

WHEN THE WORLDS OF PREFERENCES COLLIDE: DETERMINANTS OF MP'S ATTITUDES ON THE ITALIAN QUESTIONE ROMANA 1861-1870

Matteo C.M. Casiraghi*

Luigi Curini*

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Abstract

The relationship between original and induced preferences in affecting political actions has been a recurrent topic in the literature. Less attention has been devoted to investigating the interaction between these two preferences, and possible neutralizing/reinforcing effects. We explore this dynamic on a crucial issue in XIX century Italy, the "Questione Romana", employing a quantitative analysis on an original corpus of legislative speeches (1861-70). The absence of strong parties allows investigating the relationship between MPs' original preferences and that induced by their voters' linkage. Moreover, as politicians and voters were part of the same elite, we can check how their paths of political socialization shape this relationship, leading to aligned or colliding preferences.

Keywords: Italian politics; parliamentary debates; parliamentary studies; political preferences; political socialization; quantitative text-analysis

* Department of Social and Political Science, University of Milan (Italy).
Correspondence: matteo.casiraghi@unimi.it

The preferences of political actors are the animating forces of politics (Krehbiel and Peskowitz 2015), though it is difficult to empirically recover actors' preferences, and to analyse them. Indeed, preferences can be original or induced by the opportunities present in the political environment. This divide is well known in the Political Science literature focusing on MPs behaviour: original preferences descend from agents' political socialization, their background and socio-political experiences, whereas induced preferences derive from the political positions of voters and/or parties whom politicians are responsive to.

In this paper, we investigate the interaction between these two types of preferences, assessing how this relation shapes politicians' positions on a major foreign policy issue: the Italian Question Romana (QR). On March 17th 1861, King Vittorio Emanuele II sanctioned the birth of the Italian Kingdom, though the new-born nation still did not include important territories, such as Veneto and the city of Rome. The majority of Italians considered Rome as the natural capital of the peninsula, and politicians were determined to annex the territory of the Vatican, as the Pope held temporal power over the city. The QR describes this long-term struggle between Italy and the Vatican to reach an agreement about political authority over Rome. In particular, between 1861 and 1870 the QR evolved through two critical moments: in September 1864, Italy signed a treaty with France, the institutional "guardian" of the Pope, by which the Italian Government renounced to all political claims over Rome. In September 1870, Italy invaded the Vatican and annexed the city to its territory, making Rome the new capital.

Although previous studies extensively analyzed original and induced preferences (Baumann et al. 2015; Martin and Hug 2018; Proksch and Slapin, 2015) and the interaction between them and other factors, such as vote closeness (Font 2020), the analysis of our case study offers novel opportunities to test this theoretical framework. On the one hand, the absence of strong and organized political parties in this period, a politician's relevant "source" of induced preferences, allows illustrating more clearly the relationship between the original preferences of MPs and the ones induced by their voters'

linkage. On the other hand, Italian voters in that period were part of a small elite and usually held geographically homogenous preferences regarding the QR, as further sections show. The fact that also politicians were part of the same restricted elite allows verifying how different socio-political and geographically-determined experiences led to similar (or different) processes of political socialization, and therefore to the arising of colliding (or aligned) preferences regarding the QR between politicians and their voters. This interaction path, we will argue, should be particularly evident at the local level, due to the different experiences regional elites had during the Risorgimento, the socio-political movement that from the early XIX century led to the Italian unification in 1861 (Banti 2009). Finally, the QR represents a crucial foreign policy issue for Italy's early history.

We expect that both the socialization-path of a MP, forming his original preferences, as well as that of his voters, contributing to the MP's induced preferences, would affect his attitudes towards the QR. However, we also predict that in those cases where the two types of preferences are not "aligned" (for example when a MP is born in a given region while being elected in a very different "political" area of Italy), then they would offset each other. Conversely, when the two socialization-paths match each other, we expect that the impact of geopolitical factors on MPs' attitudes towards the QR are magnified.

We employ the geographical distance from Rome of both a MP's place of birth and the location of his constituency to capture the role played by these socialization effects on his original and induced preferences. To identify the position of the MPs on the QR, we collected an original corpus of legislative speeches given in the Italian Parliament throughout 10 years by the 31 most active MPs on this specific issue. We analysed such texts to scale the positions of the speakers in a multi-dimensional space and to retrieve their positions on an aversion/propensity scale toward the Vatican. We then illustrate how the places where politicians grew up and the location of their electoral constituencies significantly predict the intensity of their antagonism toward the Vatican, but,

coherently with our hypothesis, only if the political-socialization paths of both geographical factors do not cancel each other.

In the next section, we integrate theories on political preferences and socialization to build our theoretical framework. Subsequently, we present our data and methodology and we discuss our results, which highlight how socio-political factors matter in explaining politicians' divergences and convergences. In the conclusion, we summarize our contributions by highlighting the implications of our study.

Socialization and preferences during the Risorgimento

Theoretical framework

Investigating the role played by original and induced preferences in explaining political agents' behaviours has been a recurring topic. As noted by various scholars (Baumann et al. 2015; Krcmaric et al. 2020; Martin and Hug 2018), politicians' original preferences derive from personal experiences (e.g. education, prior occupation, military service) and ascriptive traits (e.g. gender, ethnicity, age). Among them, politicians' socialization during political events is particularly relevant. For instance, Chafer (2007) shows how political experiences during the French Popular Front period and the post-war period profoundly influenced the preferences of national-colonial elites in French West Africa. During such events, political elites assess "the net present value of contemporary institutions and circumstances" and consequently shape their preferences (Mishler and Rose 2007: 823). Similarly, as we will discuss below, events such as conspiracies, insurrections, and the formation of liberal political associations during the Risorgimento, decisively contribute to the diffusion in certain areas of Italy of specific political ideas and hence to politicians' "lifelong learning process" (Butler et al. 2017).

In the process of formation of original preferences, geographical factors play a relevant role. Intuitively, people growing up in different regions socialize with diverse political systems and

institutions, being involved in different socio-political events. Notably, Dehdari and Gehring (2019) shows how the “moving” border between Alsace and Lorraine during the XIX and XX century generated diverging patterns of regional identity on the two sides of the border, as citizens and elites experienced contrasting levels of state repression. Finally, scholars have highlighted how space had a profound influence on Italian politics, from the Risorgimento to nowadays (Agnew 2002; Ferretti 2014).

On the other side, politicians’ induced preferences descend from their political links with voters and parties (Carey 2007). In order to be re-elected and to maintain the benefits of their party affiliation, politicians shape their preferences to match that of their voters and of their party. Proksch and Slapin (2015) show how party discipline profoundly affects not only the positions MPs take in their speeches, but also the floor time allocated in parliament to party’s member. Similarly, Sieberer (2015) argues that party unity and discipline present politicians with incentives not to deviate from the party line, whereas Cordero and Coller (2015) demonstrate that parties with different candidate selection procedures shape members’ preferences with different intensities. Regarding the impact of voters on politicians’ preferences, academic literature is similarly rich, with contributions on how electoral systems affect politicians’ positioning with respect to voters’ preferences (Ferland 2018; Martin and Hug 2018), and how MPs react to changes in the number and characteristics of voters, as after an enlargement of the suffrage (Spirling 2016).

Overall, the majority of studies on the relationship between original and induced preferences have tried to assess which of the two types of preferences matter most in affecting political behaviours, in particular with respect to MPs’ voting (Daoust and Bol 2018). On the contrary, the investigation of possible interactions between the preferences has received far less attention, and scholars have overlooked potential neutralization or reinforcing effects. This framework about political preferences and socialization allow us to introduce our case study.

The Questione Romana in the context of the Risorgimento

Conventionally starting after 1815, the Risorgimento was a socio-political, cultural, and insurrectional movement whose main goal was to get rid of foreign occupiers in Italy, primarily the Austrians in the North and the Bourbons in the South, and unify the Peninsula (Isabella 2011). In this context, the Pope and the greatest majority of the Catholic Church were vehemently averse to the Risorgimento, construed as a liberal, democratic, and hence political, threat to the Vatican's sovereignty and a spiritual, cultural attack against the primacy of religion in Italy. Indeed, the clash between the Church and the Italians involved in the Risorgimento was complex, involving various positions within the Catholic community, such as moderates versus ultramontanists, and within the Risorgimental elite as well, such as moderates versus anti-clericals (Romani 2014).

Although most historians identify the beginning of the QR in 1861, this strife had relevant developments also before the unification, in particular during the so-called Roman Republic in 1848/9 when a popular insurrection in Rome established a Republic, which was soon overthrown by the military intervention of France. Then, after 1861 the conquest of Rome became the most important political goal in territorial terms, together with the liberation of Veneto from the Austrian domination. Indeed, politicians during the debates on the QR often mention Rome and Venice as the two most important territories that the new Kingdom must annex. Moreover, the development of the Risorgimento and the QR during the XIX century had, and still has, a powerful influence on Italian politics (Forlenza and Thomassen 2014).

Three crucial factors make the QR an insightful case-study given our theoretical interest: the absence of strong political parties; the characteristics of voters and MPs; the Italian majoritarian electoral system. Concerning induced preferences, most works focus on contemporary democracies where parties are strong institutions, so that it is hard to discern the effects of voters and parties' preferences on the positions of politicians, as both have significant impacts. Conversely, Italian parliamentary groups during the XIX century were looser and less institutionalized organizations, without a strong unity, nor a forceful party discipline (Ridolfi 2008). Mostly, these groups simply reflected MPs'

previous political experiences, and political attitudes over the various groups were not well established nor stable. Often, single issues created divergent patterns across the Parliament, significantly different from each other. The two most important parliamentary groups were the Historical Right, more conservative and Catholic, and the Historical Left. Two smaller groups were the Radical and the Extreme Left, where the anti-Catholic, democratic attitudes of the Left reached their peak. Finally, there were some moderate-centrist politicians, who participated in all cabinets often occupying institutional roles. Hence, as Hermann and Sieberer (2018) claim about the 1848 Frankfurt Assembly, also in the Italian Parliament in the 1860s ‘strong party discipline and agenda control were absent’, allowing to dismiss, at least theoretically, a significant effect of parties on politicians’ induced preferences. If groups were loose and volatile, by contrast the Parliament played a major role in Italian political life, and in particular during the QR. For sure, the Assembly could not directly decide on warfare, as it did not enjoy any veto power on the decision of the executive to wage war. Indeed, the decision in September 1870 to invade Rome was taken by the Lanza Government without a previous official approval by the Parliament. Nevertheless, MPs enjoyed the prerogative to ratify treaties, as that of 1864 with France, and to approve military expenditures, which at the time constituted a fundamental part of public expenses. Hence, as argued by Dincecco and colleagues (2011), the Parliament had a fiscal supremacy that directly and profoundly influenced decisions of internal and foreign policy. Overall, these important practical consequences of parliamentary debates, together with the cultural-political nature of the discussion on the QR explained above, testify the relevance of MPs’ disputes in the Parliament.

On the other hand, also voters in this period had drastically different characteristics compared to nowadays. Less than 2% of the total population could vote, namely only literate men older than 25 years who paid a certain amount of taxes (40 lire per year). Moreover, as various historians argue, these voters held strong a-priori preferences on relevant political issues, in particular on the QR (Banti 2006; Romani 2014). Similarly to voters, also politicians were part of a restricted elite: many MPs

were of noble birth, some had a high-rank career in the armed forces, and all of them were wealthy and embedded in relevant socio-economic and political networks (ISTAT 1946: 89). Indeed, Ridolfi (2008) argues that Italian MPs in this period shared a similar background and held convergent positions on many issues, and divisions in the Parliament did not reflect classic cleavages such as conservative versus progressive attitudes.

Therefore, politicians, members of a restricted elite, were accountable to and needed to gain the support of an electoral constituency that was itself a restricted elite. In addition, between 1861 and 1880, the Italian electoral system followed a two-round majoritarian rule, organized over 443 single-member districts. As Martin and Hug (2018) demonstrate, majoritarian rules provide higher incentives to politicians to adjust their preferences to that of their constituencies, compared to proportional systems. Thus, localness, namely the connections and networks that politicians formed with local elites, was fundamental to win an election (Shugart et al. 2005). As such, the political situation in Italy in this period provides valuable theoretical advantages to address the interaction of original and induced preferences.

The most crucial political experience for Italian MPs' political socialization throughout the XIX century was, as mentioned, the Risorgimento. As Italy had been for centuries divided in many political units, politicians grew up in significantly different socio-political contexts, which had divergent influences on the dynamics of their political socialization and on the formation of their preferences. Various historians argue that Piedmont, the core of the Savoy Kingdom, Sicily and the far south in the Bourbon Kingdom, and Lombardy and Veneto, under the Austrian domination, were the main centres of the political struggles (Agostini 2018; Romeo 1970). These areas, indeed, represent the regions that were most distant from Rome at that time.

In particular, those that directly fought against foreign occupiers during the Risorgimento developed more confrontational attitudes towards the political entities still hindering the Italian unification, such as Austria and the Vatican. As Banti (2006) explains, those Italians followed a path of 'patriotic

militancy', and developed a deep sense of patriotic honour, construing the Italian unification as a violent act of redemption after centuries of foreign domination. Although episodes of political turmoil against foreign occupation happened in other regions, moving closer to Rome politicians had less occasions to socialize with such experiences. In this context, the political power of the Vatican was considered an unacceptable form of oppression against the Italian people, and the strife between the Pope, and members of the Catholic Church, against the most important political figures of the Risorgimento was always fierce.

Thus, we expect politicians' attitudes toward the QR to be affected by the geographical distance between Rome and, on the one hand, their place of birth and, on the other, the geographical location of their electoral constituency. The two distances identify two different socialization-paths, the first linked with the personal experience and growth of the politician (original preferences) and the second with the socio-political background of his constituency (induced preferences). Considering the latter, Italian voters were largely homogenous and committed in their attitudes toward the QR, mainly as an outcome of their experience (or lack thereof) during the Risorgimento (Banti 2006). Consequently, voters were plausibly sending a clear signal to the MP elected in their constituency about which attitude to adopt toward the Vatican. Second, a MP was a prominent member himself of a given local elite which matured during the Risorgimento, conducting political struggles against various foreign occupiers: thus, a local elite with once again a clear socialization-path producing a well-defined position toward the QR and the Vatican. In this way, employing a genetic approach to causal investigation, we can identify a generative mechanism for the origin of MPs' sincere and induced preferences (Ermakoff 2019).

Of course, the experienced local socialization-paths of, respectively, a MP's and his constituency, are not necessarily the same. All this leads to two different scenarios: first, the two socialization-paths, and therefore original and induced preferences, are "aligned", as when a MP is born in a given region far from Rome while being elected in a constituency similarly far from Rome. Here, the impact on

MPs' attitudes towards the QR are magnified, producing the harshest antagonism. In the second scenario, the two socialization-paths "collide" and do not match, as when a MP is born in a given region far from Rome while being elected in a constituency closer to Rome, or vice versa. Here, we expect that the impact of geographical factors on MPs' attitudes towards the Vatican will offset each other, producing a null impact. These considerations lead to our hypothesis:

H1: the increase in distance from Rome, in terms of politicians' place of birth and location of electoral constituency, should generate harsher attitudes toward the Vatican, in particular when both distances are large

Data and Method

Scholars investigating political preferences usually focus on patterns of voting behaviour, showing how different preferences influence politicians' voting decisions (Deschouwer and Depauw 2014), though a single vote usually represents the outcome of a complex political process. Here, we focus on more nuanced attitudes, deriving politicians' positions from the analysis of the content of their legislative speeches over a ten-year period. However, our aim is not that of deconstructing the entire set of values and postures that a politician has. Identifying a midway between the assessment of a single vote and an entire socio-political baggage, we focus on politicians' attitudes toward a single issue. Moreover, by holding topical variation constant (Lauderdale and Herzog 2016), the resulting estimates of the analysis should be particularly useful in identifying preferences toward a specific topic, irrespective of any possible difference among MPs on other issues.

To conduct our investigation, we collected all debates regarding the QR in the Italian Parliament from 17th March 1861, the Italian unification, to 19th September 1870, the invasion of Rome. First, we searched and downloaded from the Italian Parliamentary Archive¹ all debates containing at least one instance of the keyword 'Roma'. Second, we manually selected among them all the debates wherein

¹ <https://storia.camera.it/>

politicians were speaking about the QR, as many speeches mentioned ‘Rome’ in other contexts. Then, we extrapolated the speeches of the major contributors, in terms of number of interventions and words, to perform the text-analysis, as we wanted a structured set of speeches. Between 1861 and 1870, in fact, around 200 MPs give at least one speech on the QR, though most politicians contribute with a short and single speech. We thus considered all MPs that gave at least eight different speeches on the QR, totalizing at least 8.000 words: these are 31 politicians, who constitute 58.1% in terms of interventions and 63.2% in terms of words of the total. Our selected threshold allows us nicely to include essentially all the most prominent MPs of early Italian history. Moreover, the exclusion of other MPs allows our analysis to be protected against distortions generated by many single and short contributions. Nevertheless, our results are robust also when we use significantly different criteria to select the MPs in our corpus, as we show below. Finally, we divided the speeches per year, resulting in 161 MP-years that serve as our units of analysis.

An advantage of analysing legislative speeches is that it produces a more dynamic approach than the alternatives (e.g. electoral programmes, experts or voters surveys), given that legislative texts are a recurring phenomenon in the life of a legislature (Curini et al. 2020). This allows to better capture the political changes that may occur between election periods (such as political events or changes in the electoral constituencies). Finally, for such a faraway period as the one we analyse, legislative speeches are likely the only possible source to extract actors’ policy preferences.

Several algorithms are available to scale texts and to retrieve speakers’ positions, such as the popular Wordfish algorithm (Slapin and Proksch 2008). However, Wordfish retrieves these positions along a single dimension: this is not a problem per-se if the documents refer to a strong single latent dimension. However, in those instances in which a multi-dimensional space is required by the data, assuming a one-dimensional world would collapse such multi-dimensionality and important information on speakers’ positions would get lost, producing puzzling outcomes. In our case, indeed, a multi-dimensionality should characterize the debate: along 10 years, several issues were in fact

dividing politicians, not necessarily correlated among themselves. Beyond the dimension we are interested in (pro-anti Vatican), there are other topics that revolved around the QR and that politicians discussed, such as the relationship with France, the organization of Italian Armed Forces, and political equilibria in the Parliament.

A preliminary topic analysis on our corpus (Roberts et al. 2014) confirms our impressions. The 18 topics recovered, indeed, show the strong heterogeneity of the topical-content of the debates about the QR. Among them, only 3 topics can be eventually reconnected to a potential confrontational attitude toward the Vatican: the presence of Italians in the Vatican prisons (topic 12), the role of priests and Catholic authorities on the Italian territory (topic 8), and the repayment of the Vatican debt (topic 16). Moreover, there is a low or null correlation among the large majority of recovered topics, confirming that MPs tended to speak about several but not overlapping dimensions – exactly as we recover from our analysis below.²

Following our expectations about such multi-dimensionality, we rely on correspondence analysis (CA) (Nenadic and Greenacre 2007). Lowe (2008) shows that correspondence analysis provides an approximation to a Wordfish model, while Barbera and colleagues (2015) illustrate how such method can produce estimates that are as robust as the ones provided by more sophisticated latent space models, with the advantage of producing multi-dimensional estimates. As expected, the CA extracts a considerable number of latent dimensions, 15 with a percentage of explained variance larger than at least 6 percent each (see Figure A in the Supplementary Materials).³ Among them, the second one in terms of magnitude clearly resembles divergent attitudes toward the Vatican and the Church, as shown by the words most highly associated with such dimension and their respective polarity. Hence, together with the genetic approach for the origin of preferences, we employ a morphological approach

² See Supplementary Materials for details about the topic model.

³ To prepare the legislative speeches for our analysis, we first constructed a term-document matrix comprising the universe of words used in our 161 digitized documents. We then omitted a list of Italian stop words, as well as numbers and punctuation. We also stemmed the words. These steps left us with 25,257 unique terms. The analysis has been conducted using the Quanteda package in R.

applying CA to our corpus of texts to uncover patterns of the political phenomena under investigation (Ermakoff 2019).

In Figure 1, we report the coordinate scores recovered for the words from the CA, and the log of their frequency in the texts – to differentiate words very frequently employed from others. Here, on the pro-Vatican side (the negative side on such dimension) there are words highlighting positive values of Catholicism (e.g. *moralità*=morality, *cristiana*=Christian) and words that condemn anti-religious attitudes and that underline the importance of the Pope’s political influence (e.g. *apostasia*=apostasy, *ireligioso*=irreligious, *empi*=sacrilegious). On the anti-Vatican side, words indicate how politicians blamed the Vatican for its negative influence on Italian politics (e.g. *oscurantismo*=obscurantism, *opprimere*=repress, *funestare*=afflict), and words that refer to the need for Italy to fight back (e.g. *liberalità*=freedom, *combattere*=fight).⁴

[Figure 1]

Figure 2, left panel, reports the density plot of the yearly MPs positions along the “Pro vs. Against Vatican” dimension. The right panel shows the average positions of Italian parliamentary groups based on such distribution: according to previous literature, and as theoretically expected, the Right has the lowest values, followed by the Centre, the Left, and the two more extreme leftist groups. In this sense, such results add a further face validity to the latent scores obtained via CA.

[Figure 2]

Empirical analysis

⁴ Regarding the other dimensions extracted from our CA analysis, the first dimension in terms of explained variance divides politicians over different foreign policy conceptions, in particular on the relations with France. Conversely, the third dimension deals with internal political equilibria that are challenged by the QR, dividing politicians over conservation versus reform. Finally, the fourth dimension highlights contrasting positions on the Italian Armed Forces and their role during the QR.

To test our hypothesis we collected data on various geographical and socio-political characteristics of our observations (see Table A in the Supplementary Materials). The two crucial variables are *Distance from Rome (birth)* and *Distance from Rome (constituency)*. The former expresses in kilometres the distance between the MP's place of birth and Rome (mean 427.7, sd 110.4), while the latter expresses the distance between the MP's electoral constituency and Rome (mean 416.8, sd 92.5). We expect a positive impact on the distances on our main dimension (as distance from Rome increases, a boost in anti-Vatican attitudes). Moreover, we anticipate that the impact of the geographical distance from Rome on a MP's attitude towards the QR is magnified when both variables display a high value.

We controlled for noble birth, as a noble origin could affect political socialization, for government/opposition membership, to test whether different political equilibria influence preferences, and for the year of the debate, to capture any temporal trends.⁵ Finally, we included a set of parliamentary group fixed effects. The results of our analysis are reported in Table 1. Observations are nested within the same unit (i.e. MPs), therefore in the models we estimate a set of OLS with standard errors clustered at the MP level to obtain heteroscedasticity- and autocorrelation-consistent standard errors (Freedman 2006).⁶ In this way, we can explore patterns of association among our empirical categories to connect MPs position with our hypothesis, indeed employing a variable-centered approach that together with the genetic and morphological completes our causal path.

In models 1 and 2, we test the impact of our two spatial variables, *Distance from Rome (birth)* and *Distance from Rome (constituency)*, on the positions on our main dimension. Results show that both distances significantly increase the aversion toward the Vatican. Confirming our expectations, politicians that grew up far from Rome, and thus experienced the most intense moments of the Risorgimento, developed a fiercer antagonism. Similarly, politicians elected in constituencies located

⁵ Additional controls are discussed in the section on robustness checks.

⁶ Replicating the analysis by employing a two-level random intercept model does not affect any of the conclusions.

at greater distance from Rome were inclined to follow the preferences of their voters, local elites who played a role during the same political struggles. Thus, the debate over the QR created a clear division on political preferences regarding the political relationship with the Vatican, a division modelled over the geographical variables we underlined.

To offer more context to the debate and the role of single politicians, we briefly provide examples about the experience of Italian MPs. As mentioned above, politicians had different socio-political experiences during their “lifelong learning process” (Mishler and Rose 2007), participating to the Risorgimento. For some, such process implied an active involvement in conspiracies and insurrections against foreign occupiers, the Pope included. For others, a pacific discussion on a potential liberal future of Italy as a unified nation, together with the maintenance of crucial and friendly relations with religious elites. In this way, future Italian MPs formed divergent original preferences about the role of the Vatican and the Church in Italian politics. Similarly, citizens that would later vote in the national elections also formed their own preferences, which then certainly influenced the composition of MPs’ induced preferences.

For instance, Brofferio (Extreme Left) grew up in Alessandria and Turin (Piedmont) and participated in various uprisings and protests since his teenage years, developing strong democratic, anti-clerical ideas (Lajolo and Archimede 1967). In January 1862, he recalls his and his associates’ experiences during the Risorgimento to explain his aversion toward the Church: *‘During our Risorgimento the Government asked us to sacrifice our lives and our money, and now the same Government does not want to go to Rome to ask members of the Church to pay taxes’*.⁷

Similarly, Guerzoni (Extreme Left) grew up in Lombardy and participated to violent uprisings (Agostini 2018). His experience during revolts and his anti-religious sentiments convinced him of the necessity to interpret the QR as a war, as he argues in December 1867: *‘your moral means, and an*

⁷ Archivio Camera – January 17, 1862 <https://storia.camera.it/regno/lavori/leg08/sed151.pdf>

unconditional alliance with France, will never overcome the 13 thousand soldiers of the Pope'.⁸ Then, also politicians from the South took part in similar episodes during the Risorgimento. Crispi (Left) organized the Sicilian Revolution of 1848 and participated in the famous Expedition of the Thousands with Garibaldi (Romeo 1970). In August 1870, he urges his colleagues not to '*fear the revolution. Instead, you should tremendously fear the reaction from Rome: there is where our enemies are, where the Church conspires against us*'.⁹ On the other side, Minghetti (Right), the Italian Prime Minister in 1862-3 and in 1873-6, was raised in Bologna, during the XIX century part of the Papal States and protected militarily by the Austrians. Although he always supported moderate liberal ideals, he was profoundly catholic and socially well connected with the religious establishment of the city, and never directly participated in the insurrections against the Pope or Austria. Indeed, during his political life in the Parliament, he always supported a moderate approach to the QR and to the relations with France and the Pope. For instance, in May 1864, he reminds his colleagues of '*the importance of catholic sentiments in the Questione Romana. We need to provide every possible guarantee to the Pope that his spiritual power will be carried out with full freedom and independence*'.¹⁰

As stated, we expect that the impact of the geographical distance from Rome should be magnified when both distances assume high values. Model 3 therefore adds an interaction term between the two distances, producing significant results: Figure 3 plots the marginal impact of both distances as the value of the other variable changes. In both cases, the distance from Rome matters only when also the other assumes a large value. For example, in model 1 the marginal impact of increasing *Distance from Rome (birth)* by 100 kilometers is +.16 along our dimension. In model 3, the same marginal impact produces a change of +.35 when *Distance from Rome (constituency)* is around 400 kilometers. Similarly, in model 1 the marginal impact of increasing *Distance from Rome (constituency)* by 100

⁸ Archivio Camera – December 13, 1867 <https://storia.camera.it/regno/lavori/leg10/sed123.pdf>

⁹ Archivio Camera – August 19, 1870 <https://storia.camera.it/regno/lavori/leg10/sed598.pdf>

¹⁰ Archivio Camera – May 14, 1864 <https://storia.camera.it/regno/lavori/leg08/sed604.pdf>

kilometers is +.25 along our dimension. In model 3, the same marginal impact produces a change of +.45 when *Distance from Rome (birth)* is around 500 kilometers.

A further insight from model 3 is that induced preferences do not matter significantly per se, as long as these are not matched by congruent original preferences. Indeed, the marginal impact of increasing one distance is not significant for low value of the other. If we employ the jargon of the literature on competing principals (Carey 2007), that would imply that the role played by a given principal (i.e. voters) is important both directly for the preferences displayed by a MP, as well as indirectly (via the impact on the role played by a MP's own socialization). However, such role is not absolute, but it is mediated by a MP's own socialization: whenever this latter one does not match with the preferences of the MP's constituency, then the role played by the voters (as principals) is largely neutralized.

[Figure 3]

[Table 1]

Concerning control variables, a negative temporal trend arises, as over the years the attitude towards the Vatican became less confrontational. Indeed, the outcome of the vote on the ratification of the 1864 Treaty, whereby Italy renounced to any claim of authority over Rome, reveals that only 70 MPs over 389 voted against the ratification. Evidently, most politicians thought that the Agreement had contributed to solve the QR, and appreciated the involvement of France and the Vatican in the negotiations. Consequently, they reduced their aversion and worked for further diplomatic solutions.¹¹ Moreover, a slight negative relationship appears between being noble and being averse to the Church. Indeed, noble families across Italy often had strong relations with religious authorities, and this could thus explain noble politicians' less pronounced aversion (Romani 2014).

Robustness Checks

¹¹ If we replace the variable *Year* with a dummy equals to 1 for the years following the Treaty Italy signed with France and 0 otherwise, our results remain largely unaffected.

We ran two robustness checks on our analysis (see Table 2). First, out of the 31 MPs included in our analysis, seven have changed their electoral constituency at least once in the period under analysis. Thus, as long as their constituency affects their preferences on the QR, we expect a larger variance in their positions, reflecting a possible change in their induced preferences. Results confirm that the standard deviation in the positions of these seven MPs is 2.08 over our dimension compared to 0.77 for the remaining 24 MPs that never changed constituency. Furthermore, we also expect for these seven MPs a stronger impact of *Distance from Rome (constituency)*, given the higher variance reported in their DV. This is exactly what we find in model 4, where the magnitude of *Distance from Rome (constituency)* is six times higher than in model 3. The same also appears once we add in our empirical analysis (model 5) the interaction term between the two distances.

[Table 2]

As a second check, we enlarged our corpus. In model 6 we considered politicians that spoke at least four times about the QR, thus including 65.4% of all speeches and 74.7% of all words. Here, the number of MPs included increases to 45, thus adding a considerable number of “backbenchers”. We re-ran our CA considering this larger pool of texts and we identified again the extracted second dimension as the one referring to “Pro vs. Against Vatican”. Model 6 then employs such latent scores for the MPs as DV. As shown, our results from the interaction between the two distances from Rome hold. The same happens, albeit with a weaker explanatory power and a lower magnitude, if we considered all MPs that gave at least two speeches on the QR (model 7). Here, we include 75.1% of all speeches and 86.8% of all words, considering 70 MPs. A possible explanation for this result is that considerably enlarging the number of speeches, the level of “noise” increases on our dimension. And indeed, in this latter scenario, the latent dimension referring to “Pro vs. Against Vatican” is the seventh one.

We present two additional robustness checks in the Supplementary Materials. In the first model, we add two dummy variables indicating respectively whether a MP was born or elected in a region being

part of the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies before 1861 to check if the existence of anti-centralistic stances among elite, attitudes particularly diffused in the South (Romeo 1970), could have affected our research hypothesis. In the second model, we control for the urban/rural character of the cities where MPs were born and elected, employing as a proxy the number of citizens (Malanima 2005). We test these additional controls using the original sample of MPs and the two enlarged samples as argued above. Once again our results hold intact.

Conclusion

We have analyzed the collision and alignment of MPs' sincere and induced preferences on a crucial issue in XIX century Italy. This period is interesting for various reasons: politics in liberal democracies was characterized by a participation restricted to a small percentage of citizens, and politicians and voters were part of the same elite. Here, the existence (or the lack) of a shared experience of political socialization between MPs and voters, as happened during the Risorgimento, can translate in enduring dynamics affecting politicians' preferences toward an important issue.

Our analysis has combined the three approaches to causal investigation in historical social sciences highlighted by Ermakoff (2019). Concerning the genetic approach, we have identified a specific generative mechanism as summarized in our hypothesis concerning the origin of sincere and induced preferences, and their possible interaction. Regarding the morphological approach, we have uncovered patterns in the empirical layout of socio-historical phenomena by means of a CA applied to legislatives speeches, allowing us to retrieve MPs' positions along a pro-anti Vatican dimension. Finally, with respect to the variable-centered approach, we have explored patterns of association among empirical categories by showing how the recovered MPs positions can be reconnected to our hypothesis.

In particular, geopolitical aspects linked to socialization arise, as expected, as important mediating factors explaining different levels of antagonism toward the Vatican. Thus, our findings offer a novel contribution, shedding light on the interaction between original and induced preferences. Specifically,

our analysis has highlighted the importance of studying different paths of political socialization and the relation between original and induced preferences to explain politicians' attitudes during these confrontations, and how such trajectories are shaped by socio-political and geographic factors.

Moreover, our investigation has confirmed that legislative speeches are a precious source of information to derive policy preferences. This source is irreplaceable if we want to analyse events happened a long time ago, where no expert or mass surveys are available. Conversely, the nowadays-increasing digitalization of political texts opens an exciting path of research: following and replicating our approach, future research could test whether the same dynamics of political socialization do matter in comparable contexts.

After all, the QR represents a specific yet common case of political conflict, an instance in which a weak state faces a powerful threat to its political legitimacy, and in which the confrontation involves relevant aspects of internationalization. There are examples of such conflicts thorough all European history in the XIX century, such as Prussia's struggle to weaken the power of German states. Also during the XX century states have been involved in similar experiences, as many countries during the decolonization process. Furthermore, these examples also share with the QR a peculiar political configuration of agents and principals, both members of a restricted elite. Although there are differences between the QR and these conflicts, our analysis can contribute to provide theoretical and methodological tools to conduct research on these strife.

Finally, scholars could investigate whether the influence of the interaction among original and induced preferences is significant not only when restricted elites are involved, but also in "mass politics", in which voters are a considerably high number and preferences vary substantially and remarkably also at the level of the single constituency.

Table 1: Determinants on MPs latent positions on the “Pro vs. Against Vatican” scale

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
Distance from Rome (birth)	0.002* (0.001)	-	-0.012+ (0.007)
Distance from Rome (constituency)		0.002* (0.001)	-0.014+ (0.008)
Distance from Rome (birth)*Distance from Rome (constituency)	-	-	0.000* (0.000)
Noble	-0.374+ (0.205)	-0.317 (0.214)	-0.465+ (0.237)
Government	0.257 (0.168)	0.299 (0.194)	0.289+ (0.149)
Year	-0.127* (0.049)	-0.122* (0.046)	-0.118* (0.045)
Constant	6.941* (3.018)	6.226* (2.886)	11.497* (4.899)
Observations	161	161	161
R^2	0.268	0.281	0.318
AIC	498.458	495.607	491.124

Cluster Standard errors on MPs in parentheses

Parliamentary groups fixed effects suppressed to conserve space (available upon request)

+ $p < 0.10$, * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

Table 2: Determinants on MPs latent positions on the “Pro vs. Against Vatican” scale – Robustness Checks

	Model 4 – subsample of MPs	Model 5 – subsample of MPs	Model 6 – enlarged sample (1)	Model 7 – enlarged sample (2)
Distance from Rome (birth)	-	-0.077*	-0.059*	-0.003**
		(0.024)	(0.028)	(0.001)
Distance from Rome (constituency)	0.011*	-0.067*	-0.071*	-0.003*
	(0.004)	(0.022)	(0.031)	(0.001)
Distance from Rome (birth)*Distance from Rome (constituency)	-	0.000*	0.000*	0.000**
		(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)
Noble	-0.820 ⁺	-0.959*	0.202	-0.080
	(0.356)	(0.375)	(0.506)	(0.103)
Government	0.721**	0.035	-0.059	0.007
	(0.145)	(0.392)	(0.255)	(0.116)
Year	-0.270	-0.310	-0.006	-0.040*
	(0.162)	(0.164)	(0.031)	(0.020)
Constant	13.45	48.96*	25.785*	3.657**
	(9.34)	(18.25)	(11.224)	(1.310)
Observations	44	44	217	272
R^2	0.4035	0.4404	0.525	0.037
AIC	177.6153	176.805	864.682	756.997

Cluster Standard errors on MPs in parentheses

Parliamentary groups fixed effects suppressed to conserve space (available upon request)

⁺ $p < 0.10$, * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

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