From Russia with War:
The Russia-Ukraine Conflict and NATO Resurgence

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Abstract

We exploit the 2022 Russian invasion of Ukraine as a shock to the anti-Russia attitudes in Spain. We collect data from multiple sources: the Spanish NATO referendum of 1986, monthly public opinion surveys with voting and pro-war attitudes, and the universe of political speeches in the Spanish Congress. Using different empirical strategies we robustly identify the effect of the invasion on domestic politics. The three main results are the following: we show that the Russia-Ukraine conflict increased by around 5 percentage points the current intention to vote for the main center-right party (*Partido Popular–PP*) among the individuals in the municipalities that strongly supported NATO in the 1986 referendum. Similarly, in those municipalities, individuals have lower "sympathy" for Russia and a stronger perception of the country as a military threat. Finally, the increase in the voting intention for the PP goes hand in hand with the legislators' narrative in Congress: after the invasion, PP legislators are more likely to mention Russia in their speeches, and when they do, they talk more negatively about it.

Keywords: Public Opinion, International Organizations, NATO, Russia, Ukraine

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1 Introduction

Since the dramatic events of the 2001 attacks on the World Trade Center and the 2003 invasion of Iraq, global stability had experienced relative calm until recently. The resurgence of heightened geopolitical risks, illustrated starkly by Russia's 2022 invasion of Ukraine and ongoing conflicts in the Middle East, has propelled the threat of war to its highest levels in over two decades.[1] Such escalation not only highlights the direct consequences for the involved nations but also raises concerns about the wider geopolitical fallout, including potential impacts on nations not directly engaged in the conflicts.

This study poses a critical question: Can these geopolitical tensions disrupt the politico-economic equilibrium in countries that are neither economically nor culturally tied to the warring states? Can these tensions be strategically exploited by politicians to increase their political support? We hypothesize that geopolitical tensions can subtly influence political dynamics within uninvolved countries through both current and historical societal divisions. The narrative surrounding NATO's interactions with Ukraine prior to the 2022 invasion provides a case study of how international military alliances can sway public opinion and political landscapes in countries beyond the immediate conflict zone, shaping perceptions and policies in seemingly unconnected states. Moreover, we also pose that political factions may have strategically re-activated a NATO cleavage, or more generally an anti-Russia sentiment, for their own gain.

While there is a large body of literature documenting the social and political effects of conflicts and wars in the involved countries (Gehring, 2021; Munroe et al., 2023), there is little evidence on the effects of wars on the non-directly involved regions. Recent work related to the 2014 Russian invasion of Crimea and the Donbas is the exception. Korovkin and Makarin (2023) shows effects on trade and Gehring (2022); Abramenko et al. (2024) on national identity in non-combat regions and border countries. On a similar vein, Balcells et al. (2024) and Anger et al. (2024) show the effect of the 2022 invasion on

[1] Geopolitical risk (GPR) can measured by the GPR index of Caldara and Iacoviello (2022). We show the increase in this index following the Russia-Ukraine conflict of 2022 in Figure A.1.

identity feelings and mental health outcomes in countries farther away, such as Spain and Germany, respectively.

To complement the latter, the main question of this paper is how support for NATO shaped voting intentions in Spain after the Russian invasion of Ukraine on February 24th, 2022. Spain is the ideal case to study this issue, especially for two reasons. A monthly political survey that was done every year since 1979, including questions about current affairs. And, more importantly, we can obtain a proper measure of support for NATO that is not contaminated by other political preferences or the war itself.

In contrast to most countries joining NATO, Spain held a referendum that we can use to measure historic support for NATO.[2] After years of negotiations, in 1982, during the presidency of the centrist party *Union de Centro Democratico* (UCD), Spain joined NATO. And in 1986, during the Presidency of the Socialist Party (PSOE), the Spanish population ratified the agreement by referendum. This exceptional circumstances give us the possibility to obtain a proxy of support for NATO with three main strengths. First, it is measured at a very local geographical scale. Second, using the historic NATO support in 1986 allows us to see the differential effect of the current Russia-Ukraine conflict according to the pre-determined level of NATO support. Third, while PSOE historically opposed Spanish membership in NATO, the party suddenly changed its stance and campaigned in favor of staying in NATO during the 1986 referendum. This generated a gap between the parties' and voters' attitudes that determined that the voting in the 1986 referendum was not merely reflecting partisan affiliations.

We use two empirical strategies, a continuous differences-in-differences estimation and a repeated cross-section model including a large set of controls, to see the political effects of the Russia-Ukraine conflict in Spain according to historic support for NATO. After the 2022 Russian invasion of Ukraine, individuals in municipalities that supported

[2]Out of the remaining thirty two members, the only referenda pertained to the post-Cold War expansion. In particular, only Hungary (1997), Poland (1997), Slovakia (1997) and Slovenia (2003) held separate referenda for accessing NATO. Lithuania (2003), Latvia (2003), Estonia (2003) and North-Macedonia (2018) either had a referendum with other issues on the ballot or about a different issue but with "implicit" consequences for accessing the Organization.

Spain's entry to NATO became more supportive of the traditional center-right political party (*Partido Popular*–PP from now on), at the expense of the left (PSOE, the center-left incumbent, and the far-left coalition) and the new right-wing political parties, less focused on foreign affairs (*Ciudadanos*, arguably focused on the Catalan issue; and *VOX*, arguably focused on immigration). The main results indicate that after the 2022 Russian invasion, individuals who live in municipalities where Spain's entry to NATO was strongly supported in 1986 (top quartile of votes for NATO membership) increased their intention to vote PP by around five percentage points, with respect to municipalities with weak support (bottom quartile). More interestingly, this result is at odds with Bueno de Mesquita et al. (2004) and Colussi (2021), which point out that foreign threats increase the support for the incumbent party.[3] All the above-mentioned effects are very robust to different specifications, including controlling for individual self-declared ideology. Moreover, consistently with the individual-level outcomes above, the effects on the 2023 Spanish national elections, aggregated at the municipality level held similar results.

Having demonstrated the influence of the NATO cleavage on current domestic affairs, we now turn our attention to exploring the potential channels through which this influence operates. That is, why this historical cleavage, arguably preeminent during the Spanish democratic transition (Cooley and Hopkin, 2010 and O'Donnell et al., 1991), still shapes domestic politics after the 2022 invasion?

Before the fall of the Berlin Wall, joining NATO meant a clear commitment to U.S. foreign policies and a stance against the USSR's. We argue that the Russian invasion of Ukraine—the second largest Soviet republic—has heightened NATO's prominence, reviving its historical role in the US-Russia conflict (Herrera and Kydd, 2023; Johnson, 2011).[4] Hence, these pro-NATO attitudes measured in 1986 could be channeling anti-Russian

[3]More generally, as in Bueno De Mesquita and Smith (2012), it is argued that declaration of wars are not exogenous and that incumbents may strategically be involved in wars to prompt a "rally around the flag" type of effect.

[4]Herrera and Kydd (2023) shows how historical narratives (i.e., disagreement about it) are a source of potentially large conflict. They also provide simulated outcomes to show that there are some strategies that may generate cooperation, even in the absence of agreement or "apologies". Johnson (2011) discusses the relationship between trust and support regarding international organizations and the most influential countries within the organization.

sentiments (derived from the anti-Soviet origins of NATO).

Indeed, we find that the anti-Russian sentiment takes preponderance after the 2022 invasion, articulated through support of NATO: individuals who live in municipalities with large 1986 NATO support increased their current support of a NATO intervention in Ukraine (either through direct military action or aid). Additionally, they consider Russia a threat in various dimensions: nuclear war, European invasion, etc. Finally, they increased their antipathy for Russia without increasing it for Ukraine. This mix of anti-Russian sentiment, explained by the NATO cleavage, is matched by the party that benefited the most from the invasion. To study this, we digitalize the universe of parliamentary interventions in plenary sessions of the Spanish Congress between 2021 and 2023. We find the behavior in the parliament by the legislators from the PP is consistent with a supply of the same historical narrative. In line with Ochsner and Roesel (2024), PP politicians made more references to Russia than its counterparts from other parties, and spoke about Russia in more negative terms.

On top of an anti-Russia sentiment, support for NATO could also reflect different opinions of the Spanish citizens, such as pro-military attitudes due to the military nature of the NATO alliance, or a general mood for supranational integration due to the Spanish historical moment of democratization in which integration to NATO happened. Regarding these other two channels, we find no evidence that pro-military or pro-integration attitudes impact our results through support for NATO. In first place, when we look at other wars, regardless of the NATO involvement, there is not effect on PP, unless Russia is involved. Secondly, citizens in pro-NATO municipalities do not feel more European or closer to other nations. Moreover, the effect remains the same when we look at NATO municipalities that are more supportive of integration, measured by the vote share in favor to the ratification of EU Constitution in the Spanish 2005 referendum.

The rest of the paper proceeds as follows. Section 2 describes the historical background of the 1986 NATO referendum in Spain and provides details about the Spanish political system. We describe the data and the empirical strategies used in this paper in Sections 3 and 4, respectively. We show our main results in Section 5 and explore the mechanisms

behind these effects in Section 6.

2 Background

2.1 North Atlantic Treaty Organization

In April 1949, in Washington DC, twelve founding members signed the North Atlantic Treaty, documenting the birth of what is commonly known as NATO. This political and military alliance, originally mainly between western European countries and the US and Canada, provided means of cooperation to counterbalance the Soviet influence, especially in Europe.[5]

Institutionally, two principles allow to sustain the alliance's objectives: collective defence and consensus decision-making. The former establishes that if any of the member state is attacked by a foreign country, all members would defend it. The latter implies that all decisions, at all levels, are taken by consensus. That it, there is no voting in NATO.

NATO's structure is organized around two axis, the civil and the military one, coordinated by the Secretary General. Political decision are taken by the civil structures (most notably the North Atlantic Council or NAC), which is where the country ambassadors to NATO serve. If these decisions have military implications, then the military committee and the integrated military command structure would be call in. Nowadays NATO has thirty two members. However, not all of them are integrated into this military structure, being France the most resonating case.

NATO is funded by its member countries, directly by a cost-sharing formula indexed by national GDP among other things and indirectly by the members' provision (and support) of civil and military personnel.

[5]This section is based on the official information available in NATO's official webpage: NATO.int

2.2 The Russia-Ukraine Conflict

For centuries, Ukraine's political history has been heavily influenced by Russia. Following the end of World War I, Ukraine oscillated between periods of attempted independence and interventions from the Kremlin, eventually becoming a part of the USSR governed by the Soviet Communist Party until the union's dissolution. Even after gaining independence, Russia's influence persisted, particularly in the predominantly Russian-speaking eastern regions. This geographical and linguistic divide influenced Ukrainian politics, leading to alternating leadership between pro-European and pro-Russian factions until 2014. That year, President Yanukovych fled to Russia following months of street protests known as the Maidan movement. In response, Vladimir Putin's Russia annexed Crimea and subsequently invaded the Donbas region, sparking the first armed conflict between the two countries.[6]

A seven-year stalemate ensued until Putin initiated a "special military operation" in Ukraine on February 24, 2022. During this interim, pro-European presidents Poroshenko (2014-2019) and Zelensky advanced Ukraine's alignment with Western allies, particularly toward NATO integration. In 2015, the Ukrainian National Army was professionalized under NATO oversight, and in 2017, Ukrainians were granted visa-free travel to the EU. Furthermore, at the 2008 NATO summit in Bucharest, an agreement was made to set Ukraine on a path toward membership through a Membership Action Plan (MAP), which Poroshenko ratified. To facilitate NATO accession, Ukraine amended its laws and constitution, and the 2020 National Security Strategy explicitly recognized NATO as a strategic partner, as documented by NATO itself (NATO, 2022).

[6] Sarotte (2021); Freedman (2022); Reid (2022); Korovkin and Makarin (2023).

2.3 Spanish International Relations and The 1986 NATO Referendum

Following World War II, Spain initially lived in an era of international isolation, in which its fascist regime, under Franco's dictatorship, was not invited to join the United Nations and did not have membership in any other international institutional or economic organization. In the 1950s there was a gradual integration in the Western block. In the Pact of Madrid in 1953, Spain and the United States agreed on military and economic help of the US to Spain, in exchange for the utilization of four US military bases in Spanish territory. The four bases were one naval base in Rota (Andalusia), and three air bases in Morón (Andalusia), Torrejón de Ardoz (Community of Madrid), and Zaragoza (Aragon) (Cooley and Hopkin, 2010). Spain increased their democratic integration in international institutions and joined the UN in 1955. Following the transition to democracy, Spain joined NATO (also known as the Atlantic Alliance) on May 30th, 1982, under the initiative of the government formed by the centrist party *Unión de Centro Democrático*. The Spanish Socialist Party and the Spanish Communist Party, the two main leftist parties, opposed the entry of Spain into NATO. Felipe González, the leader of the Spanish Socialist Party, promised the realization of a referendum on the NATO membership if he was elected president in the upcoming 1982 national elections.

The Spanish Socialist Party eventually got into power in 1982 and after obtaining Spain's accession to the European Economic Community (EEC) a vote was conducted on Wednesday, March 12th, 1986, to ratify the country's stance on its NATO membership. The referendum asked voters if they approved the government's proposal for Spain to remain a part of NATO. The specific terms outlined included i) non-incorporation into NATO's military structure, ii) a prohibition on the presence of nuclear weapons on Spanish soil, and iii) a gradual reduction of the United States military presence in Spain. The question posed to voters was whether Spain should continue its membership in NATO under these agreed terms. The original ballot is reported in Figure A.2.

The electoral campaign over the referendum did not coincide with the previous parties'

positions on NATO membership (Boix and Alt, 1991). On the one hand, the Socialist Party, despite opposing NATO membership before its accession, campaigned in favor of continuing the membership under the three conditions in the ballot, arguing that NATO membership was linked with the EEC. On the other hand, the right-wing *Alianza Popular*, which historically supported Spanish military integration into NATO and later refounded itself as the Popular Party, campaigned in favor of the abstention in the referendum. The Spanish Communist Party remained the only relevant party advocating against NATO membership.

The outcome of the referendum revealed that 56.9% of valid votes were in favor of Spain remaining within NATO, with a voter turnout of 59.4%. While Spain only conducted four referendums after Franco's death, the NATO referendum was the most contested referendum among those.[7] The country experienced a significant geographic heterogeneity in the vote. Castilla-La Mancha was the region with the highest vote in support of NATO membership (around 68%), while in the Basque Country, only 32% of the votes supported the Spanish membership within NATO. Geographic variation in voting was not only present between regions but also within regions. For example, in Andalusia, the most populated region of Spain and a political feud of the Socialist Party, the share of votes in favor of NATO membership in cities of at least 100,000 inhabitants ranged between 55% (Granada) and 72% (Jerez de la Frontera).

The referendum approved NATO membership and Spain remained part of the Atlantic Alliance afterward. However, as national referendums in Spain are only consultative, the conditions behind the referendum were not followed closely. Condition i) of the referendum was eventually not respected, as Spain eventually integrated into NATO's military structure in 1999 under the Popular Party government led by José María Aznar. Moreover, article 11 of the Defense Cooperation Agreement between the Kingdom of Spain and the United States of America (signed after the 1986 referendum) determined that US nuclear weapons could be installed in Spain under the national government agreement (in

[7]The other three referendums were about approving the political reforms in 1976 to transform Spain into a representative democracy (the share of votes in favor was 95%), the Spanish Constitution in 1978 (89%), and the European Constitution in 2005 (76%).

contrast with condition ii). Lastly, the referendum was indeed followed in 1992 by the devolution of the US air bases of Torrejón de Ardoz and Zaragoza to Spain (as part of condition iii in the referendum). However, the other two bases were expanded (Cooley and Hopkin, 2010).

2.4 Spanish Political System

Since the advent of democracy after Franco's death and the approval of the Spanish Constitution in 1978, Spain's democratic organization corresponds to a parliamentary monarchy. That is, while the King is the Head of State, the Head of Government is the President of Spain who is elected by the legislative branch.

Spain is administratively divided into seventeen regions (called Autonomous Communities) and two autonomous cities (Ceuta and Melilla). The regions are further divided into provinces, which are divided into municipalities. There are fifty provinces (plus Ceuta and Melilla) and around eight thousand municipalities in Spain.

Although a bicameral democracy, the lower chamber (called the *Congreso de Diputados*) is the most relevant legislative branch of government. Its members, the *diputados*, are elected with proportionality rule at the province level. In turn, these legislators elect the President of the country for the duration of their term. Due to the multi-party representation, the chamber is organized in parliamentary groups. These groups are formal coalitions of different parties that are programmatically allied. Typically, the president is elected with votes from different parties and parliamentary groups.

Until 1982, the country was governed by the centrist party *Unión de Centro Democrático* (UCD), led by Adolfo Suárez. UCD dissolved in 1983 and its leader founded *Centro Democrático y Social* (CDS). CDS gradually lost importance and finally disappeared in 2006. From 1982 until nowadays, the two main national parties were on the center-left *Partido Socialista Obrero Español* (PSOE) and on the center-right *Alianza Popular* (AP), which in 1989 was refounded as *Partido Popular* (PP). Figure A.3 in the Appendix shows a succint timeline. PSOE and PP were the only two parties that held the presidency

of the Spanish government. The other party that was very significant electorally at the national level was *Partido Comunista de España* (PCE), and since 1986 it has integrated the political coalition *Izquierda Unida* (IU). From 2015, the Spanish political system saw the emergence of new parties, the far-left *Podemos* and *Más País* (MP),[8] the center-right *Ciudadanos* (Cs), and the far-right *Vox*. On top of the national parties, Spain is also characterized by the existence of regionalist parties, both on the left and on the right, that represent the stances of citizens from specific regions of the country.

3 Data

Contemporary Public Opinions: Our main source of data are *Barómetros* run by the *Centro de Investigaciones Sociológicas* (CIS). We collect 28 waves from February 2021 (one year before the war) to July 2023 (right before the Spanish general elections of July 23th, 2023), and each wave includes on average 3900 interviews. This data is a repeated cross-section, as the individuals surveyed in different waves are not the same. The main question of interest is about respondents' voting intentions at the next national elections. From March 2022 onward, these surveys also include questions about the Russia-Ukraine conflict and the NATO role. We complement these public opinion surveys with the Surveys on Current Issues run by CIS in March and April 2022 that ask additional questions related to the Russia-Ukraine conflict.

Historical Public Opinions: We complement this data on contemporary public opinions with two sets of historic public opinion surveys. First, to observe the potential effect of NATO support on voting intentions during past war episodes, we collect CIS *Barómetros* three months before and after each specific war happened after the fall of the Berlin war. We consider the following wars: the First Gulf War (beginning in August 1990), the Yugoslav Wars (March 1991), the Bosnia War (April 1992), the Kosovo War (February 1998), the Afghanistan War (December 2001), the Second Gulf War (March

[8] MP was born in 2019 as an excise of *Podemos*. Later on, in 2023, both parties would join the electoral alliance *Sumar*, among other minor left-wing parties.

2003), the First Libya Civil War (February 2011), the Syria Civil War (March 2011), the Russian invasion of Donbas and Crimea in Ukraine (February 2014), and the Second Libya Civil War (May 2014). We exclude terrorist attacks as they may have a different dynamic in shaping public opinion (as in Epifanio et al., 2023). Second, to validate our measure of NATO support, we collected CIS surveys that asked about the assessment of Spain's membership in NATO. The possible five answers on a scale from 1 to 5 are: "strong disagreement", "disagreement", "neither agreement nor disagreement", "agreement", and "strong agreement". This question is included in the CIS National Defense and the Armed Forces Surveys conducted in February 2005, March 2007, December 2009, September 2011, September 2013, September 2015, and September 2017. We generate a dummy variable representing the overall agreement with the membership that takes the value 1 if the respondent agrees or strongly agrees with Spain's membership in NATO.

Electoral Results: We collect for each municipality in Spain information about several electoral results: the 1986 NATO referendum, 2005 European Constitution referendum, the Spanish national elections in 1982 (the last elections before the NATO referendum), 2015, 2016, April 2019, November 2019 Spanish national elections (the last election before the Russian invasion of Ukraine), and July 2023 (the first election after the Russian invasion of Ukraine). For each election, we know the number of potential voters and valid votes. For the 1986 and 2005 referenda, we know the number of votes in favor and against the NATO membership and the European Constitution, while for the national elections, we know the number of votes for each specific political party. The source of these data is *InfoElectoral* provided by the Spanish Interior Ministry.

US Military Bases: We geolocate the four US military bases active in Spain in 1986 (Morón, Rota, Torrejón de Ardoz, and Zaragoza) and for each municipality in Spain we calculate the distance in kilometers from the centroid of each municipality and each military base. We then compute the distance from the closest base.

Speeches in Congress: We collected all the speeches by all the legislators in the plenary sessions of the lower chamber from February 24th 2021 (one year before the invasion) to August 16th 2023. These speeches took place during the 14th Legislature, i.e. the one that re-elected the Socialist Pedro Sánchez as president. In order to assess these legislators stance on the war, approximately thirty-six thousand speeches were scrapped from Spanish Congress website.[9] For every speech, we know the name of the speaker and his/her parliamentary group.

Matching between Different Data: We match the electoral results and distance to US military bases with the public opinion surveys using the municipality of residence of the respondents.[10] CIS provides this information only for cities with a population larger than 100,000 inhabitants and capital of provinces. For the rest of the municipalities, we do not know the name of the municipality but we know the approximate population. CIS provides four municipalities population categories: under 2.000 inhabitants, between 2,001 and 10,000, between 10,001 and 50,000, and between 50,001 and 100,000. For the respondents living in these smaller municipalities, we assign the average electoral results of the municipalities in the same province and within the same population size category.

Summary Statistics: Our sample consists of more than 115,000 contemporary interviews and more than 38,000 historic interviews (25,000 used for estimating the effect of past wars, and 13,000 for the past agreement with NATO membership). We discard all interviews in which a respondent's answer is either that he/she does not know or is undecided, or does not answer. The summary statistics of our main variables of interest are reported in Table A.1.

[9] https://www.congreso.es/

[10] We only consider municipalities that do not suffer changes in their geography between 1986 and 2023.

4 Empirical Strategies

To study the political effects of the Russia-Ukraine conflict in Spain according to historic support for NATO, we use two different empirical strategies. First, a differences-in-differences strategy that we employ for outcomes that we observe both before and after the Russian invasion of Ukraine on February 24th, 2022 (detailed in Section 4.1). Second, a repeated cross-section strategy for outcomes that we observe either only before or after (Section 4.2). In Section 4.3, we validate our measure of historic NATO support. To study additional dimensions and some of the mechanisms behind the effects, we use some variations of these strategies or new specifications, and we discuss them directly in the corresponding results sections.

4.1 Differences-in-Differences Empirical Strategy

For the outcomes that we observe both before and after the Russian invasion (Y), most notably voting intentions at the 2023 general elections, we estimate the following differences-in-differences model using observation from individual i living in municipality m and interviewed at time t:

$$Y_{i(m,t)} = \alpha_m + \delta_t + \beta PostWar_t \times ShareYes86_m + \delta_t \times ShareAbst86_m + \gamma X_i + e_{i,t} \quad (1)$$

This model is a two-way fixed effect model with continuous treatment. α_m are geographic fixed effects at the municipality level and δ_t are survey wave fixed effects.[11] These dummies capture time-invarying unobserved geographical characteristics and common shocks happening at the same time.

$PostWar_t$ is a dummy taking the value one if the respondent was interviewed in a survey

[11] For cities with a population bigger than 100,000 inhabitants and capital of provinces α_m is a dummy for each specific municipality. For the other cases, α_m is a dummy for each city inside a province with the same population category. Spain has around 8,000 municipalities and we have 248 municipality fixed effects in our estimations.

wave after the Russian invasion of Ukraine. $ShareYes86_m$ is the vote share (over the total valid votes) in favor of the NATO membership. That is, we compare the outcome $Y_{i(m,t)}$ for people interviewed before and after the Russian invasion of Ukraine according to their support in the 1986 NATO membership referendum. This differences-in-differences strategy rely on a continuous treatment, as $ShareYes86_m$ measure different intensity in historic support for NATO.

As *Alianza Popular* campaigned in favor of the abstention in the referendum, we also control for the interaction between survey fixed effects and the abstention share at the 1986 referendum (over the number of possible votes), $ShareAbst86_m$. That is, we rely on comparing observations from municipalities with similar turnout rates at the 1986 referendum.

To improve the the precision of the estimates, we also control for individual characteristics of the respondent. X_i includes a dummy for sex, continuous age (respondents are all above 18 years old), a dummy for civil status, dummies for education level, dummies for employment status.[12]

The identifying assumption in this model is that, in the absence of the Russian invasion of Ukraine, the voting intentions of respondents from cities with different historic NATO support, but similar participation in the 1986 referendum and observable individual characteristics, would have evolved similarly.

4.2 Repeated Cross-Section Empirical Strategy

Some important outcomes were only asked either before or after the Russian invasion of Ukraine, and this makes the estimation of Model 1 impossible. Therefore, for these

[12]The categories for civil status are married, single, widower, separated, divorced. The categories for the education level are no education, primary, secondary first level, secondary second level, professional training, and superior. The categories for employment status are employed, household production without remuneration, student, unemployed with past work experience, unemployed without past work experience, retired with past work experience, and retired without past work experience.

outcomes, we estimate the following model:

$$Y_{i(m,p,t)} = \zeta_p + \eta_t + \theta ShareYes86_m + \lambda ShareAbst86_m + \mu X_i + \nu vote82_m + \pi DistMil_m + \epsilon_i \quad (2)$$

Differently from before, we now consider differences in outcomes for people interviewed in cities with stronger votes in favor of Spain's NATO membership, instead of estimating this difference before and after the war. Similarly from before, we control for the abstention rate in the municipality at the 1986 referendum.

The identification assumption in this model is stronger, as we require that the unique difference between respondents from cities with different historic NATO support is the vote itself. That is, we do not require parallel trends in the absence of the war, but balancing in unobserved characteristics between cities with different support in the 1986 NATO referendum. To improve identification, we control for several characteristics: fixed effects, individual characteristics, municipal political preferences, and the presence of military bases.

First, if an outcome is measured in multiple survey waves, we control for survey wave fixed effects. We now include province, p, fixed effects, instead of municipality fixed effects, as the latter would be collinear with $ShareYes_m$.[13]

Second, as in Model 1 we control for individual characteristics of the respondent that can potentially correlate with political preferences.

Third, as noted in Boix and Alt (1991), the NATO referendum vote could reflect opinions on the Socialist government's general performance, and more generally on political ideology in favor of this party. To avoid that our main variable of interest is capturing any other political preference, different from opinions on NATO and national security, $vote82_m$ includes the vote share (over the total valid votes) of the three main national parties that characterize the three positions around the 1986 referendum: PSOE, AP, and PCE.

Fourth, as reviewed in Section 2.3, one of the conditions that the Socialist Party included

[13] p refers to the 50 provinces and the two autonomous cities.

in the 1986 referendum was the gradual reduction of US military presence in Spain, which eventually terminated with the devolution of two US military bases in 1992. Therefore, we control for $DistMil_m$, a proxy that controls for the distance to the closest US military basis, to avoid the NATO support measure capturing other military preferences.

In the estimations of both Model 1 and 2, we cluster standard errors at the province times year survey wave level to control for unobserved heterogeneity in the error term $e_{i,t}$ within time and geography. Moreover, if available, we use survey weights when performing the OLS estimations to guarantee that the observations are representative of the Spanish population.

4.3 Validation of the historic NATO support measure

Our main proxy for historic NATO support comes from voting in a referendum and it is measured at the municipal level. This proxy could alternatively capture partisan positions or other specific positions in the referendum. We validate our proxy to show that it reflects agreement on NATO support using subsequent individual survey data. We use several CIS waves from 2005 to 2017 in which respondents were directly asked about their agreement with the Spanish membership in NATO and regressed it on the vote share in favor of the NATO membership in the 1986 referendum. Table 1 column (1) shows that there exists a positive association between the two proxies, people from municipalities with higher vote share in the referendum individually agree more with NATO membership in subsequent years.

[INSERT TABLE 1 HERE]

As mentioned in Section 2.3, *Alianza Popular*, the most pro-NATO party and predecessor of the Popular Party, campaigned for abstention. In Table 1 column (2) we show that the positive association between referendum and survey data maintains even controlling for the turnout rate at the referendum. In columns (3) to (7) we additionally include different controls for alternative factors that can explain NATO support in the referendum or in the survey, such as wave fixed effects, province fixed effects, individual controls, municipal

vote share for the main political parties in the 1982 elections, and the distance to U.S. military bases. We show that the positive correlation between NATO support in the 1986 referendum and in the 2000s individual surveys is always maintained, even in the most stringent estimation of Model 2 in column (7). Most interesting, as soon as we control for province-fixed effects (column 4), the correlation between municipal abstention rate and individual NATO support turns out to be not statistically significant. That is, conditional on controlling for between regions variations, voting in favor of NATO in the referendum was the only relevant political action that expressed NATO support.

5 Main Results

5.1 Saliency

The 2022 Russian invasion of Ukraine reminisced not only the Cold War era and the US-Russia confrontation, but also NATO's role in Europe.[14] In order to highlight NATO and Russia's salience in Spain we use Google Trends and Survey data.

The left panel in Figure A.4 shows the change in Google searches for the word "OTAN" (NATO in Spanish) from 2004 (when data are first available) to July 2023. The interest in NATO skyrocketed during the days following the war (and in June 2023 during the Madrid NATO summit). Similarly, while the searches for Russia also increased during this period (see the right panel of Figure A.4) there are no other spikes even in the aftermath of the 2014 invasion.[15]

Moreover, we also show that interest in the Russia-Ukraine war increased disproportionately in places where NATO grounded a higher historic support. Following a CIS survey question regarding the three most important problems in Spain, we estimate Model 2, in Table 2 column (1). In there we show that respondents from municipalities with higher

[14]As eloquently mentioned in Fix and Kimmage (2022): "A war in Ukraine would revive NATO...as the unsurpassed defensive military alliance that it was designed to be."

[15]Interestingly, the searches for the word Russia were higher during the Russian invasion of Ukraine in 2022 than during the FIFA World Cup organized by Russia in 2018.

historic NATO support, considered this war to be among the most important problems of Spain in a higher proportion than people from other municipalities.[16]

[INSERT TABLE 2 HERE]

Unlike the previous result, the war had no differential effect on other salient problems unconnected to the conflict. Columns (2) and (3) indicate that our proxy for NATO support cannot predict that respondents report health (COVID-19) or political issues as one of the most important problems of Spain.

5.2 Main Results

The Russian invasion of Ukraine in February 2022 had effects on Spanish domestic politics. Particularly, on voting intentions in the short and long run as well as in actual electoral results, both for the main center-right party (PP) and the remaining ones.

Effects on the Popular Party (PP)

The invasion reshaped the partisan landscape in Spain, favouring the center-right PP, as we show in Table 3. In first place, column (1) shows the results of the comparison of people interviewed before and after the conflict: the war increased the voting intentions for PP by around 9 percentage points. If instead of using the full sample (February 2021 to July 2023), we use the waves immediately before and after the invasion, the results halve (see Table A.2 in the Appendix). This tendency is consistent with Balcells et al. (2024), who finds null effects on the same week of the invasion.

[INSERT TABLE 3 HERE]

Second, the main contribution of the paper is to show that the effect of the war is driven by pre-existing political cleavages that resurface with the conflict. This is shown in the remaining columns of the table. In column (2) of Table 3, the post-war increase in voting intentions for PP is stronger in places that historically had higher NATO support,

[16]Following the unexpected Russian invasion of Ukraine, from March 2023 onwards CIS offered respondents to answer the Russia-Ukraine war among the possible options.

measured by the vote share in the 1986 referendum.[17] More importantly, we can quantify the effect of historic NATO support on current voting intentions for PP by estimating the differences-in-differences model exposed in Equation 1. We first show that the previous results are maintained when we include survey wave dummies instead of just including a the post-war dummy (column 3), individual controls (column 4), and the turnover share in the 1986 referendum interacted with survey wave dummies (column 5). The differences-in-differences estimate including the richest specification for the interaction between NATO support in the 1986 referendum and a post-war dummy for intentions to vote PP is 0.26 (column 6).

This effect is politically significant. After the Russian invasion of Ukraine a city at the 75^{th} percentile of support for NATO (62% of yes vote in the referendum) increased–on average–the intention to vote for PP by 5 percentage points more than a city at the 25^{th} percentile of support (43% of yes vote in the referendum). In context, the intention to vote for PP stood at 22% before invasion, only 1.4% larger than PSOE.

Dynamic effects: As previously mentioned, the main effects may have been increased over time. Thus, we study its dynamics in Figure 1, an event-study estimate of Model 1. That is, we consider how the coefficient of the support for NATO changes through time, by interacting this variable with survey wave fixed effects. We can evince several conclusions from this figure. First, places with different historic support for NATO had similar evolution of voting intentions for PP before the war, conditional on voting turnout in the referendum and individual controls, consistently with parallel pre-trends. Second, the effect of previous support for NATO on voting intentions increased with time, reaching its peak five months after the invasion, in July 2022, immediately after the NATO summit in Madrid. Afterwards, it remained relatively stable until the one-year anniversary of the invasion and then the effect decreased, possibly because of the decreasing saliency of

[17]We demean the NATO support variable in this estimation. In this way, the coefficient of the post-war dummy reflects the increase in voting intentions for PP after the Russian invasion of Ukraine in municipalities with an average NATO support.

NATO and the war.[18]

[INSERT FIGURE 1 HERE]

Electoral results: Interestingly, the self-reported voting intentions in the surveys translated to actual voting outcomes in the 2023 national elections. To show this result, we use data for all municipalities in Spain for all national elections from 2015 to 2023.[19] We run a differences-in-differences model comparing the vote share at municipal level in national elections that took place before and after the Russian invasion of Ukraine in 2022 by the level of 1986 support for NATO.[20] As shown in Figure A.6 and Table A.3, this municipality-level results confirm the individual-level estimates.

Effects on the Remaining Parties

Where did this increase in votes for PP come from? In our survey, we do not have detailed information about voting flows, but we can analyze which parties report a decrease in voting intentions (see Table 4). First, respondents decreased their voting intentions for parties from the left. Both center-left PSOE and far-left coalition *Sumar* (composed of *Podemos*, *Izquierda Unida*, and *Más País*) suffered a decrease in voting intentions (see columns 1 and 2, respectively). This result is striking given that PSOE campaigned in favor of NATO membership in the 1986 referendum.

[INSERT TABLE 4 HERE]

Second, the decrease in voting intentions for parties on the left is not enough to explain the overall increase in voting intentions for PP. We then look at the voting intentions for the two main rivals of PP, the center-right *Ciudadanos*, and the far-right *Vox*. In

[18]Figure A.5 presents the same event-study for the voting intentions of other parties.

[19]The national elections took place in December 2015, June 2016, April 2019, November 2019, and July 2023.

[20]We also control for municipality and election fixed effects, and the interaction between election dummies and the abstention rate in the 1986 referendum. The estimated equations is the following:

$$Y_{m,t} = \alpha_m + \delta_t + \beta PostWar_t \times ShareYes86_m + \delta_t \times ShareAbst86_m + e_{m,t} \quad (3)$$

columns (3) and (4), we show that respondents decreased their voting intentions for both *Ciudadanos* and *Vox*.

Third, all the previous voting intentions were coded as missing when individuals did not plan to cast a valid vote. Still, the increase in voting intentions for PP also comes from an increase in turnout, as voters declare that they are less likely to abstain in municipalities with stronger historic NATO support after the 2022 war (see column 5). Moreover, as reviewed in Section 2.4, in several regions of Spain regional parties have higher vote shares than national parties. Hence, in Table A.4, we show similar results to the previous one, as there is a mild increase in voting intentions for regionalist parties, particularly if they are from the right political spectrum.

5.3 Robustness of the Results

We argue that the particular circumstances of the vote in the 1986 Spanish referendum on NATO membership make our proxy of NATO support less prone to capture other ideological and partisan attitudes. We report additional evidence that partisan attitudes cannot explain the previous results in Table A.5. In that table, we show that the municipal vote share of *Alianza Popular*, the precursor of *Partido Popular*, in the 1982 national elections–the last elections before the NATO referendum–cannot predict the support for NATO in the 1986 referendum. If anything, municipalities with stronger NATO support have stronger support for the Socialist Party, the party that decreased the intention to vote in municipalities with stronger NATO support nowadays after the Russian invasion, the opposite result that one would expect if ideological attitudes would drive our results.

Moreover, to additionally show that our proxy of NATO support does not merely reflect partisan attitudes, in Table A.6 we include additional variables that could threaten our measure by explaining the outcome through the historic support for NATO. In all columns of the table, the coefficient of support for NATO remains statistically significant and of similar magnitude, confirming our hypothesis.

First, we include the self-declared ideology of the respondents.[21] Second, as *Alianza Popular* campaigned in favor of abstention in the 1986 referendum, in our baseline specification, we include the turnout rate in the 1986 referendum times survey waves fixed effects to allow comparisons of respondents from cities with similar turnout but different intensity in the vote share in favor of NATO membership. To guarantee even further that we are comparing observations from similar municipalities in terms of other historic partisanship, we also control for the interaction between survey waves and the vote share in the municipality of the respondent of the three main parties in the NATO campaign: *Alianza Popular*, the Socialist Party and the Communist Party. Third, we also control for the interaction between survey waves and the distance to the closest US military base of the municipality of the respondent. Fourth, to be sure that today's voting intentions for the Popular Party are not rising after the war in municipalities with strong NATO support because those cities are more pro-PP, we control for survey waves and the vote share of PP in the last national elections before the Russian invasion of Ukraine (in November 2019) in the municipality of the respondent. Fifth, as discussed in Section 2.3 there exists a geographic heterogeneity in the vote share at the 1986 NATO referendum. The vote share against NATO membership was majority in four Autonomous Communities: Basque Country, Navarre, Catalonia, and Canary Islands. To avoid capturing this geographic partisanship, we control for the interaction between a dummy for the respondent being located in one of these regions and survey waves fixed effects. Our baseline estimate is robust across all these specifications.

Time variation: In our baseline analysis we consider observations from February 2021 (one year before the Russian invasion of Ukraine) to July 2023 (when the national elections after the war took place in Spain). Using a long span of data has the advantage to provide a richer understanding of the long run effects of the war around political cleavages. However, in any differences-in-differences with many post-treatment period the estimated

[21]This variable takes values from 1 to 10, where 1 indicates that the respondent self-identifies as right-wing and 10 as left-wing. We do not include this variable in our main specification as it can potentially be affected by the treatment and then lead to the problem of bad controls.

effect could also be mediated by new political events. Therefore, in Figure A.7, we show the robustness of our results by restricting the sample of data points used. Each point in the graph reported the estimation of the differences-in-difference effect of Model 1 using the sample of observations interviewed only one month before and after the war, two months before and after the war, and so on.[22] We find that the estimated effect is robust to the number of months used as pre- and post-treatment periods. The more points we use the more the effect grows in magnitude suggesting that posterior events with differential effects according to NATO support could reinforce the initial effect of the war.

Inference: We cluster standard errors at the province times year survey wave level to control for unobserved heterogeneity in the error term within time and geography.[23] In Table A.7, we show that our results are robust to alternative inference, using robust standard errors or clustering of the standard errors at different geographic levels.

6 Mechanisms

In the previous section, we show that voting intentions changed in Spain after the Russian invasion of Ukraine according to the pre-existing political cleavage around municipalities' support for NATO.

Having shown that the variable measuring the historic support for NATO does not reflect partisan ideologies, understanding what people stand for when they support NATO is fundamental to fully comprehending its channel of influence. While this exercise may also be useful beyond the scope of this paper, we focus on three relevant interpretations of support for NATO in Spain: i) given the military nature of the Alliance, support for it may capture citizens' attitudes toward national security and war interventions, irrespective

[22]Figure A.7 is different from Figure 1 that uses all the data between February 2021 and July 2023 and estimate separately the effect of past NATO support for each data point.

[23]An additional heterogeneity in the error term arises from measurement error. This is driven by the fact that we cannot perfectly match observations from cities smaller than 100 thousand inhabitants to the NATO support of their municipality. Instead, we match it to the vote share of similar cities in terms of city size in the same province. Therefore, this unobserved heterogeneity should take place at the province level.

of the specific actors involved in a conflict; ii) as an anti-Soviet military alliance during the Cold War, NATO support can reflect today's anti-Russia sentiments; and finally iii) Spain's membership coincides with the country's normalization of international relations during the Democratic transition of Spain in the 1980s. Then, NATO support could reflect today's support for a common identity and/or european integration. Appendix A.4 discusses and discards incumbency effects as an additional channel.

In what follows, we show and discuss several pieces of evidence that suggest that the second channel, anti-Russia sentiments activated by the war and narratives about NATO and Russia, is a key determinant of the changes in voting intentions in Spain.

6.1 NATO as Military and War Attitudes

To evaluate whether support for NATO explains PP support through pro-war attitudes, we exploit the CIS Barometers which, since the invasion, include several questions about the citizens' positions on the conflict. We estimate the repeated cross-section model, as in Equation 2, using the questions about the war and NATO role in the conflict as dependent variables. As every variable is measured on a different scale, we standardized each outcome variable and reported the results in Figure 2.

[INSERT FIGURE 2 HERE]

The results in the left panel of Figure 2 shows that respondents from places with stronger support for NATO are more likely to perceive the severity of the war as greater (especially regarding the usage of weapons of mass destruction, the possibility of a Western expansion of the war and the use of nuclear weapons). Similarly, they are more likely to agree with the need of a NATO intervention. This can possibly suggest that respondents consider that NATO is an important tool for war and national security resolution. However, from the previous figure we cannot disentangle whether this is driven by the current war or by the role of Russia as perpetrator. To separate these possibilities, we conduct two additional analysis by looking at the opinions about the "victim"–Ukraine–and the effect of past wars ranked according to NATO's intervention.

First, in the right panel of Figure 2 we discard that respondents have a symmetric effect towards Ukranians, as opposed to Russians. We do not find differential opinions on the need to help Ukraine with non-military operations, such as hosting refugees or by providing humanitarian help. Respondents from places with more historic NATO support are not in favor of Ukraine accessing international organizations, such as the European Union or NATO.[24]

Second, the previous results could be interpreted as the effect of wars itself, irrespective of the specific conflict involving Russia and NATO. That is, if respondents consider that PP is the most suited party when the saliency of wars and military operations increases they can think about diverting their vote towards this platform. We discard this possibility by collecting past survey waves of the CIS Barometer from 1990 to 2014 and estimating the effect of past wars (unrelated to Russia) on voting intentions for PP according to the historic NATO support. That is, we estimate a difference-in-difference model, similar to Model 1, looking at the changes after a war according to the municipal share of votes supporting NATO membership in 1986.[25] We show the results of this differences-in-difference estimation in Table 5 column (1). Respondents from cities with more historic NATO support did not report higher voting intentions to PP after the emergence of a war in the past, and, if anything, the effect is negative but weakly significant.[26] Moreover, we separate those wars between conflicts in which NATO intervened and did not.[27] In column

[24]As a matter of caution, CIS did not ask about whether Ukraine should access NATO but whether Ukraine should have the right to access it if its government and population would desire it.

[25]We estimate Model 1 where *Post-War* is now a dummy variable taking value 1 in the three months following any war and value 0 in the previous three months. We use the three months windows to limit the overlapping of different wars. We use the survey waves for which the pre- or post-wars CIS Barometers do include voting intentions in the three months before or after any war. The set of individual controls only includes the sex, age, and employment status of the respondent, as civil status and education attainments are not consistently measured from 1990 to 2014. We consider the following wars happened after the fall of the Berlin wall: the First Gulf War (beginning in August 1990), the Yugoslav Wars (March 1991), the Bosnia War (April 1992), the Kosovo War (February 1998), the Afghanistan War (December 2001), the Second Gulf War (March 2003), the First Libya Civil War (February 2011), the Syria Civil War (March 2011), and the Second Libya Civil War (May 2014).

[26]Figure A.9 shows the event study of the estimation of the differential trends in voting intentions for PP according to support for NATO in the months before and after any of the analysed past wars.

[27]We classify as wars with a NATO intervention the following wars: Bosnia, Kosovo, Afghanistan, and the First Libya Civil War. In Table A.8 we consider all past wars and alternative definitions of NATO interventions. For each war, we construct continuous measures of NATO interventions based on the counts of the word NATO in the NATO website and Wikipedia.

(2), we do not find any statistically significant change in voting intentions after past war with NATO interventions according to municipal support for NATO. We produce a final evidence suggesting that citizens' attitudes are not moved by a NATO military intervention but by a specific involvement against Russia by estimating the differences-in-differences effect after the Russian invasion of Crimea in 2014.[28] As for the 2022 invasion, we find a positive and significant effect of the 2014 Russian invasion of Crimea on voting intentions for PP according to the historic support for NATO (column 3 of Table 5).

[INSERT TABLE 5 HERE]

6.2 NATO as Anti-Russia Sentiment

We previously showed that respondents react to the 2022 war because of the specific intervention of Russia. We here provide three pieces of evidence that this reaction is caused by Anti-Russia sentiments that were activated by the current war and are proxied by the support for NATO, due its anti-Soviet Union origin.

First, the richness of the CIS data allows us to observe, after the war, the self-reported sympathy of Spaniards towards different nationalities. Survey respondents are asked about their sympathy toward Russians and Ukrainians with a Likert scale from 1 (none) to 10 (very close). We estimate Model 2 and report our results in the left panel of Figure 3. We find that respondents from municipalities with strong support for NATO have lower sympathy for Russians, while for Ukrainians it is not statistically different across respondents from municipalities with different support for NATO.

[INSERT FIGURE 3 HERE]

Second, collective memory of certain events can shape our perception of reality. For instance, there is evidence that when specific events are reminded, survey respondents change their responses (Fouka and Voth, 2022). Similarly, politicians can selectively

[28]We compare, according to the their municipal historic support for NATO, respondents in the survey waves of January 2014 and April 2014. These are the unique CIS Barometers reporting voting intentions in the three months pre- and post-Russian invasion of Crimea. We cannot conduct more analysis of the Russian invasion of 2014 as we did for the 2022 invasion because of the limited increase in saliency during the first invasion (see Figure A.4) and the scarcity of good questions in the 2014 surveys.

activate history (or its recollection) in their favor (Ochsner and Roesel, 2024). In the specific case of Russia, NATO was historically formed as anti-Soviet Union alliance and this anti-Russian sentiments can reflourish due to politicians' narratives in places that historically ostracize Soviet Union. In fact, in Table A.5, we show that municipalities with stronger support for NATO in 1986 were more anti-communist, as the Spanish Communist Party had a lower vote share. We find evidence consistent with this channel.

We collected all the speeches of all legislators in the Spanish Congress (*Congreso de Diputados*). We classified each speech according to the political party of the speaker. We looked for keywords that could activate the NATO/Russia narrative as well as other keywords: NATO, Russia, Ukraine, USA, and war.[29] We estimate a version of Model 1, where we look at the partisan cleavage (PP vs not-PP) instead of the NATO cleavage. That is, we compare before and after the Russian invasion of Ukraine of 2022 ($PostWar$), the behavior within a plenary session of PP legislators in the Spanish Congress ($PPLeg$) with respect to other legislators. The richness of our data allows us to control for speakers (s) and plenary session of the Congress (c) fixed effects as follows:[30]

$$Y_{s,c} = \alpha_s + \delta_c + \beta PostWar_c \times PPLeg_s + e_{s,c} \tag{4}$$

Using data from February 2021 (one year before the Russian invasion) to the end of the legislature, the left panel of Figure 4 shows that legislators from PP are more likely to activate such narrative, with respect to other parties, after the invasion. That is, after the 2022 war, legislators from PP are more likely to mention Russia in their speeches with respect to other politicians. We do not find statistically significant effects for the mention of other words, such as Ukraine and USA and, most notably, NATO. Importantly, after the Russian invasion of 2022, politicians that are not from PP spoke more inside the

[29]For every speech, we create several dummy variables taking the value 1 if the speech includes one of those words or its demonym (for example, Russia and Russian), and 0 otherwise. We do not consider sentences that mention the word with a completely different meaning (for example, Russian Salad and Russia) as speeches about that specific topic.

[30]We use data for speakers in the Congress who are currently members and do not consider the speeches of the President and Vice-Presidents of the Congress, as they could reflect agenda setting. We cluster standard errors at the parliamentary group of the speaker times plenary session level.

Congress about war than PP legislators.

[INSERT FIGURE 4 HERE]

These result provides additional evidence that the increase in voting intentions for PP after the war is likely driven by the anti-Russian attitude associated with support for NATO. We further show this possibility in the right panel of Figure 4, where we study the sentiment of the speeches inside the Spanish Congress. For every intervention in a plenary session, we compute the sentiment score for each sentence of the intervention mentioning one of the considered words using the BERT language model.[31] We then classify each intervention as either positive, neutral or negative.[32] We estimate by Ordered Probit Model 4 using as dependent variable taking value 1 if speaker spoke positively about that topic, 0 if the speaker spoke neutrally, and -1 if the speaker spoke negatively. We report the marginal effects of our differences-in-differences coefficient in the right panel of Figure 4. After the Russian invasion of Ukraine in 2022, MPs from PP not only spoke more about Russia but they also did it with a negative sentiment. Notably, this is the only sentiment affected; we do not find any other statistical differences in the speeches about remaining topics.[33]

Third, to provide additional evidence that the reaction of voters to the Russian invasion is partly motivated by the activation of old memories of the NATO role we study the heterogeneity of our main result found in Section 5.2 to age of the respondents. In Appendix A.5, we show and discuss this. We find that the smallest effect of the support for NATO after the Russian invasion on voting intentions is found for individuals who votes for the first time during the 1986 NATO referendum.[34]

[31]BERT stands for Bidirectionnal Encoder Representations for Transformers.

[32]We consider the words NATO, Russia, Ukraine, USA and war. We compute the sentiment score for each sentence mentioning the word in one intervention. The sentiment score can take values from -1 to 1. For each intervention, we compute the average sentiment score of all the sentences mentioning the considered word. We categorize an intervention as positive if this average is higher than 0.5, neutral if it lies between -0.5 and 0.5 (included), and negative if it is lower than 0.5.

[33]Despite not statistically significant, MPs from PP spoke more positively about NATO, the US and Ukraine after the Russian invasion of Ukraine.

[34]This result is consistent with the impressionable years hypothesis (Krosnick and Alwin, 1989), for which events that happened during young adulthood have long-lasting effects on the formation of beliefs and attitudes, and the first-time voter hypothesis (Daniele et al., 2023).

6.3 NATO as a Tool for Integration

To evaluate whether the support for NATO explains PP support through a will to be further integrated into supranational structures, like the EU, we use two different strategies. First, we exploit CIS questions that will allow us to measure integration desires at an individual level as a dependent variable. Similarly, we show that the main result remains stable when we include an aggregate proxy of integration among the independent variables.

First, we estimate Equation (2), using questions about sympathy and identity, only asked after the invasion. Regarding the former, the left panel of Figure 3 shows that individuals living in pro-NATO municipalities are not more likely to sympathize with other countries. Regarding the latter, individuals are asked whether they identify the most with their city, region, country, continent or humankind. Consistently with the results for sympathy, the right panel of Figure 3 shows that self-identification with Europe and/or humankind is not larger in pro-NATO municipalities.

Second, we estimate the differences-in-differences model of Equation (1), incorporating a new variable proxing for the desire of supranational integration. In order to obtain a measure this, we use the referendum for the European Constitution, celebrated in Spain in 2005. We use the share of favorable votes for the ratification of the constitution at the municipality level, both as a control variable–by interacting it with survey wave dummies–and also as an heterogeneous terms–by interacting it with the support for NATO variable. In Table A.9, we show that there is a similar effect comparing places with similar desire for integration and no differential effect in places with more desire to integration.[35]

Thus, the evidence above shows that NATO support is unlikely to capture a will for

[35]In column (1), the coefficient of support for NATO remains statistical significant and with a similar magnitude, when we compare observations with similar level of EU support. That is, we control for the municipal level support at the EU referendum in 2005 interacted by survey waves. This specification also control for the abstention rate at that referendum interacted by survey waves. In column (2), we instead directly consider the effect of the support for the EU and its heterogeneity with respect to support for NATO. In places with a mean level of support for the EU, we find again a positive effect of the differences-in-differences coefficient of support for NATO after the 2022 Russian invasion of Ukraine. Instead, in places with a mean level of support for NATO, we do not find a differential increase in voting intentions for PP after the war according to support for the EU. Finally, the positive differential effect according to support for NATO does not vary with the level support for EU.

supranational integration. Still, Balcells et al. (2024) shows that the 2022 Russian invasion of Ukraine affects intranational identification, and Spaniards report higher identification with the national identity with respect to their regional identity. In Table A.10 and Figure A.10, we show that the same mechanism is present when comparing individuals from municipalities with stronger historic support for NATO.[36]

7 Conclusion

The escalate of geopolitical tensions in the world brings back the importance of understanding its effects on domestic politics (Morrow, 1991). In particular, its importance on countries not-directly involved with the tensions, which is not always warranted. Such is the case of Spain with respect to the 2022 Russian invasion of Ukraine.

We show that the invasion increased the salience of NATO not only the internationally but also in Spain. In particular, after the invasion, individuals from cities with historically higher support of NATO increased their voting intention for the Popular Party, the main center-right party.

We find suggestive evidence that the resurgence of anti Russia narratives is the main channel behind our results. Respondents report a lower sympathy towards Russia after the war in places with higher historic NATO support. Moreover, they increasingly believe that Russia could be a threat to geopolitical security in Europe, as they evaluate a higher risk of invasion of other Eastern European Countries by Russia following the Ukrainian invasion.

Our results are consistent with the legislators behavior. Analyzing the speech of the congress members during this period, we show that the PP legislators are more likely to

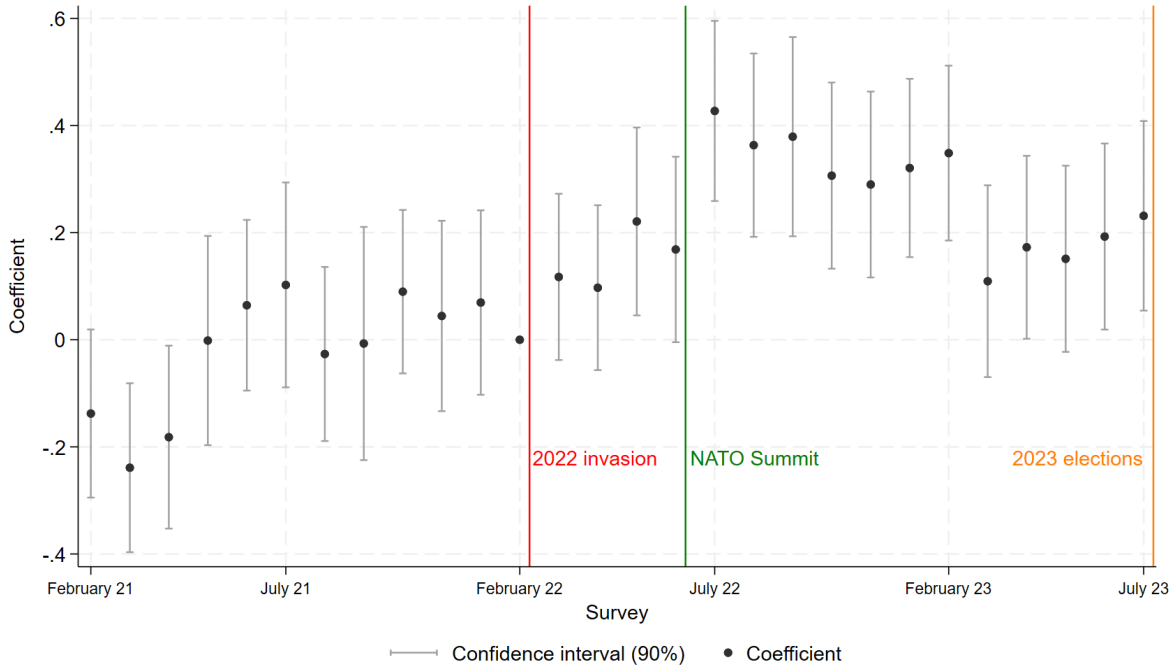
[36]For these results, we use a question about individual self-identification when respondents are only left with the possibility to identify with their national or regional identity. This question takes five values, as respondents can identify i) only with their national identity, ii) more with their national identity than with their regional identity, iii) equally between their national and regional identities, iv) more with their regional identity than with their national identity, and v) only with their regional identity. In Table A.10, we estimate Model 2 by OLS and Ordered Probit using this regional vs. national self-identification variable as dependent variable. In Figure A.10, we report the marginal effects of the historic support for NATO after the Ordererd Probit estimation.

mention Russia in their speeches than the non-PP legislators, after the invasion. Similarly, our sentiment analysis also shows that they are more likely to speak negatively about Russia.

We pose that the current reactivation of the anti-Russia narrative is a combination of the invasion and a–potentially strategic–use of historical narratives by PP legislators. These narratives could have been used to reactive the collective memory of anti-communism present during the Cold War and the Spanish political history. However, deeper and comparative analysis may be needed to evaluate whether political parties elsewhere could take advantage of these memories and change their current speech around those elements in order to pursue their electoral objectives.

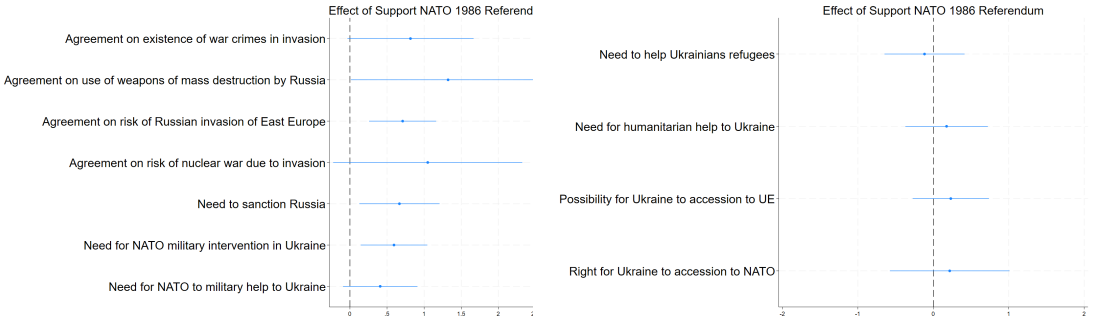
Figures and Tables

Figure 1: Event-study of the change in intentions to vote for the Popular Party according to NATO support



Notes: The figure reports the event-study coefficients and 90% confidence interval of the effect of *Support NATO 1986 Referendum* on the intention to vote for the Popular Party at the next national elections. *Support NATO 1986 Referendum*: share of votes in favor of Spain's membership in NATO in the 1986 referendum over valid votes in the municipality of the respondent. The dependent variable takes the value missing if the respondent is not planning to vote, does not know what to vote, wants to vote for a party not in the list provided by CIS, or plans to cast an invalid or blank vote. The coefficients are obtained estimating Model 1, when *Support NATO 1986 Referendum* is multiplied by survey wave dummies. We include municipality and survey fixed effects, the interaction between survey wave dummies and the abstention rate in the 1986 referendum in the municipality of the respondent, and individual controls. The omitted category is the dummy for whether the interview took place in February 2022 (before the Russian invasion took place), represented by the red vertical line. Sample of respondents interviewed in the CIS Barometer Surveys conducted from February 2021 to July 2023. Regression estimated by OLS using probability weights. Standard errors clustered at the province-survey wave level.

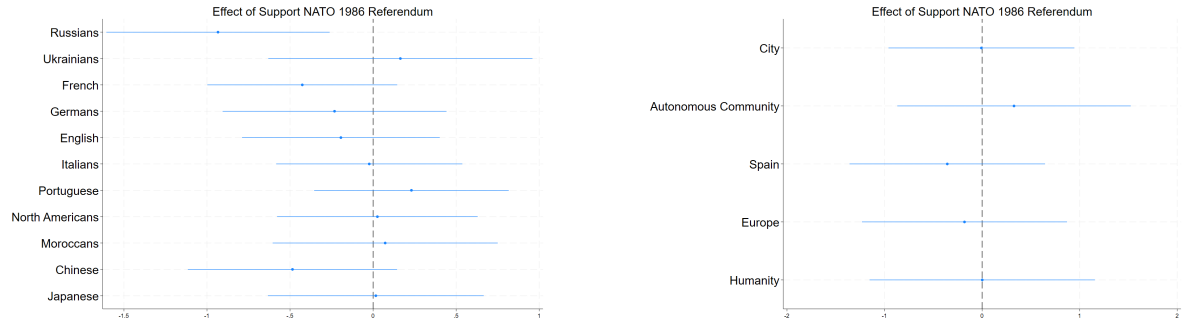
Figure 2: NATO support and opinions on NATO, Russian, and Ukrainian roles in the war



(a) NATO and Russian roles (b) NATO and Ukrainian roles

Notes: The figures report the coefficients and 90% confidence interval of the effect of *Support NATO 1986 Referendum* on each separate dependent variable. *Support NATO 1986 Referendum*: share of votes in favor of Spain's membership in NATO in the 1986 referendum over valid votes in the municipality of the respondent. Description of the dependent variables in Appendix A.1. All dependent variables are standardized. Estimation of Model 2. We include province and survey fixed effects, the abstention rate in the 1986 referendum in the municipality of the respondent, individual controls, the vote share for PSOE, AP, and PCE in the 1982 national elections in the municipality of the respondent, and the distance to the closest US military basis. Sample of respondents interviewed in the CIS Surveys after March 2022 (after the Russian invasion took place). Regressions estimated by OLS using probability weights. Standard errors clustered at the province-survey wave level.

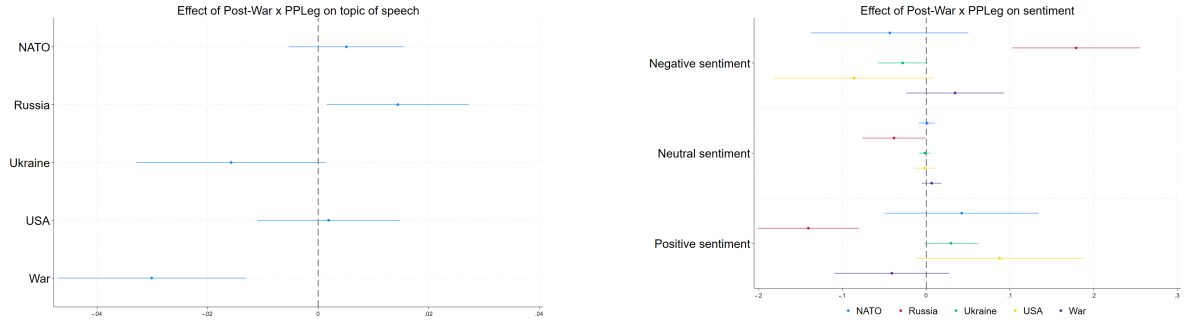
Figure 3: NATO support, sympathy for different nationalities and self-declared identification



(a) Sympathy (b) Identity

Notes: The figures report the coefficients and 90% confidence interval of the effect of *Support NATO 1986 Referendum* on each separate dependent variable. *Support NATO 1986 Referendum*: share of votes in favor of Spain's membership in NATO in the 1986 referendum over valid votes in the municipality of the respondent. In Panel (a), for each nationality X, the dependent variables take values from 1 to 10 if respondents have no sympathy (1) or much sympathy (10) towards X. In Panel (b), for each geographic level X, the dependent variables take values from 1 if respondents self-identify the most with the geographic level X, and 0 otherwise. All dependent variables are standardized. Estimation of Model 2. We include province and survey fixed effects, the abstention rate in the 1986 referendum in the municipality of the respondent, individual controls, the vote share for PSOE, AP, and PCE in the 1982 national elections in the municipality of the respondent, and the distance to the closest US military basis. Sample of respondents interviewed in the CIS Surveys after March 2022 (after the Russian invasion took place). Regressions estimated by OLS using probability weights. Standard errors clustered at the province-survey wave level.

Figure 4: Partisan divisions and speeches in the Congress



(a) Topic of the speech

(b) Sentiment of the speech

Notes: The figures report the coefficients and 90% confidence interval of the effect of *Post-War x PPLeg* on each separate dependent variable. *Post-War*: dummy variable taking value 1 if the speech took place in a plenary session of the Spanish Congress after February 24th 2022 (when the Russian invasion took place). *PPLeg*: dummy variable taking value 1 if the speaker was a legislator (Leg) from the Popular Party group (PP). In Panel (a), for each topic X, the dependent variables take values from 1 if the speaker mentioned X in a plenary session of the Spanish Congress, and 0 otherwise. For a specific topic, we also consider the demonyms of that topic if there are, while we do not consider sentences that mention another topic but use that word. In Panel (b), for each topic X, the dependent variables take values from 1 if speaker spoke positively about that topic, 0 if the speaker spoke neutrally, and -1 if the speaker spoke negatively. For every intervention in a plenary session, we compute the sentiment score for each sentence of the intervention mentioning one of the considered words using the Bidirectionnal Encoder Representations for Transformers (BERT) language model. The sentiment score can take values from -1 to 1. For each intervention, we compute the average sentiment score of all the sentences mentioning the considered word. We categorize an intervention as positive if this average is higher than 0.5, neutral if it lies between -0.5 and 0.5 (included), and negative if it is lower than 0.5. Estimation of Model 4. We include speaker and plenary session fixed effects. Sample of interventions between February 2021 and August 2023 within the XIV Legislature of the Spanish Congress done by a current member of the Congress with a known political group. In Panel (a), regressions estimated by OLS. In Panel (b), regressions estimated by Ordered Probit and the figure reports the computed marginal effects using these estimates. Standard errors clustered at the parliamentary group-plenary session level.

Table 1: NATO support in the 1986 referendum and survey data

	Agreement with Spanish membership into NATO						
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)
Support NATO 1986 Referendum	0.735***	0.724***	0.730***	0.442**	0.472**	0.572***	0.671***
	(0.0767)	(0.0753)	(0.0690)	(0.185)	(0.185)	(0.206)	(0.223)
Abstention 1986 Referendum		0.245***	0.237***	0.235	0.228	0.219	0.212
		(0.0848)	(0.0799)	(0.148)	(0.149)	(0.179)	(0.179)
Number of Observations	13529	13529	13529	13529	13430	13430	13430
R-Squared	0.020	0.021	0.026	0.043	0.049	0.049	0.049
Wave FE	NO	NO	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
Province FE	NO	NO	NO	YES	YES	YES	YES
Individual Controls	NO	NO	NO	NO	YES	YES	YES
Vote 1982	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	YES	YES
Distance US Bases	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	YES

Notes: Agreement with Spanish membership into NATO: dummy variable taking value 1 if the respondent agrees or strongly agrees with the assessment of Spain's membership in NATO and 0 if strongly disagrees, disagrees, or neither agrees nor disagrees. *Support NATO 1986 Referendum*: share of votes in favor of Spain's membership in NATO in the 1986 referendum over valid votes in the municipality of the respondent. *Abstention 1986 Referendum*: share of not valid votes in the 1986 referendum over all possible votes in the municipality of the respondent. Estimation of Model 2 sequentially including all elements, with the only difference that civil status is not included in the individual controls for lack of data for all the waves. Sample of respondents interviewed in the CIS National Defense and the Armed Forces Surveys conducted in February 2005, March 2007, December 2009, September 2011, September 2013, September 2015, and September 2017. Regression estimated by OLS. Standard errors clustered at the province-survey wave level. *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

Table 2: NATO support and perceived problems

	Russia-Ukraine war	COVID-19	Political
	(1)	(2)	(3)
Support NATO 1986 Referendum	0.0905**	0.00719	0.0284
	(0.0359)	(0.0333)	(0.0912)
Number of Observations	49420	49420	49420
R-Squared	0.012	0.064	0.025

Notes: Each dependent variable represents whether the respondent reported one of the following issues as the first, second or third most important problem of Spain: *Russia-Ukraine war*, *COVID-19*, and *Political* issues (the government, a specific party or politician; bad behavior of politicians; political problems).Dependent variables take value missing if the respondent considers the existence of problems not in the list provided by CIS or no problem at all. *Support NATO 1986 Referendum*: share of votes in favor of Spain's membership in NATO in the 1986 referendum over valid votes in the municipality of the respondent. Estimation of Model 2. We include province and survey fixed effects, the abstention rate in the 1986 referendum in the municipality of the respondent, individual controls, the vote share for PSOE, AP, and PCE in the 1982 national elections in the municipality of the respondent, and the distance to the closest US military basis. Sample of respondents interviewed in the CIS Barometer Surveys conducted from March 2022 (after the Russian invasion took place) to July 2023. Regression estimated by OLS using probability weights. Standard errors clustered at the province-survey wave level. *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

Table 3: NATO support and voting intentions for the Popular Party

	Voting intentions: PP					
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Post-War	0.0911***	0.0904***				
	(0.00405)	(0.00388)				
Support NATO 1986 Referendum (demeaned) x Post-War		0.264***				
		(0.0320)				
Support NATO 1986 Referendum x Post-War			0.262***	0.263***	0.259***	0.261***
			(0.0308)	(0.0310)	(0.0308)	(0.0311)
Number of Observations	71951	71951	71951	71506	71951	71506
R-Squared	0.060	0.060	0.063	0.080	0.064	0.080
Wave FE	NO	NO	YES	YES	YES	YES
Municipality FE	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
Individual Controls	NO	NO	NO	YES	NO	YES
Turnout 1986 Referendum x Wave FE	NO	NO	NO	NO	YES	YES

Notes: The dependent variable represents the intention to vote for the Popular Party (PP) at the next national elections. *Support NATO 1986 Referendum*: share of votes in favor of Spain's membership in NATO in the 1986 referendum over valid votes in the municipality of the respondent. *Post-War*: dummy variable taking value 1 if the respondent was interviewed in a survey wave after February 2022 (when the Russian invasion took place). The dependent variables take the value missing if the respondent is not planning to vote, does not know what to vote, wants to vote for a party not in the list provided by CIS, or plans to cast an invalid or blank vote. Estimation of Model 1 in column (6). We include municipality and survey wave fixed effects, the interaction between survey wave dummies and the abstention rate in the 1986 referendum in the municipality of the respondent, and individual controls in columns (6). Sample of respondents interviewed in the CIS Barometer Surveys conducted from February 2021 to July 2023. Regression estimated by OLS using probability weights. Standard errors clustered at the province-survey wave level.

Table 4: NATO support and voting intentions for the other parties

	PSOE	Podemos/IU/MP/+	Ciudadanos	Vox	Abstention
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Support NATO 1986 Referendum x Post-War	-0.0610*	-0.0768**	-0.111***	-0.128***	-0.0896***
	(0.0363)	(0.0303)	(0.0146)	(0.0215)	(0.0252)
Number of Observations	71506	71506	71506	71506	80711
R-Squared	0.047	0.044	0.031	0.050	0.024

Notes: Each dependent variable represents the intention to vote for the following parties at the next national elections: Socialist Party (PSOE), *Podemos*, *Izquierda Unida*, *Más Páis* or *Sumar* (Podemos/IU/MP/+), *Ciudadanos*, *Vox*, or plan to abstain (*Abstention*). *Support NATO 1986 Referendum*: share of votes in favor of Spain's membership in NATO in the 1986 referendum over valid votes in the municipality of the respondent. *Post-War*: dummy variable taking value 1 if the respondent was interviewed in a survey wave after February 2022 (when the Russian invasion took place). The dependent variables take the value missing if the respondent is not planning to vote, does not know what to vote, wants to vote for a party not in the list provided by CIS, or plans to cast an invalid or blank vote. Estimation of Model 1. We include municipality and survey fixed effects, the interaction between survey wave dummies and the abstention rate in the 1986 referendum in the municipality of the respondent, and individual controls. Sample of respondents interviewed in the CIS Barometer Surveys conducted from February 2021 to July 2023. Regression estimated by OLS using probability weights. Standard errors clustered at the province-survey wave level.

Table 5: NATO support and past wars

	Voting intentions: PP		
	(1)	(2)	(3)
Support NATO 1986 Referendum x Post-Past Wars	-0.147*		
	(0.0890)		
Support NATO 1986 Referendum x Post-Past NATO Wars		-0.111	
		(0.125)	
Support NATO 1986 Referendum x Post-2014 Crimea invasion			0.976**
			(0.450)
Number of Observations	25817	12932	1082
R-Squared	0.132	0.137	0.280
Sample	Jun90-Jul14	Feb92-May11	Jan14-Apr14

Notes: Voting intention PP: dummy variable taking value 1 if the respondent intends to vote at the next national elections for the Popular Party (PP). The dependent variables takes the value missing if the respondent is not planning to vote, does not know what to vote, wants to vote for a party not in the list provided by CIS, or plans to cast an invalid or blank vote. *Support NATO 1986 Referendum*: share of votes in favor of Spain's membership in NATO in the 1986 referendum over valid votes in the municipality of the respondent. *Post-Past Wars*: dummy variable taking value 1 if the respondent was interviewed in a survey wave three months after the beginning of one of the following wars: the First Gulf War (beginning in August 1990), the Yugoslav Wars (March 1991), the Bosnia War (April 1992), the Kosovo War (February 1998), the Afghanistan War (December 2001), the Second Gulf War (March 2003), the First Libya Civil War (February 2011), the Syria Civil War (March 2011), and the Second Libya Civil War (May 2014). *Post-Past NATO Wars*: dummy variable taking value 1 if the respondent was interviewed in a survey wave three months before one of the following wars with a NATO intervention: the Bosnia War (April 1992), the Kosovo War (February 1998), the Afghanistan War (December 2001), and the First Libya Civil War (February 2011). *Post-2014 Crimean invasion*: dummy variable taking value 1 if the respondent was interviewed in a survey wave three months before the Russian invasion of Crimea (February 2014). *Post-Past Wars*, *Post-Past NATO Wars* and *Post-2014 Crimea invasion* takes value 0 if the respondent was interviewed in a survey wave three months before the beginning of the wars considered. Estimation of Model 1 where *Post-Past Wars*, *Post-Past NATO Wars* or *Post-2014 Crimea invasion* is used instead of *Post-War*. We include we include municipality and survey fixed effects, the interaction between survey wave dummies and the abstention rate in the 1986 referendum in the municipality of the respondent, and individual controls (without civil status and educational attainments). Sample of respondents interviewed in the CIS Barometer Surveys conducted in the days specified in *Sample*. Standard errors clustered at the province-survey wave level in all columns. *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

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A Appendix

A.1 Description of the variables

- *Agreement on existence of war crimes in invasion*: dummy variable taking value 1 if respondent considers that the Russian army committed war crimes and against humanity during the invasion of Ukraine.

- *Agreement on use of weapons of mass destruction by Russia*: dummy variable taking value 1 if respondent considers that the Russian army used weapons of mass destruction prohibited by the international community during the invasion of Ukraine.

- *Agreement on risk of Russian invasion of East Europe*: dummy variable taking value 1 if respondent considers that Russia could invade another Eastern European country in its previous area of influence after the invasion of Ukraine.

- *Agreement on risk of nuclear war due to invasion*: dummy variable taking value 1 if respondent considers that the invasion of Ukraine can trigger a nuclear war.

- *Need to sanction Russia*: variable taking values from 1 to 5 if the respondent disagrees that there is the need to impose Russia and Putin any kind of economic sanctions so that they withdraw from Ukraine (1) or strongly agree (5).

- *Need for NATO military intervention in Ukraine*: variable taking values from 1 to 5 if the respondent disagrees that if Russia does not withdraw from Ukraine, NATO should intervene militarily to help Ukraine (1) or strongly agree (5).

- *Need for NATO to military help to Ukraine*: variable taking values from 1 to 5 if the respondent disagrees that NATO has to provide Ukraine with military material, weapons or ammunition, so that it can defend itself (1) or strongly agree (5).

- *Need to help Ukrainians refugees*: variable taking values from 1 to 5 if the respondent disagrees that all European countries, including Spain, must welcome and help

refugees from Ukraine (1) or strongly agree (5).

- *Need for humanitarian help to Ukraine*: variable taking values from 1 to 5 if the respondent disagrees that humanitarian aid must be sent to Ukrainians (1) or strongly agree (5).

- *Possibility for Ukraine to accession to UE*: variable taking values from 1 to 5 if the respondent disagrees that there should be the possibility for Ukraine to enter the EU if it requests it (1) or strongly agree (5).

- *Right for Ukraine to accession to NATO*: variable taking values from 1 to 5 if the respondent disagrees that Ukraine has the right to join NATO, if its Government and its population freely decide (1) or strongly agree (5).

- *Agreement on Putin's trial for war crimes*: dummy variable taking value 1 if respondent considers that Vladimir Putin should be brought to the International Criminal Court in The Hague to be tried for war crimes.

- *Need to pressure Putin*: variable taking values from 1 to 5 if the respondent disagrees that international pressure must be put on Putin to withdraw the Russian army from Ukraine (1) or strongly agree (5).

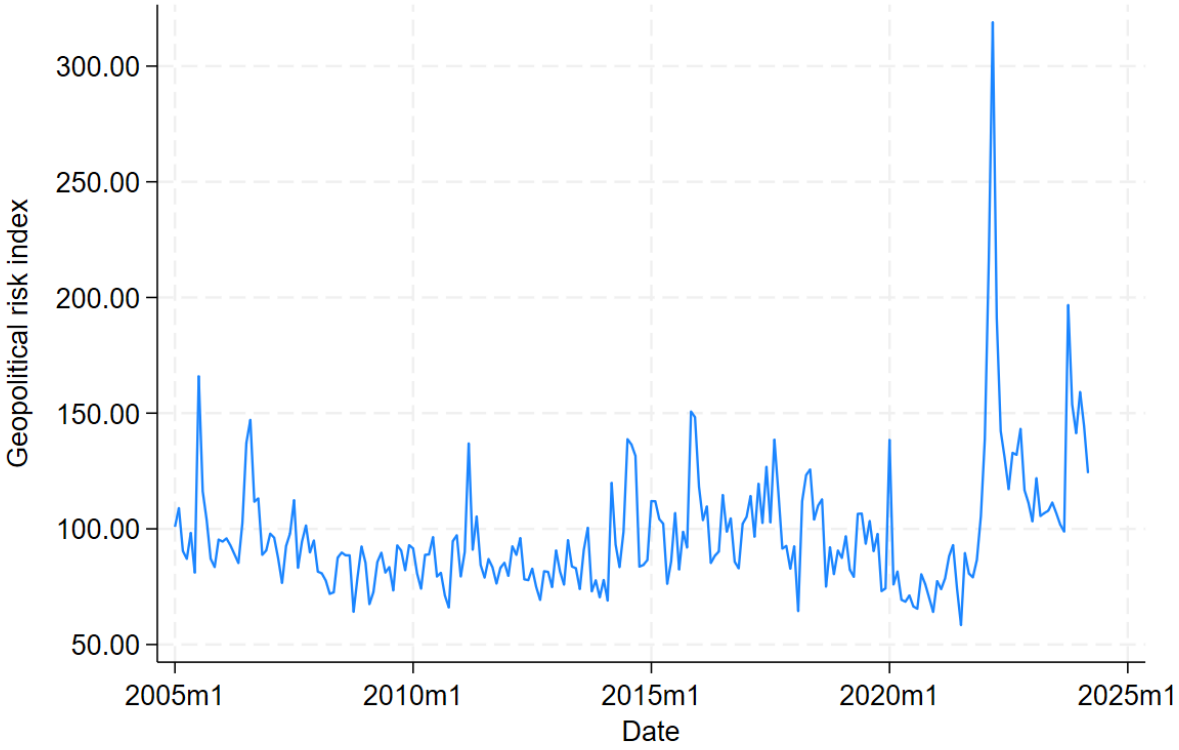
- *Agreement on risk of WWIII*: dummy variable taking value 1 if respondent considers that there is a risk of triggering a Third World War arising from the invasion of Ukraine for Russia.

- *Agreement on existence of attacks to civilians by Russia*: dummy variable taking value 1 if respondent considers that the Russian army is deliberately targeting civilians in Ukraine.

- *Agreement on existence of Russian fake news against Ukrainian army*: dummy variable taking value 1 if respondent considers that the Russian government is producing fake images or news to blame the Army for Ukraine attacks on civilians.

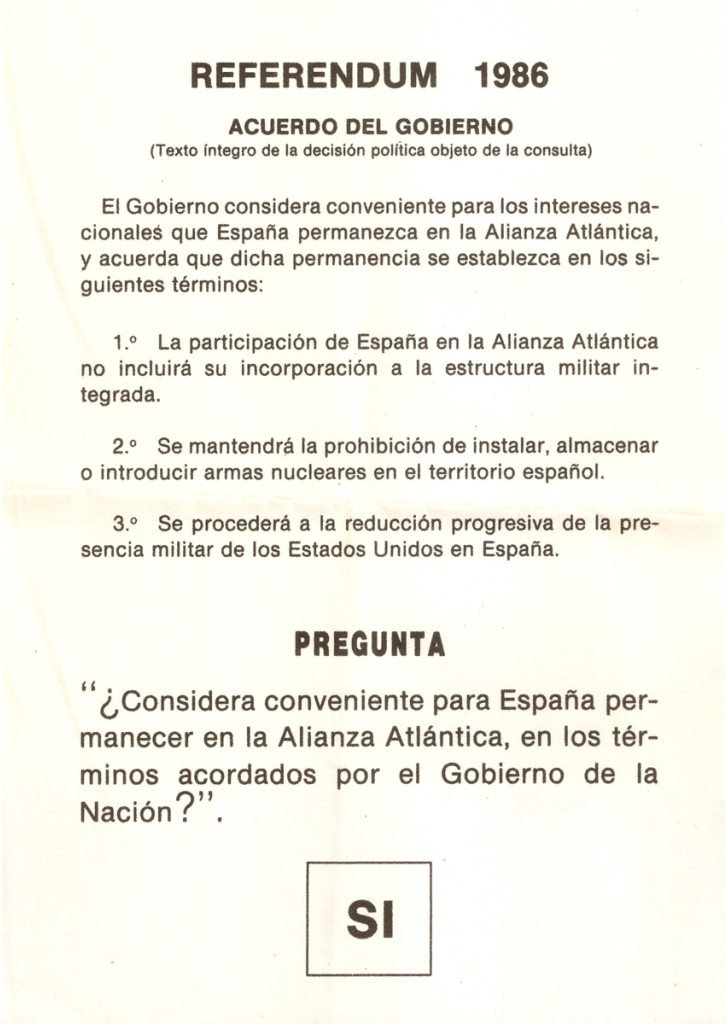
A.2 Additional figures

Figure A.1: Geopolitical Risk Index from Caldara and Iacoviello (2022)



Notes: The figure reports the Geopolitical Risk Index (GPR), downloaded from https://www.matteoiacoviello.com/gpr.htm. This index is "a measure of adverse geopolitical events and associated risks based on a tally of newspaper articles covering geopolitical tensions" since 1985 and calculated following Caldara and Iacoviello (2022).

Figure A.2: Ballot at the 1986 NATO Referendum in Spain



REFERENDUM 1986

ACUERDO DEL GOBIERNO

(Texto íntegro de la decisión política objeto de la consulta)

El Gobierno considera conveniente para los intereses nacionales que España permanezca en la Alianza Atlántica, y acuerda que dicha permanencia se establezca en los siguientes términos:

1.º La participación de España en la Alianza Atlántica no incluirá su incorporación a la estructura militar integrada.

2.º Se mantendrá la prohibición de instalar, almacenar o introducir armas nucleares en el territorio español.

3.º Se procederá a la reducción progresiva de la presencia militar de los Estados Unidos en España.

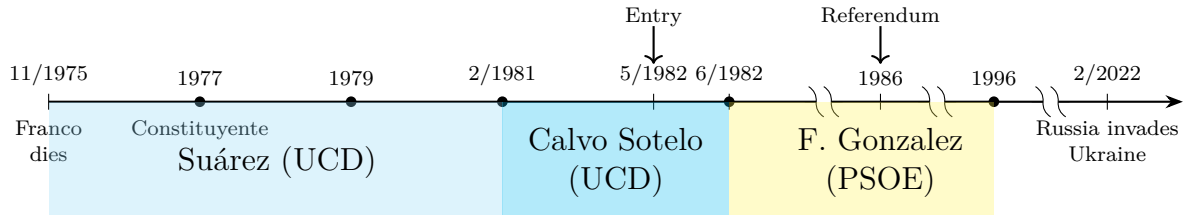
PREGUNTA

"¿Considera conveniente para España permanecer en la Alianza Atlántica, en los términos acordados por el Gobierno de la Nación?".

SI

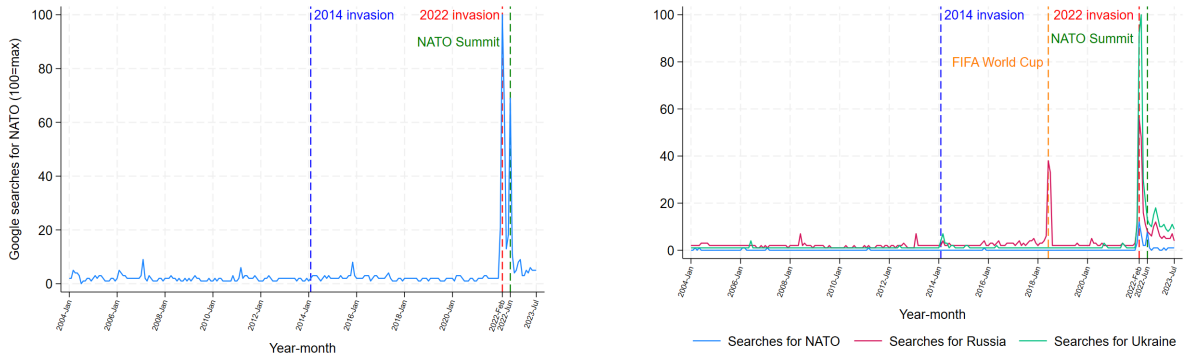
Notes: The figure shows the ballot at the 1986 NATO Referendum in Spain. Its translation to English is: "The Government considers it convenient, for national interests, for Spain to remain in the Atlantic Alliance, and agrees that such permanence be established in the following terms: (1) Non-incorporation into the Atlantic Alliance's military structure; (2) Prohibition on the installation, storage or entry of nuclear weapons on Spanish territory; (3) Gradual reduction of the United States military presence in Spain. In your view, should Spain continue to be a member of the Atlantic Alliance subject to the terms agreed by the national Government?"

Figure A.3: Historic timeline



Notes: Each dot represents a general election, with the exception of 1977, which was the election to elect members of the parliament to write the new constitution. Each colored region represents the duration in office of each president. The arrows indicate NATO related events (entry and referendum).

Figure A.4: Google searches in Spain

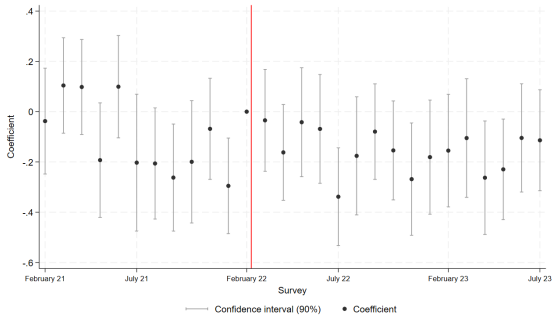


(a) NATO

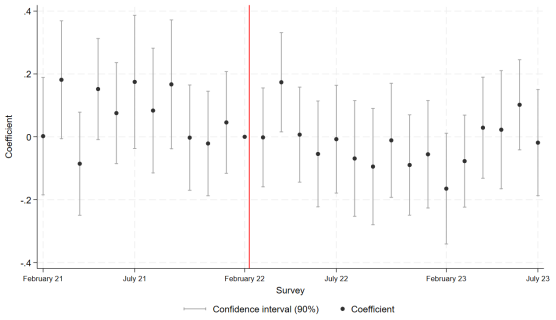
(b) NATO, Russia and Ukraine

Notes: Panel a. The figure shows the number of Google searches for the term "OTAN" (the Spanish version of NATO) in Spain between January 1st 2004 to July 23th 2023 (national elections day). The number searches are normalized to take value 100 when the maximum number of searches for the term "OTAN" took place. Panel b. The figure shows the number of Google searches for the term "OTAN" and "Rusia" and "Ucrania" (the Spanish versions of NATO, Russia and Ukraine) in Spain between January 1st 2004 to July 23th 2023 (national elections day). The number searches are normalized to take value 100 when the maximum number of searches for the term "Ucrania" took place.

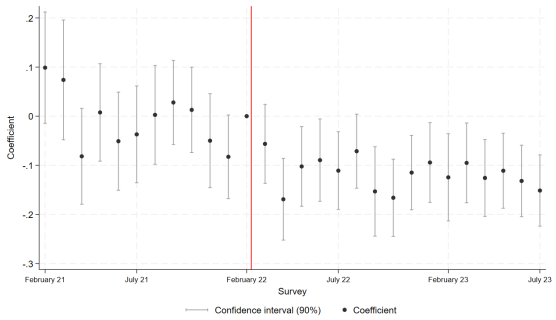
Figure A.5: Event-study of the change in intentions to vote according to support to NATO in 1986 referendum



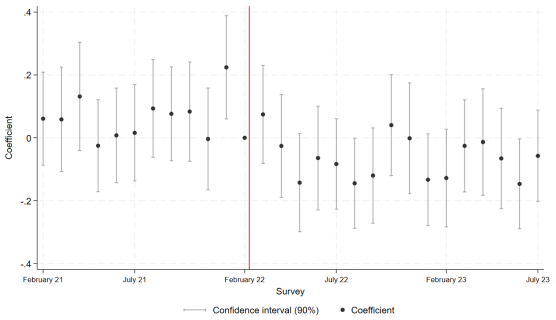
(a) PSOE



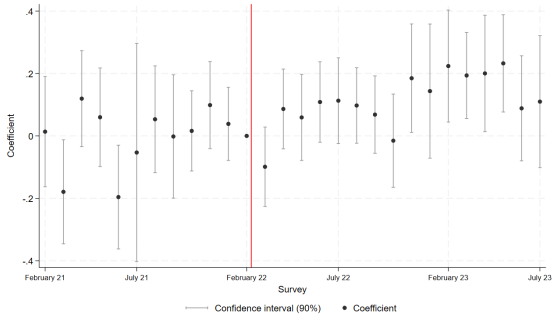
(b) Podemos/IU/MP/+



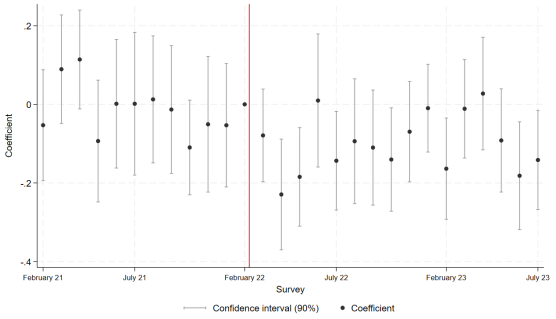
(c) Ciudadanos



(d) VOX



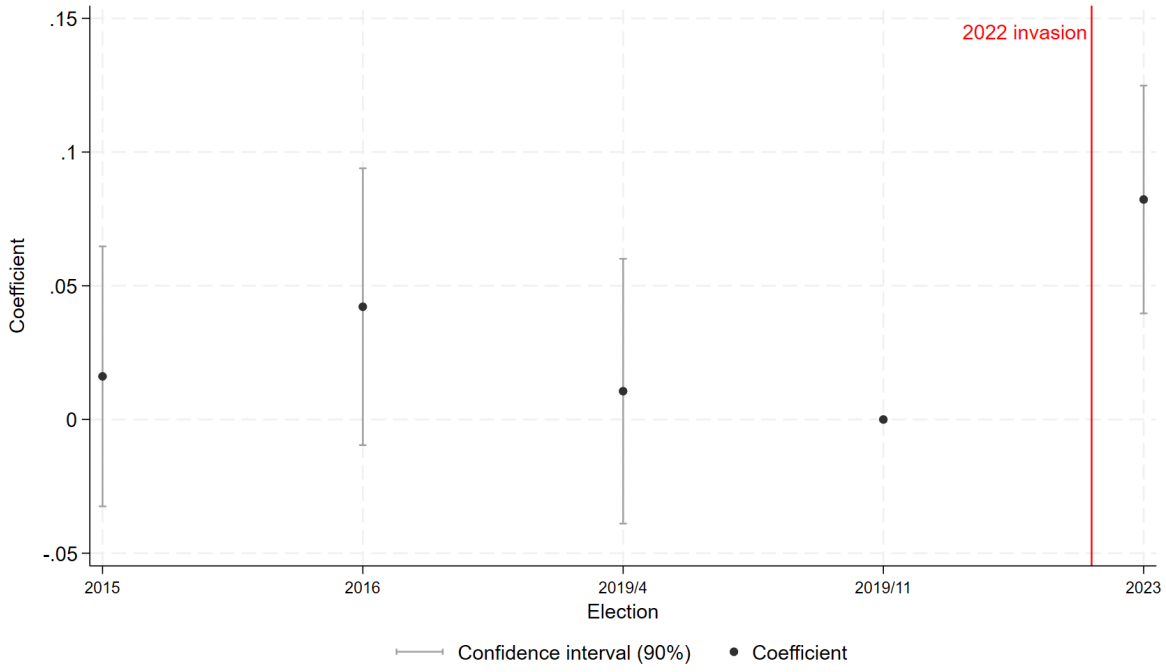
(e) Other parties



(f) Abstention

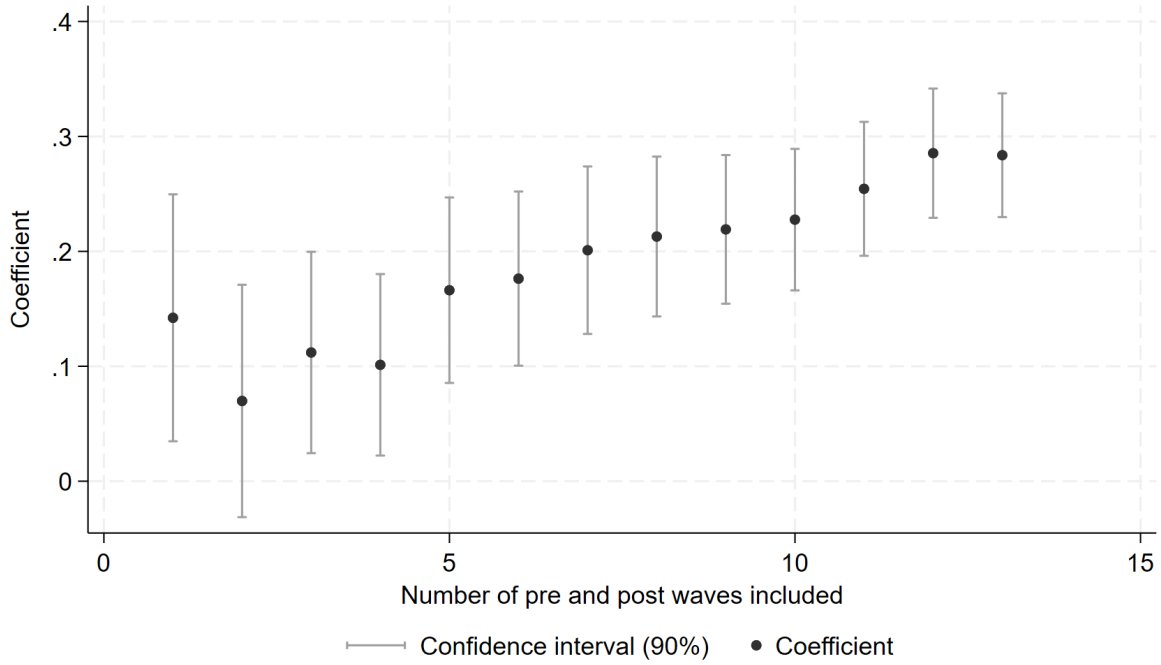
Notes: The figures report the event-study coefficients and 90% confidence interval of the effect of *Support NATO 1986 Referendum* on the intention to vote for the following parties at the next national elections: Socialist Party (PSOE), *Podemos*, *Izquierda Unida*, *Más Páis* or *Sumar* (Podemos/IU/MP/+), *Ciudadanos*, *Vox*, or plan to abstain (*Abstention*). *Support NATO 1986 Referendum*: share of votes in favor of Spain's membership in NATO in the 1986 referendum over valid votes in the municipality of the respondent. The dependent variables take the value missing if the respondent is not planning to vote, does not know what to vote, wants to vote for a party not in the list provided by CIS, or plans to cast an invalid or blank vote. The coefficients are obtained estimating Model 1, when *Support NATO 1986 Referendum* is multiplied by survey wave dummies. We include municipality and survey fixed effects, the interaction between survey wave dummies and the abstention rate in the 1986 referendum in the municipality of the respondent, and individual controls. The omitted category is the dummy for whether the interview took place in February 2022 (before the Russian invasion took place), represented by the red vertical line. Sample of respondents interviewed in the CIS Barometer Surveys conducted from February 2021 to July 2023. Regression estimated by OLS using probability weights.

Figure A.6: Event-study of the change in voting results in national elections at the municipal level for the Popular Party according to support to NATO in 1986 referendum



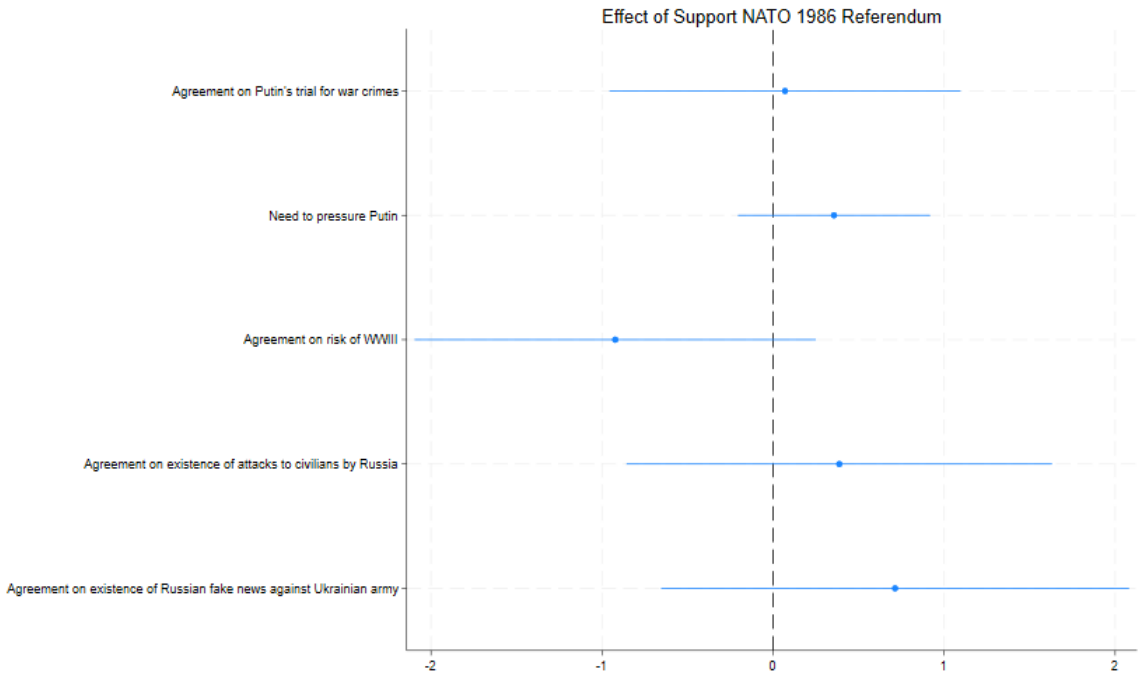
Notes: The figure reports the event-study coefficients and 90% confidence interval of the effect of *Support NATO 1986 Referendum* on the vote share at the municipal level for the Popular Party at the national elections. *Support NATO 1986 Referendum*: share of votes in favor of Spain's membership in NATO in the 1986 referendum over valid votes at the municipal level. The coefficients are obtained by estimating the coefficients of *Support NATO 1986 Referendum* multiplied by election dummies. We include municipality and election fixed effects, the interaction between election dummies, and the abstention rate in the 1986 referendum at the municipal level. The omitted category is the dummy for the election results in November 2019 (the last national election before the Russian invasion took place), represented by the red vertical line. Sample of municipalities in Spain that never changed geography for every national election of December 2015 to July 2023. Regression estimated by OLS. Standard errors clustered at the province-election level.

Figure A.7: NATO support and voting intentions for the Popular Party: robustness using time sample



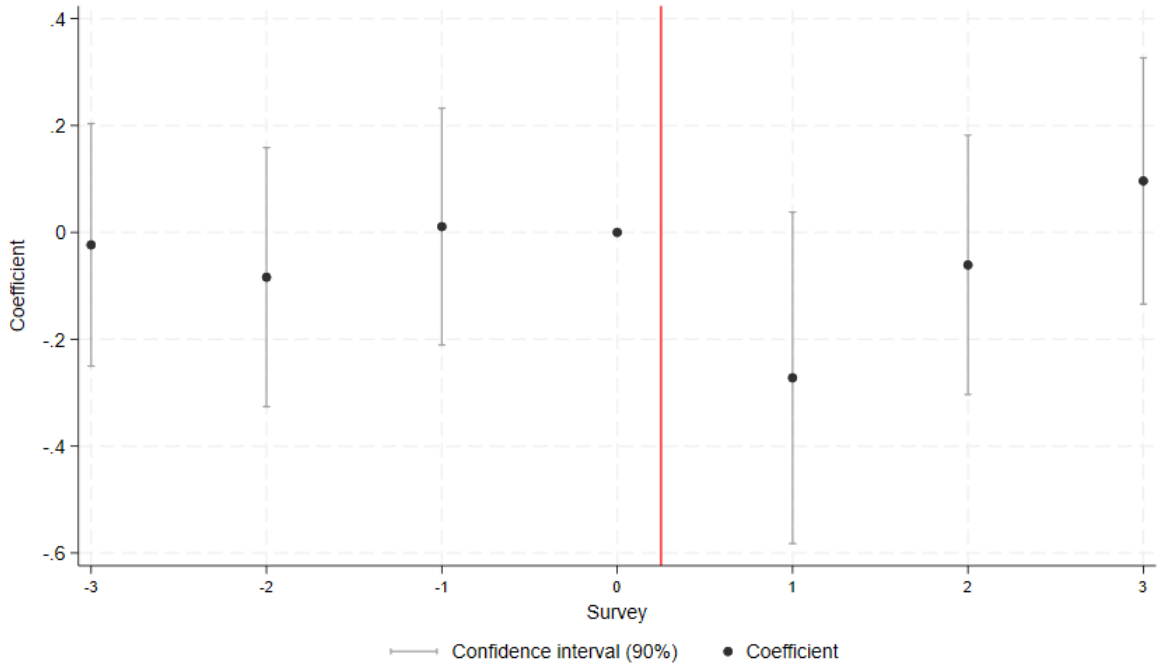
Notes: The figure reports the differences-in-differences coefficients and 90% confidence interval of the effect of the interaction between *Support NATO 1986 Referendum Post-War* on the intention to vote for the Popular Party at the next national elections. Each point estimates this effect using observations from a different number of pre- and post-treatment survey waves. *Support NATO 1986 Referendum*: share of votes in favor of Spain's membership in NATO in the 1986 referendum over valid votes in the municipality of the respondent. *Post-War*: dummy variable taking value 1 if the respondent was interviewed in a survey wave after February 2022 (when the Russian invasion took place). The dependent variable takes the value missing if the respondent is not planning to vote, does not know what to vote, wants to vote for a party not in the list provided by CIS, or plans to cast an invalid or blank vote. The coefficients are obtained estimating Model 1. We include municipality and survey wave fixed effects, the interaction between survey wave dummies and the abstention rate in the 1986 referendum in the municipality of the respondent, and individual controls. Sample of respondents interviewed in the CIS Barometer Surveys. Regression estimated by OLS using probability weights. Standard errors clustered at the province-survey wave level.

Figure A.8: NATO support and opinions on war and NATO: additional results



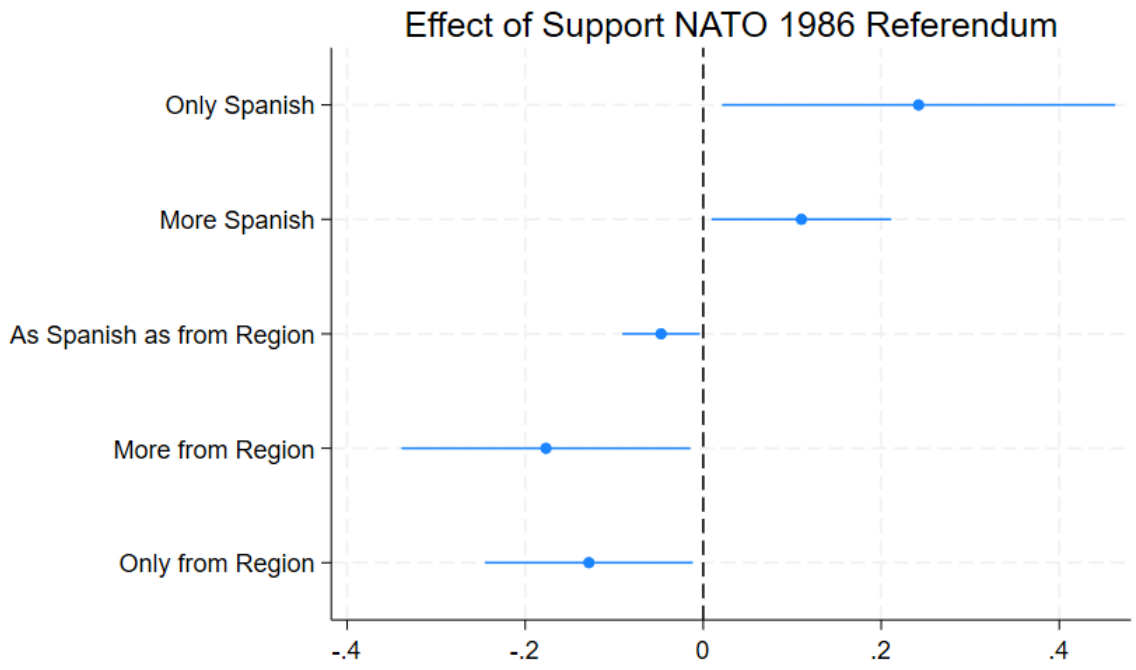
Notes: The figure reports the coefficients and 90% confidence interval of the effect of *Support NATO 1986 Referendum* on each separate dependent variable. *Support NATO 1986 Referendum*: share of votes in favor of Spain's membership in NATO in the 1986 referendum over valid votes in the municipality of the respondent. Description of the dependent variables in Appendix A.1. All dependent variables are standardized. Estimation of Model 2. We include province and survey fixed effects, the abstention rate in the 1986 referendum in the municipality of the respondent, individual controls, the vote share for PSOE, AP, and PCE in the 1982 national elections in the municipality of the respondent, and the distance to the closest US military basis. Sample of respondents interviewed in the CIS Surveys after March 2022 (after the Russian invasion took place). Regression estimated by OLS using probability weights. Standard errors clustered at the province-survey wave level.

Figure A.9: Event-study of the change in intentions to vote for the Popular Party according to NATO support in past wars



Notes: The figure reports the event-study coefficients and 90% confidence interval of the effect of *Support NATO 1986 Referendum* on the intention to vote for the Popular Party at the next national elections. *Support NATO 1986 Referendum*: share of votes in favor of Spain's membership in NATO in the 1986 referendum over valid votes in the municipality of the respondent. The dependent variable takes the value missing if the respondent is not planning to vote, does not know what to vote, wants to vote for a party not in the list provided by CIS, or plans to cast an invalid or blank vote. The coefficients are obtained estimating Model 1, when *Support NATO 1986 Referendum* is multiplied by dummies indicating whether the survey was from four months before to three months after the occurrence of a past war. We consider the following wars: the First Gulf War (beginning in August 1990), the Yugoslav Wars (March 1991), the Bosnia War (April 1992), the Kosovo War (February 1998), the Afghanistan War (December 2001), the Second Gulf War (March 2003), the First Libya Civil War (February 2011), the Syria Civil War (March 2011), and the Second Libya Civil War (May 2014) We include municipality and survey fixed effects, the interaction between survey wave dummies and the abstention rate in the 1986 referendum in the municipality of the respondent, and individual controls. The omitted category is the dummy for whether the interview took place in months before any war, represented by the red vertical line. Sample of respondents interviewed in the CIS Barometer Surveys conducted four months before to three months after the occurrence of a past war. Regression estimated by OLS using probability weights. Standard errors clustered at the province-survey wave level.

Figure A.10: NATO support and self-declared identification: national vs. regional identity marginal effects



Notes: The figure reports the coefficients and 90% confidence interval of the marginal effect of *Support NATO 1986 Referendum* on each separate options of the dependent variable. *Support NATO 1986 Referendum*: share of votes in favor of Spain's membership in NATO in the 1986 referendum over valid votes in the municipality of the respondent. The dependent variable takes value 1 if if respondents self-identify the most with as uniquely Spanish, 2 as more Spanish than from their regions, 3 as Spanish as from their region, 4 as more from their region than Spanish, and 5 as uniquely from their region. Estimation of Model 2. We include province and survey fixed effects, the abstention rate in the 1986 referendum in the municipality of the respondent, individual controls, the vote share for PSOE, AP, and PCE in the 1982 national elections in the municipality of the respondent, and the distance to the closest US military basis. Sample of respondents interviewed in the CIS Surveys after March 2022 (after the Russian invasion took place). Marginal effects obtained after estimating the model by Ordered Probit using probability weights. Standard errors clustered at the province-survey wave level.

A.3 Additional tables

Table A.1: Summary statistics

Name	Type	Scale	Time Period	Average	Average Sample	Average Pre-War	Average Post-War
Agreement with Spanish membership into NATO	Survey	0-1 (dummy)	2/05, 3/07, 12/09, 9/11, 9/13, 9/15, 9/17	.	0.60	.	.
Ukraine-Russia war as one of the main problems of Spain	Survey	0-1 (dummy)	3/22-7/23	.	23.02	.	23.02
COVID-19 as one of the main problems of Spain	Survey	0-1 (dummy)	2/21-7/23	.	0.17	0.37	0.04
Politics as one of the main problems of Spain	Survey	0-1 (dummy)	2/21-7/23	.	0.42	0.39	0.43
Voting intention for PP	Survey	0-1 (dummy)	2/21-7/23	.	0.28	0.22	0.31
Voting intention for PSOE	Survey	0-1 (dummy)	2/21-7/23	.	0.32	0.33	0.32
Voting intention for Podemos, IU, MP or Sumar	Survey	0-1 (dummy)	2/21-7/23	.	0.15	0.16	0.15
Voting intention for Vox	Survey	0-1 (dummy)	2/21-7/23	.	0.11	0.12	0.10
Voting intention for Ciudadanos	Survey	0-1 (dummy)	2/21-7/23	.	0.03	0.06	0.02
Intention to abstain	Survey	0-1 (dummy)	2/21-7/23	.	0.11	0.14	0.10
Agreement on existence of war crimes in invasion	Survey	0-1 (dummy)	03/22-04/22	.	0.97	.	0.97
Agreement on use of weapons of mass destruction by Russia	Survey	0-1 (dummy)	03/22-04/22	.	0.66	.	0.66
Agreement on risk of Russian invasion of East Europe	Survey	0-1 (dummy)	03/22-09/22	.	0.78	.	0.78
Agreement on risk of nuclear war due to invasion	Survey	0-1 (dummy)	03/22	.	0.55	.	0.55
Need to sanction Russia	Survey	0-1 (dummy)	03/22-06/22	.	4.37	.	4.37
Need for NATO military intervention in Ukraine	Survey	0-1 (dummy)	03/22-06/22	.	3.08	.	3.08
Need for NATO to military help to Ukraine	Survey	0-1 (dummy)	03/22-06/22	.	3.78	.	3.78
Need to help Ukrainians refugees	Survey	0-1 (dummy)	03/22-06/22	.	4.54	.	4.54
Need for humanitarian help to Ukraine	Survey	0-1 (dummy)	03/22-06/22	.	4.55	.	4.55
Possibility for Ukraine to accession to UE	Survey	0-1 (dummy)	03/22, 05/22 - 07/22	.	4.08	.	4.08
Right for Ukraine to accession to NATO	Survey	0-1 (dummy)	03/22-04/22	.	4.16	.	4.16
Sympathy for Russians	Survey	0-1 (dummy)	03/22-04/22	.	4.49	.	4.49
Sympathy for Ukrainians	Survey	0-1 (dummy)	03/22-04/22	.	7.29	.	7.29
Identification with city	Survey	0-1 (dummy)	09/22	.	0.01	.	0.01
Identification with Autonomous Community	Survey	0-1 (dummy)	09/22	.	0.01	.	0.01
Identification with Spain	Survey	0-1 (dummy)	09/22	.	0.01	.	0.01
Identification with Europe	Survey	0-1 (dummy)	09/22	.	0.00	.	0.00
Identification with humanity	Survey	0-1 (dummy)	09/22	.	0.01	.	0.01
Support NATO 1986 Referendum	Electoral	0-1 (continuous)	12/19-11/23	.52	0.53	0.53	0.53
Abstention 1986 Referendum	Electoral	0-1 (continuous)	12/19-11/23	.43	0.40	0.40	0.40
Share PSOE 1982	Electoral	0-1 (continuous)	12/19-11/23	.37	0.48	0.48	0.48
Share AP 1982	Electoral	0-1 (continuous)	12/19-11/23	.29	0.26	0.26	0.26
Share PCE 1982	Electoral	0-1 (continuous)	12/19-11/23	.02	0.04	0.04	0.04
Distance to nearest military base	Geographic	0-∞ (continuous)	.	205.58	253.02	252.49	253.35
Political speechess about NATO	Plenary Sessions	0-1 (dummy)	02/21-08/23	.	0.01	0.00	0.01
Political speeches about Russia	Plenary Sessions	0-1 (dummy)	02/21-08/23	.	0.01	0.00	0.02
Political speeches about Ukraine	Plenary Sessions	0-1 (dummy)	02/21-08/23	.	0.02	0.00	0.04
Political speeches about USA	Plenary Sessions	0-1 (dummy)	02/21-08/23	.	0.02	0.02	0.02
Political speeches about war	Plenary Sessions	0-1 (dummy)	02/21-08/23	.	0.03	0.01	0.05
Sentiment of political speeches about NATO	Plenary Sessions	-1,0,-1	02/21-08/23	.	0.01	0.10	-0.01
Sentiment of political speeches about Russia	Plenary Sessions	-1,0,-1	02/21-08/23	.	-0.02	0.09	-0.03
Sentiment of political speeches about Ukraine	Plenary Sessions	-1,0,-1	02/21-08/23	.	0.02	0.00	0.02
Sentiment of political speeches about USA	Plenary Sessions	-1,0,-1	02/21-08/23	.	0.04	0.03	0.04
Sentiment of political speeches about war	Plenary Sessions	-1,0,-1	02/21-08/23	.	0.03	-0.05	0.04

Notes: Type: type of variable. *Scale*: scale of the values of the variable. *Time Period*: period in which a time-varying variable is measured. *Average*: for variables that are not coming from a survey it reports the average of the variable for the entire Spain. *Average sample*: average of the variable in the period between February 2021 and July 2023. For the variables measured before February 2021 *Average sample* is the average in the observed sample. *Average Pre-War*: average of the variable before February 24th 2022. *Average Pre-War*: average of the variable in the period after February 24th 2022.

Table A.2: NATO support and voting intentions in the short run

Panel A: *Pre-post war*

	PP	PSOE	Podemos/IU/MP	Ciudadanos	Vox	Abstention
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Post-War	0.0581***	-0.00221	-0.0299***	-0.0152***	-0.0129*	-0.0142**
	(0.00739)	(0.0107)	(0.00634)	(0.00324)	(0.00679)	(0.00540)
Number of Observations	5048	5048	5048	5048	5048	5737
R-Squared	0.095	0.060	0.058	0.049	0.078	0.050

Panel B: *Pre-post war and historic NATO support*

	PP	PSOE	Podemos/IU/MP	Ciudadanos	Vox	Abstention
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Post-War	0.0579***	-0.00210	-0.0299***	-0.0151***	-0.0130*	-0.0141***
	(0.00693)	(0.0104)	(0.00631)	(0.00323)	(0.00677)	(0.00501)
Support NATO 1986 Referendum (demeaned) x Post-War	0.161**	-0.0699	0.00331	-0.0524	0.0653	-0.107*
	(0.0627)	(0.0936)	(0.0498)	(0.0358)	(0.0599)	(0.0587)
Number of Observations	5048	5048	5048	5048	5048	5737
R-Squared	0.096	0.060	0.058	0.049	0.078	0.050

Notes: Each dependent variable represents the intention to vote for the following parties at the next national elections: Popular Party (PP), Socialist Party (PSOE), *Podemos*, *Izquierda Unida*, *Más Páis* or *Sumar* (Podemos/IU/MP/+), *Ciudadanos*, *Vox*, or plan to abstain (*Abstention*). *Support NATO 1986 Referendum*: share of votes in favor of Spain's membership in NATO in the 1986 referendum over valid votes in the municipality of the respondent. *Post-War*: dummy variable taking value 1 if the respondent was interviewed in a survey wave after February 2022 (when the Russian invasion took place). The dependent variables take the value missing if the respondent is not planning to vote, does not know what to vote, wants to vote for a party not in the list provided by CIS, or plans to cast an invalid or blank vote. Panel A estimates difference before and after the Russian invasion of Ukraine. Panel B estimates difference before and after the Russian invasion of Ukraine and its heterogeneity with respect to *Support NATO 1986 Referendum*. We include municipality fixed effects. Sample of respondents interviewed in the CIS Barometer Surveys conducted from February 2022 before the Russian invasion took place) to March 2022. Regression estimated by OLS using probability weights. Standard errors clustered at the province-survey wave level.

Table A.3: NATO support and voting results in national elections at municipal level

	PP	PSOE	Podemos/IU/MP/+	Vox	Abstention
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Support NATO 1986 Referendum x Post-War	0.0650***	-0.0974***	-0.0814**	0.0423**	-0.0389*
	(0.0198)	(0.0187)	(0.0320)	(0.0179)	(0.0231)
Number of Observations	8965	8965	8965	8965	8965
R-Squared	0.934	0.915	0.850	0.807	0.793

Notes: Each dependent variable represents the vote share at the municipal level for the following parties at the national elections: Popular Party (PP), Socialist Party (PSOE), *Podemos*, *Izquierda Unida*, *Más Páis* or *Sumar* (Podemos/IU/MP/+), *Ciudadanos*, *Vox*, or plan to abstain (*Abstention*). *Support NATO 1986 Referendum*: share of votes in favor of Spain's membership in NATO in the 1986 referendum at the municipal level. *Post-War*: dummy variable taking value 1 if the election took place after February 2022 (when the Russian invasion took place). Estimation of Model 3. We include municipality and election fixed effects, the interaction between election dummies and the abstention rate in the 1986 referendum at the municipal levels. Sample of municipalities in Spain that never changed geography for every national election of December 2015 to July 2023. Regression estimated by OLS. Standard errors clustered at the province-election level.

Table A.4: NATO support and voting intentions: additional results

	Other Parties	Regionalist Right	Regionalist Left	Non-regionalist
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Support NATO 1986 Referendum x Post-War	0.116***	0.0764***	0.0517*	-0.0119
	(0.0360)	(0.0250)	(0.0280)	(0.0109)
Number of Observations	71506	71506	71506	71506
R-Squared	0.186	0.152	0.136	0.019

Notes: Each dependent variable represents the intention to vote for the following parties at the next national elections: *Other Parties* (any party that is not PP, PSOE, *Podemos*, *Izquierda Unida* or *Más Páis*, *Vox*, *Ciudadanos*), *Regionalist Right* (*Junts per Catalunya*, *Euzko Alderdi Jeltzalea-Partido Nacionalista Vasco*, *Coalición Canaria*, *Navarra Suma*, *Partido Regionalista de Cantabria*, or *Teruel Existe*), *Regionalist Left* (*Esquerra Republicana de Catalunya*, *Candidatura de Unidad Popular*, *Més Compromís*, *Bloque Nacionalista Galego*, or *Euskal Herria Bildu*), *Non-regionalist* (any other party that it is not regionalist). *Support NATO 1986 Referendum*: share of votes in favor of Spain's membership in NATO in the 1986 referendum over valid votes in the municipality of the respondent. *Post-war*: dummy variable taking value 1 if the respondent was interviewed in a survey wave after February 2022 (when the Russian invasion took place). The dependent variables take the value missing if the respondent is not planning to vote, does not know what to vote, wants to vote for a party not in the list provided by CIS, or plans to cast an invalid or blank vote. Estimation of Model 1. We include municipality and survey fixed effects, the interaction between survey wave dummies and the abstention rate in the 1986 referendum in the municipality of the respondent, and individual controls. Sample of respondents interviewed in the CIS Barometer Surveys conducted from February 2021 to July 2023. Regression estimated by OLS using probability weights. Standard errors clustered at the province-survey wave level.

Table A.5: NATO support and partisan attitudes

	Support NATO 1986 Referendum
	(1)
Share PSOE 1982 Elections	0.394**
	(0.172)
Share AP 1982 Elections	0.0227
	(0.173)
Share UCD 1982 Elections	0.0856
	(0.173)
Share PCE 1982 Elections	-0.505***
	(0.176)
Share CiU 1982 Elections	-0.160
	(0.173)
Share CDS 1982 Elections	0.0839
	(0.176)
Share PNV 1982 Elections	-0.174
	(0.175)
Share HB 1982 Elections	-0.556***
	(0.176)
Share ERC 1982 Elections	-0.139
	(0.189)
Share FN 1982 Elections	0.289
	(0.197)
Number of Observations	7853
R-Squared	0.572

Notes: The dependent variable represents the share of votes in favor of Spain's membership in NATO in the 1986 referendum over valid votes at the municipality level (*Support NATO 1986 Referendum*). The independent variables are the share of votes at the Congress over valid votes at the municipality level for every party presented at the 1982 national elections. We report the coefficients for the ten parties with the biggest national shares: Socialist Party (PSOE), *Alianza Popular* (AP), *Union de Centro Democratico* (UCD), *Convergència*

Table A.6: NATO support and voting intentions for the Popular Party: robustness to other partisan attitudes

	Voting intentions: PP				
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Support NATO 1986 Referendum x Post-War	0.230***	0.159**	0.237***	0.241***	0.140***
	(0.0282)	(0.0632)	(0.0320)	(0.0389)	(0.0486)
Number of Observations	69375	71506	71506	71506	71506
R-Squared	0.263	0.081	0.081	0.081	0.081
Wave FE	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
Municipality FE	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
Individual Controls	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
Turnout 1986 Referendum x Wave FE	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
Individual ideology	YES	NO	NO	NO	NO
Vote AP 1982 x Wave FE	NO	YES	NO	NO	NO
Vote PSOE 1982 x Wave FE	NO	YES	NO	NO	NO
Vote PCE 1982 x Wave FE	NO	YES	NO	NO	NO
Distance US Bases x Wave FE	NO	NO	YES	NO	NO
Vote PP 2019/11 x Wave FE	NO	NO	NO	YES	NO
Regionalist CCAA x Wave FE	NO	NO	NO	NO	YES

Notes: The dependent variable represents the intention to vote for the Popular Party (PP) at the next national elections. *Support NATO 1986 Referendum*: share of votes in favor of Spain's membership in NATO in the 1986 referendum over valid votes in the municipality of the respondent. *Post-War*: dummy variable taking value 1 if the respondent was interviewed in a survey wave after February 2022 (when the Russian invasion took place). The dependent variables take the value missing if the respondent is not planning to vote, does not know what to vote, wants to vote for a party not in the list provided by CIS, or plans to cast an invalid or blank vote. We consider how the differences-in-differences estimates vary when including municipality fixed effects (FEs), survey wave FEs, individual ideology control taking values from 1 (when respondents self-identify as right-wing) to 10 (as left-wing), and the interaction between survey wave dummies with the abstention rate in the 1986 referendum in the municipality of the respondent, the vote share of *Alianza Popular* (AP), Socialist Party (PSOE) or the Communist Party (PCE) in the 1982 national elections in the municipality of the respondent, the distance to the closest US military base of the municipality of the respondent, the vote share of PP at the November 2019 national elections in the municipality of the respondent, and a dummy indicating whether the Autonomous Community of the respondent has a significant fraction of regionalist parties and high vote share against the NATO membership (those are Catalonia, Basque Country, Navarre and the Canary Islands). We include individual controls in all specifications. Sample of respondents interviewed in the CIS Barometer Surveys conducted from February 2021 to July 2023. Regression estimated by OLS using probability weights. Standard errors clustered at the province-survey wave level.

Table A.7: NATO support and voting intentions for the Popular Party: robustness to different inference

	Voting intentions: PP					
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Support NATO 1986 Referendum x Post-War	0.285***	0.285***	0.285***	0.285***	0.285***	0.285***
	(0.0291)	(0.0287)	(0.0354)	(0.0292)	(0.0311)	(0.0305)
Number of Observations	71506	71506	71506	71506	71506	71506
R-Squared	0.076	0.076	0.076	0.076	0.076	0.076
Cluster s.e	Rob	Province x survey wave	Survey wave	City x survey wave	City	CCAA x survey wave

Notes: The dependent variable represents the intention to vote for the Popular Party (PP) at the next national elections. *Support NATO 1986 Referendum*: share of votes in favor of Spain's membership in NATO in the 1986 referendum over valid votes in the municipality of the respondent. *Post-War*: dummy variable taking value 1 if the respondent was interviewed in a survey wave after February 2022 (when the Russian invasion took place). The dependent variables take the value missing if the respondent is not planning to vote, does not know what to vote, wants to vote for a party not in the list provided by CIS, or plans to cast an invalid or blank vote. Estimation of Model 1. We include municipality and survey wave fixed effects, the interaction between survey wave dummies and the abstention rate in the 1986 referendum in the municipality of the respondent, and individual controls. Sample of respondents interviewed in the CIS Barometer Surveys conducted from February 2021 to July 2023. Regression estimated by OLS using probability weights. Robust standard errors in column (1). Standard errors clustered at the province-survey wave, survey wave, municipalities-survey wave, municipality, and Autonomous Communities (*CCAA*)-survey wave levels in the other columns.

Table A.8: NATO support and past wars: robustness to definitions of NATO intervention

	Voting intentions: PP	
	(1)	(2)
Support NATO 1986 Referendum x Post-Past Wars	-0.0958	-0.159*
	(0.106)	(0.0936)
Support NATO 1986 Referendum x Post-Past Wars x NATO intervention (NATO website)	-0.000556	
	(0.000720)	
Support NATO 1986 Referendum x Post-Past Wars x NATO intervention (Wikipedia)		0.000314
		(0.000806)
Number of Observations	25817	25817
R-Squared	0.132	0.132

Notes: Voting intention PP: dummy variable taking value 1 if the respondent intends to vote at the next national elections for the Popular Party (PP). The dependent variables takes the value missing if the respondent is not planning to vote, does not know what to vote, wants to vote for a party not in the list provided by CIS, or plans to cast an invalid or blank vote. *Support NATO 1986 Referendum*: share of votes in favor of Spain's membership in NATO in the 1986 referendum over valid votes in the municipality of the respondent. *Post-Past Wars*: dummy variable taking value 1 if the respondent was interviewed in a survey wave three months after the beginning of one of the following wars: the First Gulf War (beginning in August 1990), the Yugoslav Wars (March 1991), the Bosnia War (April 1992), the Kosovo War (February 1998), the Afghanistan War (December 2001), the Second Gulf War (March 2003), the First Libya Civil War (February 2011), the Syria Civil War (March 2011), and the Second Libya Civil War (May 2014). *Post-Past Wars* takes value 0 if the respondent was interviewed in a survey wave three months before the beginning of the wars considered. *NATO intervention:* count of the word "NATO" in the NATO website page or Wikipedia page of each war analysed. *NATO intervention* has been normalized dividing it by the number of words found for the war with the highest number of words. Estimation of Model 1 where *Post-Past Wars* is used instead of *Post-War*, augmented by the interaction between *Support NATO 1986 Referendum*, *Post-Past Wars* and *NATO intervention*. We include we include municipality and survey fixed effects, the interaction between survey wave dummies and the abstention rate in the 1986 referendum in the municipality of the respondent, and individual controls (without civil status and educational attainments). Sample of respondents interviewed in the CIS Barometer Surveys conducted between June 1990 and July 2014. Standard errors clustered at the province-survey wave level in all columns. *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

Table A.9: NATO support and voting intentions for the Popular Party: the role of supranational integration

	Voting intentions: PP	
	(1)	(2)
Support NATO 1986 Referendum x Post-War	0.293***	
	(0.0542)	
Support NATO 1986 Referendum (demeaned) x Post-War		0.285***
		(0.0547)
Support 2005 Referendum (demeaned) x Post-War		-0.00943
		(0.0743)
Support NATO 1986 Ref. (dem.) x Support EU 2005 Ref. (dem.) x Post-War		0.332
		(0.266)
Number of Observations	71506	71506
R-Squared	0.081	0.080
Referendum EU Yes-Abst. x Wave FE	YES	NO

Notes: The dependent variable represents the intention to vote for the Popular Party (PP) at the next national elections. *Support NATO 1986 Referendum*: share of votes in favor of Spain's membership in NATO in the 1986 referendum over valid votes in the municipality of the respondent. *Support Eu 2005 Referendum*: share of votes in favor of the ratification of the EU Constitution in the 2005 referendum over valid votes in the municipality of the respondent. *Post-War*: dummy variable taking value 1 if the respondent was interviewed in a survey wave after February 2022 (when the Russian invasion took place). The dependent variables take the value missing if the respondent is not planning to vote, does not know what to vote, wants to vote for a party not in the list provided by CIS, or plans to cast an invalid or blank vote. Estimation of Model 1. We include municipality and survey fixed effects, the interaction between survey wave dummies and the abstention rate in the 1986 referendum in the municipality of the respondent, and individual controls. Column (1), additionally includes the interaction between survey wave dummies with *Support Eu 2005 Referendum* and the abstention rate in the 2005 referendum in the municipality of the respondent. Sample of respondents interviewed in the CIS Barometer Surveys conducted from February 2021 to July 2023. Regression estimated by OLS using probability weights. Standard errors clustered at the province-survey wave level.

Table A.10: NATO support and self-declared identification: national vs. regional identity estimates

	Regional vs national identity	
	(1)	(2)
Support NATO 1986 Referendum	-1.058*	-1.239*
	(0.565)	(0.685)
Number of Observations	3533	3533
R-Squared	0.165	
Estimation	OLS	O-Probit

Notes: The dependent variable takes value 1 if if respondents self-identify the most with as uniquely Spanish, 2 as more Spanish than from their regions, 3 as Spanish as from their region, 4 as more from their region than Spanish, and 5 as uniquely from their region. *Support NATO 1986 Referendum*: share of votes in favor of Spain's membership in NATO in the 1986 referendum over valid votes in the municipality of the respondent. Estimation of Model 2. We include province and survey fixed effects, the abstention rate in the 1986 referendum in the municipality of the respondent, individual controls, the vote share for PSOE, AP, and PCE in the 1982 national elections in the municipality of the respondent, and the distance to the closest US military basis. Sample of respondents interviewed in the CIS Barometer Surveys conducted from March 2022 (after the Russian invasion took place) to July 2023. Regression estimated by OLS using probability weights in column (1) and by Ordered Probit with probability weights in column (2). Standard errors clustered at the province-survey wave level. *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

A.4 Incumbency effect

A striking fact of the negative effect of the Russian invasion in Ukraine according to NATO support on voting intentions for PSOE (Table 4 column 1) is that PSOE was the party of Pedro Sánchez, the president of the government at the time of the war. This result contrasts with the previous result in the literature about a positive incumbency effect of wars (Bueno de Mesquita et al., 2004). One possibility is that in the Spanish case, the incumbency effect is negative and this effect is the main mechanism behind our results, irrespective of the role of Russia and NATO. We discard this possibility in Table A.11 in three different ways. First, using the same specification used in Section 6.1 for the estimation of the impact of past wars, we show that voting intentions for the party that was the incumbent in the national government were not explained during previous wars by the historic NATO support (column 1). Second, we collect data about the trust in Pedro Sánchez for CIS surveys before and after the Russia-Ukraine conflict. Estimating Model 1, we find that the differences-in-differences coefficient of the Russia-Ukraine war according to NATO support is not statistically significant (column 2). Third, in a few waves after the Russian invasion of Ukraine, CIS asked whether respondents agreed with the position that the government was conducting during the war. We do not find that differences in this answer for respondents from cities with different NATO support after the war (column 3).

Table A.11: NATO support and incumbency

	Voting intention incumbent	Trust president	Agreement government
	(1)	(2)	(3)
Support NATO 1986 Referendum x Post-Past Wars	0.0226		
	(0.145)		
Support NATO 1986 Referendum x Post-War		-0.0441	
		(0.0612)	
Support NATO 1986 Referendum			0.431
			(0.562)
Number of Observations	25817	101341	6776
R-Squared	0.086	0.033	0.043
Sample	Jun90-Jul14	Feb21-Jul23	Mar22-Apr22
Wave FE	YES	YES	YES
Municipality FE	YES	YES	NO
Province FE	NO	NO	YES
Turnout 1986 Referendum	NO	NO	YES
Turnout 1986 Referendum x Wave FE	YES	YES	NO
Individual Controls	YES	YES	YES
Vote 1982	NO	NO	YES
Distance US Bases	NO	NO	YES

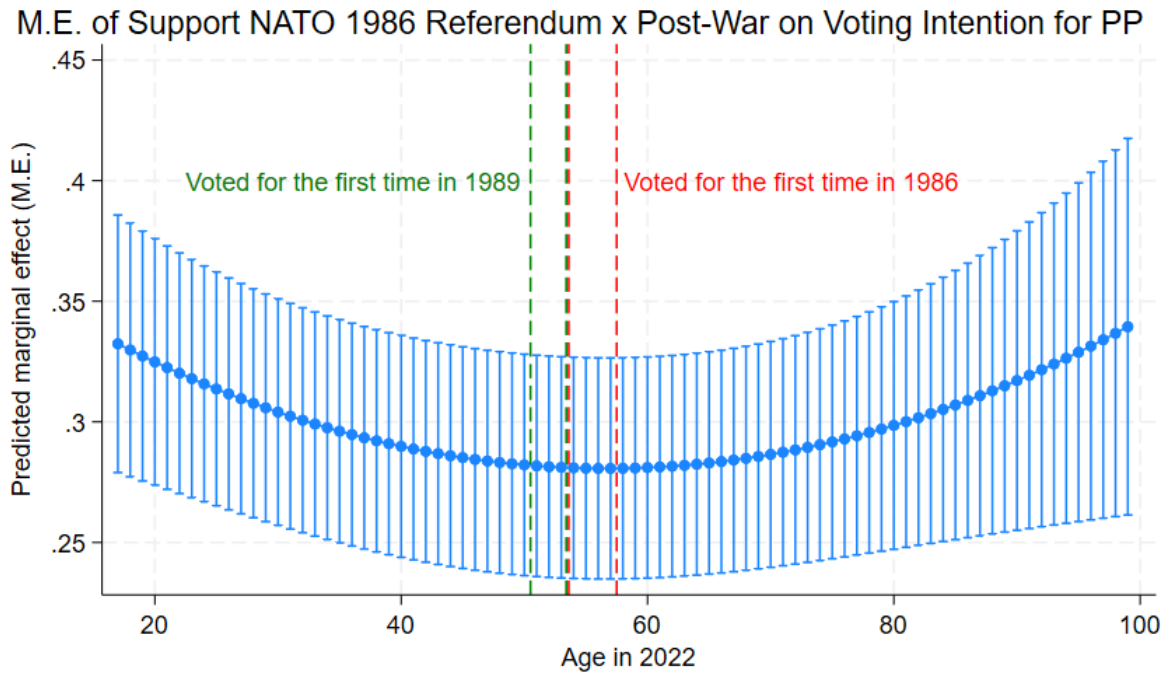
Notes: Voting intention incumbent: dummy variable taking value 1 if the respondent intends to vote at the next national elections for the party of the person that was the president of the government at that time. *Voting intention incumbent* takes the value missing if the respondent is not planning to vote, does not know what to vote, wants to vote for a party not in the list provided by CIS, or plans to cast an invalid or blank vote. *Trust president*: variable taking values from 1 to 4 if the respondent has no trust in the president of the national government Pedro Sánchez (1) or a lot of trust (4). *Agreement government*: variable taking values from 1 to 5 if the respondent disagrees with the position held by the Spanish government on the Russian invasion of Ukraine (1) or strongly agrees (5). *Support NATO 1986 Referendum*: share of votes in favor of Spain's membership in NATO in the 1986 referendum over valid votes in the municipality of the respondent. *Post-Past Wars*: dummy variable taking value 1 if the respondent was interviewed in a survey wave three months after the beginning of one of the following wars: the First Gulf War (beginning in August 1990), the Yugoslav Wars (March 1991), the Bosnia War (April 1992), the Kosovo War (February 1998), the Afghanistan War (December 2001), the Second Gulf War (March 2003), the First Libya Civil War (February 2011), the Syria Civil War (March 2011), and the Second Libya Civil War (May 2014). *Post-Past Wars* takes value 0 if the respondent was interviewed in a survey wave one year before the beginning of the wars considered. *Post-War*: dummy variable taking value 1 if the respondent was interviewed in a survey wave after February 2022 (when the Russian invasion took place). In column (1), estimation of Model 1 where *Post-Past Wars* is used instead of *Post-War*. In columns (1), we include we include municipality and survey fixed effects, the interaction between survey wave dummies and the abstention rate in the 1986 referendum in the municipality of the respondent, and individual controls (without civil status and educational attainments). In column (2), estimation of Model 1. In column (2), we include we include municipality and survey fixed effects, the interaction between survey wave dummies and the abstention rate in the 1986 referendum in the municipality of the respondent, and individual controls. In column (3), estimation of Model 2. In column (3), we include we include province and survey fixed effects, the abstention rate in the 1986 referendum in the municipality of the respondent, individual controls, the vote share for PSOE, AP, and PCE in the 1982 national elections in the municipality of the respondent, and the distance to the closest US military basis. Sample of respondents interviewed in the CIS Barometer Surveys conducted in the days specified in *Sample*. Standard errors clustered at the province-survey wave level in all columns. *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

A.5 Heterogeneity of changing in voting intentions by age

To provide additional evidence that the reaction of voters to the Russian invasion is partly motivated by the activation of old memories about the NATO role we study the heterogeneity of our main result found in Section 5.2 to age of the respondents. We agnostically study this relationship, without imposing any structure of the relationship between age and the marginal effect of past NATO support and voting intentions to PP. To do this, we augment the differences-in-differences Model 1, by also considering also the interaction between the historic NATO support in the referendum and being interviewed in the post-war period and the age that the current respondent had in 2022 and with the age squared. We report the predicted marginal effects of the differences-in-difference coefficient according to different ages of the respondent in Figure A.11.[37]

[37]The estimation table for generating this figure is reported in Table A.12. As our estimation of the differences-in-differences spans observations from 2021 to 2023, we homogenize the age variable by considering the age of the respondent in 2022, at the time of the Russian invasion of Ukraine

Figure A.11: Heterogeneity of the change in intentions to vote for the Popular Party according to NATO support with respect to age



Notes: The figures reports the marginal effect and 90% confidence interval of the effect of *Support NATO 1986 Referendum* on the intention to vote for the Popular Party at the next national elections. *Support NATO 1986 Referendum*: share of votes in favor of Spain's membership in NATO in the 1986 referendum over valid votes in the municipality of the respondent. The dependent variable takes the value missing if the respondent is not planning to vote, does not know what to vote, wants to vote for a party not in the list provided by CIS, or plans to cast an invalid or blank vote. The coefficients are obtained estimating Model 1, when in addition we also control for the interaction between *Support NATO 1986 Referendum x Post-War* and the age that the current respondent had in 1986 and with the age squared. We include municipality and survey fixed effects, the interaction between survey wave dummies and the abstention rate in the 2022 referendum in the municipality of the respondent, and individual controls (instead of the age of the respondent we control for its age in the 2022). Green and red lines represents respondents that could have voted for the first time in the 1989 and 1986 national elections, respectively. Sample of respondents interviewed in the CIS Barometer Surveys conducted from February 2021 to July 2023. Regression estimated by OLS using probability weights. Standard errors clustered at the province-survey wave level.

From this figure, we can derive that the relationship between the differences-in-differences effect of the historic NATO support and age is U-shaped. Old people are the respondents in

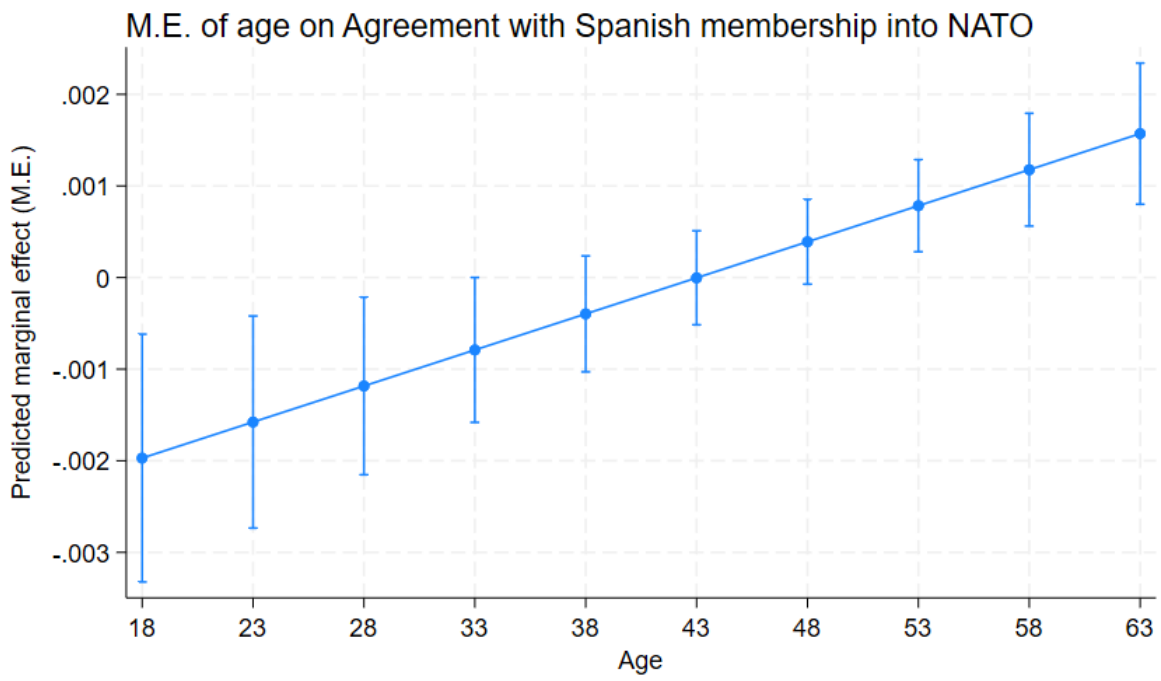
which today the historic NATO support generated a stronger reaction in voting intentions toward PP after the Russian invasion of Ukraine. This is potentially driven by two effects. First, already before the Russian invasion, there exists a life-cycle profile in which old people tend to be more supportive of NATO in Spain than younger people (see Table A.12 and Figure A.12). Second, older individuals are the ones that were exposed for longer to the Cold War. As predicted by the first interpretation, the estimate of the differences-in-differences marginal effect of the historic NATO support decreases with age. However, this decrease is not monotonic, providing evidence against the first interpretation and in favor of the second. The effect reached a minimum for people who in 2022 were 57 years old, and then increased again for younger individuals (even if it never bounced back to the level of the oldest Spanish population).

Table A.12: Age profile of NATO support and voting intentions

	Voting intention PP	Agreement with Spanish membership into NATO
	(1)	(2)
Support NATO 1986 Referendum x Post-War	0.359***	
	(0.0428)	
Age in 2022	0.00273***	
	(0.000193)	
Support NATO 1986 Referendum x Post-War x Age in 2022	-0.00394***	
	(0.00143)	
Support NATO 1986 Referendum x Post-War x Age in 2022 squared	0.0000342**	
	(0.0000142)	
Age		-0.00339***
		(0.00126)
Age squared		0.0000394***
		(0.0000127)
Number of Observations	99131	13643
R-Squared	0.083	0.043
Wave FE	YES	YES
Municipality FE	YES	NO
Province FE	NO	YES
Turnout 1986 Referendum x Wave FE	YES	NO
Individual Controls	YES	NO

Notes: Voting intention PP: dummy variable taking value 1 if the respondent intends to vote at the next national elections for the Popular Party (PP). *Voting intention PP* takes the value missing if the respondent is not planning to vote, does not know what to vote, wants to vote for a party not in the list provided by CIS, or plans to cast an invalid or blank vote. *Agreement with Spanish membership into NATO*: dummy variable taking value 1 if the respondent agrees or strongly agrees with the assessment of Spain's membership in NATO and 0 if strongly disagrees, disagrees, or neither agrees nor disagrees. *Support NATO 1986 Referendum*: share of votes in favor of Spain's membership in NATO in the 1986 referendum over valid votes in the municipality of the respondent. *Post-war*: dummy variable taking value 1 if the respondent was interviewed. *Age in 2022*: age of the current respondent in 2022. *Age*: current age of the respondent. *Age squared*: squared value of the current age of the respondent. In column (1), the coefficients are obtained estimating Model 1, when in addition we also control for the interaction between *Support NATO 1986 Referendum x Post-war* and the age that the current respondent had in 2022 and with the age squared. In column (1), we include municipality and survey fixed effects, the interaction between survey wave dummies and the abstention rate in the 1986 referendum in the municipality of the respondent, and individual controls (instead of the age of the respondent we control for its age in the 2022). In column (2), the coefficients are obtained estimating a model that includes the age of the respondent and its square, province and survey fixed effects. Sample of respondents interviewed in the CIS Barometer Surveys conducted from February 2021 to July 2023 in column (1). Sample of respondents interviewed in the CIS National Defense and the Armed Forces Surveys conducted in February 2005, March 2007, December 2009, September 2011, September 2013, September 2015, and September 2017 in column (2). Regression estimated by OLS with probability weights in column (1) and without in column (2). Standard errors clustered at the province-survey wave level in all columns. *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

Figure A.12: Age profile of NATO support in survey data



Notes: The figure reports the marginal effect and 90% confidence interval of the effect of the age of the respondent on *Agreement with Spanish membership into NATO*. *Agreement with Spanish membership into NATO*: dummy variable taking value 1 if the respondent agrees or strongly agrees with the assessment of Spain's membership in NATO and 0 if strongly disagrees, disagrees, or neither agrees nor disagrees. The coefficients are obtained estimating a model 1 that includes the age of the respondent and its square, province and survey fixed effects. Sample of respondents interviewed in the CIS National Defense and the Armed Forces Surveys conducted in February 2005, March 2007, December 2009, September 2011, September 2013, September 2015, and September 2017. Regression estimated by OLS. Standard errors clustered at the province-survey wave level.

Therefore, old memories of past events should be a key mechanism behind our observed results. This is consistent with a large literature posing the impressionable year hypothesis (Krosnick and Alwin, 1989), for which events that happened during young adulthood have long-lasting effects on the formation of beliefs and attitudes, and the first-time voter hypothesis (Daniele et al., 2023), for which the first time an individual vote is a key event in the young adulthood receive for their first time a political information shock. Which past events should then matter for explaining this U-shape relationship? There are two Spanish voting that could have mattered as they are related to NATO and the Cold War.

The first candidate is the 1986 NATO referendum itself,[38] while the second candidate is the 1989 general elections as they happened during the fall of communism, a period in which many communist countries experienced waves of revolutions demanding liberal democracies, and just a couple of days before the fall of the Berlin wall.[39] The result in Figure A.11 suggests that the voting in the NATO referendum was probably the most significant event in the past of respondents to impact their current reaction to the Russian invasion of Ukraine, as the minimum marginal effect is found for people that were in 2022 57 years old and turn out to vote for the very first time in 1986.

[38] As a reminder, this election happened on March 12th, before the 1986 general elections of June 22nd.

[39] National elections were held in Spain on October 29th, while the Berlin wall fell on November 9th.