Democracy and Fascism:
Class, Civil Society and Rational Choice

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Abstract: The origins of fascism continue to be a major concern to social scientists. Since fascism emerged in societies seeking a transition to democracy, the better we understand these failed attempts at democratic transitions, the better we may understand the possibilities for democracy in states emerging from authoritarian and totalitarian regimes in the past decade. Second, the theoretical arguments employed to explain fascism have their analogues in theories of democracy. Three arguments have been advanced to explain both democracy and fascism: class, civil society and rational choice. In the first two interpretations the obverse of one theory is used to explain the opposite case. In the third, the same theory explains fascism and democracy.

Class theorists view democracy as a project of bourgeoisie society and fascism as a reaction to the challenge to bourgeoisie hegemony by the lower class. Societal theorists give pride of place to civil society as the foundation of democracy and as a bulwark against extremism. Fascism arises when civil society is weak and appeals to those in search of social cohesion. Rational choice theorists emphasize the crucial role of rational self-interest, usually calculated as material advantage, as the basis for democratic politics. The rational voter theorem has become the mainstay of rational choice theories of politics. Yet rational self-interest has also been advanced to explain fascism.

This research examines the rise of Fascism in Italy, 1919-1921. The evidence strongly contradicts the class theory of fascism and offers mixed support for the civil society theory. On the other hand, rational choice theory receives powerful support. However, the robustness of rational choice theory in accounting for fascism makes it a weak theory of democracy.
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"Fascism will always be a minority movement. It cannot move beyond the cities."

Mussolini, 1919.

What social and economic conditions foster democracy? Under what circumstances does fascism succeed? Social science theory has long held these questions represent two sides of the same coin: The conditions supporting one are found lacking in the other. For example, just as civil society theorists make a robust civil society crucial to democracy; theorists of fascism emphasize the weakness of civil society. Parallels exist for class and rational choice theories of democracy and fascism. Thus, the theoretical arguments employed to explain fascism have their analogues in theories of democracy. These three theories – class, civil society and rational choice – may explain the rise of Italian fascism, 1919-1921; proper testing requires the construction of adequate measures and hypotheses.

While fascism emerged in many countries and in several forms, the most intensive research remained focused on Weimar Germany as the prime case of the implosion of democracy and the rise of fascism. “[S]cholars have long viewed the Weimar Republic and its collapse as a crucial theoretical testing ground. The disintegration of democracy in inter-war Germany is so central to our understanding of comparative politics and so critical for the history of modern Europe that we should at least be wary of any theory of political development that cannot explain it” (Berman 1997a, 406). By the same logic, however, we must test our understandings in a variety of national and historical settings; otherwise, we risk over-generalizing from a single case.

Analogues in Theories of Fascism and Democracy

Class Theories of Fascism and Democracy

Class interpretations emphasize that democracy and fascism result from different class alliances. Democracy emerged where a strong bourgeoisie opposed landed interests and to some degree successfully
co-opted the working class. Fascism arose where a weak bourgeoisie aligned itself with the landed classes against the working class; the rural sector was crucial in determining the outcome (Sweezy 1942; Neumann 1942; Lipset 1960; Moore 1968; Luebbert 1991; Rueschemeyer, E.H. Stephens and J.D. Stephens 1992; Huber and Stephens 1999). Central to this analysis is the “Red Menace” thesis that fascism was a reaction of classes threatened by socialism (Linz 1976b, 26, 28-9). Rural lower class radicalism provoked an alliance between the rural landlords and the urban bourgeoisie, and this reactive alliance explained Fascism’s initial appeals (Schmidt 1966, 33-44; Corner 1975, 122; Linz 1976b, 60ff; Childers 1983; Lyttelton 1987, 70; Luebbert 1991, 296ff; Elazar 1996).

Civil Society Theories of Fascism and Democracy

Current civil society literature (Fukuyama 1995; Putnam 1993a; Putnam 1998; Putnam 2000) hold that individuals well integrated into a robust civil society consisting of a dense network of secondary, voluntary associations develop impersonal trust essential to democracy. The obverse thesis has long been a staple of interpretations of fascism. If a robust civil society supported social trust and democracy, then a weak civil society facilitated distrust and fascism. Early formulations invoked the “mass society thesis” (Loomis and Beegle 1946; Bendix 1952; Kornhauser 1959; Arendt 1961, 305). Thus fascism drew its supporters from the socially marginal, alienated, isolated or rootless, particularly the newly enfranchised and newly mobilized. Burnham’s (1972) work was an early formulation. Bartolini and Mair (1990, 147-51, 175-81, 283) found where civic organizational density and electoral instability were inversely related during the inter-war period. Critics challenged the supposed weakness of civil society in Weimar Germany countering that a robust civil society divorced from political life might heighten political mobilization, but coupled to low trust and political institutionalization contributed to the collapse of democracy (Hagtvet 1980; Berman 1997a; Berman 1997b, 402).

Rational Choice Theories of Fascism and Democracy

Rational choice theories of democracy emphasize the availability of choices and the voter’s self-interests; material interests comprise a significant component of rational voting as evidenced by the link
between material interests and voting. From Downs (1957, 36) to Dahl (1989, 180-81), the rational voter looms large in democratic theory. Whereas democracy and fascism were frequently contrasted as rational and irrational, more recently rational choice theorists advanced notions of the “rational fascist” voter (Brustein 1991) and the “rational autocrat” (Olson 1993). Olson (1993, 570) assumed both democratic and autocratic leaders and supporters rationally pursue material benefits, that “democratic political leaders are just as self-interested as the stationary bandit and will use any expedient to obtain majority support. Observations of two-party democracies tells us that incumbents like to run on a ‘you-never-had-it-so good’ record.” Brustein (1996, viii) incorporated rational choice to argue that fascism appealed to voter’s “common place and rational factors – namely their material interests” and demonstrated the Nazis gained support by offering voters “the best prospects for a better life” (1996, 181).

Trust also has an important function in rational choice theory with some parallels to civil society theory. Trust develops from repeated games with reciprocity and civic associations may be one site of repeated games. One important concern in both theories is how fragile trust maybe, and once ruptured, how quickly it can be rebuilt. In a low trust, limited repetition game, voting fascist becomes rational. The “rational fascist” challenged the association of rationality and support for democracy because fascist “supporters were no different from average citizens, who usually select a political party or candidate they believe will promote their interests” with the implication that “evil as an outcome may have very logical origins and that evil is not always easily discerned – a chilling prospect” (1996, xii).

**The Context and Nature of Fascism**

While fascism was an immediate response to the economic crisis of the inter-war period, its intellectual and organizational precursors emerged before and during World War I. The large-scale organization of the economy, particularly during war, led to state intervention to organize, discipline, and eventually, co-opt economic rivals into state coordinated, national, economic efficiency, i.e., corporatism. Coupled to a faith in technology and expertise, the weakening of parliaments, the growth of bureaucracies and the blurring of the distinction between public and private spheres, the state claimed new powers to
regulate and coordinate economic, private and public life. In contrast to atomistic bourgeoisie liberalism and class-based socialism, fascism, under a new doctrine of “society as factory,” sought to implement this harmonious, hierarchically integrated, functionally dependent and efficient order (Maier 1975; Maier 1987b, 19-69; Fritzsche 1996).

Fascism, however, encountered a congested political landscape. Following the war, nineteenth-century liberal and socialist rhetoric continued to dominate the “language of class anxiety” pre-empting the ideological space and limiting the entry points for newcomers. Moreover, not only was the ideological space occupied, the existing parties claimed much of the political landscape as well. Conservative, liberal, Catholic, and socialist parties and their affiliated organizations more or less saturated the social base of politics. However, fascism possessed both the advantages and disadvantages of the “latecomer.” While fascism found the political landscape crowded, perhaps even cluttered, with ideological competitors, it was also less encumbered with historical and rhetorical baggage. Its newness insured it had few initial claimants and, hence, was freer to experiment with language and appeals. Second, the same organizational density that underlay the existing political parties also limited their maneuverability (Linz 1980, 155-6).

Under these conditions fascism defined its place by incorporating and synthesizing both new and existing political ideas, while laying claim to new organizational principles. Fascism’s protean form generated a long-standing debate on its character. While no single rigid definition predominates, most agree fascism embodied a unique mix of ideology, tactics, and organizational forms. Its ideology relied on extreme nationalism, secular idealism and vitalism, rejected rationalism, materialism and egalitarianism and propagated a myth of national rejuvenation. Its tactics emphasized the use of violence and rejected parliamentary democracy. Its organizational forms drew on organic and corporatist notions espousing ideals of harmony, hierarchy and national efficiency (Bosworth 1998; Linz 1976b, 12-13). Fascism’s “anti” character, its newness and experimentation make it unsurprising that research demonstrates fascist support among a variety of groups and that its sources of support shifted across time.
Italy: Fascism and Democracy

Fascism emerged in Italy, a weak democracy in the process of implementing a transition to mass democracy and characterized by deep social divisions and a long history of traditional patrimonial politics. While these conditions make Italy an inappropriate case of the democratic breakdown, Italy 1919-1922 is a good case for examining unsuccessful democratic transition (Tarrow 1995, 210). In this sense Italy shared conditions with other candidates for fascism, Spain, Portugal and Germany. Italian Fascism possessed two distinct characteristics: its early appearance and rapid success, and its agrarian popular support. In a remarkably short time, less than four years, the Fascists seized power. Central to this success were Fascism’s electoral victories in May 1921. Thus keys to understanding the Fascist’s success lie in years between 1919 and 1921, a period also marked by violence and labor unrest known as the “Biennio Rosso.”

While empirical, quantitative analysis of German fascism is extensive, the Italian case is less researched and understood. The two cases share the urban origins of fascism, however, unlike Germany, the triumph of Italian Fascism depended on the conquest of the countryside, as Mussolini himself noted in 1919. Although the Nazis made inroads into rural areas, by 1925 Germany was a predominately industrial economy. In contrast to Germany where about 30% of the economically active population engaged in agriculture, forestry and fishing in 1925, in Italy 90% of the economically active population engaged in agriculture and fishing in 1921, with 66% involved in land cultivation. Moreover, land tenure systems differed markedly. While 90% of the agricultural holdings in Germany were owner occupied, in Italy 21% of the agricultural economically active population were owner-occupiers, 12% sharecroppers, and 24% landless wage-laborers. In Germany, 90% of the agricultural land consisted of owner-occupied holdings and 62% of these were 5 to 100 hectares. In 1930 in Italy 0.4% of the holdings occupied 50% of the farmland.

Explaining Fascism: Research Strategy and Methods of Analysis

A serious test of these theories requires the formulation of robust hypotheses, the construction of adequate measures, the marshalling of sufficient evidence and appropriate analytical techniques. Historical research is always limited by the information available. Since the data are historical, all data are ecological
data. Second, the data are nested or hierarchical, i.e., the data are available for different levels of observation. Some variables are available only at the parliamentary electoral district level (N = 54), while others are available at administrative district level (N = 214) and still others at the local or municipal level (N = 6110). Visually nested data approximates a pyramid. At the base are 6110 areal units. Moving toward the vertex, there are 214 administrative districts, 54 electoral districts and at the vertex the single nation-state. To fully utilize the data, the research employs two techniques. Hierarchical Linear Modeling (Bryk and Raudenbush 1992) within and across levels those contextual variables most predictive of fascism. In the second stage Ecological Inference (King 1997) estimates the coefficients of individual electoral behavior in 1919-1921.

**Concepts and Measures**

The dependent variables are electoral support for pre-fascist and fascist parties leading up to the electoral breakthrough of Fascism in 1921, thus electoral dynamics among the contending political parties tracing the shift of support across levels, time and parties are at the center of the analysis.

In Italy Fascist success meant triumphs in the rural sector (DeFelice 1966, 6ff; Lyttelton 1987, 54-76). Four independent variables figure prominently: (1) Class theories emphasize the importance of land tenure as indicators of the *property and class status*. Rational choice interpretations also place importance on property but emphasize the mal-distribution of land as indicators that the Fascists exploited in their rise to power. (2) Civil society theories stress the density of associational memberships as indicators of the robustness of *civil society*. Typical indicators include measures of civic, voluntary associations, e.g., trade unions, charitable associations, cooperative movements and mutual benefit societies. (3) Class theories give particular emphasis to the agrarian strike activity 1919-1921 during the “Biennio Rosso” as a measure of

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1 Hierarchical linear modeling (HLM) avoids the drawbacks of the two most common methods applied to nested data. First, if we assign Level-2 (electoral district level) characteristics to Level-1 units (local municipalities), we violate the assumption of independence of Level-1 and ignore contextual effects of Level-2 characteristics on Level-1 units. Second, if we aggregate the Level-1 units into Level-2 units, we discard the variance of Level-1 units. HLM models capture all the information in the data by estimating both intercepts and slopes across and within Level-2 units. In addition, we can estimate contextual and cross-level effects.
rural lower-class mobilization. (4) Both class and civil society theories emphasize the importance of Fascist and anti-Fascist violence during this same period. For class interpretations, violence indicated the reaction of bourgeoisie society to the “Red Menace.” For both theories, violence aimed to destroy civil society insuring the rise of Fascism.

Data and Data Treatment
Hierarchical or Nested Data Structure While the data are nested at several levels, two-level models generate the best fitting HLM results. Level-2 consists of 54 electoral districts; Level-1 consists of 6,110 local municipal units. All units are constant across time. 2 Level-2 variables consist of three general categories: (1) Land tenure arrangements, (2) rural strike activity and (3) violence. Land tenure and cultivator arrangements derive from the 1921 and 1930 census materials.3 Family Holdings were generally small proprietors who farmed their own land usually relying on family labor; some employed part-time or full-time labor. Sharecroppers and tenants are treated as one category consisting of various in-kind rental arrangements. Croppers and tenants generally lived on the land they worked often in a house supplied by the employer. Renters were similar to croppers, but the arrangement was lodged in the cash nexus. Payments were made in cash and contracts were held for land use and sale of produce. Laborers worked for cash payments, occupied the least secure tenure and constituted the lowest rung in the rural hierarchy. They consisted of two types: Contract Laborers and Day Laborers. Contract Laborers were “under contract to work for a specific employer whenever required, the employer being bound, in turn, to give them first chance of work. In view of the widespread unemployment, this arrangement is of advantage to the workers

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2 The municipal units of analysis are “comuni.” Comuni are local administrative centers and usually include several smaller villages, termed “frazioni.” Size may range from a few hundred to over a million inhabitants; Roma, Milano, and Napoli, for example, are comuni. Over time the boundaries of comuni change, as larger ones maybe subdivided or smaller ones united to form new comuni. Since we have no way of knowing the profile of those areas affected by boundary changes, the decision rule aggregates any comune into another when any part of it is combined or subdivided. Since pre-war and 1921 census measures are necessary for the analysis, territories acquired by Italy following the war are excluded.

3 The census officials noted that the four principal types were not distinct categories. Particularly in the South tenure patterns were hybrids. However, the census officials made every effort to classify tenure patterns by the dominant mode of production. In these and other variables we use only males since they more closely approximate the enfranchised population.
and therefore they are generally paid by the day or hour at a lower rate than the casual laborers.” At the very bottom of rural life were the Day Laborers who comprised “the majority of agricultural wageworkers. They are generally paid by the hour or day (sometimes on a piece-work basis), and take employment wherever they find it, often at great distances from their homes, sometimes in non-agricultural activities” (Schmidt 1966, 10-12). Agrarian strike activity engaged 2.2% of the rural population in 1919 and 4.6% in 1920 during the “Biennio Rosso,” and is available at Level-2, electoral districts. The variables are 1919 Agrarian Strike Density and 1920 Agrarian Strike Density. Fascist violence is available in several measures at Level-2. The most effective measure of Fascist violence is the number of deaths and injuries in political clashes between January 1920 and May 1921, 1920-1921 Violence (Gentile 1989, 472-74).4

Level-1 variables are measured at the local level (N = 6110) and consist of (1) rural organizational density in 1910 and (2) electoral data for the parliamentary elections of 1919 and 1921. Rural organizations fall into two main types, trade unions and cooperative movements. The latter included the wide-ranging activities of consumer and producers cooperatives, labor cooperatives, and rural savings banks among others. These were in turn linked to Socialist and Catholic political tendencies as well as unaffiliated organizations. Measures of the density of trade union and cooperative rural membership are: Socialist Rural Membership Density and Catholic Rural Membership Density. Unaffiliated Rural Trade Union Membership Density embodied diverse political strains, but generally supported the Socialists. The rural trade union movement was deeply divided, but by 1910 the political and regional differences were clear. The Socialists and the Unaffiliated competed in Central Italy, particularly the Po Valley, while the Catholics were most successful in the North (Horowitz 1963, 78ff; Rigola 1947, 464-71; Roberts 1979, 53ff).

4 Fascist violence is often cited and contested as an explanation for its expansion (Bernabei 1975, 155ff; Aquarone 1979; Lyttelton 1982; Nello 1982; Petersen 1982; Elazar and Lewin 1999; Elazar 2000). To measure Fascist violence, I test several measures of violence: Injuries and deaths in political clashes between January 1920 and May 1921 from the Interior Ministry archives, cited in Gentile (1989, 472-74); Fascist-socialist clashes between January 1 and May 8, 1921, also form the Interior Ministry archives, cited in DeFelice (1966, 36-9); Fascist attacks on Socialist affiliated organizations between January to May 1921 compiled initially by the Fascists themselves, but later augmented by the Socialists, cited in Tasca (1966, 120). Both injuries and deaths and Fascist-Socialist clashes measures exist by electoral district (N = 54).
**Electoral data** for 1919 and 1921 parliamentary elections at the local level were gathered by field research from local archives. Electoral measures are votes for party blocks defined by Giusti (1921, 11-13) and Piretti (1995, 221, n18, 232ff). Following these guidelines there are four voting blocks in the 1919 election: center-right *Constitutional block*, the *Center-left block*, the *Catholic block* and the *Socialists*. In the 1921 election, there are the *Fascists*, the rightest *National Block*, the *Center-left block*, the *Catholics*, the *Left Block* (Official Socialists, the Independent Socialists and Communists).

**Incomplete Data Treatment**

With one exception, all data are complete for the level at which they are included in the models. Electoral data are the exception. Incomplete data average 20% across the variables. The Multiple Imputation Method (King, et al. 2001) estimates incomplete observations. A second data limitation is that in most districts in the May 1921 elections the Fascists ran in coalition with the National Block. While the Fascist vote within the Block was not reported separately, Brustein (1991) reconstructed the fascist vote. With this as an indicator of likely Fascist vote, Multiple Imputation Method estimates the full data.  

**Cross-Level Effects and Contextual Analysis**

First estimates of cross-level effects between electoral district and local measures identify contextual effects giving rise to Fascism. The process involves several steps: estimation of the variance in Fascist vote at Level-1 and Level-2, selection of the strongest predictor variables of Fascist vote, testing a regression model with means-as-outcomes and testing a random coefficient model. The final model below estimates the intercepts-and-slopes-as-outcomes.

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5 Brustein (1991: 659) compiled the vote for official Fascist candidates furnished by Mussolini. He then “totaled the votes for each Fascist candidate from the preference votes (voti di preferenza) and from votes from the other lists (voti aggiunti riportati in altre liste) and divided that sum by the province’s total preference vote and vote from other lists for all candidates”.

6 An ANOVA model estimates that 87% of the variance occurs at Level-2, i.e., between the electoral districts, and 13% is lodged within the electoral districts. This is the expected result since Fascism was centered in selected districts. The estimated grand mean Fascist vote in 1921 is 0.088 with a standard error of 0.0160. The reliability coefficient of 0.997 indicates the estimated mean is a highly reliable estimate of the true mean. Variables most predictive of Fascism are presented in Table 1. Given the standard histories of Italian Fascism, some variables are noticeably absent, particularly property arrangements, violence and rural
Modeling Contextual Effects: Intercepts-and-Slopes-as-Outcomes

This model integrates previous models and estimates the effects of Level-2, electoral districts, characteristics on Level-1, municipal, Fascist vote in 1921. The coefficients are the cross-level effects of Level-2 predictors on Level-1 intercepts and slopes within Level-2 units, electoral districts. The model estimates contextual effects permitting the disentanglement of local and compositional effects.

Table 1 presents the results of the model. The model confirms the preliminary findings as well as adds new information. First, previous findings confirmed include: (1) the mean Fascist vote across the electoral district is 8.8%. (2) The mean is significantly higher where 1919 Socialist vote and Rural Organizational Membership Density are higher. These main effects are greatest for 1919 Socialist vote and Rural Organizational Membership. (3) The average slopes, $\gamma_{10}, \gamma_{20}$, are similar to previous results with 1919 Center-Left Vote having the steepest average slope.

class mobilization as measured by strike activity. In most accounts of Fascism these play a central explanatory variables, particularly the “Red Menace” hypothesis. I return to these questions below.

The Regression with Means-as-Outcomes model estimates the mean Fascist vote as a function of the Level-2 or electoral district level variables found to be most significant in the step above. The results show highly significant associations between mean Fascist vote and mean Socialist vote in 1919, and mean Socialist rural organizational membership. This, of course, confirms the obvious that Fascism occurred in the presence of Socialist electoral and rural organizational density. The two variables account for 56% of the Level-2 or electoral district variance. The conditional intraclass correlation of 0.87 in the ANOVA model is reduced to 0.25 and measures the remaining degree of dependence among the observations having the same scores on these predictor variables. The conditional reliability coefficient of 0.993 indicates the ability to discriminate among the Level-2 units or electoral districts with the same scores on the Level-2 predictor variables is very high.

The Random-Coefficient Model estimates the regression equations within each electoral district, i.e., Fascist vote estimated as function of the Level-1 variables centered about the Level-2, or electoral district means and proving significant in step two above. The results indicate that both Level-1 or municipal-level vote variables are significant predictors of Fascist vote. The coefficients are the average regression slope within the electoral district controlling for the other predictors. The 1919 Center-Left vote is the most significant and possesses the highest slope. Both the intercepts and slopes are highly reliable, indicating the data provide considerable power to examine the effect of Level-2 or electoral district characteristics on mean Fascist vote within the electoral districts. This model accounts for 18% of the Level-1 variance. Since in the previous model the Level-2 variables of Socialist vote 1919 and Socialist Rural Organizational Membership Density accounted for 56% of the variance, the results confirm that Level-2 or electoral district variables are stronger predictors of Fascist vote. This is confirmed by the correlation between the intercepts and the slopes that demonstrate strong association between the mean Fascist vote and the slopes of 1919 Center-Left Vote (0.919) and 1919 Socialist Vote (0.695). The high correlation between the mean Fascist vote and 1919 Center-Left Vote slope cautions us that the two may not carry adequate independent variation. In the slope-
New information in the model is the cross-level interaction effect of 1919 Socialist Vote and Socialist Rural Trade Union Membership Density on both 1919 Center-Left Vote and 1919 Socialist Vote. Both relationships are powerful and significant. The Level-1 effects of 1919 Center-Left Vote and 1919 Socialist Vote on 1921 Fascist Vote are stronger in the presence of Level-2 1919 Socialist Vote and Socialist Rural Trade Union Membership Density.

The model also contains contextual effects defined as the difference between the aggregate electoral district, Level-2, effects and the local, Level-1, effects. In the group-mean model above, the contextual effects are the differences of the between electoral district and within electoral district effects. The contextual effects are computed from the OLS coefficients, not shown above, and indicate that for the Center-Left contextual effects at the electoral district level are less important than local effects in explaining Fascist vote, but the reverse is true for the Socialists.

The model successfully accounts for 51% of the total variance, 56% of the electoral district level variance, and 18% of the local level variance, in 1921 Fascist vote. The results suggest the Fascists won over the Center-Left Vote particularly where 1919 Socialist Vote and Rural Organizations were stronger. Similar results over the years led scholars to two conclusions: Fascism arose where the Center-Left voters moved to Fascism in reaction to the “Red Menace” and, second, Fascist violence directed against Socialist organizations intimated their members to vote Fascist.

If the analysis ceased here, it would confirm previous research; however, previous analyses were severely limited: first, no data were available at the local level. Hence the analyses exist only for electoral district or provincial level. In addition, data on the density of civil society was unavailable. This study overcomes both these limitations. Second, until recently researchers have lacked powerful techniques to approach a solution to the ecological inference problem. Moreover, the previous conclusions raise concerns for two additional reasons. First, in the HLM results several crucial variables in the class theory are poor and-intercept model this problem does not arise and it is not necessary to introduce fixed or nonrandomly varying constraints in the final model.

The robust standard errors are consistent even when HLM distributional assumptions are violated.
predictors of fascism, particularly property holding arrangements, Fascist and anti-Fascist violence and rural strike activity. In addition, Catholic vote and Catholic Rural Organizational Density, which figure prominently in the civil society theory, are not significant. Second, and more important, to conclude that the association of Fascism and Socialism confirms the “Red Menace” hypothesis, that Fascism was a reaction against Socialism, may commit the ecological fallacy and ignores the contrary hypothesis.

Ecological Inference Models

Identifying and Mitigating Bias

The goal of ecological inference is to make valid inferences from aggregate data to individual behavior. Variance exists at both the contextual and individual level; HLM analysis above modeled the contextual variance of fascism. In this section the contextual effects are parsed to make inferences to individual behavior. Is it possible to test a theory that explicitly makes the individual the unit of analysis, e.g., rational choice theory, with aggregate data? The question lies at the heart of the ecological inference problem. If potential bias induced by contextual or interactive effects can be parsed or modeled, then inferences to individual behavior are more efficient and unbiased.

Endogeneity

Endogeneity arises when dependent variables may have an effect on independent variables. Ecological Inference (King 1997) generates efficient estimators provided endogeneity is not present. When tests for endogeneity are positive; these effects are mitigated in the EI analysis below.8

8 Bias may take several forms, the prime concern here is selection bias or interactive causality between the independent and dependent variables. Three questions must be addressed: Is bias logically plausible? Is it empirically verifiable? And if so, can be mitigated? Logically plausible aggregation bias exists in several cases. The most obvious case is the potential endogeneity between Socialist vote and Socialist Organizations. Since these organizations had the explicit purpose of mobilizing electoral support for the party, it is plausible that a feedback loop would exist. A less plausible, but still possible, endogeneity is aggregation on the dependent variable, i.e., that Socialist sympathizers gravitated to districts where Socialist vote was higher. Similar questions follow for other dependent variables. Several techniques can control for endogeneity; the most commonly used are Two-Stage Least Squares with Instrumental Variables (TSLS-IV) (Kenny and McBurnett 1994; Gerber 1998) and Non-recursive Structural Equation Modeling with Instrumental Variables (SEM-IV). Here I employ the latter technique for two reasons: First, SEM-IV permits covariance of the error terms generating more efficient estimates. Second, SEM-IV generates a measure of the stability of the interactive effect (Bentler and Freeman 1983). The conditions to generate efficient estimators with SEM-IV models exist here (Wong and Law 1999). As in TSLS-IV models the
Violence and Intimidation Induced Bias Did Fascist violence bias the results of the 1921 election? This question is extensively debated. Yet despite the debate, no empirical tests of violence’s systematic effects exist. A series of tests fail to detect significant systematic effects of violence on 1921 Fascist or Socialist vote at the electoral district or municipal level. The null hypothesis that violence had no significant effect is not rejected.

resulting estimates are employed in the final model. As might be expected the highest feedback exists between Socialist Vote and Socialist Organizational Density.

Although the Catholics were a target of Fascist violence, the majority of the violence was committed against the Socialists. Figures on deaths and injuries in political demonstrations from January 1920 to May 31, 1921 show 70% were Socialists, 18% Fascists and 12% Catholics (Gentile 1989, 472-74). Historians disagree on its significance. Some (Gentile 1989, 202-08; DeFelice 1966, 35ff; Smith 1959, 345) assigned major importance to violence in accounting for Fascist electoral success. Others (Lyttelton 1982, 67; Maier 1975, 327) are more qualified noting that Socialist vote held despite violence. Still others noted additional factors. Corner stated (1975, 144) “to attribute so much to the actions of the squads would be to miss something.” “In fact the movement towards fascism by the mass of the provincial population was far more articulated than is suggested by an explanation solely in terms of violence. Some people were beaten into submission, certainly, but many came to fascism spontaneously and for varying reasons" (1975, 146). In Bologna, which had by far the highest levels of violence, Cardoza concluded, “Fascist achievements were considerably more modest [compared to Ferrara]. Here six months of punitive expeditions did not succeed in substantially altering mass political loyalties” (Cardoza 1982, 342). In a review of the debate, Bernabei (1975, 151-53) concludes that promises of land redistribution were equally important as violence for mobilizing 1921 Fascist electoral support. Indeed, Gramsci, commenting on the 1921 election noted, “it is not all exaggeration, it is not always a case of compulsion,” quoted in Corner (1975, 144).

See note 4 for the measures of violence. The tests are: (1) Test 1 examines correlation coefficients. The correlation between 1919 Socialist vote and 1921 Fascist vote at the electoral district level (N =54) is 0.625; controlling for violence the partial correlation is 0.618. The correlation between violence and Fascist vote is 0.133 and is not significant. (2) In Test 2 reexamines the HLM results discussed above: violence did not enter as a significant predictor of either slopes or intercepts in the relationship between 1919 Socialist vote and 1921 Fascist vote. (3) Test 3 tests an HLM model for the effect of violence on intercepts and slopes of 1921 Left vote predicted by 1919 Socialist vote. (4) Test 4 selects those eleven districts ranking above the grand mean on those variables most predictive of Fascism in Test 2 – 1919 Socialist vote and Socialist rural organizational membership density. For these districts HLM examines the effects of violence on the intercepts and slopes of Fascist vote for eleven Level-2 units and 570 Level-1 units. The resulting estimates are the effects of violence on the across-province mean Fascist vote and the within-province slopes between Fascist vote and 1919 Socialist Vote, Socialist Rural Organizational Density, Socialist Rural Trade Union Density and Unaffiliated Trade Union Density controlling for the effects of the other variables. (5) Test 5 examines the effects of violence on the intercepts and slopes of 1921 Left vote predicted by 1919 Socialist vote and the other variables in Test 4. (6) Test 6 follows the logic of a quasi-experimental treatment design. The design matches two Level-2 units on the key independent variables: 1919 Socialist vote, Socialist Rural Organizational Density, Socialist Rural Trade Union Density, and Unaffiliated Trade Union Density. The matched groups differ on the density of Fascist-Socialist Deaths and Injuries in 1919-1921 by a factor of two. Structural equation models alternatively free and impose equality constraints on directed relationships among the variables and to 1921 Fascist vote. Intercepts and covariances are permitted to vary across the groups. Both models employ 200 bootstrap samples. The resulting test statistics estimate if the differences in
Others suggest that less overt intimidation influenced the vote, e.g., landlords isolated and intimidated their Day Laborers on large estates. However, agricultural labor relations in this region do not support this interpretation. “Factories in the field” characterized the areas supporting both Socialism and Fascism. Labor and capital intensive, non-family small to medium size farms raising highly commercial crops predominated on the Po River plain. Housing patterns also influenced the dynamics. While such enterprises housed a small permanent work force, usually Contract Day Laborers making up 2% of the total labor force, most labor was met by casual Day Laborers, 30% of the labor force, who lived “agro-towns” along the roads outside the farms. Of constantly fluctuating composition, Day Laborers met farm overseers at the roadside each day to bid for work. The industrialization of agriculture after 1900 further weakened ties to landlords so that by 1907 the Agrarian Association of Parma concluded that Day Laborers saw their employers as a “ferocious and gloomy enemy that speculated in misery and brutishness” Quoted in Cardoza (1982, 27). Such conditions made laborers difficult to organize and fostered extremism.

**Ecological Inference Results**

the constrained and unconstrained directed effects coefficients across the groups are significant. Retesting the models using the subcategories of rural trade union membership and alternative violence measures yields the same results.

11 Forty-three percent of all enterprises employing wage labor were less than 20 hectares; an additional 21% were 20 to 50 hectares. The density of wage laborers per hectare of cultivated land employing wage labor averaged 80 workers in the Po Valley, for the rest of Italy it was 29 workers. Moreover, highly seasonal labor demand made it inefficient for employers to house workers on the farms. In the Po Valley plain, Day Laborers made up 40% of heads of households in agriculture; 20% were owner-occupiers, 12% renters, 13% sharecroppers, the remainder non-cultivators (Pagani 1932; Istituto Centrale di Statistica 1935). Zamagni (1993, 198-99) estimates that in 1910-14 an agrarian day laborer had to work 280 days a year for subsistence, but the figure was usually 180-200 and fell to 100-120 in Bologna in some periods. Zangheri (1960, xi-xix) cites 90 days in Ferrara as typical. Seventy percent of all chemical fertilizers and 70% of all agricultural machinery in Italy in 1913 were employed in the Po Valley (Zamagni 1993, 61-68). The principal commercial crops were rice, hemp, sugar beets and wheat all subject to high protective tariffs and subsidies (Ministero dell'agricoltura 1914; Zattini 1922; Pugliese 1926; Perdisa 1938). The Po valley produced 50% of hemp, 25% of tomatoes, and 80% of sugar beets in 1911. Profits on sugar beets and hemp were 4 and ten times that of wheat respectively (Cardoza 1982, 128).

12 Hobson (1925) described in detail the compensation of Contract Day Laborers. For typical descriptions of Day Laborers, see Cardoza (1982, 16-27); Corner (1975, 4ff); Kertzer (1984, 46) Serpieri (1930, 140-46); Cavazza (1994). For some statistical evidence see (Ministero dell'Economia Nazionale 1925, 4-76; Ministero di Agricoltura 1911)
HLM analysis demonstrated that voter transitions best explain Fascist electoral success and that context is very important. Since the predictor variables of the intercept in Table 1 are centered on the grand mean, Level-2 units or electoral districts above the grand mean on the most powerful predictors of Fascist vote -- 1919 Socialist Vote and Socialist Rural Organizational Density -- form a data subset to examine the dynamics within this context. The selection generates a group of 11 electoral districts, 29 administrative districts and 570 municipal units.\textsuperscript{13} EI analysis estimates the coefficients for the level at which the data are available.\textsuperscript{14}

Table 2, Agrarian Base of Electoral Behavior, 1919-1921, presents estimates at two levels. The Commercial and Industrial Census of 1927 provided information at the municipal level (N =570), but cultivation arrangements were available for the district level (N = 29) in the 1921 Population Census. For Table 3: Voter Transition Matrix 1919-1921 and Table 4: Rural Organizational Base of Socialist, Catholic and Fascist Vote, 1919-1921, the data are available for the 570 local or municipal level and the EI analysis is presented those data. Three statistics provide the information in each table. The figure below each row and column title is the observed mean value for that variable. For example, in Table 2 Commercial, Industrial and Public Employment was 10% of the labor force and 58% of enfranchised voters voted in the 1919 election. Each cell in the table contains two figures. The upper figure is the EI estimate; the lower figure is the standard error. In Table 2 EI estimates 50% of Commercial, Industrial and Public Employment voted in 1919 with a standard error of 0.1222.

The estimates in Table 2 clearly show Fascism’s agrarian base. Of the total vote the Fascists gained an estimated 19% of the Agricultural, Forestry, Fishing Employment, but only 3% of the Commercial,

\textsuperscript{13} The selected electoral districts/provinces are: from the region of Emilia-Romagna: Piacenza, Reggio nell’Emilia, Bologna, Modena, Ferrara, Ravenna, Forli; from the region of Lombardia: Cremona, Mantova and Pavia, and from the region of Vento: Rovigo. Together these constitute most of the Po River Valley rich agricultural region. These provinces fall into Putnam’s (1993a, 150) “most civic” region; this correspondence raised earlier questions about the social capital theory and democracy (Tarrow 1996, 393; Wellhofer 1994, 335).
\textsuperscript{14} In the EI estimates, I employ males only since they more closely approximate the enfranchised population. The exception is for the 1927 Commercial, Industrial and Public and Agricultural, Forestry and Fishing Employment where data by gender are not available.
Industrial and Public Sector Employment. In other words, 86% of Fascist vote came from the rural sector. In areas of higher Fascist electoral success the agrarian base of electoral behavior differs substantially from the nation-wide results. For all of Italy 1919 and 1921 electoral mobilization was higher for property holders than the propertyless; where Fascism was more successful, the opposite holds. Nation-wide 66% of Family Holdings and 40% of Day Laborers voted in 1919. In areas of greater Fascist success, 37% of Family Holdings and 73% of Day Laborer voted in 1919. In 1921 areas of higher Fascist electoral success witnessed increased turnout for all cultivators and particularly for the Contract Laborers and Day Laborers.

Second, both class and religious divisions were greater in areas of higher Fascism. Particularly for Family Holdings and Day Laborers the party alignments were stronger. Family Holdings divided almost equally between the Constitutional Block and the Catholic parties, while Day Laborers allied themselves to the Socialists. In the 1921 election the Fascists gained most among Contract Laborers (70%) and Day Laborers (56%), while support for the Left declined dramatically from 64% to 45% and from 61% to 22% respectively. Sharecroppers also evidenced a shift from the 1919 Center-Left (34%) to the Fascists (31%, but note the high standard error) while the 1921 Center-Left won 9% of Sharecroppers. Finally, Family Holdings showed a less dramatic shift to Fascism. On the other hand, the Catholic and Left parties retain their support among Renters and Sharecroppers and the Catholics retain most to their supporters among Family Holdings. These results strongly contradict the class theory of Fascism.

Table 3 presents the voter transition matrix for the 1919-1921 elections. EI estimates that 20% of the Constitutional Block voters, 64% of the Center-Left voters, 26% of the Socialist voters, 13% of Catholic and 25% of non-voters in 1919 shifted to the Fascists in 1921. Interpolating these figures, the distribution of the Fascist vote compared to the electorate in 1919 is: The Constitutional Block represented 10% of the 1919 electorate and 14% of the total 1921 Fascist vote, the Center-Left: 6% and 5%, Socialists: 41% and 40%, Catholics: 15% and 6%, and non-voters: 30% and 35%. While 1919 Catholic voters were the most restrained, Constitutional Block voters and non-voters in 1919 generated a disproportionate shift to the Fascists. Whereas the Fascists received 10% of those who voted in 1919, they gained 22% of those who did
not vote in 1919 but did vote in 1921. The loser among previous non-voters was the Left Block. On the other hand, the Socialist retained 54% of their 1919 support and the Catholics 47%.

Table 4 presents the estimates for the vote of rural organizational membership. First, the results indicate the ability of the organizations to deliver the vote to their party allies in 1919, particularly the Socialist organizations and Unaffiliated Rural Trade Unions. Second, the results show the weakness of these same organizations to contain the shift to the Fascists in 1921. In the 1919 election an estimated 63% of all Socialist Rural Organization members and 60% of Socialist Rural Trade Union membership voted Socialist. In addition, an estimated 76% of the membership of the Unaffiliated Trade Union Membership voted Socialist. For the Catholic rural organizational and trade union membership the results were more mixed. Sixty percent of all Catholic rural membership voted Catholic, while 44% of Catholic Rural Trade Union members voted Catholic. In each case 41% voted Socialist. Thus the Catholic rural organizations were less successful to mobilizing their membership for the Catholic party.

In the 1921 election Catholic organizations were more successful in retaining their supporters, but even here an estimated 17% of Catholic Rural Trade Unionists voted Fascist (the coefficient for all Catholic Rural Organizations possesses great uncertainty). For the Socialists the results were devastating. About 51% of Socialist Rural Organizational members and 56% of Socialist Rural Trade Union members voted Fascist. The Unaffiliated Rural Trade Unions were more successful in retaining their members’ vote for the Left; those members divided 34% for the Fascists and 68% for the Left.

These results reject the class interpretations of Fascism. Fascist electoral support comes disproportionately from the propertyless. While Day Laborers constituted 30% of the rural cultivators, EI estimated 56% of all Day Laborers voted Fascist. The coefficient for Contract Day Laborers is 70%. The differences are examined below. Moreover, class thesis that Fascist support came disproportionately from Family Holdings fails. While the Fascists did gain support from Family Holdings, Fascist support among Family Holdings constitutes 5% of total Fascist vote, but they form 16% of the electorate. In contrast, Day Laborers made up 30% of the electorate and 46% of the total Fascist vote.
Explaining Popular Support for Fascism

Popular support, particularly “working class” support, for Fascism has long been controversial because it goes to the core of the debate on the character and appeals of Fascism. Scholars focus on three explanations for evidence of popular support for Fascism: a weak civil society, tactical miscalculations by the Left, and material rewards promised by the Fascists, the last being the essence of the Rational Fascist thesis. Intimidation examined above produced no systematic effects on Fascist or Socialist vote in 1921.

Social Capital: A Weak Civil Society?

Civil society and social capital theories give pride of place to voluntary associations as basis for democratic politics. More recently scholars sought to clarify the relationship between democracy and civil society. Generally agreed propositions include: (1) a minimal, but unspecified, density of associational membership is necessary. One recent investigation used 1% of the potential membership as a base line (Skocpol 1999, 528-29). (2) Membership must be widespread and include the organization of the “subordinate classes” (Rueschemeyer 1998, 4). (3) Civic associations must accept democratic principles both within the association and in the larger polity. (4) For civic associations to be supportive of democracy they must strike a balance between political engagement and autonomy from politics. Berman (1997b) noted that high levels of associationalism divorced from political life weakened rather than strengthened democracy in Weimar Germany. (5) Some mid-point must be found between inclusive and exclusive memberships to balance the benefits of cross- and multiple-memberships and group autonomy. Additional conditions provide a context for civil society: (6) some minimum of rule of law and liberty are essential. (7) The state must possess a degree of political institutionalization including legitimacy and autonomy from both politics and powerful interests.

The results cited above offer weak evidence for the civil society thesis. Despite a robust civil society in our more closely studied area, Fascism found its popular base almost equally among associational members and non-members. How closely did 1921 Italy approach the contemporary civil society standards? According to civil society theorists, civic organizations must possess breadth and depth of membership, be
politically engaged and adhere to internal democratic norms to be relevant to democracy. Survey research on contemporary successful democracies, Germany and the US, provide some benchmarks. In Germany about 60% of the adult population were members of at least one organization in 1992 (Wessels 1998, 214); a comparable figure for the US was 70% between 1974-1994 (Putnam 1998, 240). However, for politically engaged organizations the memberships are much less dense. In Germany 4% to 6% of the adult populations are members in some “political or value based” organization, while the estimate for the US is 4%. Multiple memberships are also similar with the typical adult being a member of less than two organizations with significant differences by class, education and income.

These conditions were largely met in those regions producing Fascism in Italy. While obviously imperfect, the data paint a detailed picture of civil society. The breadth, density and political engagement of associationalism reached the levels described above and included large proportions of the “subordinate classes.” While multiple memberships reduce these figures, Catholic organizations included about 3% of the total male adult population and Socialist organizations about 4%. About 20% of all Day Laborers belonged to rural trade unions, 12% to Socialist unions, 7% to Unaffiliated unions. Among Contract Workers 59% were members of unions, 45% in Socialist organizations, and 14% in Unaffiliated unions. While some suggest a tension between hierarchy and democracy in Catholic organizations (McCarthy 1997), both Socialist and Catholic movements have been cited as supportive of democracy (Putnam 1993a).

Moreover, the Socialist and the Catholic movements were deeply engaged in democratic politics and overall political participation was high. In the region giving birth to Fascism, the Socialists received 58% of the 1919 parliamentary vote. Socialist and Unaffiliated organizations strongly supported the Socialist party in the national, provincial and municipal elections. EI estimates that about 60% of Socialist and 76% of Unaffiliated unionized rural workers voted Socialist in 1919. In the 1920 provincial elections in all of Italy the Socialists gained control of 27% of municipalities up from 3% in 1914 and won control of 36% of the provinces. In the closely studied area, the Socialists won 80% of the municipal councils in 1920. After long opposing democracy in Italy, the Catholic Church actively entered electoral politics in 1919 with
the formation of the Popular Party and won 21% of the vote in our closely studied region. However, within this region Catholic rural organizations were less dense and had less impact on electoral behavior. We estimate that about 44% of Catholic Rural Trade Union Members voted Catholic in 1919, but that 17% voted Fascist in 1921.

Without survey data, cross- and multiple-memberships are more difficult to assess. Survey research on contemporary Germany shows that among members of occupational related organizations “(unions, professional associations), social or welfare organizations (except youth organizations), and political parties … 32.2 percent of the adult population were organized in 1992 – 27.7 percent were members of only one organization, 3.8 in two and .8 in three” (Wessels 1998, 215). EI estimates that about 9% (std.err. = .0361) of the members of Catholic Rural Organizations were also members of Socialist Rural Organizations. Remember such organizations consisted not only of rural trade unions, whose membership was likely to be exclusive, but a full range of labor, producer, marketing cooperatives, rural saving banks, etc. On the other hand, an estimated 4% (.0037) of the Socialist Rural Organizational members were members of Catholic Rural Organizations. In all of Italy about 8% of Unaffiliated Rural Trade Union Members identified themselves as Catholic and about 3% in the closely examined area. In this area EI estimated 76% of Unaffiliated Rural Trade Union Members voted Socialist and 9% (with a high standard error) voted Catholic in 1919. There were no Catholic members of Socialist Rural Trade Unions in the closely studied area. These figures suggest that breadth, density and political engagement of civic associations cannot explain Fascism.

Perhaps an explanation lies in the political cleavages within the civil society that could undercut democratic politics. Two significant cleavages in Italy as a whole and particularly in the region producing Fascism were religion and class, particularly rural class divisions. We examine these cleavages on two dimensions: electoral-partisan and organizational-partisan. Religious and Class Voting Volatilities provide measures of electoral-partisan volatility for the two cleavages (Bartolini and Mair 1990, 20-23). For religious and class organizational-partisan segmentation we compute indices of organizational density and
party vote. Some comparable measures for other European countries are available (Bartolini and Mair 1990, 111, 234).

Table 5 presents the indices and provides some larger context for comparing the Italian experience to the UK and Germany in a similar period. During this period all three countries experienced suffrage expansion followed by an initial decline in turnout. The table indicates the class-electoral volatility, a measure of the shift of vote across blocks of class-based parties. The mean pre-war class-electoral volatility for Italy in 1913 approximated that of Germany in 1912; both were above the level of the UK. The shift from the last pre-war election to the first post-war election increased class-electoral volatility dramatically in all cases. Overall Italy approached level of the UK, but in areas where Fascism developed the shift was extremely large. From the first to the second post-war elections, class-electoral volatility returned to lower levels, but remained above the pre-war mean in the UK and Italy, particularly in Fascist areas. Pre-war religious-electoral volatility was low in all cases, but increased dramatically in Italy from the last pre-war to the first post-war election, and very dramatically in areas of early Fascism. From the first to the second post-war elections religious-electoral volatility declined toward pre-war levels. These measures highlight the electoral success of working class parties in the UK (Labour) and Italy (Socialists) and religious parties in Germany (Center) and Italy (Popular) in realigning electoral allegiances. By the second post war election, we see closure on religious-electoral volatility, but continued high class-electoral volatility in the UK and particularly in areas of Italy generating Fascism.

During this period in Europe both Socialist and Catholic political parties pursued a strategy of organizational encapsulation designed to incorporate within party affiliated organizations as many aspects of their supporters’ lives as possible in an effort to channel their votes. These organizations included a wide

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15 In Italy suffrage expanded to males over thirty years plus some males over 21 with special qualifications. The percent of the population over 20 enfranchised increased from 15% to 42% from 1909 to 1913. Turnout declined from 60.4% in 1913 to 56.6% in 1919 and then increased to 58.4% in 1921. In Germany the franchise increased from 38.7% of the population over 20 in 1912 to 98% in 1919. Turnout declined from 84.5% to 81.4% and to 78.4% in 1920. In the UK suffrage was expanded from 28.8% of the population over 20 in 1910 to 74.8% in 1918. Turnout in contested constituencies declined from 81.1% to 58.9% and increased to 71.3% in 1922 (Flora 1983, 117-120, 126-129, 148-151).
range of associations -- housing, consumer, producer, and labor cooperatives, saving banks, mutual aid societies, and particularly trade unions. Trade union organizational density measures indicate the overall weakness of trade unions in Italy in contrast to Germany and the UK, but also reflect differences in the economies. By the 1920s 30% of the economically active population in Germany was engaged in agriculture, forestry and fishing, in the UK the figure was 8%, while in Italy it was 90% with 66% engaged in cultivation. For all of Italy 38% of Socialist Trade Union Members were agricultural workers; for Unaffiliated Trade Union Members the proportion was 98%; for Catholic Trade Union Members the figure was 36%. Where Fascism emerged in Italy, 63% of Socialist Trade Union Members, 95% of Unaffiliated Trade Union Members, and 67% of Catholic Trade Union Members were agricultural workers. The Trade Union Membership to Vote ratios therefore reflected the power of unions to mobilize the countryside.

What is the strength of the linkages between organizations in civil society and partisan voting? The Socialist Trade Union Membership to Left Vote Ratio is very low in Italy. However, if we add the Unaffiliated Trade Union Membership, which we estimated 76% voted Socialist in 1919, to that of Socialist Trade Union Membership and the Ratio in areas of Fascism in 1921 approximates that of other European countries. Again Catholic Trade Unions were weakly organized relative to their vote. If we include the full range of organizational affiliations in Socialist, Non-Socialist Left and Catholic membership densities, the ratios to votes are higher is areas developing Fascism. The last table shows trade union density as a proportion of the work force. Italy is well below the European average for the period.

The portrait of electoral politics and civil society in Italy described above reflects very high electoral volatility across two cleavage dimensions with relatively low levels of organizational density. For example, while the UK and Italy have comparable levels of class-electoral volatility between the last pre-war and first post-war elections, the Left Vote to Trade Union Membership Ratio in Italy was less than half that of the UK. In areas of Italy where the Ratio was comparable to the UK, the class-electoral volatility was 1.6 times greater. In addition, Italy experienced high levels of religious-electoral volatility. While the overall trade union membership densities were lower in Italy, the ratio to votes was comparable to the UK. In Italy the
organizational density was less, but the ability of the organizations to mobilize their vote was similar. This suggests that the salience of civil society density to democratic stability declines as electoral volatility increases. At high levels of electoral volatility, civic organizations have a reduced impact.

In Italy despite an estimated 60% of Socialist Rural Trade Union Members voting Socialist in 1919, an estimated 56% voted Fascist in 1921. For Socialist Unionized Contract Laborers the estimates were 21% and 60%. Socialist Day Laborers’ Unions were more successful in restraining their members’ passage to Fascism. An estimated 50% of Socialist Unionized Day Laborers voted Fascist compared to 56% of all Day Laborers. For Catholic Unionized Rural Workers an estimated 44% voted Catholic in 1919 but 17% voted Fascist in 1921. Since we find no statistically significant evidence that violence explained this volatility, we conclude that politically linked civic associations had very limited effects in preventing the rise of Fascism.

**Political Tactics of the Left: A Trust Broken?**

Did the increased militancy of the Left indirectly and unintentionally aid Fascism? Did the militancy of the leaders result in the defection of their followers? During this period in Italy, as in most all of Europe, the Socialists were divided between the Communists, Maximalists and Official Socialists, foreshadowing the formation of the Communist Party in 1921.\(^\text{16}\) The War and the Russian Revolution increased the influence of those who had long argued it was necessary to “proletarianize” the rural workers, collectivize land and promote revolution. The 1919 Congress of La Federazione nazionale dei lavoratori della terra in Bologna declared the necessity of abolishing distinctions within the rural working class that hindered worker unity (Zangheri 1960, lxxiv, 350). These debates heightened the tensions within both the Socialist and Unaffiliated agrarian trade unions culminating in the conclusion of the Socialist labor contracts of 1920 which abolished the distinction between Contract Laborers and Day Laborers (Serpieri 1930, 305-06; Sereni 1975, 117-19; Cardoza 1982, 283ff; Corner 1974, 22-28; Corner 1975, 150-59). To understand

\(^{16}\) At the January 1921 Congress the party split on the question of the Third International 53% for the Communists, 31% for the Maximalists and 16% for the Official Socialists. The 1921 election were held in May 1921.
the significance of this event, it is necessary to grasp the distinction between Contract Laborers and Day Laborers and the importance of each in the agrarian trade union movement.

“Proletarianization” of the Contact Laborers meant loss of the right of first-hire, forcing them into the same precarious status and poverty as Day Laborers. The 1920 labor pact therefore deepened the divisions within the Socialist agrarian unions (Cardoza 1982, 366-67; Corner 1974, 22-3) One Socialist leader remarked that the labor contacts of 1920 “suppressed the institution – of age-long usage – of the *obbligorieta* [contract] in the countryside, driving the peasant away from that land to which he was tied by indestructible links and traditions,” quoted in Corner (1975, 159). Meanwhile the Catholic unions and the Fascists took up the cause of the contract workers (Serpieri 1930, 314-19).

The place of Contract and Day Laborers in the agrarian trade union movement was also highly significant. Both the Socialist and Unaffiliated agrarian unions organized workers by cultivator status with separate organizations for Contract Laborers and Day Laborers. Overall 19% of Day Laborers were unionized, 12% in Socialist and 7% in Unaffiliated unions. Among Contract Laborers, 59% were unionized, 45% in Socialist and 14% in Unaffiliated unions. In both movements Day Laborers made up the largest proportion of the membership, 54% of the Socialist and 18% of the Unaffiliated agrarian trade union membership respectively. Day Laborers constituted 30% of the all cultivators. Although the Contract Laborers constituted only about 2% of the cultivators, their numbers made up 14% of the Socialist and 3% of the Unaffiliated agrarian trade union membership. Thus their influence in the agrarian unions far exceeded their numbers in the workforce.

Contract Laborers’ sense of betrayal made them prime candidates for Fascism. EI estimates of the electoral behavior of Contract and Day Laborers Trade Union Membership in 1919 and 1921 appear in Table 5. The standard errors suggest some caution, but the estimates are strongly in the expected direction. While all four groups voted Socialist in 1919, the results suggest the disaffection of the Socialist Unionized Contract Laborers and Socialist Unionized Day Laborers with the labor contracts. While Contract Day Laborers were over represented in the total Fascist rural vote by a ratio of 2.2:1 compared to their proportion
in the potential electorate, Socialist Unionized Contract Day Laborers have a ratio of 1.1:1. The ratios for Day Laborers and Socialist Unionized Day Laborers were 1.5:1 and 1.2:1. In contrast, Unaffiliated Unionized Contract and Day Laborers, not subject to the 1920 Socialist labor pact, were underrepresented (0.88:1 and 0.48:1) respectively.

The Socialist’s heightened militancy, calls for proletarianization and land collectivization, may account for these defections. Commenting with reference to the Day Laborers in April 1921, the Socialist press of Ferrara, a city at the center of both the labor unrest of the Biennio Rosso and the Fascist violence, noted “the present defections are the work of those who came last to the proletarian organization because they are unhappy with the regime of social and working-class justice brought about through the labor exchanges” (Corner 1975, 159). In May a Socialist leader in Ferrara resigned in protest because the party failed to counter “the daily enthusiastic adhesion of large masses of labourers to the programme of fascio” (1975, 144). In June 1921 following the election, the same paper wrote the Day Laborers possessed “only partial class-consciousness, an inadequate preparation for sacrifice” in the struggle against Fascism, quoted in Corner (1975, 159-60).

Leaders on the Left expressed exasperation at these defections. In June, Gramsci remarked, “… in Emilia, in Polesine, in Veneto, many leagues of contadini [generally referring to peasants, but particularly contadini obbligati, contract laborers] have torn up the red flag and passed to Fascism,” quoted in Bernabei (1975, 123). Gramsci also noted while violence played a part in Socialist defections, “it is not all exaggeration, it is not always a case of compulsion,” quoted in Corner (1975, 144). Togliatti attributed Fascist support to “a certain mass base in the countryside, particularly Emilia,” quoted in Bernabei (1975, 123). However, the votes represented by the defection of agrarian trade unionists could account for only a proportion of the total Fascist vote.

17 The ratios are the proportion in the electorate weighted by the likely turnout by the probability of voting Fascist. Corner (1975, 159) comments that “there were possibly several thousand displaced obbligati eager to return to their former privileged position once it was clear that socialism had passed its peak.”
Prospects for a Better Life: A Rational Choice?

Socialists, Catholics and Fascists each offered prospects for a better life through access to land. For the Socialists agrarian cooperatives marked a step toward collectivization (Serpieri 1930, 290-93). In 1920 78% of Catholic rural trade union members were sharecroppers and tenants (Horowitz 1963, 124), thus the Catholic trade unions had ignored the landless Day Laborers, partly to avoid alienating their supporters among small holders and sharecroppers, partly because of a commitment to the sanctity of private property (Agocs 1988, 153-63) and partly because Catholics viewed the matter not as class conflict but as differences of economic interests within the harmonious hierarchy of society (Caponi 1974, 46-55). Similarly the Catholic cooperative movement proved most successful among small holders and sharecroppers. Attempts at a Catholic-Socialist rural trade union alliance failed in 1919 when Catholic union members acted as strike breakers against Socialists (Snowden 1989, 52).

If disagreements on tactics and strategies pushed some toward Fascism, for day laborers the appeals of Fascism lay in its promises for a better life. As early as 1919 elections the Fascist program of the Piazza San Sepolcro advocated the eight-hour day for all workers. By late 1920 the economic condition of Day Laborers had deteriorated badly.\footnote{Although nominal wages improved because of reductions in the working day, increased staffing requirements and wage adjustments (Arcari 1936, 679-80; International Labor Office 1920), real wages of agricultural worker declined by 9% from 1919 to 1920 (Zamagni 1993, 238). In addition take-home wages declined because of prolonged strikes and rising unemployment (Hobson 1925, 429; International Labor Office 1920; Serpieri 1930, 144, 415). Serpieri (1930, 144) concluded that of all cultivator types in the Po Valley laborers dependent only on wages, a phenomenon most characteristic of the Po Valley, suffered most.} In contrast sharecroppers, renters with fixed contracts, characteristic of the Po Valley, and smallholders fared better (Serpieri 1930, 117-20, 144).

In January 1921 the Fascists began to tailor their appeals for the upcoming May 1921 elections. In January Gaetano Polverelli in Il Popolo d'Italia launched the agrarian program with the slogan: "To every peasant his land! To every peasant the entire fruit of his sacred work," cited in Cardoza (1982, 326-7). Also in January the Fascist newspaper in Ferrara, Balilla, published the Fascist program, Il Problema Agrario ed i
Fascio. *Per Pacificare le compagne,* declaring: "The single most important idea of our farm workers is not the collective ownership of land, but the individual ownership of property," quoted Corner (1974, 13).

The Fascists varied their strategies according to the land ownership patterns, make-up of the labor force and political traditions of the region. The effects are evident in Table 2; an estimated 70% of

19 The economic strategy followed several tactics: (1) creation of producer, credit and consumer cooperatives, (2) intervention in strikes and securing more favorable terms than the Socialist or Catholic unions had offered, (3) creation of alternative hiring halls to the Socialists Chamber of Labor, (4) demanding restitution of fines imposed by Socialist unions on members for breaking boycotts, (5) redistribution of land. These tactics varied by local conditions. (1) Legislation of February 1918 and September 1919 permitted the requisitioning of underutilized land for use by cooperative movements. Socialist, Catholic and later Fascist organizers sought to take advantage of the law. The cooperatives offered credit, insurance and marketing assistance (Serpieri 1921; Hobson 1926; Cardoza 1982, 337; Corner 1975, 159). (2) Adapting to local conditions the Fascists settled strikes on more favorable terms than the Socialists or Catholics proposed. For example, in June 1921 in Cremona after a long and bitter strike, the Fascists opposed collective ownership of the land and offered profit sharing (Serpieri 1930, 319-20). The agreement was popular because it gave the former Contract Day Laborers more secure access to land. In contrast in Tuscany, where sharecropping was more prevalent, the Fascists sided with sharecroppers in some areas and with Day Laborers in others, sometime shoring up tenant rights at other times demanding land reform (Snowden 1989, 97ff). (3) In the Po Valley where Day Laborers predominated the Fascists created alternative hiring halls and syndicates, provided legal services and more favorable wage agreements than the Socialists. In other areas profit sharing contracts were advanced (Cardoza 1982, 337; Snowden 1989, 101). (4) The Fascists also offered protection against fines imposed by Socialist unions (Cardoza 1982, 337-38). (5) Actual redistribution of land appeared in several regions. In Ferrara by September 1921 the Fascists claimed to have redistributed 18,000 hectares a little less than 10% of the productive surface of the province and claimed to have resettled 4,000 families (Corner 1975, 157-58); Also see Lyttelton (1987, 63, 460, n. 107). Similarly in Tuscany, prominent landlords on the Pisa plain, the Chiana valley and the Sienna region made land available to the Fascist for resettlement of landless (Snowden 1989, 97). In July 1921 the Fascists in Bologna also made land available for leasing (Cardoza 1982, 354). In Brescia Turati, a native of Po Valley syndicalism, advocated land redistribution as well (Kelikian 1986, 140-41). The Fascists also capitalized on local political traditions. Particularly in the Po Valley with a strong syndicalism tradition, major leaders of agrarian fascism passed through syndicalism – Grandi, Bottai, Turati, Balbo and Panunzio among others (Sykes 1976; Roberts 1979, 182-212).

Usually landlords cooperated with the Fascists in the joint effort to blunt Socialism, but in other cases pressure was also applied (Corner 1975, 157; Kelikian 1986, 144-53; Snowden 1989, 64-5). In at least one case, Santa Maria in Veneto, the Fascists seized and occupied the land in 1920. The incident illustrates the transformation of the movement. After violent confrontations with the owners, but with the support of the Fascist Government in Rome, the peasants assumed control of the land in November 1922. The leader of the seizure, Baratella, went on to become the Fascist *ras* of Padua and led a second seizure of land in 1925. By 1926 Baratella was branded a “false Fascist” and “representative of the clique” left over from the “early days of Fascism” when “Fascism was in the hands of band of suspicious characters made up of old radicals, some moderate clericals and few deluded young men.” In 1931 he was exiled to Bari and by 1934 the party withdrew all support and recognition and his political career was finished, quoted in Evans (1976, 36-41, 51-3).

Most of the land distributions took place after the 1921 election and before the regime was consolidated following the Matteotti Crisis. However, most parcels were of poor quality and unable to
Contract Day Laborers and 56% of Day Laborers voted Fascist whereas 64% and 61% had voted Socialist in 1919 (but note the high standard errors). From these figures, it is possible to estimate that 86% of the Fascist vote came from the countryside, of this 53% from Day Laborers, 11% from Sharecroppers, 7% from Renters, 6% from Family Holdings, 6% from Contract Laborers and 17% from other rural occupations. Among rural occupations landless day laborers are over represented by 1.6:1 given their proportion in the likely electorate; all other rural strata are underrepresented with Family Holdings the least represented at 0.34:1.

**Conclusions**

What conditions foster a transition to democracy or to extremist movements such as fascism? How do we account for these different outcomes? Class, Civil Society and Rational Choice interpretations pose answers. The explanations need not be viewed as mutually exclusive. Certainly classes have material interests and civic organizations provide material incentives and cultivate trust that influence rational choices.

This research observed these dynamics during the failed democratic transition in Italy 1919-1921. The results strongly contradict the class interpretation of an alliance between urban bourgeoisie and rural landholders against urban and rural working classes. Small property holders, supposedly bulwark of Fascism in the countryside, were the least represented among Fascist voters, while landless Day Laborers were the most over represented. Neither violence nor intimidation explains these results.

The civil society thesis received mixed support. Newly mobilized voters are often portrayed as among the most susceptible to extremism. And indeed, 1919 non-voters were over represented (1.3:1) among Fascist voters in 1921; however, 1919 Socialist voters were equally over represented (1.3:1) and 1919 Center-Left voters were even more over represented (3.3:1). Civil society organizations did restrain some from voting Fascist, but when social trust was broken, their effectiveness decreased markedly. While support the new cultivators resulting in their reemployment as sharecroppers and laborers. Nevertheless, between 1921 and 1936 (years of censuses), proportion of Day Laborers in agriculture declined from 39% to 14% of agricultural economically active labor force (Corner 1979, 244).
Catholic and Unaffiliated Trade Union members were more resistant to Fascism, Socialist Trade Union Rural Contract Laborers members and Socialist Trade Union Rural Day Laborers members were slightly over represented among Fascist voters (1.1:1; 1.2:1), but less so than non-unionized laborers. On the other hand, unaffiliated rural trade union members were much underrepresented relative to both Socialist union members and all day laborers. The likely explanation lies in the breach of trust between the Socialist leadership and voters and trade union members as the leadership moved dramatically toward more militant positions.

Rational choice offers a more general, parsimonious explanation for the results. Fascist voters were the most impoverished of the rural population, who stood to gain the most materially from Fascist agrarian program, and whose trust was most violated by the repudiated agreements of the ruling parties during the war and the Socialists after the war. Landless laborers were most over represented among Fascist voters; all other cultivators were underrepresented. Landless laborers stood to gain the most from the Fascist agrarian program. Moreover, these laborers likely were deeply embittered and disillusioned by previous promises. During the war the government vowed agrarian reform to bolster sagging morale, but failed to deliver.\(^\text{20}\)

After the war the Socialist program of collectivization and proletarianization coupled to prolonged strikes and rising unemployment left many day laborers disenchanted and destitute by 1921.\(^\text{21}\)

\(^{20}\) Following the defeat of Italian forces at Caporetto in 1917, the government sought to motivate the peasant-soldiers with promises of land reform under the slogans, “Fight for Italy and she is yours!” and "The land to the peasants!" Prime Minister Salandra declared: "After the victorious end of the War, Italy will perform a great deed of social justice. Italy will give land and everything that goes with it to the peasants, so every hero who has fought bravely in the trenches can become economically independent. That will be the Fatherland's reward to its brave sons." Quoted in Schmidt (1966, 27), also see Cardoza (1982, 246-47). The statement was widely distributed at the front. Commenting on the consequences of these promises, Gioletti, President of the Cabinet, in a speech at the meeting of the Senate, September 26, 1920, stated: “All parties vied with one another, just then, in giving promises, vague, indeterminate, and alluring. They promised land to the peasant and factories to the soldiers; promises that meant nothing to those who made them, while those who received them considered them their just deserts," quoted in Por (1923, 37n).

\(^{21}\) In 1920 the average strike involved 33% of the day laborers in the Po Valley (Direzione Generale del Lavoro e della Providenza Sociale and Ministero dell'Economia Nazionale 1924, 295). The 1920 strikes also devastated production. Cardoza (1982, 287) estimates in Bologna 33% of the hay, 20% of the grain, 25% of the grape harvest were lost. Rice acreage was reduced by 58%. Wheat productivity per hectare declined by 29% in the Po Valley from 1919 to 1920 (Zattini 1920, 14-36). Meanwhile both regular and seasonal unemployment increased adding to that already resulting from the demobilization of military conscripts.
Betrayed, disillusioned and impoverished, rural Day Laborers and particularly Contract Day Laborers in the Po Valley voted Fascist because the Fascists, unburdened by a past, offered them better prospects for a future. Focused on a short time horizon the Fascists had few reasons to weigh the future of the society and many reasons to become “roving bandits” on a path to becoming “rational autocrats.”

"Here we have to note two things; first, that the people often, deceived by an illusive good, desire their own ruin, and, unless they are made sensible of the evil of the one and the benefit of the other by some one in whom they have confidence, they will expose the republic to infinite peril and damage. And if it happens that the people have no confidence in any one, as will be the case when they have been deceived before by events or men, then it will inevitability lead to the ruin of the state.

..."

"If we consider now what is easy and what is difficult to persuade a people to, we may make this distinction: either what you wish to persuade them to represents at first sight gain or loss, or seems brave or cowardly. And if you propose to them anything that upon its face seem profitable and courageous, though there really be a loss concealed under it that will involve the ruin of the republic, the multitude will ever be most easily persuaded to it. But if the measure proposed seems doubtful and likely to cause loss, then it will be difficult to persuade the people to it, even though the benefit and welfare of the republic were concealed under it."


(Tremelloni 1923; Ministero dell'Economia Nazionale 1925; Serpieri 1930, 141-42; Corner 1975, 49). Agricultural unemployment doubled in Emilia and tripled in Veneto between June 1920 and May 1921 (Tremelloni 1923, 15). Two mainstays of Po Valley agriculture – sugar and hemp – also suffered the vicissitudes of the international commodities markets. After recovering from war production problems, sugar beet acreage increased by 27% from 1918-1919 but contracted by 13% from 1919-1920 to 1920-1921. Emilia and Veneto accounted for 78% of Italian sugar beet acreage (Perdisa 1938, 16, 43). After hemp exports had doubled from January to June 1920, July saw the collapse of the international hemp market (Cardoza 1982, 288; Corner 1975, 100). The Po Valley accounted for 50% of hemp production.
REFERENCES CITED


### Table 1
**Fascist Vote, 1921**
**HLM Intercept-and-Slopes-as-Outcome Model**

Final estimation of fixed effects (with robust standard errors)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fixed Effect</th>
<th>Coefficient</th>
<th>Standard Error</th>
<th>T-ratio</th>
<th>Approx. d.f.</th>
<th>P-value</th>
</tr>
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<td>Intercept, $\gamma_{00}$</td>
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<td>0.010526</td>
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<td>51</td>
<td>0.000</td>
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<td>0.082151</td>
<td>3.721</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>0.001</td>
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<tr>
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<td>0.513767</td>
<td>5.534</td>
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</tr>
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<td>Intercept, $\gamma_{20}$</td>
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<tr>
<td>For Slope Socialist19, $\beta_2$</td>
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Final estimation of variance components:

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<tr>
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<th>Variance Component</th>
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<th>Chi-square</th>
<th>P-value</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>0.00626</td>
<td>47</td>
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<td>Cen-Left slope, $\mu_1$</td>
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<td>0.04000</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>548.34222</td>
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<td>0.00585</td>
<td>48</td>
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<td>Level-1, r</td>
<td>0.04074</td>
<td>0.00166</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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</table>

**Description of Variables in HL Model**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable Name</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>St.Dev.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fascist Vote, 1921</td>
<td>% Fascist Vote, 1921 (as a proportion of enfranchised population, 1921)</td>
<td>.0519</td>
<td>.08286</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cen-Left19</td>
<td>% Center-Left Vote, 1919 (Piretti, 1995:221) (as a proportion of enfranchised population, 1921)</td>
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<td>.13169</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Socialist19</td>
<td>% Socialist Vote, 1919 (as a proportion of enfranchised population, 1921)</td>
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<td>.22432</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SocRuralTUM10</td>
<td>Density Socialist Rural Trade Union Membership, 1910 (as a proportion of enfranchised population, 1921)</td>
<td>.0069</td>
<td>.04338</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
### Table 2

**Agrarian Base of Electoral Behavior, 1919-1921**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Vote</th>
<th>Municipal Units N = 570¹</th>
<th>District Units N = 29²</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Commercial, Industrial, Public Employment 10.3%</td>
<td>Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing Employment 89.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Voted 1919 58.1%</td>
<td>50.1%</td>
<td>55.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constitution 1919 14.5%</td>
<td>.1222</td>
<td>.0181</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Center-Left 1919 6.6%</td>
<td>0.9%</td>
<td>17.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Socialist 1919 58.2%</td>
<td>.0026</td>
<td>.0004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catholic 1919 20.9%</td>
<td>8.2%</td>
<td>5.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Voted 1921 64.5%</td>
<td>68.1%</td>
<td>59.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fascists 1921 17.2%</td>
<td>.0104</td>
<td>.0151</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Block 1921 13.8%³</td>
<td>.0229</td>
<td>.0061</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Center-Left 1921 3.0%</td>
<td>7.0%</td>
<td>11.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Left 1921 43.0%</td>
<td>4.0%</td>
<td>2.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catholic 1921 20.0%</td>
<td>10.2%</td>
<td>19.4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes: (1) Data for males and females. (2) Data for males only. (3) Excludes Fascist vote
Table 3
Voter Transition Matrix 1919-1921
(N = 570)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Vote</th>
<th>Constitutional 1919 14.5%</th>
<th>Center-Left 1919 6.6%</th>
<th>Socialist 1919 58.2%</th>
<th>Catholic 1919 20.9%</th>
<th>Voters 1919 58.1%</th>
<th>Non-voter 1919 41.9%</th>
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<td>35.5%</td>
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<td>Voted 1921</td>
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<tr>
<td>64.5%</td>
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<tr>
<td>13.8%</td>
<td>36.8%</td>
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<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>3%</td>
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<td>Left 1921</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>43%</td>
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<td>25.1%</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>20%</td>
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Notes: (1) Excludes Fascist vote
Table 4
Rural Organizational Base of Socialist, Catholic and Fascist Vote, 1919-1921
(N = 570)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Vote</th>
<th>Catholic Rural Organizational Density 1910</th>
<th>Catholic Rural Trade Union Density 1910</th>
<th>Socialist Rural Organizational Density 1910</th>
<th>Socialist Rural Trade Union Density 1910</th>
<th>Unaffiliated Trade Union Density 1910</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Voters 1919</td>
<td>70.0%</td>
<td>60.0%</td>
<td>62.6%</td>
<td>56.2%</td>
<td>70.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>58.1%</td>
<td>.0198</td>
<td>.1781</td>
<td>.0584</td>
<td>.0961</td>
<td>.1525</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constitutional 1919</td>
<td>7.4%</td>
<td>13.8%</td>
<td>5.6%</td>
<td>6.8%</td>
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<tr>
<td>14.5%</td>
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<td>.0382</td>
<td>.0380</td>
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<td>.0022</td>
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<td>Center-Left 1919</td>
<td>5.1%</td>
<td>4.4%</td>
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<td>6.6%</td>
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<td>.1785</td>
<td>.0286</td>
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<td>62.8%</td>
<td>59.8%</td>
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<td>.0083</td>
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<td>Voters 1921</td>
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<td>.1390</td>
<td>.1709</td>
<td>.0313</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fascist 1921</td>
<td>35.3%</td>
<td>17.0%</td>
<td>50.7%</td>
<td>56.4%</td>
<td>33.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17.4%</td>
<td>.1928</td>
<td>.0733</td>
<td>.2709</td>
<td>.0671</td>
<td>.0440</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Block 1921</td>
<td>2.0%</td>
<td>7.8%</td>
<td>7.0%</td>
<td>8.1%</td>
<td>3.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.8%</td>
<td>.0048</td>
<td>.0180</td>
<td>.0367</td>
<td>.0315</td>
<td>.0195</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Center-Left 1921</td>
<td>1.1%</td>
<td>6.5%</td>
<td>3.8%</td>
<td>4.6%</td>
<td>6.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.0%</td>
<td>.0078</td>
<td>.0449</td>
<td>.0122</td>
<td>.0092</td>
<td>.0078</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catholic 1921</td>
<td>42.6%</td>
<td>42.1%</td>
<td>9.3%</td>
<td>11.3%</td>
<td>0.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20.0%</td>
<td>.0852</td>
<td>.0765</td>
<td>.0604</td>
<td>.0735</td>
<td>.0010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Left 1921</td>
<td>21.6%</td>
<td>44.1%</td>
<td>42.0%</td>
<td>54.8%</td>
<td>67.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>43.0%</td>
<td>.0856</td>
<td>.0037</td>
<td>.1050</td>
<td>.0279</td>
<td>.0207</td>
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</table>
### Table 5
Class Electoral Volatility

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Mean CV Pre-War</th>
<th>CV Pre to Post-War</th>
<th>CV First to Second Election</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>18.4</td>
<td>5.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italy-High Fascism</td>
<td></td>
<td>31.5</td>
<td>15.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>5.4</td>
<td>3.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UK</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>19.5</td>
<td>7.3</td>
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</table>

### Religious Electoral Volatility

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Mean RV Pre-War</th>
<th>RV Pre to Post-War</th>
<th>RV First to Second Election</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>19.9</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italy-High Fascism</td>
<td></td>
<td>15.5</td>
<td>1.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>5.4</td>
<td>2.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UK</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>1.65</td>
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</table>

### Organizational Density

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Soc TU Mem/Left Vote</th>
<th>Soc Org Mem/Left Vote</th>
<th>Left TU Mem/Left Vote</th>
<th>Left Org Mem/Left Vote</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>.09</td>
<td>10.0</td>
<td>15.6</td>
<td>16.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italy-High Fascism</td>
<td>.16</td>
<td>21.0</td>
<td>33.1</td>
<td>38.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>42.7</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UK</td>
<td>35.4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Catholic TU Mem Density

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Catholic TU Mem/Catholic Vote</th>
<th>All Catholic Org Mem/Catholic Vote</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>13.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italy-High Fascism</td>
<td>9.0</td>
<td>29.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### TU Mem Density

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>0.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italy-High Fascism</td>
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<td>3.9</td>
<td>8.3</td>
<td>0.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>35.1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UK</td>
<td>31.1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Notes:
1 Bartolini and Mair, 1990: 111.
2 Unless otherwise noted, computed from data in Flora, 1983: 119-120, 129, 151.
3 For Central Italy, estimated from Piretti, 1995: 194.
4 For 11 provinces identified as High Fascist.
5 Bartolini and Mair, 1990: Appendix 2.
6 Bartolini and Mair, 1990: 234. For Italy trade union data are for 1910, electoral data for 1919, Socialist affiliated unions only.
7 Includes Socialist affiliated trade unions, cooperatives, banks, mutual benefit societies. Includes multiple memberships.
8 Includes Socialist and Unaffiliated Unions.
9 Includes Socialist and Unaffiliated trade unions, cooperatives, banks, mutual benefit societies. Includes multiple memberships.
10 Includes Catholic trade unions, cooperatives, banks, mutual benefit societies. Includes multiple memberships.
11 Includes Socialist and Catholic trade unions.
Table 6
Rural Organizational Base of Socialist and Fascist Vote, 1919-1921
(N = 570)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Vote</th>
<th>Socialist TU Contract Laborers 1910 0.4%</th>
<th>Socialist TU Day Laborers 1910 3.0%</th>
<th>Unaffiliated TU Contract Laborers 1910 0.4%</th>
<th>Unaffiliated TU Day Laborers 1910 1.6%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Voters 1919</td>
<td>45.6%</td>
<td>70.1%</td>
<td>56.5%</td>
<td>53.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>58.1%</td>
<td>.2204</td>
<td>.0402</td>
<td>.2106</td>
<td>.1692</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Socialist 1919</td>
<td>20.9%</td>
<td>86.7%</td>
<td>86.7%</td>
<td>77.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>58.2%</td>
<td>.0542</td>
<td>.0251</td>
<td>.0140</td>
<td>.1810</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Voters 1921</td>
<td>53.6%</td>
<td>71.1%</td>
<td>76.3%</td>
<td>50.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>64.5%</td>
<td>.1506</td>
<td>.0341</td>
<td>.1083</td>
<td>.1971</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fascist 1921</td>
<td>59.9%</td>
<td>50.0%</td>
<td>35.4%</td>
<td>29.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17.2%</td>
<td>.1835</td>
<td>.0507</td>
<td>.0380</td>
<td>.1917</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Left 1921</td>
<td>22.5%</td>
<td>66.2%</td>
<td>67.3%</td>
<td>71.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>43.0%</td>
<td>.2114</td>
<td>.0293</td>
<td>.0196</td>
<td>.1008</td>
</tr>
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</table>