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The legacies of authoritarian repression on civil society

Laia Balcells[1] and Francisco Villamil[2]

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Abstract: In this paper we examine the legacies on civil society of routine repressive activities carried out by authoritarian regimes, such as the targeting of opposition organizations. We focus on participation in voluntary associations in post-authoritarian Spain. We hypothesize that while repression initially depresses civic life, such effects do not persist after the demise of authoritarianism and the consolidation of a democratic regime. We analyse the impact of repression during the late Francoist regime (1960s–1970s) on local-level patterns of associationism during the democratic period (covering the period 1976–2021). We find that repression has a null local-level effect on the registration of new voluntary organizations during the early democratic period, but a significant and positive effect after 1981, once Spanish democracy consolidated. In order to probe into the mechanisms of such time-variant effects, we analyse a pool of 140,000 individual surveys fielded between 1989 and 2017. Such individual-level analyses indicate that the increase in organizational life in repressed areas might have more to do with a generational replacement effect than with people losing fear of participating over time.

Key words: authoritarianism, repression, democracy, civic life, generational replacement

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Supplementary material: Online Appendix available here (https://www.wider.unu.edu/publication/legacies-authoritarian-repression-civil-society)

[1] Georgetown University, Washington, DC, USA; [2] Carlos III—Juan March Institute, Universidad Carlos III de Madrid, Madrid, Spain; corresponding author: Laia.Balcells@georgetown.edu

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Katajanokanlaituri 6 B, 00160 Helsinki, Finland

1 Introduction

Does state repression impact civil society in post-authoritarian regimes? Does repression depress civic life, and, if yes, for how long do these effects persist? Can subnational variation in repression account for divergent patterns of associational life within a country? The existing literature in economics and political science has examined the effect of violence on social behaviours, broadly documenting a positive effect of violent victimization on pro-social behaviour in the short (Bauer et al. 2016; Voors et al. 2012) and long term (Barceló 2021). A growing number of works have also focused on the political dimension of violent repression, considering the identity of the perpetrators and the explicit effects of repression on political identities and behaviour (Balcells 2012; Costalli and Ruggeri 2015; Lupu and Peisakhin 2017; Osorio et al. 2018; Rozenas et al. 2017; Rozenas and Zhukov 2019; Villamil 2021). Most research on legacies has nonetheless focused on high-intensity forms of repression, including mass killings, deportations, and executions. With the exception of recent work on the effects of surveillance or covert repression (Gläßel and Paula 2020; Gohdes 2020; Hager and Krakowski 2022; Nalepa and Pop-Eleches 2022), the consequences of low-scale repression, which permeate everyday authoritarian politics,[1] have generally been overlooked.

In this project we aim to shed some light on the legacies of low-scale authoritarian repression by examining the case of Spain. We explore the repression of opposition activities during the late Francoist regime (1963–75) and its relationship with patterns of local-level civic life after Spanish transition to democracy in the late 1970s.[2] Using archival data from a Francoist political court (*Tribunal de Orden Público*, or TOP), as well as regional registries on voluntary associations, we build a dataset that covers more than 5,000 Spanish municipalities across 33 provinces, which we use to probe our hypotheses. We complement these local-level analyses with individual-level regressions. We use a pool of 140,000 individual surveys conducted between 1989 and 2017 (by the *Centro de Investigaciones Sociológicas*, or CIS), which allows us to examine differences in civic engagement among individuals from different generations.

Our results suggest that, coherent with previous literature on the pro-social effects of violence, low-scale state repression increases participation in voluntary associations in the new democratic regime. Such effects are slightly stronger in places that suffer more intense repression (i.e. when repression was directed at 'violent anti-regime activities', as opposed to non-violent ones such as 'oppositional propaganda' or 'illegal association').[3] We also document heterogeneous effects over time: the effects are null in the immediate aftermath of the dictatorial regime, but they become significant after some years—and they get stronger over time. We dig into the mechanisms underpinning this temporal heterogeneity. On the one hand, there is a potential 'fear dissipation' mechanism: state repression imposes costs on local political participation and fear operates as a constraint (Hager and Krakowski 2022; Young 2019). Such effects of fear may linger after the end of the authoritarian regime, when the context is till turbulent and uncertain; but after a while, people might feel less afraid to participate, and that is why there is a rebound in participation in places that witnessed authoritarian repression. On the other hand, there is a

[1] See, for example, Truex (2019) on preemptive detentions of dissidents, Berman (2021) on protest policing, Balcells and Villamil (2020) on schoolteacher purges, or Esberg (2022) on employment restriction.

[2] There is no consensus about when 'late Francoism' starts. Some authors speak of a second period in the regime after the economic liberalization reforms of 1959 (e.g. Townson 2007), others talk about a last period, or *tardofranquismo*, starting in 1969 when a new technocratic cabinet was formed (e.g. De Riquer 2015). We use 1963 as the starting point because it was then when the special political court (*Tribunal de Orden Público*) was created and thus it is the first year for which we have data on repression.

[3] The response of the regime to violent activities, such as planning an attack with explosives, was generally fiercer than when confronting non-violent oppositional activities. But, of course, there were instances of arbitrariness and disproportionate repression.

'generational replacement mechanism': new generations and older generations have different propensities to engage in civic life because of their authoritarian experiences. As new generations replace older generations, levels of civic participation increase. The evidence in our survey analyses indicates that the second mechanism is likely more prevalent than the former.

This paper contributes to the literature on the legacies of repression in two ways. First, we show that small-scale, selective forms of repression during an authoritarian regime have a long-term positive effect on civic and political participation, which speaks to previous research on how different forms of repression can have different effects on social and political dynamics (Finkel 2015; Martínez 2022; Schutte et al. 2022). We do so by focusing on a form of repression that has been relatively overlooked in prior literature. Second, we explore more directly the heterogeneous effects of repression over time. Although previous research differentiates between the short- and long-term effects of violence, with a few exceptions (i.e. Rozenas and Zhukov 2019), we know less about the reasons underpinning this heterogeneity. We show how the positive effect of repression on local-level participation grows over time and provide evidence suggesting that the time-varying effect is linked to a generational replacement mechanism. This result helps make sense of previous—seemingly contradictory—findings in the literature; indeed, while some studies show enduring long-term negative effects of repression, others speak of a positive effect. We suggest that aggregate patterns of behaviour might be hiding that repression can effectively reduce participation in a subset of the population (i.e. older generations) while increasing that of another subgroup (i.e. younger generations).

2 The legacies of repression over time

In authoritarian regimes, repression, or political violence employed to demobilize opposition (Nugent 2020), can take many forms, from covert targeted surveillance and psychological intimidation to overt indiscriminate physical harm (Davenport 2005). Repression is a powerful tool, with the potential to alter the individual psychological processes that determine perceptions of group belonging, the social environment in which groups form and mobilize (i.e. by keeping some individuals out and some people in jail), and the organizational structures of regime opposition (Nugent 2020).

Beyond immediate effects, for how long and in what ways does repression affect social relations and shape political engagement in affected countries? How does authoritarian repression continue to shape civic life after a given country transition from dictatorship to democracy? And do different types of repression produce divergent effects on collective action and civic life? While there is a growing literature on these issues (Bautista et al. 2021; Bernhard and Karakoç 2007; El Kurd 2020; Nalepa 2022; Nugent 2020; Osorio et al. 2018; Rozenas and Zhukov 2019; Zhukov and Talibova 2018), there is a lot to be learned. In particular, the literature on the legacies of repression on participation in civil society is still in its infancy.

Repression is a key part of the authoritarian playbook, but it might not have a linear impact on opposition mobilization: varying degrees, types, and targets of repression can either demobilize movements or backfire, leading to more vigorous opposition (Gartner and Regan 1996; Goodwin 2001; Rozenas and Zhukov 2019; Sullivan 2016). Recent research on the effects of victimization suggests that one of the reasons why repression can have heterogeneous effects is different patterns of targeting. In particular, a key distinction is made between indiscriminate and selective repression (Kalyvas 2006), although the literature has not settled on how each of these types affect future political behaviour and attitudes. For instance, focusing on the Arab Spring, Nugent (2020) finds that while indiscriminate repression creates shared political identities and decreases polarization, targeted repression leads opposition groups to build distinct identities which polarize them. Schutte et al. (2022) argue that indiscriminate violence strengthens in-group identities out of the fear it provokes, an effect that is not found for selective violence. In

line with this latter work, Martínez (2022) finds that indiscriminate violence sets in motion processes of collective coping that increase in-group identification, but selective violence, because of the need for local intelligence (i.e. denunciations) it entails, erodes such identification. Finally, Finkel (2015) argues instead that violence only has a positive effect on collective action when it is selective, as this form of targeting forces politically active individuals to go underground, which boosts their organizational skills.

Time is another potential source of heterogeneity. Repression can have different effects on political behaviour, depending on the moment that post-repression behaviour is observed. Rozenas and Zhukov (2019), for example, study the legacies of Stalin's campaign of mass famine on political behaviour in Ukraine and find that the effect of repression depends on how credibly the regime could threaten repressed communities over time. When the regime was able to do so, past repression was effective in increasing loyalty to the regime, but repression was not effective in increasing loyalty—and it even backfired—when there was no longer a credible threat. This research thus suggests that the effect of repression on political behaviour can depend on the extent to which individuals still expect the regime to punish any form of opposition.

Overall, research on the legacies of repression has advanced considerably in recent times. Yet, there is not a clear consensus on the effects of violent repression, which partly stems from the fact existing studies focus on very distinct forms of violence and time frames. Moreover, we know little about the mechanisms behind time-varying effects. Here we focus on a specific form of repression that has received little attention—authoritarian, small-scale repression—and explicitly look into time-varying effects.

3 How repression affects post-authoritarian civic life

What are the consequences of authoritarian repression on civic life in post-authoritarian contexts? If there are any effects, do they persist over time? We assume that repression will successfully depress organizational life, particularly when the regime is still in place (Davenport 2005; Young 2019). We argue that this impact on civic life will linger for some time after the end of the dictatorship. In places with more authoritarian repression, we expect people to be fearful of participation and thus refrain from joining voluntary organizations, and quite particularly political ones (i.e. parties or lobby groups). Costalli et al. (2022) explain that the process of transition from authoritarianism to democracy is often turbulent, with cycles of violence breaking at different points. State repression is often still operating, and, *de facto*, many citizens might still feel constrained by the state and its security forces. As Vairel (2014) shows, there might be *autolimitation* (self-constraining) of political participation in these circumstances. Individuals thus might be uncertain about the new regime and perceive that oppositional behaviour could still be punished, leading to a short-term negative impact of repression on organizational behaviour (Rozenas and Zhukov 2019). Our first hypothesis is as follows:

H1. Local experiences of authoritarian repression are likely to decrease participation in voluntary organizations during the early years of a subsequent democratic regime.

The legacies of authoritarian repression are not necessarily linear, though, and they might dissipate or even revert over time. That is, while in repressed localities there might be less civic participation in the early days of a democracy because of fear, this is likely to change as time passes. As the transition to a democratic regime settles, individuals no longer perceive that civic participation will be punished (Rozenas and Zhukov 2019), and any potential pro-social impact of past victimization might surface (Barceló 2021; Bauer et al. 2016; Finkel 2015; Voors et al. 2012). Our second hypothesis reads as follows:

H2. Once democracy is consolidated, the negative legacies of authoritarian repression on civil society are likely to fade.

We suggest two potential mechanisms explaining why authoritarian repression can have different effects over time, which are not mutually exclusive. First, as time goes by and people live in a democratic regime—where rights and freedoms are respected (and where they do not have to self-constrain their participation)—they are likely to lose fear of participating in civic life. This mechanism would be coherent with previous research that points to the political opportunity structure as the main factor defining the impact of repression in each point in time (Rozenas and Zhukov 2019). Any local-level positive effect of repression in this case would be explained by its effect on pro-social behaviour, no longer cancelled out by fear, or merely because previously repressed individuals try to 'catch up'.

A second mechanism is generational replacement: civic participation might increase as younger generations replace older (and politically more risk-averse) generations. In this case, repression would still have negative effects on those who experienced it more closely (inducing a life-long reluctance to participate in politics),[4] but not on younger generations. In other words, younger generations might not be negatively affected by previous instances of repression. And they can even display increased participation as a reaction to past repression or in an effort to compensate the lack of civic engagement of the older generations.[5]

We test our expectations with two different sources of meso- and micro-level data from Spain, a case that we introduce in the following section.

4 Dictatorship and democracy in Spain

The Francoist dictatorship started in April 1939, after the Nationalist rebels won the Spanish Civil War that they had initiated with a military coup against a democratic government in July 1936. State repression was intense during the first years of the postwar period, particularly in the early 1940s (Solé i Sabaté 2000). The new regime repressed any pocket of opposition, consolidating power throughout the territory in what was, to a great extent, a continuation of wartime violence (Balcells 2017; González Duro 2003; Juliá 1999). In that context there was also thorough purging of state institutions, intended to identify and expel individuals who were suspected of being leftists or supporting substate (i.e. Catalan, Galician, Basque) nationalism (Balcells and Villamil 2020). Any form of internal resistance, or collective action more generally, faced severe constraints during the postwar period. Individuals were afraid of systematic state repression. Moreover, the dire economic conditions of that period meant that survival (vs resistance) became a priority for many people. The only significant internal resistance to the Francoist regime at that time was limited to a few isolated pockets of armed guerrilla fighters (the so-called 'Maquis') in mountainous regions. The state strictly surveilled collective action, which was limited to activities sanctioned by state authorities.

After several years, however, the intensity of repression waned, especially once the purges related to wartime behaviour ceased and internal armed resistance had faded by the early 1950s. The 'state of

[4] This would be coherent with previous research that shows that exposure to victimization can have a negative effect on political participation in the long term, even after regime change (Zhukov and Talibova 2018).

[5] This mechanism implies that there is not an intergenerational transmission of the legacies of authoritarian repression, which challenges previous literature. Yet, most previous works examine the intergenerational transmission of victimization in forms of repression such as lethal violence or forced displacement (Balcells 2012; Lupu and Peisakhin 2017; Rozenas et al. 2017; Zhukov and Talibova 2018). These findings might not apply to less intense forms of repression. Balcells (2012), for example, reports that more moderate forms of repression carry less weight in shaping the political attitudes of victimized individuals and their offspring, as compared to more severe forms of victimization.

war', which had been declared at the onset of the civil war in 1936, was lifted in 1948 (De Riquer 2010). During the 1950s, the country also left behind a period of international isolation and the country started to grow economically. Civil society started to develop outside the official state institutions, and political opposition organizations also sprouted. In 1956, a series of student strikes broke out in the Central University of Madrid (now Complutense University of Madrid), which set the stage for the ripening of the anti-Francoist student movement (Hernández Sandoica et al. 2007). Labour-based political opposition also increased during those years, and in 1962 a notorious mining strike in Asturias, a northern region, sparked labour protests across the country (García Piñeiro 1994). ETA, a Basque nationalist terrorist group, was formed in 1958 and attempted its first violent action against the state in 1961—the attack failed and there were no fatalities (Sánchez-Cuenca and Aguilar 2009).

Despite these contentious actions, the state exercised tight control over civil society. All political organizations were banned, including any labour union other than the official state-sponsored trade union (the *Sindicato Vertical*) or its students' union equivalent. They were also strict limits to civil liberties. Any form of association, even if its primary goal was not political, such as the labour-related mutual aid organizations, was bound to be clandestine and faced a constant risk of prosecution. The only sanctioned channels for collective action were the aforementioned state institutions—linked to the National Movement, the only legal political party—and the Catholic Church.

After the initial outbursts of contentious activities, and influenced by the solid socioeconomic transformations that took place during the 1950s and 1960s, political opposition burgeoned. The response of the state consisted of increased repression of such internal dissent. In 1963, the Francoist regime created the Public Order Court (*Tribunal de Orden Público*, or TOP), a special court designed to prosecute all 'political offences', ranging from low-key, peaceful political meetings to acts of organized violence against state authorities (Del Aguila 2001). The TOP would be active until 1977, when it was dismantled in the context of the transition to democracy.

After General Franco died in late 1975, Spain began a democratization process. Among other changes, all political parties were legalized, civil liberties were restored, and free elections were held again in 1977. The Spanish democratization process is often referred to as a successful example of negotiated (top-down) transition. Contrary to other similar processes that took place in Southern Europe in the same period, in Spain the elites of the former regime made—under solid bottom-up pressure from the anti-Francoist movement—a conscious decision to democratize the regime. Nonetheless, democratic stability was not a certainty in the early 1980s. First, Francoist elites had a strong presence within the new regime. In particular, the military remained largely unchanged, especially during the early democratic years, and it was generally perceived as closely aligned with the Francoist regime. In 1981, a coup d'état attempt took place, motivated by the rejection of democratic politics within some military circles. Although the coup ultimately failed, it signalled the instability of democracy in front of a military with murky loyalties. This situation would change during the mid-1980s, as the first socialist government (led by Felipe González) engaged in a profound military reform whose goal was also to fulfil the requirements of NATO membership.[6]

A second source of instability during the early democratic period was the intensity of political violence characterizing that period (Sánchez-Cuenca and Aguilar 2009). After 1975, the number of politically motivated killings sharply increased. They were perpetrated by an array of actors, including far-left,

[6] According to academic research on the Spanish transition to democracy summarized in Rovira Martínez (2014: 31), there were two distinct phases of the Spanish Transition. The first, the proper Transition phase, lasted from 1975 to 1978, when the new Constitution was approved. A second phase, of democratic consolidation, ran from 1978 to 1981 or 1982. In 1981 there was the above-mentioned failed coup attempt, while in late 1982 the Socialist party (PSOE)—the party of the democratic opposition to the regime—won the elections for the first time and the first successful transition of power to a leftist government took place. The transition is thus considered completed from 1982.

far-right, and peripheral nationalist groups. Political violence peaked in 1980, and, even if its intensity decreased thereafter, political killings remained frequent, especially those committed by ETA, the infamous Basque terrorist organization.

After decades of repression, collective action started to markedly increase in Spain in the early 1970s, as social movements engaged in a widespread campaign against the authoritarian regime. Mobilization was at its peak during the mid-1970s, but it dropped significantly once the democratization process was complete. Indeed, since the end of that mobilization cycle Spain has been among the countries in Western Europe with the lowest levels of political participation (Morales 2005; Pérez-Díaz 2002; Torcal and Montero 2000).

5 Empirics

We first analyse the impact Francoist repression had on civic life during the democratic period. We use local-level data. Our main outcome of interest is the number of voluntary associations created in each municipality between 1976 and 2021. In a second set of analyses we complement the local-level models with individual-level data on participation in associations. While we cannot match the survey data to local-level patterns of repression due to data accessibility issues,[7] the survey data helps us dig into mechanisms. With the large number of surveys we have compiled and pooled we can examine, albeit indirectly, if there are replacement effects (i.e. younger generations replacing older ones) accounting for over-time changes in the legacies of repression.

5.1 Local-level analyses

Dependent variables

For the local-level analyses, we create a dataset covering all Spanish municipalities.[8] Our outcome captures civic participation at the local level, which we measure by looking at the formation of voluntary associations after the fall of the Francoist regime.

We gather data on voluntary associations from several regional (*Registro de Asociaciones*), which list voluntary associations and include information on their place and date of registration, among other things. The data, available at the official data portal of the Spanish government, covers more than 250,000 voluntary associations formed between the 1880s and 2020 in seven regions: Galicia, Asturias, Basque Country, Castile and Leon, Castile-La Mancha, Catalonia, and Andalusia.[9] These seven regions cover 33 out of 50 provinces, more than half of the total Spanish population, and more than 5,000 municipalities (out of a total of around 8,100 as of 2011).[10]

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[7] We do not have information on the locality of all the respondents of the CIS surveys. We only have the locality of respondents living in big cities.

[8] We adapt municipalities to territorial changes that took place between the 1960 and 2011 censuses using the `muniSpain` R package; see https://github.com/franvillamil/muniSpain/ (accessed 5 October 2022).

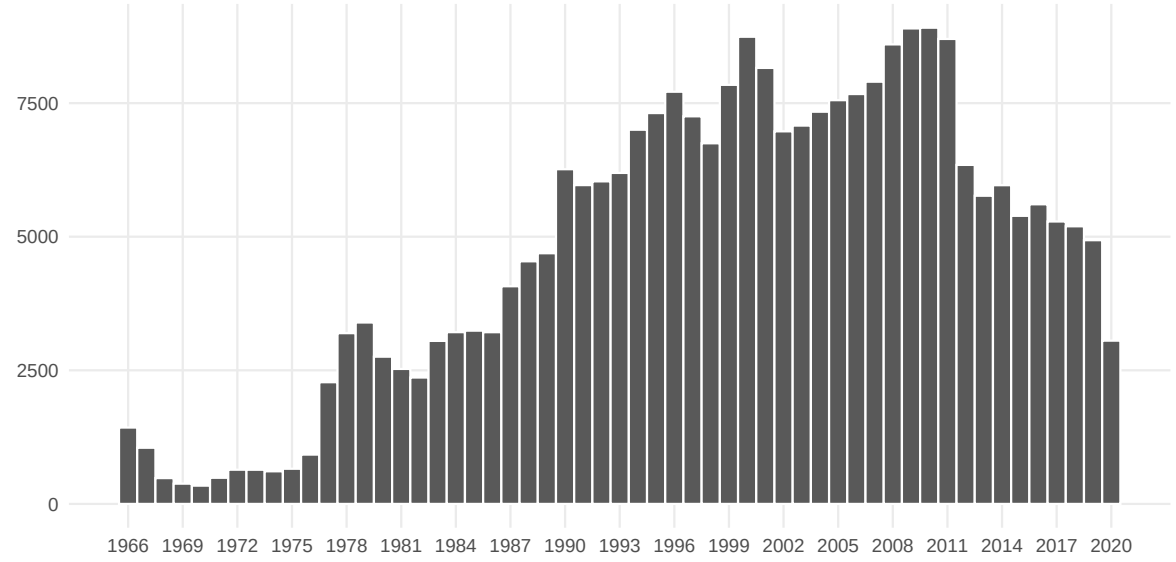
[9] Open data initiative of the government of Spain, https://datos.gob.es/es/catalogo (accessed 28 September 2021). Time coverage varies from region to region. Some include associations formed in the late nineteenth century while other registries start in the 1960s, even if in all cases the quality of the data for the first half of the twentieth century is very limited. We detail each of these sources in Appendix A.

[10] Hence, due to data constraints, these empirical analyses are based on these 5,000 municipalities, and not the totality of municipalities in Spain. In Appendix E we present results using a complementary measure of political participation: turnout in local elections. For these analyses, we can use data from all Spanish municipalities.

Our main outcome variable is the number of associations per capita registered in a given municipality.[11] The data tells us at which point voluntary associations were registered, and it is thus a proxy measure of the formation of those organizations. We measure the total number of associations for the whole period, between 1976 and 2021, and we also create separate outcome variables for five-year periods in order to track heterogeneous effects across time.

Figure 1 shows the number of voluntary organizations created by year since 1966, the earliest year for which we have data on all regions covered in the data. The data depicts a marked increase in the number of associations formed after the death of Franco in 1975. This is unsurprising since civil society is more likely to flourish in democratic polities (Wimmer 2018: 67). The number continued to increase, particularly after 1990, and peaks around 2010. During the 2010s, when the Great Recession hit Spain, the number of new associations decreased and there is a significant new dip in 2020, probably due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Figure 1: Voluntary associations created by year



Source: authors' compilation.

Independent and control variables

Our main explanatory variable is a local-level measure of repression during the Francoist regime, which we create using archival data compiled by Del Aguila (2001) on all the sentences of the TOP, a special court set up by the regime in the early 1960s to prosecute political offences. The TOP data includes information on the individuals who went to trial because of alleged political crimes, ranging from handing out flyers or organizing a small meeting to committing acts of political violence. We use the place of residence of each individual to create a measure of repression at the local level, creating a binary variable for each municipality indicating whether a resident was condemned.[12] Moreover, we also differentiate between the repression of violent and non-violent opposition activities, depending on whether there were sentences for offences classified as 'arms, explosives, or terrorism'. With this distinction, we aim to capture more intense forms of repression, which were probably the function of heightened political conflict at the local level, and affected the local population to a larger degree. Figure 2 shows

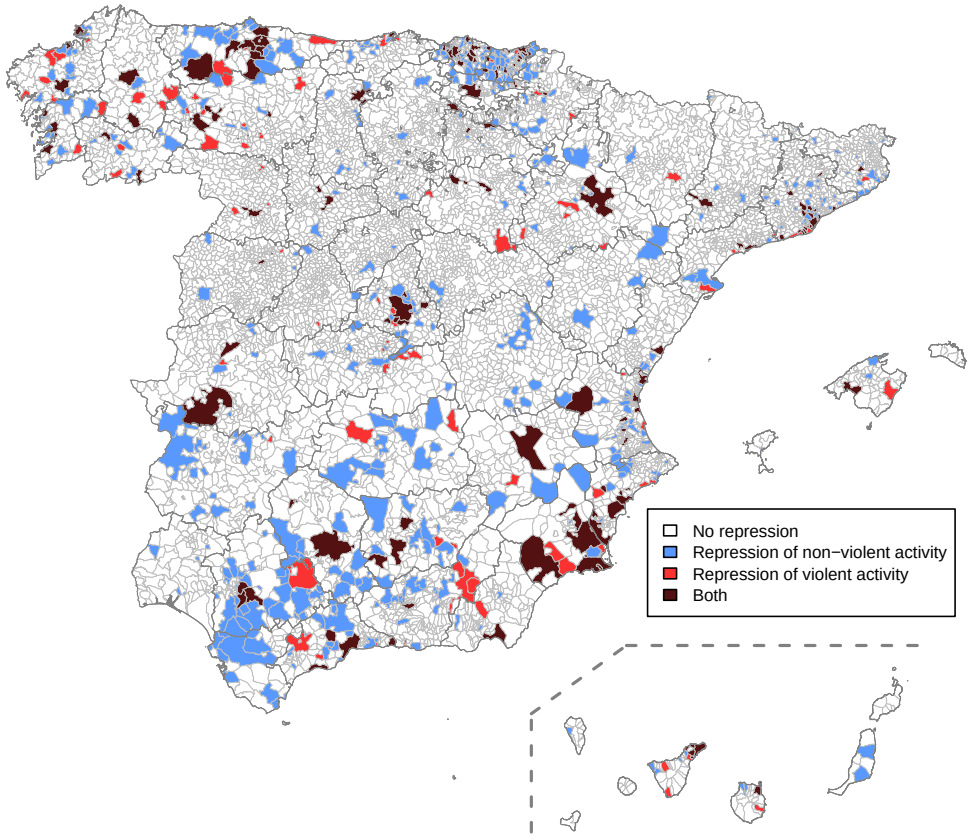
[11] We divide the number of associations by the local population in 2011 and multiply by 1,000.

[12] We include in Appendix B results using a continuous version of this variable, namely, the number of TOP sentences in each municipality divided by the local population in 1960 and multiplied by 1,000.

the geographical distribution of repression, distinguishing between the two indicators of repression of violent and non-violent activities.

We use linear regression models for both dependent variables. In the regression analyses we include a battery of control variables. Using census data (INE 2018), we include the logged population in 2011 and the change in population between 1960 and 2011, given that demographic variables are likely to impact both repression and local organizational life. We also control for logged GDP per capita, which also affects local social capital, calculated from nightlight emission data and obtained from the replication dataset for Drelichman et al. (2021). We control for terrain ruggedness using the standard deviation of elevation, calculated from digital elevation models (Mapzen 2018). We use terrain ruggedness as a proxy for state capacity, which was likely to influence the dissent-repression activity during the Francoist regime. Finally, all models include province fixed effects to account for potential unobserved confounders at the province level. Moreover, the inclusion of province fixed effects lets us control for potential differences in our outcome variables due to their being coded from distinct region-level sources.

Figure 2: Local-level Francoist repression



Source: authors' compilation.

Results

Table 1 shows the results of the first set of models, which use the binary indicator of Francoist repression as the independent variable and the number of local associations formed across both the full period (1) and each of the five-year periods between 1976 and 2020 (2–10). In this case, our repression variable is an indicator of all repression activities, that is, whether there was any TOP sentence against individuals from a given municipality.

The first column shows that Francoist repression had an overall positive effect on the number of local associations formed during the whole democratic period in Spain. However, the effect does not remain

constant when we distinguish between different periods. During the first period, between 1976 and 1980, there is a null effect of repression on the formation of voluntary associations. This effect increases in the later period and becomes significant—even if only at the 95 per cent level—and then becomes fully robust after 1986. The effect of repression increases throughout the years, suggesting that part of the global increase in the number of associations during these years (Figure 1) is linked to past Francoist repression. Indeed, even if during the first few years the effect could be driven by the registration of associations that already existed informally, the fact that it lasts for so long and increases over time suggests that areas that had suffered more repression did show more organizational activity. The effect peaks in 1996–2000, and decreases thereafter. The growth in associations of the 2000s seems thus less linked to past instances of repression.[13]

[13] Interestingly, issues related to the Civil War and the Francoist regime were especially salient during the 2000s, and the Law of Historical Memory was passed by a socialist government in 2007.

Table 1: Francoist repression (TOP) and local associations formed after 1975

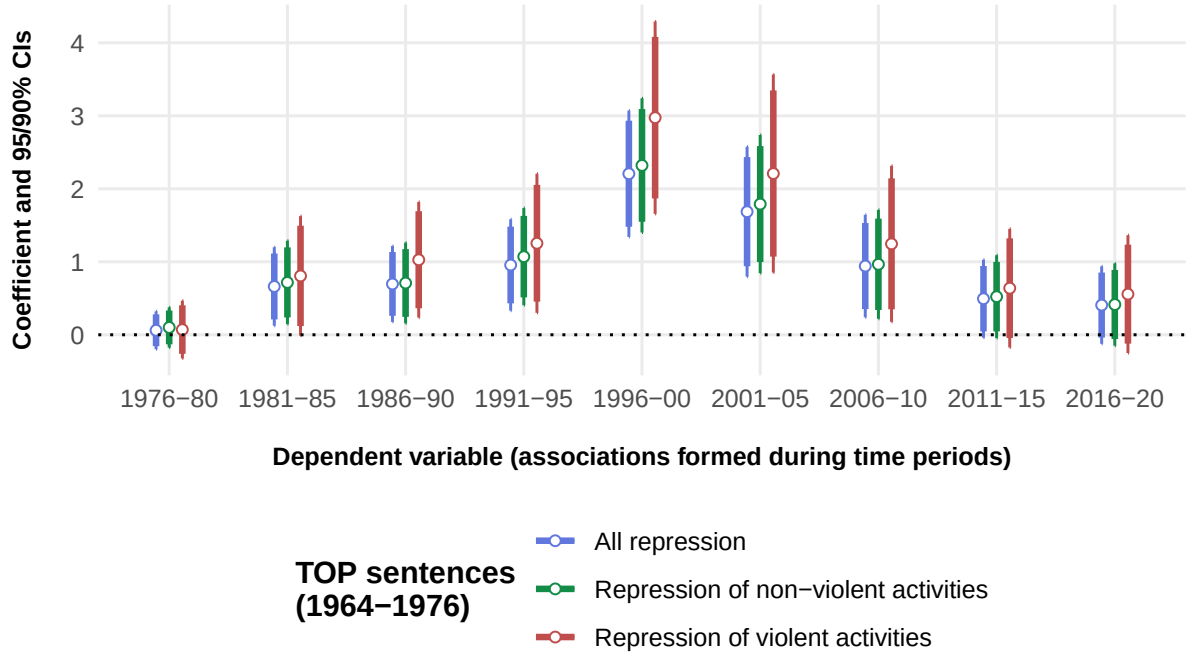
	Full	1976–80	1981–85	1986–90	1991–95	1996–2000	2001–05	2006–10	2011–15	2016–20
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)
Repression	8.112***	0.062	0.662*	0.696***	0.956***	2.206***	1.687**	0.942***	0.494^{+}	0.407
	(1.925)	(0.063)	(0.269)	(0.208)	(0.202)	(0.526)	(0.515)	(0.267)	(0.254)	(0.278)
Log GDPpc	17.046*	–0.703*	0.433	0.216	2.380**	5.361*	5.486*	1.238	1.372	1.265
	(7.257)	(0.343)	(0.580)	(0.848)	(0.780)	(2.186)	(2.751)	(1.073)	(0.932)	(0.800)
Log Pop 2011	–7.007***	–0.091*	–0.433**	–0.610***	–0.832***	–1.709***	–1.382***	–0.876***	–0.566***	–0.509***
	(1.069)	(0.042)	(0.139)	(0.109)	(0.110)	(0.381)	(0.318)	(0.132)	(0.135)	(0.117)
Pop change 1960–2011	0.044	–0.025	–0.001	–0.077^{+}	–0.077*	0.114^{+}	0.048	0.034	0.026	0.001
	(0.199)	(0.018)	(0.025)	(0.040)	(0.038)	(0.069)	(0.050)	(0.028)	(0.021)	(0.018)
Elev SD	0.017**	0.000	0.000	0.001	0.002^{+}	0.000	0.003^{+}	0.004**	0.003**	0.004***
	(0.006)	(0.000)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.002)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)
n	5,210	5,210	5,210	5,210	5,210	5,210	5,210	5,210	5,210	5,210
R^2	0.45	0.07	0.05	0.10	0.14	0.24	0.21	0.10	0.08	0.10
Adj. R^2	0.45	0.06	0.05	0.10	0.13	0.24	0.21	0.09	0.08	0.09
Province FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

Note: $^{+}$ $p < 0.1$, * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$. Province FE not shown, clustered SE (province). Outcome variable is the number of associations formed in each period, divided by population (2011 census) and multiplied by 1,000.

Source: authors' calculations.

Table 2 replicates the previous models, but in this case the measure of repression only indicates instances of repression of violent activities, namely, those TOP sentences for offences classified as 'arms, explosives, or terrorism'. Table 3 repeats these models but for repression of non-violent activities, which excludes these former sentences. Figure 3 summarizes the results from the previous three sets of models graphically.

Figure 3: Francoist repression and local associations formed after 1975



Source: authors' compilation.

The results show similar patterns across all three measures of repression during the late-Francoist period. If anything, however, the effect of repression of violent activities is stronger in the time periods when Francoist repression has a positive effect on the formation of local voluntary associations.

We include in the Appendix a series of complementary analyses. First, in Appendix B we replicate these same analyses but using a continuous measure of Francoist repression, namely, the number of TOP sentences per capita (divided by the population in 1960 and multiplied by 1,000). Second, the Basque Country could be biasing the results because of the role that nationalist violence, driven mainly by the terrorist group ETA, had in determining Francoist repression. We show results excluding this region from the sample in Appendix C. Another concern is that Francoist repression could be endogenously related to either patterns of violence during the Spanish Civil War or to political preferences before it, which could also affect local participation after the transition to democracy. In Appendix D we run a series of analyses where we include our measure of Francoist repression as the dependent variable and both wartime violence and prewar leftist support as independent variables, together with additional control variables. We do not find any evidence of endogeneity.

Table 2: Francoist repression (TOP) and local associations formed after 1975

	Full	1976–80	1981–85	1986–90	1991–95	1996–2000	2001–05	2006–10	2011–15	2016–20
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)
Repression, violence	10.785***	0.071	0.807**	1.028***	1.254***	2.975***	2.209***	1.246***	0.639*	0.557*
	(2.318)	(0.085)	(0.297)	(0.253)	(0.202)	(0.753)	(0.600)	(0.279)	(0.315)	(0.280)
Log GDPpc	16.359*	–0.706*	0.394	0.132	2.303**	5.164*	5.351^{+}	1.160	1.334	1.227
	(7.225)	(0.345)	(0.576)	(0.832)	(0.783)	(2.189)	(2.755)	(1.070)	(0.922)	(0.796)
Log Pop 2011	–6.785***	–0.088*	–0.411**	–0.596***	–0.804***	–1.651***	–1.334***	–0.850***	–0.552***	–0.498***
	(1.016)	(0.040)	(0.129)	(0.103)	(0.104)	(0.371)	(0.302)	(0.122)	(0.128)	(0.107)
Pop change 1960–2011	0.037	–0.025	–0.002	–0.076^{+}	–0.078^{+}	0.113	0.047	0.034	0.025	0.001
	(0.206)	(0.018)	(0.025)	(0.040)	(0.040)	(0.069)	(0.050)	(0.028)	(0.020)	(0.018)
Elev SD	0.017**	0.000	0.000	0.001	0.002^{+}	0.000	0.003^{+}	0.004**	0.003**	0.004**
	(0.006)	(0.000)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.002)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)
n	5,210	5,210	5,210	5,210	5,210	5,210	5,210	5,210	5,210	5,210
R^2	0.45	0.07	0.05	0.10	0.14	0.24	0.21	0.10	0.08	0.10
Adj. R^2	0.44	0.06	0.05	0.10	0.13	0.24	0.21	0.09	0.08	0.09
Province FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

Note: $^{+}$ $p < 0.1$, * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$. Province FE not shown, clustered SE (province). Outcome variable is the number of associations formed in each period, divided by population (2011 census) and multiplied by 1,000.

Source: authors' calculations.

Table 3: Francoist repression (TOP) and local associations formed after 1975

	Full	1976–80	1981–85	1986–90	1991–95	1996–00	2001–05	2006–10	2011–15	2016–20
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)
Repression, non-violence	8.612***	0.101	0.718*	0.709**	1.071***	2.321***	1.791**	0.965**	0.522*	0.414
	(2.061)	(0.068)	(0.285)	(0.220)	(0.225)	(0.545)	(0.554)	(0.294)	(0.265)	(0.293)
Log GDPpc	16.776*	–0.714*	0.407	0.200	2.334**	5.293*	5.430*	1.216	1.356	1.256
	(7.222)	(0.344)	(0.578)	(0.845)	(0.775)	(2.180)	(2.734)	(1.072)	(0.930)	(0.797)
Log Pop 2011	–7.003***	–0.094*	–0.434**	–0.607***	–0.836***	–1.706***	–1.381***	–0.873***	–0.565***	–0.507***
	(1.071)	(0.041)	(0.139)	(0.108)	(0.111)	(0.380)	(0.319)	(0.133)	(0.134)	(0.117)
Pop change 1960–2011	0.053	–0.025	0.000	–0.077^{+}	–0.075*	0.116^{+}	0.050	0.035	0.026	0.001
	(0.199)	(0.018)	(0.026)	(0.040)	(0.038)	(0.069)	(0.050)	(0.029)	(0.021)	(0.018)
Elev SD	0.018**	0.000	0.000	0.001	0.002^{+}	0.000	0.003^{+}	0.004**	0.003**	0.004***
	(0.006)	(0.000)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)
n	5210	5210	5210	5210	5210	5210	5210	5210	5210	5210
R^2	0.45	0.07	0.05	0.10	0.14	0.24	0.21	0.10	0.08	0.10
Adj. R^2	0.45	0.06	0.05	0.10	0.13	0.24	0.21	0.09	0.08	0.09
Province FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

Note: $^{+}$ $p < 0.1$, * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$. Province FE not shown, clustered SE (province). Outcome variable is the number of associations formed in each period, divided by population (2011 census) and multiplied by 1,000.

Source: authors' calculations.

In addition, we also include in Appendix E results using a complementary measure of local political participation, namely, turnout in local elections. We again include binary indicators of Francoist repression, repression of violent activities, and repression of non-violent activities, respectively, as independent variables. We run a model for each of these independent variables and for all 11 local elections held since 1979, which take place every four years. The results are coherent with the previous analyses, particularly with regards to the time-varying effects of repression during the Francoist regime. Repression has a negative effect on local turnout, which is stronger during the late 1970s and early 1980s, but this effect decreases significantly as time goes on. The results thus suggest that any potential negative legacies of repression were only present during the first few years of the democratic transition.

5.2 Pooled survey analyses

We find evidence that the local effect of repression changes over time, as we had hypothesized. As we argued above, there can be two alternative mechanisms in place: a 'fear dissipation' mechanism and 'a generational replacement mechanism'. In this section we use individual survey data to dig into them. We combine data from a large number of surveys fielded by CIS, the main public-funded public opinion institution in Spain. We have selected all surveys where the CIS included items asking whether the respondent was part of, or had been part of in the past, a range of different types of voluntary associations. These types range from parents' associations or cultural groups to labour unions and political parties. Our dataset includes around 140,000 responses from 43 surveys between 1989 and 2017.[14] We include in Appendix F the list of all surveys we use, together with the question number and the wording of the participation variables.

Dependent variables

We code two binary dependent variables, which indicate that the respondent is or has been part of (a) any type of association or (b) a political association. These associations include benefit or religious organizations, cultural associations, sports associations, unions, political parties, or environmental associations, among others. When there is no explicit category of 'political associations', we code unions and political parties as such.

Independent and control variables

Our goal in these analyses is to probe whether changes in local organizational behaviour over time are linked to a generational replacement or instead are due to individuals changing their behaviour. To do so, our main explanatory variables examine cohort and age effects over time.

First, we create a variable that indicates the decade in which the respondent was born and use it as a categorical variable. In the main analyses we include respondents who were born between the 1910s and the 1990s, and include the birth decade as the main variable. We exclude those born before 1910 or after 1999 due to the low number of observations, particularly in earlier or later surveys, respectively.

In some of the analyses we explore how cohort effects change over time. To do so, we also condition on the year in which a survey was fielded, which we do by estimating the model on a subset of surveys fielded during a particular time period. Because we have many fewer observations in these models, we include a binary version of the cohort variable, indicating whether a respondent was born before or after

[14] We cover this period because it is the years for which we could find surveys fielded by CIS that included measures of participation in associations.

1955. We use this date because those born after 1955 did not experience the Francoist regime as adults, and thus they were arguably less likely to be exposed to Francoist repression.[15]

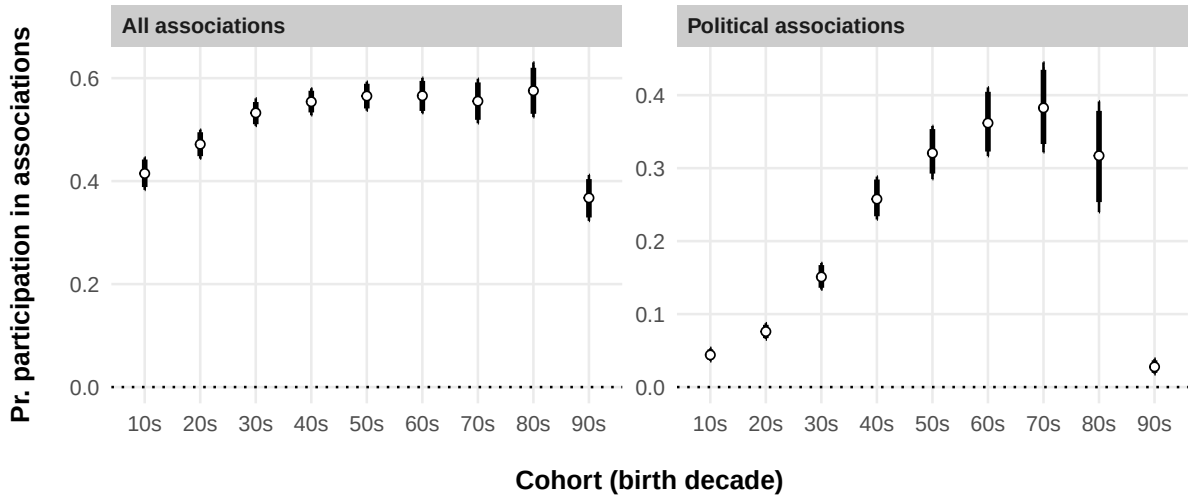
Second, we include respondents' age and its quadratic term as the main explanatory variables in some models. We use this functional form because the general effect of age on participation in associations is not linear: both younger and older individuals are less likely to participate than middle-aged individuals (Morales 2005). Again, we also run models in different subsets of the surveys depending on the year they were fielded to observe whether there are changes in the correlation between age and participation over time.

We include several individual-level control variables: gender, self-reported ideology (on a 0–10 scale), and the level of education. The models that focus on cohort effects also include logged age as a control. Finally, we include survey fixed effects in all models to account for time-varying unobserved factors and differences in question wording.

Results

Figure 4 shows the results of the first individual-level logistic models, where we analyse the relationship between cohort, coded as the decade when the individual was born, and the probability of being a member of (1) any association or (2) political associations.[16] These models thus show whether, controlling for age at the time the survey was fielded, individuals born at different points in time are more or less likely to participate in voluntary organizations.

Figure 4: Cohort effects on participation in associations



Source: authors' compilation.

Looking at the entire sample, drawing data from surveys between 1989 and 2017, we observe minor cohort effects when looking at the probability of participation in any type of association, but much larger ones when focusing on political associations. Individuals born in the 1910s, 1920s, or 1930s are significantly less likely to participate than younger cohorts. The probability of participation reaches its peak among those born around 1970, who were children when Spain was transitioning into a democracy in the late 1970s. This is overall consistent with evidence on political participation in Spain in Morales (2005), who argues that generations from the dictatorship are less likely to participate in protests, for example.

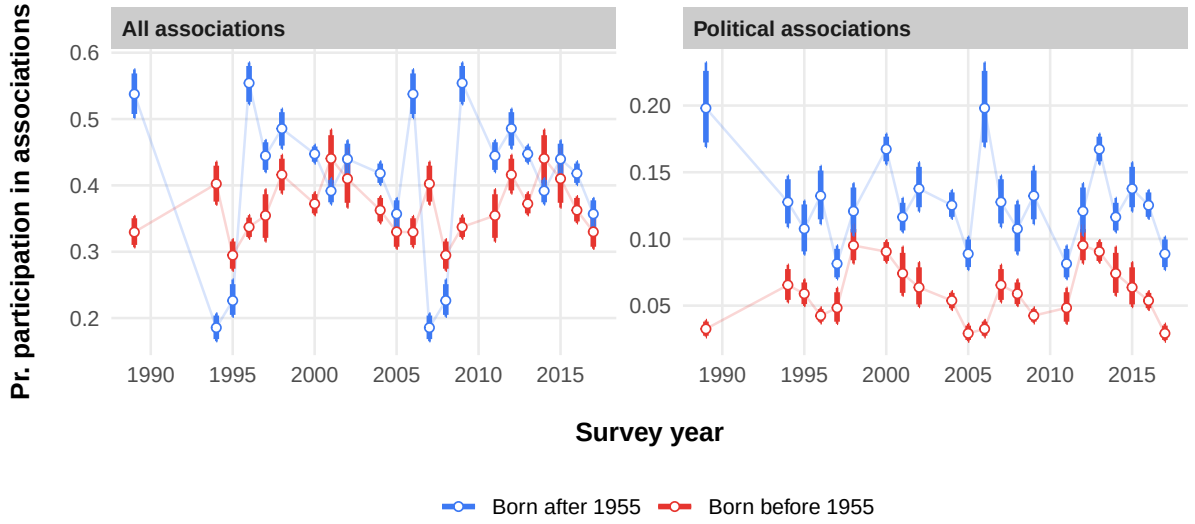
[15] We also include robustness tests in Appendix G, changing this threshold to 1945.

[16] We show the entire table in the Appendix.

These results, however, could hide differences across time within the same cohort. Specifically, individuals from older generations could be more likely to participate when asked in surveys fielded later in time, but because their relative sample size decreases as time goes by, the effect would not show up in the results. In other words, cohort effects could mask changes in political behaviour because of compositional effects.

We look into this by analysing cohort effects over time, namely, whether individuals born in the same period display different political behaviour depending on when they are asked by the CIS. We show these results in Figure 5.[17] In this case, we use a binary cohort measure—being born in 1955 or later—and include an interaction between this variable and the year in which the CIS survey was fielded. We choose 1955 as a cutoff because those who were born after 1955 turned 18 in 1973, two years before Franco died. Yet, we also show in Appendix G results with an earlier cutoff date (i.e. 1945).

Figure 5: Cohort effects (born before 1955) across survey years



Source: authors' compilation.

The results show mixed patterns for participation in any association (left panel). During most survey years, the younger cohorts are more likely to participate, but this relationship does not hold across the full period. In some cases, individuals born before 1955 are actually more likely to participate than individuals born after that date.

By contrast, when we look at the models on political associations (right panel), we observe that individuals born after 1955 are consistently more likely to participate than individuals born before 1955, across all survey years.[18] Hence, there are enduring cohort effects in participation, particularly in political associations. We would argue that this result is coherent with the generational replacement mechanism: the across-time heterogeneous effects documented in the local-level analyses might be due to the increasing presence of younger individuals in the population. These new generations, who have a greater propensity to participate in political associations, are replacing older individuals who were adults during the most repressive years of the dictatorship, and who were less active in the public sphere.

A caveat to this conclusion is that we only observe earlier generations when these individuals are already older. Hence, the observed patterns could just be picking up age effects. Put differently, the results above

[17] We only show the results graphically because of the large number of model coefficients. The full regression results are available in Appendix G.

[18] These results are even more robust when we change the threshold to 1945, which suggests a strong influence of the Francoist period.

could be due to the fact that we only observe people born in, say, the 1920s when they are at least 60 years old, and not when they were younger.

To address this, we examine how the age effect varies over time, to probe if earlier generations were indeed less likely to participate because of the period they lived through rather than because they were older. Tables 4 and 5 present results for a new set of models on participation in associations and political organizations, respectively. In these models we include age in quadratic form as our primary independent variable,[19] and run a different model for each five-year period (including all responses from surveys fielded during these years). Figure 6 depicts the results graphically, where we compare the effect of age on the probability of participation between the earliest surveys (fielded between 1989 and 1994) and the latest ones for which we have data (between 2015 and 2017).

Table 4: Age effects in participation in associations by survey year

	1989–94	1995–99	2000–04	2005–09	2010–14	2015–17
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Age	0.055***	0.040***	0.056***	0.065***	0.040***	0.047***
	(0.013)	(0.006)	(0.007)	(0.004)	(0.005)	(0.005)
Age^2	–0.001***	0.000***	–0.001***	–0.001***	0.000***	0.000***
	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)
n	3,976	17,707	10,934	35,308	20,494	15,694
AIC	5,023.2	20,221.2	13,999.6	43,861.2	26,235.9	20,162.3
Survey FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

Note: $^{+}$ $p < 0.1$, * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$. Control variables not shown: gender, ideology, age (log), and education level.

Source: authors' own calculations.

Table 5: Age effects in participation in political associations by survey year

	1989–94	1995–99	2000–04	2005–09	2010–14	2015–17
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Age	0.154***	0.180***	0.148***	0.174***	0.152***	0.190***
	(0.023)	(0.012)	(0.012)	(0.007)	(0.009)	(0.012)
Age^2	–0.002***	–0.002***	–0.002***	–0.002***	–0.001***	–0.002***
	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)
n	3,938	17,687	10,928	34,546	20,492	15,692
AIC	2,608.3	9,120.7	7,332.9	25,887.1	15,646.6	10,725.4
Survey FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

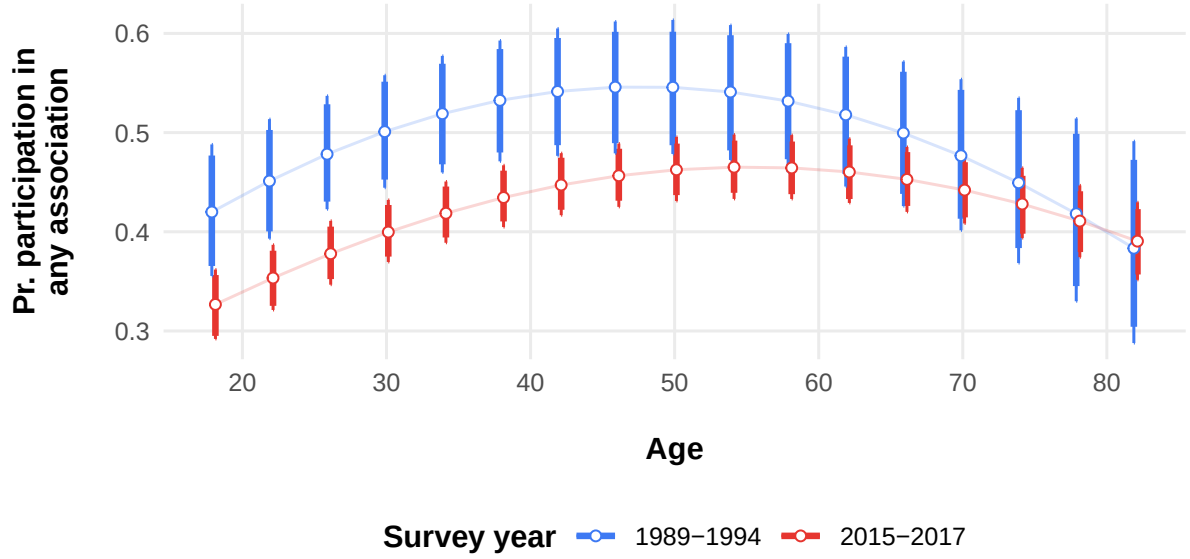
Note: $^{+}$ $p < 0.1$, * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$. Control variables not shown: gender, ideology, age (log), and education level.

Source: authors' own calculations.

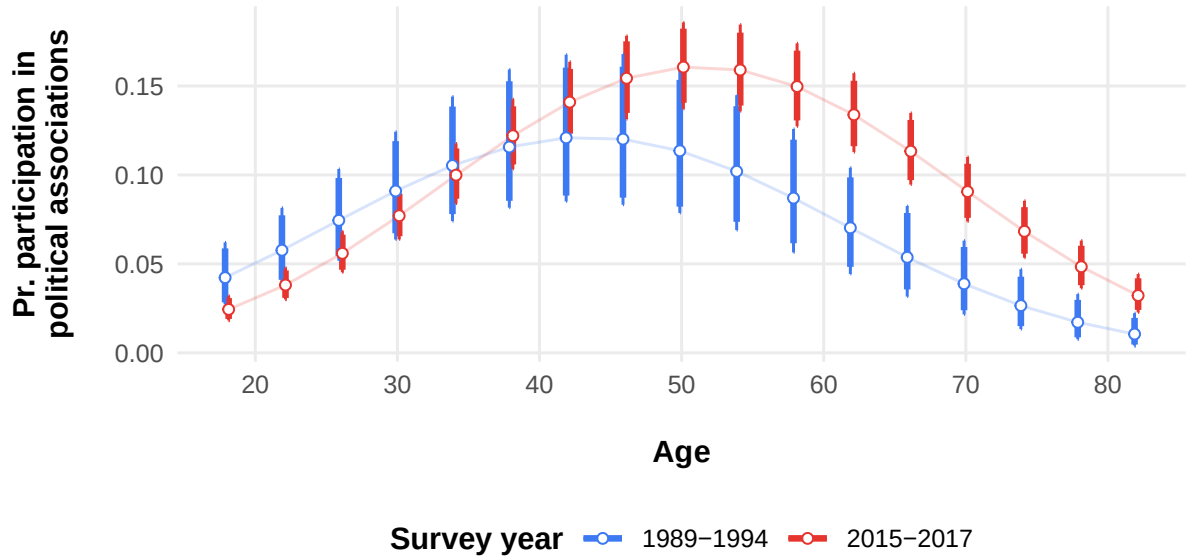
[19] The relationship between age and participation often follows an inverted-U shape, with middle-age individuals being those with higher participation rates (Morales 2005).

Figure 6: Age effects across survey years

(a) All associations



(b) Political associations



Source: authors' own calculations.

The results support the notion that the rebound effect in participation as democracy became consolidated in Spain was due to a generational replacement.[20] The results are particularly telling when looking at political associations: for example, individuals born around 1930 and interviewed in 1990 (that is, when they were 60) were significantly less likely to participate in political associations than individuals born in 1955 and interviewed in 2015 (that is, when they were also 60).

Overall, the results of the pooled survey analyses indicate that people who experienced the authoritarian regime first-hand were less likely to participate in associations compared to individuals who did not experience the Francoist regime as adults. Notably, this is suggestive that there is not a clear intergen-

[20] Unfortunately, we do not have survey data for the main period of interest: the late 1970s or early 1980s. Public opinion surveys were scarce in the late 1970s and they were overall not reliable until the transition to democracy. We have not been able to access CIS surveys from 1978 to 1989.

erational transmission of such legacies of authoritarian repression, and that the mechanism explaining the increased participation in repressed localities after democratic consolidation is the 'generational replacement' one.

A possible caveat to our study is whether we should also consider forms of repression that took place during the more brutal postwar period or even during the civil war. As explained above, we do not find evidence of correlation between repression during early Francoist period (or postwar repression) and the late Francoist repression we are studying in this paper. These are different phenomena, following different dynamics. Also, other research has examined the legacies of the Civil War in great detail (e.g., Aguilar et al. 2011; Balcells 2012; Martínez 2022; Rodón and Tormos 2022; Villamil 2021). Nonetheless, in Appendix H we show additional results using a 2008 survey that asked about experiences of victimization during the war or during the Francoist period, either first-hand or within the family (Aguilar et al. 2011). This survey does not have any indicator of participation in voluntary associations, but we use a variable capturing political engagement. This question measures how important the respondent believes political participation is in a democracy. The results show that a family history of victimization during the Spanish Civil War has different effects than either personal experiences or a family history of victimization during Francoism.[21] This evidence is suggestive that these can be considered separate historical events with different potential effects on political engagement.

6 Conclusion

While there is a burgeoning literature on the legacies of violence and repression, including authoritarian repression, there is not much work examining (1) heterogeneous effects of repression (i.e. depending on the nature or the intensity of repression) or (2) the duration of the effects over time. Also, while there is important work on the effects of repression on identities in the long run, more has to be said about the long-term effects on civic life. We make some contributions by studying the case of the Francoist dictatorship in Spain and its aftermath.

We argue that authoritarian repression is likely to depress the political engagement of citizens while the dictatorship is in place and shortly after the transition to democracy. However, these effects of repression are likely to decrease as democracy flourishes, people lose fear of engaging in politics, and new citizens socialize into democratic practices. We find supportive local-level evidence on Francoist repression and later political associationism. The evidence suggests that the legacies of repression were in fact positive on political associationism: locations with incidents of repression observed a more significant growth in voluntary organizations after democracy consolidated. With data from thousands of surveys, we find suggestive evidence that there was a replacement effect driving such increases in civic participation: political engagement grows as new generations replace older (more fearful) generations. The latter suggests that while people might be well aware of the victimization experiences of their parents/grandparents under the dictatorship, this might not diminish their appetite for collective action and political engagement—quite the opposite. This finding qualifies research on the intergenerational transmission of victimization experiences (following Balcells 2012; Rodón and Tormos 2022; Villamil 2021), and shows that such transmission might be conditional on the type of victimization as well as the type of outcome under scrutiny.

[21] In the 2008 CIS survey, civil war victimization includes experiences such as being killed in combat, in a bombardment, being executed, disappeared, or condemned to death (among other, less intense, forms of victimization). Francoist victimization measures were slightly less intense forms, such as being detained, imprisoned, expelled from work, fined, or obliged to leave Spain (though when asking about family victimization, the survey also asks about execution).

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