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The double logic of internal purges:
New evidence from Francoist Spain

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Abstract

States often engage in internal purges to eliminate political dissidents within their own ranks. However, partly because of the absence of reliable data, we know little about the logic and dynamics of these purges, particularly of lower-rank members of the state. Why do state authorities persecute these individuals when they do not entail a clear threat to the regime? We focus on the purges of public-school teachers during the early years of Francisco Franco’s regime in Spain. Using detailed historical sources, we explore whether teachers were more likely to be purged following the two main cleavages in 1930s Spain: the left-right divide and the center-periphery (i.e. nationalist) cleavage. Our results suggest that whilst the Spanish Civil War (1936-1939) was still unfolding Francoist authorities targeted teachers from leftist localities, thus focusing on potential security threats behind the frontlines. After winning the war, Francoists switched their targeting to teachers from national minority groups in order to promote nation-building policies leading to their assimilation. Our findings highlight the double logic of purging as both a preemptive measure against internal threats and a nation-building tool.
1. Introduction

Internal purges are a common tool by which political regimes deal with conceivable ideological threats within their own ranks as well carve out the political outfit of the nation. For example, right after the recent coup attempt in July 2016, the Turkish government carried out a mass purge that targeted thousands of journalists, academics, members of the judiciary, and other civil servants. According to the project Turkey Purge, over 150,000 public servants have been dismissed from their jobs and more than 20,000 private school teachers have been seen their licenses revoked.¹ These purges seem to have the double goal of punishing those individuals who are deemed politically disloyal and to remove them from a position from which they might be able to exert political influence.

The Turkish case is hardly unique. Many other cases constitute examples of this practice, which is unsurprisingly more prevalent in autocratic regimes than in democracies. While some purges target ‘fifth-column’ individuals who are deemed as a potential base of support for the enemy, such as McCarthyism or the ‘Second Red Scare’ in the United States,² others seem to have a more forward-looking strategy. Purges often take place after autocrats seize power and attempt to ‘clean up’ a workforce that could harbor individuals loyal to the previous regime. This occurred, for example, in 1930s Germany or following the Sandinista victory in Nicaragua in 1979.³ Moreover, these strategies may also be used to establish ethnic dominance among civil servants, to strengthen nation-building efforts, or to quell nationalist liberation movements, such as the Kurdish movement in Turkey, or the anti-colonial movement in Tunisia under French rule.⁴

Despite its relevance and relative frequency, we still know little about the phenomenon of purges. Previous research has focused on topics such as repression of contentious activity,⁵ coup-proofing within authoritarian regimes,⁶ or purges within military ranks.⁷ It is unclear how purges of low-rank civil servants work, what the motivations of state agents are, or how potential dissidents are targeted. Are these purges primarily a response to a major internal threat, as suggested by the Turkish case (i.e., a response to a coup attempt) or by the purges of communists in Getúlio Vargas’s Brazil
(i.e., a response to a communist uprising)? Or are purges a tool to carve the ideological or national outfit of the country, thereby consisting of a much more preemptive form of repression? The Nazification of Germany after 1933 or the “ideological cleansing” of Russia after 1917’s revolution or of Cuba after Fidel Castro’s military victory would fit the latter account.

We believe that one of the reasons for the dearth of previous studies on this topic is that fine-grained data on purges is often not available. We make use of an exception and study the logic of low-rank civil servants purges by relying on an unexploited dataset of purges of public-school teachers during the first years of Francisco Franco’s authoritarian regime in Spain (1939-75). We expect the implications of this study to travel to other cases, for example post-war Cuba or post-war Nicaragua, even if the civil war’s victors in these cases displayed an ideology poles apart from Franco’s. After all, purges are a common tool for repression in authoritarian regimes of all ideologies, as the examples above pinpoint.

The Spanish experience constitutes a good case to explore the determinants of internal purges, particularly in post-conflict contexts. As they came to power after winning the Spanish Civil War (1936-39), Francoist authorities removed all public-school teachers from service and forced them to go through a ‘purges commission’ should they want to work as teachers again. We analyze whether teachers were more likely to be purged (and thus sacked from their positions) based on cues about their identity regarding the two main cleavages at that time in Spain: the left-right and the center-periphery divides. In addition, because some territories were conquered by Franco in the early stages of the civil war, we exploit the fact that some regions went through these purging processes while the war was still being fought to see if the level of threat faced by the regime—related to the ongoing armed conflict—had any impact on the purges’ dynamics. Thus, we use the Spanish case to learn about two key determinants of internal purges: ideological or national divisions and level of threat perceived by elites.

Purges are a form of repression, which some might deem irrational or lacked of any logic other than terrorizing potential victims. However, most scholars of civil wars
and political violence now agree that violent repression is not irrational or random and that it follows a logic—even if victimization does not always benefit the perpetrators. We assume that non-lethal forms of repression such as purges follow the strategic motives of the authorities leading them and thus that they are not just random. Furthermore, we assume that there is a political logic behind the repression, and that some groups of individuals are more likely to be targeted than others.

To be sure, while non-violent repression is often used in combination with violent repression, and it can be complementary or substitute to it, in this article we do not study violent repression. We contribute to the literature by analyzing a form of non-violent repression, which has been less studied than violent repression. Empirically, however, we analyze how violent repression correlates with purges.

The Spanish Civil War was fought mainly along the left-right cleavage, but the center-periphery cleavage also played an important role in politics before, during, and after the civil war. Not only Franco’s regime embraced fervent anticommunism and persecuted any form of leftist mobilization, but it also imposed a strict version of Spanish nationalism, crushing peripheral nationalism and banning the use of minority languages throughout the country’s territory. It also banned other expressions of cultural diversity beyond language. National minorities such as Catalans, Basques, and Galicians were targeted with nation-building policies aimed at assimilation. Since schooling, literacy, and teaching are crucial for nation-building, Francoist authorities attempted to remove both leftist and peripheral nationalist teachers from schools to avoid potential sources of anti-regime mobilization and/or obstacles to the regime’s nation-building goals.

In this article, we explore whether collective cues about the ideology and nationalism of teachers had any impact on the likelihood of them being purged by Francoist authorities. First, we analyze the impact of the level of support for leftist parties in the teachers’ localities on purges—thus, using a meso-level proxy for teachers’ leftism. We then use an individual-level proxy to analyze the targeting of Basque and Catalan nationalist teachers: we examine the effect of teachers’ family names on their likelihood
of being purged. Besides, we analyze over-time variation in purges and explore how the civil war and its end influenced patterns of targeting.

As a preview, our results show that Francoist ‘purge commissions’ were more likely to repress teachers coming from leftist towns—in the areas militarily controlled by the Francoist army—while the war was being fought in other parts of the country. Our rationale is that when the regime was facing a serious military threat, purges collectively targeted those who could harbor support for the enemy. We also find that the left-right cleavage somewhat stopped being relevant to account for the collective targeting of teachers when the war ended and the military threat decreased significantly. Teachers with traditional Basque and Catalan family names were then more likely to face collective repression. These teachers were often forced to move to other Spanish regions, which suggests that purges against them resulted from a goal of de-nationalizing Basque or Catalan schools and strengthening Spanish nation-building efforts.

2. Purges as a Form of Repression

Political purges and processes of internal repression are a common phenomenon, particularly in the case of authoritarian regimes, wartime, and/or immediate postwar contexts. Research on repression abounds, but, to the best of our knowledge, there is little systematic research on the determinants and dynamics of purges. This is probably due to the dearth of relevant empirical data and the difficulty of collecting it. To make sense of purges, we rely on different bodies of research that study other somewhat related processes, which include state repression, patterns of civilian victimization, and coup-proofing. We also discuss at the end of this section how internal repression might be related to nation-building strategies, and the role of schooling institutions and teachers.

Existing literature has long found that states respond to any behavior that constitutes a political threat with different forms of repression. While most research on repression is focused on state responses to classic instances of overt challenges by the opposition, such as protests or demonstrations, some earlier works did focus on how states
purge organizations and explicitly target opposition organizations.¹⁹ More recent research by Sullivan shows how governments anticipate costly challenges and target the mobilization activities of underground organizations, particularly of those that constitute an ideological threat to the current regime.²⁰

Another related body of research focuses on the use of one-sided violence by state authorities and armed groups in the context of armed conflict. Violence against civilians differs, among other things, on whether it targets specific individuals, it follows patterns of indiscriminate violence, or it is the result of so-called collective targeting.²¹ Collective targeting implies that individuals are targeted based on their membership to specific groups or categories, contrary to selective targeting, which implies an individual selection process.²² Recent research has shown that collective targeting is common in the context of civil wars and that it can take the form of lethal violence, induced displacement, or forced displacement. When collective targeting takes place, armed groups often use cues at the meso-level (i.e. at the level of the community or the group) such as voting patterns, trade union membership, or the ethnic composition of communities.²³

A third related body of research analyses coup-proofing strategies, documenting when and how political leaders in authoritarian regimes deal with dissidents within the state structures to minimize the risk of internal rebellion.²⁴ This literature generally shows that coup-proofing practices are more common when there is an actual threat, or when the risk of a coup is high. Yet, in recent article, Sudduth predicts that dictators are more likely to undertake military purges to weaken elites’ capabilities as the threat of coup decreases rather than when coup risk is high.²⁵

Overall, the literature above suggests that challenges to the regime might trigger preemptive campaigns of repression targeted at groups that constitute a potential ideological threat. Also, previous studies link collective forms of targeting to the absence of detailed information about dissidents. From this, it follows that those groups that entail a bigger threat to the state are more likely to face repression, particularly when the regime is in a more delicate situation, and that repression is likely to follow a logic of collective targeting when mechanisms of selective violence are absent.²⁶ In the context of repression
of Spanish schoolteachers, all this implies that left-leaning teachers would be particularly sought for by Francoist authorities because this group could harbor covert leftist militants that constituted a security threat for the state. Absent precise individual-level data, group-level traits would inform the Francoists authorities about where to repress more. This dynamic should be more prevalent while the civil war was still ongoing, when the nascent Francoist state was much more vulnerable to the risk of ‘fifth-columnists’ or covert opposition within their ranks.

The literature on coup-proofing observes how state leaders engage in preemptive measures to minimize the likelihood of future insurrection. Related to this, states often engage in nation-building strategies that attempt to homogenize their population, create a sense of community, and minimize the risk of challenges to their territorial integrity.27 An obvious and extreme case of this phenomenon is ethnic cleansing, when a regime tries to eliminate those who do not fit its definition of nation.28 Beyond genocidal violence, non-fatal forms repression has also been used as a tool in nation-building processes, as in population resettlements or “demographic engineering”.29 We expect that a nation-building logic should also help to explain internal purges and, in particular, the targeting of Spanish teachers suspected of being peripheral nationalists. Schooling has been found to be a major tool for nation-building,30 particularly in the case of Catalonia in Spain.31 Given that Spanish nationalism was one of the key foundations of the new Francoist regime, we expect that the new authorities would go after these teachers who were considered a threat to Spain’s national homogeneity.

Nonetheless, we expect nation-building considerations to be most prevalent after the civil war ended, and not while the civil war was being fought. Tracking down leftist teachers was an urgent task during the war because of the risk for the Francoist regime of harboring fifth-columnists within their own territory. By contrast, nation-building
strategies, particularly through the restructuration of the educational institutions, was a longer-term and more forward-looking effort.\footnote{32}

3. Historical Background

3.1. The Spanish Second Republic, the Civil War, and the Postwar

The Spanish Civil War ended on April 1st, 1939, when General Francisco Franco proclaimed his army’s victory over the Spanish Republican (or Loyalist) forces. Hostilities, however, did not end that day. Anyone how had been loyal to the Republic or was a suspected sympathizer of the left would suffer harsh reprisals by the Francoist authorities. Already during the war, Franco started setting up new state structures and repressing internal dissent in the territories under his military control. Summary executions, imprisonments, work suspensions and other forms of economic repression were faced by many Spaniards accused of being on the ‘wrong side’ of the war.\footnote{33} Some social sectors were particularly targeted by the new authorities, such as industrial workers, intellectuals, or schoolteachers. Mass fear of reprisals became a hallmark of the strategy carried out by Franco after the civil war, which sought widespread demobilization more than active support.\footnote{34} Moreover, instead of promoting Transitional Justice policies, the state established a new “official memory” of the civil war and the Second Republic. This version promoted the idea that the rebels were heroes that saved Spain from Communism and other disgraces, glorifying the victims of leftist violence while ignoring the victims of Francoism. Francoist policies also incentivized people to forget the civil war and “move on”, and they sought widespread political demobilization. Many people internalized the message that “politics was behind the disgrace of the civil war”, and that
“it is better to stay away from politics.” Studies of the long-term legacies of the civil war have documented that these attitudes persisted among survivors of the civil war several decades later.35

The Second Republic (1931–1936) had initiated the most important process of both economic and social modernization and democratization that Spain had experienced to date. The Spanish Constitution of 1931 set in motion far-reaching economic reforms, granted new civil liberties and women’s suffrage, and established the separation of the Church and the state. This process also entailed a decentralization of Spain and the recognition of non-Spanish nationalisms within the country, particularly in Catalonia, the Basque Country, and, to a lesser extent, Galicia.36 As Justo Beramendi put it, “the Second Republic was born as the result of an alliance of the labour movement, democratic Spanish nationalism and Catalan and Galician nationalisms. This alliance sought to establish a democratic system which would also resolve the national question (apart from the socio-economic problems) by attempting to follow a middle road between the old centralism and a federal system which was considered too hazardous by the majority.”37 During the Second Republic these three regions advanced in the approval of laws of political autonomy (Estatutos de Autonomía), but the outbreak of the civil war impeded the approval of the Basque law, and only Catalonia could actually briefly implement its law of political autonomy.

Importantly, as part of the modernization process and in an attempt to eradicate the traditionally Catholic school system, the left-wing governments of the Second Republic promoted secular, progressive education. Religion was no longer a mandatory subject in schools; although they offered religion as an elective course, the new guidelines prioritized the individual choice of both children and teachers.38 This unprecedented schooling policy resulted from the secular character of the Second Republic, and public teachers spearheaded an important dimension of this change.

Besides secularism, the new curriculum followed a civic form of Spanish nationalism and, in Catalonia, the Basque Country, and Galicia, many schools taught in
the national minorities’ languages, and some even followed very liberal teaching methods. The introduction of the Catalan, Basque, or Galician languages into public education was another important dimension of the recognition of a multinational Spain. This shift to national accommodation, which contrasted with previous repression and aggressive attempts of assimilation of national minorities (for example, during the Primo de Rivera dictatorship), would contribute to offset antagonism and hostility towards the Republic among conservative sectors of Spanish society.

While non-Spanish nationalisms were already present before the Second Republic, the rise of peripheral nationalisms and the mobilization around the territorial cleavage—in addition to the class, religious and rural-urban cleavages—was a key feature of the Second Republic. Catalan nationalism was somewhat more successful mobilizing internal support and, according to some historians, its strength was the main reason why the Second Republic established a decentralized system. Basque nationalism was less successful and limited to the province of Biscay.

A key difference between these two nationalisms was that, while Basque nationalism was mainly conservative, Catalan nationalism was cross-cutting with the class and religious cleavages. The largest political party in Catalonia was the left-wing Republican Left of Catalonia (Esquerra Republicana de Catalunya, ERC), which became part of the leftist coalition in 1936 elections (the Popular Front). The largest conservative party in Catalonia, the Lliga Regionalista—led by Francesc Cambó, was a nationalist party; and there were other minority parties that were Catalanist, such as the Christian democratic party Unió Democràtica de Catalunya. Also, while support for the Basque Nationalist Party (Partido Nacionalista Vasco, PNV) was mainly limited to conservative sectors in Biscay, nationalist parties were hegemonic across the territory of Catalonia. The PNV opposed the Francoist coup, but some nationalist sectors endorsed the rebellion, particularly the Basque clergy. In Catalonia, by contrast, the leaders of the Lliga
supported the coup, but many Catalanist sectors ended up opposing the Francoists, and some prominent right-wingers, such as Manuel Carrasco Formiguera, became victims of Francoist violence. Indeed, many of these right-wingers were targeted by anarchist and communist militias due to their rightism—several hundreds of them were killed—while they were also targeted by Franco due to their Catalan nationalism.\(^{44}\)

In stark contrast to the progressive aspects of the Second Republic, the ideology of Francoism was based on a strong Spanish nationalism and social conservatism. There was an important fascist section among the rebels which repudiated any form of class struggle and the existence of non-Spanish nationalisms. Besides its clampdown on leftist organizations, Francoists rejected the emerging Basque, Catalan, and Galician nationalisms on the basis of a unified, conservative, and Catholic Spain.

Finally, it is worth emphasizing that Catholicism played indeed a very important role in the new regime. Although the military rebellion showed a strong fascist imprint at first, the conflict and the construction of the new regime quickly became linked to Catholicism after Pope Pius XI sided with Franco and some high authorities of the Spanish Church explicitly supported the insurgency. This move, which helped the Francoist rebels secure ideological legitimacy and international support, became a fundamental part of the new Francoist state.\(^{45}\) It followed that those who had been defenders and executors of secularism became key enemies of the new regime.

### 3.2. Purges of Teachers in Postwar Spain\(^ {46}\)

The school system inherited from the Second Republic, and the public-school teachers that pertained to it, constituted a threat to the construction of the new Francoist regime. To be sure, teachers were not the only professional group that suffered purges; the Law for the Depuration of Public Servants, which was approved on 10 February 1939, had implications for all government employers— from magistrates, postmen, or prison
employees. However, as Historian Conchita Mir explains, “Teachers were persecuted with special ferocity, especially if they were thought to have assimilated liberal and democratic ideals such as those imparted at the Catalan Generalitat’s teacher training college.”

Even before winning the civil war, Franco started to dismantle the schooling system in the territories that were under his control. The new authorities carried out an ideological cleansing of schools’ personnel and curricula and promoted a return to the old Church-dominated system. Besides the assassination of many teachers, the new authorities removed from service every public-school teacher and forced them to re-apply should they wanted to return to their jobs. For this re-application to be successful, teachers would have to go through a political screening that would assess their fit within the ideological principles of the new regime, which consisted of strong Spanish nationalism, moral conservatism, Catholicism, and deep rejection of any single form of left-wing ideology.

The purging of teachers was carried out in the whole Spanish territory. It started in 1938—while the civil war was still ongoing—in the Francoist areas of control, it continued in the rest of territories upon conquest, and it lasted until approximately 1945. Different commissions were created to inspect all levels of the education system, including universities and technical schools, along with primary and secondary schools.

The purging of schoolteachers was carried out by the so-called ‘D Commissions’, which oversaw all teachers, including interns. These commissions were organized at the provincial level, except for the cities of Madrid and Barcelona, which had their own commissions. These commissions were comprised by a director of a secondary school, an education inspector, the president of the Parents’ Association, and two other members assigned by political authorities. Each teacher had to submit an application describing the details of their personal life and highlighting their loyalty to the new regime and its ‘foundational principles’. Commissions then requested reports to the local authorities of the municipalities where the teachers were based (i.e., the town mayor, the local priest,
the local police chief, and a relevant head of a family), and they had the right to ask for further reports. After reading the applications and reports, the commissions would write a resolution proposal specifying the sanctions or punishments to the teacher and a list of charges they were accused of, and send this proposal to the national Ministry of Education. The Ministry would then establish the final resolution.

The main resolutions included 1) suspension from the teaching position, 2) forced relocation to another school—within the same province or in another province, or 3) confirmation in the position. In the case of the Basque Country and Catalonia, teachers could also be forced to relocate outside of the region. Regarding the charges, the most common ones were: 1) militancy in leftist or Republican organizations, 2) nationalism, which of course referred to non-Spanish peripheral nationalism (i.e., Basque, Catalan, Galician), 3) disloyalty towards the ‘National Cause’ (Causa Nacional), or the ‘foundational principles’ of the Francoist state, and 4) showing sympathy for leftist ideologies. In practice, most of these charges were rather hazy and were not linked to specific behaviors.

The final resolutions were published in several official newsletters, among them the Official Provincial Gazettes (Boletines Oficiales Provinciales, or BOP), which detailed the sanctions, charges, and basic details of every teacher. These official archives are the main sources used to track the purges.

4. Empirics

4.1. Data on Teachers’ Purges

The data on purges comes from Morente Valero, who compiled a list of almost all the teachers who went through the purging process in 13 provinces of Spain, relying on a variety of archival sources, mainly the General Archives of the State Civil Administration (Archivo General de la Administración Civil del Estado) and the official gazettes (Boletín Oficial del Estado, or BOE, and the Boletines Oficiales Provinciales, or BOP, of each
province). The dataset Valero compiled from these sources, which we have put in digital form, indicates the name of the teacher, the location where she was last based on, the charges she was accused of, the resolution proposal, the final resolution, and the date the case file was published in the official gazette or BOP.  

The use of historical archives in empirical research has its own advantages and limitations. We are aware that studying a distant phenomenon for which we do not have any complementary source of data (for example, oral interviews) can limit our ability to draw inferences from the results. However, we believe this is one of those cases for which the use of archives offers a clear methodological advantage. As Balcells and Sullivan say, by providing a better coverage than third-party data and offering the possibility to study new political process previously unrecorded, “in many cases conflict archives provide more comprehensive and less biased information on political conflict than any other systematic collection of data”. Indeed, the archival data compiled by Valero is both systematic and granular, and it provides a rich picture of the purges against Spanish schoolteachers.

Our sample includes data from eight provinces: Albacete (Castilla-La Mancha), Asturias, Bizkaia (Basque Country), Huesca (Aragón), and the four Catalan provinces: Barcelona, Girona, Lleida, and Tarragona. The provinces studied by Morente Valero were explicitly selected to offer a wide range of variation within Spain in terms of social and political background, economic systems, and the presence of national minorities. We had to exclude from our study five provinces (Granada, Madrid, Pontevedra, Sevilla, and Valencia) from Morente Valero’s dataset because we do not have high-quality data on prewar electoral results or wartime victimization. However, the eight provinces we include in the analyses respect the variation in terms of social, economic, and political backgrounds. The sample thus remains broadly representative of Spain, and we include all the provinces for which we could gather fine-grained data to maximize their representativeness. Figure 1 shows the number of teachers purged over time, according to the date their case files were published in the official gazette.
We use the individual teachers as our unit of analysis and analyze the probability that an individual was confirmed in or removed from their position. In the analyses focusing on the center-periphery divide in the Basque Country and Catalonia, we also include a third outcome: forced relocation outside of the home region. In some cases, we also analyze the charges that were given to teachers who were accused of specific charges, focusing on the four main categories listed in the previous section. Because charges were barely used or reported during the war, we only analyze them for the postwar period.

Table A1 in the Appendix summarizes the outcome variables in this study. The dependent variables are all binary, indicating the outcome of the purge or the charge used, so we use logistic regression models. To test the robustness of our results, we also use multinomial models (see Appendix).

### 4.2. Covariates and Models

First, we assess whether teachers coming from leftist localities were more likely to be purged, and how this effect varied before and after the end of the civil war. We use two main independent variables: a binary variable indicating whether the teacher was processed in the postwar period (after April 1, 1939), and the share of votes in the teacher’s locality that were cast for the leftist coalition Popular Front (*Frente Popular*, FP) in the 1936 elections, which took place five months before the war onset.

We then analyze whether having a Basque or a Catalan family name made teachers in the provinces of Bizkaia (Basque country) and Lleida, Tarragona, Girona, and Barcelona (Catalonia), respectively, more likely to be purged. We take all teachers’ family names and, using data from the *Instituto Nacional de Estadística* (INE), we order names by the share of people currently with that name who were born in the Basque region or Catalonia, respectively. The top 10% of family names in each distribution are defined as Basque or Catalan. We provide further details in the Appendix.

Particularly in the case of the variable of local leftist support, we are testing whether the Francoist regime engage in collective targeting. Even though the regime was collecting individual reports on teachers and had access to individual-level information
on teachers, collective targeting was likely to occur when information on individual-level preferences was probably not perfect. This was the case during the civil war, when the bureaucracy of repression was still being built, and for those teachers who had not engaged in visible political activities or did not belong to any leftist or nationalist organization. As in other forms of repression (i.e. executions, bombings), Francoist authorities were likely to rely on collective (municipal-level) traits to better identify teachers suspected of not being loyal to the Francoist political project.

We include several control variables, all of them measured at the municipality level and linked to each teacher based on their location. First, we control for levels of rightist victimization (calculated as the logged number of killings by rightwing armed forces for 1,000 inhabitants) during the civil war, as it might impact the purging process because of its potential effect on leftist teachers and because this violence was also related to political identities and local competition. Second, we include a variable indicating the presence of prewar local affiliates to the two major trade unions, the anarchist CNT and the socialist UGT. We also control for the logged population in 1930. In the second part of the analyses, limited to the Basque Country and Catalonia, we also control for gender, which we manually coded from teachers’ first names. We include province-level fixed effects in all models and use cluster-robust standard errors at the level of municipality to account for local-level dependency.

For those cases where data is available, we show in the Appendix additional robustness analyses controlling for the level of wartime leftist victimization and teachers’ socioeconomic status, proxied by the logged frequency of their family names.

5. Results

5.1. Wartime Threat and Collective Targeting

Table 1 shows the main results on the effect of the political outlook of Spanish localities on teachers’ purges, using data from all available provinces. Figure 2 summarizes the results graphically. The left panel (a) shows the predicted probability of being removed
from teaching based on the level of leftist support in the municipality, before and after the end of the civil war, while the right panel (b) shows the probability of being confirmed in the teaching position.

The results in Table 1 and Figure 2 show that higher levels of leftist electoral support in a locality made teachers working in that locality more likely to be removed from their position. Yet, this effect disappears after the end of the war. Results for confirmation in the position mirror these, suggesting that there was indeed collective targeting of teachers from leftist localities during the war: these were less likely to be confirmed in their position than those coming from more rightist localities.

We show in the Appendix that these results are robust to the inclusion of additional control variables, namely the degree of wartime victimization by the Republican army and leftist militias and the socioeconomic status of the teacher proxied with surname frequency (table A2), and to the use of multinomial logit models (table A3 and figure A1). Table A4 shows that the degree of leftist support in a locality barely explains which specific charges the teachers were accused of.

The findings in this section suggest that when the war was ongoing—and hence a military threat was present—Francoists probably used school purges to target potential ‘fifth-columnists’ and they did it by purging more intensively in places where the left had greater levels of political support. Once the war was over, this type of collective targeting stopped being so prevalent: first, the military threat from the defeated leftist bloc vanished; second, leftist people could then be better screened and prosecuted through other channels (i.e., trials), and thus selective forms of repression became more prevalent. An additional reason why we might be observing this switch in targeting is that much of the repressive work with regards to leftist militants might have already been carried out during the conflict.

5.2. Postwar Nation-building

We now turn to the postwar period. Table 2 shows the results of a logistic regression on the effect of having a Basque or Catalan family name on the probability of being removed
from teaching, confirmed in the position without sanctions, or forcefully relocated outside the region. Teachers with Basque family names were less likely to be confirmed without sanctions and more likely to be forced to relocate outside of the Basque Country, although this did not mean a higher probability of being banned from teaching. In Catalonia, we also find a positive effect of having a Catalan family name on the probability of being relocated outside of Catalonia.

Table 3 replicates the analyses in Table 2, but using the charges the teachers were being accused of as dependent variables. Table 4 does the same for Catalonia. As in the previous section, Figure 3 summarizes the main results graphically. The left panel (a) shows the average marginal effect of having a Basque or Catalan family name on the probability of each outcome. The right panel (b) on Figure 2 shows the main results from Table 4, using the charges as dependent variables.

We can observe that teachers with a Basque family name were more likely to face charges of nationalism and less likely to be accused of having leftist sympathies, perhaps because traditional Basque nationalism had conservative roots. In Catalonia, teachers with a Catalan family name were also more likely to face charges of nationalism. All of this suggests that the purges of these teachers had to do with their suspected “nationalism” and the threat of their potential “nationalist activities” or “nationalist indoctrination” in schools.

The findings from this section suggest that purges in postwar Spain followed a logic of nation-building and that Francoist authorities used family names as a cue of teachers’ nationalist loyalties. Even though Basque and Catalan suspected nationalist schoolteachers faced milder sanctions than the ones suspected left-leaning teachers faced during the civil war, they were less likely to come out “clean” from the commissions than those that did not have Basque or Catalan names.
6. Conclusions

In this article, we have explored the dynamics of internal purges of low-rank state employees, with a focus on schoolteachers who were purged from Spanish schools during the Francoist regime that followed the civil war, which took place between 1936 and 1939. We have argued that purges resulted from two different logics: a ‘threat removal’ logic, and a ‘threat preemption’ logic. In Spain, this implied that the purges had two different types of targets in different points of time. During the civil war, suspected left-leaning teachers were the main objective of Francoist purges; after the war, the targets were mostly suspected peripheral nationalists, who were perceived as having the potential to undermine the new nation-building project.

The switch in patterns of targeting that we have documented could be accounted by other explanations, in addition to the two logics of purging we have outlined. For instance, although getting rid of leftist sympathizers could have been the priority for the whole period, much of the ‘threat removal’ repressive work was largely culminated during the civil war. Except for the mountainous areas in which maquis were operating, the Francoist state had either killed, detained, or expelled most leftist militants from Spanish territory.\textsuperscript{60} This could have allowed the regime to switch to a preemptive logic and concentrate on the nation-building project. Similarly, during the postwar period, the regime could have had better resources to identify and repress leftist teachers on an individual basis and that is why collective targeting was somewhat abandoned. Again, our analyses suggest that during the war left-leaning teachers were collectively targeted based on meso-level characteristics (i.e. voting patterns at the level of the locality), but that this was not the case after the end of the war. It could be that, after the civil war ended, an improved state capacity and less urgency in the purging process allowed Francoist authorities to collect more information on each of the individual teachers and thus follow a more selective logic of targeting, which would clearly differentiate the individual leanings of the teachers from the voting patterns in the localities where they lived.

To the best of our knowledge, this study is a first empirical attempt to understand internal purges of low-rank employees in autocratic regimes, a topic that has been largely
overlooked in previous research mainly because of the difficulties in collecting fine-grained data on such a veiled phenomenon. We present new data on the case of Spain, which we have put in digital format, and which we are making publicly available to other researchers. Studying the dynamics of internal purges is not only pertinent for the conflict research literature—in the sense that it both complements and informs our knowledge on state repression in general—but it is also relevant to understand a frequent phenomenon that has a high human cost. Indeed, despite the importance of violent or lethal forms of repression, economic repression such as job suspensions, which tend to affect much larger shares of the population, arguably constitutes a severe blow to anyone’s life.

Further research may address the role of social networks on the nature of targeting and the outcomes of purges, or the long-term impact of teachers’ purges on a given schooling system, nationalism or economic development.
### Table 1. Logistic regression on purges commission’s final resolution

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Removal</th>
<th>Confirmation</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(1)</td>
<td>(2)</td>
<td>(3)</td>
<td>(4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Intercept)</td>
<td>0.322</td>
<td>-0.695+</td>
<td>0.814*</td>
<td>2.081***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.336)</td>
<td>(0.414)</td>
<td>(0.325)</td>
<td>(0.462)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leftist support 1936</td>
<td>0.157</td>
<td>2.144***</td>
<td>-0.097</td>
<td>-2.801***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.244)</td>
<td>(0.515)</td>
<td>(0.176)</td>
<td>(0.710)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Postwar period</td>
<td>-2.245***</td>
<td>-0.963*</td>
<td>0.010</td>
<td>-1.435**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.267)</td>
<td>(0.382)</td>
<td>(0.297)</td>
<td>(0.470)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rightist victimization</td>
<td>0.019</td>
<td>-0.021</td>
<td>-0.023</td>
<td>-0.002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.057)</td>
<td>(0.056)</td>
<td>(0.038)</td>
<td>(0.040)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trade Unions prewar</td>
<td>0.003</td>
<td>-0.042</td>
<td>0.196*</td>
<td>0.234**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.115)</td>
<td>(0.119)</td>
<td>(0.087)</td>
<td>(0.088)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Log. Population 1930</td>
<td>-0.055*</td>
<td>-0.043+</td>
<td>0.002</td>
<td>-0.005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.024)</td>
<td>(0.024)</td>
<td>(0.019)</td>
<td>(0.019)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Left 1936 x Postwar</td>
<td>-2.766***</td>
<td>3.210***</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.607)</td>
<td>(0.792)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>n</td>
<td>8,750</td>
<td>8,750</td>
<td>8,750</td>
<td>8,750</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AIC</td>
<td>5,969.0</td>
<td>5,937.9</td>
<td>10,476.4</td>
<td>10,414.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Note:** +p < 0.1; *p < 0.05; **p < 0.01; ***p < 0.001. Province fixed effects not shown. Standard errors clustered at the level of municipalities.
## Table 2. Logistic regression on purges commission’s final resolution

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Bizkaia (Basque Country)</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th>Catalonia</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(Intercept)</td>
<td>0.517</td>
<td>-0.048</td>
<td>-1.832</td>
<td>1.551</td>
<td>0.965***</td>
<td>3.484</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.680)</td>
<td>(0.463)</td>
<td>(1.032)</td>
<td>(0.313)</td>
<td>(0.262)</td>
<td>(0.462)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Basq/Cat name</td>
<td>-0.489</td>
<td>-0.615</td>
<td>1.603</td>
<td>-0.078</td>
<td>-0.031</td>
<td>0.439</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.312)</td>
<td>(0.185)</td>
<td>(0.374)</td>
<td>(0.118)</td>
<td>(0.090)</td>
<td>(0.153)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>0.067</td>
<td>-0.585</td>
<td>0.685</td>
<td>1.149</td>
<td>-0.866***</td>
<td>0.659</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.456)</td>
<td>(0.181)</td>
<td>(0.330)</td>
<td>(0.120)</td>
<td>(0.073)</td>
<td>(0.138)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trade Unions</td>
<td>0.579</td>
<td>-0.443</td>
<td>-0.318</td>
<td>-0.008</td>
<td>0.147</td>
<td>0.043</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.506)</td>
<td>(0.321)</td>
<td>(0.758)</td>
<td>(0.178)</td>
<td>(0.140)</td>
<td>(0.245)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Left 1936</td>
<td>-1.005</td>
<td>0.941</td>
<td>0.506</td>
<td>-0.683</td>
<td>0.445</td>
<td>-0.273</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.832)</td>
<td>(0.487)</td>
<td>(1.238)</td>
<td>(0.365)</td>
<td>(0.307)</td>
<td>(0.626)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Log. Pop. 1930</td>
<td>-0.325***</td>
<td>0.162</td>
<td>-0.189</td>
<td>-0.052</td>
<td>-0.003</td>
<td>0.051</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.094)</td>
<td>(0.062)</td>
<td>(0.151)</td>
<td>(0.030)</td>
<td>(0.021)</td>
<td>(0.038)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rightist vict.</td>
<td>0.407</td>
<td>-0.319</td>
<td>-0.019</td>
<td>-0.007</td>
<td>0.046</td>
<td>0.117</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.395)</td>
<td>(0.257)</td>
<td>(0.436)</td>
<td>(0.095)</td>
<td>(0.072)</td>
<td>(0.137)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>n</td>
<td>721</td>
<td>721</td>
<td>721</td>
<td>3,873</td>
<td>3,873</td>
<td>3,897</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>AIC</td>
<td>412.2</td>
<td>879.7</td>
<td>369.2</td>
<td>2,795.5</td>
<td>4,547.8</td>
<td>1,571.3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note:* +p < 0.1; *p < 0.05; **p < 0.01; ***p < 0.001. Province fixed effects not shown. Standard errors clustered at the level of municipalities. Data for the Basque Country includes only data from the province of Bizkaia.
Table 3. Logistic regression on charges against teachers in the Basque Country

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Political participation</th>
<th>Nationalism</th>
<th>Attitudes against ‘Causa Nacional’</th>
<th>Leftist sympathies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(Intercept)</td>
<td>-0.690</td>
<td>-0.900</td>
<td>1.337</td>
<td>-0.739</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(1.113)</td>
<td>(1.331)</td>
<td>(1.077)</td>
<td>(1.107)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Basque name</td>
<td>0.292</td>
<td>2.345***</td>
<td>-0.844</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(0.354)</td>
<td>(0.638)</td>
<td>(0.893)</td>
<td>(0.496)</td>
<td>1.320**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>0.809*</td>
<td>0.010</td>
<td>-0.439</td>
<td>0.588</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(0.381)</td>
<td>(0.465)</td>
<td>(0.472)</td>
<td>(0.485)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trade Unions prewar</td>
<td>0.514</td>
<td>1.759</td>
<td>-0.177</td>
<td>0.580</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(0.952)</td>
<td>(0.964)</td>
<td>(0.922)</td>
<td>(0.758)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leftist support 1936</td>
<td>-1.236</td>
<td>-5.181**</td>
<td>-1.106</td>
<td>2.972</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(1.835)</td>
<td>(1.719)</td>
<td>(1.988)</td>
<td>(2.014)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Log. Population 1930</td>
<td>-0.018</td>
<td>-0.015</td>
<td>-0.008</td>
<td>-0.041</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(0.180)</td>
<td>(0.183)</td>
<td>(0.179)</td>
<td>(0.156)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rightist victimization</td>
<td>0.055</td>
<td>-0.333</td>
<td>0.089</td>
<td>-0.200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(0.597)</td>
<td>(0.527)</td>
<td>(0.557)</td>
<td>(0.563)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>n</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AIC</td>
<td>134.5</td>
<td>107.6</td>
<td>136.3</td>
<td>112.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: +p < 0.1; *p < 0.05; **p < 0.01; ***p < 0.001. Province fixed effects not shown. Standard errors clustered at the level of municipalities. Data only includes the province of Bizkaia.
Table 4. Logistic regression on charges against teachers in Catalonia

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Political participation</th>
<th>Nationalism</th>
<th>Attitudes against 'Causa Nacional'</th>
<th>Leftist sympathies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(Intercept)</td>
<td>-2.218***</td>
<td>-2.314***</td>
<td>0.435</td>
<td>-1.493**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.489)</td>
<td>(0.500)</td>
<td>(0.416)</td>
<td>(0.428)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catalan name</td>
<td>-0.013</td>
<td>0.394*</td>
<td>0.043</td>
<td>0.024</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.225)</td>
<td>(0.171)</td>
<td>(0.177)</td>
<td>(0.161)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>1.055***</td>
<td>0.030</td>
<td>0.063</td>
<td>0.066</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.135)</td>
<td>(0.149)</td>
<td>(0.125)</td>
<td>(0.123)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trade Unions prewar</td>
<td>0.756**</td>
<td>-0.348</td>
<td>-0.219</td>
<td>-0.198</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.247)</td>
<td>(0.282)</td>
<td>(0.228)</td>
<td>(0.238)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leftist support 1936</td>
<td>0.009</td>
<td>0.351</td>
<td>-1.034+</td>
<td>-0.523</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.640)</td>
<td>(0.671)</td>
<td>(0.529)</td>
<td>(0.580)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Log. Population 1930</td>
<td>0.005</td>
<td>0.124**</td>
<td>0.025</td>
<td>0.099*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.040)</td>
<td>(0.041)</td>
<td>(0.036)</td>
<td>(0.036)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rightist victimization</td>
<td>0.132</td>
<td>-0.011</td>
<td>0.059</td>
<td>-0.081</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.172)</td>
<td>(0.185)</td>
<td>(0.160)</td>
<td>(0.174)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>n</td>
<td>910</td>
<td>910</td>
<td>910</td>
<td>910</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AIC</td>
<td>1,072.3</td>
<td>1,022.0</td>
<td>1,240.3</td>
<td>1,079.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: +p < 0.1; *p < 0.05; **p < 0.01; *** p < 0.001. Province fixed effects not shown. Standard errors clustered at the level of municipalities.
Figure 1. Number of teachers purged by date of case file in each province

(Red line indicates the end of the civil war on April 1, 1939)
Figure 2. Effect of local leftist support on individual outcomes during and after the civil war
Figure 3. Effect of having a Basque or Catalan family name on the individual purges

a) Final outcomes

b) Charges used against teachers

- AME of having a Basque/Catalan family name
ENDNOTES


7 Jun Koga Sudduth, ‘Strategic logic of elite purges in dictatorships’, Comparative Political Studies 50(13) (2017), 1768–1801.

8 Anthony W. Pereira, 'Political justice under authoritarian regimes in Argentina, Brazil, and Chile', Human Rights Review 4(2) (2003), 27–47.


13 The Francoists were not the first ones pursuing the assimilation of national minorities. Right before the Second Republic period, Miguel Primo de Rivera (1923-1930) had already attempted to aggressively homogenize the country linguistically and culturally.


16 In both cases, these are cues for collective identities that we assume Francoists were using to target teachers. We do not imply that teachers in leftist localities were all leftists or that teachers with Basque or Catalan names were all nationalists. However, we do assume that Francoists used these as cues for targeting. We use a meso-level proxy for leftism because we do not have an individual proxy such as the family name, which permits to roughly identify if the person has local ancestry and thus is more likely to be a nationalist. One could argue that last names can potentially identify social class, but this would be a much rougher proxy. We do not assume that Francoists were using last name
as a cue except for very clear cases; for example, if a person had a last name from the nobility; this would likely help this person avoid repression.

17 See Yuri M Zhukov and Roya Talibova, 'Stalin’s terror and the long-term political effects of mass repression,' *Journal of Peace Research* 55(2) (2018), 267–283. They study mass arrests during the Stalinist Great Terror. However, they focus on the consequences and not on the determinants of these arrests.


22 In the case of indiscriminate violence, there is no selection into targeting whatsoever. See Stathis N. Kalyvas, *The logic of violence in civil war* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006).


24 Quinlivan, 1999; Belkin and Schofer, 2003; Roessler, 2011; Pilster and Böhmelt, 2012.

25 Sudduth 2017

26 Blaydes 2018


32 To be sure, we do not posit that the left-right cleavage only mattered during the civil war and that the nationalist cleavage was only relevant after the civil war. Both divisions were important throughout the Spanish Civil War and the Francoist regime. However, following previous research on the dynamics of repression and coup-proofing, we argue that collective targeting of leftist teachers was more prominent when the conflict was still ongoing, given the potential threat they represented. Once the war was over, the repression of leftist individuals was less urgent could follow more selective forms.

34 José Reig Cruañes, *Identificación y alienación: La cultura política y el tardofranquismo* (Valencia: Publicacions de la Universitat de València, 2007).


41 Beramendi, 1999.

42 De la Granja, Beramendi, and Anguera, 2001.


44 Catalan historians Josep Maria Solé i Sabaté and Joan Villarroya document that during the military occupation of Catalonia by the Nationalist army, there was widespread hatred against anything “Catalan,” resulting in “the prohibition of the usage of the language, the
printing and distribution of publications in Catalan, the destruction of libraries, museums, schools, historical monuments, cult places and other institutions” (1987: 14).

45 For a good description of the ideological foundations of the new Francoist regime, see Montserrat Guibernau, Catalan nationalism: Francoism, transition and democracy (London: Routledge, 2004), chapter 2.

46 This section draws of a series of historical references on the purges in postwar Spain. See Francisco Morente Valero, La depuración del magisterio nacional (1936-1943): La escuela y el Estado Nuevo (Valladolid: Ambito Ediciones, 1997); Carlos de Pablo, 'La depuración de la educación española durante el franquismo (1936-1975): Institucionalización de una represión,' Foro de Educación 5(9) (2007), 203–228; Beatriz Souto Galván, La Libertad de cátedra y los procesos de depuración del profesorado: Desde principios del s. XIX hasta la Constitución del 1978 (Barcelona: Marcial Pons, 2005) for general accounts of the process. There are additional works that analyze the purges in specific provinces or regions.


49 In Catalonia, Mir writes that ‘fifty government-run secondary schools were handed over to religious orders, who thus recovered their monopoly over secondary education’ (2008, p. 142).

50 There were also intermediate sanctions, such as salary suspension or temporal bans, but we do not take them into account here.


52 We focus on teachers who were based in specific locations, excluding those in training or under temporary contracts without any specified location.


56 See Balcells, 2017. Data for Catalonia and Aragon comes from the replication data from Balcells, 2017, while data for the other provinces comes from the replication data from Francisco Villamil, 'Mobilizing memories: The social conditions of the long-term impact of victimization,' *Journal of Peace Research* (2020).

57 We use again replication data from Balcells, 2017.


For example, Mir (2008, p. 142) argues that over four hundred teachers fled Catalonia. This figure is likely to be an underestimation.

All the data files and R scripts used in this paper are available as replication files at: https://dataverse.harvard.edu/dataverse/Francoistpurges/