Job Market Paper: The Politics of Local Control in Electoral Autocracies*

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Abstract

Electoral autocrats are often characterized as hegemonic. Despite this, opposition parties sometimes win elections and challenge their rule. How do opposition parties build support? How does local control - who wins elected local office - affect electoral strategies and hence political competition? I argue that local control defines the strategies of incumbents and opposition parties use to compete for votes. When incumbents retain local control, local capacity makes it easier for incumbents to credibly threaten to sanction opposition support. However, when opposition parties win local control, they gain unprecedented opportunities to use distributive politics to win support. I test this argument using administrative data and interviews from Tanzania. I find that electoral autocrats are only able to use local capacity to sanction if they retain local control. When opposition parties win control, they even access to services and improve local governance. I show that they do so, despite receiving lower central transfers, by investing in local capacity to maintain their autonomy from the center. I show the survival and spread of opposition support is conditional on local control. This theory has important implications for prevailing understandings of regime durability, opposition parties and decentralization.

Electoral autocrats[1] must maintain the assent of the elite and the electorate to stay in power (Svolik, 2012). Extant scholarship suggests that incumbent autocrats[2] are largely unconstrained in what strategies they can choose to use to maintain elite cohesion and win elections. Upon winning control of the executive and securing enough seats in the legislature to hold constitutional control, the incumbent wins hegemonic control of state resources and the 'rules of the game' (Magaloni, 2006; Levitsky & Way, 2010). Incumbents are then thought to have freedom over how state resources are distributed and institutions are designed. This characterization of the 'hegemonic incumbent' has become a stylized fact in the study of authoritarian politics.

Opposition parties are seldom conceptualized as adversarial political actors with real agency. So long as incumbent support remains above the electoral thresholds for executive and legislative control, opposition support is not thought to constrain incumbents.[3] Indeed, scholars argue that opposition parties and other nominally democratic institutions are permitted when they have a stabilizing influence on incumbent power (Gandhi, 2008; Gandhi & Przeworski, 2006). Opposition parties are a means of co-opting elites and as a 'safety valve' for popular discontent (Gandhi, 2008; Sartori, 1976). Opposition parties are allowed to survive when not deemed a threat, often because they are niche ideological parties or those which represent a stable regional bloc with no interests in national office (Greene, 2002; Magaloni, 2006; Aalen & Murias, 2018). Few studies engage with how and to what extent these institutions empower the opposition or have destabilizing consequences because incumbents should be free to restrict or remove these institutions if they cause problems. Control of the design of these institutions is taken as equivalent to control of the terms and outcomes of political competition.

However, opposition parties do win presidential elections or come close to it. If incumbents are hegemonic, why do they allow opposition parties to build enough support to challenge them? I argue that that opposition parties are able to build support because incumbents are often more constrained and opposition parties more important and strategic than the prevailing consensus would suggest. In many electoral autocracies, local governments implement electorally salient distributive policies. I plot electoral autocracies with elected local governments in Figure 1. Winning *local control* – elected local office and control of local state capacity – becomes another threshold incumbents must cross to remain

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[1]I use Schedler's (2009) definition of electoral authoritarianism: "Electoral authoritarian regimes practice authoritarianism behind the institutional facades of representative democracy. They hold regular multiparty elections at the national level, yet violate liberal-democratic minimum standards in systematic and profound ways"

[2]Throughout this study, I use 'incumbent', 'incumbent autocrat', 'electoral autocrat' and 'autocrat' interchangeably

[3]Low levels of opposition support are important for projecting power and an aura of invincibility (Magaloni, 2006)

truly hegemonic in any given subnational unit. By *local state capacity*[4], I refer to infrastructural capacity, the ability of the state to penetrate its territory and implement policies (Mann, 1984).[5]
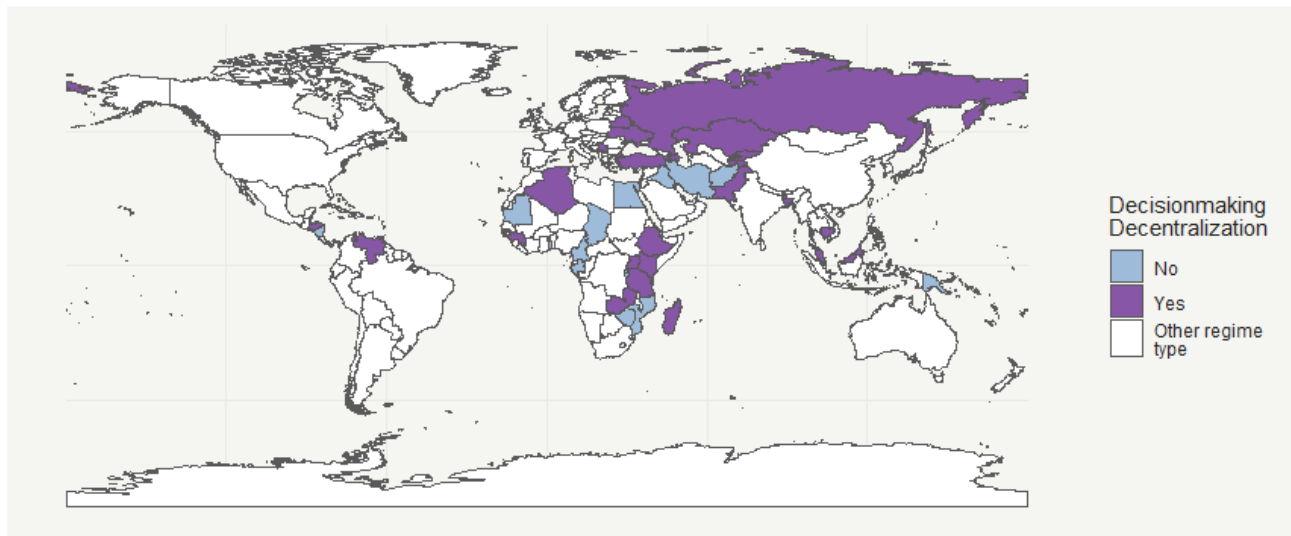
Figure 1: Electoral autocracies in 2017 by decentralization

Details: This map show electoral autocracies with elected local governments in 2017. I drop countries below minimum thresholds of administrative and fiscal decentralization as measured by Ivanyna & Shah (2012). This data is not from the same year and so this plot should be treated with caution

I argue that local control determines the balance of power between incumbent and opposition parties, which in turn determines the durability of incumbent support in that unit and in the system as a whole. Local control determines who can exploit local capacity for political ends. Local capacity defines the strategies available to the incumbent and opposition in a given subnational unit. When incumbents have local control, they remain hegemonic. When they lose local control, it becomes harder for them to induce voters to remain loyal. Some of the 'carrots and sticks' incumbents rely on to win elections are handed to the opposition. Opposition control allows opposition parties to exploit the same local capacity, giving them power over distributive policies they can use to win support. Opposition parties can build credibility by using local resources to fulfil promises to their voters and increasing their autonomy by investing in local capacity. This makes it possible for opposition parties to offer a competing platform to voters in systems where they are otherwise marginalized. By this channel, opposition control can lead to the emergence of opposition parties which can credibly challenge the

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[4]I use 'local state capacity' and 'local capacity' interchangeably

[5]Infrastructural capacity encompasses the resources the state can draw on to meet their objectives (*capabilities of the state*), where the state can implement their preferred policies (*territorial reach of the state*) and the effect of these policies on citizens' lives (*weight of the state*) (Soifer, 2008).

incumbent at the national level.

I test this argument using evidence from Tanzania. I draw on an original dataset of public good provision and quality, a dataset of local taxes and transfers, twenty years of election results and over 200 interviews conducted between 2015 and 2018 in local governments across Tanzania. I exploit variation in the phasing of decentralization and opposition control over time to trace the ways in which the creation and control of local capacity influenced incumbent and opposition strategies and political competition. I find that the creation of local capacity made incumbents better able to sanction opposition support using data on the allocation of water projects. However, I show that subsequent patterns of distributive strategies are determined by local control. Incumbents are only able to sanction using local resources if they retain local control. I demonstrate that opposition local governments even access to services and improve the quality of local governance in an effort to build credibility with voters. They are able to do so, despite receiving systematically lower central transfers, by investing in local state capacity. I find that opposition local governments raise significantly more local taxes with the explicit intention of maintaining their autonomy from the central government. I conclude by showing that opposition control makes subsequent opposition support more robust and that this support diffuses to other levels of elections and to nearby areas.

In this study I make several contributions to the literature on comparative politics. I challenge the idea that incumbent autocrats are generally hegemonic and do not face a meaningful threat from opposition parties. I show that opposition parties are indeed able to survive despite not being co-opted and can build support from one electoral cycle to the next through local government. I highlight the agency of opposition parties and demonstrate the importance of local politics in understanding incumbent and opposition strategy and hence political competition in electoral autocracies. To truly understand to what extent incumbents are hegemonic, scholars of autocracy must look beyond the center. Furthermore, I challenge the prevailing consensus that decentralization was a boon for autocrats (Landry, 2008; Riedl & Dickovick, 2013; Bohlken, 2016; Aalen & Muriaas, 2017). Indeed, I find evidence that show that local capacity provides opposition parties with the tools they need to challenge the incumbent. I therefore show that political competition in electoral autocracies is more dynamic and harder to control than extant scholarship would suggest by exploring a level of competition which is generally overlooked.

Opposition Parties and Electoral Strategies in Electoral Autocracies

Like voters in democracies, voters in electoral autocracies arbitrate between the costs and benefits of loyalty to the incumbent versus switching to an opposition party. These elections are seldom free and fair but they do give opposition parties a chance to unseat ruling party politicians and even the regime. Opposition victories at the national level are often attributed to structural conditions which led opposition parties to organize successfully – most likely cases of opposition success – or weak incumbents to fall after the introduction of multipartyism – most likely cases of incumbent failure (LeBas, 2011; Arriola, 2013; Levitsky & Way, 2010)

Levitsky and Way (2010) argue that the incumbent's state capacity is a more important determinant of incumbent durability than opposition strength. Many authoritarian states, particularly in Africa, the former Soviet Union and Asia, fell primarily because of state weakness rather than some societal push. Greene (2009) argues that the PRI fell in Mexico because of a contraction in their fiscal resources. Opposition party tactics are thought to matter primarily when opposition parties contest for power against an incumbent whose organizational strength has been undermined by a crisis or structural change (Bunce & Wolchik, 2010).

However, I claim that incremental increases in opposition strength weakens incumbents by reducing their ability to mobilize local state capacity, making it more likely that competitive national elections will come to pass in the first place. Opposition tactics are important well before these windows of opportunity appear. I argue that opposition tactics precipitate them.

We know little about how opposition parties win support. In contemporary electoral autocracies, opposition politicians are marginalized. They lack meaningful responsibilities or roles so struggle to build credibility (Keefer, 2007). It is hard to convince voters to switch from the 'devil they know' if they cannot offer competing benefits. Yet voters do back opposition parties even in relatively consolidated electoral autocracies. I contend that opposition parties win support through local politics.

Incumbents use their control of state resources to motivate voters' to remain loyal (Magaloni, 2006). Their hegemony over state resources is one channel by which opposition parties are marginalized (Svolik, 2012). Studies of incumbents' distributive strategies characterize the logics they use to allocate resources and propose their effects on voters' incentives.[6] Prominent among these logics are punishment regimes (Magaloni, 2006; Blaydes, 2010). Incumbents enforcing a punishment regime reward

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[6]See Albertus et al (2018) for an excellent review of distributive logics in electoral autocracies

supporters and punish opposition areas to shore up regime support and dissuade defection.

Studies of distributive politics characterize the incumbent as akin to a central planner. They are resource constrained but not spatially constrained. It is presupposed that incumbents are able to gather the information they need to target and then mobilize resources where they see fit. However, the informational demands of these kinds of strategies are high. The incumbent must be able to monitor and punish vote choice. At the central level, it is hard for bureaucrats and politicians to gather information about localized opposition support (Stokes et al, 2013). It is only at the local level that dense political information exists and this often leaks out as it is passed from local to central institutions. Thus, whether 'incumbent as central planner' is a reasonable characterization depends on the extent to which the incumbent can gather and act on local information. I argue that this makes it important that scholars look beyond the center and take seriously incumbent control at the local level.

Control of these local institutions is subject to elections in decentralized countries. I define decentralization using Treisman's definition of *decision-making decentralization.* A country is decentralized if there exists an elected subnational tier or tiers responsible for at least one policy domain which it is hard for the incumbent to recentralize (Treisman, 2007).[7] Decentralization creates elected local institutions which are empowered to provide public services without extensive coordination with the center. Local institutions became central to the implementation of punishment regimes and coercive distributive politics.

The success of decentralization relies on local institutions having enough local capacity to act on local needs without extensive coordination with the center (Ziblatt, 2008). Without this capacity, local officials[8] cannot act autonomously. Local capacity increases the 'weight' and 'reach' of the state in citizens' lives, where they can mobilize resources and whether they can gather information (Soiffer, 2008). In principle, local officials should use this capacity to target resources to those in most need.

In practice, I contend that local capacity makes it easier for incumbents to target voters and sanction opposition support. This is in line with extant studies which agree that electoral autocrats benefited from decentralization reforms despite many countries having little choice but to accept these reforms (Manor, 1999). Decentralization created jobs for incumbents to distribute as patronage (Riedl & Dickovick, 2014), new offices to co-opt opposition parties (Clark, 2018) and a new cadre of election

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[7]This is a form of political decentralization which assumes a non-trivial accompanying level of administrative and/or fiscal decentralization

[8]Here and in the rest of this study, I use 'officials' when I interchangeably refer to local politicians and bureaucrats

intermediaries (Bohlken, 2016). Furthermore, decentralization made local political support and performance of electoral intermediaries and local officials more legible (Malesky & Schuler, 2011; Bohlken, 2016; Landry, 2008; Martinez-Bravo et al, 2018). However, I contend that the same capacity which can strengthen incumbents' hold on power can be exploited by opposition parties to even the balance of power between them.

Theory: Local Control, Distributive Strategies and the Evolution of Competition

The authoritarian state is reliant on control of local capacity. For a punishment regime or any other strategic logic to be effective, an incumbent must be able to mobilize infrastructural capacity to enforce distributive or violent sanction in politically relevant parts of the country. In decentralized states, this cannot simply be assumed.

Local capacity matters because it determines the resources and information local officials can draw on and the autonomy they have to use these for altruistic or political ends.[9] Local agents are better able to target (and therefore sanction) than officials at the center because there is denser information at the local level. Local capacity means that parties can better leverage this dense information without risk of it leaking out before it reaches central decision-makers.

Local capacity also defines what resources local officials can then mobilize on the basis of this information. For example, local officials can grant preferential access to those public goods and services they control to incumbent supporters. Local officials can also use distributive powers to try and signal a policy priority, ideological commitment or preference/commitment to a given bloc of voters (Mares and Young, 2019). Local capacity defines the distributive strategies available to local officials, who they can target and what they can target them with.

Local state capacity determines the extent to which local states can assert their interests vis-a-vis the national state (Remick, 2002). Local institutions have local capacity that local officials can administer as they see fit. If local institutions lack capacity, they must coordinate with the center to fulfil their responsibilities. In theory, this autonomy allows officials to be responsive to fine-grained geography of need in their area. In practice, autonomy allows officials to leverage state resources to

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[9]I distinguish between policy domains, the policy areas in which decentralized actors are empowered, and local capacity, the ability of the state to penetrate its territory and implement its chosen policies.

reward and sanction political support. I define local autonomy as the ability of the decentralized institutions to pursue a different set of policies in decentralized domains (including priority between different policy areas and different subnational units) than those preferred by the central government. At the most basic level, autonomy allows the local level to go against the center. This need not be bad for the incumbent at the center so long as they control the local level. However, if local capacity and hence autonomy falls into opposition hands, parts of the state can be used against the incumbent.

Under incumbent control, local capacity strengthens the authoritarian state. To enforce any strategy, the incumbent and agents working on their behalf must be able to gather enough information to monitor and sanction vote choice. Local capacity allows incumbent-loyal local officials to do so without costly coordination with the center. If the goals of the incumbent and local elites are aligned, local officials can take advantage of the superior information at the local level to improve upon the allocation that the center would have otherwise prescribed. Local knowledge on the distribution of opposition support is less likely to leak out of the system. Sanctioning becomes more finely grained after decentralization because support is now easier to observe for those implementing punishment regimes.

However, when opposition parties win local control, incumbents lose this local capacity. Local capacity gives opposition parties the autonomy to use distributive strategies which could otherwise only be exploited by the incumbent. They can use these strategies to win support from voters and resist incumbent attempts to keep them weak. Central capacity is still more important than local capacity in all decentralized electoral autocracies. The incumbent can still use its control of the rules of the game and the bulk of state resources to frustrate opposition parties.[10] However, opposition control tempers the incumbent's reach. Opposition parties can use limited capacity they have to carve out a role and reputation for themselves in an otherwise incumbent-dominated system. Opposition parties must come up with strategic ways of using this capacity to signal to voters and to build a credible record. Opposition parties are still marginalized but now they can govern at the margins.

Local capacity allows opposition parties to do three things. First, it allows them disrupt incumbent sanctioning. If the incumbent loses control at the LG level, their access to a pool of clientelistically important resources is tempered. Opposition parties can then shield opposition supporters from sanction by using their power over local distribution. Opposition control makes opposition support less costly

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[10]Incumbents can pursue many strategies to frustrate opposition control, including cuts in fiscal transfers, bureaucratic interference and political harassment. I cover these strategies in more detail elsewhere in Chapter 6 of the dissertation

to voters in that subnational unit.

Second, local capacity allows opposition parties to pursue policies which signal their credibility to voters. Ordinarily, voters may not view opposition promises as credible because they lack a record.[11] Opposition control allows them to build such a record and signal to voters that they are a competent, office-seeking party.

I contend that they do so by prioritising service delivery in those areas where they have more autonomy. Low-coordination service delivery allows them to signal competency and difference without central permission. Where public good provision requires a greater upfront financial cost, opposition parties are likely to have to coordinate with the incumbent. The incumbent can then exert more influence over distribution of these high-coordination services, making it harder to deliver to opposition voters or claim credit. I argue that opposition parties focus on those powers for which local capacity is sufficient. For example, they work to improve the quality and efficiency of existing services or build public goods that require little coordination with the center like local roads and classrooms. Opposition local governments do not seek to revolutionize local government, rather opposition parties seek to fill in gaps in local service provision and improve local performance.

Third, control of local capacity makes quality and quantity of local capacity endogenous to the decisions of opposition parties. Opposition local governments are able to invest in local capacity to bolster their autonomy. Opposition local governments want to carve out as large a role as they can. Investing in local capacity makes local governments better able to discharge their duties without coordinating with the center or calling on the center for support or resources. Opposition local governments therefore have an incentive to invest in local capacity to strengthen their ability to deliver services and disrupt incumbent sanctioning. This is particularly likely when incumbents try and frustrate opposition governance. By investing in local capacity, opposition parties can defend their ability to keep delivering services to their voters and so weather attempts to undermine their support.

Local control determines what strategies the opposition and incumbent can respectively use as summarized in Table 1. When incumbents retain control, they retain hegemonic control of the state

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[11]Some voters back opposition parties in all electoral autocracies. Voters may support opposition parties which lack any experience of governance for a variety of reasons. They may live in an area with a history of violent or economic grievance or a concentration of high income, high education voters most likely to back opposition parties for ideological reasons (Greene, 2009; Letsa, 2019 Arriola, Dow & Letsa, 2019). Indeed, these are the areas where opposition support is most likely to appear after the introduction of multiparty elections (Arriola, Dow & Letsa, 2019). Credibility is important to then convince other voters to switch in subsequent elections. If opposition parties are to credibly threaten incumbents, they must win support beyond these 'most likely' early opposition areas.

Control of LG	Incumbent Strategies	Opposition Strategies
Incumbent control	Make credible promises to their voters Use central resources to sanction opposition support & LGs Use local resources to sanction opposition support	Make non-credible promises Make promises based on opposition credibility elsewhere
Opposition control	Make credible promises to their voters Use central resources to sanction opposition support & LGs	Build credibility through service delivery Make credible promises to their voters Stop local resources being used to sanction opposition support Invest in local capacity to increase autonomy from incumbent

Table 1: Strategies by local control

and opposition parties remain toothless and marginalized. Under incumbent control, incumbents can engage in finer grained sanctioning and make it costlier to support opposition parties. Small pockets of opposition support are less likely to survive. Opposition control gives opposition parties the tools they need to reduce the costs of opposition and offset them with their own benefits. Under opposition control, support for opposition parties is more likely to survive and increase over time. Opposition parties can build credibility through local control and win support over time. They can invest in capacity to build autonomy and resist restrictions.

Opposition support is then not determined by decisions at the center but by how successfully the opposition can perform given the contours of the game that the incumbent defines. Local control gives opposition parties tools to govern their way out of the margins in systems that are otherwise dominated by electoral autocrats. This makes it possible for subnational opposition strongholds to emerge, where the benefits of opposition support are higher and which are relatively insulated from incumbent sanction. In subsequent electoral cycles, opposition support may then diffuse to surrounding areas. I therefore contend that opposition control is a channel by which credible opposition parties can build support and challenge incumbents.

This theory has implications for how we think about the prospects for opposition parties, incumbent durability and the implications of decentralization. This theory suggests that the concept of the hegemonic incumbent is not applicable to those electoral autocracies which have even limited forms of decentralization. With opposition local control, incumbents lose control of some of the distributive strategies which scholars have shown are core to their ability to consistently win elections and maintain

power. Furthermore, I propose a pathway by which opposition parties can govern their way out of the margins of incumbent-dominated political systems. This shows that office-seeking opposition parties can survive and build support in electoral autocracies. It therefore challenges the predominant pessimistic view of opposition parties in the literature on authoritarian politics. Opposition success and survival can therefore be understood as the result of strategic interaction by the local opposition and the central incumbent. Finally this theory shows that decentralization may not strictly be a boon for incumbents. Incumbents decentralize given they expect that most areas will remain under incumbent control and so decentralization will, on balance, strengthen their rule. At the time of decentralization the stabilizing effect of incumbent control in the vast majority of the country outweighs the perils of loss of control in opposition strongholds. However, my theory suggests a pathway by which decentralization may weaken an incumbent, a knife edge quality which has thus far been overlooked by scholars of decentralization.

Scope Conditions and Case Selection

This theory applies to decentralized electoral autocracies where competition is, at least in part, clientelistic. The theory is likely to apply in cases where there are elected local governments with non-trivial local capacity and policy powers that are important to voters. I map the cases where these conditions held in 1997, 2007 and 2017 in Figure A13.

I test my theory using evidence from Tanzania. Figure A12 shows Tanzania is not a highly decentralized country. It is below average on all forms (administrative, political, fiscal) of decentralization across all countries, average among all electoral autocracies.[12] Many electoral autocracies, hybrid and single-party dominant regimes across Southeast Asia, the post-Soviet space, South Asia, Latin America as well as sub-Saharan Africa are more decentralized than Tanzania. If I can show that local control matters in Tanzania, where the central government is relatively more powerful than in elsewhere in my universe of cases, this will provide convincing evidence for my theory and indicate that local control and indeed local politics more broadly matters more in electoral autocracies than scholars may ordinarily assume. Tanzania is comparable to other low to middle income decentralized electoral autocracies, particularly post-socialist/post-communist countries with a legacy of one party rule. Unlike many other countries in sub-Saharan Africa, political competition in Tanzania is not ethnic. While

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[12]Tanzania is above average in sub-Saharan Africa. I do not seek to account for 'African politics' broadly

this limits the extent to which Tanzania is comparable with some other cases in the region, it increases the portability of the conclusions I draw to other regions.

Empirical Strategy

I theorize how incumbents and opposition parties use local capacity and trace the implications this has for vote choice. To provide empirical support for my theory, I must show evidence of the use and the effects of the strategies I outline. I take a mixed methods approach on a single country-case, Tanzania. Focusing on a single case allows me to do the data gathering necessary to conduct the fine-grained multi-method subnational analysis central to my empirical approach.

I use administrative data and election results alongside interviews with voters, politicians and bureaucrats. Quantitative data allows me to test the observable implications of my theory for the allocation of state resources, local performance and the distribution of political support across the whole country. I supplement this data with qualitative data from interviews to get at variation in harder-to-measure differences in local service delivery. Interviews allow me to go beyond simply testing subnational variation in outcomes.

I also use interviews to trace the decision-making processes that leads to these outcomes. That allows me to assess whether the strategic logics I theorize inform how bureaucrats and politicians allocate resources and how voters perceive these choices and respond. In Table 2 I outline the main hypotheses I draw from my theory, the observable implications I draw from them and the types of data I use to test them.

The observational nature of the data means that I have to deal with non-random assignment to treatment. My theory works on three levels. Each of these pose different challenges for identification. First, I make claims about the advantages of local versus central capacity. However, countries were not randomly assigned to the timing or form of decentralization reforms[13]. Given this, there may be many plausible alternative explanations for why politics may change after decentralization in a given country because of some unrelated but simultaneous shift. I exploit the quasi-random allocation of LGs to phases of decentralization within a single country-case to identify the causal effect of the introduction

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[13]There was substantial donor pressure in developing countries like Tanzania as I will discuss in the next section. However, incumbents had input into the process of decentralization in all cases so it is not plausible to treat decentralization as wholly exogenous

Table 2: Summary of empirical approach

	Theoretical hypotheses	Observable implications	Data
Local capacity under incumbent control	H1a: Local capacity makes it easier for incumbents to sanction opposition support	- Opposition areas are less likely to receive state resources after decentralization - Officials highlight importance of local capacity for punishment regime	- Public good provision, variation in phasing of decentralization - Interviews with local bureaucrats and politicians
	H1b: Incumbents sanction opposition voters in incumbent LGs	- Opposition areas are less likely to receive state resources than incumbent areas in incumbent LGs - Officials motivate this discrimination as a punishment for disloyalty	- Administrative data, interviews on public good provision - Interviews with local bureaucrats and politicians
Local capacity under opposition control	H2a: Opposition LGs disrupt incumbent sanctioning	- Opposition areas in opposition LGs are sanctioned less than those in incumbent LGs - Opposition politicians work to change who LGs distribute to despite central preferences	- Administrative data, interviews on public good provision - Interviews with local bureaucrats and politicians
	H2b: Opposition LGs build credibility through service delivery	- Local service provision is better in opposition LGs - Opposition politicians view local governance as an opportunity to win over voters through good performance	- Administrative data on public good provision - Interviews with local bureaucrats and politicians
	H2c: Opposition LGs invest in local capacity to assert their autonomy	- Opposition LGs raise more local taxes - Opposition politicians view this as a way of reducing the need for central assistance	- Tax and transfer data - Interviews with local bureaucrats and politicians
Evolution of competition given local control	H3a: Opposition control makes it more likely that voters will vote for opposition parties in subsequent local and national elections	- Opposition support survives or increases at the next election in areas under opposition control - Early opposition areas which decentralized earlier are more likely to still be opposition areas today	- Election results, variation in phasing of decentralization
	H3b: Opposition support diffuses around areas under opposition control	- Incumbent areas near areas under opposition control are more likely to support opposition parties at the next election	- Election results

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of local capacity.[14]

Second, I make claims about differences between strategies in LGs under incumbent control and those under opposition control. To provide evidence for my theory, I must highlight differences based on local control and show that variation in local control is the cause of these differences. However, assignment to local control is not random. Distributive politics may be different in opposition and incumbent LGs because of characteristics of these LGs, which in turn influences voters' willingness to support opposition parties. With quantitative data, I look at panel data to try and isolate the within-unit effect using difference-in-differences and fixed effects regression where possible. However, the extent to which I can do so is limited as I only have access to a fairly small number of elections and much of my quality data is cross-sectional. Where within-unit analysis is not possible, I include controls for units' demographic characteristics and time and geographic fixed effects where appropriate. To make these findings more robust, I isolate subsections of LGs where control of the LG was closely contested and therefore where we would expect 'propensity to back opposition parties' to be more similar.[15]. I also use my qualitative evidence to do controlled comparisons of distributive politics in similar LGs which differ on history of opposition control. Within a given LG, I compare distributive politics before and after an opposition handover.

Third, I make claims about the effects of these strategies on vote choice. Again, assignment to local control at the LG or the ward level is not random. The voters in units under opposition control or near them may be different for other reasons. I control for prominent demographic predictors of 'most likely' opposition voters (income, urban/rural, education, gender) in the units I look at as well as time and geographic fixed effects where appropriate. I look where possible at subsections of close elections to strengthen the claims I can make about the effects of local control on vote choice. Many of the ward-level elections I look at are very closely contested and I exploit this to add robustness to my baseline findings using regression discontinuities and limited sub-samples. To test my persistence claim, I again rely on the as-if random phasing of decentralization. I now provide details about my case and a full description of the data.

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[14]I discuss this strategy more in the data section

[15]Specifically this means those LGs where 40-60 per cent of the LG politicians come from opposition parties. In my case, that covers about ten per cent of all LGs

Case: Competition and Local Government in Tanzania

Tanzania is an electoral authoritarian country in East Africa. Since independence, it has been ruled by a single political party. Until 1992, this party was the only legally permitted one. The ruling *Chama cha Mapinduzi* (CCM) has overseen several successful handovers of power within the party. However, the CCM's share of the popular vote has been falling since 2005 as shown in Panel a) of Figure 2. Opposition support looked very typical of electoral autocracies in the early electoral cycles with opposition parties enjoying support for one electoral cycle only for this to collapse by the next (Kuenzi & Lambright, 2001; Randall & Svasand, 2002; Lindberg, 2007). As electoral cycles have gone on, opposition parties have become more institutionalized as shown in Panel b) of Figure 2. Opposition support in early elections was split between many small opposition parties. By 2015, *Chama cha Demokrasia na Maendeleo* (Chadema) had emerged from the pack, having built support at each electoral cycle. In 2015, the main opposition parties formed a single coalition to contest for the presidency behind Chadema and gained 40% of the vote. Opposition parties had an even better showing in the legislative elections, winning 45% of the total vote.

(a) Incumbent vs. opposition vote share   **(b)** Vote share by party
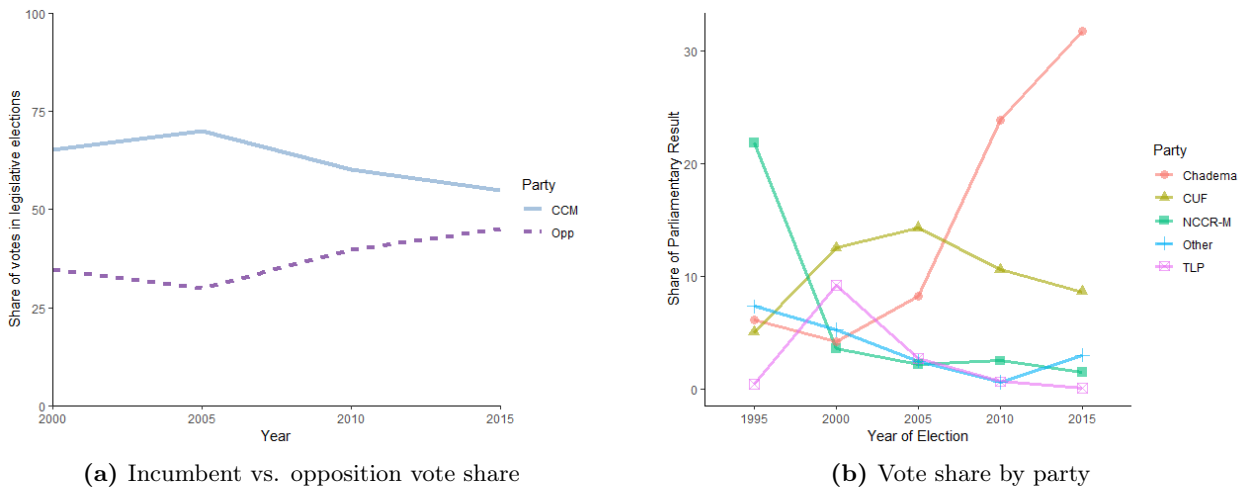
Figure 2: Opposition performance in legislative elections since decentralization (2000-2015)

Tanzania is a low income country. Many communities lack basic public services but the government lacks the resources to radically expand access to schools, clean water, clinics and so on without extensive donor support.[16] Extant evidence suggests the CCM enforces a punishment regime in allocating the scarce public services that they can fund (Weinstein, 2011, Carlitz, 2017). Tanzania decentralized in

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[16]Secondary school provision was massively extended in the country in the mid 2000s as part of a World Bank funded program

2000 through the Local Government Reform Programme (LGRP). Analysts and policymakers agree that Tanzania decentralized because of donor pressure.[17] However, the CCM agreed because it believed it stood to gain from these reforms[18]. Decentralization was part of the CCM's platform in the founding multiparty election in 1995. Like many donor dependent countries, the expansion of local capacity required for decentralization was funded by IFIs and donor governments (PORALG, 2005). The shifts in the structures of government that followed would be prohibitively expensive for Tanzania to completely reverse and so these new subnational institutions became the new contours of the Tanzanian political landscape.[19]

Incumbent

Administrative level responsible for decentralized public good provision made up of council of ward councilors

Local Government

Voting age population: ~ 200,000

Elects a ward councilor to local government. Councilor oversees development in the ward, allocates budget across village/streets

Ward

Voting age population: ~ 4,000

Administrative level run by elected village chair, responsible for community administration, granting individuals access to state

Village/Street

Voting age population: ~ 800

Figure 3: Subnational levels of government in Tanzania

Figure 3 summarizes the key subnational levels of government in Tanzania. Local governments (LGs) are made up of appointed bureaucrats and elected politicians. They are also referred to as 'districts' and are administrative level 2 units. Councilors, who are elected by a ward (administrative level 3) or appointed from party lists to women's only special seats, vote to select a mayor/chair who heads the political wing of the local government. The executive director is their bureaucratic counterpart and heads the appointed wing of the local government. Local governments have the power

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[17]Interviews with policymakers and stakeholders involved in decentralization process; to be improved with more scholarly sources in next draft

[18]Interviews with policymakers and stakeholders involved in decentralization process

[19]This is an important scope condition for my theory. Very high income autocracies like China are likely to be able to recentralize quickly once these institutions become a problem. However, this is not the case for low and middle income autocracies given the huge financial costs, bureaucratic restructuring and political costs this would involve

to allocate public good projects within their jurisdiction. These decisions are voted on by the council. Opposition councilors therefore have influence over allocation of public goods.[20] In this study, I focus on two levels: the *local government* and the *ward*. Wards are the unit from which councilors are elected to local government. I use wards to measure finer-grained political support. Ward councilors are responsible for development in their area and have discretionary control over a small budget and the assistance of ward bureaucrats. Ward control provides more limited local capacity than LG control and fewer responsibilities.[21]

The LGRP gave elected politicians at the LG level authority over key public goods including schools, clinics, roads and water. It moved these responsibilities from central ministries and regional administrations to dedicated service delivery units in these newly created local governments. These units cannot work completely independently from the center. Coordination with the central government is required for more expensive public goods like school construction, especially secondary school construction. Local governments have more autonomy over provisions like local road construction, allocation of new water projects, maintenance of functionality and quality of public goods because they have enough capacity at the local level to manage these without central support. Work in public administration has found that the reforms meaningfully empowered local government and were comparable to other decentralization reforms (Kessy & McCourt, 2010). Local governments are funded through a combination of local revenue raising and central transfers. CCM areas receive higher central transfers (Weinstein, 2011s). Some of these central transfers come with centrally determined stipulations already specified but some of the budget can be spent as the local government decides. Local taxes account for between 10 and 30% of local government budgets and these can be spent without central approval. Local governments can collect a range of taxes which are defined by the LGRP and can introduce their own new taxes in their LG by passing a local by-law.

Historically, the CCM has had a strong local presence. The Ujamaa (villagization) programme moved the majority of the Tanzanian population into villages, each of which had a TANU (the former name of CCM) representative and office. The CCM was at the heart of the functioning of these communities. However, this local presence waned towards the end of the 20th century as the local party apparatus (and hence the local state) became prohibitively expensive to finance (Ngware, 1992).

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[20]For more details, see Case Appendix

[21]Implications of my theory extend to community governance (the village/street level as shown in Figure 3). I look at this elsewhere in the dissertation project but this is beyond the scope of this paper.

The Tanzanian government hoped that decentralizing would pose a solution to the increasingly limited 'reach' of the state (PORALG, 2005). They assumed most local capacity would remain firmly under incumbent control because opposition support in 1996, when decentralization discussions formally began, was fractionalized between many parties and spatially diffuse.
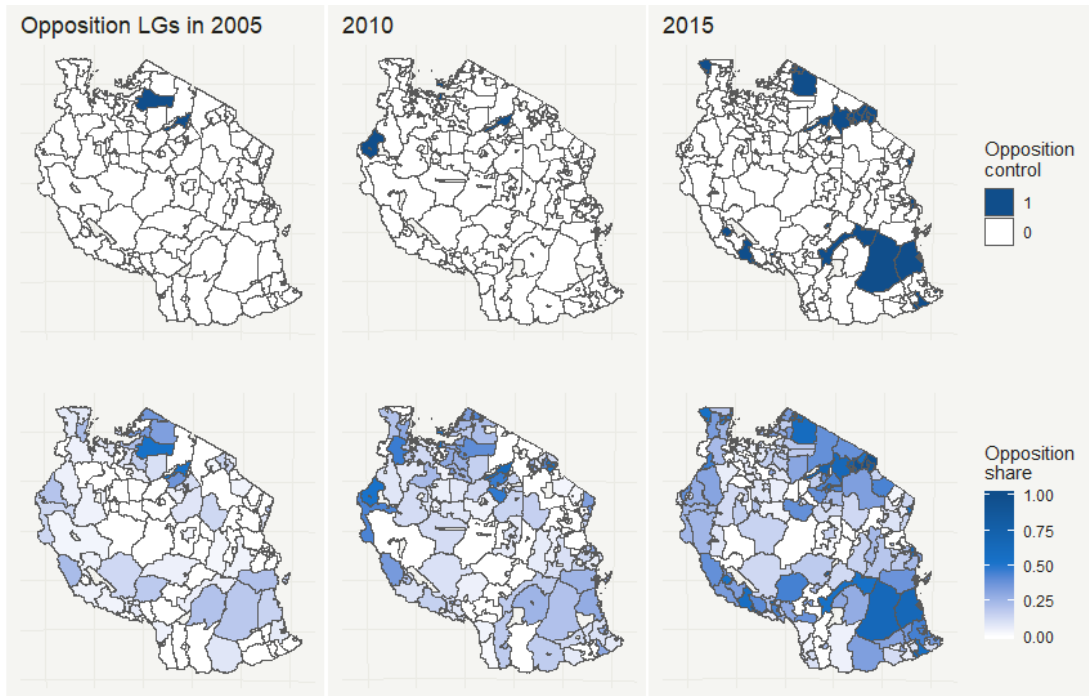
Figure 4: Opposition support in local elections

However, these reforms have led to substantial variation in CCM local control as shown in Figure 4. Opposition parties initially had little presence in local government. However, from their initial footholds, opposition support has spread and opposition parties now control local government in most of Tanzania's urban areas. Almost all local elections are now contested by at least one of the opposition parties. Today, approximately 25 per cent of the Tanzanian population lives under opposition local governments. Most of these local governments are run by Chadema. Opposition local governments are not treated equally by the central government. Bureaucrats and legal authorities hold the opposition to the letter of the law, which may change regularly and punitively, where CCM local politicians have more freedom in how they run their local governments. This constrains opposition local governments from pursuing the kind of punishment regimes that the incumbent favors and indeed limits the scope of the policies they can implement more generally. However, opposition local government have been able to carve out a distinctive 'brand' of governance through these institutions which has formed the

foundation of their broader rise in popularity as I will show.

Data

Administrative data

I use an original dataset of public good construction, public good quality, local taxes and transfers in Tanzania. I combine internal government data collected from five different government ministries to produce a geo-coded dataset of approximately 80,000 water points, 12,000 primary schools and 4,000 secondary schools built before and since decentralization. For around 90% of these public goods, I have year of construction/registration.[22] I combine these data with school and water quality data from Tanzania's Open Data Platform to create measures of waterpoint functionality and repair, sixth form classroom construction and school performance from 2012 to 2017.[23] Construction of waterpoints and primary schools has been decentralized since the creation of LGs. However secondary school provision was not decentralized until 2010. These data give me a fairly comprehensive picture of public good provision in Tanzania spanning those goods over which local governments have the most control to those where they have the least. To measure local support, I use ward-level results from 2005, 2010 and 2015 local elections. I then use these to calculate which party holds majority control of each local government and the size of these majorities. I also use parliamentary election results from 1995, 2000, 2005, 2010 and 2015.[24] Local elections were also held in 2000 but I have yet to find these election results.[25]

As discussed, I exploit quasi-random variation in the phasing of decentralization across LGs when I test my hypothesis regarding the importance of the existence of local capacity for sanctioning. Tanzania

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[22]For schools, I have year of registration. I lag secondary school construction by two years and primary school construction by one year. This coding decision is based on interviews with bureaucrats in the Ministry of Education on the process from allocation of a construction project to date of initial registration with the Ministry. Waterpoint data lists year of construction

[23]Most of the public goods constructed in my dataset were built before 2015. These measures allow me to study the dynamics of public good provision and funding after 2015 when opposition support became much more widespread and many more councils became opposition run

[24]The 1995 elections were the founding multiparty elections in Tanzania.

[25]These data are not without its limitations. There is a good chance that some of the dates of construction or registration are 'guesses'. As with all administrative data work on electoral autocracies, there is a risk that these data have been manipulated in some way. Lastly, I do not have 2000 local election results. I am therefore forced to use post-treatment election results for some of my analysis. When this is necessary, I include various additional robustness checks to minimize concerns. That said, this data remains the most comprehensive single administrative data-set available on public good provision in Tanzania. It is important to be up front about the limitations inherent in using administrative data but there is still a lot to learn from it.

decentralized in two phases. Initially, the Tanzanian government had planned to decentralize on a rolling basis. However, after putting in place decentralization reforms in the first group of councils around 2001/02 (just less than a third of all councils), the government put the rest of the program on hold until they had enough resources to complete it.[26] This meant that all other councils decentralized three years later around the 2005 election. Importantly, the phase one councils were not those which were most ready to decentralize. According to the consultants hired to evaluate the reforms, selection to the program was done to maximize geographical spread rather than *'on the basis of financial viability, accountability and management'.*[27] The phasing of decentralization was not 'random'. However, the order of decentralization was exogenous to local capacity or readiness to decentralize at the time of decentralization. Phase 1 areas are slightly wealthier and more urban than Phase 2 areas but the areas are balanced on population size, opposition support in the 1995 and 2000 elections and the rate of uncontested elections in 2000. Thus, parts of Tanzania decentralized almost a whole electoral cycle earlier than the rest.

Interview data

Alongside these quantitative data, I include discussion and vignettes from over 200 interviews with politicians, bureaucrats and voters between 2015 and 2018. I leverage differences in local control to explore what restrictions opposition councils face compared to regime councils, how opposition councils operate differently and to understand the form and logic of opposition and regime strategy across space and over time. I also use my interviews to better understand the downstream consequences of local control for voters. All interviews were semi-structured and open-ended.

I conducted these interviews in LGs which varied in history of opposition control, rural/urban status and wealth.[28] I spoke with bureaucrats, politicians from both sides and voters of any or no partisanship. I recognize the risk that interviewees will simply parrot the 'party line' whatever that may be. By talking to people on both sides and in multiple locations, I was able to triangulate what was likely to be true. I carefully considered respondents' incentives to lie, exaggerate performance and so on. When this was particularly concerning, I made sure to try and find corroborating accounts from other 'stakeholders'. For example, I would check the factual core of opposition politicians' accounts of

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[26]Tanzanian government planning document, 2003. Found in the Tamisemi archive.

[27]KPMG report prepared for the Tanzanian government and stakeholders, 2002. Found in the Tamisemi archive

[28]In the full draft of my dissertation, I take a more systematic subnational case-study approach. In the interests of brevity, I describe places by history of opposition control alone in this study

their successes with bureaucrats or civil society organizations (CSOs) involved in these projects where possible.

Results

Local Capacity Under Incumbent Control

I contend that local capacity in incumbent hands strengthens the regime by making it easier to use dense information at the local level to reward their own and sanction opposition support. Interviews show that bureaucrats and local politicians alike are confident about knowledge of the distribution of political support, describing themselves as the 'eyes and ears' of the regime. All the bureaucrats I interviewed, all of whom were directly involved in service delivery and allocation, mentioned that they know substantially more about local political support than the central government. All the bureaucrats I spoke to were confident they knew the geography of need in their area well while eighty five per cent were confident they knew the political geography well.

Most pointed to personal connections and interactions with communities when explaining how they know the fine-grained distribution of political support. When asked how well they[29] could pinpoint areas which are less loyal to the regime, a bureaucrat replied "Very well - I know the parties, I know the leaders, I know the people. Tamisemi[30] does not know any of this". Indeed, they make clear that the central government is reliant on them for this information. Another, when asked if they knew more than the central government, said: "Definitely - that information they have is from us. They could not have this without us."

Local officials then act on this information. Several bureaucrats described how the ruling party directed them to send resources to CCM communities and CCM communities only. A bureaucrat said that LG funding often "comes with specific projects in the directive. It's water. It's roads, education. It is directed to CCM areas. They are human beings and so they do focus on areas where they have followers and away from their opponents.". Another local bureaucrat echoed this: "Sometimes if someone wants to support an opposition councillor, there might be a conflict and they [their superiors] may want them to reallocate the project. They don't want us to work on a project outside of ruling party areas."

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[29]I use 'they' as singular third person pronoun throughout
[30]Tamisemi is the short form of the President's Office for Local Government and Regional Administration
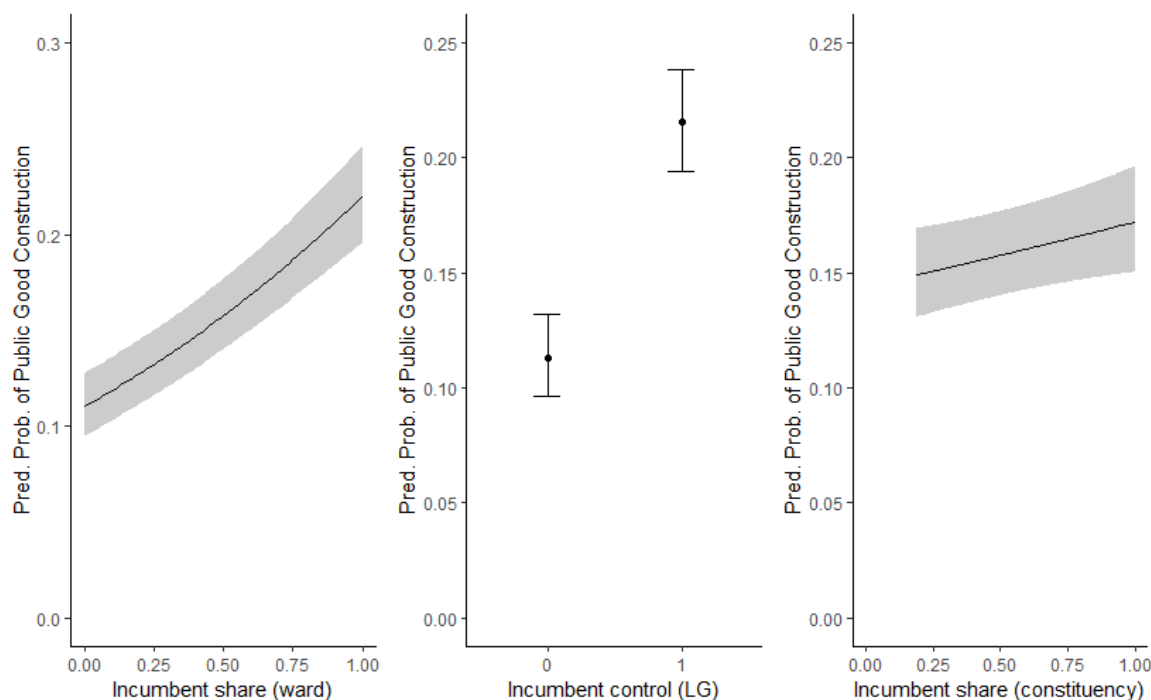
Figure 5: Probability of high-coordination public good construction by vote share in local and national elections

Details: Public good construction is a binary measure of whether a given ward had a new school (primary or secondary) or waterpoint constructed in a given year. Predicted probabilities calculated using results of logistic regression including region fixed effects on 50936 ward-years from 2000-2016

One important thing to note from these quotes and from the interviews more broadly is how local bureaucrats think about distribution on a community-by-community, ward-by-ward basis. Once funding is ceded to LGs, it is allocated strategically and by incumbent support *within the LG*. The distribution of public goods since decentralization shown in Figure 5 reflects this. Ward and constituency share of incumbent support as well as LG control are all significant predictors of public good provision, in line with an incumbent enforcing a punishment regime. However LG control and ward support are far more significant predictors of whether a given ward gets a public good constructed in a given year. As I show later in Table 4, central transfers to LGs depend on incumbent support. These results suggest that any given ward's share of support for the incumbent candidate for councilor is a more significant predictor of public goods provision than that ward's broader parliamentary constituency's level of incumbent support even controlling for LG control. If central bureaucrats were making distributive decisions, we would expect them to rely on heuristics like regional levels of support as indicated by legislative elections or LG control and identity-based cleavages like ethnicity. Instead, Figure 5 suggests that allocation of public goods is done by those with fine-grained knowledge of the

distribution of political support ward-by-ward within LGs and legislative constituencies.

Table 3: Effect of local capacity and opposition support on likelihood of waterpoint construction from 2000-2005

	Dependent variable:						
	Waterpoint constructed						
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)
Opp Ward	0.154*	0.186**	0.189*	0.191*	0.171*	0.143	0.145
	(0.090)	(0.093)	(0.113)	(0.113)	(0.102)	(0.123)	(0.123)
Phase 1	−0.263***	0.035	−1.191***	−1.202***	0.062	−1.133***	−1.142***
	(0.048)	(0.051)	(0.282)	(0.282)	(0.059)	(0.339)	(0.336)
Opp Ward*Phase 1	−0.341*	−0.428**	−0.466**	−0.470**	−0.564**	−0.492*	−0.497*
	(0.195)	(0.199)	(0.222)	(0.223)	(0.229)	(0.254)	(0.255)
Observations	15,168	15,006	15,006	15,006	11,538	11,538	11,538
Controls	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
LG fixed effects	N	N	Y	Y	N	Y	Y
Year fixed effects	N	N	N	Y	N	N	Y
Constituency vote	N	N	N	N	Y	Y	Y

*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Note: Logistic regression with robust standard errors on wards-years from 2000-2005. Models control for demographic, geographic and political variables at the ward level and include local government and year fixed effects where indicated. Differences in observations numbers due to missingness. Results are robust to use of OLS.

I contend that this targeting is made possible by local capacity. To test this, I leverage variation in the phasing of decentralization to test whether the ability to sanction opposition support is indeed contingent on local capacity. During this initial phase, all councils were under incumbent control. I exploit this variation in phasing to test whether ward opposition support is more negatively predictive of public good provision in Phase 1 areas than Phase 2 areas. Table 3 shows the results of a logistic regression measuring the effect of opposition support at the ward level, given the phasing of decentralization, on the likelihood that a given ward would receive a new waterpoint in a given year. I find that the interaction effect of being in both an opposition ward and a Phase 1 area is a significant and negative predictor of waterpoint provision. Depending on specification, opposition areas in Phase 1 areas are between 3 and 5.5 per cent less likely to be allocated a waterpoint than like wards in Phase 2 areas. Given low public good provision, this is a substantively large effect. This suggests that public goods were distributed by a different logic in decentralized areas than in those LGs yet to decentralize.

As a robustness check, I look at secondary school construction. Secondary school construction was not decentralized until 2010. Central bureaucrats made decisions to allocate secondary schools. If local

capacity was irrelevant to the differences I find in Figure 1, we would expect to find similar patterns in secondary school construction. Table A10 shows that phasing and opposition support at the ward level had an insignificant effect on secondary school construction during the same period. This null result provides additional support for H1.

However, the results in Table 3 come with an important caveat. My measure for ward opposition support is post-treatment. 2005 ward results are earliest available despite ward elections being held in 2000 in all councils. An obvious worry would be that the results I find are driven by voters rewarding the incumbent for public good provision. If this were the case, lower opposition support in places which did not receive public good provision would be common across Phase 1 and Phase 2 areas. The results indicate that this is not the case. As an additional robustness check, I perform the same analysis looking at the two years after the 2005 election and the subsequent three years from 2008 to 2010 in Table A11. I do so because I can use pre-treatment election results and exploit the residual variation in completion of decentralization to show my baseline results in Table 3 are indeed robust. In 2006 and 2007, Phase 2 councils were in the process of decentralizing. From 2008, decentralization was complete. I find that the interaction effect is still significant, albeit at a lower level, in the 2006-07 subsample. However, the results in the later subsample are insignificant. Once the Phase 2 councils 'catch up' with the Phase 1 councils, the effect of phasing on day-to-day allocation of public goods goes away. This is in line with my theory as it suggests that institutional differences were driving the earlier differences between Phase 1 and 2 councils.

These results suggest that local capacity did indeed make it easier for incumbents to sanction opposition support. Local capacity in the hands of the incumbent made their 'punishment regime' stronger and more credible than before decentralization, in line with hypothesis 1a in Table 2.[31]

I now test whether opposition support is sanctioned in incumbent LGs. Through my interviews, I find that local capacity has been used to target opposition support in areas under incumbent control as part of the CCM's punishment regime. Interviewees in all incumbent LGs point to clear bias in allocation of local development projects[32]. Opposition politicians point to this discrimination and some

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[31]A plausible alternative explanation for these results is that decentralization simply made wards individually more valuable to the incumbent because who wins them determine control of local governments. The information of who makes the decisions is not relevant according to this explanation. If the results were driven by the value of wards as prerequisites for local control, we would expect sanctioning of opposition wards to be more likely in LGs which are close between opposition and incumbent. To test this, I create a dummy for these LGs and interact it with the headline interaction. I find no significant difference between these close LGs and the less competitive LGs within phases. This suggests that it is the strengthening of local capacity itself that makes a difference.

[32]Development projects are small public good projects, which are proposed by the community and funded by LG

incumbent politicians and bureaucrats even acknowledge they engage in this discrimination. According to an opposition councilor, "there is a lot of favoritism and discrimination. Projects are allocated to incumbent wards over opposition wards. The head of the township authority, who is also a CCM VC[33], has had 17 projects allocated to his street alone. Chadema wards[34]? Maybe one. They get road building and maintenance, development funds, money from TASAF.[35] Favoritism has been increasing as Chadema has got more popular. Most of the projects are now being allocated outside of town because Chadema has all council seats in the Township."

Opposition areas' lack of financial support in that LG is not for want of trying. For example, an opposition leader had been seeking to add an additional classroom to the school in his area. In line with government policy, they had raised funds for and built the initial foundations and structure awaiting final completion by the LG. The politician said "We still can't get the school finished. LG has refused to help despite us holding up our end of the bargain. Before the presidential election, we were told we will get help with our projects but only if we went back to CCM but we voted more for Lowassa[36] and so we haven't got help." In contrast, the policy was respected in a incumbent politician's area: "We just finished a school. The decision of where to build the school is the community's: we built the foundation and then the government built the rest". The dynamics of distribution in this incumbent LG shows how local resources are used deliberately and punitively to sanction communities for their political loyalties. Opposition communities are denied local resources. When the incumbent controls LG, distribution looks like a classic punishment regime. In a widely circulated video from a by-election rally in a CCM district in Manyara region, a CCM councilor made clear that punishment was the logic driving these differences: "When this place had councilor from the opposition, we didn't bring development projects here as we are not the ones who brought him to power. We didn't build schools, dispensaries and roads. Why should we allocate money to this place? The councilor should struggle by himself. Pray for hunger to the enemy because when they pray for food, you will be powerful to punish them."[37]

Administrative data from across Tanzania corroborates interview accounts. Figure 6 shows opposition wards in incumbent LGs are systematically less likely to receive high-coordination public good
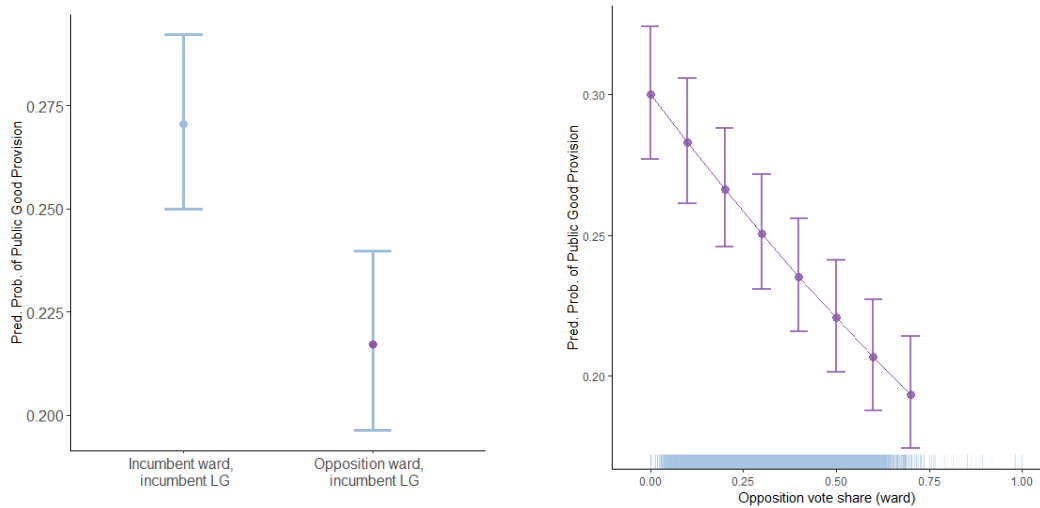
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[33]Author's note: an incumbent politician at the street/community level

[34]Wards are four times or more the size of streets)

[35]TASAF is a centralized conditional cash transfer program

[36]Opposition candidate for President in 2015

[37]Speech by CCM councilor, Manyara region, 2018

(a) Probability of high-coordination public good provision by ward control in incumbent LGs

(b) Probability of high-coordination public good provision by opposition vote share in incumbent LGs

Figure 6: Public good construction as sanctioning in incumbent LGs

Details: Predicted probabilities calculated from logistic regression models (including region fixed effects) on 50936 ward-years from 2000-2016. Public goods included are waterpoints, primary schools, secondary schools (only after 2010). The rug plot in plot b) indicates the support in the data by LG control. Results are robust to use of OLS. This result is highly robust to a range of controls and specifications.

provision (waterpoint and school construction) than incumbent wards. Incumbent wards receive significantly more of the expensive decentralized public goods that require central assistance to be funded. Tables A12, A13 and A14 show that opposition wards also receive poorer low-coordination public good provision (school performance, waterpoint maintenance, classroom construction), those provisions which local governments can largely do themselves. These local provisions are systematically used to sanction opposition wards and so increase the cost of opposition support.[38] As one official said: "Some parts of the government treat Chadema voters as if they are not Tanzanians."

In this subsection, I have shown that local capacity makes it easier to target resources and sanction opposition support given incumbent control. The CCM mobilizes this capacity to sanction opposition voters in LGs under incumbent control using both low-coordination and high-coordination public goods.

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[38]Throughout this section and this study more generally, I test the effect of opposition control on public good provision given I argue that the incumbent enforces a punishment regime. A plausible alternative distributive logic is that incumbents target swing areas to try and win votes in wards where elections are close. I find no evidence that the incumbent CCM is engaging in a swing voter targeting logic. Swing areas are significantly less likely than incumbent loyal areas to receive a public good project and there is no significant difference between swing and opposition areas. Loess regression does not show any increase in likelihood of public good provision in swing wards. Indeed, loess regression suggests that the relationship between ward opposition vote share and public good provision is decreasing and linear over 35 per cent vote share with no substantial differences between vote shares from zero to 30 per cent opposition. This suggests that the incumbent is enforcing a punishment regime

This makes it costly to be an opposition supporter in these areas. In the final subsection of this study, I show that this sanctioning in incumbent areas suppresses opposition support.

Local capacity under opposition control

In this subsection, I trace how opposition local control changes how LGs are governed. LGs under opposition control face significant disadvantages as they too are subject to a punishment regime enforced from the center. The incumbent CCM retains control of the rest of the system and can use this power to frustrate opposition autonomy and subvert these LGs' decentralized powers. Opposition LGs receive significantly lower central transfers than comparable incumbent areas across multiple specifications as shown in Table 4. Given these fiscal restrictions, it is harder for opposition local governments to deliver new public goods without central assistance. Formally, provision of the schools and waterpoints are decentralized. However, construction of new public goods is expensive. It often requires substantial financial capital which local governments and communities cannot afford. This allows the center to exert pressure over distribution of public goods. In interviews, bureaucrats in opposition LGs describe how much of the school building or major water construction work is funded by ad hoc transfers which come with specific wards named. Politicians expressed their frustration about their lack of autonomy when it came to these kinds of capital projects: "This kind of stuff comes directly from the ministry to Tamisemi[39], then down to us. We can only discuss what we want here and propose projects to get money. But the central government does follows-ups and make their own decisions. The money is tied to where they decide." Administrative data suggests that high-coordination public goods used to punish opposition wards regardless of local control. Figure A14 plots the relationship between incumbent share at the ward level and the probability of high coordination public good construction broken down by opposition and incumbent control. For any given level of incumbent support, wards in opposition areas are significantly less likely to get any high coordination public good provision. All else equal, LGs under opposition control receive fewer public goods. The incumbent now uses central resources to sanction opposition LGs. As I will show, they do so in response to loss of local capacity to sanction.

Opposition LGs are marginalized. However, I argue that local capacity gives them powers at the margins. Opposition parties in local government have autonomy even if it is more constrained than incumbent LGs. Rather, opposition local governments have to make the best of the limited capacity

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[39]The President's Office for Regional Administration and Local Government

Table 4: Central transfers by local control

	Dependent variable:				
	Log(Development Transfers)				
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Opposition LG	−0.137	−0.156	−0.265**	−0.237**	−0.323**
	(0.115)	(0.106)	(0.104)	(0.112)	(0.157)
N	455	455	455	455	455
Population control	N	Y	Y	Y	N
LG type control	N	N	Y	Y	N
Tax base controls	N	N	N	Y	N
LG fixed effects	N	N	N	N	Y

$^*p<0.1; ^{**}p<0.05; ^{***}p<0.01$

Note: OLS regression with robust standard errors. Controls and local government fixed effects included as indicated

that they control. In interviews, opposition politicians made clear that they were governing with a logic of constrained optimization in a strategic interaction with the incumbent. An opposition politician described their role in local government as one of "pulling the string in their direction". Opposition LGs try and change how local resources are distributed, moving away from the incumbent's preferred policies and using these powers to signal their own.

Opposition politicians describe the most important powers they have – local road construction, water maintenance, school classroom construction, environmental cleanliness, public health management – and how they use these to show voters they are productive. The kinds of projects opposition politicians mention – water quality, teacher attendance, markets, local roads, bus stations, refuse collection, greenery, – may seem trivial compared to big infrastructure projects, schools, hospitals that incumbent LGs are able to arrange. However, these improvements make a substantial impact on the standard of living in these jurisdictions, particularly against a backdrop of low public good provision. Opposition LGs are unable to overhaul the infrastructure of local service delivery because of the constraints they face. However, they are able to improve the quality of the public goods which already exist and push for new service delivery at the margins. As I will show in the final subsection, this allows opposition parties to win votes more quickly in areas under opposition control than in the rest of the country.

I propose three ways local controls allows opposition parties to win support. First, opposition LGs are able to shift the distribution of resources to offset the incumbent's sanctioning of opposition voters. Interviews suggest that sanctioning of opposition support is less prominent in opposition LGs. As one voter said: "In the past, the top government was threatening the community for being with the

opposition party but that's not happened for a long time since the council has been under Chadema."
An opposition community leader talked about his relative ease in getting access to local public goods
after the opposition party took over in their LG: "You still have to push to get anything out of the
(central) government...Importantly, this is not the case with things like roads now because the LG is
Chadema. We finally got the paved road we had asked for since I came to power in 2009."

Interviews with leaders of opposition LGs suggest that this shift is an intentional policy. One mayor
of a rural opposition LG explained her local government's popularity: "People did not like unequal
distribution under CCM. We tried to convince people that Chadema would be fairer in allocating
services and the party grew when this happened." Similarly, another mayor made clear that his
opposition LG intentionally disrupted the punishment regime, albeit without only partial success: "We
want to show CCM how to govern. We want to make broad-based neutral policy. 21 wards, all under
Chadema, not considering how two of those wards are different.[40] As much as we try, the civil servants
do CCM area projects quicker "
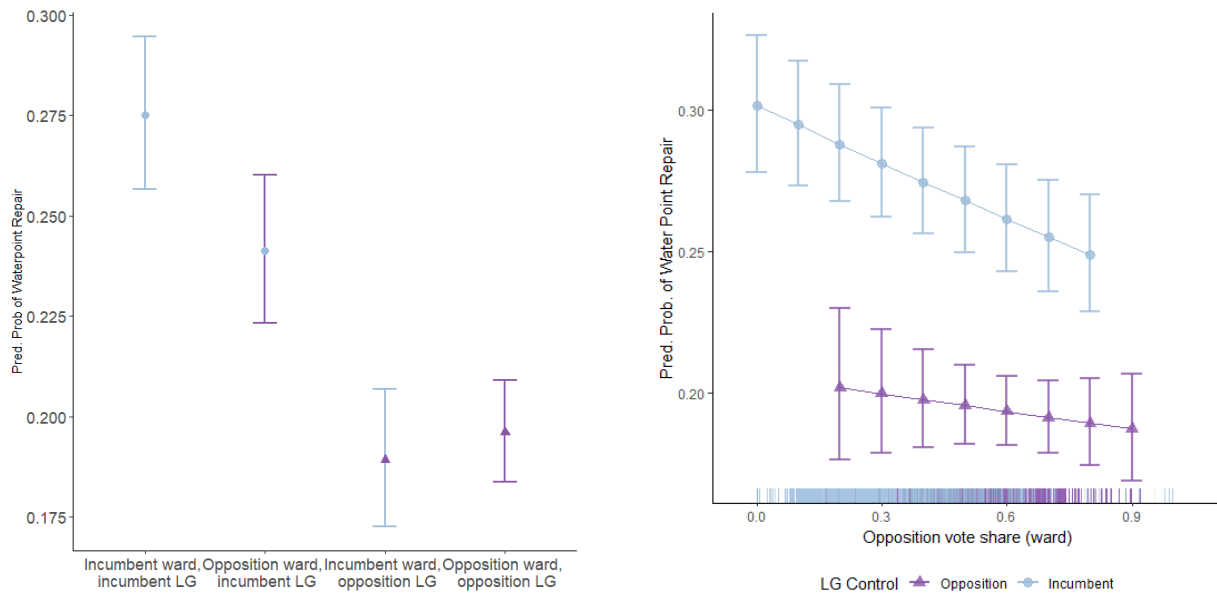
(a) Probability of water point repair by local control

(b) Probability of water point repair by opposition vote share in incumbent and opposition LGs

Figure 7: Use of low-coordination public goods on punishment regime by local control

Details: Predicted probabilities calculated from logistic regression with robust standard errors on dataset of >73000
waterpoints in Tanzania. Repair is calculated by comparing status in 2015 and 2017. The rug plot in plot b) indicates
the support in the data for opposition share by LG control. Full table with alternate specifications can be found in Table
??. Results are robust to use of OLS.

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[40]In that LG, only two wards are under the ruling party, CCM
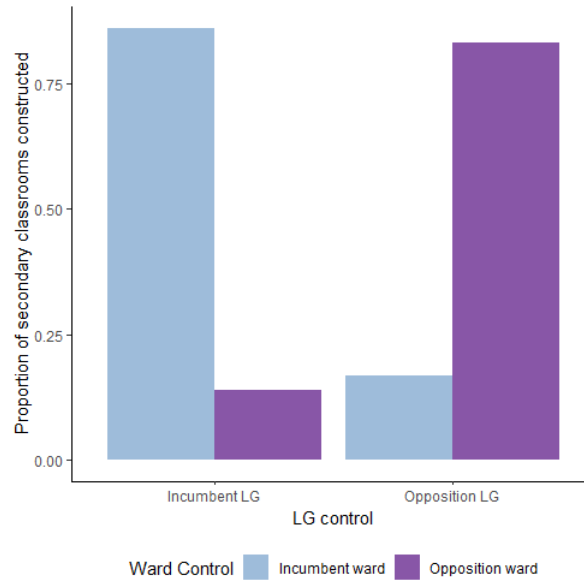
Figure 8: Secondary school construction between 2012 and 2015

Of the low-coordination public goods discussed, I have data to measure differences in water maintenance and classroom construction between incumbent and opposition LGs. The results of analysis of these data suggest that opposition politicians are able to move the distribution of these public goods and disrupt sanctioning of opposition support. Figure 7 shows that repair work on waterpoints is positively and strongly significantly associated with incumbent vote share under incumbent control. However, in opposition areas, I find that repair work is allocated evenly across all areas. I find even more pronounced differences in Figure 8, which shows the effect of local control on secondary classroom construction. Incumbent LGs prioritize construction in incumbent wards where the converse is true in opposition LGs. Taken together, these results suggest opposition LGs are able to change the distribution of lower cost, lower coordination public goods and distribute these resources according to their own distributive logic. This allows them to offset incumbent sanctioning and even reward their own.

I also argue that opposition LGs use local capacity to signal their credibility. Given this goal and the constraints they face, I expect that opposition politicians to take steps to outperform incumbent areas in provision of low-cost, low-coordination public goods and communicate their competence to voters. Indeed, the electoral benefits of making conspicuous improvements, "pointing to something concrete" and "showing that we're working" were often brought up in interviews with opposition politicians. Opposition politicians across the country were clear that their job was to run opposition LGs to set

an example of good governance and convince voters that they are a credible alternative to the ruling party. An opposition councilor said his role was to: "find out what the people need ... then we provide that. Our ideology is development. We want to differentiate from CCM by moving into space where the CCM has not." Around eighty five per cent of opposition LG politicians interviewed said their goal in local government was to demonstrate difference from the ruling party.

An opposition councilor in another area explained that this was why support for his party had grown: "Chadema did better here because people have noticed that they are delivering on promises. We need to show that we are different from the ruling party, that we believe people are first, people are power. It's about showing we are there for them then society believing it" A mayor from a rural area in northern Tanzania explained that local government was " an opportunity to show difference through development projects." Opposition politicians spoke in great detail about pushing through various development projects. Bureaucrats in these areas describe how opposition politicians push them to improve performance and maintenance, often to their annoyance.

In contrast, bureaucrats in incumbent areas claim they seldom see incumbent politicians outside of election time. This reflects incumbent politicians' view of local government as little more than an extension of the central government. Incumbent politicians in incumbent LGs characterized their job at the local level as a conduit for information and requests between citizens and the central government. One incumbent politician described the role of local government as follows: "Local government is not the priority. Magufuli's reforms are most important. The president is at the top of the hierarchy, then MP then us. I'm only important in gathering information". Another agreed that "the local government is just an agent of the national government". Incumbent politicians focused more on petitioning the central government for big capital projects and much less on day-to-day running and improvement of the local government services.

Instead, opposition politicians talk about local government as an opportunity, as a way of gaining support and proving themselves to voters. A councilor in a newly opposition LG made this clear: "if we fulfil our promises, we can show the citizens that we are good and we are ready to perform in other areas." Another said: "If we do well here – environment, schools, roads – people see that and people from outside of this area see it too. People will see what they can do if they work well at the council level. Chadema councils have done well and people coming from another part of the country will be impressed by the environment, by the water availability, by the electricity provision. We only have a

small amount of influence and we are doing a lot."

The idea that local performance was gateway to national credibility was brought up often in interviews. An opposition mayor in an urban area in southern Tanzania, an area without a substantial history of opposition control, when asked if opposition control may influence nearby voters in the next election, said "Yes, we are like an icon, an image of what it can be like if you have a Chadema government. A lot of people in the rural areas don't have education, they don't have schools and people are easy to mislead so people don't see the importance of multiparty system. We will use this victory to go to the outskirts and make them less scared" An opposition politician in an urban area in the North echoed this: "Our target is to show the citizens that we are able to grow. Chadema has grown with every council cycle, we want to show that we are bringing development and can do that in the whole country. Service delivery is key. Our target is to bring what we promise." I test whether opposition control leads to the diffusion of support they are hoping for in the final subsection.

To quantitatively test whether the efforts opposition politicians describe lead to better quality services and local public goods in opposition LGs, I first look at the functionality and quality of over 73 000 waterpoints in 2017 as shown in Table 5.[41] I find that waterpoints in areas of opposition control are significantly more likely to be functional and have drinkable water. This result is robust to controls and region fixed effects. Furthermore, the results are robust to a subsample of LGs where opposition control was determined by only a few council seats. This provides even stronger evidence that it is difference in control which is driving these results. However, this test has limitations because it is a snapshot of quality and functionality at a given time. It is plausible that characteristics of the type of areas that switch to opposition parties are actually responsible for the results I find in Table 5.

I therefore also look at primary school quality to test whether opposition control leads to improved public good provision. Local governments are responsible for the oversight of all schools and teachers in their jurisdictions, the allocation of resources like textbooks and the construction of new classrooms and facilities like labs. Local governments are therefore able to influence the quality of schools in their areas. Indeed, this is a priority mentioned by many opposition politicians in opposition LGs. I use panel data on student pass rates from 2012 to 2017 released by the Tanzanian government. This time period covers two electoral cycles which allows me to exploit variation in local control over time. Table 6 summarizes the results of fixed effects and difference-in-difference regressions of the effect of local

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[41]I plot the predicted probabilities of these results in Figure 15

Table 5: Relationship between local control and waterpoint quality in 2017

	Dependent variable:			
	Whole sample		Close LG control	
	Functional	Quality	Functional	Quality
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Opposition LG	0.161***	0.630***	0.293***	0.460**
	(0.033)	(0.048)	(0.110)	(0.233)
Observations	75,269	75,540	9,902	9,974
Controls	Y	Y	Y	Y
Region fixed effects	Y	Y	Y	Y
Constituency/ward vote	Y	Y	Y	Y

*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Note: Logistic regression with robust standard errors on cross-sectional data on waterpoint functonality and quality in 2017. Waterpoints are included in the 'close election' sample if they are situated in a LG in which the incumbent holds between 40 and 60 per cent of all seats on the local government council. The results are robust to varying this bandwidth. Demographic, geographic and political controls as well as region fixed effects are included as indicated. Results are robust to use of OLS.

control on school quality. Full tables can be found in Tables A15 and A16.

Table 6: Effect of local control on school quality between 2012 and 2017

	Dependent variable:	
	Pass Rate	
	FE	DiD
	(1)	(2)
Opposition LG	1.848***	
	(0.537)	
Handover to Opp*After		2.066***
		(0.661)
Observations	46,867	46,712
Demographic controls	N	Y
Region fixed effects	N	Y
School fixed effects	Y	N
Year fixed effects	Y	Y
Constituency/ward vote	Y	Y

*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Note: Main results from difference-in-differences and fixed effects regressions on data from ≈ 50 000 school-years on school rank and pass rate. Full tables can be found in SI. All models include robust standard errors. Differences in number of observations due to missingness.

I find that opposition control increases pass rates by around 2%. Given mean pass rate is 47 per cent, this is a substantively meaningful improvement in quality. The fixed effect results are robust to inclusion of year and school fixed effects and controls for constituency and ward level opposition support over time. The difference in differences results are robust to various controls, constituency and ward level opposition support as well as region and year fixed effects. These results are also robust to samples of close elections. These results suggest that opposition parties are able to use their constrained powers at the local level to improve the quality of schools and waterpoints. These performance differences matter because it translates to credibility in the eyes of voters.

Lastly, I argue that opposition LGs are able to make these improvements, despite the disadvantages they face, because they can invest in local capacity. Local control gives opposition parties some say over the quantity and quality of local capacity. If they invest in local capacity, they can increase their autonomy. This means that opposition parties do not necessarily exist in the exact form that the incumbent defines. Furthermore, it gives them greater ability to pursue projects distinct from the incumbent. Interviews suggest a range of strategies by which they do this - bureaucratic oversight, municipal works, investment in revenue-raising capacity. All of these strategies allow opposition parties to make the most of the powers they have, either by raising revenue or increasing efficiency. This increases the chances that opposition parties will be able to perform well and win over voters. As such, I expect that opposition LGs invest in more local capacity in than incumbent LGs.

Facing these kinds of cuts in transfers shown in Table 4, how do opposition local governments survive let alone thrive and win over of voters? Councilors in opposition areas interviewed describe strategy meetings where they would come up with new strategies to make the most of their powers and keep their support high. These strategies often centered on investments in local capacity. In opposition councils, local tax collection became a priority. Local taxes are 'the only money that does not need a signature from the ruling party', according to the deputy mayor of one such council. Opposition councilors there recognized that their ability to raise this revenue would ameliorate some of the restrictions imposed on them.

This council then took the 'conscious decision to be strict' on revenue collection because 'Chadema councils obviously have to collect more taxes' given the budget constraints they face.[42] When Chadema

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[42]This and other Chadema politicians' decisions to increase tax collection does not reflect any kind of ideological platform. Chadema is a center-right party. In the past, it has campaigned against the fiscal/tax burden placed on low-income citizens for public school fees (which have since been abolished by the government) and high marginal tax rates on the formally employed. The expansion of state influence that this policy represents is in tension with their

took over in 2010, the tax base they inherited was low. Revenue collection was disorganised and sporadic. Ward bureaucrats were sent out as and when money was required with little supervision or oversight (Fjeldstad & Semboja, 2000). Business licenses were not required uniformly. In response to the cut in transfers, opposition politicians directed civil servants to regularize collection. They directed them to create databases to register businesses, to assess what is owed in property taxes and other taxes they had power over. Ward bureaucrats were sent to survey their wards and register houses, hotels, bars and so on. This was then aggregated to produce a new tax baseline. Opposition politicians constructed new administrative systems and procedures to improve the ability of the local government to collect revenues. These new procedures bolster the LG's autonomy by increasing the capacity of the local state. Importantly, these practices became persistent. According to the current mayor of that council, who took over in 2015, 'our music everyday is to keep the databases up to date', making sure to increase collection without increasing rates. This LG resisted incumbent restrictions and thrived despite them, showing the importance of local autonomy and making clear the agency that opposition parties act with. This all contrasts with how the last incumbent mayor of that town discussed local taxation. Because the "money was coming in", the council relied on existing property tax revenues and transfers. Indeed, this echoed the lax attitude to local taxation expressed by incumbent leaders in incumbent LGs.

In many of the opposition LGs I visited, tax collection was a priority because they viewed it as the only way they could deliver on their promises. Politicians and bureaucrats have been proactive in formalizing collection and innovating new approaches to local taxation. For example, one city passed a bylaw to lower service levies from three to one per cent to increase compliance. This was successful in increasing overall revenue from this previously under-collected service levy, which then supplemented lost revenues.[43] As one deputy mayor said: "Without own source, we can't do anything. Without own source, we can't run the council at all". As councilors in another city pointed out, finding own source revenues is "necessary for survival."

Administrative data on local revenue raising supports these qualitative findings. I use internal tax data obtained from the Tanzanian government to measure the effect of local control on tax collection during 5 of the 7 fiscal years between 2010/11 to 2016/17. Table 5 shows the results of a fixed effect

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political principles. As I will show, they raise taxes despite their ideology as a matter of political survival.

[43]Collecting taxes is generally not a popular policy. I asked voters whether they noticed local governments were collecting more taxes since opposition took over. The overwhelming majority did not notice the increase in taxes or found them insignificant. This is likely to be because these local taxes are often fees rather than income a taxes

regression of the effect of local control on own source revenue collection. The most conservative estimate suggests that opposition control increases local tax takings by between 13 %. This result is also robust to only considering a subsample of close elections. By investing in local capacity, opposition LGs were able to deliver on the electoral promises I discuss above.

Table 7: Effect of local control on local revenue raising

	Dependent variable:		
	Log(Own Source Revenues)		
	(1)	(2)	(3)
Opposition Control	0.485***	0.517***	0.125**
	(0.097)	(0.169)	(0.061)
Year Fixed Effects	No	Yes	Yes
LG Fixed Effects	Yes	No	Yes
N	769	769	769

*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01
All models use robust standard errors

Note: Fixed effect regression with robust standard errors on data on local revenue raising from 769 LG-years in 2010/11, 2011/12, 2015/16, 2016/2017 financial years. Missing years due to data limitations. Panel is not balanced due to missing data.

National incumbents control the rules of the game and they can try and frustrate use this power to frustrate opposition parties. During the period I conducted fieldwork, incumbents 'moved the goalposts' for opposition LGs on several occasions. Key urban taxes were recentralized after opposition parties began excelling in tax collection. Opposition politicians are subject to unprecedented harassment and violence. Bureaucrats are under instructions to be as obstructive as possible in opposition LGs. Despite these restrictions to opposition autonomy, I find evidence that opposition LGs are outperforming incumbent LGs as late as 2017. I contend they have been able to do so because they can invest in local capacity to supplement for lost revenues and powers. I find evidence in my interviews and from analysis of administrative data not shown here that opposition LGs also invest in administrative oversight, novel fiscal strategies, fixed capacity like bridges and roads and public buildings like local community offices at a higher rate than incumbent LGs.[44] These investments in capacity ameliorate losses in transfers, improve the efficiency and performance of municipal workers and make opposition LGs better able to meet their policy goals. The ability to invest in local capacity has allowed opposition LGs to weather

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[44]I cover this in Chapter 6 of my dissertation

attempts to undermine their support. Incumbent and opposition strategically respond to each other's efforts to move to their preferred level of local autonomy. I argue they do so because this is pivotal in their efforts to win popular support.

Thus, I have shown that LGs under opposition control operate very differently than incumbent LGs. Where possible, they do not sanction opposition support, they perform better and they invest more in local capacity. I argue that these differences are driven by opposition parties' strategy to use local government as a platform to build credibility and win support. The autonomy and resources that this capacity gives these parties unprecedented opportunities to go against incumbent policy and so build a distinct record with voters.

Evolution of Competition Given Local Control

I have shown that voters living under opposition control face very different conditions than those living under incumbent control. Opposition supporter in incumbent LGs are subject to more severe sanctioning and incumbent supporters see little benefits to opposition support as the opposition remains largely untested in those areas. In contrast, opposition voters are shielded to some extent from sanction under opposition control. Incumbent and opposition voters alike view opposition parties as more credible challengers to the incumbent. In another paper, I find that opposition control of LG and community institutions reduce voters' fear of group and individual sanctioning respectively (McLellan, 2019). By these channels, I argue the evolution of support for opposition parties depends on local control. I expect that opposition control makes it more likely that opposition support in local elections will survive from one electoral cycle to the next and that this will then diffuse into nearby areas. Furthermore, I contend that opposition control makes it more likely that opposition support for legislative candidates will increase from one electoral cycle to the next.

I tests these claims by measuring the effect of opposition control of wards and local governments on later opposition support in those units and nearby units in both local and national elections. If living under opposition control is consequential to voting behavior, subnational units with a history of opposition control should be more likely to back opposition parties at subsequent elections all else equal. Indeed, the results of logistic regression on election results shown in Table 8 indicate that those wards which were under ward or LG opposition control in the previous election are significantly more likely to remain under ward control, and to vote for opposition parties more generally. Wards in

Table 8: Relationship between opposition support and lagged opposition support

	Dependent variable:					
	Opp ward control			Opp share		
	logistic			*OLS*		
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Lagged opp LG control	0.359*		0.749***	0.025**		0.061***
	(0.185)		(0.172)	(0.010)		(0.010)
Lagged opp ward control	1.101***	0.713***		0.091***	0.049***	
	(0.090)	(0.096)		(0.005)	(0.005)	
Observations	6,287	6,287	6,287	6,287	6,287	6,287
Region Fixed Effects	Y	N	Y	Y	N	Y
LG Fixed Effects	N	Y	N	N	Y	N
Election Fixed Effects	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Controls	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y

*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Note: Results of regression analysis of ward results in the 2010 and 2015 elections. Models 1 and 2 employ logistic regression with robust standard errors of effect of lagged ward and LG control (which party wins ward election for councilor, which party wins control of LG council) on subsequent ward control. Models 3 and 4 employ ordinary least squares regression to predict the effect of lagged control on opposition vote share. When looking only at effect of ward control, I include LG fixed effects to isolate the effect of ward control itself and otherwise I include region fixed effects. All models include election fixed effects. Results are robust to use of OLS.

opposition LGs are between 9 and 18 per cent more likely to elect an opposition councilor at the next election. Wards which elected an opposition councilor at the previous election are between 14 and 26 per cent more likely to elect one at the next election.

To get additional causal leverage, I take advantage of close elections at the ward level. I estimate the causal effect of ward control using a regression discontinuity design.[45] This technique focuses on the difference between those observations on either side of the cut-off for electoral victory to identify the causal effect of opposition ward control as a 'treatment'. Table 9 shows the results of this analysis. I find that ward control increases opposition support at the later election by 3.2 per cent in the baseline estimate. This effect increases to 5 per cent when focusing only on those observations very close to the threshold. Figure A16 plots the main result.

In Figure 9, I show that the extent lagged opposition vote share predicts subsequent opposition

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[45]I am unable to do the same at the LG level because the forcing variable is clustered across units and so does not vary smoothly. However, replicating the analysis in Table 8 on only those LGs in which control was closely contested (i.e. whether the LG was opposition or incumbent controlled was determined by the results of a small number of ward elections) shows that opposition LG control has a significant and positive effect on later opposition support and control

Table 9: Regression discontinuity estimates of effect of opposition ward control on later opposition support

	Bandwidth	Observations	Estimate	Std. Error	Z Value	Pr(>|z|)	
LATE	0.0670	768	0.03223	0.01472	2.190	0.02853	*
Half-BW	0.0335	397	0.05053	0.02246	2.249	0.02449	*
Double-BW	0.1340	1313	0.01143	0.01064	1.075	0.28246	

Signif. codes: 0 '***' 0.001 '**' 0.01 '*' 0.05 '.' 0.1 ' ' 1

Note: Table shows the results of regression discontinuity regression which leverages close elections to estimate the effect of opposition ward control on later opposition support. These models control for covariates. The bandwidth used was selected using the data-driven techniques described in Calonico, Cattaneo and Farrell (2019). The Local Average Treatment Effect (LATE) is the baseline estimate calculated using the optimal bandwidth.
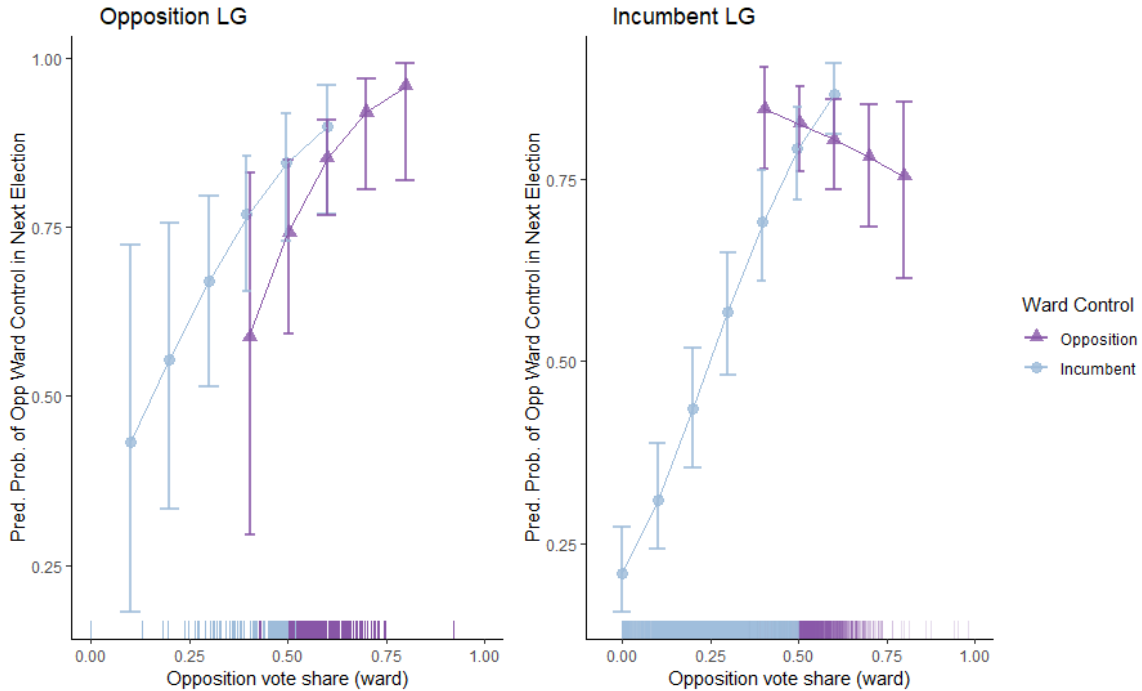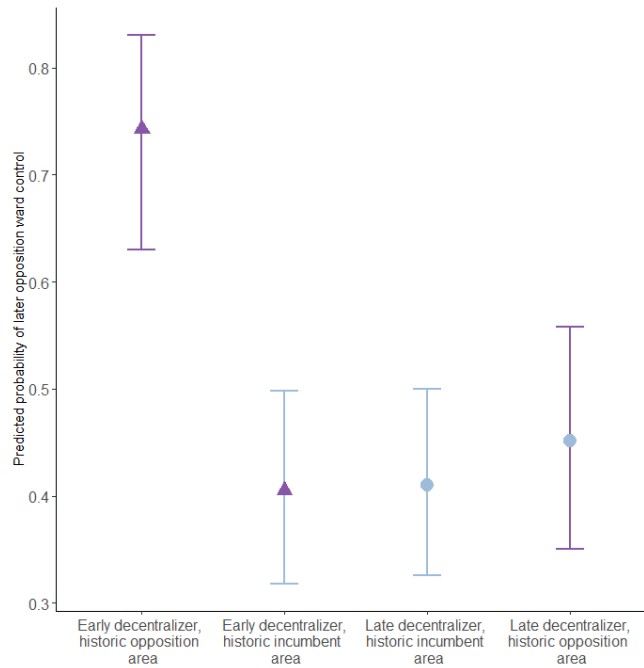

Figure 9: Relationship between LG control and evolution of opposition support in subsequent elections

Details: Predicted probabilities are calculated from logistic regression model which interacts ward control, LG control and opposition vote share at the ward level using ward election results from the 2010 and 2015 elections with lagged share/control from the 2005 and 2010 elections. The panel on the left plots the effect of ward share and ward control on the predicted probability of later opposition control at the ward level, which the right shows the same relationship in incumbent LGs. The rug plots visualizes the support of opposition vote share in each of opposition and incumbent LGs by ward control. Model includes controls and region fixed effects. Results are robust to use of OLS.

ward control is conditional on local control. In opposition LGs, the predicted probability of subsequent opposition control is higher for all levels of lagged support in opposition LGs regardless of which party controls the ward. Lagged opposition support is a significant and positive predictor of later support in both incumbent and opposition wards. In contrast, opposition support in opposition wards in incumbent LGs is negatively associated with later opposition support while it is positive in incumbent

wards.

These results are consistent with my theory. Where opposition support can grow without local resources being used to sanction it, opposition support survives from one cycle to the next regardless of ward control. Where the incumbent controls the LG, opposition wards are sanctioned using local resources. Opposition wards in incumbent LGs are prime target for sanctioning as shown in the first subsection of this study. Voters in those areas are then discouraged from supporting the opposition at later elections while opposition support is not directly suppressed by sanctioning in incumbent wards. These results are robust to a subsample of only those wards in which there was a close election. This provides additional evidence that it really is ward control and the heterogeneous treatment of like wards in opposition and incumbent LGs driving this effect.

Figure 10: Relationship between timing of decentralization and persistence of early opposition support

Details: Predicted probabilities are calculated from logistic regression model which interacts opposition support in legislative elections in the founding elections in 1995 with the phasing of decentralization to predict opposition ward control in 2010 and 2015 elections controlling for lagged control from the 2005 and 2010 elections. Model includes controls and region fixed effects. Results are robust to use of OLS.

These results suggest that opposition control makes it more likely that opposition support will survive and grow in subsequent electoral cycles. My theory suggests that this persistence is explained by the ability of opposition parties to use local capacity to buffer their voters from sanction and offer competing benefits. I test this directly by again leveraging the phasing of decentralization. Areas in

Phase 1 of decentralization reforms had local capacity which could be won by opposition parties a whole electoral cycle earlier than those in Phase 2 areas. There were areas which elected opposition MPs in both phases. If local capacity is important to opposition survival, early opposition support should be more likely to survive in Phase 1 areas because opposition parties can win local control sooner, be it at the community, ward or LG level. In later decentralizing areas, opposition support would be more likely to peter out before it could translate to local control. I therefore would expect that historic opposition areas – those areas which backed opposition candidates in early legislative elections after liberalization and before decentralization – in early decentralizing LGs would be more likely to survive than those opposition areas in late decentralizing LGs. In Figure 10, I show that wards which were in historic opposition areas and which were also early decentralizers were significantly more likely to under opposition control in 2010 or 2015.[46] Taken together, these results all suggest that local control does indeed make it more likely that opposition support will survive.

However, this opposition support will only threaten the incumbent in the long-term if this support diffuses, both spatially and to national elections. In Figure 11, I plot the results of logistic regression showing the effect of distance from opposition LGs and wards respectively on later likelihood of opposition control. If opposition control does lead to an increase in opposition credibility, I would expect that to convince those living nearby to vote opposition at a higher rates than those living further from opposition control, all else equal. I find that proximity to opposition LGs and wards has a large and significant effect on the likelihood of opposition control at the ward level. I include various demographic, political and geographic controls as well as region fixed effects to try and isolate the effect of distance itself.[47] The results in Figure 11 indicate that opposition support has geographically diffused over time. The maps in Figure 4 show clear clusters spreading from one electoral cycle to the next.

Finally, I look at evidence that local support diffuses to other levels of elections. Unfortunately, I do not have access to ward level results for either parliamentary or presidential elections. Because they are reported in a consistent form, I focus on constituency level results of parliamentary elections in Table A17. I find that there is surprisingly a far greater association between lagged average opposition share in local elections and later legislative support for opposition parties than lagged average legislative support. While this evidence is only correlational, it does suggest that local opposition support may

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[46]These results are robust to looking at each election individually which provides additional evidence for this 'transmission' effect

[47]The results are similar if I instead directly control for increasing bandwidths of distance from opposition control.
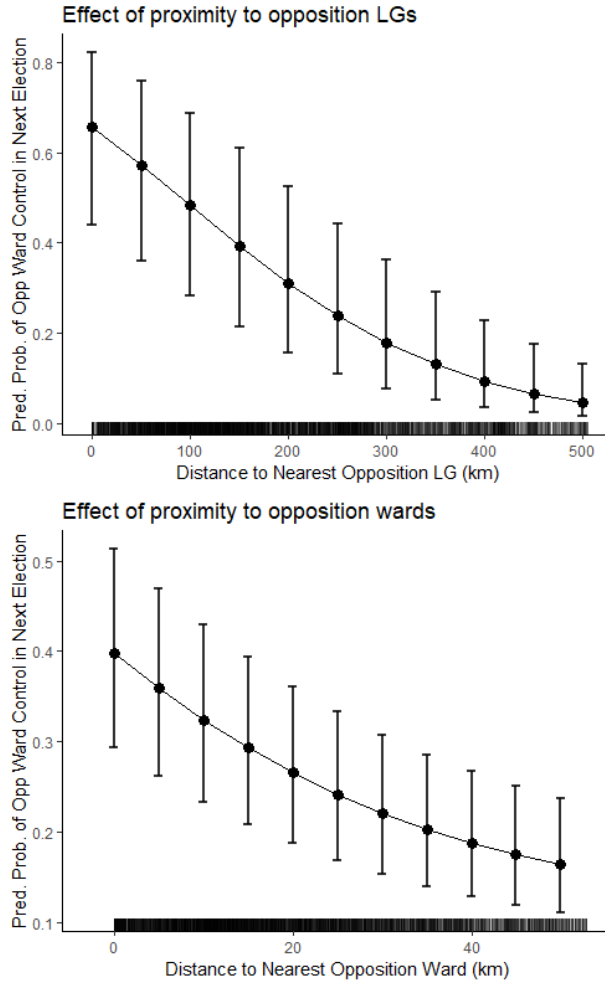
Figure 11: Relationship between proximity to opposition and subsequent opposition control

Details: Figure plots effect of distance from nearest opposition LGs and wards on the predicted probability of that ward electing an opposition councilor at the next election as estimated using logistic regression with robust standard errors. These specifications include a squared term, controls and region fixed effects. Rug plot shows support in data of distance from nearest opposition LG or ward. Plots do not show the full support. Results are robust to use of OLS and various specifications/controls.

precede a later switch to opposition support in national elections.

In this final subsection, I show that opposition support is indeed more likely to survive under opposition control, both in the immediate and the long-term. Furthermore, I provide evidence that suggests that opposition support diffuses around areas under opposition control and influences other levels of elections. Taken together, these results make clear that opposition control is an electoral threat to incumbents and may indeed threaten incumbent durability and provide a springboard for credbile opposition parties to challenge incumbents.

Conclusion

In this study, I show that local control – which party wins local elections and so control of local state capacity – is highly consequential to politics in electoral autocracies. Using extensive qualitative and quantitative data from Tanzania, I show that local capacity is indeed consequential to the implementation of autocrats' distributive strategies. I exploit the phasing of decentralization to show that the introduction of local capacity makes sanctioning of opposition support more fine-grained. I then demonstrate that local control determines what strategies are available to both the incumbent and opposition. I compare public good provision in areas under incumbent and opposition control. I find evidence of sanctioning of opposition support across all state resources in incumbent LGs. In contrast, I find that only high-coordination public goods, those which rely on central government co-funding, are used to sanction opposition support in opposition LGs. Opposition parties are able to shift the distribution of low-coordination public goods to even access to state resources or even favor their own supporters. Indeed, opposition LGs outperform incumbent LGs across these provisions. I show that opposition LGs finance this performance through a very different compact with the center and with voters. Opposition LGs receive significantly lower transfers and so invest more in local capacity, notably revenue-raising capacity, in order to maximize their performance.

These differences in strategies have downstream effects on voting behavior. I show that opposition support is more likely to survive in areas under opposition control. With more limited sanctioning and more benefits of opposition support, voters who choose to turn to opposition parties are more likely to remain loyal to them going forward. In contrast, my analysis of three cycles of local elections suggest that opposition support is less likely to survive in incumbent LGs, especially in opposition-controlled wards. This finding suggests the importance of the incumbent's ability to sanction for their own survival. Furthermore, I provide evidence that the credibility generated in areas under opposition control is not contained to these areas or to local elections. I find evidence that opposition support diffuses around areas of opposition control and influences vote choice at subsequent national elections.

In Tanzania, Chadema emerged as the main opposition party by exploiting the opportunities of local politics. They use local state capacity to win support outside of their strongholds. Chadema is now a credible challenger to the ruling party with local control of most urban areas in the country. The politics of local control therefore have clear implications for regime durability. Local control is a springboard for opposition parties to build credibility from below and become a threat to electoral

autocrats' rule.[48]

These results challenge several prevailing consensuses in comparative politics. First, incumbents are not as hegemonic as we may think. My results make clear that the incumbent CCM in Tanzania is not. I show that their ability to enforce a punishment regime is contingent on local capacity and control thereof. In opposition areas, the CCM is more limited in how and to what extent they can win votes, which threatens their long-term durability. How popular opposition parties are in an electoral autocracy is therefore not the unilateral decision of the incumbent. Opposition parties are able to strategically outmanoeuvre incumbents and survive despite attempts to contain them. Indeed, elsewhere in the dissertation project, I argue that loss of local control and the resulting rise in opposition party support may account for the recent drastic uptick in violence in Tanzania as the CCM looks for new ways to contain opposition parties.

Second, I challenge the dominant characterization of opposition parties as co-opted. The opposition party whose strategies I documented is sincerely office-seeking. Importantly, their strategies have been successful in winning over voters in a country with no history of meaningful opposition. By moving away from this characterization I am able to theorize how opposition parties can win votes in electoral autocracies and go beyond most likely cases of incumbent failure and opposition success. Opposition parties can win support by entrenching their credibility in the eyes of voters, despite only having limited capacity.

Third, I challenge the notion that decentralization and indeed state capacity more broadly is necessarily a boon for incumbent autocrats. I show that local capacity does strengthen the accuracy of existing distributive strategies. However, I introduce an important caveat: these benefits are contingent on local capacity remaining in incumbent hands. I trace how opposition control of local capacity can have a destabilizing effect on incumbents and strengthen opposition parties, a pathway as such unexplored in the authoritarian decentralization and state capacity literatures. This suggests that local capacity and decentralization are double-edged swords for incumbents, a logic thus far not explored in the literature.

Fourth, I show that it is important for scholars to look beyond the center to understand regime

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[48]Elsewhere in the dissertation, I explore how Chadema may have become a 'victim of its own success' with the ruling CCM increasingly relying on violence to contain the threat they now pose. I argue that, by substituting lost distributive strategies for more violent ones, incumbents destabilize their regime in the long-run. While violence may be effective in suppressing opposition turnout in the short-run, it erodes popular support for the ruling party, especially among moderate voters, and leads to increase polarization and conflict in affected areas.

durability and indeed national politics more broadly. Threats to incumbent power can start from small pockets of opposition support at the local level. I show how opposition parties can build from below to become a credible threat to the regime. Indeed, local capacity gives parties at the local level the ability to contest with national parties over their own survival and their preferred policies. Examples of these struggles exist across the world and show how local politics can influence the national in democracies and non-democracies alike: between Trump Administration and sanctuary cities on immigration, between the UK and Scottish governments on austerity offsetting, between the Turkish and Ugandan governments and the city governments of Istanbul and Kampala over opposition politics.

Tanzania is just one example of an electoral autocracy. However, the dynamics I characterize there can be found across many cases. Distributive strategies and the ability to enforce them are key to stability across the world's electoral autocracies (see Albertus et al, 2018). Opposition strongholds create national problems for incumbents in non-democratic cases as diverse as Turkey, Cameroon and Nicaragua. Local government, in particular opposition local government, has been a point of political struggle and manipulation in several cases including Russia, Uganda and Venezuela. Opposition parties are subject to restrictions and backsliding reforms from Hungary to Zambia, from Singapore to Bangladesh. Furthermore, a number of successful democratic transitions – notably Mexico and Malaysia – came after opposition parties with local roots won presidential elections. Understanding where and when opposition parties can thrive and survive is important because opposition parties are key to responsive government and hopes of democratization. In this study, I generate insights into the operation of opposition parties and how they strategically interact with the incumbent, which may illuminate the politics of these diverse and understudied oppositions.

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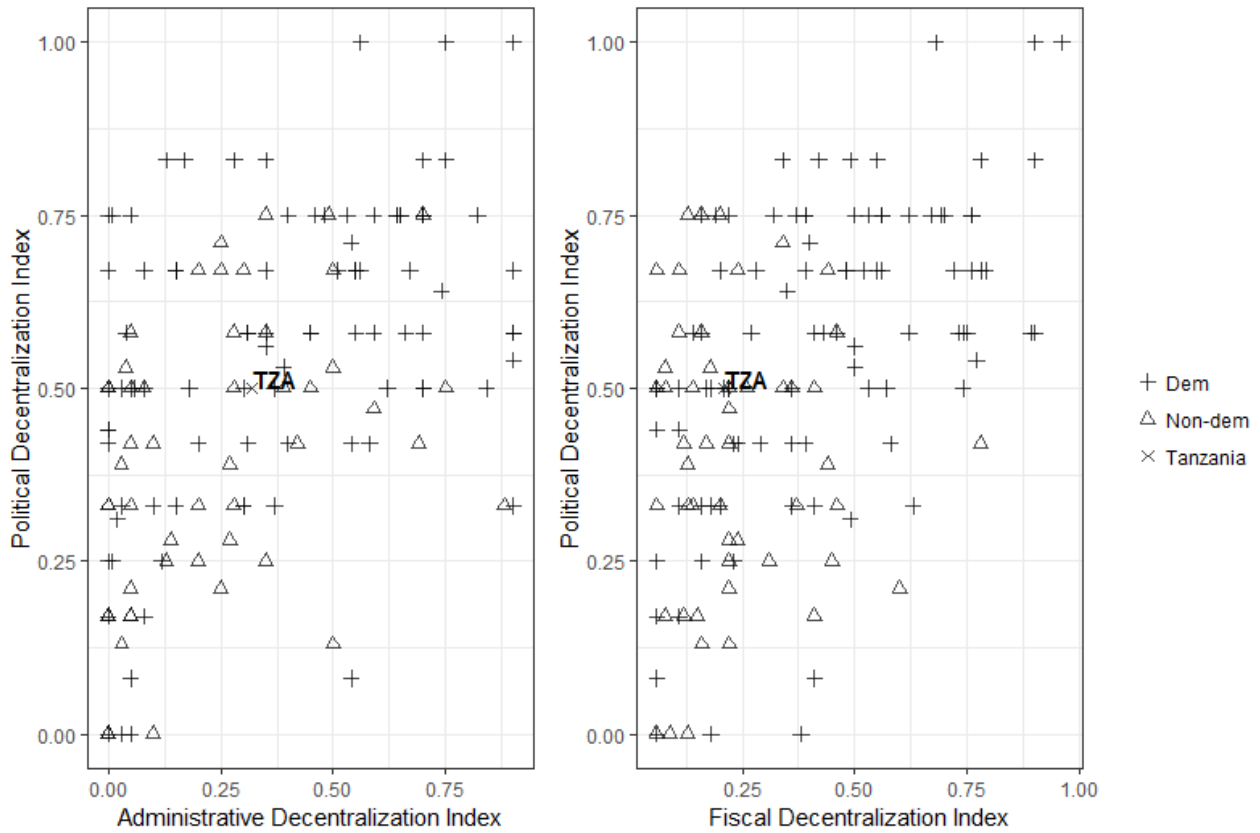
Supplemental Information

Table 10: Relationship between decentralization and secondary school construction from 2000-2005

	Dependent variable:						
	Sec school constructed						
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)
Opp Ward	0.068	0.103	0.053	0.061	0.033	0.021	0.024
	(0.116)	(0.117)	(0.137)	(0.144)	(0.129)	(0.146)	(0.154)
Phase 1	0.096*	0.186***	0.309	0.350	0.131*	0.546	0.608
	(0.056)	(0.059)	(0.562)	(0.593)	(0.068)	(0.445)	(0.463)
Opp Ward*Phase 1	−0.260	−0.292	−0.236	−0.264	−0.212	−0.153	−0.172
	(0.227)	(0.228)	(0.244)	(0.256)	(0.256)	(0.273)	(0.288)
Observations	12,640	12,620	12,620	12,620	9,720	9,720	9,720
Controls	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
District fixed effects	N	N	Y	Y	Y	N	Y
Year fixed effects	N	N	N	Y	Y	N	N
Constituency vote	N	N	N	N	Y	Y	Y

*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Note: Logistic regression with robust standard errors on wards-years from 2000-2005. Models control for demographic, geographic and political variables at the ward level and include local government and year fixed effects where indicated. Differences in observations numbers due to missingness. Results are robust to use of OLS.

Figure 12: Countries by levels of political, fiscal and administrative decentralization

Data: Ivanyna & Shah (2012). The authors construct these indices by measuring the relative importance of local government, security of existence of local governments and the powers of local governments.
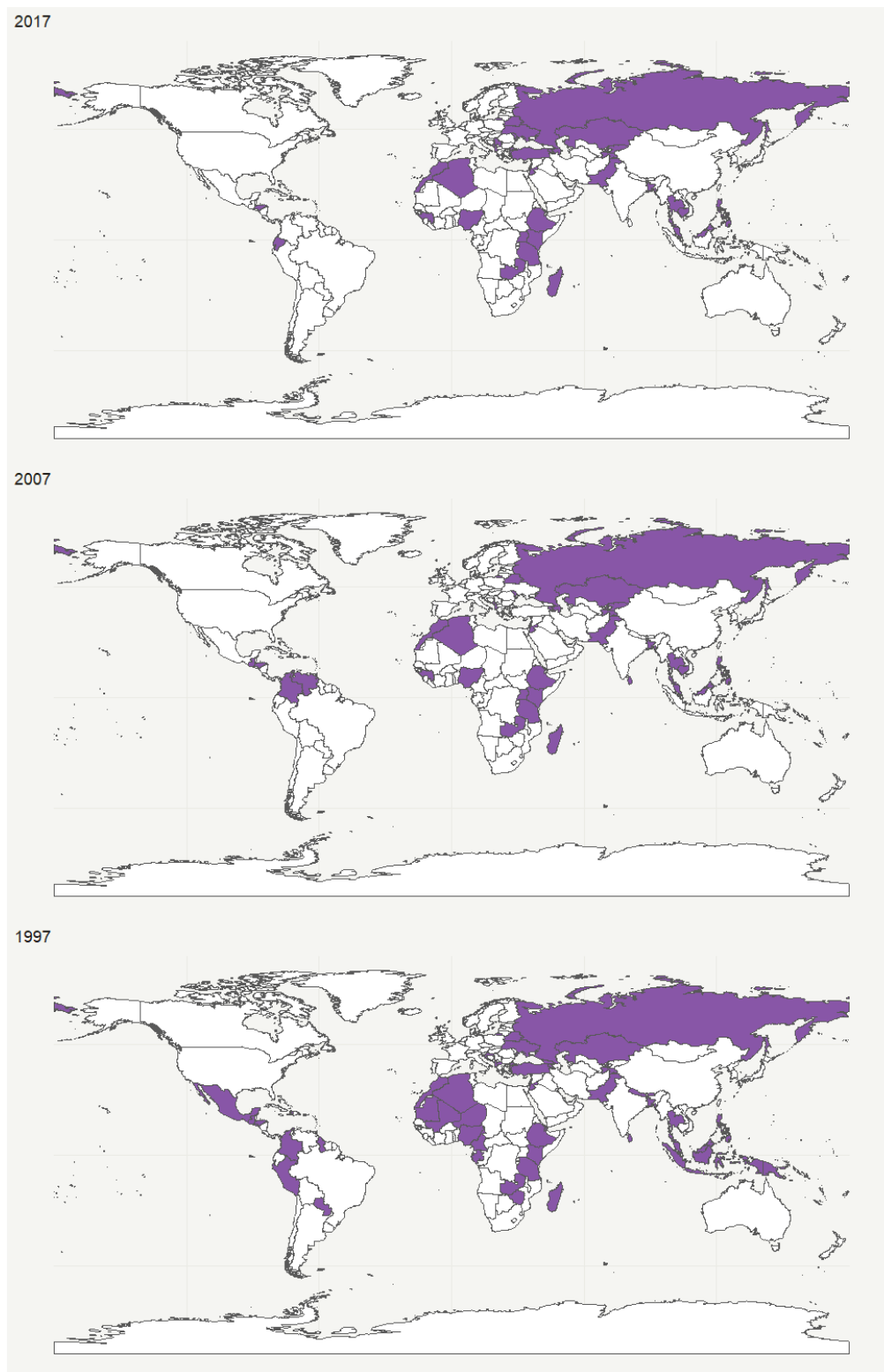
Figure 13: Applicable cases in 1997, 2007 & 2017

Details: These maps show electoral autocracies which were low/middle income with elected local governments in the relevant year. I drop countries below minimum thresholds of administrative and fiscal decentralization as measured by Ivanyna & Shah (2014). This data is correct as of 2005. Panels a) and c) should be treated with caution

Table 11: Effect of decentralization and localized opposition on waterpoint construction from 2006-07 (when Phase 2 councils were decentralizing) and 2008-10 (when the process was complete in all councils)

	Dependent variable:					
	Waterpoint constructed					
	2006-07			*2008-2010*		
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Opp Ward	0.147	0.147	0.141	−0.068	−0.068	−0.060
	(0.191)	(0.191)	(0.198)	(0.148)	(0.148)	(0.154)
Phase 1	−0.656	−0.656	−0.654	−1.172***	−1.173***	−1.198***
	(0.425)	(0.425)	(0.425)	(0.331)	(0.331)	(0.334)
Opp Ward*Phase 1	−0.649*	−0.649*	−0.659*	0.297	0.297	0.236
	(0.390)	(0.390)	(0.393)	(0.253)	(0.253)	(0.258)
Observations	5,002	5,002	4,804	7,503	7,503	7,206
Demographic and geographic controls	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
District fixed effects	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Year fixed effects	N	Y	Y	N	Y	Y
Constituency vote	N	N	Y	N	N	Y

*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Note: Logistic regression with robust standard errors on wards-years from 2000-2005. Models control for demographic, geographic and political variables at the ward level and include local government and year fixed effects where indicated. Differences in observations numbers due to missingness. Results are robust to use of OLS.

Table 12: Relationship between local control and primary school exam performance

	Dependent variable:					
	Pass Rate					
	OLS				*FE*	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Incumbent LG control	−13.534***	−12.584***	−7.274***	−4.960***	−2.661***	−2.711***
	(0.716)	(0.763)	(0.780)	(0.797)	(0.652)	(0.639)
Incumbent ward control	−6.589***	−6.559***	−4.685***	−3.351***	−0.927	−0.818
	(1.041)	(1.053)	(1.049)	(1.075)	(0.853)	(0.846)
Incumbent LG control*ward control	4.281***	3.345***	4.346***	3.929***	1.974**	2.050**
	(1.137)	(1.149)	(1.143)	(1.162)	(0.952)	(0.944)
Observations	47,204	46,802	46,490	46,008	46,867	47,204
Controls	N	N	N	Y	N	N
Constituency vote	N	N	Y	Y	N	N
Region Fixed Effects	N	Y	Y	Y	N	N
School fixed effects	N	N	N	N	Y	Y
Year fixed effects	N	N	N	N	Y	Y

Note:　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Table 13: Relationship between local control and LG waterpoint repairs

	Dependent variable:		
	Waterpoint repaired		
	(1)	(2)	(3)
Opp Ward	−0.055**	−0.167***	−0.121***
	(0.027)	(0.028)	(0.030)
Opp LG	−0.175***	−0.493***	−0.287***
	(0.044)	(0.049)	(0.056)
Opp Ward*Opp LG	0.192***	0.173***	0.153**
	(0.057)	(0.059)	(0.063)
Observations	81,130	81,130	73,270
Controls	N	N	Y
Region fixed effects	N	Y	Y

Note: *p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Note: Results of logistic regressions with robust standard errors on waterpoints mapped by the Ministry of Water. Repaired is a binary measure calculated by comparing waterpoint status in 2015 and 2017. Results are robust to use of OLS.

Table 14: Relationship between local control and secondary classroom construction

	Dependent variable:			
	New classroom constructed			
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Opp Ward	0.082	0.081	0.069	0.124
	(0.205)	(0.211)	(0.211)	(0.220)
Opp LG	−1.901*	−1.904*	−1.909*	−1.986*
	(1.014)	(1.018)	(1.019)	(1.018)
Opp Ward*Opp LG	2.148**	2.149**	2.166**	2.150**
	(1.069)	(1.069)	(1.071)	(1.065)
Observations	3,313	3,313	3,313	3,313
Constituency vote	N	Y	Y	Y
Demographic controls	N	N	Y	Y
Region fixed effects	N	N	N	Y

*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Note: Logistic regression with robust standard errors. Classroom construction measured by comparing school's provision of post-Form 4 education over time. Results are robust to use of OLS.

Table 15: Difference-in-differences analysis of effect of opposition control on primary school pass rate

	Dependent variable:				
	Pass Rate (out of 100)				
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Handover to Opp LG in 2015	−0.092	−0.092	0.248	1.658***	2.321***
	(0.535)	(0.371)	(0.388)	(0.398)	(0.383)
After	29.967***	58.224***	58.521***	58.460***	58.783***
	(0.293)	(0.319)	(0.326)	(0.313)	(0.301)
Handover*After	2.817***	2.817***	2.328***	1.636**	2.066***
	(0.792)	(0.685)	(0.692)	(0.666)	(0.661)
Observations	47,010	47,010	46,677	46,400	46,712
Demographic and geographic controls	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Region fixed effects	N	N	N	Y	Y
Year fixed effects	N	Y	Y	Y	Y
Constituency vote	N	N	Y	Y	N

*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Note: Ordinary least squared regression with robust standard errors and controls and fixed effects as indicated. Differences in observations due to missingness

Table 16: Fixed effects regression of effect of opposition control on primary school pass rates

	Dependent variable:		
	Pass Rate (out of 100)		
	(1)	(2)	(3)
Opposition LG	1.511***	1.879***	1.848***
	(0.487)	(0.530)	(0.537)
Observations	47,204	47,204	46,867
Ward vote	N	Y	Y
Constituency vote	N	N	Y
School fixed effects	Y	Y	Y
Year fixed effects	Y	Y	Y

*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Note: Fixed effects regression with robust standard errors and time-varying political controls indicated. Differences in observations due to missingness
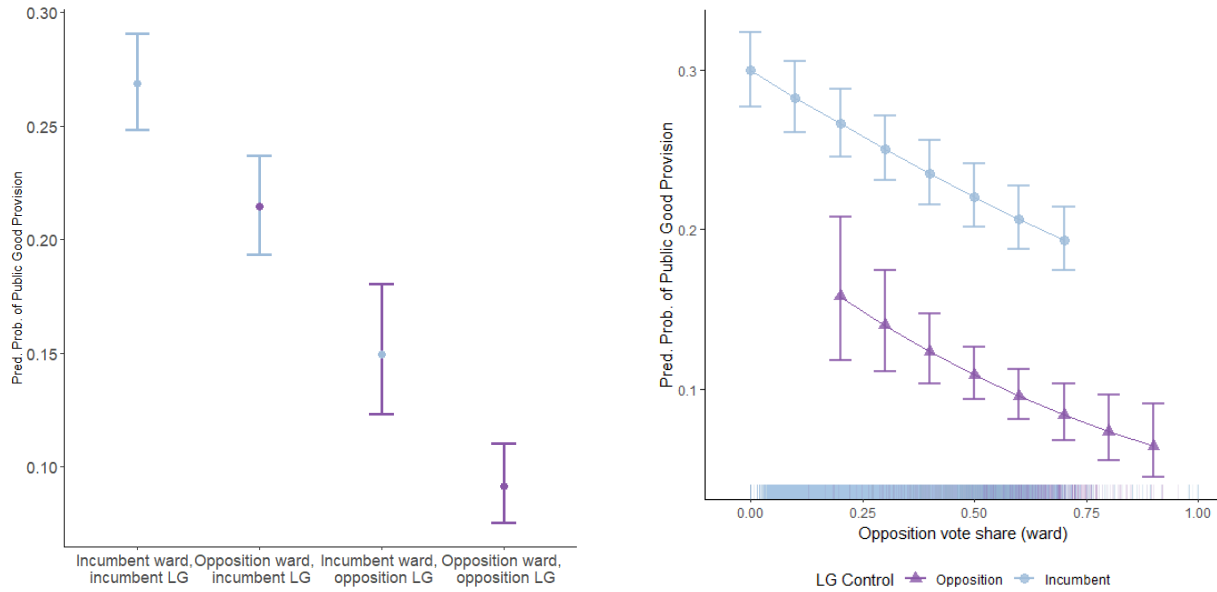
**(a)** Probability of high-coordination public good provision by local control

(b) Probability of lumpy public good provision by opposition vote share in incumbent and opposition LGs

Figure 14: Use of high-coordination public goods in punishment regime by local control

Details: Predicted probabilities calculated from logistic regression models (including region fixed effects) on 50936 ward-years from 2000-2016. Public goods included are waterpoints, primary schools, secondary schools (only after 2010). The rug plot in plot b) indicates the support in the data by LG control. Results are robust to use of OLS. This result is highly robust to a range of controls and specifications.
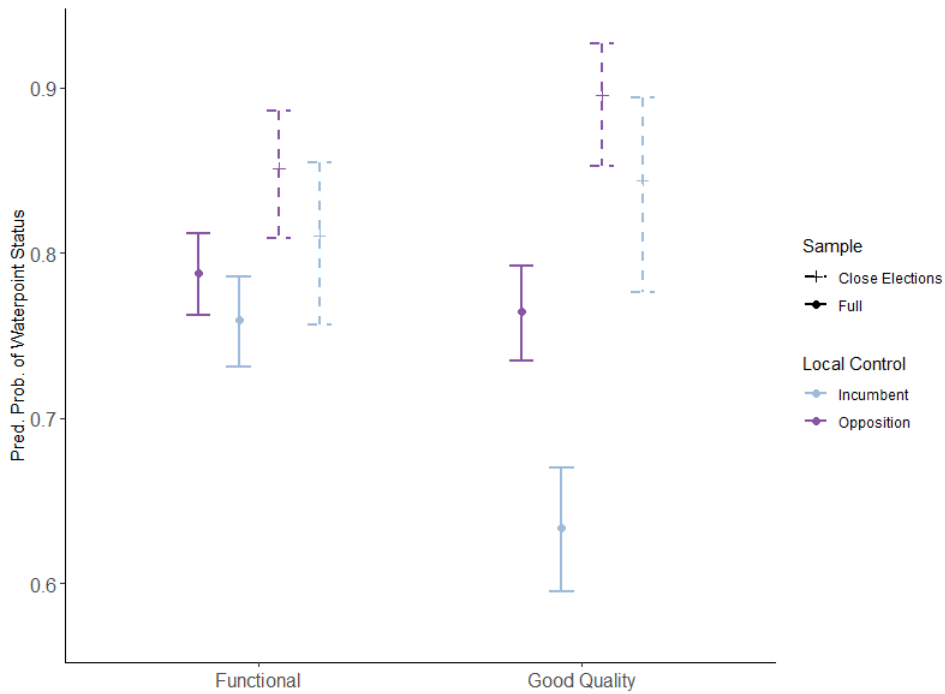
Figure 15: Predicted probabilities of waterpoint quality by local control
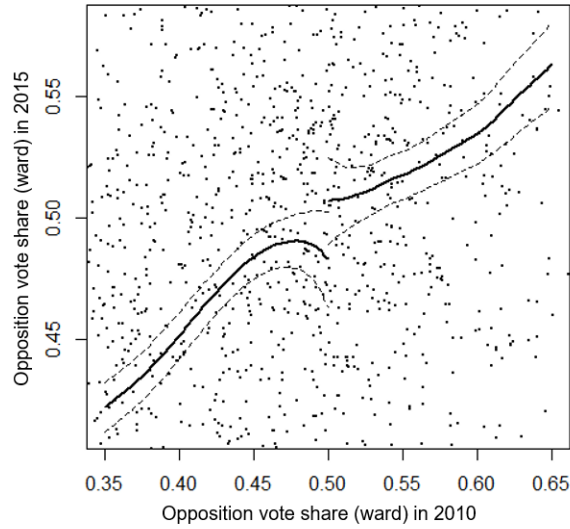
Figure 16: Regression discontinuity estimate plot

Table 17: Relationship between lagged local and legislative opposition support and later opposition legislative support

	Dependent variable:			
	Opp share at next legislative election			
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Opp share at local elections	1.273***		1.147***	1.158***
	(0.210)		(0.176)	(0.176)
Opp share at legislative elections		0.550***	0.543***	0.532***
		(0.044)	(0.041)	(0.041)
Observations	397	390	390	390
Controls	N	N	N	Y

<div align="right">

*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

</div>

Note: Ordinary least squares regression with controls when indicated