Rivalry and Revenge: Violence against Civilians in Conventional Civil Wars[1]

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Recent research on violence against civilians during wars has empha-sized war-related factors (such as territorial control or the characteristics of armed groups) over political ones (such as ideological polarization or prewar political competition). Having distinguished between irregu-lar and conventional civil wars and between direct and indirect violence, I theorize on the determinants of direct violence in conventional civil wars. I introduce a new data set of all 1,062 municipalities of Catalonia during the Spanish Civil War (1936–1939) and I show that the degree of direct violence against civilians at the municipal level goes up where prewar electoral competition between rival political factions approaches parity. I also show that, following the first round of violence, war-related factors gain explanatory relevance. In particular, there is a clear endoge-nous trend whereby subsequent levels of violence are highly correlated with initial levels of violence. In short, the paper demonstrates that an understanding of the determinants of violence requires a theory com-bining the effect of political cleavages and wartime dynamics.

What explains the variation in levels of violence across time and space during civil wars? Why do armed groups use high levels of violence in some places, but not in neighboring places with similar characteristics? What leads armed groups in conflict to target noncombatants to a greater or lesser degree?

This question has been at the forefront of recent research on civil wars. To date, two types of explanations have emerged. A first generation of scholars con-sidered prewar characteristics of countries undergoing civil wars; following Clausewitz (1968) and Schmitt (1976), civil conflicts were seen as the result of existing political cleavages, and violence as the consequence of these divisions.[2] Recent empirical research has pointed instead to security concerns related to warfare, for example the military incentives of armed groups (Kalyvas 2006), the survival incentives of civilians (Valentino, Huth, and Balch-Lindsay 2004; Kalyvas 2006), or the organizational characteristics of the armed groups (Humphreys and Weinstein 2006; Weinstein 2006). These authors, who were in general using more systematic research methods than the previous generation of scholars, have

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[2] Clausewitz did not refer exactly to political cleavages in his theory, but he argued that ''war is a mere continu-ation of policy by other means'' (1968:23), and that ''under all circumstances War is to be regarded not as an inde-pendent thing, but as a political instrument'' (25).

been theoretically inspired by Mao's (1978) insight that war cannot be equated with politics because it has its own particular characteristics. This body of research has de-emphasized political variables despite the fact that civil wars are usually fought over political issues, that is, demand for self-determination, regime change, or leadership change.[3] The tendency has been to assume that, even if politics matter at the outbreak of conflict, the internal dynamics of war are driven by factors that are not necessarily political.[4]

The literature on civil wars, following Fearon and Laitin's influential article (2003), has also tended to equate all civil wars with guerrilla wars. However, this assumption has recently been questioned: Kalyvas and Balcells (2008) show that more than half of civil wars fought over the last 60 years have taken the form of what they call conventional or symmetric non-conventional civil wars, which differ from irregular or guerrilla wars in their technology of insurgency. In this paper, I focus on a civil conflict that primarily takes the form of a conventional contest, the Spanish Civil War (1936–1939). Conventional civil wars are those that ''have clear frontlines, in which attacks take place mostly from barricades and stable positions, and in which there are big major battles that are usually determinants for the war outcomes'' (Kalyvas 2005). One of the main differences between conventional civil wars and irregular or guerrilla wars is that, except for zones that are extremely close to the frontline, the control of the armed groups over the population under their dominion is overwhelming; in irregular civil wars this is not the case, as areas of total control coexist with areas of fragmented control where this must be ''shared'' with the rival. This implies that, in guerrilla wars, violence against civilians is largely the result of warfare and the competition to gain territory; in contrast, in conventional civil wars this violence is much less connected to military competition, which takes place in a space separated from the battlefield (for example cities, towns, or villages with noncombatants). In short, because warfare is connected to patterns of civilian victimization, we need different theories in order to understand this violence across types of wars as defined by their technology of insurgency.

In this paper, I develop a theoretical framework to explain intentional violence against noncombatants in conventional civil wars. I focus on what I call face-to-face or direct violence against civilians, which I distinguish from indirect violence.[5] I test my hypotheses by drawing on data from all municipalities in the region of Catalonia (Spain), which I have collected from secondary and primary historical sources. The focus on the Spanish Civil War is motivated by the recent move toward subnational research designs fueled by the need for fine-grained data of high quality. The Spanish Civil War, together with the American Civil War, is a paradigmatic case of conventional civil war; is a particular focus on the region of Catalonia derives not only from the availability of fine-grained historical data on this territory,[6] but also from the fact that this region presents rich variation in both the dependent variable(s) and the independent variable(s) that will

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[3] See, for instance, Gurr (1970, 2000), Horowitz (1985), Bates (1999), Hechter (2001), Sambanis (2001), Reynal-Querol (2002), Toft (2003), Montalvo and Reynal-Querol (2005), Sambanis and Zinn (2005), Esteban and Ray (2008).

[4] Interestingly, political variables have been much less neglected when explaining other forms of political violence such as riots (Wilkinson 2004), street violence (De la Calle 2007), or terrorist attacks (Sánchez-Cuenca and de la Calle 2004).

[5] Due to length constraints, I do not explain indirect violence here. As I will argue later, there are two main dimensions over which indirect violence differs from direct violence, and that make their theoretical approach necessarily different: On the one hand, while direct violence is perpetrated by an armed group within the territories under its control, indirect violence is mostly perpetrated within the territories controlled by its enemy. For this reason, indirect violence is more likely to be associated with militaristic factors, which cannot explain direct violence. On the other hand, direct violence implies the interaction between armed groups and civilians: this is not the case for indirect violence, which is unilaterally perpetrated by the group. These categories should not be confused with direct and indirect ''warfare strategies'' in Arreguín-Toft (2001:106).

[6] Reliable data on violence during the Spanish Civil War is still not available for a large number of provinces.

be taken into consideration.[7] The municipal level approach is appropriate both from a theoretical and empirical perspective: on the one hand, it is consistent with a microlevel explanation of the phenomenon of intentional violence against civilians[8]; on the other hand, it allows for minimizing measurement error.[9]

The organization of the paper is as follows: in the next section I briefly outline the main characteristics of the Spanish Civil War (hereafter, also SCW), and I argue that direct violence against civilians in a conventional war such as the Spanish one is puzzling from a theoretical perspective. I then present the theoretical framework and hypotheses, which I test with data from Catalonia using multivariate regression techniques. Finally, I conclude the article with a summary of the main findings of the paper and possible avenues of research.

The Spanish Civil War

The Spanish Civil War began as a military coup against a legally constituted democratic government. It lasted for almost three years (July 18, 1936–April 1, 1939) and caused 800,000 deaths and more than 440,000 externally displaced refugees.[10] The war took place between two main political blocs: (1) the army of the Republican government, or Loyalists, which also included militias of political parties,[11] trade unions,[12] and the International Brigades. I include all of them under the label of the ''left,'' even though there were important differences between them, including intense rivalries that eventually led to violent clashes;[13] (2) the army of the rebels (Francoists or Nationalists), which also included factions of the regular army and various irregular militias,[14] and which had an overall greater level of internal cohesion, in contrast with the Republican army. I include all of these groups under the label of the ''right.'' These blocs mapped

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[7] Catalonia underwent both leftist and rightist violence during the Spanish Civil War. Violence had both a direct and indirect character, and it varied across the territory, as well as along time. At the same time, Catalonia was a region with a high variation of political affinities in the prewar period—having areas of strong right-wing support (for example, the so-called highlands) and areas of strong left-wing support (for example, the industrial areas surrounding Barcelona). There were areas of high social conflict between landlords and peasants/industrial workers, and areas with relatively greater social peace. Geographically, it is a very varied region, as it has forests and mountainous areas, (the Pyrenees), as well as seashore, plains, and hilly areas. Further, it borders with France (in the North) and the Mediterranean sea (in the East), and during the war it was close to one of the main frontlines (the Ebro's frontline). All in all, this region presents local variation in key geographical, social, and political variables.

[8] The microlevel focus has been proved necessary to understand dynamics of violence during conflict (Petersen 2001; Wood 2003; Gagnon 2004; Humphreys and Weinstein 2006; Kalyvas 2006; Weinstein 2006; Fujii 2009). On the study of genocide, Fuji says: ''Examining the social dimensions of genocide also helps to locate agency at the microlevel, rather than assuming it away or assigning it to whole groups of actors, such as ''the Hutu'' or ''the masses'' (2009:20).

[9] Using the municipality as the level of analysis permits for the collection of fine-grained data, as well as better control for sources of unit heterogeneity that can otherwise bias the empirical results. In Spain, the municipality is the lowest administrative level; the size of municipalities is relatively small: in 1936 Catalonia they were 1,062 municipalities in a territory of approximately 32,100 km[2]. The average population of a municipality was 1,647 inhabitants.

[10] Data on total deaths during the civil war is still incomplete, and different historians are involved in debates over estimations (Salas 1977; Preston 1986; Martín Rubio 1997; Juliá 2004); hence, we should take this as an approximate number. Among all of the victims, around 122,000 are estimated to be civilian victims of intentional lethal violence—of these, 84,095 were victims of Francoist violence, and 37,843 were victims of leftist violence (according to data in Juliá 2004). Data on refugees is also very fragmented, and it should be taken cautiously; the sources here are Rubio (1977) and Gaitx (2006).

[11] For example, POUM (Partit Obrer Unificat Marxista), FAI (Front Anarquista Ibèric), or PC (Partit Comunista).

[12] For example, CNT (Confederación Nacional del Trabajo) or UGT (Unión General de Trabajadores).

[13] Tensions within the Leftist bloc were constant from the beginning of the war. Yet, in May 1937, members of the Communist party engaged in an armed confrontation with members of the POUM (Trotskyist party) and the FAI (the anarchist trade union) in the streets of Barcelona. The Communist party emerged as the leader of the Leftist bloc after these events, which marked the transition from a loose and decentralized organization of the Leftist army to a more strict and centralized one (Orwell 1938).

[14] For example, Falangists, Carlists, or *Requetés*.

the political cleavages of the prewar: indeed, Spain was highly polarized along the left-right cleavage during the period of the Second Republic (1931–1939) that preceded the civil war outbreak (Beevor 1982; Preston 1986; Thomas 1986)[15]. In February 1936, the national elections opposed a left-wing political coalition (the ''Frente Popular,'' which grouped all left-wing parties, including the anarchists), and a right-wing political bloc (the ''Frente Nacional,'' which grouped all right-wing parties). The former won the elections with 42.9% of votes and 60.5% of seats (Linz and de Miguel 1977).[16]

Shortly after the coup, the Spanish territory became split between areas of Loyalist and Nationalist control. The war was largely comprised of pitched battles and aerial attacks, and in less than 3 years, the Nationalist army managed to conquer all the Loyalist territory and eventually win the war. I do not deal in this paper with the macro-history of the war; I instead focus on the violence perpetrated by the groups in the rear territories. As I have said, we can distinguish between direct or face-to-face lethal violence, and indirect violence. In the SCW, the former consisted of individual or mass executions perpetrated by the groups in their own rear-guards; the latter consisted of aerial bombings perpetrated by the armies in their enemies' rear-guards. Nationalist direct violence lasted several years after the war in the form of executions that had a proto-legal nature. Since the wartime political, social, and military atmosphere persisted during the early postwar and victims of violence were extremely connected to the conflict, I argue—following major historians of the SCW[17]—that early postwar violence can be conceptualized as wartime violence perpetrated by a group having full control of a territory, and that the explanatory factors should therefore not differ from those operating in a wartime context.[18]

While indirect violence can be largely understood from a militaristic perspective—this mostly targeted military enclaves and/or crucial production and communication centers (Solé i Sabaté and Villarroya 1989a), direct violence in a conventional civil war like the SCW is quite puzzling from a theoretical standpoint (Balcells 2007). Consistent with the tradition of the first generation of scholars, some historians have characterized direct violence during the SCW as the result of political factors. Yet, it is not very well established from these works how politics influenced wartime violence: some argue that violence affected localities that were politically polarized (Ledesma 2003) while others argue that it affected communities with a higher density of political opponents, for example that leftist violence was higher in places where the right had received a greater degree of electoral support (Gaitx 2006). Also, some others argue that violence affected areas with greater economic inequalities (Casanova 2001). Further, none of these authors have performed rigorous empirical analyses in order to test their hypotheses, so their insights are not confirmatory.

Linking to organizational types of arguments (Humphreys and Weinstein 2006; Weinstein 2006), some historians have argued that direct violence on the Republican side was the result of the anarchical nature of the Republican army, and the low level of control that the governmental authorities had over anarchist and communist militias that emerged and established authority at the local level (Brenan

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[15] Raguer (2007) illustrates this polarization by explaining that, before the war, he and his school friends played at fighting leftists vs. rightists—instead of cowboys vs. Indians or cops vs. criminals.

[16] The right obtained 30.4% of votes and 23.7% of seats. The lag between ''votes'' and ''seats'' derives from the non-proportionality of the electoral system in place. Linz and De Miguel have also distinguished a ''Center'' bloc, which includes regionalist parties such as *Partido Nacionalista Vasco*, in the Basque Country, or *Lliga Regionalista*, in Catalonia. Yet, these can easily be classified as right-wing parties: the *Lliga*, for example, competed in the 1936 elections under the umbrella of the right-wing coalition (called ''Catalan Order Front'' in Catalonia); furthermore, this party supported the coup and was aligned with Franco since the beginning of the civil war.

[17] For example Juliá (2004), Casanova (2001), Solé i Sabaté (2000).

[18] It would obviously be better to study rightist wartime and postwar violence separately, but this is not possible due to the nature of the data available (not disaggregated by date).

1967; Preston 1986; Vilar 1986; Segura 1999). Following this approach, violence should have been greater in those places where Republican authorities could not control the militias, and lower where they could impose their rule over them. This might seem a sound explanation, but it is an incomplete one: for instance, at the beginning of the war, just after Franco's coup, there was a vacuum of power in most of the Republican territory and violence still diverged across localities.[19] On the other hand, this approach cannot explain violence that occurred in the few territories where the Republican government managed to keep a higher degree of territorial control, for example, Valencia or the island of Menorca.[20] Finally, this approach cannot account for violence carried out by the Francoist army, since it has been described as very well organized, with a high level of hierarchy and rank control, which provided little potential for opportunistic behavior.[21]

Lastly, it could be that the strategic approaches explaining violence as a result of the interactions between combatants and civilians are more helpful in explaining why armed groups killed people in their respective rear-guards: it can be thought that armed groups decided to commit violations in their control zones motivated by the need to attain the consent and control of civilians (Kalyvas 2006). Yet, it is not clear what could have led to the variations in levels of violence in municipalities located in the same military zone, since armed groups had the same incentives to kill everywhere, and the incentives of civilians to collaborate with the armed group were constant across the zone.

In sum, none of these theories satisfactorily explains direct violence during the SCW. I would argue that this is the case because they have largely been inspired by irregular civil wars, and conventional warfare is out of their scope conditions. In this paper, I instead provide an explanation for direct violence in conventional civil wars.

Theory

In this section, I present a theory of direct violence in conventional civil wars. I first depict the characteristics of conventional civil wars and I explain the operation of a different logic of violence than in irregular civil wars. I then define direct violence and identify the main dimension over which its production differs from that of indirect violence. Lastly, I theorize on direct violence in conventional civil wars and I present a set of observable implications to be tested.

Conventional Civil Wars

Unlike in irregular wars, violence against civilians and combatants in conventional civil wars takes place in clearly delineated spaces. Combatants are generally young men, voluntarily or forcibly recruited by armed groups, who engage in combat primarily on a frontline.[22] Combatants are generally killed in the course of battles, which usually include the use of artillery and bombings. Civilians are generally isolated from the battlefield: while some may live close to the frontlines, or even go there to visit combatants, their everyday life tends to be independent

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[19] Some historians have associated weakness of the state with presence of anarchist trade unions. Yet, ''leftist atrocities were also committed in areas with a weak FAI and CNT presence'' (De la Cueva 1998:358).

[20] ''Valencia remained during almost all the war in a situation of strict rear-guard, where the structure of the State was maintained'' (Bosch 1983:73), but the amount of victims of leftist violence in this region is still not negligible: 4,634, according to Gabarda (1993). In Menorca, the military command was strong from early stages of the war, and leftist violence was still high (Martín Jiménez 2000).

[21] On the characteristics of the Nationalist army, see, among others, Espinosa (2005) and Calzado (2006).

[22] A combatant can be a soldier who is in charge of a weapon, or merely one who works in any job related to the military endeavor (for example, bridge and barricade construction, cooking, transportation, etc.). My definition of combatant is slightly broader than Downes (2006, 2007) who only considers munition workers as combatants.

from the war events. Insofar as there are civilian assassinations, they are usually due to armed groups entering villages/towns, to aerial or naval bombings, or to executions or massacres taking place in the course of territorial conquest.[23]

In irregular civil wars, the clear spatial distinction between battlefield and non-battlefield areas does not hold, as the war takes place unevenly across space; as a result, there is a much greater mingling of civilians and combatants (Guevara 1967; Mao 1978; Wood 2003), who therefore partake in the same basic process of violence.[24] Since frontlines are permeable and any action from a defector is potentially threatening the control of a locality and the safety of an armed unit, actions by defectors become relevant for war outcomes; hence control of information (in order to identify defectors among civilians) is essential for armed groups, as explained by Kalyvas (2006). Control of information is, on the contrary, less crucial in conventional wars, where frontlines are nonporous and where the outcome of the war is mostly determined by the evolution of battles.

Hence the puzzle: why do groups in conventional civil wars decide to perpetrate violence behind the frontlines, when this type of violence appears to be unnecessary based on standard rationalist assumptions? And, moreover, why does this violence vary? I argue that the decision to perpetrate direct violence against civilians in conventional civil wars is related to the degree of political mobilization during the prewar period. Because mobilization produces deep loyalties and attachments,[25] mobilized individuals are a key asset for armed groups in wartime contexts: they may become recruits (Bearman 1991; Humphreys and Weinstein 2008),[26] they may encourage economic production (Wood 2003), or they may hinder the enemy's actions (Petersen 2001). Due to these effects, armed groups are likely to devote resources to eliminate such individuals by "sweeping the rear." Given that an armed group's resources devoted to victimize civilians are limited, groups are likely to target highly mobilized people, that is the "strong supporters" of their rival, who represent the most important threat.[27] Those not highly mobilized, that is "weak supporters," are by definition less threatening and so they are less likely to be targeted.

In a nutshell, a prediction of my logic is that in the absence of prior mobilization, conventional wars should not be the sites of mass violence against civilians, while the converse should also hold.[28] Also, since mobilization reflects prewar cleavages, it follows that the targeting of noncombatants in conventional civil wars will likely be related to these cleavages; political identities will be crucial for the groups' detection of potential threats behind the frontlines,[29] and—as I will explain—they will influence the extent to which there is variation in direct violence across space.[30]

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[23] As in any other war, instances of communal violence or killings between civilians may also take place, but, from a rationalist framework, we should not expect these to be the norm.

[24] In fact, in irregular civil wars, civilians might have greater probability of getting killed than combatants (Kalyvas and Kocher 2007).

[25] On political mobilization, see, among many others: McAdam (1988); Verba, Lehman Schlozman, and Brady (1995); McAdam, Tarrow, and Tilly (2001); Beissinger (2002).

[26] Bearman argues that the mobilization of localist identities (at the expense of a Southern identity) explain desertion in the Confederate bloc during the US Civil War. Localism replaced the Confederate/Southern identity that had initially propelled men into war (1991:326). Humphreys and Weinstein find that, in Sierra Leone, "70% of CDF fighters reported joining because they supported the group's political goals" (2008:438).

[27] That is the case, for example, of activists or members of political parties, but also of members of organizations with an ideological flavor (e.g., religious congregations, business associations).

[28] Prior mobilization can also exist in irregular contexts but we should expect it to display a different dynamic (this is outside the scope of my paper).

[29] The identities that are relevant—ethnic, ideological, religious—vary depending on the dimension around which the conflict is articulated.

[30] Again, prewar identities are those that matter because in contexts of full military control people do not have incentives to behave against the controlling group (Kalyvas 2006) and wartime behavior and/or identities are therefore not informative; the cues for the identification of potential defectors must thus relate to the prewar period. As I will explain, wartime behavior is only informative for a subsequent phase of the war, when control changes hands.

Direct Violence

Following Kalyvas (2006), we know that the production of selective violence in an irregular civil war is a function of the intersection between the actions of armed groups (which can have greater or lesser incentives to pursue violent strategies) and the actions of civilians (who can have greater or lesser incentives to collaborate with the armed groups). I argue that the interaction of civilians and armed groups is relevant for the production of any type of violence, not just the selective type, provided that violence is direct, that is, it requires some type of face-to-face interaction between perpetrators and victims (for example, individual or mass executions). In order to perpetrate direct violence, armed groups have to arrest, process, and finally assassinate the victims; at any point during the process, local civilians can either facilitate or constrain this. For example, local civilians may denounce their neighbors, help to identify them, or they can even arrest them; this obviously enhances an armed group's capacity to target civilian supporters of its rival. Conversely, local civilians can hide potential victims, they can help them flee to other places, or they can give false indications to the groups, which limits their capacity to assassinate.[31] In sum, civilian agency is relevant for the perpetration of direct violence; this is not the case with indirect violence (for example the aerial bombing of a city), whose perpetration is unilateral from an armed actor's perspective.[32]

Explaining Direct Violence

Let's imagine a hypothetical country where a civil war erupted after a period of intense political confrontation between political parties A and B, whose platforms are now championed by respective armed groups A and B. The citizenry of this country has been mobilized along the A-B cleavage. Now imagine a hypothetical armed group A that is patrolling territory that has been newly conquered from group B. The two groups, which fight a conventional war with relatively stable frontlines, enjoy exclusive military control of relative large areas from which they have excluded the rival group. Relevant interactions in the territory controlled by A involve combatants of this group and all civilians living in it.

In addition to confronting B on the battlefield in order to increase the share of territory under its control, A is interested in getting rid of strong supporters of B (thereafter, also SS_B), who are perceived as a potential threat. The crucial interactions leading to direct violence take place at the local level, where the degree to which A targets civilians depends on two factors: (a) the number of SS_B living there, and (b) the behavior of civilians in the locality, who can choose to back the killings or to constrain them. On the one hand, in each locality there are political activists or individuals who are highly mobilized and identify intensively with one of the groups. As a general norm, we can expect that the presence of SS_B will be proportional to the existence of supporters of B in a locality (the same should hold for A and SS_A). Furthermore, the number of SS_B will likely be related to the presence of particular institutions mobilizing along the war cleavage lines (for example trade unions, churches, and professional organizations). Lastly, we can expect more SS_B in places with a record of social unrest and political confrontations between A and B.

At the same time, collaboration with the armed group in power (in our example, A) is subject to constraints. Local civilians associated with group A are likely

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[31] Civilians can also presumably be neutral to the actions of the groups (Wood 2003). Yet, remaining neutral does not seem to be easy in wartime contexts (Petersen 2001; Kalyvas 2006).

[32] Again, this—together with the fact that indirect violence is perpetrated in the enemy's controlled territories—makes the logic of other types of violence necessarily different.

to take into consideration the effects of violence for the future of their locality. Building on the insights from the economic literature on electoral competition and redistribution (for example, Dixit and Londregan 1998; Bardhan and Yang 2004; Bardhan and Mookherjee 2008), I hypothesize that these considerations are shaped by the distribution of local power between groups, as expressed electorally. When electoral power approaches parity (that is, the margin of victory is small), violence can decisively alter the local political balance; in this context, A supporters are likely to opportunistically push the armed group toward violence against B supporters. However, where A supporters are either a distinct majority or a distinct minority (that is the margin of victory is large), they are likely to restrain their respective armed groups: where they are a majority, they do not need to use violence in order to change the status quo; where they are a minority, only genocidal levels of violence would help reverse the balance; short of that, they would endanger themselves without altering their position vis-à-vis B supporters.

Translating this conjecture in operational terms, I would expect A supporters to promote armed group violence where the prewar electoral balance approaches parity (that is, a 50–50% distribution) and to constrain armed group violence where this balance moves away from parity. In other words, as competition approaches parity, both the presence of strong supporters of the enemy and collaborative civilian behavior combine to generate higher levels of violence.

Hypothesis 1: *The greater prewar competition approaches parity between groups, the higher the levels of violence perpetrated by the armed group controlling that locality.*

Of course, this hypothesis assumes a one-shot, static setting (let's call it t_1). Intuitively, past instances of violence will likely influence subsequent ones in t_{1+n}; this is coherent with my theoretical framework. Imagine, for instance, a second period where the territory that was initially controlled by A is conquered by B, a group that faces similar incentives toward the use of violence against civilians. The identification and assassination of SS_A will be, at this point, connected to both the electoral profile of the locality *and* the actions taken by A's supporters in t_1. On the one hand, those that have openly collaborated with A (that is backing or perpetrating executions) during t_1 will be easily identified as SS_A—regardless of their prewar identities; that is, B and its local supporters will update their expectations on the presence of SS_A according to the events in t_1. On the other hand, people will choose to promote or restrain violence depending on their experiences during t_1: if they have been victimized by A in the first period, they will push for killings.[33] The mechanism associated to the latter is the desire for revenge (Fridja 1994) or retaliation (Gould 2000). These emotional motives will add to the strategic or political incentives depicted above.[34] Hence, *ceteris paribus*, the more violence used at t_1 against B supporters the more violence we should expect at t_2 against A supporters, and vice-versa.

Hypothesis 2: *The higher the levels of violence perpetrated by an armed group controlling a locality at t_1, the higher the levels of violence perpetrated by the rival armed group in the same locality during the subsequent time period.*

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[33] Victimization is a broad concept, and it may be associated not only to lethal violence. Yet, for simplicity reasons, I will operationalize it here as such—with the understanding that a victimized person is a relative or friend of a person who has been killed.

[34] According to Petersen, ''emotion is a mechanism that triggers action to satisfy a pressing concern'' (2002:17). While emotions such as fear, hatred, or resentment (analyzed by Petersen) may be present in the first stage of the war—and trigger violence at the local level, I would argue that revenge will be an added or ''new'' emotion derived from the events having taken place earlier in the conflict. And it will itself build ''pressing concerns'' that people will try to satisfy.

Given that, after accounting for wartime events (of the previous ''control phase''), armed groups and civilians update both their beliefs on the local presence of an enemy's supporters and their preferences for assassinating them, we can presume that wartime factors will supersede prewar identities and balance of power considerations as the war persists and violent events accumulate. At an operational level, this implies that political factors will likely lose relevance in favor of war-related variables along time.

Empirical Test

During the SCW, most of the Catalan territory was under Republican control until the beginning of 1939, with very few exceptions.[35] This means that violence took place in two stages: first (from July 1936 to 1938/1939, during the period I have called t_1) violence was perpetrated by leftist militias and the Republican army; later (during and after its occupation of the territories, the period I have called t_2) violence was perpetrated by the Nationalist army and right-wing militias.[36]

In this section, I will test my hypotheses by means of multivariate linear regression techniques using a cross-sectional data set I have built for all 1,062 municipalities in Catalonia. I have relied on primary and secondary sources (detailed in Table 1 below): These include history books, local histories, official censuses, and trade union bulletins. I have obtained data on direct violence from the books by Solé i Sabaté and Villarroya (1989) and Solé i Sabaté (2000), which are highly reliable sources. These authors have put together data on a number of executions perpetrated by the groups at the municipal level.[37] They have collected the data from local civil registers and a myriad of historical archives (national, regional, local), and they have double-checked them with available oral sources.[38]

Using this cross-sectional data set, I estimate negative binomial II (NB) and zero inflated negative binomial (ZINB) regressions, which are count models appropriate for the nature of the dependent variable(s) (number of people executed by the left, in t_1, and number of people executed by the right, in t_2). NB permits controlling for overdispersion; ZINB allows controlling both for overdispersion and the excess of zeros in the dependent variable (Long 1997). This model generates two set of estimates: a first set of estimates explaining the probability of the non-occurrence of violence (that is, that the DV is always 0) —through a logit regression; a second set of estimates explaining the number of counts—through a NB regression—for all those cases that are ''not always zero.''

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[35] A few localities close to the Ebro frontline were conquered by the Nationalists in mid-1938; the first Catalan town to be occupied by the Nationalist army was Lleida (April 3, 1938). The total occupation of Catalonia ended on the February 12, 1939 (Solé i Sabaté 2000).

[36] The right was overall less brutal than the left in Catalonia, but this is not the rule for the rest of Spain, where the right was at least twice as brutal (Juliá 2004). This outcome is driven by the fact that Catalonia was one of the regions that lasted longer under Republican control. Elsewhere (Balcells 2010), I test the same hypotheses with local level data from the provinces of Malaga, in Andalusia; Alicante and Valencia, in Valencia; Huesca, Teruel, and Zaragoza, in Aragon; the results are consistent with those obtained here and they indicate that the results are neither limited to the case of Catalonia nor to violence in the Loyalist side.

[37] They have classified victims by place residence. I have followed the same coding procedure when double-checking and completing some missing cases with data from local archives, memoirs, and local histories.

[38] For leftist violence, they have also relied on *La Causa General*, a section of the Spanish National Historical Archive where the Francoist authorities meticulously documented wartime crimes perpetrated by leftist forces. Even though the data in this archive is upwardly biased, making the left responsible for more crimes than those actually committed, these historians have corrected the data through triangulation; that is, combining information from different historical sources.

TABLE 1. Dependent and Independent Variables in the Models

Name of the Variable	Characteristics	Sources
Leftist executions	Total number of people executed by the left in a municipality	Solé i Sabaté and Villarroya (1989a)
Rightist executions	Total number of people executed by the right in a municipality	Solé i Sabaté (2000)
Competition	Index from 0 (minimum parity) to 1 (maximum parity)	Formula in Chacón (2004). Data from Vilanova (2005)
CNT affiliation	% of inhabitants affiliated to the CNT in a municipality	CNT (1936), Cucó Giner (1970)
UGT affiliation	% of inhabitants affiliated to the UGT in a municipality	UGT (1931a,b)
Population	Inhabitants of the municipality in 1936	Instituto Nacional de Estadística (Spanish National Bureau of Statistics)
Catholic center	Dummy variable, 1 if the municipality had an archbishop in 1936; 0 otherwise	Conferencia Episcopal Española (Spanish Episcopal Conference)
Frontline	Dummy variable, 1 if the municipality is in a county that shares the military frontline at any time during the war, 0 if not	Solé i Sabaté and Villarroya (2005)
Border	Dummy variable, 1 if the municipality is in a county that shares the French border, 0 if not	Institut Cartogràfic de Catalunya (Cartographic Institute of Catalonia)
Sea	Dummy variable, 1 if the municipality is in a county with seashore, 0 of not	Institut Cartogràfic de Catalunya (Cartographic Institute of Catalonia)
Altitude	Altitude of the municipality, in meters	Institut Cartogràfic de Catalunya (Cartographic Institute of Catalonia)

Although the ZINB regression proves to be more suitable for my data,[39] I include results of both NB and ZINB in order to supply greater robustness.[40]

In Table 1, we can see the description of the variables that will be used in the different econometric models. In addition to the main independent variable, ''competition,'' which captures the degree of parity between political factions in a locality,[41] I am including a number of independent and control variables that are grounded in my theoretical framework, as well as in the civil war literature.

''Leftist executions'' and ''Rightist executions'' quantify (for each of the localities in the data set) the total number of victims of leftist and rightist direct violence, respectively. ''Competition'' is an index created from the local returns in the national elections that took place in February 1936, that is, approximately six months before the onset of the war. In those elections, the left was competing under the umbrella organization known as the ''Popular Front,'' and the right was competing under the umbrella of the ''Nationalist Front'' coalition. I apply a basic index capturing the extent to which there is a balance of power between the two

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[39] In all the regressions below, the Vuong test shows that the zero inflated specification is necessary, which indicates that the ZINB results are more reliable than the NB results. Additionally, if I test the different count regression models potentially applicable to these data, and I check graphically the way they fit the real data (following Long 1997:247–8), the ZINB model also appears to be the most appropriate.

[40] I also run a set of OLS regressions with the dependent variable normalized on the size of the locality, that is, executed per thousand inhabitants. The results are robust, and they are available upon request.

[41] Some authors use the term ''polarization'' to refer to the degree of parity between groups; I deem competition as a more appropriate concept. Polarization entails considering the distance between the groups (Esteban and Ray 1994), and it therefore has different theoretical and empirical implications.

factions: $1-(\%VoteLeft36-\%VoteRight/100)^2$. This index has value 0 when one of the groups received all the share of votes in the elections (that is 100%), and it has value 1 when both groups received 50% of the vote in the elections; following my theory, we can expect the variable to have a positive effect on the number of executions.[42]

''Catholic center'' is a dummy for places that had a catholic archbishop, and hence had relatively large religious population; we can expect a positive sign with regard to leftist violence. I will not include this variable on the regressions for rightist violence, as it is not theoretically relevant for explaining it: religious people were not a would-be target for the rightists.

''CNT affiliation'' and ''UGT affiliation'' are additional measures of political and social conflict in a locality, and we can therefore expect them to take a positive sign with regard to leftist violence—the number of strong rightist supporters should be relatively larger in these places. Also, the embryo of most leftist armed militias were these trade unions; when acting in their own localities, militiamen had greater leeway to perpetrate violence because they already had local information and resources. Civilian collaboration was more superfluous; because of this, we can also expect these variables to increase levels of direct violence. On the other hand, since these are proxies for the presence of strong supporters of the left, we can expect that they will also have a positive effect on levels of rightist violence in t_2.

I will include in the regressions a set of geographical variables having potential effects on levels of violence, which also should allow for controlling sources of unit heterogeneity: ''frontline'' captures the uncertainty that is likely to take place in zones close to the war frontline(s), which we can expect will increase levels of victimization by each of the groups. ''Sea'' should capture the effect of a potential escape gate on the number of assassinations taking place in a particular area (we expect that this will reduce them).[43] Proximity to the French ''border'' should also capture the effect of proximity to an escape gate. Altitude is a measure for ''rough terrain,'' and it should capture the effect that knowledge of local terrain and access difficulties has on violence against civilians: in rough terrain locations, people can hide in the mountains or forests in order to avoid being assassinated more easily than in other places (Fearon and Laitin 2003), so we can expect that it will have a negative sign.[44] Finally, I also include inhabitants of the village in 1936 (''population'') in order to control for size of the locality.

I have included in the Appendix the formal expression of the different econometric models that will be estimated. Table 2 depicts the results of the NB and ZINB models for leftist executions in Catalonia, which, as I pointed out, were mostly perpetrated by irregular militias that patrolled in a decentralized manner across the Republican territory. When militias entered a municipality, they would get in touch with the local council, which at that time was called ''Antifascist committee'' and was formed by a combination of leftist political parties, in order to get information on right-wing supporters in the locality. The committee's actions, as well as those of other civilians in the locality, had key implications for

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[42] In running a set of robustness tests with alternative measures of competition: (1) the formula above, but with absolute (instead of quadratic) values; (2) competition measured with results on the 1933 national elections; (3) dummy variable that is for different electoral shares. Furthermore, absent an optimal instrument for competition, I perform a number of robustness checks in order to make sure that the analyses do not suffer from omitted variable bias, namely that there are factors jointly affecting patterns of political identity and violence (Chacón, Robinson, and Torvik 2006). For example, I run regressions with county level fixed effects, as well as with geo-referencing indicators (that is latitude and longitude of the locality). All the results are robust, and they are available upon request.

[43] During the civil war, many refugees left Catalonia by sea (Doll-Petit 2004).

[44] In alternative specifications, I use altitude range of a locality as a proxy for rough terrain, which is a measure more consistent with Fearon and Laitin's (2003). The results are robust.

TABLE 2. Leftist Executions in Catalonia
NB and ZINB Models*

	NB	ZINB	ZINB
	DV: Number of Executed	DV: Number of Executed (NB)	DV: Non-Violence (Logit)
Competition	1.3*** (0.337)	1.47*** (0.375)	1.79 (1.47)
Frontline	0.264* (0.15)	0.28** (0.14)	0.69 (0.7)
Population (*1000)	0.08 (0.12)	0.064*** (0.002)	−6.8*** (1.9)
CNT affiliation	0.12* (0.062)	0.111*** (0.021)	—
UGT affiliation	0.101 (0.09)	0.08 (0.049)	0.037 (0.504)
Border	−0.39** (0.16)	−0.39** (0.16)	−0.43 (0.52)
Sea	−0.34** (0.14)	−0.12 (0.154)	1.45
Rough terrain (*1000)	−1.2*** (0.4)	−0.75*** (0.28)	1.33 (1.02)
Catholic center	2.16*** (0.826)	2.15*** (0.46)	—
Constant	0.49 (0.43)	0.296 (0.372)	−1.64 (1.3)
LnAlpha	0.65 (0.096)	0.411 (0.083)	
Alpha	1.91 (0.183)	1.5 (0.12)	
Observations	*870*	*583*	*870*
	Wald χ^2 (9) = 284.06	Lr χ^2 (9) = 489.9	Lr χ^2 (9) = 489.9
	Prob>χ^2 = 0.0000	Prob>χ^2 = 0.0000	Prob>χ^2 = 0.0000

(*Notes.* Robust Standard Errors in Brackets. NB, negative binomial; ZINB, zero inflated negative binomial; DV, dependent variable. Sig Level: *.1, **.05, ***.001.

*The use of the variable ''altitude'' implies missing a significant number of cases from the sample—as it can be seen in the Appendix, this variable only has 870 cases. In order to make sure that losing these cases is not biasing the results, I have run all the regressions in this section without this variable [for a total of 1,058 localities]. The results remain robust in all cases, and they are available upon request.)

violence: members of the committee, individually or collectively, could provide the militias with a list of ''suspects,'' they could arrest these people, or they could even indicate to the militiamen the location of these people's households. Conversely, they could choose not to provide the militias with a list of names, not to help the militiamen find the suspects, or even inform would-be targets about the intentions of the militias so that they could escape in time.[45] In short, violence would achieve greater or lower levels depending on the number of right-wing supporters in the locality, on the one hand, and on what left-wing supporters decided to do (to back or to constrain militias' lethal actions), on the other.

Table 2 indicates that, as predicted, ''competition'' is substantively and statistically significant in explaining direct violence by the left: the greater the level of parity between political factions in a locality, the greater the number of executions. This is the case both in the NB and the ZINB regressions. Yet, ''competition'' is not relevant in explaining the occurrence of violence—the coefficient is not significant in the second part of the ZINB equation.[46] ''CNT affiliation'' also has a significant effect, and it goes in the expected direction: the presence of affiliates increases the number of assassinations. In fact, this variable cannot be included in the logit piece of the ZINB model because it overpredicts violence; in other words, there are no places where with positive levels of CNT affiliation leftist violence was not observed. ''UGT affiliation'' is not significant in

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[45] These processes are detailed in many regional and local historical accounts. See, for example, Garriga (1986), Pous i Porta and Solé i Sabaté (1988), Segura (1999), Gutierrez Flores (2000), Crosas (2004), Gaitx (2006), Dueñas (2007), Casanova (2007).

[46] This is coherent with the fact that, at the empirical level, there were some factors that affected the occurrence of violence and that were independent of the degree of competition in a locality: for example, in many localities, the priest was the only victim of leftist violence. As it is explained by Delgado (1992), killing the priest became a sort of a revolutionary obligation that could not be easily avoided by local revolutionaries, even in those cases where they decided to spare the lives of other would-be targets, that is, rich people or rightists.
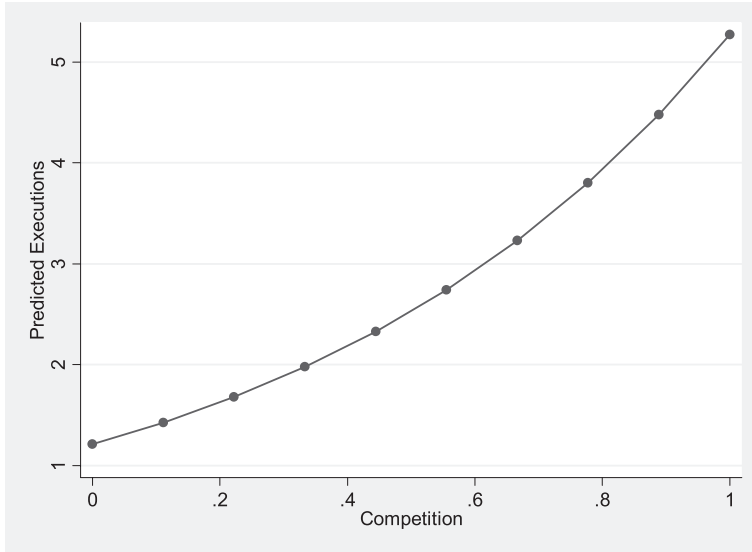
FIG 1. Predicted Number of Leftist Executions, by Level of Competition
(Localities with non-zero levels of violence)

explaining violence by the left. ''Frontline'' also has a positive effect on number of executions, as predicted: localities close to the Ebro frontline were more victimized than others. Proximity to the French border and to the sea take expected negative signs: they indicate that the possibility of fleeing reduces the degree of victimization at the local level. ''Altitude'' also takes a negative sign, capturing the negative impact of rough terrain over executions. ''Catholic center'' has a very strong positive effect on level of executions, indicating that the presence of a large number of strong supporters of the right (that is religious people) led to higher levels of violence by the left. As in the case of ''CNT affiliation,'' ''Catholic center'' overpredicts the occurrence of violence, and it cannot be included in the logit portion of the ZINB model.

Figure 1 depicts the predicted number of leftist executions by level of political competition using the ZINB model and setting all other variables at their sample mean. It illustrates that, for all places with non-zero levels of violence, level of competition substantively increases executions by the leftist militias.

Table 3 shows the marginal effects of the variable competition on number of killings, both for the NB and the ZINB models. Since competition is a variable with little variance (see descriptive statistic in the Appendix), the most intuitive indicator for marginal effects is %StdX, which indicates the percent change in the value of the dependent variable for a change in one standard deviation in the value of this independent variable. According to the results of the ZINB model, as a locality gets closer to a situation of prewar political parity (by one

TABLE 3. Effect of Competition on Leftist Executions

	Percent change in expected count	Percent change in expected count	Factor change in odds
	NB	ZINB (NB)	ZINB (logit)
B	1.3***	1.47***	1.79
%X	267.6	333.4	501.3
%StdX	22	25.2	31.6

(*Notes.* NB, negative binomial; ZINB, zero inflated negative binomial.)

TABLE 4. Rightist Executions in Catalonia
NB Models

	Model 1	Model 2
	DV: Number of Executed	DV: Number of Executed
Competition	2.02*** (0.42)	1.62*** (0.41)
Leftist executions	—	0.034*** (0.093)
Frontline	0.06 (0.15)	−0.074 (0.13)
Population (*1000)	0.07 (0.1)	−0.08 (0.009)
CNT affiliation	0.084 (0.055)	0.102 (0.092)
UGT affiliation	0.016 (0.08)	−0.042* (0.023)
Border	−0.56*** (0.17)	−0.49*** (0.17)
Sea	−0.031 (0.16)	0.088 (0.16)
Rough terrain (*1000)	−0.86*** (0.33)	−0.87*** (0.31)
Constant	−0.844** (0.42)	−0.59 (0.42)
LnAlpha	0.81 (0.102)	0.69 (0.08)
Alpha	2.24 (0.23)	2.01 (0.16)
N	870	870
	Wald χ^2 (8) = 141.98	Wald χ^2 (7) = 132.88
	Prob>χ^2 = 0.0000	Prob>χ^2 = 0.0000

(*Notes*. Robust standard errors in parentheses. NB, negative binomial; DV, dependent variable. Sig level: *.1, **.05, ***.001.)

standard deviation), its level of lethal violence increases by 25.2%; according to the results of the NB model, the increase is of 22%.

Tables 4 and 5 show the results of the econometric models with rightist executions as the dependent variable. These executions took place in Catalonia during and after the occupation of the territory by the Nationalist army. In this region, rightist violence was much more institutionalized than leftist violence, and it had a proto-legal nature (Solé i Sabaté 2000), but this does not mean that its perpetration was unilateral: like leftist violence, rightist violence implied the interaction between the armed group and local civilians. Indeed, when the Nationalist army or its irregular militias conquered a locality, it relied on local civilians in order to create lists of suspects, which would be imprisoned and eventually executed.[47] Members of the local community had a lot of agency in the process leading to executions: for example, people could easily denounce their neighbors by saying that they were *rojos* (''reds''), or by arguing that they had been involved in ''blood crimes'' during the war—that is, they could push for killings. Conversely, local rightist politicians or religious authorities could write letters to ask for the absolution of detainees, and people could hide relatives and neighbors or help them flee—in other words, they could constrain the perpetration of violence. In the context of these victimization processes, civilians would often act upon revenge desires motivated by their experiences during the first phase of the civil war.[48]

Table 4 shows the results of the NB regressions for rightist executions. The results of the NB regressions in Table 4 are supportive of hypothesis 2: leftist executions have a positive and significant effect on rightist executions (in model 2). ''Competition'' also has a positive effect on rightist executions (in both

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[47] Very often, people would not be immediately killed, as the Francoist apparatus followed a set of proto-legal procedures before carrying out the executions. In some occasions, people would be imprisoned for months or years before being assassinated. If it came into being, the release of prisoners would only happen after the intervention of local authorities in favor of the detainees.

[48] The role of civilians' revenge motives in the processes leading to rightist victimization has been illustrated in many local and regional historical accounts, for example: Garriga (1986, 2004), Gimeno (1989), Gabarda (1993), Ventura i Solé (1993), Solé i Sabaté (2000), Gutierrez Flores (2000), Casanova (2007), and Dueñas (2007).

Table 5. Rightist Executions in Catalonia
ZINB

	Model 1	Model 1	Model 2	Model 2
	DV: Number of executed (NB)	DV: Non-Violence (logit)	DV: Number of executed (NB)	DV: Non-Violence (logit)
Competition	1.47*** (0.47)	−0.17 (0.85)	1.01** (0.435)	−0.29 (0.811)
Leftist executions	—	—	0.018*** (0.04)	−0.67*** (0.13)
Frontline	0.03 (0.14)	0.22 (0.35)	−0.15 (0.13)	0.114 (0.37)
Population (*1000)	0.03*** (0.001)	−4.9*** (0.79)	−0.05*** (0.002)	−3.8*** (0.611)
CNT affiliation	0.064*** (0.017)	−4.07 (46.26)	0.079*** (0.014)	0.024 (0.047)
UGT affiliation	0.01 (0.047)	−12.05 (54019.57)	−0.0264 (0.041)	0.235 (0.15)
Border	−0.52*** (0.164)	−0.226 (0.357)	−0.49*** (0.15)	−0.26 (0.34)
Sea	−0.014 (0.142)	−0.47 (0.367)	0.033 (0.13)	−0.71** (0.33)
Rough terrain (*1000)	−0.44** (0.28)	−0.22 (0.53)	−0.56** (0.13)	0.65 (0.53)
Constant	0.023 (0.46)	2.37*** (0.882)	0.49 (0.42)	2.93*** (0.841)
LnAlpha	0.09 (0.097)		−0.18 (0.09)	
Alpha	1.09 (0.106)		0.833 (0.081)	
N	455	870	455	870
	Lr χ^2 (8) = 211.22	Lr χ^2 (8) = 211.22	Lr χ^2 (9) = 273.4	Lr χ^2 (9) = 273.4
	Prob>χ^2 = 0.0000	Prob>χ^2 = 0.0000	Prob>χ^2 = 0.0000	Prob>χ^2 = 0.0000

(*Notes.* Robust standard errors in parentheses. NB, negative binomial; ZINB, zero inflated negative binomial; DV, dependent variable. Sig level: *.1, **.05, ***.001.)

models 1 and 2); this variable does not lose statistical significance when we introduce leftist executions in the regression, although its coefficient shrinks. ''CNT affiliation'' is not significant in these regressions, and ''UGT affiliation'' takes a negative sign in model 2—that is, when including leftist executions as an independent variable; this is contrary to our expectations.

As before, proximity to the border also implies fewer killings, which indicates that the possibility of fleeing to France lessened the degree of rightist violence at the local level. As predicted, ''Altitude'' also implies fewer assassinations. Proximity to the war frontline and to the sea are not statistically significant.

Table 5 depicts the results of the ZINB regressions for rightist executions. The ZINB results in Table 5 are consistent overall with the NB results. Model 2 indicates that the revenge mechanism is important in order to understand levels of violence in t_2: the greater the violence by the left in a locality, the greater the violence by the right during the subsequent period. Simultaneously, the revenge mechanism helps to explain the occurrence of violence: the greater the level of leftist violence in the previous period, the greater the likelihood of violence (or the lower the likelihood of nonviolence) by the right. In Model 2, we can observe that proximity to the sea increases the likelihood of violence. This is contrary to the NB results (where proximity to the sea was not significant), and to what we expected—although it might reflect that the possibilities to flee by sea were more limited during the period of Francoist vis-à-vis the period of Republican control (Doll-Petit 2004). Finally, we observe in this table that CNT-affilation has a positive effect on rightist executions, as we expected.

In order to better illustrate the effects of the key independent variables in this econometric model (that is ''competition'' and ''leftist executions'') on the dependent variable (''rightist executions''), I have summarized their marginal effects in Table 6.

Table 6 shows that ''leftist executions'' in t_1 are statistical and substantively more relevant than ''competition'' for explaining both the occurrence and the level of rightist executions in t_2. On the one hand, while one standard deviation

TABLE 6. Effects of Competition and Leftist Executions on Rightist Executions

	Percent change in expected count	Percent change in expected count	Factor change in odds	Factor change in odds
	Competition	Leftist executions	Competition	Leftist executions
B	1.01**	0.018***	−0.29	−0.67***
%X	174.9	1.9	−25.6	−49
%StdX	16.7	354.6	−4.4	−100

change on leftist executions generate a change of −100% on the odds of nonviolence, competition is not significant in explaining nonviolence. On the other hand, a one standard deviation change in leftist executions generates a change of 354.6% on the expected count of rightist executions; a one standard deviation change in competition generates a much smaller change, of 16.7%, on this expected count.

If we compare the marginal effects of a one standard deviation change in ''competition'' on ''leftist executions'' (in Table 3) and on ''rightist executions'' (in Table 6), we can see that they are smaller in the latter case. These marginal effects decrease from 25.2% (for leftist executions) to 16.7% (for rightist executions). Hence, as the war develops wartime variables (that is previous violence) gain relative explanatory power at the expense of political variables like prewar political competition.

With respect to the models in Tables 4 and 5, it could be argued that the effect of ''competition'' and ''leftist executions'' are endogenous, and that including both of them in the same regression does not solve this problem (Achen 2005). In an attempt to illustrate the effect of executions in t_1 on executions in t_2—independent of competition, I proceed to do a comparison of means test: I identify a subset of localities that are highly similar in terms of prewar levels of political competition (that is, they had high levels of competition), and I partition them into two groups, one that experienced *high* levels of leftist violence during the first period of the war, and one that experienced *low* levels of leftist violence during the same period. I then compare the mean level of rightist executions during the second period of the war for each of these two sub-samples of municipalities. Table 7 show the results of this test: Sample 1 includes localities with high levels of political competition in the prewar period,[49] which experienced no violence or very low levels of leftist executions;[50] and sample 2 includes localities also with high levels of competition in the prewar period,[51] which experienced high levels of leftist executions.[52] I calculate the difference in the mean number of executions by the right (during period t_2) for each of these sub-samples, and I check if the difference in means is statistically significant.

The results of this test indicate that violence by the left in t_1 is a key factor explaining violence by the right in t_2: localities that were highly competitive and experienced high levels of violence by the left in t_1 present a much greater average in number of rightist executions in t_2 vis-à-vis places that were also highly competitive but that experienced very low levels of leftist violence or no violence at all in t_1. The difference in the means of the two sub-samples is statistically significant at the 1% level.[53]

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[49] It includes those that have a competition index equal or greater than 0.987004, which is the value of the third quartile of this variable.

[50] It includes those with no deaths or with one death.

[51] Again, this includes localities with a competition index equal or greater than 0.987004.

[52] I code as such localities that had equal or more than four deaths by the left, which is the third quartile of the distribution of this variable.

[53] I have done the same type of test for municipalities with low levels of competition (and different levels of leftist violence), and the results are consistent with the ones here. In addition to this, in order to make sure that there are no interactive effects between competition and victimization, I have performed interactive hypotheses tests (Franzese and Kam 2007), which do not provide significant results.

Table 7. Comparison of Means Test for Sub-Samples of Highly Competitive Municipalities with Different Levels of Leftist Violence

| | Sample 1 | Sample 2 | | |
	Low Leftist Violence	High Leftist Violence	Combined	Sample 2–Sample 1
Mean of rightist executions	0.51 (0.088)	6.6 (0.69)	2.7 (0.32)	6.08***(0.533)
Obs	143	81	224	

(*Notes.* Standard errors in brackets. Sig level: *.1, **.05, ***.001.)

To recapitulate, the results of the empirical test are supportive of the idea that direct violence is the result of the interaction between armed groups' incentives to sweep the rears of political enemies and civilians' incentives for collaborating with the groups. This makes violence increase with levels of parity between political groups, as the local conditions for both the presence of strong supporters of the enemy and civilian sponsorship of violence are positively associated to parity. Also, the results are supportive of the idea that conditions leading to violence are somewhat endogenous to wartime events, and that we should expect levels of violence in one period of the war to be associated with levels of violence in subsequent periods. Overall, the results demonstrate that political factors are highly relevant and they should be included in models explaining intentional lethal violence against civilians in civil wars, but that wartime dynamics also matter and that they likely shrink the effect of political factors over time.

Conclusions

This paper has sought to explain the dynamics of violence against civilians in a civil war context by extending the analytical focus to a civil war that was fought conventionally—namely the Spanish Civil War—using data from localities of Catalonia. I have analyzed sub-national variation in one single civil war in a way that follows current practice in the field and provides significant empirical leverage. The focus has been on a particular type of violence, namely direct or face-to-face violence, which I have argued is particularly puzzling in the context of conventional civil wars.

Several implications follow. First, variation in levels of violence appears to be largely explained by the incentives of armed groups, which—in these wars—decide to target civilians according to their public identities, but also by the civilian incentives for collaboration with the groups, which are associated with strategic political considerations at the local level. In localities with high levels of parity between political factions in the prewar, violence can be used strategically by locals in order to change the status quo, and this increases support towards the group's violent actions. The role of civilian agency in the production of direct violence helps explain why level of violence is not linearly associated with the number of supporters of the enemy group (in other words, why we do not observe greater leftist violence in places with greater proportion of rightist supporters).

Second, local collaboration has its roots in factors exogenous to the military dimension of the war (that is, the local distribution of political identities), but it is also affected by events endogenous to the war (that is, denunciations and executions). This makes violence both more likely and more intense in places where there has been greater victimization in previous periods of the war. I have argued that this is the case because, in these contexts, the group will identify those perpetrating violence in the previous stage as strong supporters of the group, and because civilians will promote (and not restrain) violence against their co-villagers to a greater extent.

In general, the results in this paper are supportive of the idea that the insights of both the first and second generation of scholars of violence should be integrated into a single theoretical framework incorporating both prewar politics and within-war dynamics. Indeed, the macro-cleavages and political processes leading to a civil war are unlikely to be detached from the reality that people live at the local level, and to have an impact on levels of violence. Yet, these macro-cleavages, as well as strategic considerations associated with them, lose some explanatory power as events such as killings of friends, relatives, or neighbors have taken place; the latter becomes quite determinant for individual behavior and local dynamics of violence in subsequent war periods. This paper has made an attempt to integrate these approaches. Even though it has been empirically focused on a particular case of conventional civil war, its findings should also apply to other conventional civil wars with significant levels of prewar political mobilization, for example, Croatia (1992–1995), Tajikistan (1992–1997), or Abkhazia, in Georgia (1992–1994), among others.[54]

The findings here emphasize the need to disaggregate civil wars according to the nature of their warfare. The spatial and temporal dynamics of violence in irregular wars, such as the current civil war in Colombia or Iraq, are likely to diverge from those in conventional civil wars such as the civil wars in Spain, Croatia or Georgia. The analysis of the relationship between warfare and patterns of civilian victimization is critical, and yet it is underdeveloped to date.

In a similar vein, this paper shows that microlevel analyses of factors such as political competition or polarization contribute to a better understanding of conflict. While macrolevel approaches have been quite prominent in the scholarly literature (for example, Reynal-Querol 2002; Montalvo and Reynal-Querol 2005; Esteban and Ray 2008), microlevel approaches have been largely overlooked. Yet, if political and social configurations affect wartime violence, they are likely to do it through mechanisms taking place at the local level, and the latter can only be understood through microlevel research designs like the one in this paper.

Appendix

Descriptive Statistics of the Independent and Dependent Variables

Variable	Obs	Mean	SD	Min	Max
Population	1,058	1,647.56	19,726.11	50	637,841
Leftist executions	1,062	7.54	73.65	0	2,328
Rightist executions	1,062	2.79	14.29	0	431
Competition	1,058	0.88	0.16	0	1
CNT affiliation	1,062	0.98	4.49	0	49.61
UGT affiliation	1,058	0.09	1.02	0	20.36
Frontline	1,060	0.21	0.40	0	1
Border	1,060	0.22	0.41	0	1
Sea	1,060	0.28	0.45	0	1
Rough terrain (Altitude)	875	368.22	317.3	0	1539
Catholic center	1,062	0.01	0.09	0	1

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[54] See, for example, Gagnon (2004)—on Croatia; Akbarzadeh (1996)—on Tajikistan; Zürcher (2007)—on Abkhazia.

Econometric Models

Negative Binomial for Leftist Violence

$$\text{Leftist executions}_i = \alpha + \delta\text{Competition}_i + \beta X_i + \mu_i \quad (1)$$

X_i is the vector of independent and control variables, and β the vector of their estimates. X_i includes the following variables: Frontline, Population, CNT affiliation, UGT affiliation, Border, Sea, Rough terrain, Catholic center.

Zero Inflated Negative Binomial for Leftist Violence
Equation 1 applies to all cases with Leftist executions$_i$ > 0
For all cases, a logit regression is estimated with the dependent variable being a dummy variable Y_i with value 1 if Leftist executions$_i$ = 0, and 0 if Leftist executions$_i$ > 0:

$$Y_i = \alpha + \delta\text{Competition}_i + \beta X_i + \mu_i \quad (2)$$

X_i in eqn 2 includes the same variables as in eqn 1 with the exception of variables overpredicting the occurrence of violence, that is, CNT affiliation and Catholic center.

Negative Binomial for Rightist Violence

$$\text{Rightist executions}_i = \alpha + \delta\text{Competition}_i + \beta X_i + \mu_i \quad (3)$$

$$\text{Rightist executions}_i = \alpha + \delta\text{Competition}_i + \gamma\text{Leftist executions}_i + \beta X_i + \mu_i \quad (4)$$

X_i includes the following variables: Frontline, Population, CNT affiliation, UGT affiliation, Border, Sea, Rough terrain.

Zero Inflated Negative Binomial for Rightist Violence

Equations 3 and 4 are applied to all cases with Rightist executions$_i$ > 0.
Two logit regressions are estimated with the dependent variable being a dummy variable J_i with value 1 if Rightist executions$_i$ = 0, and value 0 if Rightist executions$_i$ > 0:

$$J_i = \alpha + \delta\text{Competition}_i + \beta X_i + \mu_i \quad (5)$$

$$J_i = \alpha + \delta\text{Competition}_i + \gamma\text{Leftist executions}_i + \beta X_i + \mu_i \quad (6)$$

X_i in eqn 5 and eqn 6 include the same variables as in eqn 3 and eqn 4.

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