MONARCHY *vs* REPUBLIC
Historical Evidence on Individual Preferences and their Roots

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Abstract

In a unprecedented and still unique instance of self-determination in nation building, the institutional form of the state at the moment of democratization in 1946 Italy has been chosen with a referendum held in universal franchise. The vote, involving around 25 million people including women and a large majority of men voting for the very first time, offers a unique opportunity to study individual preferences over democratic institutions in the population at large. We study how the exposure to republican and monarchic rule in historical times shaped individual preferences for free institutions during democratization. We provide a measurement of political history over the 1000–1861 time period for around 8,000 municipalities. Evidence shows that higher intensity of exposure to republican, respectively monarchic, rule in the past is a main determinant of the vote. Alternative identification strategies and checks, including the use of local variation, IV and spatial RDD strategies, bolster a causal interpretation of the findings. Large effort is devoted to validation and mechanisms. Accounting for conditions in 1946 confirms the role of political history and documents that socio-economic conditions at the moment of the vote (inequality, education and sectoral employment), experience of nazi-fascist massacres, war violence, and exposure to radio propaganda also matter. For both validation and mechanism, we assemble a database on historical local statutes in pre-industrial times. Within municipality panel variation show that political history in quarter-centuries leads to the emergence of charters granting freedom and self-governance. Finally, we look at large scale surveys, to study the impact on the support for democracy and trust in political institutions half a century after democratization.

JEL-Classification: O43, P16, N43
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"*The question 'what absolutely is the best government?' is unanswerable as well as indeterminate. It is not answered, because everyone wants to answer it in his own way. Subjects extol public tranquillity, citizens individual liberty*" (Rousseau, 1762)

"*Personally, far from finding fault with equality because it inspires a spirit of independence, I praise it primarily for that very reason. I admire it because it lodges in the very depths of each man's mind and heart that indefinable feeling, the instinctive inclination for political independence. [...] the slightest privileges are repugnant to his reason; the faintest dissimilarities in the political institutions of the same people offend him, and uniformity of legislation appears to him to be the first condition of good government*" (De Tocqueville, 1840)

"*Republican patriotism is first of all a political passion based on the experience of citizenship, not on shared pre-political elements derived from being born in the same territory [...] but a passion that needs to be stimulated through laws or, more precisely, through good government and the participation of the citizens in public life*" (Viroli, 2002)

1 Introduction

Should a country be a Monarchy or a Republic? For Hobbes (1651), writing on the aftermath of the English civil war, only a Monarchy can serve the interests of the population by avoiding anarchy and insuring stability and peace. Rousseau (1762) praises self-governance but considers democracy sustainable only for small states. In fact, by the time he writes, republicanism and institutions limiting rulers' power and granting forms of political and economic freedom had been essentially confined to local experiences, small polities and cities. Based on the observation of the US, the only mass democracy at the time, De Tocqueville (1840) instead forcefully pushes the idea that political and economic freedom can be self-sustaining also in modern nation states without necessarily leading to poor governments or anarchy. His main argument rests on the view that the individual experience of equality granted by law and of effective self-governance lead citizens to demand, and take risks to defend, free institutions. In fact, this argument is in keeping with today's understanding of republicanism whose roots are traced to the experiences of self-governance in the middle ages as summarized, e.g., by the quote by Viroli (2002) reported above.

This view, if empirically confirmed, brings several implications whose relevance for the emergence and sustainability of well functioning mass democracies are hard to overstate. First, it predicts the existence of virtuous, and vicious, cycles: the experience of equality by law and self-governance may push individuals to sustain, and fight for, freedom but the lack of such experiences may induce risk averse individuals to indulge in traditional—"hobbesian"—forms of restricted governments even at the cost of limitations of their personal freedom. To the best of our knowledge, we still lack, however, any systematic investigation of the role of historical exposure to republican and monarchic rule. In particular, we lack any evidence on individual preferences on political institutions prior to the emergence of mass democracies, on their historical roots and on their role in the process of democratization. A second untested key implication comes from the fact that modern nation states typically incorporate territories featuring very different intensity of historical exposure to either monarchic or republican rule: this implies that preferences over the institutional form

of a state in the process of democratization should be expected to feature important spatial heterogeneity within countries. Finally, a specific prediction relates republicanism to the, de jure, regulation of individual rights by law as basis for equality and good governance. Whether different local political history shaped preferences for democratic institutions in the rise of modern countries, and whether and how they persists even within modern democracies are still open empirical questions. In this paper, we look at the emergence of the Italian democracy in the second wave of democratization. The peculiar conditions of the transition to democracy in 1946 and the diversity in local political history within the peninsula offer a unique opportunity to address the questions at hand and to perform a first investigation of individual preferences over political institutions in the population at the moment of democratization.

Context. Democratization took place after two decades of totalitarian regime and a civil war, in a void of power after the armistice and the flight of the king from Rome in 1943. The Committee for National Liberation (CNL) that was heading the resistance, exploited a window of opportunity in June 1944 when the Allied forces liberated Rome, the king was forced to abdicate, and his son, appointed Lieutenant General, accommodated a transition to democracy. In 1944 a vote in universal suffrage to be held at the end of the war was set by Lieutenant's Decree (LD) Law 151/1944 with the goal of electing a constitutional assembly in charge of drafting a constitution. In 1945, however, the Allied forces and the CNL took advantage of the weakened position of the king and successfully passed a democratic principle of self-determination on the choice of the institutional form of the state. As a result, in March 1946, LD Law 98/1946 called the whole population to a referendum to directly express their individual preferences on whether the country should retain monarchical institutions or should rather be organized as a Republic, as illustrated in the ballot paper.

Figure 1: Ballot of the 1946 Referendum



Notes: Voters had to put a cross on the square of the side of either "Republic" or "Monarchy".

The result was an unprecedented, and unique, large scale experiment of direct democracy in which the whole adult population of a country was called to vote on the institutional form of a newborn democracy. The referendum, held the 2nd of June 1946, involved around 25 million people of which a vast majority, about 60% of males and all females, could cast their vote for the first time. The resulting heated political

debate echoed closely the long-lasting arguments discussed above. Supporters of the Republic systematically recalled the historical freedom enjoyed from medieval times, while supporters of the king praised the stability offered by Monarchy since centuries (the Savoy family ruled since the fourteenth century in Piedmont and since unification in 1861 all over the country). Luigi Einaudi, born in Piedmont, active anti-fascist, economist and governor of the Bank of Italy in 1945, strongly supported the king in 1946 arguing that only the monarchy would insure stability and a government by competent administrators. Ironically, after the referendum, he was voted by the parliament as first president of the newborn Italian Republic and served from 1948 to 1955. The vote has been extensively described as highly emotional for the whole population leading to turnout of about 90%. The Republic got the majority by a narrow margin with 54% of valid votes, but with substantial heterogeneity across the around 8,000 municipalities where the vote took place.

Analysis and Results. The analysis is based on historical and spatially disaggregated data and faces several challenges in terms of data limitations and measurement error, econometric identification, validation of the results and explorations of the mechanisms. We need to measure the intensity of historical exposure to both republican and monarchic rule in the almost 8,000 municipalities that voted in the 1946 referendum. Historians and political scientists have classified pre-modern polities depending on their political organization, (e.g., Finer, 2004) and, crucially, identify modern states as territorial polities that achieved comparable levels of state capacity across space. However, a feature of pre-modern polities is a sharply declining state capacity in the distance from centers of power (see, e.g., Herbst, 2000; Bartlett, 2005). Building on these classifications and insights, we provide a—so far missing—measurement of the intensity in the exposure to republican and monarchic rule across and within the territories ruled by pre-modern states. This is done by geo-referencing yearly maps for historical polities and computing effective distances over historical routes from all locations to all centers of power (e.g., capitals). We discuss such municipality-level measurement in Section 2.1.

The regression analysis shows that the historical intensity of exposure to different institutions is a main, and highly statistically significant, determinant of the votes difference between Republic and Monarchy at municipality level (and it explains alone about a quarter of the total variation). The baseline results do not necessarily imply, however, a causal interpretation since correlational evidence can be biased, in particular, by measurement error, spatial autocorrelation, endogeneity, and omitted variables. There is no single empirical strategy that, taken alone, allows to dissipate all possible concerns. Our approach to deal with these issues is to adopt several complementary approaches as presented in Section 2. First, we follow the literature and account for a large set of possible confounders.[1] The point estimates remain significant and are very stable across specifications offering a first indication that the effects are unlikely to be driven

[1] These include: geographic controls such as ruggeddness (Nunn and Puga, 2012) and caloric suitability (Galor and Ozak, 2016), historical covariates to account for pre-determined levels of prosperity and access to trade (Galor and Mountford, 2008; Dalgaard et al., 2022), local historical experiences of self-governance (Guiso et al., 2016) and political instability (Cervellati et al., 2023), and other historical shocks such as earthquakes (Belloc et al., 2016), climate variability (Buggle and Durante, 2021; Giuliano and Nunn, 2021) and epidemics (Jedwab et al., 2022).

by local omitted confounders. The spatial distribution of the votes features two main clusters in the core areas of the most intense republican and monarchic rule. While broadly in line with hypothesis, this implies, however, the existence of spatial autocorrelation. As a second strategy, we look at the residual variation within electoral districts as of 1946 (roughly the size of modern regions) where the distribution of votes displays low spatial autocorrelation and no systematic clusters can be detected. The intensity of exposure to republican and monarchic rule remains a main, and very stable, predictor of the votes also within electoral districts, documenting that the results are not driven by omitted confounders behind the republican and monarchic clusters and spatial autocorrelation.

The measure of intensity of exposure to historical republican and monarchic rule exploits time-varying information on the changing borders and distances from the center of power of the polity ruling over each location, both of which are measured with noise and can be endogenous. To address these concerns, we use two orthogonal identification strategies. First, following the literature on regional democratization waves (see Persson and Tabellini, 2009; Acemoglu et al., 2019, 2024) we use a 2SLS strategy adapted to our historical context. We exploit variation in the full network of polities and centers of power at each point in time to predict the intensity of republican and monarchic rule in a given location half a century later. Importantly, the instrument does not make use of information on the location of borders of polities and on the (republican or monarchic) nature of the polity ruling a given location, thereby dispelling, by construction, possible biases due to problems of measurement or endogeneity in these dimensions. Also, by using exogenous variation in the full sample, the analysis is directly comparable to baseline estimates and retains maximum external validity. The instrument performs well and the 2SLS coefficients are about twice as large compared to the OLS and remarkably stable to all sets of covariates. Second, we follow the literature estimating the causal impact of historical institutions and events exploiting borders as local exogenous variation in spatial regression discontinuity (RDD) settings (see, e.g., Dell, 2010; Grosfeld and Zhuravskaya, 2015; Becker et al., 2016, 2020). In pre-industrial Italy borders changed frequently with few relevant exceptions that can be exploited for identification. The unique standing of the Pope as spiritual leader of Europe and powerful absolute ruler over Rome and Latium from the year 756 AD until 1870 made the Papal States one of the most stable polities in history. Specifically, the location of the northern and southern borders is well documented and very stable, having been subject of mutual respect between the Papal States and the polities ruling in Tuscany and in Campania over the centuries. RDD results for the northern border, that separates the municipalities exposed to republican rule in Tuscany from the non-republican rule of the Papal States, provide robust evidence in line with the baseline findings.[2] Taken together, the stability of the results obtained with identification strategies featuring complementary identifying restrictions and exploiting different variation (full sample in OLS and 2SLS, residual variation within electoral districts, and local variation in

[2]The southern border of the Papal States and the border of the Republic of Genoa (essentially a stable natural border) are used as placebo borders to show that no effect can be detected in RDD estimates when looking at borders within monarchic and republican areas, respectively. The eastern border of the Papal States is, in contrast, less stable as the territorial expansion of the Papal States took place towards the Adriatic side of the peninsula at the expenses of lesser Italian states and city states.

RDD) bolster a causal interpretation of the findings.

The analysis in Section 3 proceeds by exploring further predictions and the mechanisms behind the baseline findings. To explore other contemporaneous determinants of preferences over the institutional form of the state we assemble a novel municipal database at the end of WWII. In particular, following the literature, we look at economic inequality in land distribution (from the agrarian census), local weather shocks in spring 1946, and socio-economic characteristics (literacy and employment shares in agriculture and industry). We also collect information on nazi-fascist massacres during the civil war, areas of intense war violence in terms of defense lines, and exposure to radio propaganda, among others. In line with predictions in the literature, the results provide evidence for the role of these short-term determinants of the votes but also confirm that the historical intensity of exposure to republican and monarchic rule is a main, robust, driver of local preferences. To explore the prediction on the role of equality by law, and as a validation of the baseline measure, we collect and geo-reference information on statutory laws that were introduced to defend spaces of autonomy and regulate local interests and activities. We use panel data at quarter of century frequency and estimate the impact of the intensity of republican and monarchic rule in a quarter on availability of statutory laws. The analysis accounts for all confounders at the level of municipalities by including municipality fixed effects. The results show that a higher local intensity of exposure to republican rather than monarchic rule significantly increases the likelihood that a municipality successfully adopts a statutory law over the time. In turn, for a given intensity of exposure, municipalities that successfully adopted statutory laws display even higher support for the Republic in the 1946 referendum.

As a final step, in Section 4, we turn our attention to the individual support for democracy and trust in institutions. To this end, we exploit information from large scale surveys with two interesting features. First, by covering the national territory, the survey allows to test whether local history also affects individual support for democracy across locations. Second, the respondents are also asked to report information on the vote by their fathers in the 1946 referendum as well as the intensity of their fathers' political engagement. The results provide several insights. First, the intensity of historical exposure to republican and monarchic rule significantly increases support for democracies and trust in institutions of responders half a century after democratization. Second, the intensity significantly impacts the votes for the Republic in 1946 by fathers and their engagement in politics—as reported by responders—which provides a reassuring validation of the baseline results. Finally, and concerning the mechanisms of transmission, the evidence suggests that local history in the community has a stronger impact on support for democracy than the votes by fathers back in 1946. Interestingly, however, individual trust in political institutions is significantly increasing in the level of political engagement of fathers.

Literature. The political economics literature has recently shifted attention from policies in democracies to studying preferences and conflicts of interests over political institutions. Evidence of preferences over policies has been extensively derived by looking at voting in democracies (Persson and Tabellini, 2000;

Drazen, 2002) but we lack any systematic evidence on individual preferences over political institutions prior to, and in the context of, democratization (by the simple fact that the population at large is—generally—not allowed to vote prior to democratization). In this respect, the 1946 referendum that took place during democratization in Italy offers a unique opportunity to study preferences in the population at large. Existing theories put forward alternative hypothesis on the main determinants of the demand for more inclusive political institutions by focusing—exclusively—on the role of economic conditions. Our results provide evidence for the main seminal arguments predicting that: inequality (e.g., Acemoglu and Robinson, 2000; Acemoglu et al., 2002), education (e.g., Bourguignon and Verdier, 2000), and structural and sectorial change (Lizzeri and Persico, 2004; Llavador and Oxoby, 2005) should increase the support for institutions granting political freedom to larger shares of the population. We also find evidence for the role of relevant shocks (weather shocks and exposure to war violence) (Acemoglu et al., 2020, 2022) and radio propaganda (DellaVigna et al., 2014; Adena et al., 2015; Gagliarducci et al., 2020; Grosfeld et al., 2024). Nonetheless, in spite of the long pedigree of these ideas (e.g., Hobbes, 1651; De Tocqueville, 1840), the legacy of political freedom and monarchic rule in shaping political preferences is missing in the current research on institutional change. According to our findings, this is a relevant omission in the current understanding of the main drivers of institutional change as documented by the evidence that a more intense exposure to republican and monarchic rule is a main determinant of preferences over free political institutions.

A growing empirical literature is studying how political history and contingencies impact the formation of modern states, nation building and individual political views. See Rohner and Zhuravskaya (2023) for an extensive treatment of the literature. While different in context, methods, and findings, our results conceptually align and complement recent insights suggesting a key role of "local"— subnational—historical exposure to political institutions. We contribute to the literature a methodology and a measurement of the intensity of exposure to the rule of historical polities across locations.[3] Our measure of intensity of exposure to republican and monarchic rule in history builds on the evidence that in pre-modern polities state capacity and territorial control were imperfect and sharply declining with distance from centers of power (see, e.g., Herbst, 2000; Bartlett, 2005). Michalopoulos and Papaioannou (2014) show that penetration of modern states, *vis-a-vis* pre-colonial institutions, in Africa today is limited by distance from centers of power. Our findings support this perspective for pre-modern Europe and document that effective distance from historical centers of power persists within the country. Angelucci et al. (2022) look at trade-driven self-governance in cities in UK and document its impact on local representation in the national parliament in 1348 and in the English civil war. Alesina and Fuchs-Schündeln (2007) provide evidence for the role of exposure to communist rule for preferences over policies within a democracy. Our results provide a first systematic evidence supporting the view that local political history has a main impact also on preferences for political institutions in the population at large during and after democratization. The evidence also documents the

[3]Existing measures record self-governance at city level (e.g., Guiso et al. 2016 for Italy; Rustagi, 2022 for Switzerland; Angelucci et. al. 2022 for UK; Buonanno et al. 2022 for city states). To the best of our knowledge, we lack any disaggregated measurement of intensity of exposure to republican and monarchic historical rule.

existence of intense conflicting, in fact opposite, political preferences during the process of nation building as deeply rooted in local political history.

The decline in measures of political freedom across countries over the last decades has raised awareness on the need to better understand the determinants of stability of democracies and of individual support of, and trust in, democratic institutions.[4] Macroeconomic evidence supports the view that a longer exposure to democracy interpreted as higher "democratic capital" increases its stability (see Persson and Tabellini, 2009; Besley and Persson, 2019). Cross-country survey data provide complementary evidence that longer exposure to democracies increases individual support for democracy (Fuchs-Schündeln and Schündeln, 2015) but particularly, or only, when they provide good governance (particularly control of corruption and low inequality) (Acemoglu et al., 2024). We contribute to this literature several novel insights. First, we complement the evidence by showing that also the exposure to free institution before democratization impacts preferences during the second wave of democratization. In keeping with existing findings, the effect is stronger when political equality was formally historically ensured by law (as measured by the existence of statutes and charters of freedom). Second, we document that the effect persists and impacts the support for democracy and trust within democracies. Third, the evidence documents large heterogeneity in the support for democracy and trust in institutions across different locations within countries. Finally, also the intensity of exposure to monarchic rule, and not only the intensity of exposure to self-governance or democracy, significantly and persistently impacts preferences for democracy.

A large literature aims at understanding the interactions between historical institutions and shocks and culture (see Alesina and Giuliano, 2015, for a survey). The evidence on the sizable role of intensity of exposure to either republican or monarchic rules in shaping deep, and opposite, local preferences in the referendum provides broad support for the theoretical literature suggesting that institutions and culture can reinforce each other (through transmission across generations) by magnifying, or dampening, the effects of initial institutional shocks (see Bisin and Verdier, 2023a,b, for a review and latest advances). The results complement the evidence on the effects of political history and shocks on social preferences (e.g., Miho et al., 2024; Lowes et al., 2017). Related to our question, scholars have argued that self-governance and the participation to political decisions, by forcing people to compromise and internalize negative externalities of opportunistic behavior, should—indirectly—facilitate the emergence of pro-social norms. Existing evidence provides increasing support for this view: Guiso et al. (2016) on social capital, Rustagi (2022) on cooperation; Besley (2020) and Buonanno et al. (2022) on tax compliance. Interestingly, however, we still lack any systematic evidence on the predicted—direct—effect of exposure to different historical political institutions on individual political preferences. Our results contribute to this literature a first evidence that intensity of exposure to republic and monarchic political institutions have opposite effects on political preferences before democratization and in democracies. Furthermore, the analysis suggests that part of the

[4]Democratic measures across the world have reach levels comparable to the 1980s (Papada et al., 2023). See also Casas-Zamora (2023) and Gorokhovskaia et al. (2023).

historical persistence might be specifically associated to laws and regulations granting individual freedom (González de Lara et al., 2008; Koyama, 2022). Finally, the analysis within democracies provides suggesting evidence that the mechanisms of transmission is not only confined to families but relates to local conditions.

2 Local Political History and Preferences over Monarchy and Republic

We present the main data used for the baseline analysis in Section 2.1, then discuss the findings in Section 2.2, and present the results of robustness checks and alternative identification strategies in Section 2.3.

2.1 Baseline Data

We assemble a novel dataset with disaggregated information from several primary and secondary historical sources. The analysis is conducted at the level of 7,925 municipalities over which all variables have been harmonized. Here, we briefly describe the dependent and explanatory variable of primary interest used in the baseline empirical analysis. More data are introduced and described before presenting further analysis. The Data Appendix provides details on data sources and on the steps undertaken for the construction of each variable and presents summary statistics, robustness checks and further results.

Votes on the 1946 Referendum. We newly digitized data on the votes to the 1946 Referendum at the level of municipality from Stáltari (2004). Building measures of votes over Republic and Monarchy does not bear particular complications besides harmonizing the data at the administrative level chosen for the analysis.[5] For each municipality we have information on the number of valid votes for the Republic and Monarchy. This allows us to compute our main outcome variable, *Votes Difference Republic–Monarchy*, as the difference between the share of votes to the Republic and the share votes for the Monarchy.[6] This variable ranges from –1 to 1 and measures the relative intensity of the preferences for the Republic (positive) or the Monarchy (negative), with 0 representing neutrality. We also keep record of the 31 electoral districts in which municipalities were organized for the vote.[7]

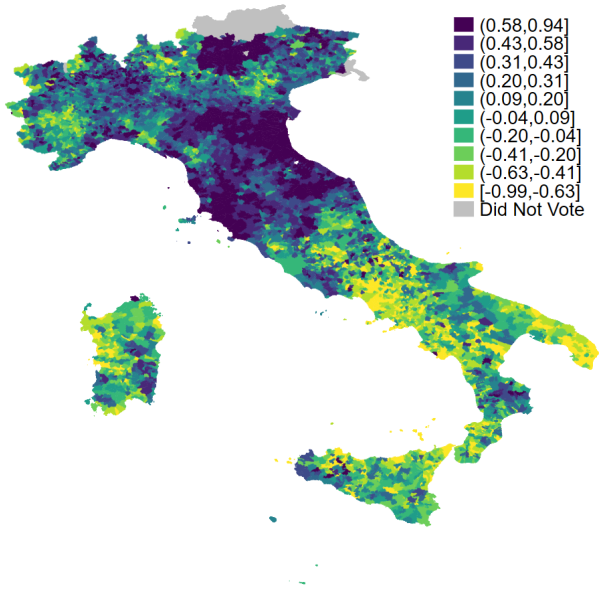
Figure 2 presents the geographic distribution of the variable across Italian municipalities. The Republic got more support in the north while the south supported more intensively the Monarchy (see also Figure A1 and Forlenza (2018)). At the municipal level, however, we still observe substantial spatial variation in addition to the north-south divide.

[5] Italy is currently divided into 7,904 municipalities across 110 provinces and 20 regions. However, since our analysis employs several variables from various years including data on pre-industrial times and data for periods in which the administrative structure of Italy was slightly more disaggregated, we rely on the 2011 division (prior the recent process of aggregation). Finally, since two provinces (Bolzano and Gorizia) did not vote at the 1946 Referendum, we exclude them from the sample. Appendix E describes in more details the harmonization process between municipality data from different sources and pertaining to different periods of time.

[6] This variable is computed based on valid votes. Results are robust if we compute our measure based on the total votes.

[7] Each electoral district included one or more provinces based on the 1946 administrative division. Panel (a) of Figure 5 displays the boundaries of the electoral districts and the spatial distribution of the dependent variable at this level of aggregation.

Figure 2: Votes Difference Republic–Monarchy in the 1946 Referendum



Notes: Unit of observation is an Italian municipality. Spatial distribution of the *Votes Difference Republic–Monarchy*. Light colors refer to stronger support for the Monarchy whereas darker colors refer to stronger support for the Republic.

Intensity of Historical Exposure to Republican and Monarchic Rule. Providing spatially disaggregated measures of historical intensify of exposure to the rule of republican and monarchic polities in pre-industrial times is a non trivial challenge. We face it by proposing a methodology based on two main elements that closely follow historical evidence. First, for each point in time, we need to identify the sovereign polity that ruled over each municipality, and whether it was a Republic or a Monarchy. Second, we need to quantify the intensity of exposure to the ruler in each location. This quantification has a crucial spatial dimension as historically state capacity was declining depending on distance from centers of power (see, among others, Hohenberg and Lees, 1995; Herbst, 2000).[8] This was especially the case in the context of a territory with a highly diversified geography and availability of communication infrastructures as Italy (see Figure A2). For instance, within the Kingdom of Naples during the XV century, taking advantage of royal weknesses and low control due to mountainous terrain and distance from Naples, towns in the region of Abruzzo acted as semi-autonomous units until King Ferdinand I realized it and instructed his officials to reinstate royal prerogatives (Sakellariou, 2012).[9] Likewise, during the XVII century the territory of Bologna was

[8] According to Bell (2005, p.531): "[I]n the days before efficient state agencies existed, it was often extremely difficult for a central political body to maintain control over the outlying districts of its territory; the greater the distances involved, the greater the problems".

[9] Sakellariou (2012, p.172) reports: "In October 1467 Ferrante [(Ferdinand I, king of Naples from 1458 to 1494)] sent special instructions to Pietro Gizzo [(the president of the institution collecting taxes within the kingdom]), about what should be done with tolls and duties exacted by towns, especially in Abruzzo, a province that, because of its mountainous nature and its distance from Naples, had slipped away from royal control in previous decades. Towns like Atri, Vasto, Francavilla and Ortona not only collected the customary road tolls and market taxes, which had been considered rights of lordship in the past, and which previous rulers had occasionally granted to their barons; but they had also substituted the royal fisc with their own officials in the case of duties that had always been an exclusive royal prerogative, such as the ius dohane, fondaci and exiture. These taxes should only be exacted at royal custom houses. Ferrante argued that a king must abstain, as much as possible, from alienating regalia iura; but the wars that had

ruled by the Papal States, but enjoyed a substantial amount of autonomy since it was situated beyond the Apennines and at a considerable distance from Rome.[10] While the proposed methodology is conceptually straightforward, its technical implementation is not. The analysis involves the following steps:

- We digitize yearly gridded data on the emergence, changing borders, and disappearance of the sovereign polities ruling over Europe during the period 1000–1861 for the subset of locations belonging to the territory of the Italian peninsula as of 1946. Our baseline source is the *Centennia Historical Atlas* (Reed, 2014).[11] This procedure allows to record 60 sovereign political entities that ever ruled over the territory of (modern) Italy for at least one year between 1000 and 1861 (as reference, Figure B4 maps the outcome of this procedure for the year 1278);

- Each polity is classified as either a Monarchy or a Republic based on Finer (2004). In particular, each polity is assigned a weight, $w = 1$ for a Republic $w = -1$ for a Monarchy;[12]

- For each year we track the coordinates of each polity's most important centers of power (a capital city or a city where the king, viceroy, or governing body of the polity were prevalently located);

- We reconstruct the time series of polities ruling the whole territory using 0.0833×0.0833 degree grid-cells (roughly 8×8 km or 66 square kilometers) and use the centroid of each municipality to map the yearly gridded data on political history at the municipality level.

- In each year, we compute a municipality-level measure of intensity of exposure to republican or monarchic rule depending on the effective distance to the polity's center of power.[13] To compute historical meaning-

afflicted his kingdom in the past perturbed the regius status, and consequently a considerable portion of the royal demesne and royal prerogative had been usurped, especially in Abruzzo. Pietro and his assistants, therefore, had a double task in this province: not only to check the legality of the right of barons and towns to exact the traditional road tolls and market taxes, but also to reintegrate into the royal demesne those exclusive regalian rights, which should be collected by royal customs officials, and had been usurped by the semi-autonomous towns of Abruzzo in a period of royal weakness.

[10] Bartlett (2005, p.19) writes: "If the Alps formed a northern barrier against invasion, the Apennines served as an internal division that ran the length of the peninsula from the Lombard plain to Sicily, cutting the boot down the center and consequently driving settlements to the coasts and river mouths and providing a measure of security for small, independent, unusually impoverished states within its rocky fastness. The Apennines complicated communications on the peninsula, and control of the passes through the mountains constituted military goals for ambitious cities wishing to take advantage of what trade there was, especially as internal commerce and long-distance trade increased".

[11] See Cervellati et al. (2023) and Buonanno et al. (2022) for an application over Europe and the locations ever ruled by city states, respectively.

[12] The dataset comprises 22 "Republics" and 38 "Monarchies". Appendix D reports the full list of polities and their weights with a brief description of the dimensions along which the weight was assigned.

[13] Specifically, we compute an inverse distance interpolation of the polity-specific weight measure proposed by Shiode and Shiode (2011):

$$Historical\ Exposure\ Rep-Mon_{i,t} = \frac{d(p_i, p_{l=own})^{-\lambda} w_{l=own}}{\sum_{l=1}^{k} d(p_i, p_l)^{-\lambda}} \tag{1}$$

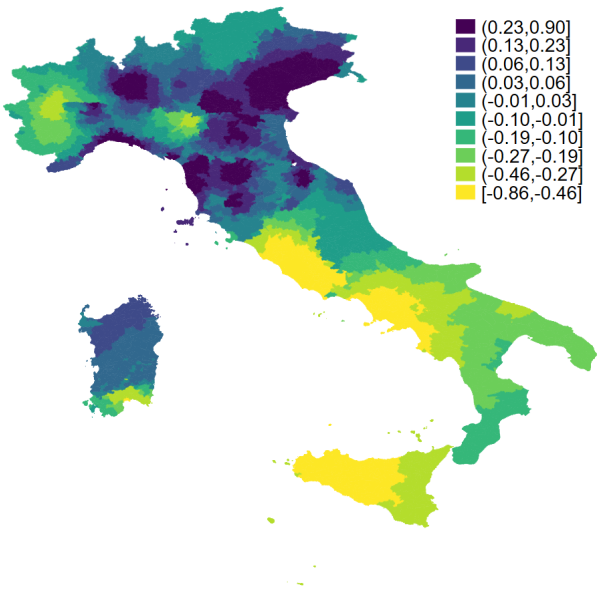
where $l = 1...k$ are the relevant centers of power for the polities ruling over Italy in year t, $d(p_i, p_{l=own})$ is distance from the centroid of municipality i to the coordinates of the center of power of its own polity, λ is the decay power coefficient (equal to 2 as standard in the literature although its precise level is not relevant as the index exploits relative differences in effective distance rather than absolute ones), and $w_{l=own}$ is the monarchic/republican weight [–1, 1] assigned to the polity ruling over municipality i. The index is scale invariant and normalized by the effective distances from the centroid of municipality i to the coordinates of all centers of power in that given year.

ful effective distances we account for the role of geography and infrastructures. Specifically, we calculate distance based on the least cost path from the municipality to the respective center of power given: (i) the network of major Roman roads, and (ii) the slope of the terrain.[14]

- The result is a yearly panel of relative intensity of exposure to the values between –1 and +1.[15]
- Finally, for each municipality we build the cross-sectional measure *Historical Exposure to Republic–Monarchy* as the average of the yearly index over the period 1000–1861.

Figure 3 displays the geographic distribution of the variable. In line with historical accounts, we observe that municipalities in the Centre-North were more exposed to republican regimes, while monarchic rule predominated in the South. Note that the spatial distribution of our measure presents a high degree of correlation with the vote to the 1946 Referendum (see Figure 2).

Figure 3: Historical Intensity of Exposure to Republic and Monarchy (1000–1861)



Notes: The unit of observation is an Italian municipality. Spatial distribution of *Historical Exposure Rep–Mon* (computed as the average of yearly measures over the period 1000–1861). Light colors refer to stronger Monarchic exposure whereas darker colors stand for higher exposure to the Republics.

[14] We take the network of Roman roads from McCormick (2013), whereas the slope of the terrain is calculated using altitude data from the Copernicus European Digital Elevation Model (see https://land.copernicus.eu/imagery-in-situ/eu-dem/eu-dem-v1.1?tab=metadata). To calculate the least cost path we use the Dijkstra's optimal route algorithm between bilateral pairs of nodes (see Dijkstra, 1959).

[15] We provide a numerical example in Appendix A.1 to clarify how the index functions.

2.2 Baseline Results

To study the relationship between exposure to Republic–Monarchy over centuries and preferences over democratic institutions we estimate the following equation

$$Y_i = \alpha \, Historical \, Exposure \, Republic \text{ - } Monarchy_i + \beta \mathbf{X}_i + \varepsilon_i \tag{2}$$

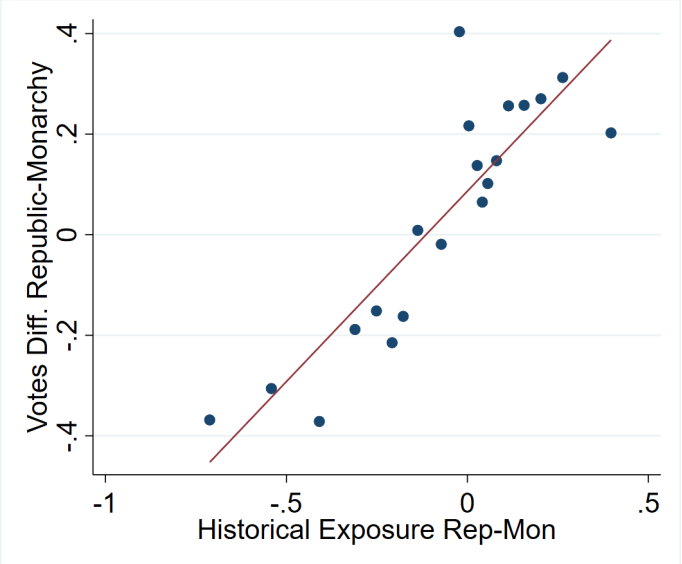
where Y_i is the difference between the share votes to the Republic and the share votes to the Monarchy for municipality i during the 1946 Referendum while the main explanatory variable is the baseline measure of intensity of historical exposure to Republic–Monarchy over the period 1000–1861. The vector $\mathbf{X}_i$ denotes municipality-level covariates. We follow the literature and account for a large set of possible confounders: (i) *geographic controls*, including altitude, ruggedness, distance to rivers and distance to the sea, and caloric suitability before 1500; (ii) *historical controls*, including population and distance to bishoprics in the year 1000, and distance to Roman roads as proxies of initial levels of development and access to trade; and (iii) *political controls*, including historical political instability over the period 1000–1861, a dummy for muncipalities that became free cities and a dummy for cities that fought against the Holy Roman Emperor by participating in the Lombard League and further historical contingencies.[16] For each municipality we account for the number of earthquakes affecting them, for a dummy variable tracking the occurrence of epidemic outbreaks within 50 km from the municipality centroid, and for the extent of climate variability as captured by the standard deviation of temperatures.[17] The error term ε_i is clustered to account for spatial autocorrelation up to 100 km based on Conley (1999).

Figure 4 displays the unconditional correlation between our measure of intensity of exposure to historical republican and monarchical rule and the difference between the vote share to the Republic against the Monarchy. Municipalities with higher intensity of historical exposure to republican (respectively monarchic) rule display a higher support for the Republic (respectively Monarchy) in the 1946 Referendum.

[16] All geographic controls with the exception of ruggedness are available from the Italian National Institute of Statistics (ISTAT). We constructed the average municipal measure of terrain ruggedness using the Global Land One-km Base Elevation Project (GLOBE), a global gridded digital elevation data set covering the Earth's surface at a 10-minute spatial resolution (approximately 1km). For futher details see Nunn and Puga (2012). Data on caloric suitability comes from Galor and Ozak (2016). Historical population in the year 1000 AD is computed using data on the cities with at least 5,000 inhabitants in 1000 AD from Bairoch et al. (1988) as updated Bosker et al. (2013) as a baseline source of information. Distance to Roman roads is measured using information from McCormick (2013). Data on free cities, cities that were bishop sees and cities that were part of the Lombard League come from Guiso et al. (2016). Historical political instability is computed based on the Sovereign Polities Dataset by Cervellati et al. (2023). In addition, we acknowledge the role of *contingencies* (Belloc et al., 2016; Jedwab et al., 2022; Buggle and Durante, 2021). Summary statistics for all variables are reported in Appendix Tables A1 and A2 for the cross-sectional and panel analysis, respectively. Details on the different data sources and the construction of each variable for these and further variables discussed below are reported in the online Supplementary Appendix.

[17] Data on earthquakes occurrence come from the Italian National Institute for Geophysics and Volcanology (INGV) and are publicly available on the website https://emidius.mi.ingv.it/CPTI15-DBMI15/, information on epidemics outbreaks come from Biraben (1975), whereas the standard deviation of temperature was computed based on Guiot et al. (2010), All variables are computed over the 1000–1861 time period.

Figure 4: Political History and Votes in the 1946 Referendum: Baseline Correlation (Binscattered)



Notes: The unit of observation is an Italian municipality. Binscattered relationship between *Historical Exposure to Republic–Monarchy* and the *Vote Difference Republic–Monarchy*. Each bin contains approximately 400 municipalities.

Table 1 reports estimates of equation (2). Column 1 presents the unconditional specification. Column 2 controls for geographic covariates, column 3 adds historical controls, column 4 further accounts for historical contingencies, and column 5 additionally include political controls. To ease the interpretation of coefficients we report standardized beta coefficients in square brackets. Focusing on column 5, which is the most demanding specification, the coefficient estimate implies that a standard deviation increase in relative intensity of exposure to republican as compared to monarchic historical rule is associated with a 0.41 standard deviations increase in the difference between the vote share to the Republic against the Monarchy. The point estimates are significant and very stable across specifications. This insight is further supported by an Oster statistic above the conventional threshold, offering a first indication that the effects are unlikely to be driven by local omitted confounders (Oster, 2019).[18]

[18] We compute a δ statistic of 1.23.

Table 1: Political History and Votes in the 1946 Referendum: Baseline Results

Dependent Variable	Votes Differences Republic-Monarchy				
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Historical Exposure Rep-Mon	0.757***	0.607***	0.616***	0.662***	0.671***
	(0.126)	(0.136)	(0.130)	(0.129)	(0.135)
	[0.457]	[0.366]	[0.371]	[0.400]	[0.405]
Geographic Controls	×	✓	✓	✓	✓
Historical Controls	×	×	✓	✓	✓
Contingencies	×	×	×	✓	✓
Political Controls	×	×	×	×	✓
R-squared	0.213	0.268	0.278	0.293	0.296
Observations	7946	7925	7925	7925	7925

Notes: Observations are municipalities. In all specifications, the dependent variable is the difference between the share votes to the Republic and the share votes to the Monarchy during the 1946 Referendum on the institutional form of the State, while the main explanatory variable is *Historical Exposure Rep–Mon*, that is the average index [–1, 1] of historical exposure to Republics/Monarchies over the period 1000–1861 based on distance from the municipality to its own polity's center of power as described by equation (1). In column 1 we report unconconditonal estimates. In column 2 we control for *geographic controls*, column 3 adds *historical controls*, column 4 further includes proxies of historical *contingencies*, and column 5 adds *political controls*. OLS estimates. Standard errors in parentheses are clustered to account for both spatial correlation up to 100 km. Standardized beta coefficients are reported in brackets. *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1.

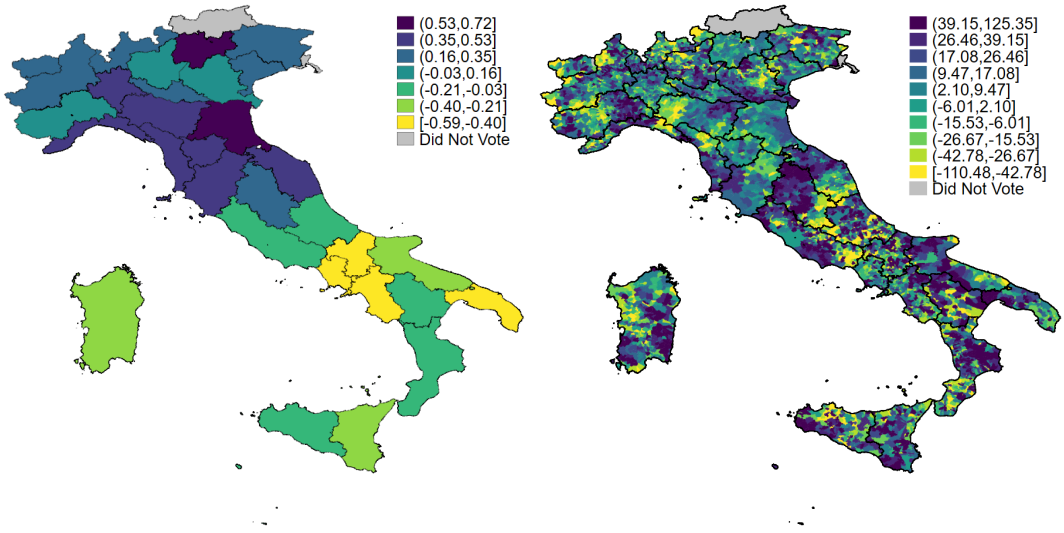
We check the sensitivity of statistical inference to accounting for spatial autocorrelation of the error term over different distance thresholds. Appendix Figure B1 shows the robustness of results to using Conley standard errors for thresholds ranging from 10 to 200 Km.

2.3 Local Estimates, IV and RDD Regressions

In this Section, we follow the literature and perform a set of checks based on three alternative and complementary identification strategies, that taken together, allow to account for a large set of potential confounders and a causal interpretation of the results.

Variation within Electoral Districts. Panel (a) of Figure 5 displays the average votes difference between Republic and Monarchy in the electoral districts collecting the votes in 1946. The Figure illustrates the presence of a cluster of republican, respectively monarchical, support in the Po valley and around Naples (see also Figure A1 reporting a formal hot and cold spot analysis and the average votes in modern regions). Consistently with our initial observations, areas around Milan, Trento, Bologna, and the northern part of the Marche region emerge as hot spots (pro-Republic), whereas areas around Turin and Naples emerge as cold spots (pro-monarchy).

Figure 5: Vote Difference Republic vs Monarchy: Across and Within Electoral Districts in 1946



(a) Vote Diff. in Electoral District (Average) (b) Votes Diff. *Within* Electoral Districts (Residuals)

Notes: Unit of observation is an Italian municipality. Average vote difference in Electoral Districts panel (a). Residual variation of vote difference net of electoral districts fixed effects in panel (b). Light colors refer to stronger support for the Monarchy whereas darker colors refer to stronger support for the Republic.

The evidence aligns well with the fact that these are the core areas of historical republican and monarchic rule in Italy. The baseline results in Table 1, following the literature, condition on a large set of local geographical, historical and geo-climatological features of each municipality. Nonetheless, one may wonder whether the results are driven by further omitted confounders behind these main republican and monarchic clusters. Panel (b) of Figure 5 displays the distribution of the votes difference within electoral districts by plotting the residual variation in the data after accounting for electoral-district fixed effects. The figure illustrates that, even accounting for the republican and monarchic clusters, the data display important local variation. We exploit the highly disaggregated nature of the measure to check whether the intensity of exposure to republican and monarchic rule impacts the votes difference also within electoral districts. The results in Table 2 document that the historical intensity of exposure to republican and monarchic rule significantly affects votes in the referendum also within electoral districts.

Table 2: Political History and Votes in the 1946 Referendum: Variation Within Electoral Districts

Dependent Variable	Votes Differences Republic-Monarchy				
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Historical Exposure Rep-Mon	0.252**	0.233**	0.239**	0.226**	0.233**
	(0.127)	(0.115)	(0.114)	(0.113)	(0.116)
	[0.152]	[0.141]	[0.144]	[0.136]	[0.141]
Geographic Controls	×	✓	✓	✓	✓
Historical Controls	×	×	✓	✓	✓
Contingencies	×	×	×	✓	✓
Political Controls	×	×	×	×	✓
Electoral District FE	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
R-squared	0.501	0.506	0.507	0.508	0.508
Observations	7946	7925	7925	7925	7925

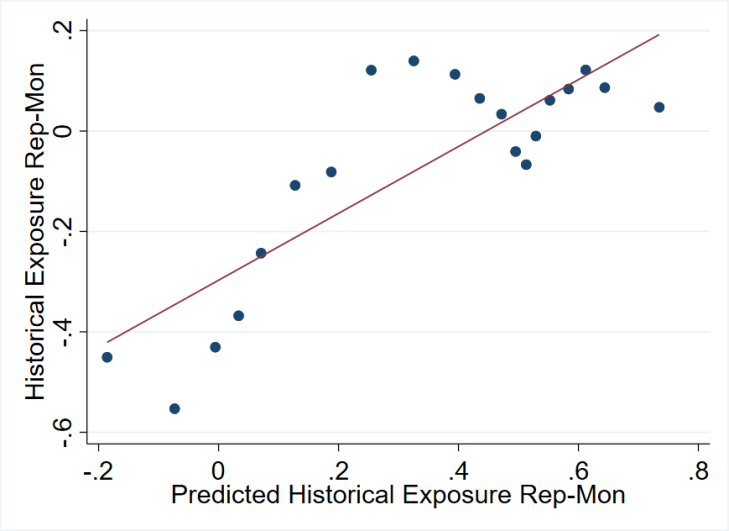
Notes: Observations are municipalities. In all specifications, the dependent variable is the difference between the share votes to the Republic and the share votes to the Monarchy during the 1946 Referendum on the institutional form of the State, while the main explanatory variable is *Historical Exposure Rep–Mon*, that is the average index [–1, 1] of historical exposure to Republics/Monarchies over the period 1000–1861 based on distance from the municipality to its own polity's center of power as described by equation (1). All specifications include 1946 electoral districts FE. In column 1 we report unconconditonal estimates. In column 2 we control for *geographic controls*, column 3 adds *historical controls*, column 4 further includes proxies of historical *contingencies*, and column 5 adds *political controls*. Standard errors in parentheses are clustered to account for both spatial correlation up to 100 km. OLS estimates. Standardized beta coefficients are reported in brackets. *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1.

As a further, alternative, strategy to account for unobserved local characteristics, we report in Figure B2 estimates accounting for simulated territorial fixed effects in place of electoral-district fixed effects. In panel (a) we report results controlling for randomly generated territorial fixed effects of the same size of electoral districs (31 random fixed effects), while in panel (b) we present results using simulated geographical clusters of about the size of modern administrative provinces (100 random fixed effects). In particular, Figure B2 presents the distribution of point estimates of thousand replications using the aformentioned territorial units, showing robustness of our baseline findings.

IV Estimates. Our measure of intensity of exposure to historical republican and monarchical rule leverages time-varying data on shifting borders and distances from the ruling polity's center of power, both of which are subject to measurement error and potential endogeneity. We firstly employ 2SLS regressions to address these concerns. Following the literature on regional democratization waves (Persson and Tabellini, 2009; Acemoglu et al., 2019, 2024), we exploit variation in the full network of polities and centers of power at each point in time to predict the intensity of republican and monarchic rule in a given location half a century later. Formally, we compute a network version of our baseline measure, *Predicted Historical Exposure*

Rep–Mon, and use it as instrument.[19] By relying on the network of polities and centers of power this instrument does not make use of information on the location of polities' borders. We set the nature of the polity ruling a given location equal to zero (i.e. neutral between a republican or monarchic experience) to further mitigate endogeneity concerns. Finally, we lag our instrument by half a century to avoid simultaneity with contemporaneous intensity of exposure to republican–monarchic rule. *Predicted Historical Exposure Rep–Mon* conveniently lies within the [–1, +1] interval. Similar to the baseline analysis, we then take the average of all yearly values over the period 1000–1861 (see Figure A3 for the spatial variation of the instrument). This makes the analysis directly comparable to baseline estimates and retains maximum external validity. Figure 6 shows the unconditional first stage relationship between the instrument and our measure of historical exposure to republican and monarchic rule. Our instrument exhibits considerable power in predicting the historical exposure to Republics versus Monarchies.

Figure 6: First Stage Relationship, Binscattered Relationship



Notes: Observation is an Italian municipality. Binscattered first stage relationship between the instrument and our measure of *Historical Exposure Rep–Mon*. Each bin contains approximately 400 municipalities.

Columns 1–2 in Table 3 show a positive and statistically significant coefficient, both when we estimate the unconditional relationship (column 1) and when we control for the full set of covariates presented in section 2.2 (column 2). Then, in columns 3–4 we show estimates of the first stage, where we regress our measure of *Historical Exposure Rep–Mon* over the instrument. In both columns the F-test is above the

[19] We compute this measure similarly to our baseline variable, as the inverse distance interpolation of the polity-specific weight measure proposed by Shiode and Shiode (2011):

$$Predicted\ Historical\ Exposure\ Rep-Mon_{i,t} = \frac{\sum_{l=1}^{k} g(p_i, c_l)^{-\lambda} w_l}{\sum_{l=1}^{k} g(p_i, c_l)^{-\lambda}} \tag{3}$$

where $l = 1...k$ are the polities ruling over Italy in year t, $g(p_i, c_l)$ is the effective distance from the centroid of municipality i to the coordinates of the capital of polity l, λ is the usual decay power coefficient, and w_l is the monarchic/republican weight [–1,1] assigned to the polity. We set $w_{l=own} = 0$ for all municipalities.

conventional value of 10, suggesting a strong instrument (Stock et al., 2002). Finally, columns 5–6 report the IV estimates, showing a strong and highly significant effect of historical exposure to republican–monarchic rule on and the choice of a republican/monarchic form of state in 1946. The IV estimate in column 6 suggests that a one standard deviation increase in historical exposure is associated with a 0.84 standard deviations increase in the difference between the vote share to the Republic against the Monarchy. 2SLS coefficients are about twice as large compared to the OLS and remarkably stable to all sets of covariates.

Table 3: Instrumental Variable Regressions: Results

Dependent Variable	Reduced Form Votes Diff. Rep-Mon		First Stage Hist. Exp. Rep-Mon		2SLS Votes Diff. Rep-Mon	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Hist. Exp. Rep-Mon					1.341***	1.386***
					(0.201)	(0.188)
					[0.809]	[0.836]
Predicted Hist. Exp. Rep-Mon	0.909***	0.817***	0.666***	0.585***		
	(0.113)	(0.137)	(0.090)	(0.109)		
	[0.537]	[0.483]	[0.652]	[0.573]		
Kleibergen-Paap F stat			54.909	27.831		
Geographic Controls	×	✓	×	✓	×	✓
Historical Controls	×	✓	×	✓	×	✓
Contingencies	×	✓	×	✓	×	✓
Political Controls	×	✓	×	✓	×	✓
R-squared	0.287	0.321	0.425	0.527	0.086	0.171
Observations	7946	7925	8092	8071	7946	7925

Notes: Reduced form estimates in columns 1–2, first stage estimates in columns 3–4, and 2SLS estimates in columns 5–6. Observations are municipalities. In columns 1–2 and 5–6, the dependent variable is the difference between the share votes to the Republic and the share votes to the Monarchy during the 1946 Referendum on the institutional form of the State, while in columns 3–4 the dependent variable is *Historical Exposure Rep–Mon*, that is the average index [–1, 1] of historical exposure to Republics/Monarchies over the period 1000–1861 based on distance from the municipality to its own polity's center of power as described by equation (1). *Predicted Historical Exposure Rep–Mon* is the average index [–1, 1] of historical exposure to Republics/Monarchies over the period 1000–1861 based on effective distance from the municipality to all polities' centroids as described by equation (3). Odd specifications presents unconditional estimates, whereas even specifications include the same set of controls as in column 4 of Table 1. All control variables in each set are listed and described in footnotes 16 and 17. Standard errors in parentheses are clustered to account for both spatial correlation up to 100 km. Standardized beta coefficients are reported in brackets. *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1.

We test for potential violations of the exclusion restriction using the method proposed by Conley et al. (2012) and find reassuring evidence against the hypothesis that our instrument, based on the full network of polities and centers of power, directly influenced political preferences for the Republic (Monarchy) in 1946.[20]

[20]This procedure asks how big the direct effect of our instrument on the *Vote Difference Republic–Monarchy* would have to be for the 2SLS estimates to become insignificant. Figure B3 shows how the effect of the historical exposure to republican and monarchic rule changes as we allow the instrument to have a direct effect on the *Vote Difference Republic–Monarchy*. On the y-axis, we report the union of confidence intervals of our 2SLS estimate against different potential direct effects of the instrument (x-axis). As reference, we report the reduced form coefficient as a vertical blue line. We find that the direct effect of *Predicted Historical*

While results so far pointed to strengthen our confidence on the external validity of both our measure of historical exposure to republican and monarchic rule and results throughout the Italian municipalities, in the following third and last exercise we concentrate on the internal validity of our findings.

RDD Estimates. While our measure of historical exposure to republican vs. monarchic rule leverages the *instability* of borders over time as a source of variation, in this last exercise we particularly focus on *stable* borders and implement a regression discontinuity strategy. This implies that we compare municipalities very close to each other and very similar in terms of observable characteristics, but long exposed to institutions with different levels of democratic governance on the two sides of the border. Though very local in nature, this approach allows us to reduce remaining concerns that other potential confounders are driving preferences over democratic institutions at the municipality level.

In pre-industrial Italy borders changed frequently with few relevant exceptions that can be exploited for identification. First, the Pope had sovereignty over the Papal States from 756 to 1870, a territory roughly covering present-day Latium, Umbria, Marche, and part of Emilia Romagna. Papal control and the extent of the territory under his rule were not always stable over the period 1000–1861, but the pope's established international status as the spiritual leader of Europe and a series of strategic alliances with other rulers allowed the preservation of at least a core of its domain from wars and expansionist threats (see, e.g., Larson and Sisson, 2016). Panel (a) of Figure 7 shows in darker colors across central Italy the municipalities longer ruled by the Papal States and its most stable border (thick line). In particular, based on the rulers on the opposite side of this stable border, we can distinguish two specific segments: (i) the *Northern* segment (in red), historically serving as a boundary between the Papal States and the more inclusive Tuscan Republics; and (ii) the *Southern* segment (in yellow), dividing the Papal States from the more autocratic regimes governing the Kingdom of Naples.

Second, the peculiar geography of the territory facing the Ligurian Sea, with the Apennines creating a natural boundary between the locations near the coast and the rest of Northern-East Italy, allowed the Republic of Genoa to maintain a relatively stable dominion (for more than 480 years) on the black area depicted in panel (a) of Figure 7 (in the northern part of the country). Municipalities above the Genoese border, by contrast, experienced a less stable, initial autocratic governance of the Holy Roman Emperor, followed by a similar republican governance under the domains of, e.g., Asti, Pavia, and Milan.

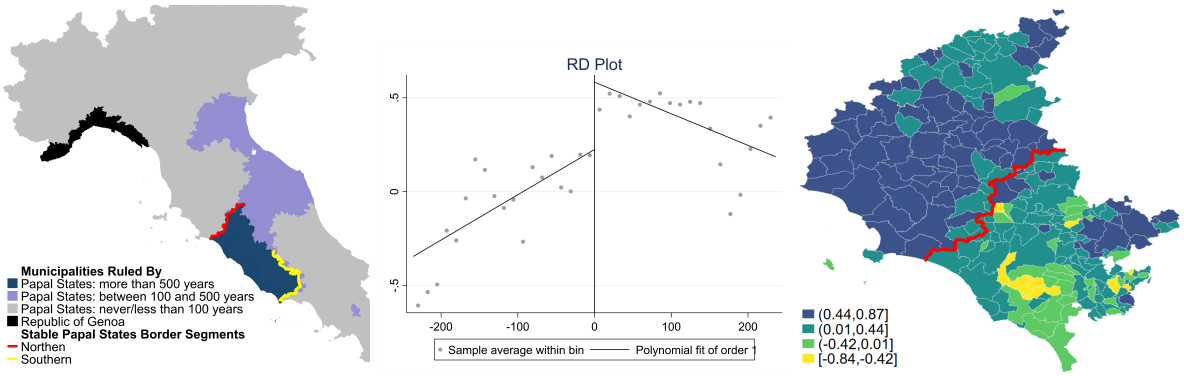
Given the more pronounced differences in the type of governance between the Tuscan Republics and the "papal monarchy", we consider the northern segment of the Papal States' border for the baseline RDD analysis, whereas we retain all other borders as placebo boundaries.[21] We expect municipalities located above

Exposure Rep–Mon on *Vote Difference Republic–Monarchy* should be more than 70 percent of the reduced form effect for the IV estimates to become insignificant and rule out a causal interpretation of our results.

[21] Harka et al. (2021) also focus on the Papal States' border to study the impact of Papal governance on gender inequality. Besides investigating a different outcome, in our work we consider a restricted portion of their study border (that also includes the northern part of the Grand Dutchy of Tuscany). This is due to the fact that in their analysis they account for the larger territorial extent reached by the Papal States only in the second part of the historical period we investigate.

the Papal States' northern segment to display higher support for the Republic in the 1946 Referendum.[22]

Figure 7: Exploiting Stable Borders for RDD Estimates



(a) Stable Borders (b) RDD Plot Across the Northern Border (c) Vote Shares Difference

Notes: Municipalities ruled by the Papal States and the Republic of Genoa in panel (a). The border delimiting municipalities longer ruled by the Papal States is divided in 2 segments based on the different ruler on the opposite side of the segment. Panel (b) reports the regression discontinuity plot considering municipalities within 200 km from the Northern border of the Papal States. The *x*-axis depicts distance to the border in kilometers (positive for municipalities located above the Northern border and negative below the Northern border). Panel (c) presents the difference in vote shares between Republic and Monarchy in 1946 Referendum for Italian municipalities located above and below the Northern border of the Papal State (red line) based on the optimal bandwidth (Keele and Titiunik, 2015; Cattaneo et al., 2019).

Regarding our baseline, panel (b) of Figure 7 shows the presence of a discontinuous increase in the difference between the share votes to the Republic and the share votes to the Monarchy during the 1946 Referendum across the northern border (municipalities above the border are displayed on the left of the cutoff). More formally, columns 1–3 of Table 4 present estimates of the linear local regression model using as forcing variable the normalized distance to the northern border and a triangular kernel (Keele and Titiunik, 2015; Cattaneo et al., 2019). The linearity assumption requires performing the analysis within a small enough bandwidth, therefore we use the MSE optimal bandwidths as suggested by Calonico et al. (2014). Panel (c) of Figure 7 plots the geographical discontinuity in our outcome variable zooming on the set of municipalities included in the optimal bandwidth around the border.

The coefficient in column 1 indicates that the vote share to the Republic was 28 percentage points higher than that to the Monarchy in municipalities historically ruled by more democratic institutions (the Tuscan Republics above the Papal States' northern border) compared to municipalities historically ruled by the Papal States. This result is significant at the 1% level and is robust to several checks, as discussed next.

[22]For a detailed description of data and samples used in the RDD analysis, see section 3 of the Online data appendix.

Table 4: Spatial RDD estimates

	Votes Differences Republic-Monarchy				
	Main Border Papal States–Northern			Placebo Borders Southern	Genoa
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
RDD_Estimate	0.279***	0.227***	0.336***	0.041	-0.153
	(0.066)	(0.063)	(0.094)	(0.091)	(0.092)
	{0.077}	{0.074}	{0.118}	{0.108}	{0.121}
Robust P-value	0.000	0.002	0.003	0.445	0.196
Observations Left	127	132	69	132	110
Observations Right	95	106	48	136	108
Polynomial Order	1	1	1	1	1
Optimal Bandwidth (Km)	79.136	85.873	51.760	31.852	8.802
Boundary FE	×	✓	✓	✓	✓
Donut hole (Km)	×	×	± 5	×	×

Notes: Spatial RDD estimates. Observations are municipalities. Columns 1–3 adopt the northern border between the Papal States and the Tuscan Republics as study border. Columns 4 adopts as study border the southern border of the Papal States. Column 5 focuses on the border of the Republic of Genoa. For all specifications the dependent variable is the difference between the share votes to the Republic and the share votes to the Monarchy during the 1946 Referendum on the institutional form of the State. Columns 2–5 include boundary FEs, while in column 3 we employ a "donut hole" approach and exclude municipalities within 5 km to the border. All specifications employ a local linear regression model. All estimates are based on the optimal bandwidth (Calonico et al., 2014), which is reported for all specifications together with the effective number of observations to the left and to the right of the border. Conventional standard errors are reported in parethesis. Bias robust standard errors are reported in curly brackets. Significance is evaluated using bias robust P-value (reported for all specifications). *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1.

First, the validity of our RDD strategy using the Papal States' northern border rely on two conditions. The first condition states that, except for the outcome variable, all characteristics must vary smoothly at the border. Table B2 shows placebo estimates of the local linear regression approach to the spatial RDD at the northern border. Column 1 allows for variable-specific optimal bandwidth as proposed by Calonico et al. (2014), while in column 3 we apply the optimal bandwidth adopted in column 1 of table 4. As expected, geographical, historical, and political characteristics vary smoothly at the border, with the only exception of the variable accounting for population in 1000 (only in column 1). In any case, if we augment specification 1 to account for population in 1000, our results hold. The second assumption behind the RDD analysis is the absence of self-selection into treatment at the cutoff (manipulation testing). Reassuringly, a formal test for the validity of this assumption shows no discontinuity in the observations' density at the cutoff (see Appendix Figure B7). Second, to ensure that we are comparing observations in close geographic proximity, we follow Dell (2010) and include in column 2 boundary segment fixed effects of equal length (20 km).[23] Third, to further rule out that our results are driven by unobservable municipalities' characteristics at the cut-

[23]For a detailed description of boundary segments, see section 3 of the Online data appendix.

off, in column 3 we employ a "donut hole" approach and exclude municipalities within 5 km to the border. Coefficients remain large in magnitude and highly significant. Fourth, in line with our expectations, RDD estimates using the placebo borders show no significant discontinuity in preferences over democratic institutions (see columns 4–5 of Table 4).[24] Finally, baseline RDD results become consistently non-significant if, as additional placebo tests, we shift the border either 0.1 or 0.5 decimal degrees to the north or the south (see Appendix Table B3).

Taken together, the stability of the results obtained with identification strategies featuring complementary identifying restrictions and exploiting different variation (full sample in OLS and 2SLS, residual variation within electoral districts, and local variation in RDD) bolster a causal interpretation of the findings. In the next Section we validate our evidences and investigate the mechanisms underlying this result.

3 Mechanisms And Validation

To investigate the mechanism behind the positive relationship between the historical exposure to republican–monarchic rule and the choice of a republican/monarchic form of state in 1946 we build on the insights discussed in Section 2 and proceed in three steps. We show that other potential mechanisms suggested by the literature are not confounding our results (Section 3.1). In a panel framework, we focus on the institutional and political legacy of local exposure to republic–monarchy as proxied by the stable adoption of statutory laws (Section 3.2.2).

3.1 Alternative Determinants of the Vote: Economic Conditions, Shocks, Violence and Propaganda

Historians and political scientists discussing the outcome of the 1946 Referendum have pointed to the role of several alternative short-term factors besides the local historical republican capital, some of which have been emphasized by a well-established political economics literature studying democratic transitions and other instances of institutional changes. We particularly discuss the role of local economic shocks and socio-economic characteristics, war-related violence, exposure to Fascism, and exposure to media propaganda, and check the robustness of our findings to specifically accounting for them in our regression estimates.

We do this in two ways. First, by collecting data that can proxy for a given alternative mechanism and augmenting our specification to specifically account for its influence on the outcome of the Referendum. Second, by exploring potential complementarities between our historical measure and the alternative mechanism by controlling for both the variable proxying for the alternative mechanism and its interaction with *Historical Exposure Rep-Mon*. Before presenting the results of these two exercises we briefly discuss each

[24] Appendix Figures B5, and B6 report the RDD plot and maps of the geographical discontinuities across the Papal States' southern segments, and across the Genoese border, respectively.

alternative mechanism and how we proxy it through municipality-level data.[25] Remarkably, we note that many of these variables may very well be considered "bad controls", as they are likely to have been influenced by the stock of long-term exposure to republican/monarchic rule. Nevertheless, we view these two robustness tests as valuable checks to further corroborate our findings in light of the existing literature.

Economic Inequality and Shocks. Transitory shocks, such as droughts or higher rainfall, have been indicated as possible determinants of voting behavior since they provide a window of opportunity for citizens to contest power (Bruckner and Ciccone, 2011; Franck, 2016; Kotschy and Sunde, 2021). The scope for this contestation would be stronger in the presence of large economic inequality. In general, large economic inequality could have made a more inclusive political regime like the Republic more appealing for voters in 1946 (Acemoglu et al., 2020, 2022). We measure shocks to the agricultural production in the months preceding the vote (April-June 1946) using data on precipitation and temperatures from Pauling et al. (2006) and Xoplaki et al. (2005), respectively.[26] We measure inequality using the municipal inequality in land distribution in 1947 (from agrarian census) (Buonanno et al., 2020).

Socio-Economic Characteristics. Robinson and Torvik (2016) formalize the role of elites in a theoretical model predicting that presidential regimes will be preferred by elites because it generates most rents. Along the same lines, Nakaguma (2015) shows that rich and poor voted differently for the 1993 Brazilian constitutional referendum. Education (Bourguignon and Verdier, 2000), structural and sectorial change (Lizzeri and Persico, 2004; Llavador and Oxoby, 2005) should increase the support for institutions granting political freedom to larger shares of the population. To measure these characteristics we rely on data from the 1951 census (the closest to 1946) to specifically track literacy rates and employment shares in agriculture and industry as measures of local socio-economic conditions.[27]

War-related violence. The World War II armistice set the critical juncture that led to the Referendum. The violence and retaliation experienced during 1943–1945 were still vivid in June 1946 and may have affected the outcome of the vote. Therefore we account for the number of Nazi-fascist massacres in each municipality from the *Atlas of Nazi and Fascist Massacres* (INSMLI and ANPI, 2016), and for WWII major fronts (a dummy variable indicating if the municipality is within 20 km from at least one of the main front lines: the Gustav Line, the Trasimene Line, Hitler Line, and Gothic Line) to account for the potential influence that

[25] A more detailed description of the data construction and sources is available in the Online Data Appendix.

[26] As a measure of transitory shocks we compute the municipality-related one-sided deviation of rainfall (temperature) in the period April-June 1946 from the reference climate normal (1930-1960)

$$shock_{i,t} = \frac{x_{ip} - \bar{x}_{ip}}{sd_{ip}} \tag{4}$$

where x_{ip} if the quantity of rainfall (temperature) in municipality i in the period p (April-June), standardized by the mean $\bar{x}_{ip}$ and the standard deviation sd_{ip} in each municipality (both computed over the 1930–1960 period.

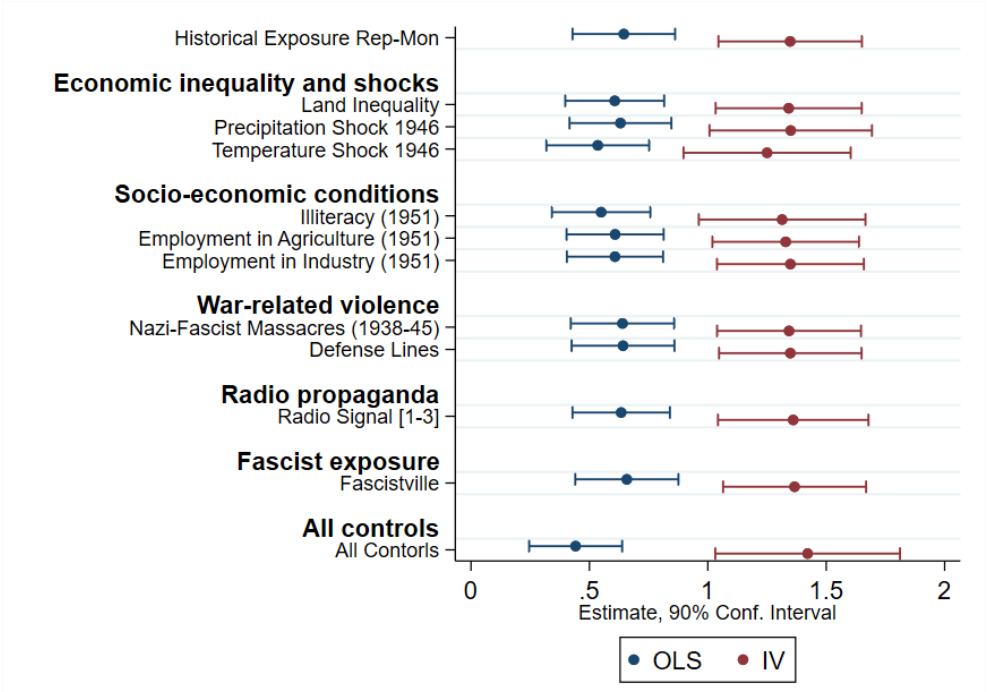
[27] Data were retrieved from https://ottomilacensus.istat.it/.

harsher war episodes and proximity to major battlefronts might have had on the vote in the referendum.

Exposure to Radio propaganda. Recent literature has focused on the role of radio propaganda in influencing political outcomes and conflicts (DellaVigna et al., 2014; Adena et al., 2015; Gagliarducci et al., 2020; Grosfeld et al., 2024). For instance, Gagliarducci et al. (2020) show the role of the radio in coordinating and mobilizing insurgency against a Nazi military occupation In Italy. The fascist regime itself used extensively radio and media to convey its propaganda. During the campaign before the referendum the radio provided a means to inform the population regarding the implications of the vote, so we track the radio signal in February 1946 thanks to data from the national broadcasting company (RAI).

Exposure to Fascism. The Referendum came after more than twenty years of Fascist regime. While part of the population suffered the repression of the regime, part of it enjoyed some benefits. for instance, Carillo (2022) shows the long term effect of infrastructures built by the Fascist regime on political support the Fascist ideology. The same mechanism might explain part of the support for the monarchy in the Referendum. To control for this alternative mechanism we use the municipal distance from the closest "New Town" built by Mussolini from Carillo (2022).

Figure 8: Sensitivity to Alternative Mechanisms



Notes: Observations are municipalities. Coefficients reported on top of the graph correspond to the estimated coefficients for *Historical Exposure Rep–Mon* reported in column 5 of table 1 (OLS in blue) and column 6 of table 3 (IV in red), respectively. Coefficients reported on subsequent rows are the coefficients for *Historical Exposure Rep–Mon* estimated using the same specifications augmented with the variable specified in that row. Specifications associated with coefficients reported at the bottom of the graph include all variables at the same time. OLS and IV estimates. Standard errors are clustered to account for spatial correlation up to 100 km.

Reassuringly, Figure 8 shows that the effect of the intensity of historical exposure to republican/monarchic rule is not substantially affected by the alternative mechanisms discussed above (confront the coefficient reported on the top of the Figure with the same coefficient when we control for the additional mechanism reported on the left). Similarly, when we include both the proxy for the alternative mechanisms and its interaction with our measure of exposure to republican and monarchic rule (see Tables 5), our main coefficient of interest remain strongly and positively significant whereas the interaction term between our measure and the proxies for the other mechanisms is mostly non-significant, with the exception of being on WWII deference lines and land inequality.

In line with predictions in the literature, the results provide evidence for the role of short-term determinants of the votes but also confirm that the historical intensity of exposure to republican and monarchic rule is a main, robust, driver of local preferences.

Table 5: Historical Exposure to Rep-Mon and its Interaction with Socio-Economic Controls

Dependent Variable	Votes Differences Republic-Monarchy									
	Economic Inequality and Shocks			Socio-Economic Characteristics			War-Related Violence		Propaganda	Fascism
Alternative Mechanism	Land Inequality	Prec. Shock	Temp. Shock	Share Illiterate	Share Agriculture	Share Industry	Nazi-Fascist Massacres	Defense Lines	Radio Signal	Distance Fascistville
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)
Historical Exposure Rep-Mon	0.601***	0.607***	0.501***	0.559***	0.609***	0.608***	0.639***	0.612***	0.638***	0.663***
	(0.124)	(0.152)	(0.175)	(0.141)	(0.124)	(0.123)	(0.132)	(0.132)	(0.125)	(0.131)
	[0.363]	[0.366]	[0.302]	[0.337]	[0.368]	[0.367]	[0.386]	[0.369]	[0.385]	[0.400]
Alternative Mechanism	0.052***	0.025	-0.146***	-0.095***	-0.085***	0.091***	0.019**	0.075	0.043*	-0.023
	(0.014)	(0.034)	(0.031)	(0.026)	(0.015)	(0.020)	(0.007)	(0.053)	(0.025)	(0.015)
	[0.118]	[0.057]	[-0.330]	[-0.215]	[-0.192]	[0.206]	[0.043]	[0.049]	[0.098]	[-0.052]
Interaction	-0.080**	-0.056	0.088	-0.030	-0.022	-0.002	0.013	0.992***	-0.042	0.030
	(0.040)	(0.212)	(0.250)	(0.146)	(0.051)	(0.060)	(0.017)	(0.345)	(0.091)	(0.045)
	[-0.043]	[-0.022]	[0.034]	[-0.014]	[-0.011]	[-0.001]	[0.010]	[0.097]	[-0.021]	[0.019]
R-squared	0.305	0.296	0.319	0.311	0.321	0.324	0.294	0.301	0.298	0.296
Observations	7925	7867	7925	7925	7925	7925	7925	7925	7925	7916

Notes: OLS estimates. Observations are municipalities. Each column replicates the specification of column 5 of Table 1 augmenting it with one the following variables and its interaction with *Historical Exposure to Rep-Mon*: *Land Inequality* (column 1), *Precipitation Shocks* (column 2), *Temperature Shocks* (column 3), *Share Illiterate* (column 4), *Share of Employed in Agriculture* (column 5), *Share of Employed in Industry* (column 6), *N. Nazi-Fascist Massacres* (column 7), *Defence Lines* (column 8), *Radio Signal* (column 9), and *Distance from Fascistville* (column 10). All variables are described in Section 3.1. Standard errors in parentheses are clustered to account for spatial correlation up to 100 km. Standardized beta coefficients are reported in brackets. *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1.

3.2 Panel Analysis: Political History and Self-Governance by Law

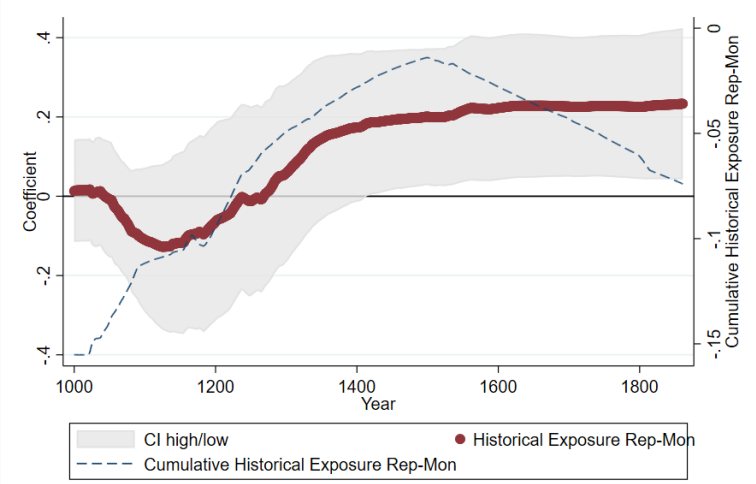
We now exploit the temporal nature of our measure in two panel analyses. First, we unpack the dynamics of the exposure to republican/monarchic rule to gain insights on the sensitivity of our results to the use of different periods of time (Section 3.2.1). Second, we explore the prediction on the role of equality by law by using the time-varying adoption of statutory laws to validate our baseline measure and analyze transmission channels (Section 3.2.2).

3.2.1 The Dynamics of Intensity of Exposure to Republican and Monarchic Rules

To further support the idea that the historical exposure to republican vs. monarchic rule over the centuries influences preferences for republican (monarchic) forms of state today, we exploit the time-varying nature of our original dataset and explore the sensitivity of results to the use of different periods of time for the computation of our indicator of historical exposure to Republics–Monarchies. More specifically, for each year over the period 1000–1861, Figure 9 reports the point estimate and confidence interval of the historical exposure Republic–Monarchy computed between the year 1000 and that specific year.

Exposure to Republic–Monarchy generally leaned toward Monarchy between 1000 and 1200 (ranging from –0.15 to –0.1). During that period, our measure is not significantly associated with stronger preferences for the Republic in 1946. However, this relationship becomes increasingly positive and significantly different from zero when the average exposure to Republic–Monarchy began to lean toward the Republic (ranging from –0.1 to 0) during the consolidation of republican governance (1200–1500). Finally, our coefficient of interest remains stable even when we include periods in the index calculation where republics were superseded by monarchies (after 1500).

Figure 9: The Dynamics of Intensity of Exposure to Republican–Monarchic



Notes: The blue dashed line represents the cumulative value of the historical exposure to Rep-Mon in a given year. Each dot in the maroon line represents the point estimate from a regression replicating specification 5 of Table 2 in which the average *Historical Exposure to Rep-Mon* computed over the period 1000–1861 is replaced by the same indicator computed over the period between the year 1000 and the year indicated on the *x*-axis. The gray area indicates the 90% confidence interval associated with each point estimate.

3.2.2 Channel and Validation: Statutory Laws

Statutory Laws. Historical accounts suggest that the local adoption of statutory laws from the year 1000 may be a good proxy of local republican rule as these legal acts were particulary devised to defend spaces of autonomy and specific local interests (see Piergiovanni, 1989). Importantly, statutory laws were not confined to Northern Italy, as we can find legal acts granting autonomies also in the monarchic South, which allows us to track the implementation of more inclusive local social contracts throughout Italy. Moreover, given their written form, we know these acts have endured over time (see Wickham, 2016), which is aso a convenient feature of this measure that can be exploited in the empirical analysis.

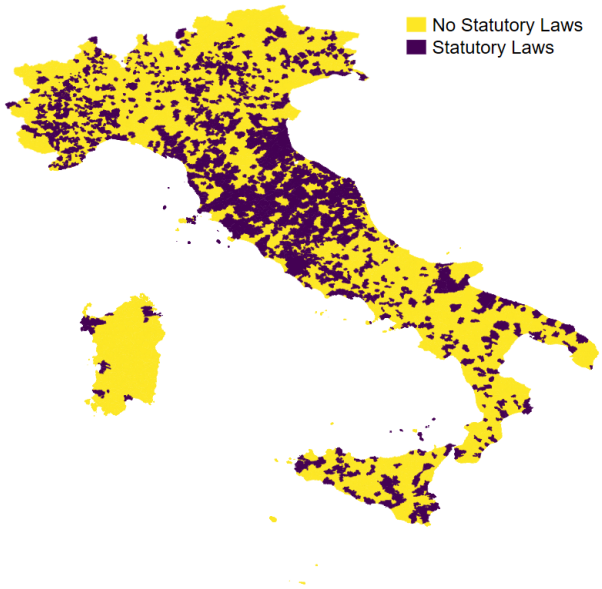
To track information on the local adoption of statutory laws we rely on the *Catalogue of the Statutes, Customary Laws, Decrees, Orders, and Privileges of Communes, Associations, and Local Organizations from the Middle Ages to the end of the XVIII century* by Chelazzi (1943), in its digitized and updated version as provided by the Library of the Italian Senate. For each Italian municipality, the catalogue compiles bibliographic references and concise descriptions of all forms of *ius statuendi*, both legislative and administrative, including statutes of secular and religious associations, as well as local institutions such as corporations. It stands as the most comprehensive bibliography of Italian statutory laws (Thompson, 1952), encompassing more than 3,900 acts.[28] For each statutory law, we know the date (or period) in which it was compiled and the location (mapped to present-day Italian municipalities) it aimed to regulate.[29]

[28]The catalogue, available in print, has been digitized by the Library of the Italian Senate, which has also updated it with about 250 missing charters.

[29]Note that if a statutory law pertained to the territory of more than one municipality, the catalogue reports the list of munici-

Out of this source we build two main variables. First, we compute the *Statutory Laws Dummy*, that is a cross-sectional indicator taking the value of one if a municipality ever had a statutory law in the period 1000-1800. Figure 10 displays the spatial distribution of this variable across all Italian municipalities. This measure allows us to observe some form of self-governance in 1286 municipalities, that is 15.89% of our sample.

Figure 10: Statutory Laws (1000–1800)



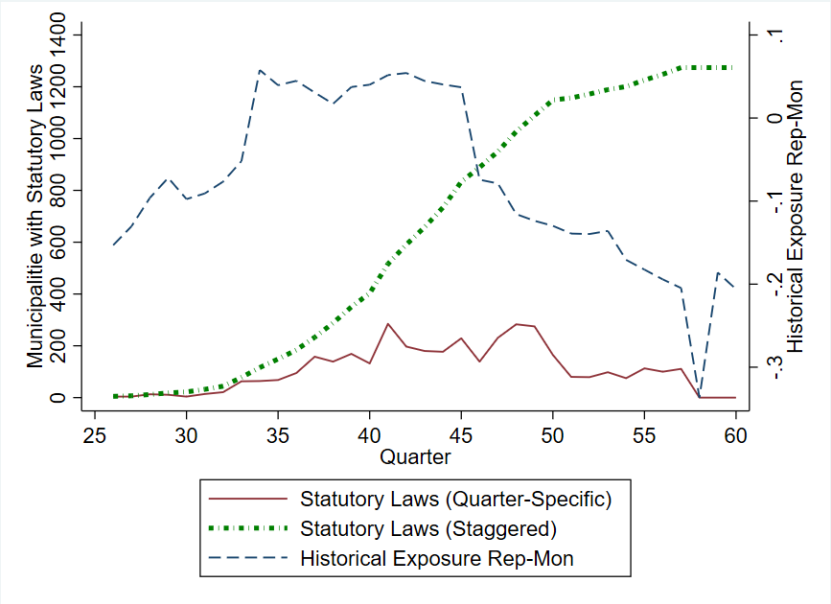
Notes: Spatial distribution of *Statutory Laws*, computed as a dummy taking the value one if a municipality ever had a statutory law during the period 1000-1800.

Given the panel nature of the catalogue, we can exploit the timing of adoption to construct a panel version of the cross sectional variable presented above. Given the low frequency at the yearly level, for the purposes of the econometric analysis we chose to build the panel measure at the quarter of century level. More specifically, we compute the quarter-specific Statutory Laws Dummy as a dummy taking the value one if the municipality ever had a statutory law within that quarter. The maroon solid line in Figure 11 shows the evolution of the number of municipalities with a statutory law in each quarter over the period 1000–1861. Since historical accounts point to the resilience of statutory laws to changes in the type of governance, for the empirical analysis we will actually rely on the staggered version of the quarter-specific dummy. For each municipality this variable will therefore take the value one from the quarter of adoption onwards, up to the end of the panel. The dotted-dashed line in Figure 11 presents the evolution of the staggered dummy overtime showing a monotonic increase in the number of municipalities with these consolidated forms of republican rule, with a progressively increasing slope up to the peak of republican experiences and

palities to which it applied or the name of the (medieval) region over which the act was issued. For the sake of comparability in the dataset and in the absence of additional information on the implementation of regional acts, we discard acts that involve entire regions.

a progressively declining slope as republican experiences reach an end.

Figure 11: The evolution of Statutory Laws and Historical Exposure Rep–Mon



Notes: This figure shows the evolution over time of the number of municipalities with a statutory law in each quarter of century (solid maroon line), the cumulated number of municipalities ever endowed with a statutory law (green dotted-dashed line), and the evolution of *Historical Exposure Rep-Mon* (navy dashed line) over the period 1000-1861.

To assess whether these consolidated forms of equality by law directly originated from time-varying experiences of republican/monarchic rule, we estimate the following panel regression equation

$$Statutory\ Laws(staggered, DV)_{it} = \alpha\ Historical\ Exposure\ Rep-Mon_{it-1} + \beta \mathbf{X}_{it} + \delta_i + \theta_t + \varepsilon_{it} \qquad (5)$$

where $Statutory\ Laws(staggered, DV)_{it}$ is a dummy variable taking the value one for municipality i in all quarter of centuries t from the quarter it first implemented a statutory law onward, and the Historical Exposure Rep-Mon is the value of our measure of intensity of exposure to Rep-Mon in the previous quarter. Similar to our cross-section specification we then account for the vector of municipality-level covariates $\mathbf{X}_{it}$, including the same time invariant geographic and historical controls in equation (2) interacted with the quarter of century dummies, and the time varying versions of our proxies of historical contingencies and political controls.[30] Finally, δ_i denotes municipality fixed effects to account for unobserved municipality-specific factors such as specific cultural traits that might influence the implementation and consolidation of local statutory laws, while θ_t denotes quarter of century fixed effects to control for unobserved quarter-specific factors. The error term ε_{it} is clustered to account for spatial autocorrelation up to 100 km based on

[30]This implies that we are accounting for the quarter-specific incidence of earthquakes, epidemics outbreaks, and temperature variability, and the staggered versions of the free city and Lombard League dummies. We do not account for quarter-level political instability because this measure would be very correlated with the evolution of the historical exposure to Rep–Mon.

Conley (1999).

Results are reported in Table 6. Column 1 includes only municipality and quarter of century fixed effects, columns 2 and 3 progressively add geographic and historical covariates interacted with the quarter dummies, respectively, column 4 further accounts for local historical contingencies, and column 5 adds political controls. In all specifications, the historical exposure to republican and monarchic rule in the previous quarter is strongly and positively associated with the probability to implement and maintain a statutory law. In particular, focusing on column 5, a one standard deviation increase in the level of historical exposure to republican and monarchic rule (0.366) is associated with a 0.007 percentage points increase in the probability to implement a statutory law, that is 8.39% of the average probability in the overall panel of municipalities.

A higher local intensity of exposure to republican rather than monarchical rule significantly increases the likelihood that a municipality will successfully adopt statutory law over time. Once the statute is adopted, it persistently guarantees legal equality, reinforces republican institutions, and directly shapes preferences for republican rule. Table B1 supports this interpretation, as municipalities that successfully adopted statutory laws show even higher support for the Republic in the 1946 referendum, given the same intensity of exposure to republican–monarchical rule.

Table 6: Exposure to republican–monarchic rule and Statutory Law adoption

Dependent Variable	Statutory Laws Dummy (staggered)				
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Historical Exposure Rep-Mon (Lagged)	0.020***	0.021***	0.023***	0.022***	0.019***
	(0.005)	(0.005)	(0.005)	(0.005)	(0.005)
Mean Dependent Variable	0.0815	0.0815	0.0815	0.0815	0.0815
Quarter FE	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Municipality FE	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Geographic Controls	×	✓	✓	✓	✓
Historical Controls	×	×	✓	✓	✓
Contingencies	×	×	×	✓	✓
Political Controls	×	×	×	×	✓
R-squared	0.576	0.579	0.599	0.599	0.603
Observations	270164	269450	269450	269450	269450

Notes: Observations are municipalities per quarter of century between 1000 and 1861 (35 quarters). In all specifications the dependent variable is *Statutory Laws* $(staggered, DV)$, that is a dummy variable taking the value one for municipality i in all quarter of centuries t from the quarter it first implemented a statutory law onward, while the main explanatory variable is *Historical Exposure Rep* $-$ *Mon* $(Lagged)$, the value of our index of *Historical Exposure Rep-Mon* in the previous quarter. Column 1 controls for municipal and quarter fixed effects, column 2 adds *geographic controls* interacted with quarter's dummies, column 3 adds *historical controls* interacted with quarter's dummies, column 4 further includes proxies of historical *contingencies*, and column 5 add *political controls*. All control variables in each set are listed and described in Section 3.2.2. OLS estimates. Standard errors in parentheses are clustered to account for spatial correlation up to 100 km. *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1.

The evidence presented in Table 6 supports the conjecture of an "institutional" mechanism to sustain

high local republican rules over time. We turn our attention to the individual support for democracy and trust in institutions to explore the role of family transmission of republican values through family lines.

4 Political History and Individual Preferences within Democracy

To investigate the role of family transmission of republican (monarchic) values we rely on survey data from the Italian National Election Studies (ITANES) for 1996 and 2001. While surveys by ITANES have multiple waves spanning from 1972 to 2018, only the 2001 and 1996 waves simultaneously satisfy all the requirements needed for our analysis: they include questions on respondents' preferences for democracy or trust in institutions, interview respondents old enough to ensure that their parents plausibly voted in 1946, and provide municipality identifiers. This last feature allows us to link respondents to the municipality-specific level of intensity of historical exposure to republican and monarchic rule to which respondents are exposed by simply residing in that municipality.[31] In addition, the surveys provide an extensive set of demographic and socio-economic characteristics of the respondent and the respondent's parents. Appendix Table A3 presents summary statistics for this part of the analysis.

We start by checking whether a more intense exposure to republican rule in the past is associated with the probability that the father of the respondent voted in 1946 for a party supporting the Republic and that is more likely to be interested in politics. This provides us with a sort of sanity check that our results in Section 2 hold also with an alternative dataset on political preferences. Then, we proceed by studying whether the intensity of historical exposure to republican and monarchic rule and the political preferences of the respondents' father are: (i) related to the respondent's support for democracy, and (ii) related to the respondents' trust in institutions.

The results are illustrated in Table 7. In all specifications, we control for respondents' characteristics such as age, gender, educational level, marital status, number of children, and a set of dummies for the sector in which the respondent is employed (self-employed, agriculture, service, industry, public administration). Additionally, we include standard municipal controls as in equation (2) and, when examining the attitudes of the respondents' fathers, we also control for a set of dummies for the sector in which the father was employed when the respondent was 14 years old.

[31] Respondents from 1996 and 2001 ITANES surveys reside in 793 municipalities. As shown in tables A1 and A4 these municipalities are not representative of the full sample of Italian municipalities, as ITANES surveys are designed to be representative only at the national level.

Table 7: Political History and Individual Preferences

Dependent Variable	Republican Father in 1946 (DV)	Father Interested in Politics (DV)	Individual Support for Democracy (DV)			Trust in Institutions		
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
Historical Exposure Rep–Mon	0.187***	0.138***	0.114***	0.114***	0.114***	0.557***	0.553***	0.537***
	(0.044)	(0.050)	(0.038)	(0.038)	(0.038)	(0.153)	(0.153)	(0.152)
Republican Father in 1946				0.028			0.037	
				(0.022)			(0.073)	
Father Intrested in Politics					0.021			0.180**
					(0.023)			(0.072)
Observations	1560	1560	2303	2303	2303	3062	3062	3062
Father Controls	✓	✓	×	×	×	×	×	×
Respondent Controls	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Municipal Controls	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Survey Year	2001	2001	1996	1996	1996	2001	2001	2001

Notes: OLS estimates. Observations are at the individual level. All regressions are weighted using survey weights. Columns 1–2 and 6–8 use data from the 2001 ITANES survey, while columns 3–5 rely on the 1996 ITANES wave. Columns 1–2 restrict the sample to respondents older than 45 years old. In column 1 the dependent variable is *Republican Father in 1946 (DV)*, that takes the value one if the respondent's father supported a pro-republic party in 1946. In column 2 *Father Interested in Politics (Dummy)* is a dummy that takes the value one if the respondent's father is interested in politics. In columns 3–5 the dependent variable is the *Individual Support for Democracy (DV)*, taking the value one if the respondent answered 'always' to the question 'Is democracy preferable to any other form of government?'. Finally, in columns 6–8 the dependent variable is *Trust in Institutions*, that is the first principal component of six dummies tracking whether the respondent reported trust in the following institutions: parliament, political parties, president of the republic, justice system, public administration, and the army. In all specification the main explanatory variable is *Historical Exposure Rep-Mon*, that is the average index [–1, 1] of historical exposure to republics/monarchies over the period 1000–1861 based on distance from the municipality to its own polity's center of power as described by equation (1). In all specifications we include *Municipal Controls* (as in column 4 of Table 1) and *Respondent Controls*. Columns 1–2 also add *Father Controls*. *Respondent Controls* and *Father Controls* are listed and described in Section 4. Robust standard errors clustered at the municipality level in parenthesis. *** indicates significance at the 1% level, ** indicates significance at the 5% level, * indicates significance at the 10% level.

‘

Fathers' Political Preferences. The 2001 ITANES survey includes the following two questions about the political preferences of the respondents' fathers: (i) 'Do you remember which political party your father supported?', which allows us to build a dummy variable that takes the value one if the father supported a pro-republic party in 1946 (*Republican Father in 1946 (DV)*); and (ii) 'Was your father interested in politics?', which we use to build the dummy variable *Father Interested in Politics (DV)* taking the value one for fathers interested in politics. To examine the political preferences of respondents' fathers, ensuring they likely participated in the 1946 Referendum, we restrict the sample of respondents to individuals aged over 45 years.[32] In line with our baseline findings, results in columns 1 and 2 of Table 7 show that local long-term exposure to republican–monarchic rule is positively associated with the probability that the respondents' father voted for a party supporting the Republic in 1946 (column 1) and reported to be interested in politics (column 2). These results using simple linear probability models are robust to using probit models (see

[32]We include only respondents born before 1956; if their fathers were 30 years old at their birth, this implies the fathers were born before 1926.

columns 1–2 of Appendix Table B4).

Respondents' Preferences for Democracy. The 1996 ITANES survey directly asked respondents the following question: 'Is democracy preferable to any other form of government?', which allows us to define the variable *Individual Support for Democracy (DV)* as a dummy variable taking the value one if the respondent answered 'always'. Estimates in column 3 indicate that the historical exposure to republican–monarchic rule is positively related to preferences for democracy in 1996, even 50 years after the 1946 Referendum. The coefficient is significant at the 1% level, suggesting that what we observe in 1946 is not confined to that particular context or period but represents a long-lasting phenomenon.

Then, in columns 4 and 5 of Table 7, we study whether the respondents' fathers political preferences the findings in column 3 can be partially attributed to the vertical transmission of values and preferences through family lines (see, e.g., Bisin and Verdier, 2000, 2023a). To do this, in the spirit of a mediation analysis, we check what happens to the coefficient of interest when we augment specification 3 to control for the fathers' preferences for pro-republic parties (column 4), or when we account for fathers interested in politics (column 5). In both specifications the coefficient of the intensity of historical exposure to republican–monarchic rule is barely affected, while both fathers' related variables are not statistically significant. This suggests that the persistent effect of the local institutional history seems to go beyond cultural transmission through family lines.

Trust in Formal Institutions. As recent works have shown longer exposure to democratic institutions influences support for democracy (Persson and Tabellini, 2009; Fuchs-Schündeln and Schündeln, 2015; Besley and Persson, 2019; Acemoglu et al., 2024). Repeated fruitful interactions between voters and formal institutions can increase trust in their functioning, leading to stronger preferences for democracy in a virtuous circle over time. Trust in formal institutions might therefore be the mechanism that links *Historical Exposure Rep-Mon* and preferences for republican institutions. The 2001 ITANES survey asks for the level of trust in various Italian institutions. We thus construct a synthetic measure of *Trust in Institutions* by using the first principal component of the following institutions: parliament, political parties, president of the republic, justice system, public administration and the army.

Columns 6–8 of Table 7 find that a higher level of *Historical Exposure Rep-Mon* is correlated with greater trust in formal institutions. This correlation holds even after controlling for vertical cultural transmission (columns 7–8), with the coefficient of interest slightly declines when father's interested in politics is considered. While these results are purely suggestive, they still provide valuable insights into the existence of a virtuous nexus between long-term exposure to republican rule and trust in the functioning of democratic institutions themselves.

5 Concluding Remarks

Peculiar contingencies at the end of WWII lead to a process of democratization in which the whole adult population, making up for around 25 million people, was called to vote on whether the newborn country should retain traditional monarchic rule or should be a Republic. We have studied this unique instance of self-determination on the institutional form of the state to study individual preferences over political institutions in the population at large. To this end, we have assembled an original geo-referenced database on pre-industrial political development at municipality level in Italy. The data contribute, in particular, a panel measurement of exposure to the rule of republican and monarchic polities in pre-industrial times that tracks the differential intensity across and within sovereign polities. We also have assembled and geo-referenced a database of local statutes—legal charters regulating forms of self-governance and economic activities—at yearly frequencies. These data have been harmonized with historical data for the pre-industrial period, for 1946 and half a century after democratization (either from existing sources and with a new measurement).

The analysis contribute evidence on individual preferences in the process of democratization. The results provide support for untested predictions by democratization theories but also document a key role for a largely neglected element: the local political history crucially shapes political preferences above and beyond socio-economic conditions and shocks. The results also document a key role of sub-national political history in the process of state formation. In particular, it documents the existence of large spatial heterogeneity in preferences for free institutions even at a local scale. The findings provide insights on the co-evolution of historical institutions and individual political preferences and suggest a key role of local legal regulations. Pushing the evidence by exploiting large scale surveys allows to document that half a century after democratization local political history shapes support for democracy and trust in political institutions. Taken together, the evidence suggests a relevant, but so far largely neglected, role of local political history in shaping preferences for free institutions and democratic representations. Exploring whether, and how, political history also affects the working of democracies in terms, e.g., of votes and political participation, appears a natural direction for further research aimed at a deeper understanding of the deep roots of individual preferences in democracies.

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A Descriptives

Table A1: Summary statistics. Municipality Level (Cross-Section)

Variable	Observations	Mean	St. Dev.	Median	Min	Max
Votes Differences Republic-Monarchy	7946	0.0298	0.442	0.0890	-0.988	0.942
Historical Exposure Rep-Mon	8092	-0.0740	0.267	-0.0128	-0.857	0.900
Average Exposure (all centroids, euclidean)	8092	0.181	0.297	0.255	-0.476	0.738
Altitude	8078	357.3	297.6	290	0	2035
Ruggedness	8071	224.0	215.4	164.9	0.894	1151.4
log Distance to the Sea	8092	3.169	1.508	3.160	-4.512	5.738
log Distance to Rivers	8078	3.126	3.084	4.019	-6.908	5.440
Caloric Suitability	8091	2228.4	549.3	2403.9	0	2969.0
log Population 1000	8092	-2.840	0.488	-2.996	-2.996	4.095
log Distance Bishoprics 1000 AD	8092	1.326	1.291	1.527	-8.869	3.925
log Distance to Roman Roads	8092	2.303	1.997	2.683	-6.908	5.387
log Distance to Roman Market	8092	3.020	0.965	3.040	-1.644	5.893
Seismicity 1000-1861	8092	0.946	1.886	0	0	25
Epidemic Outbreaks	8092	0.893	0.309	1	0	1
Climate Variability	8092	0.517	0.0421	0.504	0.431	0.640
Political Instability 1000-1861	8092	21.54	8.467	19	4	79
Commune	8092	0.00816	0.0899	0	0	1
Lombard League	8092	0.00297	0.0544	0	0	1

Notes: Observations are municipalities.

Table A2: Summary statistics. Municipality Level (Panel Data)

Variable	Observations	Mean	St. Dev.	Median	Min	Max
Statutory Laws (staggered, DV)	278110	0.0815	0.274	0	0	1
Historical Exposure Rep-Mon	278110	-0.0769	0.366	-0.0261	-1.000	1.000
Seismicity	278110	0.0236	0.152	0	0	1
Epidemic Outbreaks	278110	0.178	0.382	0	0	1
Climate Variability	278110	0.419	0.0910	0.411	0.184	0.833
Commune (staggered)	278110	0.0164	0.127	0	0	1
Lombard League (staggered)	278110	0.00242	0.0491	0	0	1

Notes: Observations are municipalities per quarter of century in the period 1000-1861 (35 quarters).

Table A3: Summary statistics. Individual Level Data Within Democracy (Survey)

Variable	Observations	Mean	St. Dev.	Median	Min	Max
Republican Father in 1946	7287	0.288	0.453	0	0	1
Father Intrested in Politics	7287	0.317	0.466	0	0	1
Own Preference for Democracy	2309	0.813	0.390	1	0	1
Trust in Institutions (PC)	4978	2.87e-10	1.437	-0.827	-0.827	7.470
Father Employed in Agriculture	4978	0.183	0.387	0	0	1
Father Employed in Manufacturing	4978	0.269	0.443	0	0	1
Father Employed in Service	4978	0.130	0.336	0	0	1
Father Employed in Public Sector	4978	0.142	0.349	0	0	1
Age	7287	45.01	16.39	43	18	96
Gender	7287	0.507	0.500	1	0	1
Educational Level	7277	10.61	3.868	11	0	18
Marital Status	7287	0.583	0.493	1	0	1
Number of Childern	6640	1.765	1.239	2	0	9
Employed (yes/no)	7287	0.790	0.663	1	0	2
Self-Employed (yes/no)	7287	0.701	0.830	0	0	2
Employed in Public Sector	7287	0.306	0.461	0	0	1
Employed in Service	7287	0.257	0.437	0	0	1
Employed in Manufacturing	7287	0.307	0.461	0	0	1
Employed in Agriculture	7287	0.0637	0.244	0	0	1

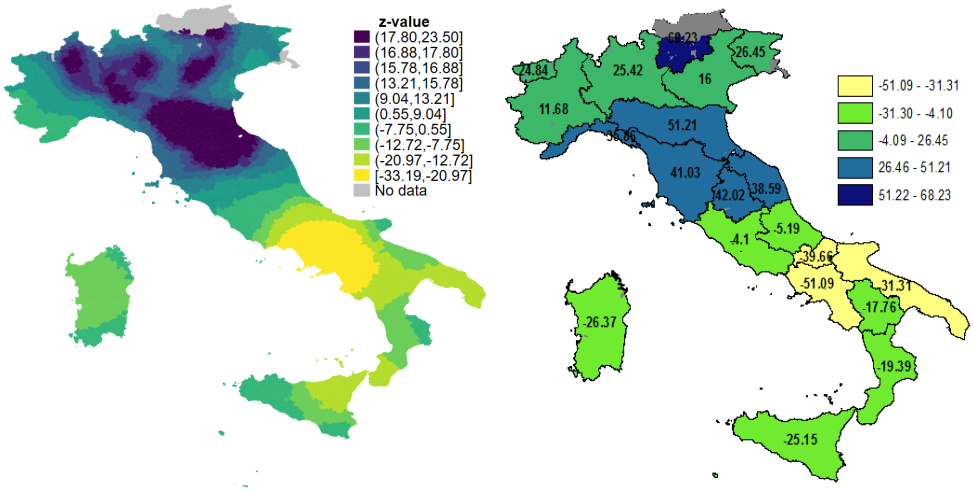
Notes: Observations are individual respondents to 1996 and 2001 ITANES survays.

Table A4: Summary statistics. Municipality level Date within Democracy

Variable	Observations	Mean	St. Dev.	Median	Min	Max
Vote Difference Republic–Monarchy	793	0.0573	0.447	0.140	-0.966	0.933
Historical Exposure Rep–Mon	793	-0.103	0.336	-0.0339	-0.851	0.900
Altitude	792	222.2	227.2	150.5	1	1388
Ruggedness	792	145.6	160.8	90.30	0.962	1025.6
log Distance to the Sea	793	3.271	1.433	3.353	-2.089	5.731
log Distance to Rivers	792	1.848	4.266	3.644	-6.908	5.382
Caloric Suitability	793	2291.3	373.5	2339.1	24.27	2938.2
log Population 1000	793	-2.579	1.031	-2.996	-2.996	4.095
log Distance Bishoprics 1000 AD	793	1.074	1.277	1.241	-5.335	3.642
log Distance to Roman Roads	793	0.577	3.897	2.403	-6.908	4.160
log Distance to Roman Market	793	2.798	0.941	2.862	-1.644	5.877
Seismicity 1000-1861	793	1.482	2.658	0	0	25
Epidemic Outbreaks	793	0.929	0.256	1	0	1
Climate Variability	793	0.521	0.0411	0.512	0.456	0.640
Political Instability 1000-1861	793	21.68	7.772	19	6	59
Commune	793	0.0618	0.241	0	0	1
Lombard League	793	0.0277	0.164	0	0	1

Notes: Observations are municipalities where individual respondents to 1996 and 2001 ITANES survays reside.

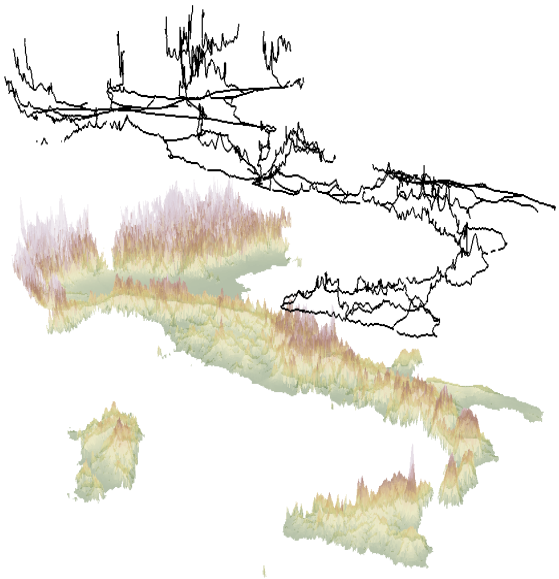
Figure A1: Vote Difference Republic *vs* Monarchy: Hot-Cold Spots Analysis and Modern Regions



(a) Vote Diff: Hot and Cold Spot Analysis (b) Vote Diff: Regional Variation

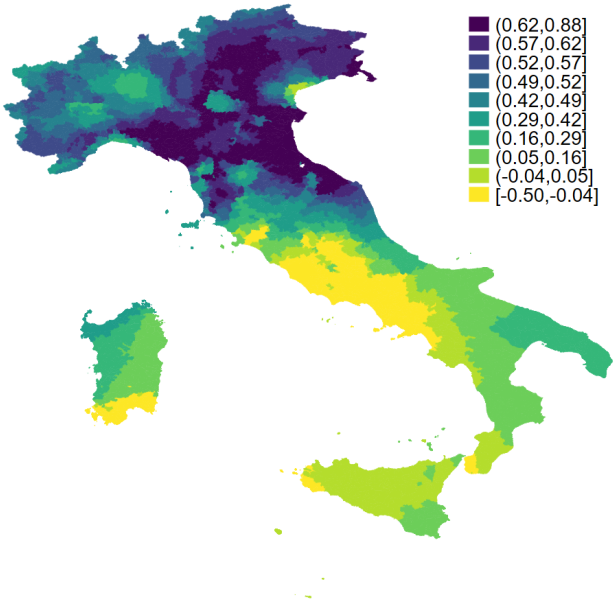
Notes: Spatial distribution of the overall *Vote Shares Difference Republic versus Monarchy*. Panel (a) shows the hot and cold spot analysis of spatial autocorrelation based on the Getis–Ord $G_i^*(d)$ statistic. For each location i, the statistic tests whether the location forms a spatial cluster together with its neighboring locations up to a certain distance d (for further details see Getis and Ord, 1992; Ord and Getis, 1995). Distribution of votes in today regions in panel (b).

Figure A2: Effective Distances: Geography and Major Roads



Notes: Altitude and major Roman roads.

Figure A3: Predicted Historical Exposure Rep–Mon



Notes: Observation is an Italian municipality. Spatial distribution of the instrument (*Predicted Historical Exposure Rep–Mon*).

A.1 Historical Exposure Rep–Mon: a numerical example

In this section we report some numeric examples to help understand how our measure of historical exposure to republic vs. monarchy works. Suppose there are only two capitals, Bologna and Rome. Bologna is the capital of a republican polity (so its weight is w=1) while Rome is the capital of a monarchy (so w=–1). If municipality "A" is ruled by Bologna and it is very close to its capital, say at 5 km distance, and very far from Rome, say at 500 km, the historical exposure to republic vs. monarchy of municipality "A" in year t will be

$$Historical\ Exposure\ Rep-Mon_{A,t} = (5^{-2} \times 1)/(5^{-2} + 500^{-2}) = 0.999.$$

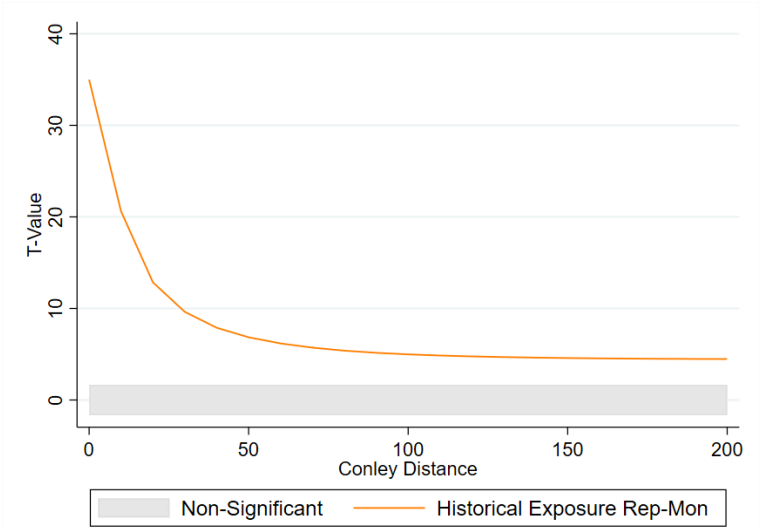
By contrast, if we consider municipality "B" ruled by Rome but located far from it, say at 200 km distance, and far from Bologna as well, say at a distance of 300 km, its democratic capital in year t will be equal to:

$$Historical\ Exposure\ Rep-Mon_{B,t} = (200^{-2} \times (-1))(200^{-2} + 300^{-2}) = -0.692.$$

B Robustness and Further Results

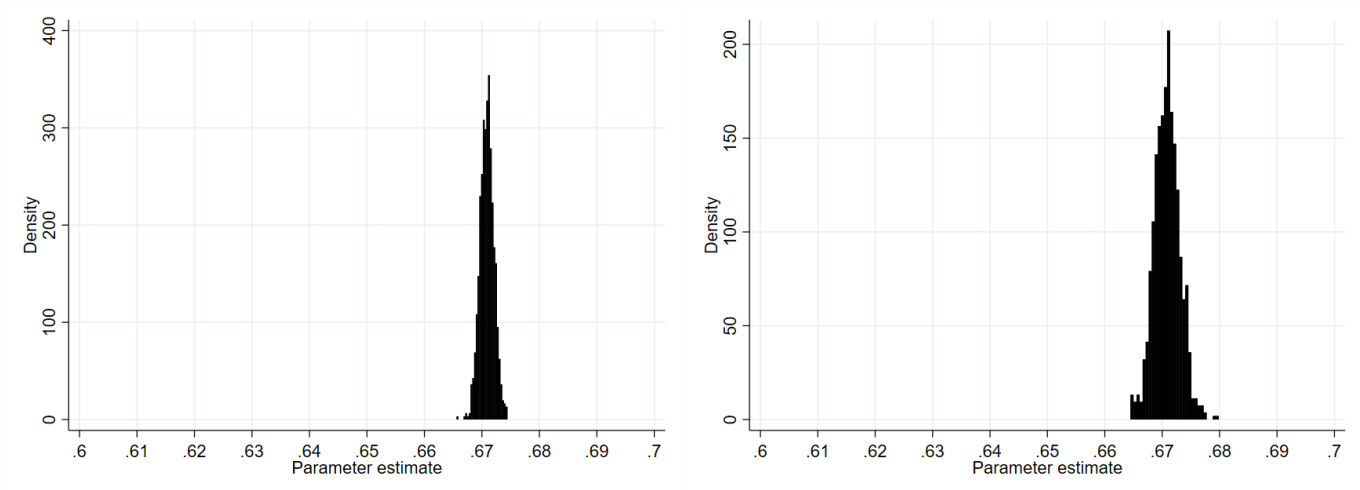
B.1 Robustness on the Baseline Results

Figure B1: Spatial Autocorrelation: Conley treshold



Notes: Evolution of the T-value of the coefficients estimated by replicating the specification in Column 5 of Table 1 with Conley standard errors accounting for increasing distances (every 10 Km from 0 to 200 Km) and a Bartlett kernel decay across observations within the same cluster.

Figure B2: Estimates Using Artificial (Random) Geographic Fixed Effects



(a) Electoral Districs Random Geographic Fixed Effects

(b) Province Random Geographic Fixed Effects

Notes: Distributions of the point estimates obtained in the thousand replications of specification 5 of Table 2 further conditioning on fixed effects for a set of random virtual geographical aggregations. Panel a fixed effects are about the size of electoral districts (31), while in panel b of modern administrative provinces (100).

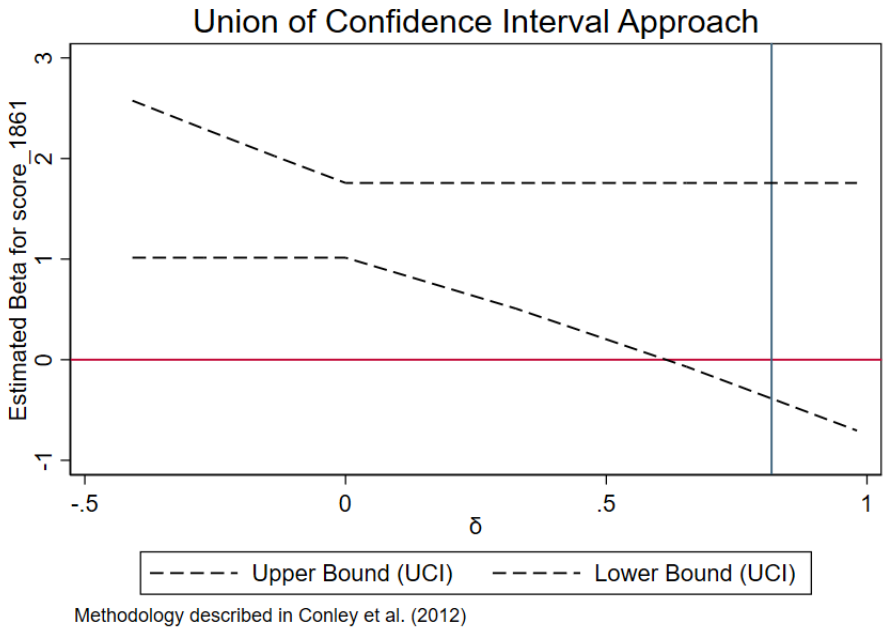
Table B1: Baseline Evidence: Statutory Laws and Historical Exposure Rep-Mon

Dependent Variable	Vote Difference Republic–Monarchy			
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Statutory Laws (DV)	0.132***	0.111***	0.041***	0.042***
	(0.031)	(0.019)	(0.014)	(0.014)
	[0.109]	[0.092]	[0.034]	[0.035]
Historical Exposure Rep–Mon		0.662***		0.236**
		(0.131)		(0.115)
		[0.400]		[0.142]
Geographic Controls	✓	✓	✓	✓
Historical Controls	✓	✓	✓	✓
Contingencies	✓	✓	✓	✓
Political Instability	✓	✓	✓	✓
Electoral District FE	×	×	✓	✓
R-squared	0.196	0.304	0.506	0.509
Observations	7925	7925	7925	7925

Notes:Observations are municipalities. In columns 1 and 3 we include *Statutory Laws (DV)*, a dummy variable taking the value one for municipalities that were recorded to have had statutory laws during the 1000–1800 time period. Columns 2 and 4 specifications include *Statutory Laws (DV)* and *Historical Exposure Rep–Mon*, that is the average index [–1, 1] of historical exposure to Republics/Monarchies over the period 1000–1861 based on distance from the municipality to its own polity's center of power as described by equation (1). In all specifications, the dependent variable is the difference between the share votes to the Republic and the share votes to the Monarchy during the 1946 Referendum on the institutional form of the State. In all columns we control for *geographic controls*, *historical controls*, *contingencies*, *political controls*. In columns 3– 4 we include electoral district fixed effects. All control variables in each set are listed and described in footnotes 16 and 17. Standard errors in parentheses are clustered to account for both spatial correlation up to 100 km. OLS estimates. Standardized beta coefficients are reported in brackets. *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1.

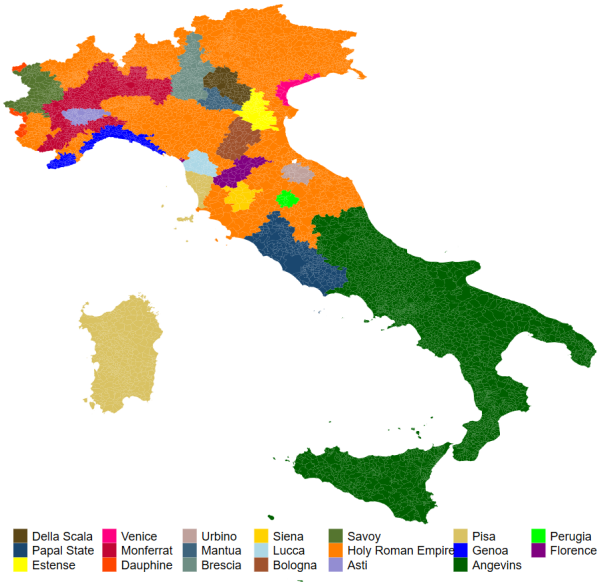
B.2 Robustness on the IV Results

Figure B3: Plausibly Exogenous (Conley et al., 2012)



Notes: Effect of violation of exclusion restriction Conley et al. (2012). Union of 90% confidence intervals of the IV estimates (y-axis) when the exclusion restriction is violated (x-axis). We allow *Predicted Historical Exposure Rep–Mon* to have a direct effect on the outcomes. Vertical blue line represents the reduced form coefficient of *Predicted Historical Exposure Rep–Mon*. All regressions include the full set of baseline controls.

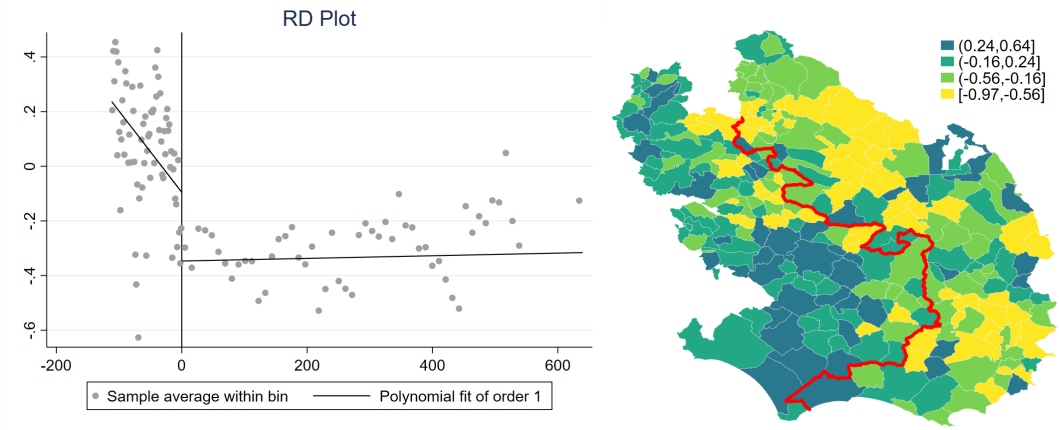
Figure B4: Polities and Borders in 1278



Notes: This figure maps the municipalities ruled by each polity in 1278 based on the Sovereign Polities Dataset by Cervellati et al. (2023).

B.2.1 Further Descriptives and Robustness on the RDD Results

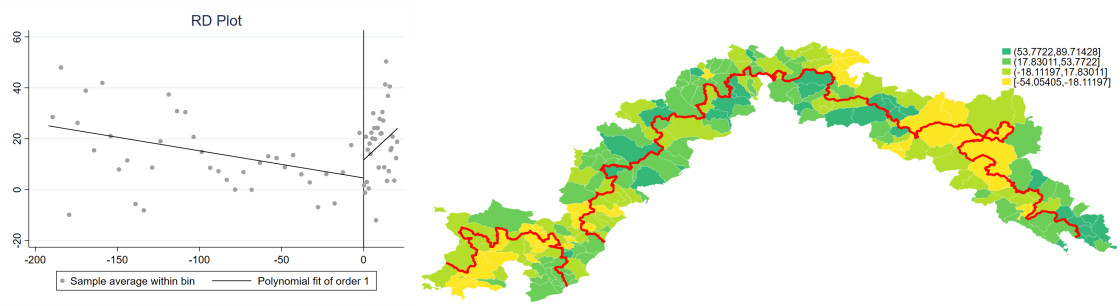
Figure B5: Regression Discontinuity Plot and Municipalities in the Sample – Southern Border



(a) RDD Plot across the Southern Border (b) Vote Shares Difference

Notes: Regression discontinuity plot considering municipalities in the sample analysis in panel (a). The *x*-axis depicts distance to the border in kilometers (positive for municipalities located above the Southern border and negative below the Southern border). Panel (b) presents the *Vote Shares Difference Republic versus Monarchy* in Italian municipalities located above and below the Southern border (red line) of the Papal States.

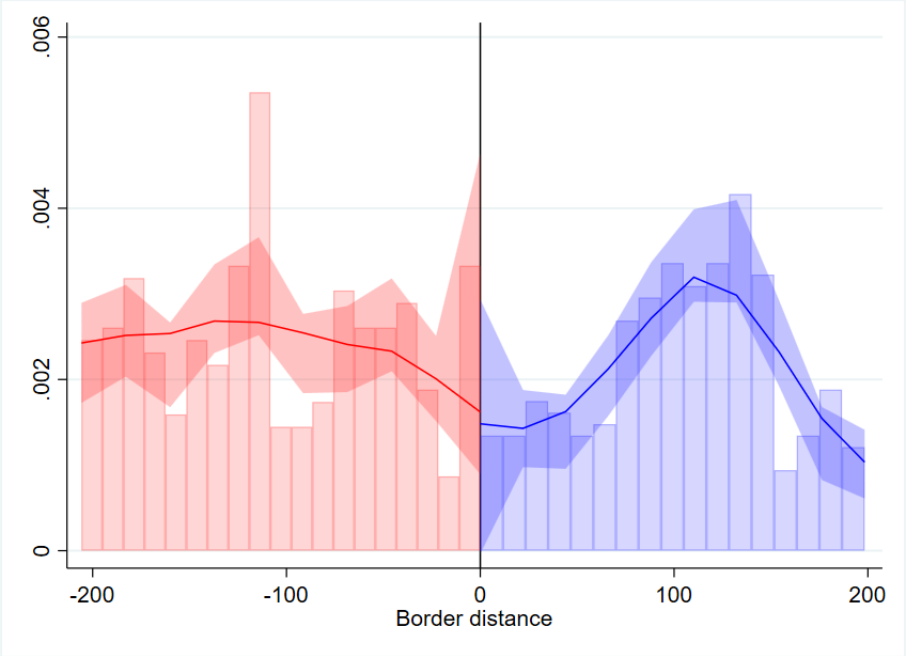
Figure B6: Regression Discontinuity Plot and Municipalities in the Sample – Genoa Border



(a) RDD Plot across the Genoa Border (b) Vote Shares Difference

Notes: Regression discontinuity plot considering municipalities in the sample analysis in panel (a). The *x*-axis depicts distance to the border in kilometers (positive for municipalities located Below the Genoa border and negative above the Genoa border). Panel (b) presents the *Vote Shares Difference Republic versus Monarchy* in Italian municipalities located above and below the Genoa border (red line) of the Republic of Genoa.

Figure B7: Manipulation Test Plot



Notes: The figure shows the absence of a discrete change in the density of observations across the Nothern border, as we observe an overlap of the 95% confidence intervals at the border.

Table B2: Spatial RDD estimates, Northern Border: Balance tests

Optimal Bandwidth:	Variable-Specific		Benchmarck	
	RDD Estimate	Robust P-Value	RDD Estimate	Robust P-Value
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Altitude	64.6111	0.3037	80.3274	0.1857
Ruggedness	19.4072	0.3981	21.5858	0.3542
Distance to the Sea	-0.2882	0.5800	-0.3009	0.9618
Distance to Rivers	-0.0430	0.2648	0.4114	0.3808
Caloric Suitability	44.0616	0.6124	34.2646	0.5493
Population 1000	-0.1194	0.0015	0.0196	0.1479
Distance Bishoprics 1000 AD	-1.5463	0.1390	-1.5877	0.1325
Distance to Roman Roads	0.2256	0.6981	0.3273	0.8903
Distance to Roman Market	0.1489	0.6163	-0.1494	0.7484
Seismicity 1000-1861	0.8825	0.3370	0.5221	0.1056
Epidemic Outbreaks	-0.0331	0.9261	-0.1107	0.9749
Climate Variability	-0.0008	0.9272	-0.0053	0.8288
Political Instability 1000-1861	-1.0536	0.6452	-2.0131	0.5456
Commune	0.0143	0.8225	0.0143	0.3940

Notes: Spatial RDD estimates. Observations are municipalities. On each row we report RDD estimates (columns 1 and 3) and bias robust P-values (columns 2 and 4) using as dependent variable one of the control variable presented in section 2.1. All estimates are obtain using the same specification of column 1 of table 4. Specifications in columns 1 allows for variable-specific optimal bandwidth as proposed by Calonico et al. (2014), while in column 3 we apply the optimal bandwidth adopted in column 1 of table 4.

Table B3: Spatial RDD estimates, Northern Border: Border Shifts

	Vote Difference Republic–Monarchy			
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
RDD_Estimate	16.984	-0.510	-5.160	-0.258
	(9.067)	(8.567)	(7.951)	(8.274)
	{10.237}	{10.054}	{8.760}	{10.212}
Robust P-value	0.1931	0.9409	0.2532	0.9410
Observations Left	48	33	60	98
Observations Right	43	76	48	95
Polynomial Order	1	1	1	1
Band. (Km)	43.137	39.320	40.532	58.840
Boundary F.E.s	✓	✓	✓	✓
Border shift (DD)	0.1 Nord	0.5 Nord	0.1 Sud	0.5 Sud

Notes: Spatial RDD estimates. Observations are municipalities. For all specifications the dependent variable is the difference between the share votes to the Republic and the share votes to the Monarchy during the 1946 Referendum on the institutional form of the State. All Specifications adopt as study border a shifted version of the northen border between the Papal States and the Tuscan republics. In column 1 the border is shifted 0.1 Decimal Degrees to the north, while in column 2 0.5 decimal degrees. In column 3 the border is shifted 0.1 Decimal Degrees to the south, while in column 2 0.5 decimal degrees. All specifications employs a local linear regression model and all estimates are based on the optimal bandwidth (Calonico et al., 2014) and include boundary FEs. The optimal bandwidth is reported in the table for each specification. The effective number of observations to the left and to the right of the border are also reported for all specification. Conventional standard errors are reported in parethesis. Bias robust standard errors are reported in curly brackets. Significance is evaluated using bias robust P-value (reported for all specifications). *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1.

C Robustness on Results on the Mechanisms

Table B4: Political History and Individual Preference: Probit

Dependent Variable	Republican Father in 1946 (DV)	Father Intrested in Politics (DV)	Support for Democracy			Trust in Institutions		
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
Historical Exposure Rep–Mon	0.181***	0.134***	0.110***	0.110***	0.109***	0.557***	0.553***	0.537***
	(0.045)	(0.048)	(0.038)	(0.038)	(0.038)	(0.153)	(0.153)	(0.152)
Republican Father in 1946				0.029			0.037	
				(0.022)			(0.073)	
Father Intrested in Politics					0.022			0.180**
					(0.022)			(0.072)
Observations	1560	1560	2303	2303	2303	3062	3062	3062
Father Controls	✓	✓	×	×	×	×	×	×
Respondent Controls	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Municipal Controls	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Survey Year	2001	2001	1996	1996	1996	2001	2001	2001

Notes: Probit estimates (the average marginal effects). Observations are at the individual level. All regressions are weighted using survey weights. Columns 1–2 and 6–8 use data from the 2001 ITANES survey, while columns 3–5 rely on the 1996 ITANES wave. Columns 1–2 restrict the sample to respondents older than 45 years old. In column 1 the dependent variable is *Republican Father in 1946 (DV)*, that takes the value one if the respondent's father supported a pro-republic party in 1946. In column 2 *Father Interested in Politics (Dummy)* is a dummy that takes the value one if the respondent's father is interested in politics. In columns 3–5 the dependent variable is the *Individual Support for Democracy (DV)*, taking the value one if the respondent answered 'always' to the question 'Is democracy preferable to any other form of government?'. Finally, in columns 6–8 the dependent variable is *Trust in Institutions*, that is the first principal component of six dummies tracking whether the respondent reported trust in the following institutions: parliament, political parties, president of the republic, justice system, public administration, and the army. In all specification the main explanatory variable is *Historical Exposure Rep-Mon*, that is the average index [–1, 1] of historical exposure to republics/monarchies over the period 1000–1861 based on distance from the municipality to its own polity's center of power as described by equation (1). In all specifications we include *Municipal Controls* (as in column 4 of Table 1) and *Respondent Controls*. Columns 1–2 also add *Father Controls*. *Respondent Controls* and *Father Controls* are listed and described in Section 4. Robust standard errors clustered at the municipality level in parenthesis. *** indicates significance at the 1% level, ** indicates significance at the 5% level, * indicates significance at the 10% level.

D Italian sovereign political entities: 1000-1861

To identify republics we follow Buonanno et al. (2022). First we look at the subset of political entities that emerge after the year 1000 AD. A relevant exception is the Republic of Venice that already existed prior the year 1000 AD. Second, we require that in the year of their first appearance polities are territoriality small, typically covering a territory below 100 Km^2. Third, a newborn polity is coded as a republic only if it is not under the rule of any other sovereign polity (de jure or de facto) applying a principle of self-governance. This implies, for instance, that although territorially small, the Duchy of Naples is not coded as a republic since in fact it never stopped being under the formal influence and control of the Byzantine Empire until the Norman conquest (Cassandro, 1969). Polities ruling over the Italian territory between 1000 and 1861 are then assigned a weight $w = 1$ when coded as republics or a weight of $w = -1$ when coded as monarchies as shown in Table B5.

The polity labelled "Lesser Imperial States" stands for all German territories controlled by the Holy Roman Empire and is assigned a weight of $w = -1$, whereas the polity labelled "Lesser Italian States" gathers micro-independent republics ruling in Italy, so we assign it the republican weight $w = 1$. Finally, the territories temporarily controlled by the military alliance labeled the Lombard League, that are recorded as lands de facto independent from the Holy Roman Empire, are also not coded as republics as their aggregation exceeds the spatial extent of 100 Km^2.

Table B5: Polities Ruling over Italy (1000–1861) and their Republican/Monarchic Weight

N.	Polity	Republican/Monarchic Weight w
1.	Angevins	-1
2.	Aragonese	-1
3.	Bavaria	-1
4.	Bohemia	-1
5.	Bonaparte Family	-1
6.	Byzantine Empire	-1
7.	Cisalpine Republic (Napoleon)	-1
8.	Dauphine	-1
9.	Ezzelino (1252-1259)	-1
10.	Fatimids	-1
11.	France	-1
12.	Great Britain	-1
13.	Habsburgs	-1
14.	Holy Roman Empire	-1
15.	Hungary	-1
16.	Kingdom of Burgundy	-1
17.	Kingdom of Naples	-1
18.	Langobards	-1
19.	Lesser Imperial States	-1
20.	Lombard League	-1
21.	Luxembourgs	-1
22.	Modena	-1
23.	Naples (1000)	-1
24.	Norman Italy	-1
25.	Ottoman Empire	-1
26.	Parma (1500)	-1
27.	Piedmont	-1
28.	Provence	-1
29.	Roman Republic (1798)	-1
30.	Savoy	-1
31.	Sicily (1000)	-1
32.	Sonderbund	-1
33.	Spain	-1
34.	Spanish Habsburgs	-1
35.	Stateless (Sardinya)	-1
36.	Swiss League	-1
37.	Wittelsbachs	-1
38.	Papal States	-1
39.	Asti	1
40.	Bologna	1
41.	Brescia	1
42.	Estense	1
43.	Florence	1
44.	Genoa	1
45.	Lesser Italian States	1
46.	Lucca	1
47.	Mantua	1
48.	Massa	1
49.	Milan	1
50.	Montferrat	1
51.	Padua	1
52.	Pelavicino	1
53.	Perugia	1
54.	Pisa	1
55.	San Marino	1
56.	Siena	1
57.	Urbino	1
58.	Venice	1
59.	Verona	1
60.	della Scala	1

Notes: List of polities ruling over Italian municipalities during the 1000-1861 time period, with their assigned republican (+1) or monarchic (–1) weight w.

E Structure of Italian municipalities

The administrative structure in Italy changed over the years. In 1946 there were about 7800 municipalities, in 2011 the number had increased to about 8100. In order to make a time consistent analysis and in the absence of a shapefile for the year 1946 we took the shapefile of 2011 as reference. To omogenize data of different years to 2011 we follow the procedure of Nannicini et al. (2016) and to the following:

- Adjust names: some municipalities changed their names.
- Consider aggregations: some municipalities merged into a single entity. For instance, at date t we observe municipalities A and B, but at date $t_0 > t$, we observe municipality C corresponding to the merger of A and B. In 2001 we only observe municipality C. Then only municipality C is included in the sample. For date t when C did not exist yet, we impute to C the data of A + B.
- Consider partial aggregations: it may also be the case that some municipalities at some point in time absorb a municipality that no longer exists. For instance at date t we observe A, B and X, but at date $t_0 > t$, we observe municipality A and B while territory of X has been split (not necessarily equally) between A and B. In 2001 we only observe municipality A and B. Then only municipalities A and B are included in the sample. For date t when also X existed, we impute data of X to both A and B; that is, at date t, we impute A = A + X and B = B + X.
- Consider disaggregations: some municipalities split their territory in two or more municipalities. For example, suppose that at date t we observe only municipality C; but at date $t_0 > t$; we observe municipalities A and B corresponding to the separation of C: In 2001 we observe A and B; but not C: Then we include in the sample both A and B: For date t; when A and B did not exist yet, we impute to both of them the data of C; that is, at date t, we impute A = C and B = C.
- Consider partial disaggregations: We also track the case where C still exists in 2001 but at $t_0 > t$ parts of C where split to give birth to A and B; with C still existing today. In this case, for all date prior to t we impute A = C and B = C.