect is registered suddenly in the year following the dissolution, and persists for at least six years afterward. To validate the causal interpretation, we conduct a placebo test using dismissals triggered by reasons unrelated to organized crime and find no significant impact on turnout. Then we document spillover effects in neighboring municipalities, where no local political disruption occurred. Turnout also drops in these areas, indicating a potential informational shock mechanism: exposure to news of organized crime infiltration erodes electoral participation.

The heterogeneity analysis shows that municipalities with larger populations in 1991 experience a significantly stronger decline in voter turnout following a dissolution. The effect is concentrated in municipalities that experienced a single dissolution, while those experiencing multiple dissolutions show little to no response. Additionally, the effect has grown in recent decades, with turnout dropping by up to three percentage points after 2000. We attribute these heterogeneous effects to the greater salience of mafia infiltration, meaning that the decline in turnout is strongest where and when mafia presence was least anticipated.

Finally, the finding is robust to a variety of specifications, such as the implementation of matching procedures to construct control municipalities, or the use of alternative estimators.

In sum, our findings suggest that despite the benefits documented in the literature, public disclosure of anti-mafia interventions also has unintended consequences for political engagement. Publicly revealing the depth of organized crime’s infiltration of local governments is likely to lead to political distrust, thereby reducing voter participation.

We contribute to the literature on the electoral consequences of the organized crime. This literature is vast and growing, as summarized by Accardo et al. (2022). More specifically, we add to the literature started by Acconcia et al. (2014) on the study of the effects of infiltrated city council dismissals. City council dismissals for organized crime infiltration were introduced in Italy in 1991 (law act 164/1991). So far, the literature has found positive effects of this policy. City council dismissals generate large economic returns (Fenzia and Saggio, 2024), promote positive demand-driven political turnover at local level (Daniele

and Geys, 2015; Baraldi et al., 2022; Fenizia and Saggio, 2024), reduce violent intimidation against politicians (Baraldi et al., 2024), and improve the tax collection and the public funds' allocation (Di Cataldo and Mastroiocco, 2022). Moreover, dismissals generate law enforcement spillovers in neighboring municipalities (Galletta, 2017), though they also induce strategical elusive behavior (Tulli, 2024). Finally, Buonanno et al. (2024) find that CCDs increase the share of taxpayers allocating part of their income tax (5%) to local voluntary associations, which they interpret as a proxy for social capital. Our paper shows that city council dismissals also induce disaffection with the political system, presumably by exposing the existence of links between politics and organized crime. This result appears even stronger when conjugated with the documented positive effects of the dissolution at the local level and with the argument that the involvement of the high-level political system in the dissolution of the connection between local political power and organized crime could be welcomed by local citizens.

We contribute to the literature on the electoral consequences of political scandals. The closest strand of literature has connected corruption scandals with decreased voter participation in Mexico (Chong et al., 2015; Rivera et al., 2024), Italy (Giommoni, 2021), and Spain (Costas-Pérez, 2014; Ares and Hernández, 2017). Differently to most of the literature, we focus on elections at higher level (regions, national parliament) than the level in which the scandal happens (municipality), which allows to disentangle electoral dynamics from effects on political trust. Related, we contribute to the literature trying to explain the secular decline in average turnout among advanced democracies.<sup>2</sup> Using the CCDs as an informational shock, we provide a proof of concept of the important relationship between political trust and voter turnout.

The remainder of this paper is organized as follows. Section 2 presents the background context on city council dismissals, Section 3 describes the used data, Section 4 discusses the research design, Section 5 presents the results, and Section 6 concludes.

## 2 Background

### 2.1 Organized Crime in Italy

The Italian Penal Code (Art. 416-bis) defines the Mafia as a criminal association that exploits the power of intimidation, with the condition of subjugation and the resulting code of silence, to acquire, among other things, the direct or indirect control of economic activities and public services, or to realize unjust profits, or to interfere with the free exercise of voting. The most important organizations are the *Camorra*, *Cosa Nostra* and the *'Ndrangheta*, traditionally located in Campania, Sicily and Calabria, respectively. Although the Mafia presence is concentrated in southern Italy (Mocetti and Rizzica, 2023), its activity has a national and international reach. Catino (2020) provides an overview of the structure and history of the Italian Mafia organizations.

In the last decades, organized crime in Italy has undergone significant transformations. In the 1980s, the Italian Mafia pursued a strategy of visible, frontal confrontation with the state, which led to the assassination of 71 high-profile figures between 1983 and 1992 (Catino, 2020). On the other hand, anti-Mafia legislation was greatly expanded in this period, from the criminalization of Mafia participation in 1982 (Criminal Code 416-bis), to the antiracket legislation in 1991, the prosecution of external participation in 1991

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<sup>2</sup> The average turnout for national parliamentary elections in OECD countries was around 80% in 1980 and has fallen by more than 10 percentage points since then (see Figure A1).

(Legislative Decree No. 203), and the tougher prison conditions for Mafia members under the “41-bis” law regime in 1992 (Catino, 2020). This challenge was also executed, most notably during the Palermo Maxi Trials (1986–1992), in which over 400 members of *Cosa Nostra* were convicted. Since the mid-1990s, the Mafia in Italy has increasingly adapted to an invisible, submersive criminal activity. Between 1993 and 2002, the number of high-profile figures murders fell to 18. Mafia-related violent crime has been on the decline ever since. Figure 1 shows a sharp increase in mafia-related homicides toward the end of the 1980s, followed by a steady decline in the homicide rate per 100’000 inhabitants from 1991 through 2000.

Figure 1: Mafia-related Homicides per 100 inhabitants in Italy, 1991-2016



Notes: Source: ISTAT.

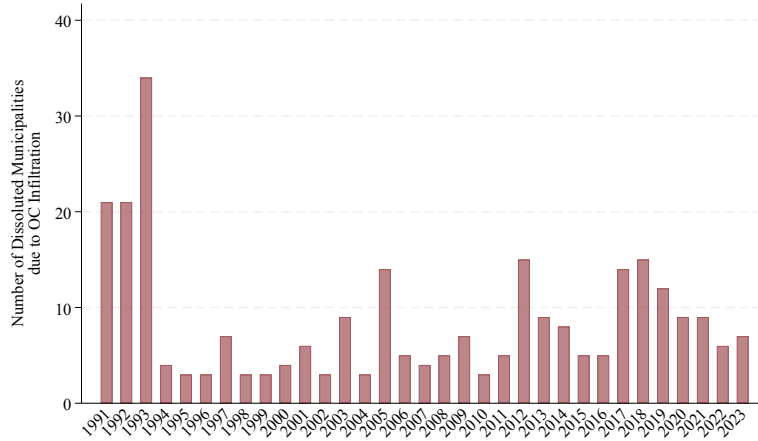
## 2.2 Council Dismissals

On May 31, 1991, the Italian Parliament approved the Legislative Decree No. 164, which introduced the possibility of dismissing municipal councils with proven links to the organized crime. The dismissal of city councils is an aggressive policy, and is subject to a strict procedure that is carried out without disclosing any public information. The process begins with a police investigation that establishes the existence of contacts between municipal officials and organized crime. It is important to note that most investigations are not initiated due to suspicious of mafia infiltration. The police allegations are communicated to the head of the provincial authority (the *prefetto*), who forms an investigative commission and reports to the Ministry of Interior within four months. The Ministry of Interior, in consultation with the Cabinet, then decides on the dismissal. In case of dismissal, the whole procedure is confirmed by a decree of the President of the Republic and made public. At this point, the mayor, the executive body, and the legislative municipal council are replaced by unelected commissioners who administer the municipality for a transitional period that can last up to 18 months, until new elections are held.

Figure 2 shows the number of council dissolutions by year since the policy was introduced. Between 1991 and 2020, up to 280 municipalities have been dissolved. More than 70 dissolutions were ordered in the first three years of the policy, but dissolutions have continued into recent years. Table A1 lists the municipality and the date of dissolutions by region. More than 90% of the dissolutions took place in central-south Italy. Figure 3 shows the

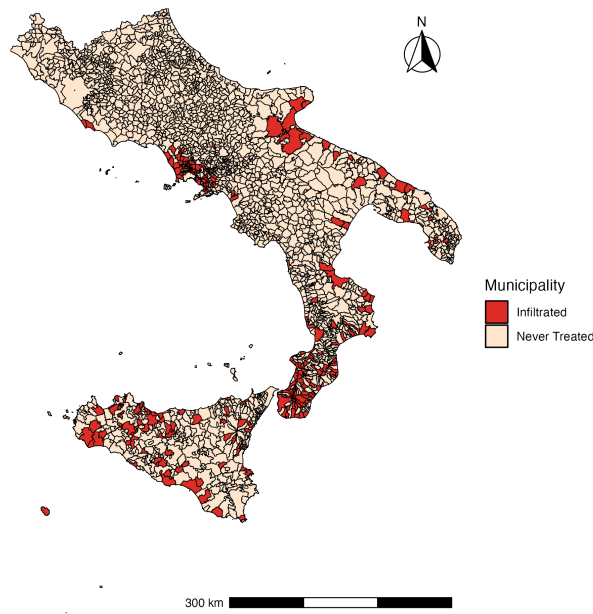
spatial distribution of dissolutions in the center-south Italy. Calabria and Sicily stand out as having the highest percentage of municipalities dissolved over time.

Figure 2: Number of City Council Dissolutions (CCDs), 1991-2023



Notes: Source: *Department of Internal and Territorial Affairs (2024a)*.

Figure 3: City Council Dissolutions due to Organized Crime in Southern Italy, 1991-2023



Notes: Source: *Department of Internal and Territorial Affairs (2024a)*.

## 2.3 Italian Elections

Italy is a representative democracy, organized on several institutional levels. Besides the national level, Italy has three levels of local government: as of January 1, 2024, Italy was divided into 20 regions (*Regioni*), 107 provinces (*Province*), and 7,900 municipalities (*Comuni*).

At the lowest institutional level, Italian municipalities handle local matters such as urban

planning and proximity public services (e.g. primary schools and waste management). Italian citizens elect representatives to the legislative municipal councils (*Consigli Comunali*) through a proportional system, as well as the mayor (*Sindaco/o*) through a two-round system. The mayors then form executive bodies called *Giunte comunali*.

At the intermediate local institutional level, the Italian provinces are mainly responsible for local planning of transport and school networks. Their role has diminished over the years. Moreover, since the law 56/2014, provinces are no longer elected by the electorate, but indirectly by local municipal councils and mayors. At the highest local institutional level, the Italian regions are divided into 15 ordinary statute (*Statuto Ordinario*) and 5 special statute (*Statuto Speciale*) regions. Usually, Italian citizens elect the representatives of the regional councils (*Consigli Regionali*) through a proportional system, as well as the president (*Presidente della Regione*) through a two-round system.

At the national level, Italian citizens elect representatives to the two chambers of the Parliament, the Chamber of Deputies (*Camera dei Deputati*) and the Senate of the Republic (*Senato della Repubblica*). The Parliament constitutes the legislative power of the state, nominates (supported by a selection of regional representatives) the President of the Republic (*Presidente della Repubblica*) every 7 years, and its confidence is necessary for the appointment and the stability of the Government (*Consiglio dei Ministri*). In recent decades, both the electoral system and the electoral formula for parliamentary elections have changed several times. Both chambers are now elected by a mixed-member proportional system, with the majority of the seats allocated by first-past-the-post system and a minority by proportional representation system.

Finally, Italian citizens elect representatives to the European Parliament every 5 years. Seats are allocated to parties based on national performance, and then distributed proportionally to the top vote-getters in 5 different constituencies.

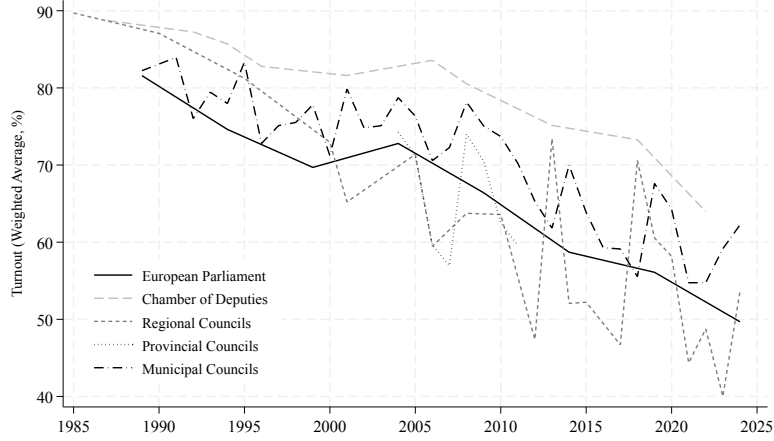
Figure 4 shows the evolution of turnout levels for each type of legislative election since 1990, weighting turnouts at the municipal level by the number of electors.<sup>3</sup> Regardless of the type of election, voter turnout declined steadily over the period. Note that municipal, regional and provincial elections are held at different times in different regions, and therefore show jumps in turnout as a consequence of different sampling (Figure A2 resolves the sample selection by showing linear trends over the observed period). As shown in Figure A3 for the 2013 Chamber of Deputies elections, there are also regional variations: In general, turnout is lower in the southern part of Italy.

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<sup>3</sup> Turnout in elections for mayors, regional presidents, and the Senate of the Republic is not shown, as it is very similar to the turnout in elections for municipal councils, the regional councils, and the Chamber of Deputies, respectively.



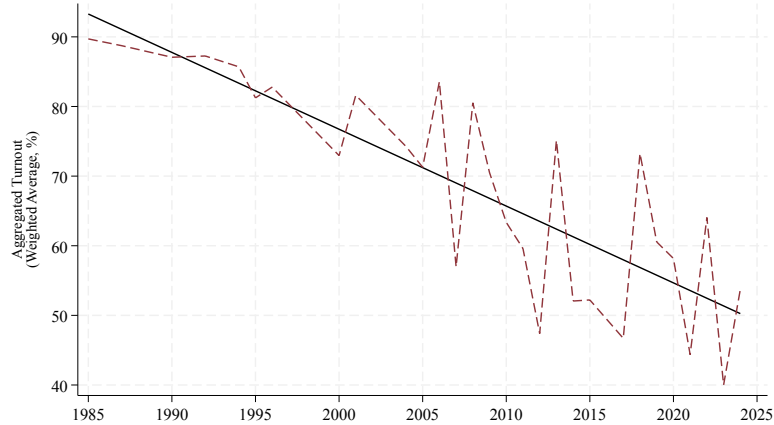
Figure 4: Average Turnout by Election Type and Year, 1985-2024.



Notes: Source: *Eligendo*.

In order to use the largest number of votes in individual municipalities over time, we combine different elections into an aggregate turnout measure. We consider elections to the Chamber of Deputies, Regional Councils and Provincial Councils. In our main estimation, we do not consider elections to the European Parliament, which may capture a different level of institutional trust. We discard elections that were held at the same time than municipal elections, to avoid contamination in turnout form the dissolution at lower level. In case multiple elections were held in the same time unit, we hierarchically selected the turnout in the election at the higher geographical level. **Figure 5** shows the evolution of this form of aggregated turnout between 1990 and 2020. As expected, this measure declines steadily over the observed period.

Figure 5: Average Aggregated Turnout by Year with Linear Fit, 1985-2024.



Notes: Source: *Eligendo*.

### 3 Data

We mainly use three sources of data covering municipalities in the center-south Italy between 1991 and 2020. We focus on cohorts treated up to 2017 to ensure that we observe



treated municipalities for at least 3 years after the shock.

We collect municipal-level data on voter turnout in each type of election through *Eligendo*, the historic archive of the Department of Internal and Territorial Affairs for the period 1970-2024 ([Eligendo, 2024](#)).<sup>4</sup> The archive collects data from all elections in the used period, with the exception of regional elections in special statute regions (Aosta Valley, Friuli-Venezia Giulia, Sardinia, Sicily, Trentino Alto Adige). We collect Sicilian regional election data between 2006 and 2022 from the website of the *Sicilian Electoral Service* ([Sicilian Electoral Service, 2024](#)). In the observed period, municipalities had the median number of elections of 6 for European-, 8 for national-, 7 for regional-, 2 for provincial- and 6 for legislative elections. [Figure A4](#) gives an overview of the years in which elections take place, divided by election type.

We collect data on city council administration from the Department of Internal and Territorial Affairs’s “Anagrafe degli Amministratori Locali e Regionali” ([DAIT, 2024](#)). The dataset reports all compulsory administrations due to organized crime infiltration or other reasons (e.g. death of the mayor). All reasons are listed in [Table A2](#). It also reports demographic characteristics of the mayors (age, gender, education), party affiliation (right wing, left wing, civic list), type of electoral system (proportional/majoritarian) and the duration of the charge.

Finally, we collect census data for the years 1991, 2001, 2011, and 2021 from the Italian National Institute of Statistics ([ISTAT, 2024](#)). The censuses contain a information for each municipality on the resident population, such as the number of residents, foreigners, their age and gender distribution, educational attainment, and (un-)employment. We mainly use these data to construct control variables in our regression and to construct a matched sample of municipalities.

## 4 Research Design

### 4.1 Sample Selection and Descriptive Statistics

We begin with a sample of 388 city council dissolutions due to mafia infiltration recorded over the period 1991 and 2023. To ensure consistency in the sample, we retain only the first dissolution experienced by each municipality. This restriction reduces the sample to 305 unique dissolution events.

Next, we limit our focus to municipalities in the Center, South, and Sicily, which together account for 97.42% of all mafia-related dissolutions, reducing the sample to 295 treated municipalities. This geographic restriction serves two purposes: it ensures that treated and control municipalities are drawn from a comparable institutional context, and it avoids problematic comparisons with municipalities in the North, which typically exhibit higher baseline voter turnout (see [Figure A3](#)).

Finally, to ensure that our estimates capture the broader effects of mafia-related dissolutions on electoral participation, we focus on voter turnout at provincial, regional and national level, excluding turnout at the municipal level. This choice allow us to isolate the informational and political trust effects of dissolution, rather than the administrative consequences of local electoral turnover, while mitigating potential claims of municipal vote

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<sup>4</sup> In the rare cases where elections were held at a level lower than the municipality, such as in some large cities for national elections, we aggregate the results to the municipal level. For mixed proportional and single-member elections, we focus on turnout in terms of proportional seats.

buying behavior. To further eliminate potential contamination, we exclude any elections held on the same day as municipal elections in the treated municipalities. After these refinements, our final analytical sample includes 268 mafia-related dissolutions.

Beyond the main treated sample, we also incorporate two complementary samples to strengthen our causal interpretation. First, we include 524 bordering municipalities, defined as those sharing a direct boundary with a treated municipality, to estimate spatial spillover effects. These municipalities were not directly subject to dissolution but may have been exposed to the information on shock, allowing us to assess whether the observed turnout decline reflects a broader erosion of political trust.

Second, we leverage a placebo sample of 1'570 non-mafia-related dissolutions. These events serve as a counterfactual for assessing whether political disengagement arises specifically from the criminal nature of the intervention, rather than from council turnover per se.

**Table 1** provides descriptive statistics for the main variables used in our empirical analysis. Panel A summarizes treatment assignment across different categories. The variable *Infiltrated* indicates whether a municipality was subject to a mafia-related dissolution in a given election observation and represents our main treatment identifier. The variables *Multiple* and *Appealed* capture respectively whether the municipality experienced multiple dissolutions and whether the dissolution was appealed. *Neighboring* flags municipalities sharing a border with mafia-related dissolved municipalities, which we use to estimate spatial spillover effects. Finally, the *Other dissolutions* category aggregates all non-mafia-related dissolutions, further subdivided into cases of resignation, mayoral death, or other institutional causes.

Panel B reports electoral outcomes. The main dependent variable, *Turnout*, represents our measure of voter turnout aggregated at provincial, regional and national level. Turnout rates are also broken down by election type. The remainder of panel B includes variables for the number of eligible voters, total voters, blank ballots cast, number of elections per year and number of elections per day.

Panel C includes socio-demographic and economic characteristics of municipalities from the four waves of census data. These include the share of female population, population density, the unemployment rate, and the old age dependency ratio (i.e., elderly to working-age population), and educational attainment.

Panel D presents characteristics of the mayors in office. These include age, duration of term (in years), whether the mayor was female, whether the election was decided in a Ballot run-off, and the political affiliation of the mayor, classified into center, left, and right parties.

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics

	Obs.	Mean	Std.	Min	Max
<b>Panel A: Dissolutions</b>					
Infiltrated	45'387	0.056	0.229	0	1
Multiple	2'528	0.208	0.406	0	1
Appealed	2'528	0.068	0.252	0	1
Neighboring	45'387	0.169	0.375	0	1
Other dissolutions	45'387	0.522	0.500	0	1
Resignation	23'675	0.670	0.470	0	1
Mayor's death	23'675	0.056	0.231	0	1
Other reasons	23'675	0.274	0.446	0	1
<b>Panel B: Elections</b>					
Turnout	45'387	0.709	0.145	0.004	1
Turnout National	28'737	0.751	0.115	0.005	1
Turnout Regional	17'207	0.628	0.162	0.004	1
Turnout Provincial	2'854	0.648	0.118	0.218	0.999
Turnout European	5'793	0.654	0.139	0.101	0.993
Electors	45'387	7'267	40'210	62	2'363'059
Voters	45'387	5'254	29'135	3	2'067'514
Blank ballot	28'736	132.92	360.40	0	23'654
N. elections per year	45'387	1.262	0.484	1	4
N. elections per day	45'387	1.091	0.288	1	2
<b>Panel C: Census</b>					
Female share	45'387	0.511	0.013	0.393	0.664
Population density	45'387	271.40	745.20	2.47	14'991.39
Unemployment rate	45'387	0.097	0.050	0	0.492
Old age ratio	45'387	0.368	0.140	0.078	1.790
High education	45'387	0.254	0.104	0.013	0.721
Middle education	45'387	0.286	0.041	0.056	0.480
Low education	45'387	0.280	0.068	0.081	0.746
No education	45'387	0.181	0.074	0	0.602
<b>Panel D: Mayors</b>					
Age mayor	39'350	46.93	9.86	18	94
Duration	39'352	4.62	0.81	1	7
Female mayor	39'352	0.057	0.231	0	1
Ballot run-off	39'352	0.273	0.445	0	1
Center Party	36'926	0.623	0.485	0	1
Left Party	36'926	0.278	0.448	0	1
Right Party	36'926	0.099	0.299	0	1

Notes: Source: Census, DAIT, Eligendo.

As a robustness check for the unconditional control group, we propose an alternative control group of municipalities built using matching procedures. Municipalities are matched within the same region and year using the turnout in the year previous to the dissolution, the average turnout over the previous 5 and 10 years to the dissolution, population and unemployment rate. Table A4 compares observables characteristics of treated municipalities ("Treated, T") to the unconditional control group ("Control, C") and the matched control group ("Matched, M"). The table report average values in the first three columns, and standardized differences in the last two columns. Generally, treated municipalities are very similar to municipalities in both types of control groups in terms political variables.

In particular, the levels of participation in the aggregated turnout measure are 72% and 71%, respectively. Also the age of the mayor and the presence of female mayors is similar. On average, mayors in treated municipalities have slightly lower office duration.

Figure A6 in the Appendix shows the raw trends in turnout for treated and control municipalities using both the full control group and the matched sample. Trends in calendar time are relatively parallel in the unmatched data and the matched sample exhibits an even closer alignment. The comparability of treatment and control groups in both samples reinforces the validity of our identification strategy.

## 4.2 Estimating Equation

To estimate the effect of mafia infiltration on turnout we exploit variation in the staggered dissolution of municipalities in Italy between 1991 and 2023. We use the following difference-in-difference model

$$y_{i,t} = \sum_{\ell=-4, \ell \neq -1}^5 \gamma_k \cdot Dissoluted_{i,d-\ell} + \alpha_i + \lambda_t + X'_{i,t}\beta + u_{i,t}, \quad (1)$$

where  $y_{i,t}$  is the aggregated electoral turnout in municipality  $i$  at time  $t$ ,  $Dissoluted_{i,d-\ell}$  is an identifier for the dissolution of the city council at time  $k = 0$  in municipality  $i$ ,  $X_{i,t}$  is a vector of time-varying municipality and election-level control variables,  $\lambda_t$  and  $\theta_i$  are year and municipality fixed effects, and  $u_{i,t}$  is the error term. Note that the event time  $k$  is constructed in terms of 365 days distance from the dissolution date, rather than in calendar years, so that elections in  $k \geq 0$  always take place after the dissolution. Control variables include dummies for the type of election under consideration, as well as for other elections held on the same day and their interactions, to account for both the number and types of elections occurring simultaneously, capturing their potential impact on turnout. Additional covariates include the number of eligible electors, the unemployment rate, the old-age dependency ratio, and the shares of the population with low, middle, and high levels of education. The coefficient of interest is represented by  $\gamma_k$ , which identifies the difference in turnout between dissolved municipalities and non-dissolved municipalities at  $k \neq -1$ . Standard errors are clustered at the municipal level.

The validity for difference-in-differences generally relies on two core assumptions: (i) Parallel trends; (ii) No anticipation effect (Angrist and Krueger, 1991; Card and Krueger, 1994). In the context of our study, these assumptions imply that, in the absence of the dissolution, the treated and control units would have followed similar trajectories, and that the dissolution was unforeseen by the agents. On one hand, while it is challenging to perfectly validate the parallel trends assumption, we employ a dynamic DiD approach to provide statistical evidence on its satisfaction. Specifically, we examine the  $\gamma_k$  coefficients in the pre-treatment period to assess whether treated and control municipalities displayed comparable trends prior to the shock. On the no-anticipation assumption, the framework presented in Section 2.2 on the secret investigation upon the dismissal, greatly mitigates the risk of a foreseen presence of Mafia in the municipal council. However, the no-anticipation assumption may be violated in cases where there is widespread public awareness of corruption or mafia infiltration within the local governments. To address this concern, we incorporate a salience analysis, examining whether the effects are stronger in contexts where the dissolution is likely to have been more unexpected.

On top of the standard identifying assumption, staggered designs also require treatment homogeneity for identifying an average treatment effect. In our context, this implies that

voter turnout reacts homogeneously across treated cohorts, otherwise the result could be driven by contamination of pre-period and post-period estimate on the coefficient of interest. To tackle this issue, we also use the interaction weighted estimator proposed by [Sun and Abraham \(2021\)](#). The results are qualitatively similar to the ones in the main specification, mitigating treatment heterogeneity concerns.

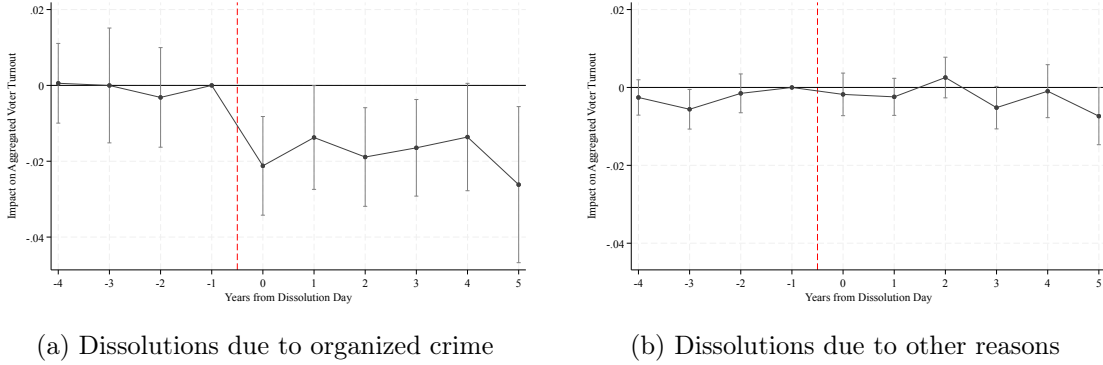
## 5 Results

### 5.1 Main Estimation

Figure 6 presents the  $\gamma_k$  coefficients from Equation (1). Specifically, Figure 6a illustrates the impact of city council dissolutions due to mafia infiltration on voter turnout. We estimate that turnout decreases by approximately 2 percentage points within 12 months of the dissolution. The effect remains significantly negative in the subsequent years, indicating a persistent decline in electoral participation. Importantly, the pre-treatment coefficients are close to zero and statistically insignificant, suggesting that treated and control municipalities followed parallel trends in voter turnout prior to the intervention.

Figure 6b serves as a placebo test, examining the effect of council dissolutions for reasons unrelated to organized crime (e.g., resignation or death of the mayor). This analysis helps isolate the impact of mafia-related dissolutions from general disruptions in local governance. Reassuringly, we find that dissolutions unrelated to organized crime do not produce any significant change in voter turnout, supporting the interpretation that the observed turnout decline is driven by organized crime-related events.

Figure 6: Impact of City Council Dissolutions on Voter Turnout, 1991–2023



*Notes:* The figures present the estimated effects of municipal council dissolutions due to mafia infiltration (left) or for other reasons (right), as specified in Equation (1), on voter turnout. The samples include municipalities in the Center, South, and Sicily. Turnout is measured between 1987 and 2023, and treatment cohorts vary from 1991 to 2023. The analysis in panel (a) includes 45'387 observations across 3'115 municipalities. The analysis in panel (b) includes 33'739 observations across 2'809 municipalities. Standard errors are clustered at the municipality level. Source: Census, DAIT, Eligendo.

Table A3 in the Appendix presents the effects of mafia-related city council dissolutions on voter turnout across a range of model specifications. The main coefficient remains consistently negative, statistically significant at the 1% level, and robust to the inclusion of various controls. This indicates a stable and strong association between city council dissolution and reduced electoral participation.

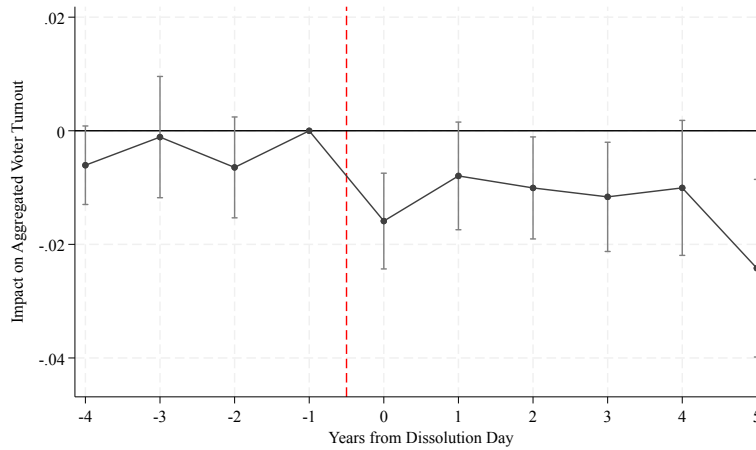
The results in Figure 6 indicate that the decline in voter turnout is specifically driven by city council dissolutions due to mafia infiltration, rather than by general municipal turnover. These findings suggest that such dissolutions may act as informational shocks, revealing the presence of organized crime within local institutions, and thereby erode political trust, ultimately leading to voter disengagement.

While a more detailed discussion of the underlying mechanisms and potential alternative explanations is provided later, we next examine whether the informational effects of these

dissolutions extend beyond the directly affected municipalities. If mafia-related dissolutions indeed serve as public signals about organized crime infiltration, the news is unlikely to remain geographically confined. To assess this, we study spillover effects on neighboring municipalities, defined as those sharing a direct border with a treated municipality (refer to [Figure A5](#) in the Appendix to see the selection of neighbors). Importantly, residents in neighboring municipalities are not subject to the same local institutional disruptions, but are still exposed to the information of the dissolution.

[Figure 7](#) presents results from estimating [Equation \(1\)](#) where treatment timing is determined by a dissolution in a neighboring municipality. Municipalities that experienced a dissolution themselves are excluded from this analysis. Strikingly, we find that neighboring municipalities experience a turnout decline of roughly 1.5 percentage points. As with the main sample, pre-treatment trends are flat and statistically insignificant, lending credibility to the parallel trends assumption.

Figure 7: Impact of City Council Dissolutions due to Organized Crime Infiltration on Aggregate Voter Turnout in Neighboring Municipalities, 1991-2023



*Notes:* The figure presents the estimated effects of a municipal council's dissolution due to mafia infiltration, as specified in [Equation \(1\)](#), on voter turnout in neighboring municipalities that share a border with those affected by the dissolution. The sample includes municipalities in the Center, South, and Sicily. Turnout is measured between 1987 and 2023, and treatment cohorts vary from 1991 to 2023. The analysis includes 40'357 observations across 2'839 municipalities. Standard errors are clustered at the municipality level. Significance levels: \*\*\*  $p < .01$ , \*\*  $0.01 \leq p < 0.05$ , \*  $0.05 \leq p < 0.10$ . Source: Census, DAIT, Eligendo.

The result of [Figure 7](#) strengthens the interpretation that the main effect is not driven by disruption of local governments. Rather, it support the possibility that the informational shocks about organized crime depresses political engagement.

In the following section, we examine the mechanisms through which mafia-related dissolutions may affect voter turnout, with particular attention to how informational shocks can influence political engagement. We then discuss the magnitude and implications of the estimated effects, before turning to a series of robustness checks.



## 5.2 Mechanism

Our findings point to a robust and significant drop in voter turnout following the city council dismissal of municipalities infiltrated by the organized crime. In this section we aim at identifying different possible mechanisms driving this result. This exercise does not only contribute to the general understanding of this phenomena, but it is also crucial for the evaluation of the result. Indeed, the interpretation of the decline in voter turnout obviously changes in case it is led by a drop in citizens' political trust or by a decrease of vote exchange activities of the organized crime.

**Political Trust:** A potential channel explaining the drop in voter turnout following the city council dismissals passes through a decline in political trust. Political trust can be conceptualized as the feeling that the "own interests would be attended to even if the authorities were exposed to little supervision or scrutiny" (Easton, 1975). On the one hand, the public disclosure of the connection between local politics and organized crime might represent an informational shock to some local voters, and spur negatively on their level of political trust. On the other hand, political trust in higher-level governmental institutions may also increase if the state intervention solves a known situation of malfeasance. The lack of institutional credibility lowers the expected return of the preferred electoral outcomes as well as the expressive benefit from the act of voting, and turnout decreases consequently. One indication that political trust declined in this context is partisan shifting as shown in Table A5. Dissolutions lead to a shift in vote share away from the incumbent party's alignment toward opposing blocs, suggesting a breakdown in trust toward the previously dominant political force. Second, Figure A7 documents a rise in the number of blank ballots following the dissolution, another potential sign of political distrust.

**OC-Controlled Votes:** There is widespread evidence of the involvement of organized crime in controlling votes in Italy. On the one hand, journalistic and juridical inquiries have reported evidence of vote exchange, vote buying and coercion to vote by the organized crime (e.g. ANSA (2024); Polizia di Stato (2025)).<sup>5</sup> On the other hand, there is evidence on the influence of organized crime on electoral outcomes. For example, the (instrumented) presence of the Sicilian mafia is associated with electoral gains for the Christian Democratic Party between 1946 and 1992 (De Feo and De Luca, 2017) and Forza Italia between 1994 and 2013 (Buonanno et al., 2016). Moreover, Alesina et al. (2019) document the strategical use of pre-electoral violence by the organized crime. If the city council dismissals lead to a weakening of the local presence of organized crime (Baraldi et al., 2024; Cingano and Tonello, 2020; Fenizia and Saggio, 2024), then the decline in voter turnout might be led by a decrease in vote control practices. In this setting, the risk of vote buying at the municipal level is mitigated; however, we cannot fully exclude the possibility of vote buying occurring at higher levels of political hierarchy within the same municipality.

**Income Effect:** Fenizia and Saggio (2024) find that city council dismissals generate large economic returns in the affected municipalities. This income effect may explain the decline in voter participation if economic welfare correlates negatively with turnout. For instance, higher employment may imply increased informational opportunity costs and therefore lower turnout. In this respect, the literature on the link between income effects and voter turnout is mixed. On the one hand, Charles and Stephens (2013) and Burden and Wichowsky (2014) find that local employment rates and wages are associated with lower turnout in US counties. On the other hand, Schafer et al. (2022) find that negative

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<sup>5</sup> Since 1992, the bargain of votes involving mafia is explicitly punished by the article 416ter of the Italian Criminal Code.

shocks in within-individual income lower turnout among poor voters in the city of Bologna. Timing is an important argument in our context. Voter turnout falls immediately after the city council dismissal, but the economic returns take some years to materialize (Fenizia and Saggio, 2024). Therefore, while income effects may play a role in the medium-term, they are unlikely to be the driving force behind the short-term decline in voter turnout.

**Migration Effect:** Another potential mechanism that could help explain the observed decline in voter turnout is migration out of municipalities affected by mafia-related dissolutions, particularly among younger or more politically engaged residents. If this dynamics were significant, part of the observed decline in turnout might be mechanically driven by changes in the composition of the resident electorate. However, this channel does not appear to pose any threat in our context. In Figure A8 we directly assess this possibility by examining changes in the number of registered electors across municipalities. The results show no meaningful difference: estimated effects are close to zero and statistically insignificant. This evidence suggests that migration is unlikely to be a major driver of the observed turnout decline.

### 5.2.1 Discussion

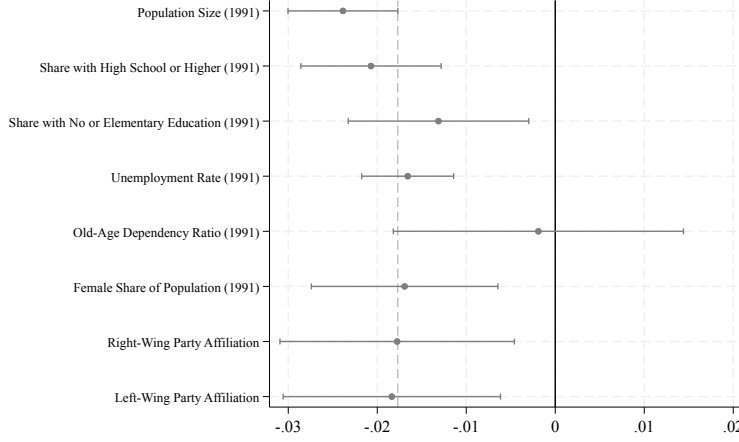
The estimated decline in voter turnout following mafia-related city council dissolutions, about 2 percentage points or roughly 2.8%, is substantial when placed in context with existing evidence, as shown in Table A7. Compared to Giommoni (2021), who finds a modest 0.3% turnout decline associated with higher corruption exposure in Italy, our effect is markedly larger. It is also comparable to or slightly below the effects found in randomized information interventions. For instance, Chong et al. (2015) and Rivera et al. (2024) report turnout drops of 2.5% to 10% in response to corruption information campaigns in Mexico. Taken together, this benchmarking exercise shows that the political consequences of mafia-related dissolutions are not only statistically robust but also substantively meaningful, falling within the range of major institutional or informational disruptions documented in the literature.

## 5.3 Effect Heterogeneity

In this section, we explore the characteristics that condition the magnitude of the turnout response to mafia-related dissolutions. Figure 9a plots the estimated baseline effect alongside its interaction with key pre-treatment municipal characteristics. The results suggest that municipalities that had larger populations in 1991 exhibit a significantly stronger decline in voter turnout following a dissolution. In contrast, municipalities with a higher old-age dependency ratio experience a considerably attenuated effect. Notably, it seems that the institutional shock transcends party lines as the political party affiliation of the mayor does not affect the magnitude of the turnout response.

For completeness, Figure A9 in Appendix presents the interaction coefficients without the baseline terms. That confirm population size, and demographic age structure as statistically significant and robust heterogeneities.

Figure 8: Impact of City Council Dissolutions on Voter Turnout Conditional on Observable Characteristics, 1991-2023



Notes: The figure shows conditional estimates of the effect of municipal council dissolution due to mafia infiltration on voter turnout, based on the linear combinations of the coefficients. The dashed grey line represents the main (average) treatment effect estimated Equation (1). Standard errors are clustered at the municipality level. Significance levels: \*\*\*  $p < .01$ , \*\*  $0.01 \leq p < 0.05$ , \*  $0.05 \leq p < 0.10$ . Source: Census, DAIT, Eligendo.

The stronger negative effect observed in larger municipalities may be explained by the fact that a dissolution due to mafia-related reasons is more salient in this context. This is not only because larger municipalities tend to receive more attention from regional and national media, but also because the public may perceive them as less likely to be infiltrated by organized crime due to their administrative capacity, institutional reputation, or political relevance. As a result, a dissolution in these settings may come as a greater shock to voters, leading to a stronger decline in turnout. In this sense, salience does not merely amplify the informational effect of the dissolution but also reflects its unexpectedness.

This observation motivates our subsequent analysis of saliency of the dissolution, where we examine more directly whether the magnitude of the turnout response depends on how surprising the dissolution is to the public. This analysis serves two key purposes. First, it helps explain the mechanisms driving the observed heterogeneity in voter responses. Second, it provides additional support for the no-anticipation assumption by showing that stronger effects arise precisely where the dissolution was likely less expected by voters.

### 5.3.1 Saliency

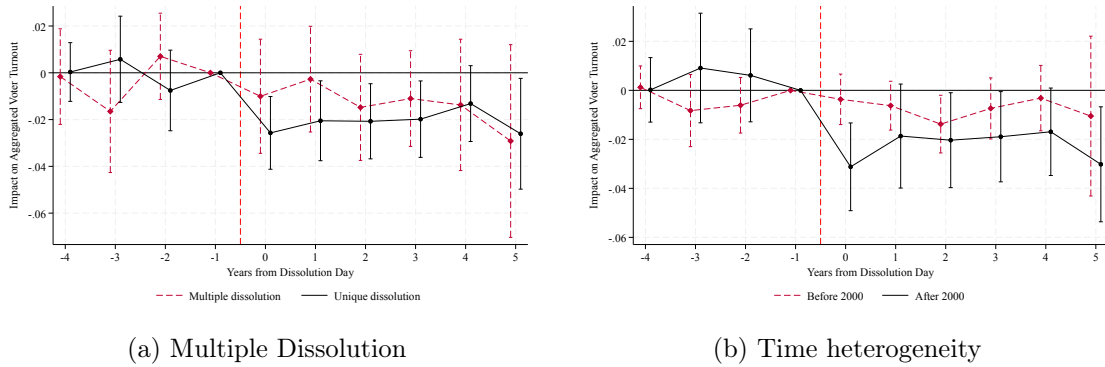
As argued, the strength of the turnout response is likely shaped not only by the information of the dissolution itself, but also by how unexpected the event is within the local political context. To explore this idea empirically, we examine two sources of variation that plausibly condition the saliency of the dissolution: the rarity of such events within a municipality and their timing relative to the historical patterns of mafia activity.

Figure 9 presents the results of this analysis. In particular, Figure 9a compares municipalities that experienced only one dissolution during our sample period with those that were dissolved multiple times. The logic here is that in municipalities that will go through repeated dissolutions, the public may already be aware of persistent mafia infiltration in the local governments, diminishing reducing the perceived novelty, or shock value, of the event. Consistent with this interpretation, we find that the negative effect on turnout

is concentrated in municipalities that experienced a unique dissolution. In contrast, the response is close to zero in municipalities that go through multiple dissolutions.

The [Figure 9b](#) introduces a second dimension of saliency by comparing dissolutions that occurred before and after the year 2000. As previously documented, mafia-related crimes, particularly homicides, were more prevalent during the 1990s. In that earlier context, dissolutions may have been less surprising or less newsworthy, especially in areas already accustomed to high levels of criminal activity. After 2000, however, as mafia-related violence declined and legal enforcement became more institutionalized, the same events likely became more exceptional and more politically resonant. The results support this view: the turnout decline is significantly stronger for dissolutions that occurred after the year 2000.

Figure 9: Heterogeneities in the Impact of City Council Dissolutions on Voter Turnout, 1991–2023



*Notes:* The figure presents the estimated effects of a municipal council’s dissolution due to mafia infiltration, as specified in Equation (1), on voter turnout, conditional on whether the municipalities incurred or not in multiple dissolutions (left) whether the dissolution occurred before or after 2000 (right). The samples include municipalities in the Center, South, and Sicily. Turnout is measured between 1987 and 2023, and treatment cohorts vary from 1991 to 2023. The analysis in panel (a) includes 43’386 observations in 2’923 municipalities (multiple dissolutions) and 44’860 observations in 3’039 municipalities (unique dissolutions). The analysis in panel (b) includes 22’352 observations in 2’885 municipalities (pre-2000 dissolutions) and 33’740 observations in 3’019 municipalities (post-2000). Standard errors are clustered at the municipality level. Source: Census, DAIT, Eligendo.

Taken together, these results highlight the importance of the saliency of the shock in shaping citizens’ political reactions to institutional interventions. [Figure 9](#) also reinforces the credibility of our identification strategy by showing that the effects are strongest precisely where prior anticipation is least likely. More broadly, the post-2000 results highlight an emerging paradox in contemporary governance: even well-intentioned policies aimed at restoring democratic integrity may have increasingly adverse consequences for political participation in an era when such interventions are more visible, more surprising, and more politically charged.

## 5.4 Robustness Checks

To test the robustness of the results presented in [Section 5.1](#), we estimate a number of alternative models.

First, to mitigate the effect of cohort heterogeneity in the response to city council dissolutions, we analyze the robustness of our results by using the interaction-weighted estimator proposed by [Sun and Abraham \(2021\)](#). [Figure A10](#) shows the results, which are qualita-

tively similar to the results of the main specification.

Second, as described in [Section 4.1](#) we construct an alternative control group using a 5-closest neighborhood matching. [Figure A11](#) reports the results of [Equation \(1\)](#) using the matched sample. Again, results are very similar compared to the main estimation presented in [Figure 6a](#). As for the main specification, [Table A6](#) show that these results on the matched sample are robust to the inclusion of various controls.

Third, given the presence of geographic spillovers documented in [Section 5.1](#), we estimate the model in [Equation \(1\)](#) excluding the bordering municipalities. [Figure A12](#) shows that the results are not particularly affected by this measure. If anything, as expected, the decrease in voter turnout is slightly more pronounced.

Fourth, we conduct robustness checks to verify that our results are not driven by the specific aggregation of turnout measures. [Figure A13](#) shows that results are robust to using an alternative measure of turnout, calculated as the simple average across individual elections. Meanwhile, [Table A8](#) breaks down turnout by election type, revealing a consistent negative effect across all categories.

Fifth, [Table A9](#) and [Figure A14](#) present robustness checks assessing the influence of outliers. [Table A9](#) shows that the estimated effect remains stable and statistically significant when we estimate the model separately within each region, confirming that the results are not driven by specific geographic areas. Further, [Figure A14](#) reports a leave-one-out analysis, where we re-estimate the model repeatedly while excluding one treated municipality at a time. The consistency of the estimated coefficients across all iterations indicates that no single treated municipality disproportionately influences the overall result. Together, these analyses reinforce the robustness of our findings and address concerns that the main effect could be driven by outliers.

## 6 Conclusion

This paper investigates how the dismissal of Italian city councils infiltrated by organized crime affects voter turnout. We argue that these interventions operate as informational shocks: by publicly disclosing collusion between elected officials and organized crime, they undermine trust in political institutions and reduce the perceived benefits of participating in elections. To test this, we leverage the staggered timing of city council dismissals in a difference-in-differences and event study framework, measuring voter turnout at higher institutional levels to isolate demand-side effects on political participation and minimizing potential contamination from local political dynamics.

Our findings show that city council dismissals cause a significant and persistent reduction in turnout, averaging 2 percentage points in national, regional, and provincial elections. Placebo tests with municipalities dissolved for unrelated reasons confirm that the effect is specific to organized crime-related interventions. The effect is stronger in contexts where mafia-related events are more salient and less anticipated by the public, such as after 2000 and in municipalities dissolved only one time. The result is robust to a wide range of alternative specifications, including matched control groups and alternative estimators.

We also find negative spillover effects on neighboring municipalities, indicating that exposure to the information, even absent direct intervention, can reduce political engagement. This suggests that the mechanism likely operates through public awareness rather than institutional disruption alone.

Our contribution is twofold. First, we add to the growing literature on the electoral consequences of organized crime, highlighting a previously overlooked consequence of anti-mafia policies. While prior work has emphasized the economic and administrative benefits of city council dismissals (Acconcia et al., 2014; Fenizia and Saggio, 2024), we show that these gains come at the cost of diminished political participation. Second, by identifying an exogenous shock to political trust, we provide new empirical evidence for the causal link between institutional trust and electoral participation, a key yet difficult-to-identify relationship.

Taken together, our findings point to a trade-off at the heart of state interventions against organized crime. While dismantling collusive local governance is crucial for state capacity and development, doing so publicly may inadvertently disillusion voters and reduce democratic engagement. Designing these interventions in ways that preserve or even rebuild trust in political institutions should be a central concern for policymakers.

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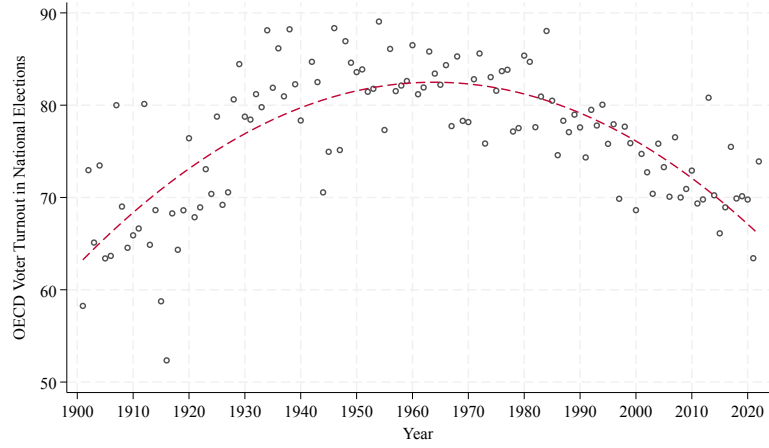
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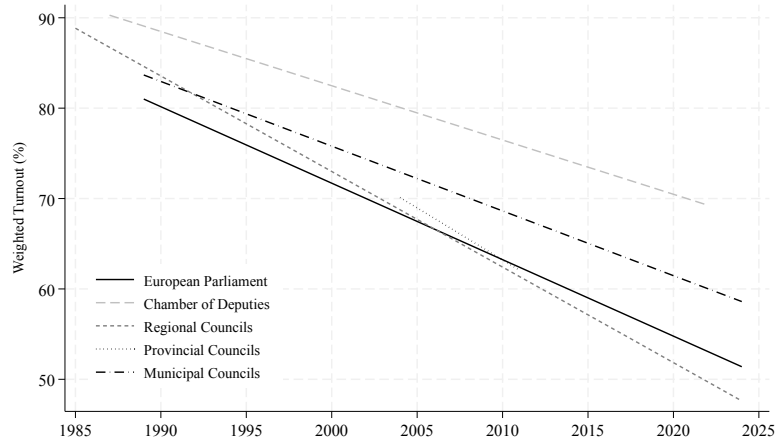
## 7 Appendix

Figure A1: Average Turnout in OECD National Elections by Year, 1900-2020.



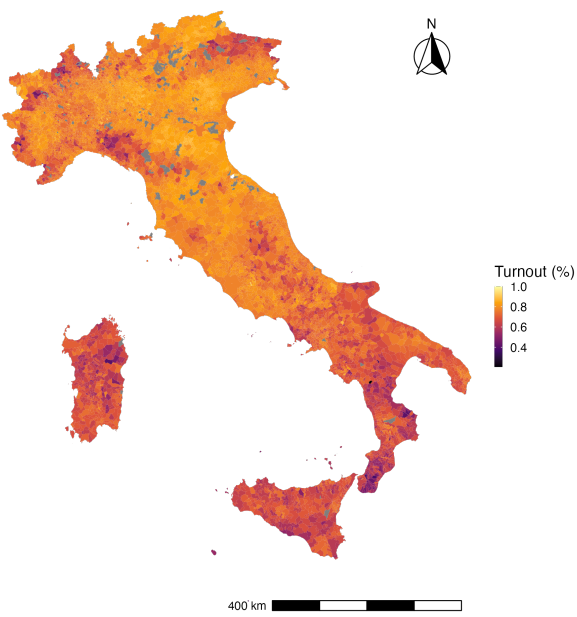
Notes: *V-Dem. Sample: OECD countries. Method: Unweighted average by year. Source: Eligendo.*

Figure A2: Linear Fit of the Average Turnout by Election Type and Year, 1990-2020.



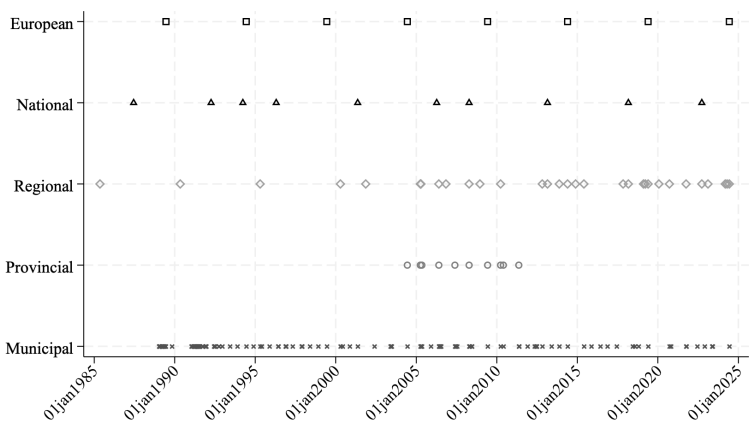
Notes: *Source: Eligendo.*

Figure A3: Turnout in Chamber of Deputies Election by Municipality, 2013.



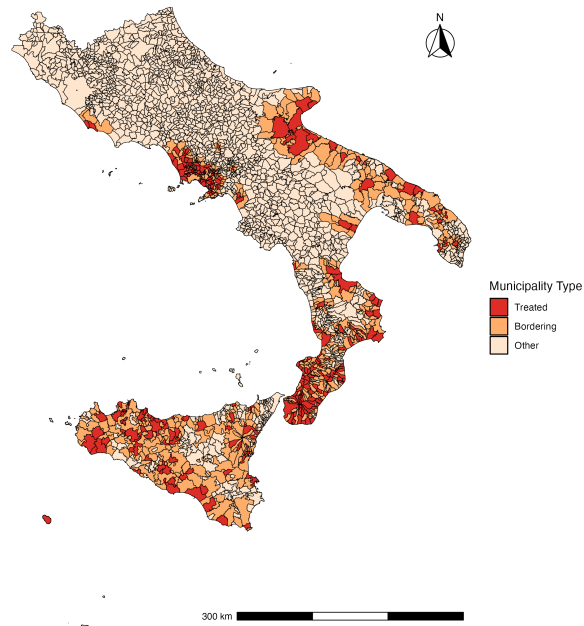
Notes: Source: *Eligendo*.

Figure A4: Elections Covered in the *Eligendo* Dataset, 1985-2025



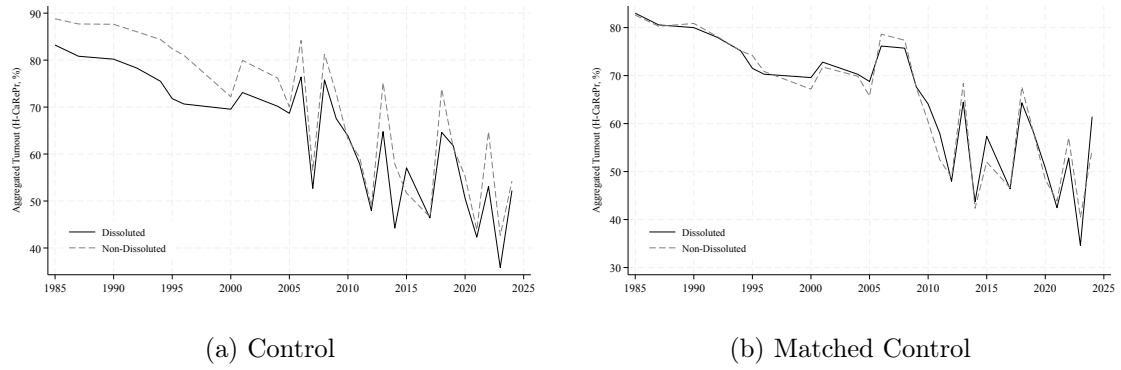
Notes: Source: *Eligendo*.

Figure A5: Municipalities Neighboring City Council Dissolutions due to Organized Crime in Southern Italy, 1991-2023



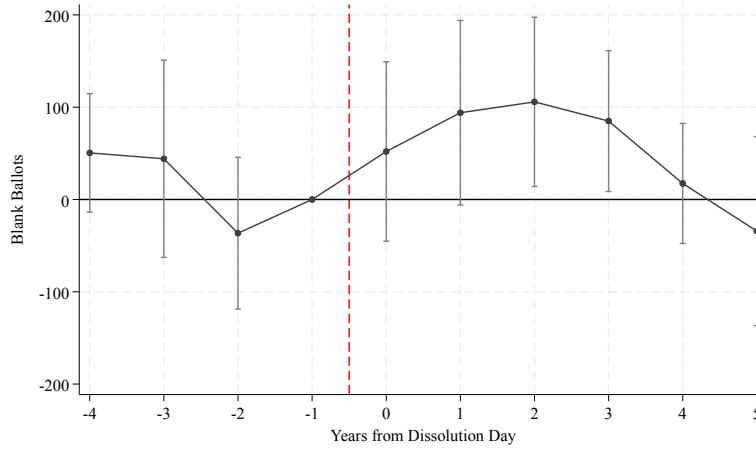
Notes: Source: DAIT.

Figure A6: Yearly trends in turnout, Unmatched and Matched Sample, 1985, 2023



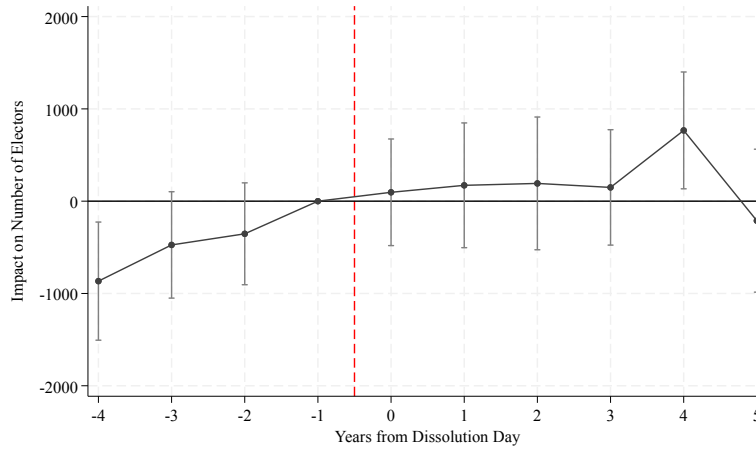
Notes: The figure presents the raw trends in voter turnout in municipalities dissolved due to mafia infiltration and in control municipalities for (a) all sample, and (b) the matched sample. The samples includes municipalities in the Center, South, and Sicily. Turnout is measured between 1985 and 2023, and treatment cohorts vary from 1991 to 2023. Source: DAIT, Eligendo.

Figure A7: Impact of City Council Dissolutions due to Organized Crime Infiltration on Number of Blank Ballots, 1991-2023



Notes: The figure presents the estimated effects of a municipal council's dissolution due to mafia infiltration, as specified in Equation (1), on the number of blank ballots. The sample includes municipalities in the Center, South, and Sicily. Blank ballots are measured between 1987 and 2023, and treatment cohorts vary from 1991 to 2023. The analysis includes 29'466 observations across 3'136 municipalities. Standard errors are clustered at the municipality level. Significance levels: \*\*\*  $p < .01$ , \*\*  $0.01 \leq p < 0.05$ , \*  $0.05 \leq p < 0.10$ . Source: Census, DAIT, Eligendo.

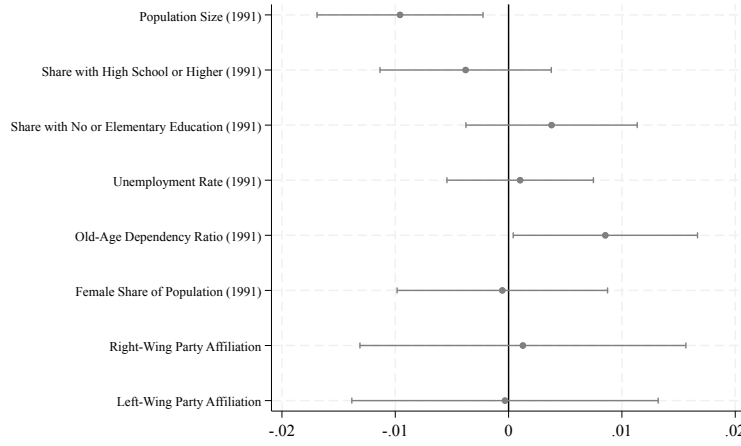
Figure A8: Impact of City Council Dissolutions due to Organized Crime Infiltration on Number of Electors, 1991-2023



Notes: The figure presents the estimated effects of a municipal council's dissolution due to mafia infiltration, as specified in Equation (1), on the absolute number of electors. The sample includes municipalities in the Center, South, and Sicily. Electors are measured between 1987 and 2023, and treatment cohorts vary from 1991 to 2023. The analysis covers 45'387 observations in 3'115 municipalities. Standard errors are clustered at the municipality level. Significance levels: \*\*\*  $p < .01$ , \*\*  $0.01 \leq p < 0.05$ , \*  $0.05 \leq p < 0.10$ . Source: Census, DAIT, Eligendo.

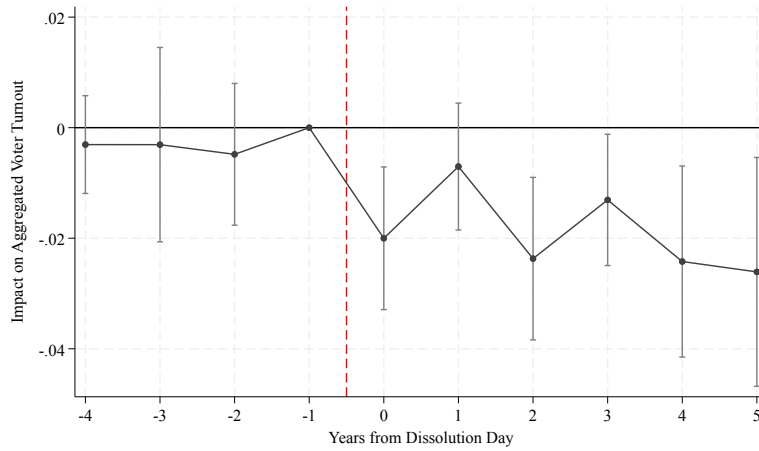


Figure A9: Impact of City Council Dissolutions on Voter Turnout Interacted with Observable Characteristics, 1991-2023



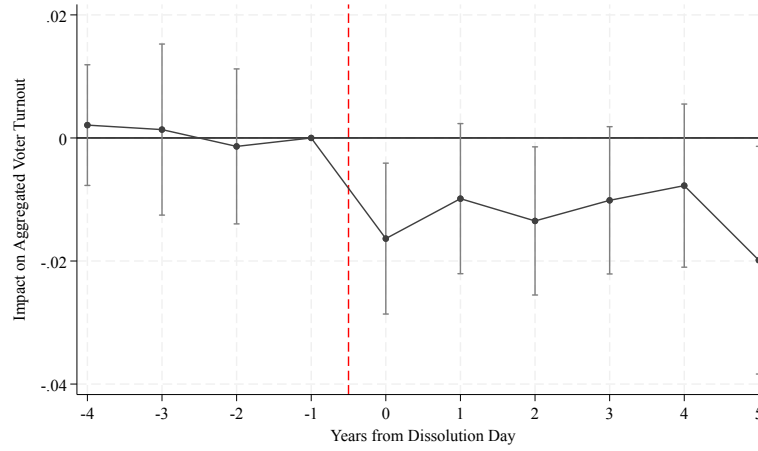
Notes: The figure shows the conditional estimates of the effect of municipal council dissolution due to mafia infiltration on voter turnout, based on the interaction between the observable and the  $\gamma$ -coefficients estimated in Equation (1). Standard errors are clustered at the municipality level. Significance levels: \*\*\*  $p < .01$ , \*\*  $0.01 \leq p < 0.05$ , \*  $0.05 \leq p < 0.10$ . Source: Census, DAIT, Eligendo.

Figure A10: Impact of City Council Dissolutions due to Organized Crime Infiltration on Aggregate Voter Turnout using Sun and Abraham (2021), 1991-2023



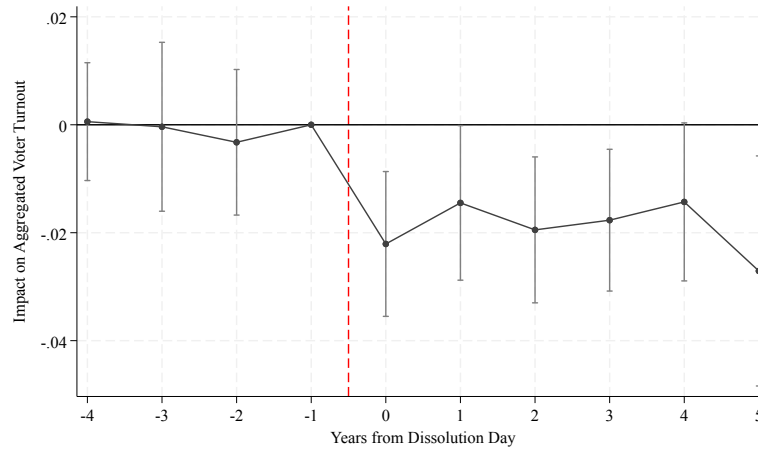
Notes: The figure presents the estimated effects of a municipal council's dissolution due to mafia infiltration, using Sun and Abraham (2021) interaction-weighted estimator, on voter turnout. The sample includes municipalities in the Center, South, and Sicily. Turnout is measured between 1987 and 2023, and treatment cohorts vary from 1991 to 2023. The analysis covers 45'558 observations in 3'115 municipalities. Standard errors are clustered at the municipality level. Significance levels: \*\*\*  $p < .01$ , \*\*  $0.01 \leq p < 0.05$ , \*  $0.05 \leq p < 0.10$ . Source: Census, DAIT, Eligendo.

Figure A11: Impact of City Council Dissolutions due to Organized Crime Infiltration on Aggregate Voter using Matched Control Group, 1991-2023



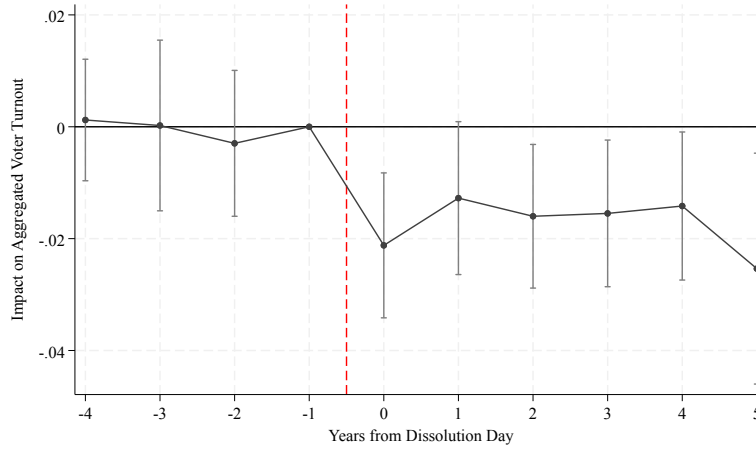
Notes: The figure presents the estimated effects of a municipal council's dissolution due to mafia infiltration, as specified in Equation (1), on voter turnout. The sample includes municipalities in the Center, South, and Sicily matched to dissolved municipalities by region year. Matching variables include turnout in the 5 years prior to the dissolution, population, the old dependency ratio, and unemployment rate. Turnout is measured between 1987 and 2023, and treatment cohorts vary from 1991 to 2023. The analysis covers 20'616 observations in 1'474 municipalities. Standard errors are clustered at the municipality level. Significance levels: \*\*\*  $p < .01$ , \*\*  $0.01 \leq p < 0.05$ , \*  $0.05 \leq p < 0.10$ . Source: Census, DAIT, Eligendo.

Figure A12: Impact of City Council Dissolutions on Voter Turnout removing Neighboring Municipalities, 1991–2023



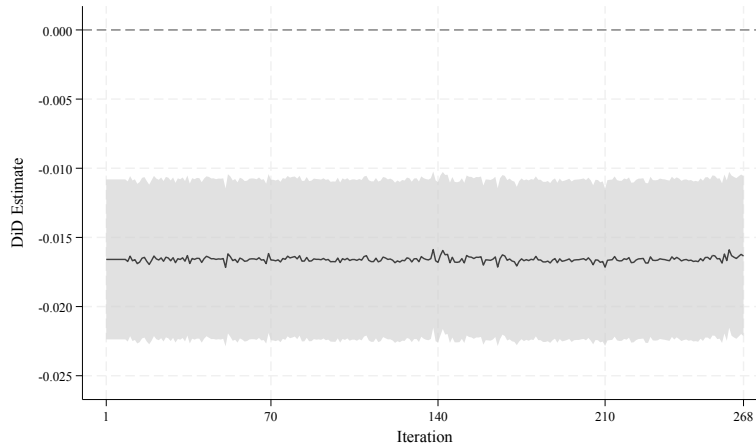
Notes: The figure presents the estimated effects of a municipal council's dissolution due to mafia infiltration, as specified in Equation (1), on voter turnout. The sample includes municipalities in the Center, South, and Sicily excluding from the controls municipalities neighboring dissolved municipalities. Turnout is measured between 1987 and 2023, and treatment cohorts vary from 1991 to 2023. The analysis includes 37'728 observations across 2'591 municipalities. Standard errors are clustered at the municipality level. Significance levels: \*\*\*  $p < .01$ , \*\*  $0.01 \leq p < 0.05$ , \*  $0.05 \leq p < 0.10$ . Source: Census, DAIT, Eligendo.

Figure A13: Impact of City Council Dissolutions due to Organized Crime Infiltration on Aggregate Voter using Yearly Average Turnout, 1991-2023



Notes: The figure presents the estimated effects of a municipal council's dissolution due to mafia infiltration, as specified in Equation (1), on average voter turnout. The sample includes municipalities in the Center, South, and Sicily matched to dissolved municipalities. Turnout is measured between 1987 and 2023, and treatment cohorts vary from 1991 to 2023. The analysis covers 45'387 observations in 3'115 municipalities. Standard errors are clustered at the municipality level. Significance levels: \*\*\*  $p < .01$ , \*\*  $0.01 \leq p < 0.05$ , \*  $0.05 \leq p < 0.10$ . Source: Census, DAIT, Eligendo.

Figure A14: Impact of City Council Dissolutions due to Organized Crime Infiltration on Aggregate Voter Turnout, Leave-One-Out, 1991-2023



Notes: The figure presents the estimated effects of a municipal council's dissolution due to mafia infiltration, as specified in Equation (1), on voter turnout. The  $\gamma_k$  coefficients are aggregated into a single post-period estimate and plotted using a leave-one-out procedure, iteratively excluding one municipality at a time over 280 iterations. The sample includes municipalities in the Center, South, and Sicily. Turnout is measured between 1987 and 2023, and treatment cohorts vary from 1991 to 2023. Standard errors are clustered at the municipality level. Significance levels: \*\*\*  $p < .01$ , \*\*  $0.01 \leq p < 0.05$ , \*  $0.05 \leq p < 0.10$ . Source: Census, DAIT, Eligendo.

Table A1: List of Dissoluted Municipalities, 1991-2023

Basilicata	Montalbano Jonico (16.12.1993), Scanzano Jonico (16.12.2019)
Calabria	Acquaro (18.9.2023), Africo (1.8.2014), Africo (27.10.2003, 2.12.2019), Amantea (4.8.2008, 17.2.2020), Ardore (27.6.2013), Badolato (19.4.2014), Bagaladi (6.4.2012), Bagnara Calabria (14.4.2015), Borgia (2.7.2010), Botricello (9.5.2003), Bova Marina (23.3.2012, 11.5.2017), Bovalino (2.4.2015), Brancaleone (31.7.2017), Briatico (17.3.2003, 24.1.2012, 8.5.2018), Calanna (2.11.2004), Camini (16.1.1995), Canolo (6.5.2017), Capistrano (17.10.2023), Careri (15.2.2012, 10.1.2019), Casabona (29.10.2018), Casignana (19.4.2013), Cassano all'Ionio (22.11.2017), Cirò (19.2.2001, 21.10.2013), Cirò Marina (19.1.2018), Condofuri (12.10.2010), Corigliano-Rossano (9.6.2011), Cosoleto (8.9.1997, 21.11.2022), Cropani (31.7.2017), Crucoli (29.10.2018), Cutro (14.8.2020), Delianuova (30.9.1991, 21.11.2018), Fabrizia (27.7.2009), Gioia Tauro (18.1.1993, 24.4.2008, 11.5.2017), Guardavalle (21.11.2003, 23.2.2021), Isca sullo Ionio (28.1.1992), Isola di Capo Rizzuto (9.5.2003, 22.11.2017), Joppolo (7.2.2014), Lamezia Terme (30.9.1991, 5.11.2002, 22.11.2017), Laureana di Borrello (11.5.2017), Limbadi (26.4.2018), Marcedusa (8.10.2001), Marina di Gioiosa Ionica (7.7.2011, 22.11.2017), Melito di Porto Salvo (30.9.1991, 28.2.1996, 27.3.2013), Mileto (6.4.2012), Molochio (23.6.1993), Monasterace (27.10.2003), Mongiana (12.7.2012), Montebello Jonico (24.4.2013), Nardodipace (19.12.2011, 7.12.2015), Nicotera (2.9.2005, 13.8.2010, 23.11.2016), Nocera Terinese (30.8.2021), Palizzi (3.5.2019), Parghelia (17.9.2007), Petronà (22.11.2017), Pizzo (7.7.2006, 23.3.2012, 26.4.2018, 25.2.2020), Portigliola (22.5.2022), Quarto (10.4.1992), Reggio di Calabria (9.10.2012), Rende (28.6.2023), Ricadi (11.2.2014), Rizziconi (28.10.2016, 31.7.2000), Roccaforte del Greco (10.2.1996, 27.10.2003, 28.2.2011), Roghudi (16.1.1995), Rosarno (28.1.1992, 15.12.2008, 30.8.2021), Samo (24.1.2012), San Calogero (27.3.2013), San Ferdinando (20.5.1992, 23.4.2009, 31.10.2014), San Giorgio Morgeto (27.12.2019), San Gregorio d'Ippona (24.4.2007, 8.5.2018), San Luca (14.9.2000, 19.5.2013), San Procopio (23.12.2010), Sant'Andrea Apostolo dello Ionio (30.9.1991), Sant'Eufemia d'Aspromonte (14.8.2020), Sant'Ilario dello Ionio (15.2.2012), Sant'Onofrio (23.4.2009), Santo Stefano in Aspromonte (30.3.1998), Scalea (25.2.2014), Scilla (22.3.2018, 11.4.2023), Seminara (30.9.1991, 29.12.2007), Siderno (27.3.2013, 9.8.2018), Simeri Crichi (30.8.2021), Sinopoli (8.9.1997, 1.8.2019), Sorbo San Basile (13.6.2017), Soriano Calabro (25.1.2007, 17.6.2022), Stefanaceni (28.1.1992), Stilo (9.5.2019), Strongoli (3.9.2003, 17.4.2018), Taurianova (2.8.1991, 23.4.2009, 5.7.2013), Tropea (12.8.2016)

Campania	Acerra (18.1.1993), Afragola (20.4.1999, 25.10.2005), Arzano (5.3.2008, 29.4.2015, 22.5.2019), Battipaglia (4.4.2014), Boscoreale (15.12.1998, 26.1.2005), Brusciano (26.1.2005), Caivano (26.4.2018, 17.10.2023), Calvizzano (17.4.2018), Carinola (18.1.1993), Casal di Principe (30.9.1991, 23.12.1996, 6.4.2012), Casalnuovo di Napoli (29.12.2007), Casaluze (7.7.2006), Casamarciano (4.6.1993), Casandrino (2.8.1991, 16.2.1998), Casapesenna (30.9.1991, 30.1.1996, 6.4.2012), Casavatore (24.1.2017), Casola di Napoli (4.6.1993), Casoria (25.10.2005), Castel Volturno (14.9.1998, 6.4.2012), Castellammare di Stabia (24.2.2022), Castello di Cisterna (10.7.2009), Cesa (27.8.1992), Crispano (25.10.2005, 24.1.2017), Ercolano (14.6.1993), Frattamaggiore (5.11.2002), Frignano (11.3.1993), Giugliano in Campania (24.4.2013), Gragnano (23.3.2012), Grazzanise (11.9.1992, 26.1.1998, 8.3.2013), Gricignano di Aversa (2.8.2009), Liveri (19.5.1997), Lusciano (12.12.1992, 17.10.2007), Marano di Napoli (30.9.1991, 28.7.2004, 30.12.2016, 18.6.2021), Marcianise (19.3.2008), Melito di Napoli (23.12.2005), Mondragone (30.9.1991), Montecorvino Pugliano (21.11.2003), Nocera Inferiore (14.4.1993), Nola (16.8.1993, 26.4.1996), Orta di Atella (4.7.2008, 8.11.2019), Ottaviano (8.9.1997), Pagani (11.3.1993, 23.3.2012), Pago del Vallo di Lauro (23.6.1993, 13.3.2009), Pignataro Maggiore (30.11.2000), Pimonte (4.4.1996), Poggiomarino (30.9.1991, 9.2.1999), Pomigliano d'Arco (16.8.1993), Pompei (11.9.2001), Portici (10.9.2002), Pozzuoli (23.12.2005), Pratola Serra (26.10.2020), Quarto (27.3.2013), Quindici (14.4.1993, 24.9.2002), Recale (31.7.1992), San Cipriano d'Aversa (27.8.1992, 19.3.2008, 4.9.2012), San Felice a Cancelli (11.5.2017), San Gennaro Vesuviano (12.2.2018), San Gennaro Vesuviano (6.11.2001, 15.11.2006, 12.2.2018), San Giuseppe Vesuviano (4.6.1993, 9.12.2009, 9.6.2022), San Lorenzo Maggiore (24.4.1994), San Paolo Bel Sito (4.3.1994, 5.11.2002), San Tammaro (23.12.2005), Sant'Antimo (30.9.1991, 16.3.2020), Sant'Antonio Abate (2.9.1993), Santa Maria la Carità (8.2.2002), Santa Maria la Fossa (26.10.1992, 11.7.1996), Sarno (23.6.1993), Scafati (11.3.1993, 27.1.2017), Sparanise (19.12.2022), Terzigno (28.7.1997), Teverola (16.12.1993), Torre Annunziata (4.6.1993, 6.5.2022), Torre del Greco (25.10.2005), Trentola Ducenta (10.5.2016), Tufino (25.10.2005), Villa Literno (23.4.2009), Villa di Briano (26.10.1992, 26.1.1998), Villaricca (17.1.1994, 6.8.2021), Volla (2.11.2004)
Emilia-Romagna	Brescello (20.4.2016)
Lazio	Anzio (21.11.2022), Nettuno (28.11.2005, 21.11.2022), Ostia (X Municipio di Roma, 27.9.2015)
Liguria	Bordighera (10.3.2011), Lavagna (27.3.2017), Ventimiglia (6.2.2012)
Lombardia	Sedriano (15.10.2013)
Piemonte	Bardonecchia (2.5.1995), Leini (23.3.2012), Rivarolo Canavese (22.5.2012)

Puglia	Carmiano (5.12.2019), Carovigno (12.3.2021), Cellino San Marco (19.4.2014), Cerignola (14.10.2019), Foggia (6.8.2021), Galipoli (30.9.1991), Gioia del Colle (10.9.1993), Manduria (26.4.2018), Manfredonia (22.10.2019), Mattinata (16.3.2018), Modugno (30.3.1993), Monopoli (23.4.1994), Monte Sant'Angelo (20.7.2015), Neviano (5.8.2022), Orta Nova (18.7.2023), Ostuni (27.12.2021), Parabita (15.3.2017), Scorrano (20.1.2020), Sogliano Cavour (29.6.2018), Squinzano (30.1.2021), Surbo (30.9.1991, 8.5.2018), Terlizzi (30.3.1993), Trani (10.9.1993), Trinitapoli (5.4.2022), Valenzano (25.9.2017)
Sicilia	Aci Catena (28.6.1993), Adrano (30.9.1991), Altavilla Milicia (11.7.1996, 11.2.2014), Augusta (8.3.2013), Bagheria (11.3.1993, 20.4.1999), Barrafranca (16.4.2021), Bolognetta (18.11.2021), Bompensiere (26.4.2018), Borgetto (2.5.2017), Burgio (2.9.2005), Caccamo (11.3.1993, 10.3.1999), Calatabiano (10.7.2000, 30.8.2021), Caltavuturo (8.10.2001), Camastra (10.4.2018), Campobello di Licata (18.7.2006), Campobello di Mazara (11.7.1992, 27.7.2012), Canicattì (6.9.2004), Capaci (9.6.1992), Castellammare del Golfo (27.3.2006), Castelvetro (7.6.2017), Castiglione di Sicilia (23.5.2023), Castrofilippo (15.4.2011), Cerda (30.9.1991, 12.12.2006), Cinisi (11.9.2001), Corleone (12.8.2016), Ficarazzi (20.4.1999), Furnari (4.12.2009), Gela (18.7.1992), Giardinello (8.8.2014), Isola delle Femmine (9.11.2012), Lascari (31.10.1997), Licata (31.7.1992), Maniace (16.5.2020), Mascali (9.6.1992, 27.3.2013), Mascalucia (13.7.1993), Mazara del Vallo (25.10.1993), Mazzarrà Sant'Andrea (13.10.2015), Mezzojuso (16.12.2019), Misilmeri (9.6.1992, 29.4.2003, 27.7.2012), Misterbianco (21.12.1991, 1.10.2019), Mistretta (28.3.2019), Moio Alcantara (2.2.2023), Montelepre (13.3.2014), Niscemi (18.7.1992, 27.4.2004), Pachino (15.2.2019), Palagonia (9.8.2023), Palazzo Adriano (28.10.2016), Pantelleria (17.3.2003), Partanna (14.4.1993), Partinico (29.7.2020), Piraino (30.9.1991), Polizzi Generosa (27.3.2013), Pollina (31.10.1997), Racalmuto (23.3.2012), Ragalna (23.11.1993), Riesi (16.10.1992, 26.1.2005), Roccamena (26.1.2006), Salemi (23.3.2012), San Biagio Platani (6.8.2018), San Cataldo (28.3.2019), San Cipirello (20.6.2019), San Giovanni la Punta (11.3.1993, 9.5.2003), San Giuseppe Jato (9.7.2021), Santa Flavia (30.9.1991), Scicli (18.7.1992, 29.4.2015), Siculiana (13.6.2008), Terme Vigliatore (23.12.2005), Termini Imerese (11.3.1993), Torretta (28.11.2005, 8.8.2019), Tortorici (23.12.2020), Trabia (30.9.1991), Trecastagni (8.5.2018), Valledlunga Pratameno (27.7.2009), Vicari (25.10.2005), Villabate (20.4.1999, 27.4.2004), Vittoria (2.8.2018)
Valle d'Aosta	Saint-Pierre (10.2.2020)

Notes: Department of Internal and Territorial Affairs (DAIT, 2024).

Table A2: Reasons for Municipal Dissolutions

<i>Reason</i>	<i>Description</i>
Death of the mayor or serious impediment	The mayor passes away or is permanently unable to fulfill their role. The city council is dismissed and the municipality is administered by an external commissioner until elections are held at the first eligible date.
Resignation of the mayor	Mayors may resign for personal or political reasons. The council is automatically dissolved after 20 days and an external commissioner is appointed. Elections are held at the first eligible date.
Impeachment or remotion of the mayor	Removal due to incompatibility with other roles (e.g., regional or national office, healthcare leadership), violations of law, or issues of public order. An external commissioner is appointed and elections are held at the first eligible date.
Motion of no confidence	A majority of councillors vote against the mayor or the financial law. The council is dismissed, and a commissioner is appointed. Elections are typically held after 18 months.
Resignation of the majority of councillors	If more than 50% of the council resign, the council is automatically dissolved. A commissioner takes over and elections are usually scheduled after 18 months.
Failure to approve the budget	If the municipal council fails to pass the budget by legal deadlines, it is dissolved. A commissioner is appointed and elections follow (often after 18 months).
Serious legal or constitutional violation	Dissolution occurs if serious breaches of law or constitutional provisions are identified. The municipality is administered by a commissioner until elections are held.
Public order concerns	When the functioning of the municipality is severely compromised by disorder or institutional paralysis, it can be dissolved and managed by a commissioner until new elections.
Mafia infiltration	When concrete evidence links officials to organized crime (per Law 221/1991), the council is dissolved. A commissioner is appointed with full powers and elections are held after 18 months.

Notes: *DAIT*.

Table A3: Impact of City Council Dissolutions due to Organized Crime Infiltration on Aggregate Voter Turnout across Specifications, 1991-2023

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
<i>Dissolved</i>	-0.0203*** (0.00414)	-0.0177*** (0.00357)	-0.0184*** (0.00342)	-0.0177*** (0.00329)
Observations	46'758	46'756	46'756	45'387
R-squared	0.517	0.855	0.858	0.862
Year FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Municipality FE	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Election Controls	No	No	Yes	Yes
Municipality Controls	No	No	No	Yes

Notes: Notes: The table presents the estimated effects of a municipal council's dissolution due to mafia infiltration, as specified in Equation (1), on voter turnout. For clarity, the  $\gamma_k$  coefficients are binned in a post-period coefficient. The sample includes municipalities in the Center, South, and Sicily. Turnout is measured between 1987 and 2023, and treatment cohorts vary from 1991 to 2023. Standard errors are clustered at the municipality level. Standard errors are clustered at municipality level. Significance levels: \*\*\*  $p < .01$ , \*\*  $.01 \leq p < .05$ , \*  $.05 \leq p < .10$ . Source: Census, DAIT, Eligendo.



Table A4: Balancing Table: Treated, Unconditional Control and Matched Control

	Treatment	Control	Matched Control	Std.Diff T-C	Std.Diff T-MC
Population (CF)	16,436	8,882	12,613	0.17	0.02
Inhab. per km2 (CF)	896	235	370	0.52*	0.14
Unemp/Labforce Ratio (CF)	0.13	0.10	0.12	0.65*	0.03
65y/(20y-64y) Ratio (CF)	0.27	0.38	0.32	-0.90*	-0.18
Share High-school+ (CF)	0.24	0.27	0.27	-0.27*	-0.08
Share Middle school (CF)	0.31	0.29	0.30	0.65*	0.13
Share Elementary school (CF)	0.26	0.27	0.25	-0.22	0.04
Mayor Age (y)	47.44	46.88	47.19	0.06	0.01
Mayor Duration (y)	4.31	4.62	4.53	-0.31*	-0.08
Female Mayor	0.02	0.06	0.04	-0.18	-0.04
Mayor elected in Second Round	0.26	0.27	0.27	0.01	0.00
<i>N</i>	268	2,871	1,206	3,139	1,474

Notes: \*StdDiff>0.25 (Imbens and Rubin, 2015, page 277) Source: Census, DAIT, Eligendo.

Table A5: Impact of City Council Dissolutions due to Organized Crime Infiltration on Party Vote Shares, 1991-2023

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
<i>Dissolved</i>	0.00931** (0.00402)	0.00867** (0.00404)	0.00868** (0.00403)	0.00876** (0.00403)
<i>Aligned</i>	0.0399*** (0.00232)	0.0396*** (0.00232)	0.0396*** (0.00232)	0.0403*** (0.00232)
<i>Dissolved</i> × <i>Aligned</i>	-0.0515*** (0.0147)	-0.0514*** (0.0147)	-0.0514*** (0.0147)	-0.0520*** (0.0147)
Observations	144'071	144'071	144'071	142'703
R-squared	0.010	0.011	0.011	0.012
Year FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Municipality FE	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Election Controls	No	No	Yes	Yes
Municipality Controls	No	No	No	Yes

Notes: The table presents the estimated effect of a municipal council's dissolution due to mafia infiltration on party vote shares (left, center, right). The panel is at the municipality-year-election level, covering elections held between 1987 and 2023, and treatment cohorts vary from 1991 to 2023. The sample includes municipalities in the Center, South, and Sicily. Standard errors are clustered at the municipality level. Significance levels: \*\*\*  $p < .01$ , \*\*  $.01 \leq p < .05$ , \*  $.05 \leq p < .10$ . Source: Census, DAIT, Eligendo.

Table A6: Impact of City Council Dissolutions due to Organized Crime Infiltration on Aggregate Voter Turnout using Matched Control Group, 1991-2023

	(1)	(2)	(3)
<i>Dissolved</i>	-0.0108* (0.00598)	-0.0131*** (0.00350)	-0.0134*** (0.00310)
Observations	21'382	21'382	20'787
R-squared	0.568	0.858	0.873
Year FE	Yes	Yes	Yes
Municipality FE	No	Yes	Yes
Election Controls	No	No	Yes
Municipality Controls	No	No	Yes

*Notes:* The table presents the estimated effects of a municipal council's dissolution due to mafia infiltration, as specified in Equation (1), on voter turnout. The sample includes municipalities in the Center, South, and Sicily matched to dissolved municipalities by region year. Matching variables include turnout in the 5 years prior to the dissolution, population, the old dependency ratio, and unemployment rate. Turnout is measured between 1987 and 2023, and treatment cohorts vary from 1991 to 2023. Standard errors are clustered at the municipality level. Significance levels: \*\*\*  $p < .01$ , \*\*  $.01 \leq p < .05$ , \*  $.05 \leq p < .10$ . Source: Census, DAIT, Eligendo.

Table A7: Benchmarking the Impact of City Council Dissolutions due to Organized Crime Infiltration on Aggregate Voter Turnout

Paper	Treatment	Land	Period	Level	Timing	Result (pp)	Result (%)
This Paper	CCD	ITA	1986-2024	>Mun.	1-5y 1y	-1.6 -2	-2.3 -2.8
Giommoni (2021)	1-SD in corruption index	ITA	1999-2014	Mun.	1-2y		-0.3
Chong et al. (2015)	Info RCT on corruption	MEX	2009	Mun.	1w	-1.3	-2.5
Rivera et al. (2024)	Info RCT on corruption	MEX	2021	Federal	1-5w	-5/-7.8	-10
Arias et al. (2022)	Info RCT on pol. malfeasance	MEX	2015	Mun.		-1/+0.5	-2/+1
Drago et al. (2014)	Newspaper entry	ITA	1993-2010	Mun.		+0.45	+0.6
Gentzkow et al. (2011)	Newspaper entry	USA	1869-1928	Federal		+0.3	
DellaVigna and Kaplan (2007)	Fox News entry	USA	2000	Federal			+1.8

Table A8: Impact of City Council Dissolutions due to Organized Crime Infiltration on Aggregate Voter Turnout by Election Type, 1991-2023

	National	Regional	Provincial
<i>Dissolved</i>	-0.0136*** (0.00380)	-0.0181*** (0.00444)	-0.0154 (0.0103)
Observations	28,736	17,196	2,309
R-squared	0.787	0.937	0.958
Year FE	Yes	Yes	Yes
Municipality FE	Yes	Yes	Yes
Election Controls	Yes	Yes	Yes
Municipality Controls	Yes	Yes	Yes

*Notes:* The table presents the estimated effects of a municipal council's dissolution due to mafia infiltration, as specified in Equation (1), on voter turnout by election type. Turnout at each election is measured between 1987 and 2023, and treatment cohorts vary from 1991 to 2023. Standard errors are clustered at the municipality level. Standard errors are clustered at municipality level. Significance levels: \*\*\*  $p < .01$ , \*\*  $.01 \leq p < .05$ , \*  $.05 \leq p < .10$ . Source: Census, DAIT, Eligendo.

Table A9: Impact of City Council Dissolutions due to Organized Crime Infiltration on Aggregate Voter Turnout by Region, 1991-2023

	Basilicata	Calabria	Campania	Lazio	Puglia	Sicilia
<i>Dissolved</i>	-0.0144 (0.0324)	-0.0330*** (0.00614)	-0.0146*** (0.00473)	-0.0431*** (0.0165)	-0.00728 (0.00913)	-0.000243 (0.00587)
Observations	42,882	43,813	43,588	42,883	43,152	43,535
R-squared	0.862	0.862	0.862	0.862	0.862	0.863
Year FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Municipality FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Election Controls	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Municipality Controls	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

*Notes:* The table presents the estimated effects of a municipal council's dissolution due to mafia infiltration, as specified in Equation (1), on voter turnout by region. Turnout is measured between 1987 and 2023, and treatment cohorts vary from 1991 to 2023. Standard errors are clustered at the municipality level. Standard errors are clustered at municipality level. Significance levels: \*\*\*  $p < .01$ , \*\*  $.01 \leq p < .05$ , \*  $.05 \leq p < .10$ . Source: Census, DAIT, Eligendo.