Party Ideology and Policies *

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Abstract

The work studies the relationship between party ideology and implemented policies, using data on Italian municipalities. In order to identify the causal effect of party ideology, the paper exploits the random allocation of parties on the ballot paper and the "ballot order effect". The arrangement of symbols on the ballot determines a focal party, which receives on average 4% share of additional votes within coalition. Results show that parties largely respect their electoral promises. When parties receives a random premium of additional votes, they shift spending and taxation to address the policies included in their political manifesto. In particular, the Left Party (*Rifondazione Comunista*) increases spending in education, culture and in social welfare. When the Populist-Right Party (*Lega Nord*) is treated, it increases spending in police and justice. Finally, evidence shows that the Center-Right Party (*Forza Italia*) decreases local taxes, which mostly include the house property tax (ICI).

JEL Classification: H71, H72, E62.

Keywords: Fiscal Policies, Party Ideology, Ballot Order Effect

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1 Introduction

Increasing effort has been devoted to investigating the links between parties, candidates, and the policies they implement. This has been at the core of research in political economy since the seminal work of Downs (1957) and recognition of the "tremendous importance of government decisions in every phase of economic life". While there exists a vast literature, both theoretical and empirical, that investigates the incentives of candidates and parties and how they affect policies, the empirical relationship between party ideology and policies is still unclear.

One of the main obstacles has been the lack of a clear and convincing identification strategy. Indeed, a number of confounding factors can affect this relationship, from voters' preferences and idiosyncratic features of party candidates, to the direct effect of policies on preferences and party structure and ideology. The goal of this work is to investigate the link between parties and policies, using a large dataset on Italian municipalities and a new identification strategy that allows for a comprehensive understanding of the behaviour of parties in coalition governments.

The Italian municipal electoral system incentivizes the formation of coalitions of parties. More specifically, parties usually form coalitions that have a broad common political objective, but are also often highly heterogeneous with respect to their political manifestos and their electoral promises. Local parties frequently exist at the national level as well, although a sizable number of parties are present only locally (*liste civiche*). Moreover, it has been suggested that the range of local parties in Italy possibly covers one of the largest ideological spectra in the world. One interesting institutional feature is that the coalition of parties that wins the election has a majority premium and gains at least 60 per cent of the seats on the municipality council. These seats are distributed proportionally to the votes obtained by parties within the ruling coalition. The presence of multiple parties in a coalition government, and their marked ideological heterogeneity makes this an ideal setting for understanding how different party features interact in shaping policy. Finally, the presence of a large majority granted by the law to ruling coalitions helps isolating the role of ideology from possible confounding factors related to the risks of government stability.

In order to identify the causal effect of party identity on fiscal policies, this work exploits the presence of a lottery managed by State officials, that randomizes, within coalition, the position of parties in the ballot paper. The lottery takes place once, and the same ballot paper is distributed to voters at the polling station on election day. A peculiar disposition of names and symbols in the ballot implies that the party which is aligned to the name of the candidate for mayor receives on average 4% share of additional votes within coalition, and an increase of 10% in the probability of obtaining at least one seat in the city council. By using the random allocation of parties on the ballot paper and the presence of a *focal point*, we can exploit random shocks in the share of votes

and party seats on the municipal council.

First, we take advantage of a series of natural experiments. We build a sample, made by all observations in which a party of interest, e.g. the Left Party (*Rifondazione Comunista*), is in the ruling coalition. We denote by treated an observation for which the party of interest is in the focal point. We include in the control group an observation for which the party of interest is not in the focal point. We will have a natural experiment and a different sample, for each party of interest.

We show that treating the Left Party (*Rifondazione Comunista*) increases its percentage of votes within the ruling coalition by 2.5 pp, and its share of seats within coalition by 2.1 pp. Treating the Center-Left Party (*Partito Democratico*) increases its percentage of votes within the ruling coalition by 5.4 pp, and its share of seats within coalition by 5.2 pp. Treating the Center-Right Party (*Forza Italia*) increases its percentage of votes within the ruling coalition by 3.2 pp, and its share of seats within coalition by 2.8 pp. Treating the Populist-Right Party (*Lega Nord*) increases its percentage of votes within the ruling coalition by 6.7 pp, and its share of seats within coalition by 5.8 pp.

Secondly, we find that parties shift spending and taxation to address the policies included in their political manifesto, when their political representation in the city council increases. In particular, the Left Party (*Rifondazione Comunista*) increases spending in education & culture and in social welfare. We find that the Center-Right Party (*Forza Italia*) decreases local taxes, which mostly include the house property tax (ICI). The Populist-Right Party (*Lega Nord*) increases spending in police & justice. The political manifesto of the Left Party[1] focuses on the weaker segments on society, making social justice one of its main objectives, to be obtained through different means, including public education. The Center-Right Party has campaigned since its foundation on the reduction of taxes, in particular of the house property tax. Silvio Berlusconi, the founder of the party, promised, during a famous electoral speech in 2006, that he would abolish the house property tax, if elected Prime Minister. The Populist-Right Party has shifted attention from the independence of the north of Italy, in the early nineties, to the opposition to illegal immigration and increased spending on issues related to personal safety. Additional results show that that increasing political representation for the Left Party induces larger fees and tariffs, suggesting that increased spending in education & culture and social welfare is financed by higher taxes. Moreover we find that the revenues from kindergarten fees increase, suggesting a larger number of users. Finally we show that increasing the number of seats of the Populist-Right Party implies larger revenues from police fines, probably a consequence of increased spending in local police.

A relatively recent literature has used a regression discontinuity design (RDD) approach to

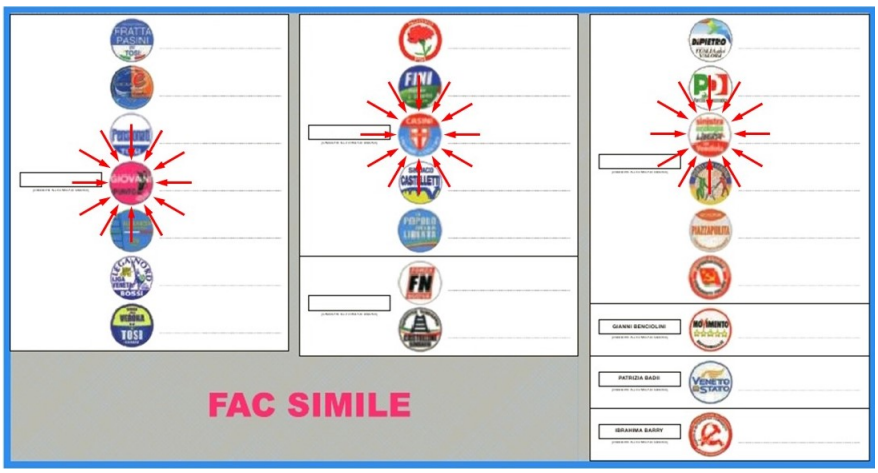
[1] http://web.rifondazione.it/home/images/statutoXcongressoGU_prc.pdf

provide identification in the relation between party ideology and policies. (Pettersson-Lidbom 2008) has shown that left-wing ruling coalitions in Sweden spend and tax more than right-wing coalitions, by comparing municipalities where a left-wing coalition won by a small margin with municipalities where a right-wing coalition won by a small margin. (Ferreira and Gyourko 2009) use the same empirical approach to show that whether a mayor is a Democrat or a Republican does not affect the size of US city governments or the allocation of local public spending. (Folke 2014) implements a modified RDD tailored for proportional systems to show that small parties matter for secondary policies, such as immigration and environmental policies. While the results of these works shed important light on the link between parties and policy, they also suggest that this relationship is complex and influenced by the presence of multiple parties in ruling coalitions, which are heterogeneous in terms of size and ideology.

2 Ballot Order Effect

The ballot order effect is defined as the relation between the order of symbols of parties or names of candidates on a voting ballot and the distribution of votes. The existence and relevance of this relation has been the focus of the political science literature. The empirical literature has shown that, when parties are simply listed in the ballot, the first and the last party receive a boost of votes (i.e., (Miller and Krosnick 1998), (Ho and Imai 2008) and (Meredith and Salant 2013)). However, as shown in Figure 1, in this setting parties are not simply listed in the ballot. Indeed, the combination of symbols and names in the ballot paper of Italian municipalities is quite articulated.

FIGURE 1: MUNICIPALITY BALLOT PAPER



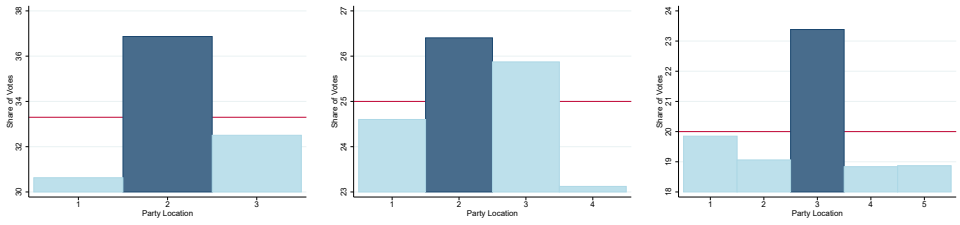
Ballot paper (Facsimile) of Italian municipalities with more than 15,000 inhabitants.

Since 1990, in italy, the position of party symbols in the ballot paper is determined by a random

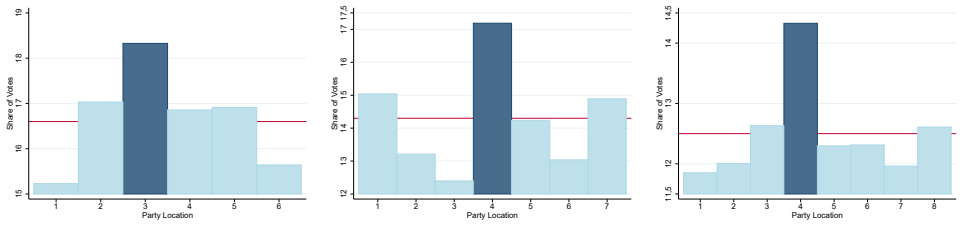
draw, executed by state officials. Our objective is to use this randomization as an instrument for the political fragmentation of the ruling coalition. As a first step, we identify the causal effect of the position on the percentage of votes obtained by each party. Then, we show that there is no evidence of a specific pattern in the relation between party symbols and positions on the ballot paper, suggesting that indeed the order is assigned randomly. Finally, in the next section, we present the instrument.

We provide evidence of the existence of a focal point in the box of a coalition (the white box in Figure 1) that seems to attract a disproportionate amount of voters. The symbol of the party which is located on the right of the name of the running mayor has on average a larger share of votes then all other parties in the same coalition. The Graphs of Figure 2 show the share of votes within coalition of parties, by position in the ballot paper and according the number of running parties in the coalition. These graphs show that on average the party that is in the focal point receives more votes (Dark-Blue Bars). When three parties are running (see Graph (a) of Figure 2), due to randomization and the law of large numbers, each party on average should obtain 33% of votes, if no ballot order effect is active. However, the first and the last party on average obtain less than 33% of votes and the party in the focal point obtains more than 33% of votes. The same path is observed in all other graphs of Figure 2.

FIGURE 2: BALLOT ORDER EFFECT



(a) Three Parties (b) Four Parties (c) Five Parties



(d) Six Parties (e) Seven Parties (f) Eight Parties

The graphs report the party share of votes within coalition by location in the ballot paper. Each graph includes coalitions with a given number of running parties. *Vertical axis*: the mean of the party share of votes within coalition. *Horizontal axis*: the ballot paper position of the party symbol in the box of the coalition. The dark blue bar represents the share of votes of the party in the *Focal Point*.

In order to identify the effect of a party being in the focal point on its vote share, we estimate

the following specification:

$$SV_{eti} = \delta_0 + \delta_1 FP_{eti} + \delta_2 V_{et} + \delta_3 X_c + \mu_t + \theta_n + \varepsilon_{eti} \quad (1)$$

where SV_{eti} is the share of votes within coalition of party i running during election e in the calendar year t and FP_{eti} (*Focal Point*) is a dummy that takes value 1 if the party's symbol is on the right of the name of the running mayor, 0 otherwise. The specification includes control variables relative to electoral outcomes e,[2] time invariant geographical characteristics of the municipality X_c,[3] year fixed effect μ_t and number of running parties within the coalition fixed effect θ_p. Standard errors are clustered at municipal legislature level. We include in this specification also coalitions that lost the election.

When there is an odd number of running parties within coalition, the name of candidate is always aligned with the symbol of a single party. For example (Figure 1) in the case of three parties, the name of the candidate is aligned with the second party symbol. Instead, when there is an even number of running parties within coalition, the name of the candidate is in the middle between two party symbols. For example, in the case of four running parties the name of the candidate for mayor is in between the second and the third party symbols. As will be clear in the following section, in order to define our instrumental variable, only one position in the vertical list of parties can be considered as focal. In particular, when there is an even number of parties running, the variable FP_{eti} takes values one only for the first (from the top) of the two party symbols quasi-aligned with the name of the candidate. For example, in the case of four running parties it takes value one only for the second party symbol. This choice has been made following the standard results in the visual hierarchy and eye tracking literatures that show that viewers follow a left-to-right and top-to-bottom reading pattern ((Djamasbi, Siegel, and Tullis 2011)), thus it should be more likely that voters, if they choose randomly between the two quasi-aligned parties, vote the top one. Moreover, this is confirmed by graphs of Figure 1.

[2]The level of turnout, the percentage of votes obtained by the mayor, a dummy that takes values 1 if the mayor is elected at the runoff, whether the mayor has the absolute majority of seats, a dummy that takes values 1 if the mayor is endorsed by parties other than her original coalition and if they get seats, if the mayor is at her first or second term of office, and the number of parties in the city council during the previous term.

[3]The municipal area in square kilometers, the degree of urbanization, the seismicity class, the sea distance, the population size in log, the presence of a river or any other type of watercourse (river, lake or sea), and the altitude category.

TABLE 1: BALLOT ORDER EFFECT: ESTIMATES

PANEL A	Dependent Variable: Party Share of Votes (within Coalition)						
N. of Running Parties:	(1) 3 Parties	(2) 4 Parties	(3) 5 Parties	(4) 6 Parties	(5) 7 Parties	(6) 8 Parties	(7) 3-8 Parties
Ballot Order: Treated Party	5.374***	2.571**	4.498***	1.799*	2.861***	2.315*	3.464***
	(1.418)	(1.167)	(0.990)	(1.038)	(1.078)	(1.236)	(0.514)
Fixed Effect:							
Running Parties FE	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✓
Calendar Year FE	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Election Characteristics	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Geographical Characteristics	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Observations	1,593	2,080	2,585	2,106	1,519	1,256	11,139
R^2	0.015	0.004	0.011	0.002	0.005	0.004	0.133
PANEL B	Dependent Variable: Probability to Have at Least a Seat						
N. of Running Parties:	(1) 3 Parties	(2) 4 Parties	(3) 5 Parties	(4) 6 Parties	(5) 7 Parties	(6) 8 Parties	(7) 3-8 Parties
Ballot Order: Treated Party	0.079***	0.037	0.158***	0.080***	0.185***	0.089**	0.100***
	(0.023)	(0.023)	(0.021)	(0.026)	(0.029)	(0.039)	(0.010)
Fixed Effect:							
Running Parties FE	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✓
Calendar Year FE	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Election Characteristics	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Geographical Characteristics	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Observations	1,593	2,080	2,585	2,106	1,519	1,256	11,139
R^2	0.282	0.184	0.117	0.095	0.079	0.076	0.122

The dependent variable is: the party share of votes within coalition in *Panel A*; the probability to obtain at least a seat within the city council in *Panel B*, see Table A1 for details on the variables and Table A2 for summary statistics. The *Ballot Order: Treated Party* is a dummy variable equal to one if the party is in the focal point in the ballot paper and zero otherwise. All the regressions include Election Characteristics, Geographical Characteristics and Calendar Year FE. In the last column (7) the number of running parties within the coalition FE is included in the regression. Covariates description and data sources are reported in Tables A3 and A4, respectively. Summary statistics of covariates are reported in Table A5. The unit of observation is a party i which belongs to a coalition of at least three, and less than nine, running parties. Municipalities with more than 15,000 inhabitants in the period 2002-2012. Estimation methods: ordinary least squares estimation as in equation (**??**). Robust standard errors clustered at the municipal legislature level are in parentheses. Significance at the 10% level is represented by , at the 5% level by *, and at the 1% level by *.

Panel A of Table 1 reports the estimates of specification (1). From Column (1) to Column (6) results are reported by number of running parties, separately. Finally, column (7) reports the results with all the coalitions with more than three parties and less than nine parties.

Evidence shows that parties that randomly end up in the focal position receive more votes than others parties. Column (1) shows that the party in the focal point, in a coalition of three parties, obtains 5.25% point more votes within the coalition than other parties. The estimates are robust to the inclusion of all the controls. Overall, evidence shows that the effect is larger when the number of parties in the coalition is odd. As suggested before, when there is an even number of parties, the two parties quasi-aligned to the name of the candidate for mayor share part of the boost of votes. The ballot order effect identified in this work does not have spillovers outside a single coalition: the votes gained by the party in the focal point are taken from other parties in the same coalition. In

the next section, when we discuss the exclusion restriction of the instrument, we provide evidence which confirms this statement.

From a political point of view, the magnitude of the effect is relevant. Due to the proportional distribution of seats within the ruling coalitions, a reallocation of 3.5 percentage points significantly changes the balance of power within the ruling coalition. The implicit minimum threshold, consequence of the discrete nature of seat allocation, to get at least one seat, in many cases is lower the 3.5 percentage points. Panel B of table 1 shows the effect of being in the focal point on the probability that the party receives at least one seat. The dependent variable is a dummy that takes value one if the party has obtained at least one seat, 0 otherwise. The party in the focal point increases the probability to obtain at least on seat in the city council by 5-18 percentage points with respect to the other parties of the coalition.

3 Baseline Experiment

The setting presented in the previous section allows us to study the effect of party identity on policy through a natural experiment. We build the sample, grouping observation in a treated and control groups (as shown in Figure 3), we follow the following steps:

i) We select all government coalitions where a party of interest, let us denote it by "Party A", is present. We only keep government coalitions because we are interested in the direct effect of an increase in party representation of a ruling party on policy.

ii) We build the treated group, considering all municipalities in which Party A is in the focal position on the ballot.

iii) The control group is composed by municipalities in which Party A is not in the focal position.

It is important to stress that we are not studying the extensive margin of the presence of Party A in the coalition, comparing coalitions with and without Party A. Instead, we are identifying the intensive margin of party ideology, comparing coalitions where the relative power of Party A is lower, as opposed to coalitions where the relative power of Party A is higher.

FIGURE 3: BASELINE EXPERIMENT: TREATED VS NOT TREATED

(a) Treated Group (b) Not Treated Group

The graph on the left (a) shows a coalition in which the party of interest is in the focal point, the treated group. The graph on the right (b) shows a coalition in which the party of interest is not in the focal point.

4 First Stage

In this section we show the effect of our experiment on voting and political representation outcomes. In particular we show that each of the parties of interest, when treated, increases significantly its percentage of votes, the number of seats, the share of votes within coalition, the share of seats within coalition. For each party of interest a different sample is considered, following the steps outlined in the previous section.

TABLE 2: FIRST STAGE: ESTIMATES

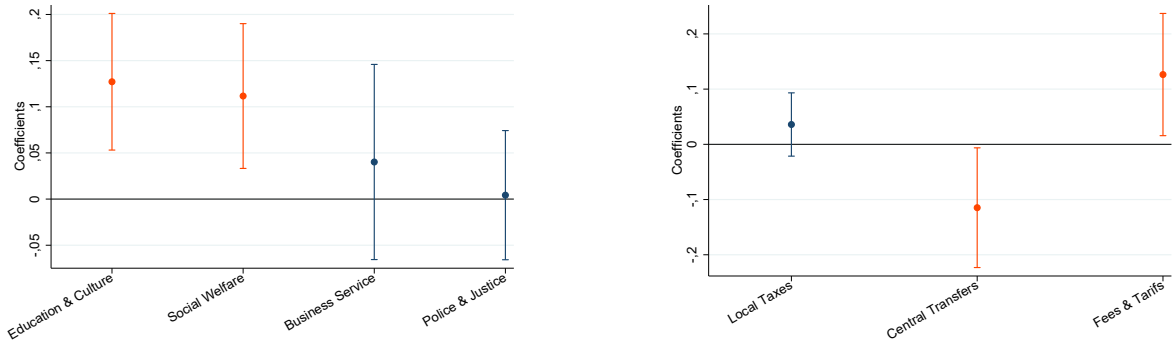
SAMPLE A: LEFT PARTY IN THE RULING COALITION				
	(1) Percentage Votes	(2) Number of Seats	(3) Share of Seats within Coalition	(4) Share of Votes within Coalition
Treated Party	1.2060***	0.3537***	2.1275***	2.5126***
	(0.288)	(0.108)	(0.567)	(0.703)
Observations	466	466	466	466
R-squared	0.2958	0.2565	0.2608	0.1833
SAMPLE B: CENTRE-LEFT PARTY IN THE RULING COALITION				
	(1) Percentage Votes	(2) Number of Seats	(3) Share of Seats within Coalition	(4) Share of Votes within Coalition
Treated Party	2.7157***	0.8932***	5.1891***	5.3918***
	(0.593)	(0.228)	(1.050)	(1.250)
Observations	609	609	609	609
R-squared	0.7854	0.7190	0.7034	0.6611
SAMPLE C: CENTRE-RIGHT PARTY IN THE RULING COALITION				
	(1) Percentage Votes	(2) Number of Seats	(3) Share of Seats within Coalition	(4) Share of Votes within Coalition
Treated Party	1.5983**	0.5836**	2.7861**	3.2232*
	(0.750)	(0.282)	(1.382)	(1.640)
Observations	404	404	404	404
R-squared	0.4648	0.4969	0.4259	0.3538
SAMPLE E: POPULIST RIGHT PARTY IN THE RULING COALITION				
	(1) Percentage Votes	(2) Number of Seats	(3) Share of Seats within Coalition	(4) Share of Votes within Coalition
Treated Party	3.3522***	1.1996**	5.8195**	6.7349**
	(1.229)	(0.470)	(2.420)	(2.921)
Observations	161	161	161	161
R-squared	0.6220	0.5677	0.6240	0.5954
Fixed Effect:				
Running Parties FE	✓	✓	✓	✓
Calendar Year FE	✓	✓	✓	✓
Election Characteristics	✓	✓	✓	✓
Geographical Characteristics	✓	✓	✓	✓

4.1 Baseline Results

In this section we analyze the effect of begin treated, i.e. being in the focal point, on spending and revenue outcomes. The main expenditure items analyzed in this section are: (1) *education & culture*; (2) *social welfare*; (3) *business services*; (4) *police & justice*. The main revenue items analyzed in this section are: (1) *local taxes*, which contains the income tax (*IRPEF*), the tax on waste collection, and the real estate tax (*ICI*), the latter being the largest; (2) *fees & tariffs* include revenues from the supply of public services (fees for kindergarten, retirement homes, sport facil-

ities etc.), from exercising certain functions (fines made by the local police, parking lots fees and public land rent) and from the management of certain activities or from ownership of properties; *central transfers* include transfers from higher levels of government. Confidence intervals are at the 95% level. Significant results are emphasized in red.

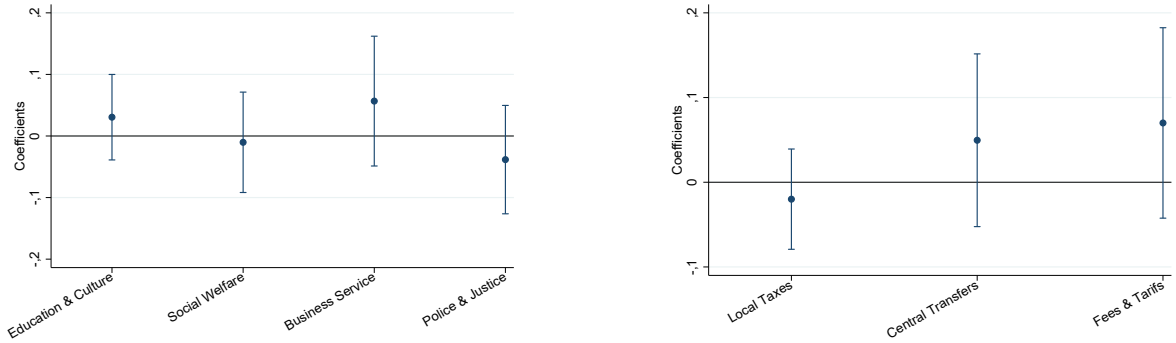
FIGURE 4: THE LEFT PARTY: EXPENDITURE AND REVENUES ITEMS



(a) Expenditure Items

(b) Revenues Items

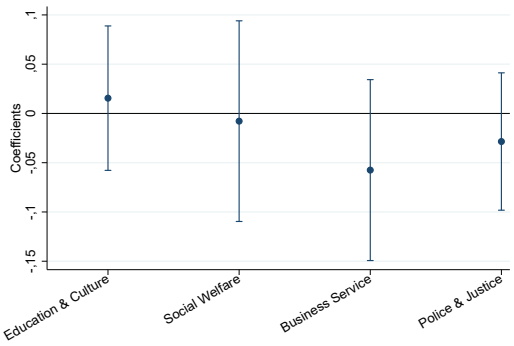
FIGURE 5: THE CENTRE-LEFT PARTY: EXPENDITURE AND REVENUES ITEMS



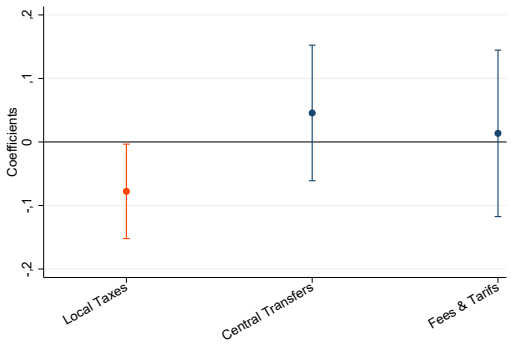
(a) Expenditure Items

(b) Revenues Items

FIGURE 6: THE CENTRE-RIGHT PARTY: EXPENDITURE AND REVENUES ITEMS

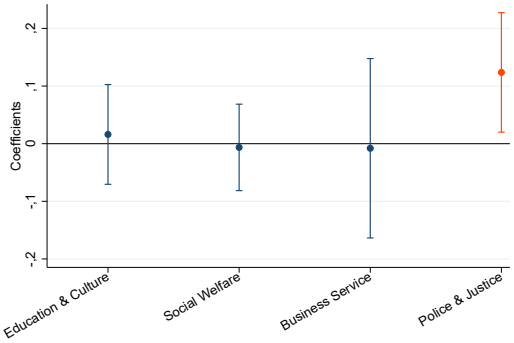


(a) Expenditure Items

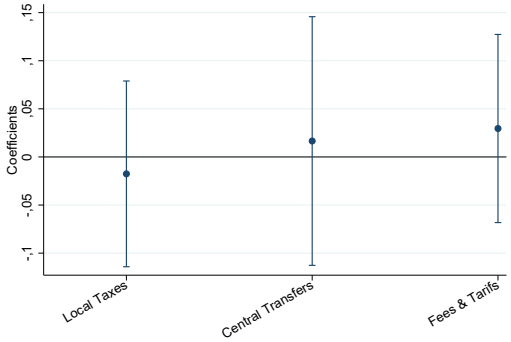


(b) Revenues Items

FIGURE 7: THE POPULIST-RIGHT PARTY: EXPENDITURE AND REVENUES ITEMS

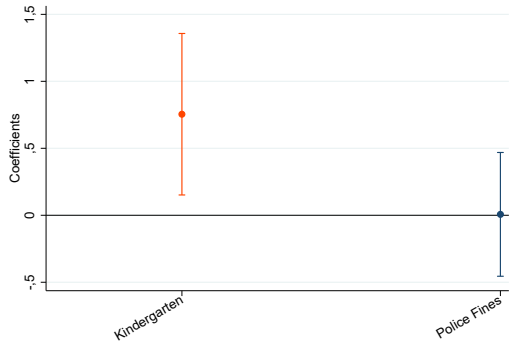


(a) Expenditure Items

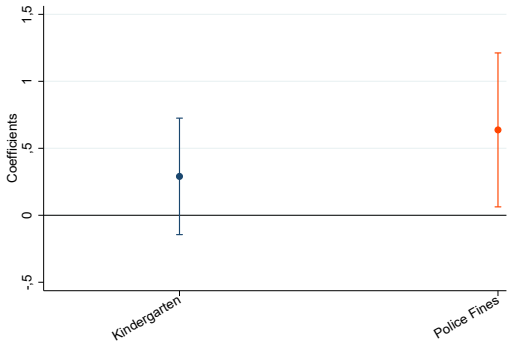


(b) Revenues Items

FIGURE 8: ADDITIONAL RESULTS



(a) Left Party



(b) Populist Right

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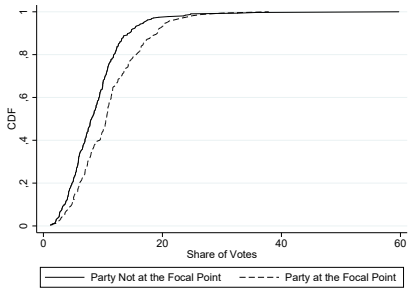
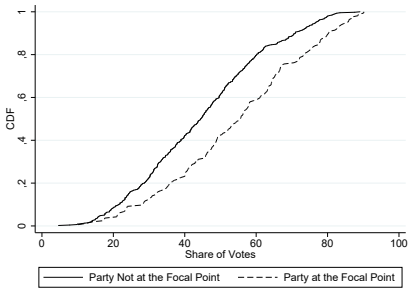
Appendix

Appendix A: Ballot Order Effect & First Stage

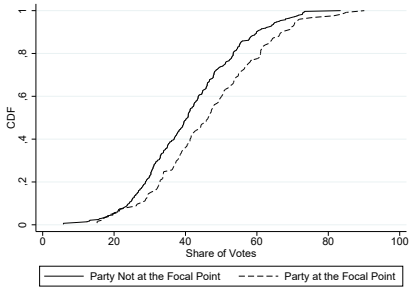
FIGURE A1: FIRST STAGE: BALANCE TEST (LEFT PARTY)



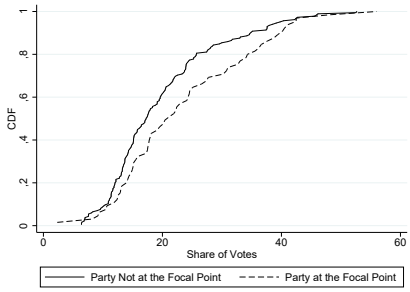
(a) Left Party



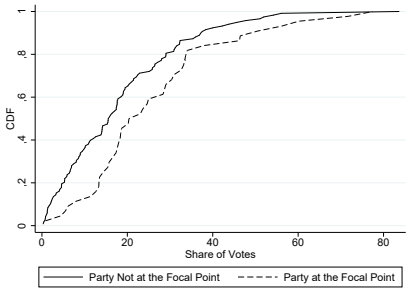
(b) Centre-Left Party



(c) Centre-Right Party



(d) Conservative Party



(e) Populist Right Party

FIGURE A2: FIRST STAGE: BALANCE TEST (LEFT PARTY)

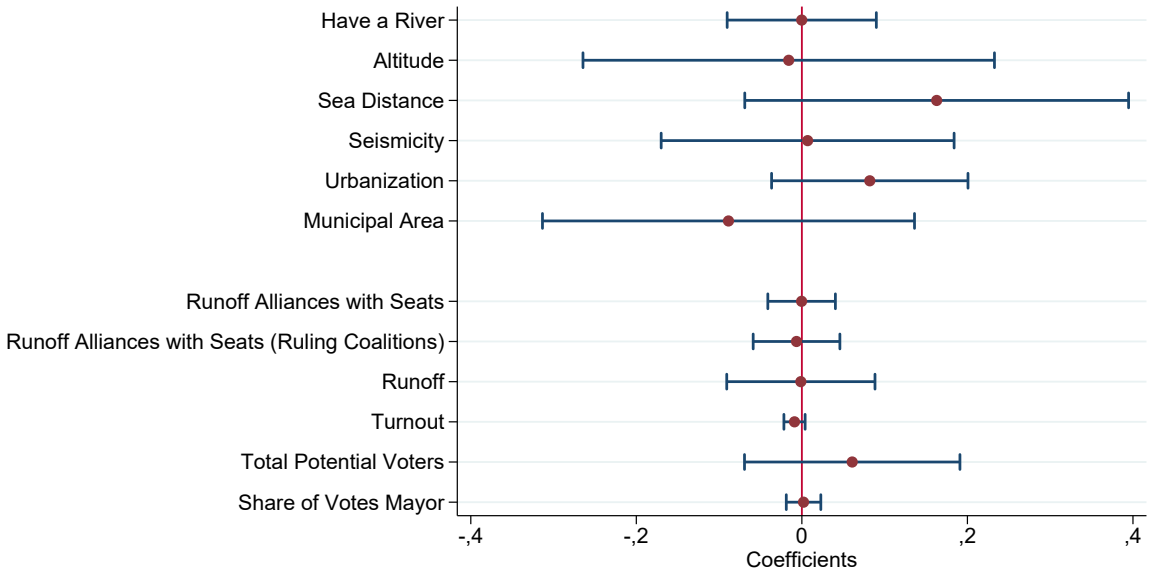


FIGURE A3: FIRST STAGE: BALANCE TEST (CENTRE-LEFT PARTY)

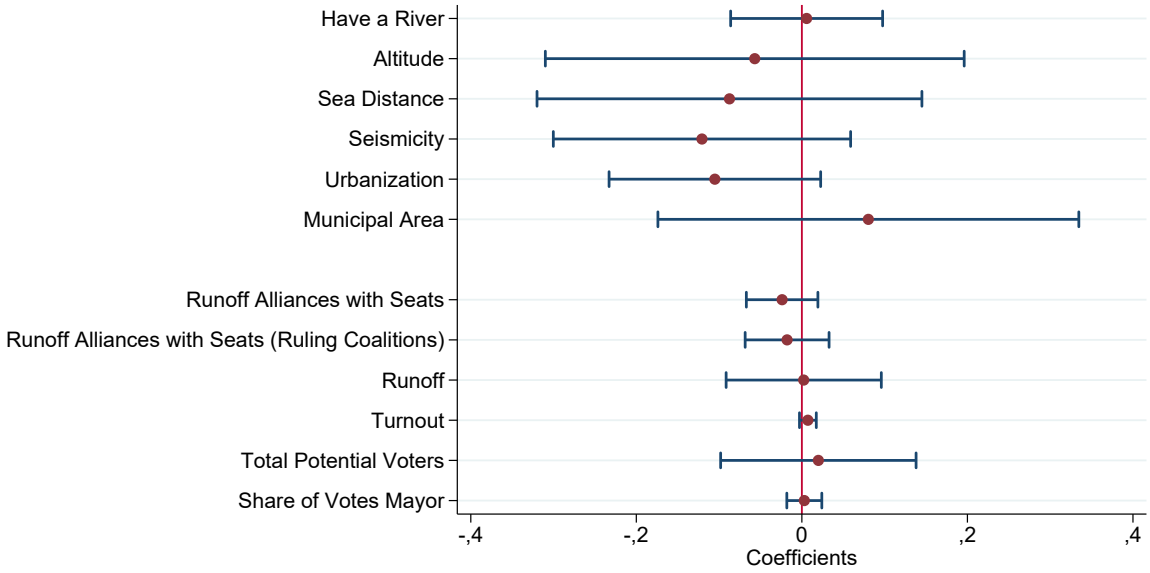


FIGURE A4: FIRST STAGE: BALANCE TEST (CENTRE-RIGHT PARTY)

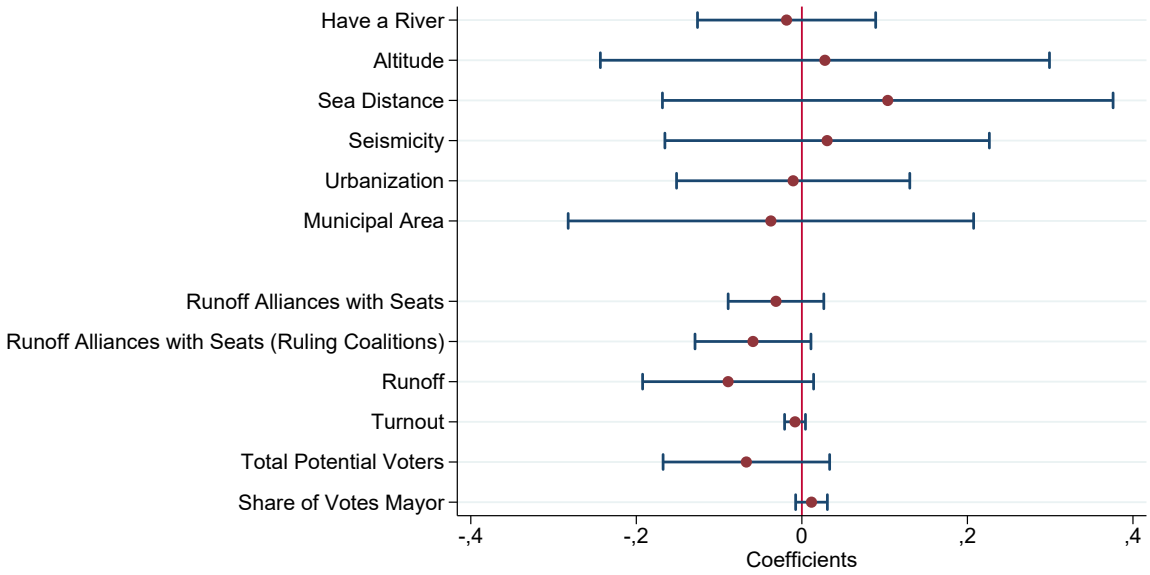


FIGURE A5: FIRST STAGE: BALANCE TEST (CONSERVATIVE PARTY)

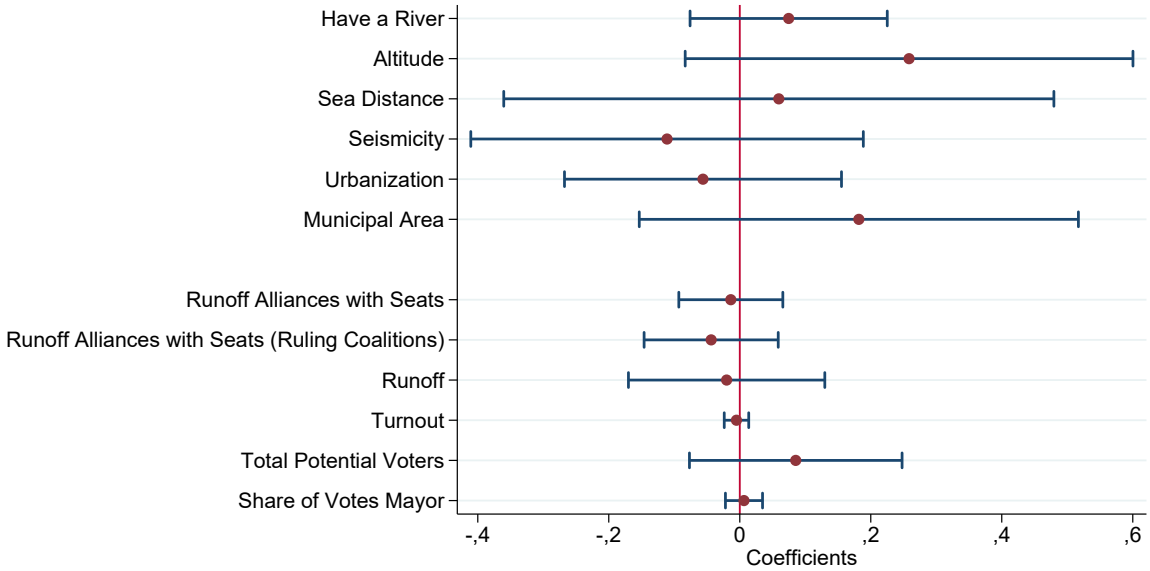


FIGURE A6: FIRST STAGE: BALANCE TEST (POPULIST RIGHT PARTY)

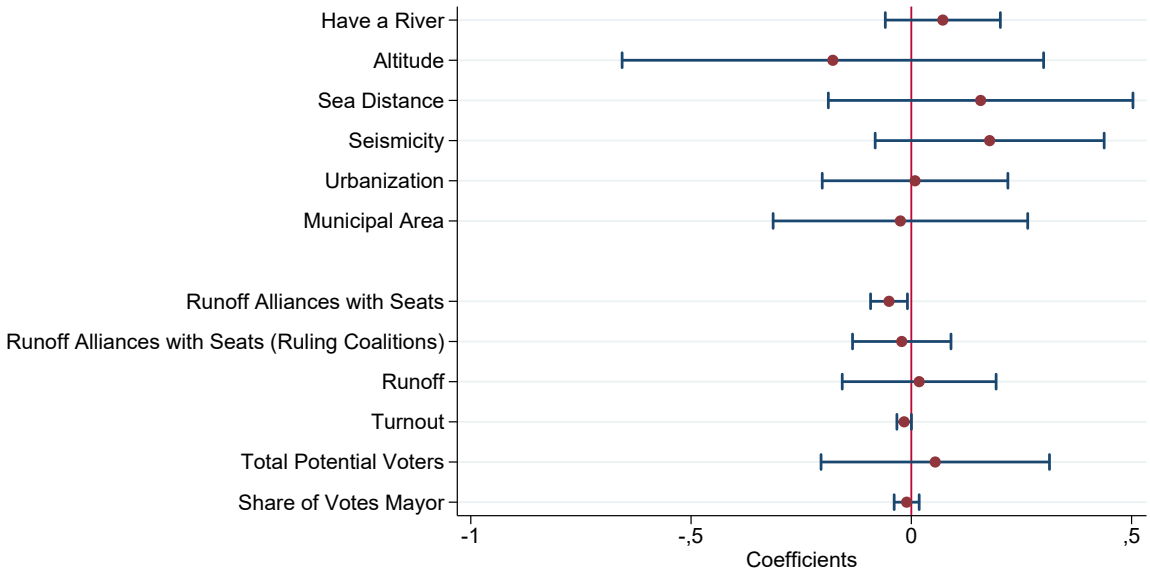


TABLE A1: VARIABLES' DESCRIPTION AND DATA SOURCES: BALLOT ORDER EFFECT

Explanatory Variable:

Ballot Order: Treated Party Dummy variable equal to one if the party is in the focal point in the ballot paper and zero otherwise. Source: the position of party in the ballot paper has been retrieved by the authors from documents of the Italian Ministry of Internal Affairs.

Dependent Variables:

Party Share of Votes (within Coalition). The votes obtained by the party over the total number of votes obtained by the parties of the coalition. Source: Italian Ministry of Internal Affairs, Election Archive.

Number of Seats. Number of seats obtained by the party within the city council. Source: Italian Ministry of Internal Affairs, Election Archive.

Probability to Have at Least a Seat. Dummy variable equal to one if the party has obtained at least on seats within the city council and zero otherwise. Source: Italian Ministry of Internal Affairs, Election Archive.

Party Ranking. Ranking of the party in term of share of votes within coalition. For example, in a coalition of three running parties, the variable takes value 1 if the party enjoys the largest share of votes (within coalition), it takes value 2 if the party receives the second largest share of votes and 3 if the party takes the smallest share of votes. Source: Italian Ministry of Internal Affairs, Election Archive, authors' calculations.

Left Dummy variable equal to one if the party is the Left Party ("Rifondazione Comunista") and zero otherwise. Source: Italian Ministry of Internal Affairs, Election Archive.

Center-Left Dummy variable equal to one if the party is the Center-Left Party ("Partito Democratico") and zero otherwise. Source: Italian Ministry of Internal Affairs, Election Archive.

Center-Right Dummy variable equal to one if the party is the Center-Right Party ("Forza Italia") and zero otherwise. Source: Italian Ministry of Internal Affairs, Election Archive.

Conservative Dummy variable equal to one if the party is the Conservative Party ("Alleanza Nazionale") and zero otherwise. Source: Italian Ministry of Internal Affairs, Election Archive.

Populist Right Dummy variable equal to one if the party is the Populist Right Party ("Lega Nord") and zero otherwise. Source: Italian Ministry of Internal Affairs, Election Archive.

Instrument:

Ballot Order: Instrument Ranking of the party, located in the focal point of the ballot paper, in term of share of votes within coalition. Source: Italian Ministry of Internal Affairs, Election Archive, authors' calculations.

Source: Electoral Covariates are available on the website of the Italian Ministry of Internal Affairs, Election Archive. See http://elezionistorico.interno.it/.

TABLE A2: SUMMARY STATISTICS: BALLOT ORDER EFFECT

Variable	N	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min.	Max.
Explanatory Variable:					
Party in the Focal Point:					
3 Parties within Coalition	1,593	0.333	0.472	0	1
4 Parties within Coalition	2,080	0.250	0.433	0	1
5 Parties within Coalition	2,585	0.200	0.400	0	1
6 Parties within Coalition	2,106	0.167	0.373	0	1
7 Parties within Coalition	1,519	0.143	0.350	0	1
8 Parties within Coalition	1,256	0.125	0.331	0	1
Dependent Variables:					
Party Share of Votes (within Coalition):					
3 Parties within Coalition	1,593	33.33	21.27	0.70	92.35
4 Parties within Coalition	2,080	25	19.14	0.36	88.98
5 Parties within Coalition	2,585	20	17.21	0.14	88.63
6 Parties within Coalition	2,106	16.67	15.82	0.13	92.23
7 Parties within Coalition	1,519	14.29	13.86	0.18	79.03
8 Parties within Coalition	1,256	12.50	12.76	0.07	73.16
Number of Seats:					
3 Parties within Coalition	1,593	1.77	2.87	0	30
4 Parties within Coalition	2,080	1.91	2.93	0	29
5 Parties within Coalition	2,585	1.85	2.80	0	33
6 Parties within Coalition	2,106	1.99	3.23	0	35
7 Parties within Coalition	1,519	2.03	3.49	0	39
8 Parties within Coalition	1,256	1.91	3.35	0	39
Probability to Have at Least a Seat:					
3 Parties within Coalition	1,593	0.55	0.50	0	1
4 Parties within Coalition	2,080	0.61	0.49	0	1
5 Parties within Coalition	2,585	0.62	0.48	0	1
6 Parties within Coalition	2,106	0.62	0.48	0	1
7 Parties within Coalition	1,519	0.63	0.48	0	1
8 Parties within Coalition	1,256	0.62	0.49	0	1
Party Ranking:					
3 Parties within Coalition	1,593	2	0.82	1	3
4 Parties within Coalition	2,080	2.50	1.12	1	4
5 Parties within Coalition	2,585	2.99	1.41	1	5
6 Parties within Coalition	2,106	3.49	1.71	1	6
7 Parties within Coalition	1,519	3.99	2	1	7
8 Parties within Coalition	1,256	4.48	2.28	1	8
Left	4,161	0.30	0.45	0	1
Center-Left	4,546	0.18	0.38	0	1
Center-Right	3,854	0.21	0.40	0	1
Conservative	1,843	0.20	0.40	0	1
Populist Right	1,243	0.21	0.41	0	1
Instrument:					
Ballot Order: Instrument	964	2.77	1.61	1	8

TABLE A3: VARIABLES' DESCRIPTION AND DATA SOURCES: ELECTORAL COVARIATES

Turnout. The percentage of eligible voters who voted in the election.

Percentage of Votes (Mayor). The share of votes obtained by the mayor, over total number of votes, in the first round.

Runoff. Dummy variable equal to one if the mayor is elected at the second round and zero otherwise.

Minority Mayor. Dummy variable equal to one if the mayor does not have the majority of seats within the city council and zero otherwise.

Runoff Alliances. Dummy variable equal to one if the mayor forms formal alliances with parties between the first and the second round and zero otherwise.

Runoff Alliances with Seats. Dummy variable equal to one if parties that form formal alliances with the mayor have seats in the city council and zero otherwise.

Second Term Mayor. Dummy variable equal to one if the mayor was elected mayor also in the previous term and zero otherwise.

Number of Parties Previous Term. The total number of parties with seats in the city council during the previous legislature.

Number of Running Parties (Ruling Coalition). Number of running parties of the ruling coalition.

Number of Parties with Seats (Ruling Coalition). Number of parties with seats within the city council of the ruling coalition.

Number of Running Parties (All Coalitions). Total number of running parties.

Number of Parties with Seats (All Coalitions). Total number of parties with seats within the city council.

Number of Running Mayors. Number of running mayors.

Seats Ruling Coalitions. Total seats obtained by the ruling coalition.

Total Number of Seats within the City Council. Total number of seats available in the city council.

Source: Electoral Covariates are available on the website of the Italian Ministry of Internal Affairs, Election Archive. See http://elezionistorico.interno.it/.

TABLE A4: VARIABLES' DESCRIPTION AND DATA SOURCES: GEOGRAPHIC COVARIATES

Municipal Area. The municipality area in Km^2.

Urbanization. The variable classifies municipalities according to three degrees of urbanization; (1) low, (2) medium, (3) high.

Seismicity. The variable classifies municipalities according to four degrees of seismic risk.

Sea Distance. The distance between the municipality and the sea, in meters.

Population (Log). The log of the resident population in the municipality.

River. Dummy variable equal to one if the municipality is crossed by a river and zero otherwise.

Any Water Course. Dummy variable equal to one if the municipality is bathed by any type of watercourse (river, lake or sea) and zero otherwise.

Altitude. The variable classifies municipalities according to five degrees of altitude class.

Source: Geo-morphological controls are available from the Italian Institute of Statistics. See https://www.istat.it/it/archivio/156224

TABLE A5: SUMMARY STATISTICS: COVARIATES

Variable	N	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min.	Max.
Electoral Covariates Included:					
Turnout	964	0.76	0.06	0.49	0.91
Percentage of Votes (Mayor)	964	50.09	11.85	18.47	88.99
Runoff	964	0.48	0.50	0	1
Minority Mayor	964	0.02	0.16	0	1
Runoff Alliances	964	0.09	0.29	0	1
Runoff Alliances with Seats	964	0.05	0.23	0	1
Second Term Mayor	964	0.28	0.45	0	1
Number of Parties Previous Term	964	12.81	4.32	2	37
Number of Running Parties (Ruling Coalition)	964	5.39	1.50	3	8
Number of Parties with Seats (Ruling Coalition)	964	4.21	1.28	1	8
Number of Running Parties (All Coalitions)	964	14.59	4.50	4	37
Number of Parties with Seats (All Coalitions)	964	7.67	2.06	2	14
Number of Running Mayors	964	5.07	1.99	2	16
Seats Ruling Coalitions	964	15.24	4.83	0	31
Total Number of Seats within the City Council	964	22.58	7.52	11	48
Geographic Covariates:					
Municipal Area	964	89.71	96.79	1.62	652.89
Urbanization	964	2.34	0.63	1	3
Seismicity	964	2.93	0.92	1	4
Sea Distance	964	52274.79	48668.26	655.98	194575.30
Population (Log)	964	1185.70	2175.69	41.99	45183.94
River	964	0.59	0.49	0	1
Any Water Course	964	0.48	0.50	0	1
Altitude	964	4.10	1.11	1	5
Mayors Characteristics:					
Age	964	49.94	8.98	25	74
Male Mayors	964	0.92	0.26	0	1
No High School	964	0.04	0.19	0	1
High School	964	0.30	0.46	0	1
At Least Bachelor	964	0.63	0.48	0	1
Low Blue Collar	964	0	0	0	0
High Blue Collar	964	0.01	0.07	0	1
Low White Collar	964	0.26	0.44	0	1
High White Collar	964	0.61	0.49	0	1
Others Job	964	0.08	0.28	0	1