

# Local Control: How Opposition Support Constrains Non-Democratic Incumbents

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## **Abstract**

Studies of distributive politics conceptualize incumbents as central planners allocating resources, constrained in how much they can distribute but not where. Non-democratic incumbents often use punishment regimes to sanction disloyalty. In many non-democracies, local institutions are the infrastructure of reward and sanction, a legacy of widespread decentralization in the 80s and 90s. I show that incumbents face subnational constraints on their ability to enforce ‘punishment regimes’. Using interviews and list experiments in Tanzania, I demonstrate that local control – who controls local institutions in a subnational unit – determines the incumbent’s ability to monitor and sanction opposition support. Respondents in opposition communities fear individual sanctions less. Respondents in opposition local governments fear community sanctions less. By making it harder to impose costs on opposition support, loss of local control makes it harder for incumbents to manage competition. This suggests decentralization has more of a democratic legacy than existing scholarship suggests.

Most autocrats must contain threats from the electorate to stay in power. To this end, work on non-democratic politics focuses on incumbent strategies to prevent the emergence of credible challengers and meaningful political contestation. Distributive politics is at the core of the incumbent's toolkit. Incumbents often enforce 'punishment regimes' to maintain electoral control, rewarding the loyal with state resources and sanctioning opposition support (Magaloni, 2006; Blaydes, 2010). Existing understandings of distributive politics in non-democracies presuppose that an incumbent can exert their authority uniformly across space. Conceptualizing the incumbent's problem as that of a central planner, studies of incumbent strategy assess where regimes target resources and why. Incumbents are understood to be resource constrained but not constrained as to where they can distribute. I argue that local control – whether the incumbent controls local institutions in a given subnational unit – imposes constraints on the incumbent's ability to implement strategies in decentralized non-democracies. By overlooking these constraints, we overlook subnational variation in the incumbent's ability to impose costs for opposition support from region to region, community to community. Thus, we overlook subnational limitations in the incumbents' ability to manage political competition and so maintain their hold on power.

The 1980s and 1990s saw an unprecedented wave of decentralization. The legacy of this is that most countries, including many non-democracies, are decentralized to some extent. After decentralization, local institutions allocate significant state resources with control of these institutions often determined by local elections. I contend that this changes the dynamics of authoritarian distribution, which then has important implications for incumbent strategy and autocratic durability. Decentralization has long been thought of as inherently democratic (Madison, 1788; de Tocqueville, 1825). However, the comparative politics literature broadly views decentralization as a boon for non-democratic incumbents because it improves their ability to reach into communities, monitor and distribute patronage (Landry, 2008; 2009; Riedl & Dickovick, 2013; Bohlken, 2016; Aalen & Muriaas, 2018). However, I argue that these benefits are contingent on local control. How does local control alter the costs incumbents can impose for opposition support in non-democracies? Given this, what implications does decentralization have for the durability of non-democratic regimes?

I make two claims in this study. First, local institutions are a key part of the infrastructure of reward and sanction in decentralized non-democracies. I argue that local institutions are the conduit through which punishment regimes are enforced after decentralization. Second, control of these institutions determines the credibility of an incumbent's 'punishment regime' in a given area. Different levels of government have different capacity to monitor and sanction individuals and communities. Local control determines the kind of electoral tools the incumbent can use to induce cooperation and dissuade defection in a given area. In incumbent areas, they can leverage the power of local knowledge to sanction voters and prevent defection. Loss of local elections forces incumbents to cede their usual infrastructure of reward and sanction to opposition parties. Therefore the incumbent can impose greater costs for opposition support in incumbent areas than they can on similar voters in opposition areas. Decentralization makes it possible for the costs of opposition support to vary across a single polity. This has the potential to weaken incumbents by limiting their ability to use 'punishment regimes' to discourage further defection in areas under opposition control.

I use interview evidence alongside a pre-election survey of voters in Tanzania to understand how variation in local control influences where the incumbent can sanction opposition support. Using evidence from over 50 interviews with politicians, bureaucrats and voters in Kilimanjaro, I show how local officials<sup>1</sup> use decentralized powers and dense local knowledge to sanction opposition support at the community and individual level. I use responses to list experiments designed to elicit truthful responses to sensitive questions to explore where voters feared individual and community sanctions for defecting to the opposition party. I find that opposition control of local institutions significantly reduces fear of sanctions. Respondents in opposition communities are less likely to fear individual sanctions than incumbent communities but no less likely to fear community sanction. Respondents in opposition local governments are less likely to fear community sanctions. I therefore show that opposition control blunts incumbents' use of the 'punishment regimes' integral to how they manage competition.

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<sup>1</sup>I use local officials when I refer to local politicians and bureaucrats interchangeably

## Punishment regimes and opposition support

By 2005, 75 countries had passed decentralization reforms with the majority incorporating some form of political decentralization (Ahmad et al, 2005). Political decentralization is defined as a set of reforms which devolves political authority to subnational actors (Falleti, 2010). Political decentralization allows voters to sanction incumbents by voting them out of local office. The World Bank espoused decentralization, in part, to improve accountability and popular participation. Many of these new elected levels were also granted control of significant state resources. Decentralization was not simply window-dressing in non-democracies. As shown in Figure 4 (SI, p5), many non-democracies also committed to significant decentralization.

Nominally democratic institutions in non-democracies allow incumbents to better distribute concessions and induce citizens and elites to cooperate with the regime (Przeworski & Gandhi, 2007). Scholars contend that decentralization likewise made it easier for incumbents to maintain elite cohesion and distribute patronage (Landry, 2008; Riedl & Dickovick, 2013; Bohlken, 2016; Aalen & Muriaas, 2018). They argue decentralization was a rational political choice for many incumbents, even without considering the significant and often overwhelming pressure from IFIs to reform. Strong local institutions are generally a boon for incumbents (Slater & Fenner, 2011). Decentralization strengthens these institutions where local state and party presence may have been weak. Indeed, many decentralization packages came with significant budgetary assistance to support the new local institutions, resources which were then tied to the state rather than party infrastructure.

In non-democracies, distributive politics is core to incumbent survival as it structures the incentives of the electorate and the elite to remain loyal to the incumbent (Albertus, Fenner & Slater, 2018). One prominent logic of authoritarian distribution is ‘punishment regimes’ (Magaloni, 2006; Blaydes, 2010).<sup>2</sup> ‘Punishment regimes’ target state resources to the loyal and deny them to the disloyal. Incumbents use these ‘punishment regimes’ to contain and prevent the emergence of electoral threats. In these studies and work on authoritarian politics more broadly, scholars conceive of incumbents as constrained in how much they can distribute but not where they can distribute. Both Magaloni and Blaydes argue that citizens in autocracies continue to support the regime at the polls because the regime is understood as the sole route to resources and opportunities. By sanctioning disloyalty, the regime signals that it is costly to be outside the regime’s group of beneficiaries. Voters in non-democracies vote based on this electoral bargain. The durability of an incumbent’s tenure is therefore driven by their ability to enforce this bargain.

Opposition supporters incur costs for going against the incumbent. These theories suggest that there is a stark contrast between how opposition and incumbent voters access state resources and the broader benefits of citizenship. Scholars explore why voters back opposition parties despite these costs. These parties’ core supporters are generally high socioeconomic status who are less vulnerable to sanction or ideological ‘activist’ voters committed to their programmatic platforms (Greene, 2002; Letsa 2017). The hostile environment for opposition voters that these punishment regimes create makes it hard to win over other voters. Despite these costs, opposition strongholds are a common feature in countries with hegemonic incumbents (McMann, 2018). The political beliefs and behaviors of voters in these strongholds often look systematically different from demographically similar voters in incumbent areas (Letsa, 2018). In decentralized countries, the distribution of opposition support determines how likely it is that opposition popularity translates to local control. In these countries opposition parties can win control of state resources wherever they are popular enough to win a local election. Opposition parties then take control of the state resources ceded to that unit. This calls into question the extent to which the same ‘electoral bargain’ holds uniformly across a given non-democracy. Scholars of decentralization often ask how local conditions at the time of decentralization affected the institutional arrangement that was introduced (O’Neill, 2003; Boone, 2003; Falleti, 2010). I ask how distribution of opposition support after decentralization, given the institutional arrangement introduced, affects the incumbent’s power going forward.

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<sup>2</sup>I focus on punishment regimes but local control would also temper incumbent’s ability to implement other distributive logics

## Sanctioning and local institutions

Clientelist allocation of local public goods and state resources are common electoral strategies in democracies and non-democracies alike. In many countries, these strategically important functions of the state are decentralized. Clientelist transactions are contingent exchanges between voters and politicians. To get a reward or avoid sanction, the client votes for the patron. The client will only honor this bargain if it is credible that the patron can monitor the client and has the capacity to punish them if they defect from the bargain. The credibility of punishment regimes in non-democracies is underpinned by the capacity of agents acting on behalf of the incumbent to monitor and sanction voters. Studies of regime durability often focus on how local party structures in non-democracies maintain voter loyalty (Levitsky & Way, 2010; Svoboda, 2012). However, the importance of local state resources is underplayed. State resources are the currency of most clientelist bargains in decentralized non-democracies. Slater & Fenner argue that state institutions hold far greater leverage over ordinary citizens than party institutions. The strongest regimes are those where state apparatus can consistently reward the loyal and sanction the disloyal (Slater & Fenner, 2011). To impose costs for opposition support, incumbents must be able to influence the distribution of these resources.

An incumbent's ability to sanction opposition voters also depends on the information they can draw on. Central officials are at a disadvantage compared to those at the local level. Local actors can improve on the accuracy of central targeting by drawing on local knowledge that would otherwise leak from the system before it could be acted upon (Stokes et al, 2013). In decentralized systems, it is often local officials that allocate public goods central to the incumbent's distributive strategy. Local knowledge allows these officials to sanction opposition support more accurately. However, it is community networks that have the most credible information about political preferences of those living within their community (Cruz, 2018; Finan & Schechter, 2012). Decentralization often introduced or strengthened a level of community politicians who act as gatekeepers to state resources. They are embedded in their communities and have frequent interactions with community members in enacting their duties. They have superior knowledge about the distribution of political preferences in the community when compared to central officials or local brokers. This makes it credible that community officials can monitor and sanction individuals. In decentralized countries, those with the densest information have the power to implement the incumbent's sanctioning strategy. Who controls these local institutions is therefore highly consequential to whether incumbents can impose costs for opposition support.

## Local control and the costs of opposition

I argue that local control – who controls local state institutions in a given subnational unit – determines the incumbent's ability to impose costs for opposition support across space. When the incumbent retains local control, incumbent-loyal politicians can exploit local knowledge and local state resources to sanction opposition support. However, if the incumbent loses local control, it forces them to abdicate the capacity to monitor and sanction voters to opposition parties. This constrains their use of 'punishment regimes' and limits their ability to discourage opposition support. I define sanctioning as the use of powers associated with public office to disadvantage individuals or groups who do not support the regime. This theory operates on two levels - the local government level (LG) and the community level. By 'local government', I refer to the decentralized level of government responsible for the allocation of local public goods. By the community administration, I refer to the village and neighbourhood institutions subordinate to LGs which administer basic services to citizens and allocate resources within the community. I use incumbent to refer to the national incumbent.

Different levels can impose different costs for opposition support. First, they can sanction with varying accuracy because they control different provisions, which in turn vary in how excludable they are. Community institutions are better placed to target individuals. Community officials act as gatekeepers to state and community resources. They mediate access to schools, medical treatment, business permits, government and community social assistance, etc. These kinds of resources are individually excludable. They have distributive control over state resources during a whole electoral cycle and so can impose greater costs than brokers can with election time handouts. LGs are better able to target groups, notably the communities

Level	Monitoring	Sanctioning	Strategies lost when level lost
Community	Individual, households	Access to government services, community assistance, community security, identity verification	Individual sanctioning
Local Government	Communities, wards	Local public goods, development grants	Community sanctioning
Center	Central electoral returns, regional heuristics	Central transfers, welfare programs, security services	<i>Regime falls</i>

**Table 1:** Monitoring, sanctioning capacity by government level

which compose their jurisdiction. LGs are responsible for provisions like allocation of local public goods and community development budgets which are locally but not individually excludable. LGs can reward loyal communities and sanction disloyal ones. In sum, different levels of government have different capacities to punish different constituencies.

Second, capacity to sanction varies with the accuracy of political knowledge at that level. Using the local knowledge they accumulate enacting their day-to-day duties, LG politicians and bureaucrats can target communities based on their political support. At the LG level however, it is unlikely that officials can identify the partisanship of individuals. In contrast, community politicians may be able to identify the partisanship of individuals living in their community. Community institutions are generally set up at the center of established social networks which may run to only a few hundred voters. Community politicians interact regularly with their constituents in conducting their work and so learn about individuals' partisanship through both open discussion and exchange of gossip and hearsay. It is only with the cooperation of these community leaders that individual sanctioning is credible. Different levels of government therefore have different capacity to monitor partisanship.

This targeting and monitoring capacity combine to determine a level's sanctioning capacity. Officials are motivated to leverage their sanctioning capacity against opposition voters to curry favor. LGs and communities are in a nested hierarchy below the center. Each level controls resources that they can allocate between the different units subordinate to them. Bureaucrats, politicians and voters at each level are aware that those at the level above are observing them and have good information about the distribution of opposition support. Those at the subordinate level have an incentive to avoid sanction by delivering a 'satisfactory' vote share to the incumbent. Community sanction is non-excludable and the whole community stands to lose out if sanctioned. If the incumbent can credibly threaten community sanctions, the community has an incentive to target those they suspect to be opposition voters. They may refuse to assist those who they suspect of harming the standing of the community. Community officials may refuse access to government services. By empowering leaders with tools they can use to leverage meaningful sanctions, local control bolsters the effectiveness of this coordination effort.<sup>3</sup> Likewise LGs may target disloyal communities to discourage opposition support and present a show of loyalty to avoid sanction. When motivated to implement the incumbent's sanctioning strategy, the custodians of local institutions leverage the information and resources at these levels to sanction opposition support and reward loyalty.

Local control determines what information the incumbent can draw on and what resources they can allocate to reward and sanction in that unit (summarised in Table 1). Opposition control deprives incumbents of many of their usual clientelist tools and so reduces the costs incumbents can impose for opposition support. If the incumbent retains control of LG, the incumbent can credibly threaten communities. When LGs are opposition-controlled, opposition parties have control over allocation of lumpy resources, making it harder

<sup>3</sup>Several scholars have proposed why bloc voting occurs (Koter, 2013; Baldwin, 2016; Conroy-Krutz, 2018). These accounts focus on the role of intermediaries at election time. I conceive of delivering the vote as an ongoing process because punishment regimes inform distribution throughout the electoral cycle, which distinguishes these dynamics in democratic and non-democratic cases.

for the incumbent to reward loyalty and sanction opposition support community-by-community. Second, when community elections are won by opposition parties, the incumbent’s ability to sanction individuals is blunted. Without the cooperation of community politicians, it becomes more difficult for incumbents to gather the granularity of knowledge required to sanction individuals. Thus, opposition control of communities weakens an incumbent’s ability to implement their punishment regime at the individual level. Local control determines what costs an incumbent can impose for opposition support.<sup>4</sup>

Local institutions are the infrastructure of reward and sanction in decentralized countries. The information and capacity to sanction at the LG and community levels make punishment regimes and the associated electoral bargain credible in incumbent areas. However, losing local control weakens the incumbent’s ability to impose costs for opposition support. It is then easier for citizens to vote on conscience for opposition parties where similar voters living under incumbent control would be motivated to remain loyal to the incumbent by threat of sanction. This has important implications for how we understand the effect of decentralization on incumbent durability. I contend decentralization is a double-edged sword for incumbents. Local knowledge and capacity may make sanctioning more accurate after decentralization.<sup>5</sup> However, opposition control disrupts an incumbent’s ability to impose their punishment regime in some parts of the country, while it remains firmly in place in others. In opposition areas, it becomes easier for opposition parties to maintain control from one election to the next because it is harder for the incumbent to sanction. These pockets of opposition support can lay the foundation for a future challenge to the incumbent.<sup>6</sup>

## Hypotheses and empirical approach

I test the following hypotheses:

- **H1 (Community control):** Opposition control of community administration reduces the ability of the incumbent to sanction individuals
- **H2 (Local government control):** Opposition control of local government reduces the ability of the incumbent to sanction communities

I test this theory using interviews and a survey conducted in Tanzania. I take a mixed methods approach. First I use interview evidence to show how decentralized institutions are used to sanction opposition support and how opposition control confounds this logic. I trace the logic used by those exploiting these institutions for the ends of the regime. I then use a survey with list experiments to demonstrate that voters’ fear of sanction is determined by who controls community and LG in their area. The observable implications of this theory for what costs voters face for opposition support in different areas is summarized in Table 2. If my ‘capacity to sanction’ mechanism holds, those individuals and communities more reliant on state resources should fear sanction more but this should depend on local control.

I appraise my theory against various alternative explanations. One may reject that the infrastructure of sanctioning in contemporary non-democracies is local. If this is the case, local control should not affect where and how opposition support is sanctioned. It is also possible that any difference in sanctioning given local control is because the incumbent chooses not to sanction. I discount this by showing explicit discussion of sanctioning as a logic. In SI (p14), I also show evidence that the incumbent uses central resources as a substitute after loss of control. Furthermore, lower fear of sanction in opposition communities and LGs may be because more autonomous or defiant people vote opposition and these people also fear sanctioning less.

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<sup>4</sup>I do not discuss the scenario where opposition parties can likewise use local institutions to sanction incumbent support. Opposition control does not take away other incumbency advantages, which make it difficult for opposition parties to sanction incumbent voters. Bureaucrats may refuse to cooperate or they may be subject to legal consequences for pursuing such a strategy. Opposition control blunts the incumbent’s ability to sanction but does not take it away entirely nor does it insulate opposition politicians from threats of repression or legal harassment which may constrain their behavior. I provide evidence for this in SI (p14)

<sup>5</sup>Testing this argument directly is beyond the scope of this study

<sup>6</sup>Incumbents are still likely to control some resources and power in areas of opposition control as few non-democracies are fully decentralized, which they can use to frustrate opposition parties in power. Exploring dynamics of this are beyond the scope of this study

	Type of sanction	Incumbent LG	Opposition LG
Incumbent community	Individual	✓	✓
	Community	✓	±
Opposition community	Individual	±	±
	Community	✓	±

**Table 2:** Observable implications of theory on costs of opposition given local control

Opposition units are simply clusters of this type of voters. I try and discount this concern by controlling for individual characteristics to isolate the effect of local control. Lastly, higher fears of sanction in some areas may be driven by misinformation. Low information voters may overestimate the risk of sanctioning and such voters may be clustered in incumbent areas. I directly test this information mechanism in SI (p8).

This theory applies to decentralized non-democracies where competition is, at least in part, clientelistic. I use non-democracies as a general term to describe those regimes which hold elections but where competition is not free and fair and incumbents hold significant advantages.<sup>7</sup> I exclude countries that do not hold elections or where opposition parties are de facto or de jure banned from holding office. I draw on Treisman’s definition of ‘decision-making decentralization’ (Treisman, 2007). A country is decentralized if some elected subnational tier of government holds decision-making authority in at least one policy area that it is difficult to reverse.<sup>8</sup> Figure 4 shows that 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 non-democracies and hence below average among decentralized non-democracies.<sup>9</sup> Many non-democracies (including hybrid or single-party dominant regimes) across Southeast Asia, Eastern Europe, 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 decentralization matters in more cases than scholars may ordinarily assume. Tanzania is comparable to other low to middle income decentralized non-democracies, particularly those with a legacy of one party rule.

## Local control and costs of opposition 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. Since the founding elections of 1995, opposition parties have become more institutionalized. In 2015, the opposition parties formed a single coalition to contest for the presidency and gained 40% of the vote. 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 majority of Tanzania’s urban areas. Almost all community elections are now contested by at least one of the opposition parties.

Tanzania decentralized in 2000 through the Local Government Reform Programme (LGRP). The LGRP gave elected politicians at the LG level authority over key public goods including schools, clinics, roads and water. Coordination with the central government is sometimes required but work in public administration has found that the reforms meaningfully empowered local government and were comparable to other reforms to local public good provision (Kessy & McCourt, 2010). The reforms also increased the role of community institutions. Village/street offices are headed by an elected politician assisted by an appointed official. This system pre-dates decentralization reforms but had limited official powers and minimal participation (Ngware & Haule, 1992). Today, these offices are highly influential in the daily life of Tanzanians (Croke, 2017).

<sup>7</sup>This encompasses competitive or electoral authoritarian, hybrid and single-party dominant regimes

<sup>8</sup>This is a form of political decentralization but one which presupposes a sufficient resource base (administrative, fiscal decentralization) that they have meaningful decision-making power. This definition breaks from Riker (1964) as it does not require decentralization to be constitutionally guaranteed. Most decentralized countries are not federal

<sup>9</sup>Tanzania is above average in sub-Saharan Africa. I do not seek to account for ‘African politics’ broadly

Village chairpeople (VCs) are elected the year prior to general elections. They provide identity verification and referrals for access to state resources, are responsible for community order and coordinate citizen requests for development projects. Community offices are another common feature of decentralization reforms.

Historically, the CCM has had a strong local presence but this waned towards the end of the 20th century. The less political functions of CCM village leaders were subsumed into VC's role at the time of decentralization. Party offices in many cases became the VCs' offices. However, these institutions could now be lost to opposition parties. The Tanzanian government were confident in 2000 that this was not a major threat. However, these reforms have led to substantial variation in CCM local control. Today, around two thirds of all Tanzanian wards (the unit which elects representatives to the LG) neighbor an opposition ward.

Extant evidence suggests the CCM enforces a punishment regime. Central transfers to LGs (Weinstein, 2012) and decentralized provision of water points by LGs are disproportionately allocated to CCM areas (Carlitz, 2017). I address how local control confounds this punishment regime. Through a case study of Kilimanjaro region, I show that local officials can identify areas and individuals who support opposition parties then leverage decentralized state resources to sanction them. I highlight how this leads to inequalities in access to state resources between and within LGs and between and within communities in Kilimanjaro. I conducted interviews with local and community politicians and bureaucrats as well as voters<sup>10</sup>. I conducted over 60 interviews in Kilimanjaro region between 2015 and 2018. I also interviewed bureaucrats at the President's Office for Regional Administration and Local Government in Dodoma. I select Kilimanjaro region as it exhibits substantial variation in support for CCM. Areas in the north of the region are some of the most loyal in Tanzania to the main opposition party, Chadema. The areas south and east of Moshi range from competitive to highly CCM loyal. The main opposition parties are active in multiple levels of government in Kilimanjaro. I did interviews in 4 districts to exploit this variation to understand how variation in control of different levels influenced whether and how Chadema areas and voters were targeted. Kilimanjaro is one of the wealthier areas of Tanzania and its residents are less vulnerable to sanction than voters in other parts of the country. If sanctioning is important to voters in Kilimanjaro, where residents are less reliant on the state, then I expect it to be important to voters across the country. Working in a single region allowed me to implicitly control for variation in administration and leadership at the regional level. Additional interview evidence and discussion of case selection can be found in SI (p10).

First, I look at the LG level. Opposition communities struggled to secure access to public goods and services in CCM districts. Interviewees in CCM districts point to clear bias in allocation of local development projects<sup>11</sup>. According to an opposition councilor, "there is a lot of favoritism and discrimination. Projects are allocated to CCM wards over Chadema wards. The head of the township authority, who is a CCM VC, has had 17 projects allocated to his street alone. Chadema wards? (*author's note: wards are four times or more the size of streets*) Maybe one. They get road building and maintenance, development funds, money from TASAF.<sup>12</sup> 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."<sup>13</sup> Chadema areas' lack of support from LG in that district is not for want of trying. For example, a Chadema village chair had been seeking to add an additional classroom to the school in his community. In line with government policy, the community had raised funds for and built the initial foundations and structure awaiting final completion by the LG. The chair 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<sup>14</sup> and so we haven't got

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<sup>10</sup>The communities in which I interviewed VCs were randomly selected from villages not included in the survey. A random sample of ward councilors were contacted (stratified by party) and those who consented were interviewed. In districts with few opposition councilors, all were contacted and those that consented were interviewed. Permission to talk with politicians was brokered through the parties. District bureaucrats were contacted directly. Permission to talk to these bureaucrats was brokered through Kilimanjaro Regional Commission and District Executive Directors

<sup>11</sup>Development projects are small public good projects, which are proposed by the community and funded by LG

<sup>12</sup>TASAF is a centralized conditional cash transfer program

<sup>13</sup>Interview #6798

<sup>14</sup>Opposition candidate for President in 2015



help”<sup>15</sup> In contrast, the policy was respected in a CCM VC’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”.<sup>16</sup> The dynamics of distribution in this incumbent district shows how decentralized resources can be used deliberately and punitively to sanction communities for their political loyalties. When the incumbent controls LG, distribution looks like a classic punishment regime.

Opposition communities in opposition districts do not face the same problems. A VC in an opposition district who was elected before the opposition party won control of the LG explained how his role had changed with the change in LG control. “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.”<sup>17</sup> Chadema politicians in opposition districts talked about their relative ease in securing funding for public goods. Opposition control of LG denies the incumbent their usual clientelist tools. As one voter in an opposition district put it: “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.”<sup>18</sup>

I interviewed bureaucrats to probe if sanctioning was a factor in their distributive decisions. Bureaucrats working in both CCM and Chadema-controlled districts said their priority was respecting the wishes of appointed senior bureaucrats over those of local politicians. However, they found it harder to do so in opposition districts. Some were explicit that they received directives to prioritize CCM communities and neglect opposition ones. A bureaucrat in a Chadema area said the money 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.”<sup>19</sup> Central bureaucrats claimed these directives were necessary because opposition politicians could not be trusted.<sup>20</sup> Bureaucrats in CCM districts did not report the same kind of directives.

In a widely circulated video from a by-election rally in a CCM district in Mbeya region, a CCM councilor made clear that punishment was the logic driving these directives: “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.”<sup>21</sup> This sanctioning logic echoes the rhetoric of President John Magufuli in Kilimanjaro. After the majority of voters in Kilimanjaro voted against Magufuli in 2015, he made clear at a rally in Moshi in 2017 that the region could expect to see no new infrastructure. If voters did not hold up their end of the bargain then neither would central government.

However, bureaucrats sanction opposition communities less despite these directives when opposition politicians are in control of LG. One bureaucrat in a district where Chadema took control in 2015 was concerned that they would be less able to follow the directives coming from the CCM now that the opposition parties controlled the council, putting him in a difficult position professionally.<sup>22</sup> Where opposition politicians and government appointed technocrats cohabit, central government preferences over which areas receive projects and which are passed over no longer dominate as opposition politicians have control of the LG budgets. Thus the costs that the CCM can impose for voting against them are weakened once the LG is Chadema-controlled.

Now I examine sanctioning dynamics at the community level. When a punishment regime is in force, communities have an incentive to discourage disloyalty because voters and community politicians alike are

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<sup>15</sup>Interview #3561

<sup>16</sup>Interview #1710

<sup>17</sup>Interview #4567

<sup>18</sup>Interview #3809

<sup>19</sup>Interview #9074

<sup>20</sup>Interview #8627

<sup>21</sup>Speech by CCM councilor, Mbeya region, 2018

<sup>22</sup>Interview #1782

aware of the costs of opposition. Indeed, the bargain of ‘resources for votes, sanction for disloyalty’ is common knowledge. Voters in CCM communities expressed worries about opposition leaders being unable to bring money and development to their areas.<sup>23</sup> They point to how a ‘lack of unity’ between LG and community has led to worse social services in neighboring opposition communities. Furthermore, community leaders are also at risk of personal sanction from the party for low vote shares.<sup>24</sup> As one VC put it “It is important that the village stays with the CCM because the CCM is the system...I have to use all of my powers to get people to vote for the party”<sup>25</sup>

CCM VCs see themselves as a powerful part of the wider party machine. One described himself as the “face of the central government and the party” in the community.<sup>26</sup> Community leaders brokered pacts with the ruling party. One community leader brokered a deal with a CCM politician. The village school had been damaged and needed repairs. However, at that time, the village was led by Chadema and this help was not forthcoming from the CCM district council. In return for delivering the village back to CCM, this village was promised that the school would be repaired. After this village returned a CCM chair to power and a ‘good’ vote share at the subsequent presidential election, the school was indeed repaired, several years after the initial damage and request for help.<sup>27</sup> Recognizing the consequences for the community of any show of disloyalty, village chairs and other community leaders deliver the vote.

VCs’ embeddedness in the community gives them substantial information about their constituents. CCM VCs describe their network of informants, their interactions with citizens in their duties as an important source of information and power.<sup>28</sup> Those interviewed were overwhelmingly confident about their knowledge of their constituents. The majority said they would be able to identify the partisanship of all or most of their constituents.<sup>29</sup> ‘Quiet’ opposition supporters helped illuminate how information spreads and reaches VCs. One explained the risks of being open: “I keep very quiet about how I feel about opposition. In this area, everyone is CCM. If I tell the wrong person how I vote, maybe someone tells someone who tells the mabalozi (ten cell leaders) or VC, maybe I stop getting help, maybe they don’t listen to me in meetings anymore, maybe they don’t let me sit with them in the grocery”<sup>30</sup> This suggests both the ease with which information spreads and the real social and political costs of being ‘outed’ as an opposition supporter in areas hostile to defectors.

The village office endows incumbent-loyal VCs with a toolkit of powers to punish individual voters. First, VCs can grant access to services clientelistically. In a village on Mount Kilimanjaro, a student described her struggle to get approval for a universal educational loan. With all the paperwork assembled, she arrived at the village chair’s office for a simple stamp to verify her identity. However, the chair refused. There was no ink; she would have to come back. When she came back, he again refused. So next time, the student came with ink from a stationery shop in town and again he refused. This was not ‘official government ink’ he claimed; he still could not give her the stamp she needed. Despite her persistence, the chair was adamant in his refusals and the deadline for the loan passed. The chair was an elected CCM politician and the student’s parents were known Chadema voters.<sup>31</sup> This is one of example of the range of different services Chadema voters were blocked from by village chairs. Chadema voters were denied signatures to to be bailed from jail, hospital referrals, access to conditional cash transfers and even access to disaster relief. The powers of community politicians as a gatekeeper to state and community resources can be leveraged to sanction opposition voters.

Second, VCs used their legal powers to sanction opposition supporters. The VC maintains peace in the community. To this end, they have far-reaching powers, including the ability to fine, confiscate property

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<sup>23</sup>Interview #1111 & #9899

<sup>24</sup>Interview #9753

<sup>25</sup>Interview #5229

<sup>26</sup>Interview #5109

<sup>27</sup>Interview #1101

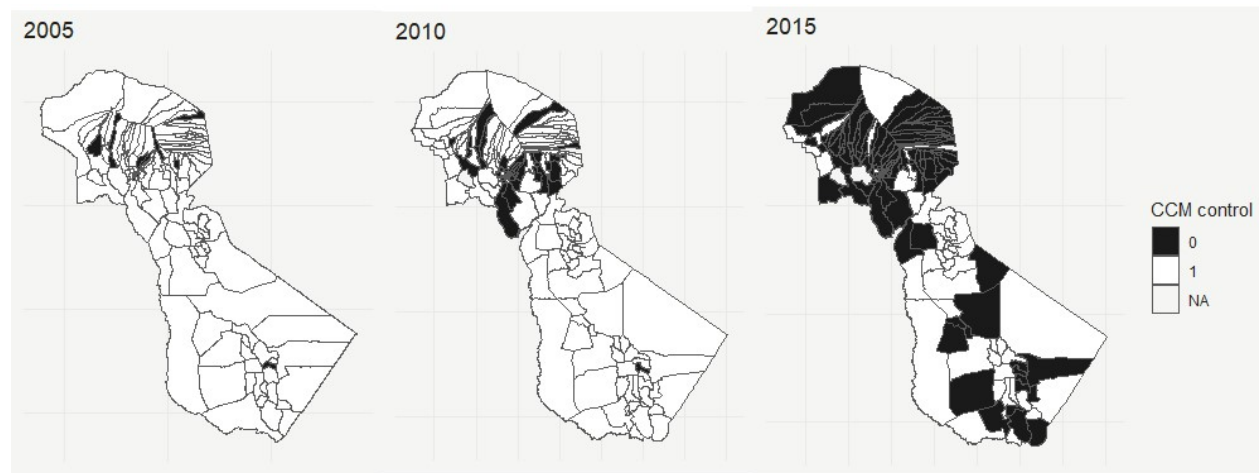
<sup>28</sup>Interview #5433

<sup>29</sup>This contrasts to Village Executive Officers, community bureaucrats appointed by central government who live outside the community. Most said that they knew far less than the VCs and got most of their information from them.

<sup>30</sup>Interview #1459

<sup>31</sup>Interview #9978, 2015

and even exile constituents. VCs head the security council in the community which often directs a village militia. After decades of CCM rhetoric about the role of the party in keeping the peace in an otherwise turbulent region, the role of peacekeeper is often viewed through a political lens. One CCM VC described the coercive power of local politicians: “CCM are more powerful at solving these kinds of (compliance) issues – they have experience, they have authority and can delegate, they have unity – other parties cannot do this because it is not decentralized. They can’t make people do what they’re supposed to. CCM can impose consequences whereas Chadema cannot. They can impose punishments and restrictions, might be exiled from the area, might give them forced labor in local activities.”<sup>32</sup> Any ‘troublemakers’ in the community can be held accountable by the VC. When asked what kind of people were ‘troublemakers’, several CCM chairs listed Chadema voters. One VC, when asked how he deals with ‘troublemakers’, replied: “Force if they do not listen. I use a lot of force to control the Chadema people in the village”<sup>33</sup> Indeed, Chadema supporters talked of punitive use of legal powers against them: enforcement of bylaws which went otherwise unenforced, harsher fines and punishments and even intimidation by village militias and police. With VCs viewing themselves as the final word on legal matters in their community, chairs keen to deliver the vote can and do use these powers punitively to target opposition supporters.



**Figure 1:** Map of evolution of opposition control in Kilimanjaro by ward<sup>34</sup>

If my theory holds, opposition supporters should not be subject to individual sanction once the VC office is won by Chadema. Indeed, once this happens, the costs of opposition reported in interviews become substantially more banal. Opposition voters in opposition communities mentioned social pressure from CCM-loyal neighbors and worries about access to funding from higher levels of government controlled by the incumbent. However, they were clear that they could rely on their chair now. As one said, “the street bureaucrat and street chair in the community are there to help us now.”<sup>35</sup> Opposition supporters in these areas are far less worried about the individual discrimination in access to state resources described in interviews in regime-loyal communities.

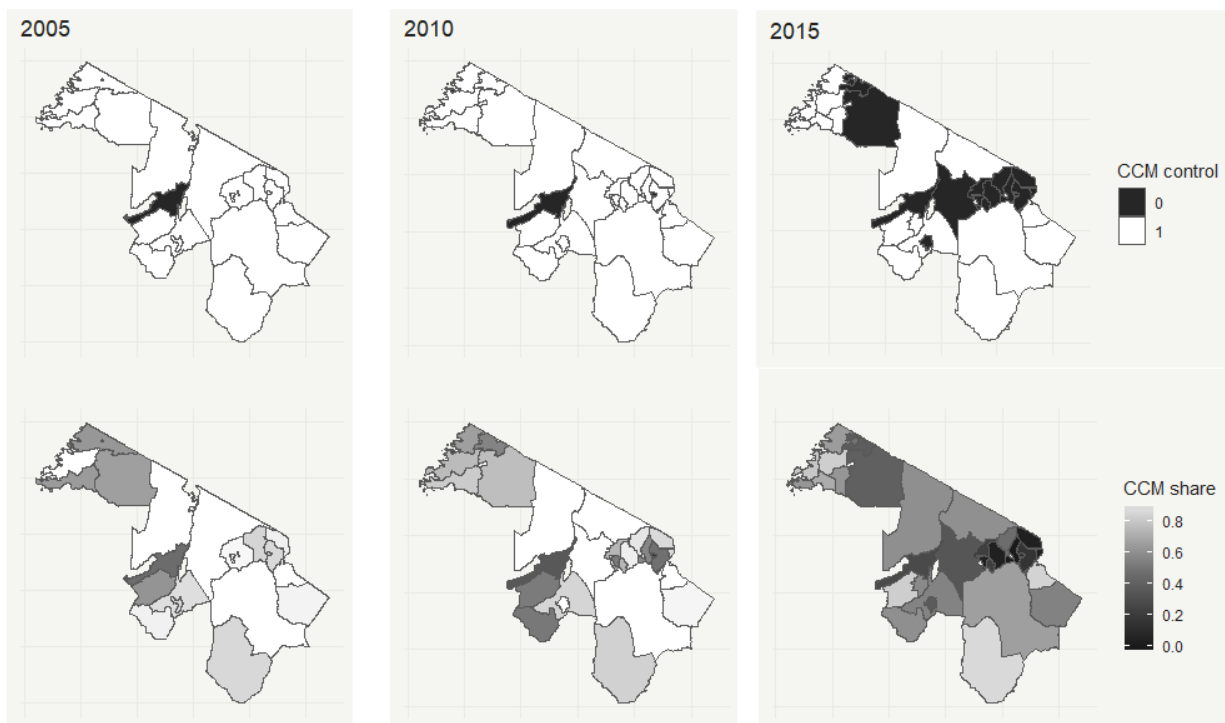
In Kilimanjaro, ability to sanction opposition support using state resources is determined by local control. These differences in control have created radically different environments for opposition supporters across the region. Opposition voters in the north of the region are generally less fearful, can vote more on conscience and express beliefs about politics more akin to voters in democracies. CCM voters even reported split-ticket voting in these areas, preferring opposition candidates for some positions because of their perceived competency. In areas in the North of the region, voters who are not archetypal opposition supporters can

<sup>32</sup>Interview #1710

<sup>33</sup>Interview #9753

<sup>34</sup>I use wards, the electoral level above the village, because I was not granted access to Kilimanjaro village election results

<sup>35</sup>Interview #3809



**Figure 2:** Map of evolution of opposition control in NE Tanzania. Top row shows LG control, bottom shows what share of LG is CCM councilors

choose who to side with. They can do so because the coercive influence of incumbency advantage is weaker in their areas. In contrast, opposition supporters in CCM dominated areas face pressure to keep their sympathies private for fear that they will lose the basic benefits of citizenship. The CCM can control politics far more when they have local control. When they lose local control, it becomes easier for opposition voters to keep voting for opposition parties in subsequent elections. In Kilimanjaro (as shown in Figure 1), isolated clusters of opposition control survived and spread from one election cycle to the next. By 2015, most of the region became opposition controlled. Figure 2 shows how opposition LG control persisted in early movers Katavi (one of only 3 opposition LGs in 2005) and Moshi (opposition controlled after 2010). By 2015, most of NE Tanzania’s LGs were under opposition control or had significant opposition minorities. I posit that the spatial constraints the CCM faces made it possible for opposition footholds to form and then subsequently spread.<sup>36</sup>

## Using list experiments to measure fear of sanctions

I now test my theory quantitatively using a pre-election survey I conducted in Kilimanjaro in 2015. I selected three districts: one opposition and two CCM.<sup>37</sup> In each district, villages were categorized as by opposition or incumbent VC and villages were then selected at random from each list. A total of 20 villages were included in the sample with a total of 766 respondents. Households were selected using ‘random walk’ from a centroid of each village.

The core of the survey was a short battery of list experiments intended to assess perceptions of the cost of opposition support. Respondents are likely to avoid or lie when asked direct questions about sensitive topics. List experiments use an item count technique, where respondents report a number of the items they agree with, to allow respondents to have plausible deniability for affirming a sensitive item. Half of respondents,

<sup>36</sup>Lucardi (2016) shows local opposition performance can lead to the diffusion of opposition support in non-democracies

<sup>37</sup>I do not name districts due to safety concerns

the treatment group, are given the non-sensitive items and the sensitive item. The other half, the control group, are given only the non-sensitive items. Estimates of the rate that respondents agree/identify with the sensitive item(s) are made by comparing the item response counts of the treatment group and the control group. To increase the anonymity of item responses, respondents did not say aloud their response, rather they wrote it down (either number or marks) and placed it in a sealed envelope. In this study, I use 3 list experiments, which assess perceptions of costs of voting for the opposition coalition, Ukawa, headed by Chadema. In all three of these experiments, the same question was posed with different control and sensitive items:

*Some people are worried about voting for the opposition in the upcoming election. How many of these things would you worry about in voting for the opposition?*

The sensitive items were as follows:

1. I, a member of my family or a friend may be worse off if I back Ukawa, for example I or someone I know may lose a job, a business license, a position of influence
2. If we vote opposition, my community may lose out; for example the community may receive fewer projects and grants to improve life here, we may have more power cuts and other shortages here
3. If I vote opposition, I may be subject to discrimination before or after the election<sup>38</sup>

These items arbitrate between individual and community costs of opposition support. The discrimination question is intended as a robustness check. One plausible objection to the findings outlined in this study is that positive response to the other sensitive items may be driven by respondents' concerns about service delivery under an opposition party or simple pocketbook voting. The discrimination sensitive item allows me to dismiss this objection; respondents are asked directly whether they fear being treated unfairly based on their political support. The full text of the list experiments is in SI (p16). These list experiments allow me to estimate the extent to which people fear different kinds of sanction and how LG control influences these perceptions. Village chairs were elected in December 2014 before the main round of elections in October 2015. Thus, respondents knew the partisanship of the village chairs who would oversee their communities for the majority of the following electoral cycle. Partisanship of district councils and each of their constituent councilors were determined at the 2015 election.

To test my hypotheses, I use a maximum likelihood regression technique developed to analyze item count data with sensitive items (Blair & Imai, 2010). This method allows me to directly estimate the proportion of the population who 'agree' with the sensitive item, while controlling for covariates. For robustness, I also use ordinary least squares (OLS) to regress my main independent variables on the item count responses, controlling directly for whether the respondent was in the control or treatment group. I use OLS regression to test my mechanism. I also show a simple difference of means between treatment and control to compare rates of fear of sanction under incumbent and opposition control in Figure 5.

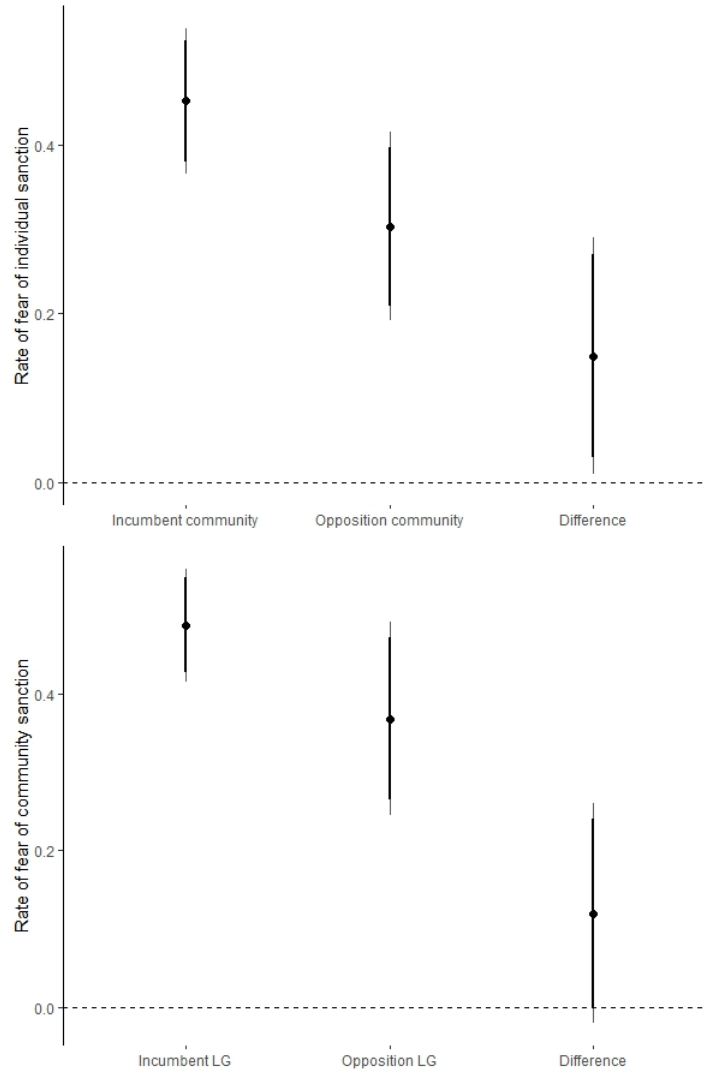
## Results

I use maximum likelihood estimation to identify the estimated proportion of respondents who are concerned about each kind of sanction, controlling for covariates. Table 3 shows the estimated proportion of respondents who agree with the sensitive item i.e. fear individual sanction (models 1-4) and community sanction (models 5-8) given who controls the community and district. The first two models for each only control for incumbent control, the third includes demographic controls and the fourth controls for partisanship. These estimates are all highly significantly different from zero. However, the main quantities of interest are the differences between incumbent and opposition controlled units, i.e. how much more likely respondents are to fear sanction in incumbent communities and LGs than in opposition ones. I find strong support for my two

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<sup>38</sup>Discrimination is not a perfect translation of the Kiswahili word used. While discrimination can be used to interchangeably refer to treatment of groups and individuals in English, the phrasing here applies more to individuals. In this sense, 'victimized' would be another way of translating this item

main hypotheses. Controlling for covariates including vote choice in the 2014 local election<sup>39</sup>, respondents in incumbent communities are significantly more likely to fear individual sanction than those in opposition communities. I plot these results in panel 1 of Figure 3. Furthermore, opposition control of the LG significantly lowers fear of community sanction as shown in Panel 2 of Figure 3. As a robustness check, I test if community control affects fear of discrimination. The results of this are shown in Figure 6. As I anticipate, fear of individual sanction falls. However, this difference is only significant if respondent partisanship is not controlled for. Thus, MLE results provide support for my theory.



**Figure 3:** MLE estimates of the effect of community control on fear of individual sanction (Panel 1) and the effect of LG control on fear of community sanction (Panel 2). Plots show 90% and 95% confidence intervals

<sup>39</sup>Results are robust to measures of partisanship. I choose local vote choice because it is a pre-survey measure and one which respondents were most likely to answer.

**Table 3:** Effect of local control on fear of sanctions

<i>MLE estimate of proportion of affirmative responses to the sensitive item</i>								
	<b>Fear of individual sanction</b>			<b>Fear of community sanction</b>				
	(Model 1)	(Model 2)	(Model 3)	(Model 4)	(Model 5)	(Model 6)	(Model 7)	(Model 8)
Comm control: <i>Incumbent</i>	0.473*** (0.044)	0.467*** (0.044)	0.459*** (0.043)	0.452*** (0.044)	0.502*** (0.041)	0.495*** (0.041)	0.489*** (0.041)	0.489*** (0.041)
<i>Opposition</i>	0.301*** (0.053)	0.308*** (0.054)	0.280*** (0.053)	0.303*** (0.057)	0.387*** (0.051)	0.372*** (0.052)	0.401*** (0.053)	0.401*** (0.053)
<i>Difference</i>	0.172*** (0.069)	0.159** (0.069)	0.178*** (0.068)	0.149* (0.072)	0.115* (0.065)	0.123* (0.066)	0.079 (0.067)	0.079 (0.067)
LG control: <i>Incumbent</i>		0.435*** (0.040)	0.418*** (0.039)	0.417*** (0.040)	0.503*** (0.037)	0.486*** (0.037)	0.488*** (0.036)	0.488*** (0.036)
<i>Opposition</i>		0.318*** (0.064)	0.304*** (0.063)	0.326*** (0.067)	0.3284*** (0.0825)	0.331*** (0.060)	0.334*** (0.061)	0.369*** (0.063)
<i>Difference</i>		0.119 (0.076)	0.114 (0.075)	0.091 (0.078)	0.175*** (0.070)	0.169** (0.071)	0.152** (0.071)	0.119* (0.073)
<i>N</i>	766	766	766	766	766	766	766	766
Controls	X	X	✓	✓	X	X	✓	✓
Partisanship control	X	X	X	✓	X	X	X	✓

Robust standard errors in parenthesis. Models control for age, income, gender, ethnicity, vote choice in 2014 indicated.

\*  $p < 0.1$ , \*\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.01$

In line with other list experiment studies, I test the robustness of my findings using OLS regression on the item response count, controlling directly for inclusion in the treatment group as well as the same battery of controls.<sup>40</sup> The results of these regressions are shown in Tables 5 and 6. I again find support for my hypotheses. Being in an incumbent community has a positive and highly significant effect on item response count for the individual sanction question. Being in an incumbent LG has a positive and significant effect on item response count for the community sanction question. The OLS results follow the same patterns of significance as my MLE results. Through these three techniques together, I therefore provide strong quantitative evidence for both of my hypotheses.

The preceding analyses do not allow me to test my mechanism. If my theory is correct, those respondents who are more vulnerable to sanction by local officials should fear individual sanction more in incumbent communities but not in opposition communities. Similar patterns should not exist for fear of community sanction as these sanctions are at the group level and not determined by a given individual's behavior. I proxy for 'capacity' using visits to CCM party offices and village offices. I look only at fear of community sanction. Vulnerability to capacity to sanction at the community level could be proxied for the poverty of the community. However, village level estimates of poverty are not available. I therefore do not test my mechanism at this level. Frequent visits to the VC or CCM office imply that relationships with the authorities are important to the respondent's life. However, these offices have different implications for vulnerability to sanction given local control. Frequent visits to CCM offices imply that the respondent's daily life and livelihood is in some way dependent on approval from central government and the party. I would expect visits to the CCM office to have a positive effect on fear of sanction but not mediate the effect of local control because CCM capacity will remain even if LG or community office is handed over. In contrast, frequent visits to the VC suggests a respondent is more dependent on community government. I would expect visits to VC, when interacted with community control, to mediate the direct effect of community control on fear of individual sanction.

Table 4 shows the extent to which capacity to sanction predicts fear of individual sanction. Visits to the VC have an insignificant effect. However, visits to the VC, when interacted with community control does. Visits to a CCM VC have a positive and significant effect on fear of sanction and renders the coefficient on incumbent control insignificant. This suggests that vulnerability to CCM VC sanction is the mechanism which drives the effect of local control on fear of individual sanction. I do not find similar results when it comes to fear of community sanction, shown in Table 7, which provides further support for my theory. Fear of group sanction should not be determined by vulnerability to VC directly. CCM office visits have a positive and significant effect on fear of sanctions. Visits to a CCM office suggests that the respondent is reliant on the incumbent through the party. These visits should predict fear of individual sanction for opposition support. Controlling for this does not negate the effect of village control or indeed significantly reduce the coefficient of the baseline result shown in Model 1. The interaction between this variable and incumbent control is insignificant. These results indicate that CCM office visits' effect on fear of individual sanction does not operate through local control. These results suggest that community control determines fear of individual sanction through the mechanism of the VCs capacity to sanction.

Thus, I show that there is a robust relationship between fear of individual sanctioning and community control and fear of community sanction and LG control respectively. Those most vulnerable to sanction by CCM VCs are more likely to report fear of sanction. Together, these results provide support for my theory. Local institutions are leveraged by incumbents to sanction opposition support. When incumbent loses control of these institutions, fear of sanction drops significantly. Thus, local control determines the costs that the ruling party can impose for opposition support.

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<sup>40</sup>MLE is a more conservative and better identified test than OLS. I include it to show that more 'standard' regression techniques produce similar results



**Table 4:** Effect of capacity to sanction on fear of sanction

	OLS				
	Item response (individual sanction)				
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Incumbent comm	0.297*** (0.110)	0.282*** (0.109)	0.295*** (0.110)	-0.153 (0.252)	0.470*** (0.136)
Incumbent LG	0.154 (0.115)	0.140 (0.115)	0.138 (0.118)	0.150 (0.151)	0.231* (0.128)
Visit CCM office regularly		0.509*** (0.126)			0.928*** (0.206)
Visits VC regularly			-0.112 (0.129)	-0.475** (0.220)	
Incumbent comm: Visits CCM					-0.032 (0.258)
Incumbent comm: Visits VC				0.574* (0.298)	
Full controls	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Observations	766	760	766	766	760

*Note:* Robust standard errors in parenthesis. 'Regularly' refers to be several times a year or more.

\*  $p < 0.1$ , \*\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.01$

## Conclusion

In this study, I show that local control determines the credibility of sanctions for opposition support in decentralized non-democracies. Through a mixed methods approach, I demonstrate that the incumbent CCM is constrained in its ability to implement its punishment regime across space. This changes how we think about incumbent strategy. Incumbents may be able to win enough votes to maintain an elite coalition but doing so does not imply they have hegemonic control over state resources nor that they have full territorial control. There are areas of non-democracies where the incumbent is as hegemonic as the prevailing consensus suggests. However, there are others, where the incumbent faces serious limitations on their ability to use the 'quieter' forms of coercion they rely on.

Since decentralization, local institutions control access to the majority of resources and services which an ordinary Tanzanian may expect to receive between electoral cycles. When the incumbent retains control of local government, it can credibly threaten to sanction disloyal communities using local public goods. These communities have an incentive to return a 'satisfactory' electoral result to avoid sanction. Once the local government is under opposition control, the regime loses control of decentralized resources and hence loses the ability to direct these to sanction disloyal communities. Indeed, I find that loss of control of the local government led to a significant drop in fear of community sanctions. Control of communities is key to the credibility of threats of individual sanctions. The strengthening of community institutions brought meaningful powers to the very local level where information about individuals' political behavior and preferences is the densest. Interviews highlighted the many and varied ways these powers are used to sanction opposition voters in incumbent communities. The incumbent loses the ability to monitor and sanction disloyal individuals if control of these communities is lost. I show that respondents in opposition communities were significantly less likely to fear individual sanctions.

In areas where opposition parties are popular enough to win office, the incumbent becomes less able to make it costly for individuals or communities to support opposition parties. In opposition districts and even opposition communities in incumbent districts, voters make political decisions given a lower coercive threat of sanction. Voters are more able to vote on conscience and openly express their views in areas where the incumbent has lost control of some or all levels of local government. This makes it harder for the incumbent to suppress political competition and increases the chance that a credible opposition party emerges. In areas where the incumbent retains control, they can discourage opposition support by making it costly. In these areas, nascent opposition support may quickly collapse before election time as voters and communities weigh the potential consequences of sanction for their welfare. The incumbent can better manage the evolution of political competition and prevent the emergence of a credible electoral threat to their tenure in these areas. Local control determines the tools that the incumbent has to impose costs for opposition support and so manage political competition.

This study has important implications for the study of clientelism, decentralization and autocracy. I show how the local control determines the credibility of clientelist bargains and whether incumbents can target individuals or groups. These insights can carry to clientelist democracies. Furthermore, I challenge the view that decentralization is only a boon for incumbent autocrats. I outline how decentralization is double edged sword, a logic not yet explored in this literature, by showing how decentralization can meaningfully constrain incumbents in opposition areas. This suggests level of centralization changes how incumbent autocrats must manage political contestation. Lastly, this theory contributes to the authoritarian politics literature in two ways. First, I show that incumbents can be spatially constrained despite being hegemonic at the national level. Second, I propose a channel by which opposition parties, normally viewed as either co-opted or doomed to fail, can gain a foothold in non-democracies.

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**Supplemental Information for 'Local Control: How Opposition Support Constrains Non-Democratic Incumbents'**

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## Additional quantitative evidence

**Table 5:** Effects of local control on fear of individual sanction

	OLS				
	Item response (individual sanction)				
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Incumbent comm.	0.570*** (0.120)		0.543*** (0.12)	0.514*** (0.119)	0.297*** (0.109)
Incumbent LG		0.381*** (0.134)	0.325** (0.133)	0.285** (0.132)	0.154 (0.115)
Controls?	X	X	X	✓	✓
Partisanship control?	X	X	X	X	✓
Observations	766	766	766	766	766

*Note: Robust SEs*

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

**Table 6:** Effects of local control on fear of community sanction

	OLS				
	Item response (community sanction)				
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Incumbent LG	0.595*** (0.144)		0.548*** (0.143)	0.469*** (0.143)	0.319*** (0.122)
Incumbent comm.		0.499*** (0.131)	0.454*** (0.131)	0.411*** (0.130)	0.162 (0.118)
Controls	X	X	X	✓	✓
Partisanship control	X	X	X	X	✓
Observations	766	766	766	766	766

*Note: Robust SEs*

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

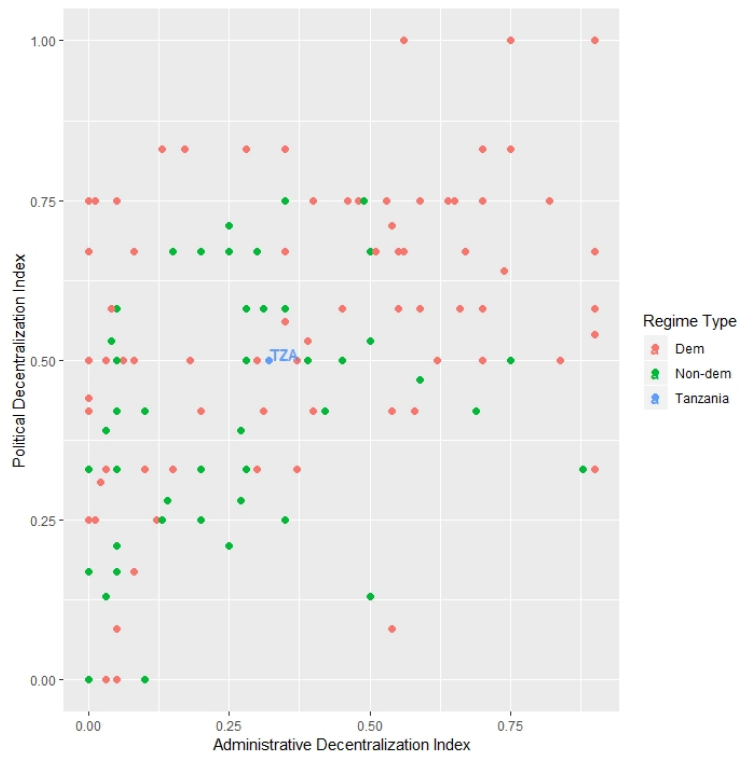
**Table 7:** Effect of capacity to sanction on fear of sanction

	OLS			
	Item response (community sanction)			
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Incumbent comm	0.162 (0.117)	0.159 (0.117)	0.157 (0.116)	0.024 (0.245)
Incumbent LG	0.319*** (0.122)	0.292** (0.124)	0.303** (0.121)	0.296** (0.124)
Visits CCM		-0.185 (0.143)		-0.294 (0.213)
Visits VC			0.489*** (0.133)	
Incumbent comm: visits VC				0.173 (0.274)
Full controls	✓	✓	✓	✓
Observations	766	766	760	766

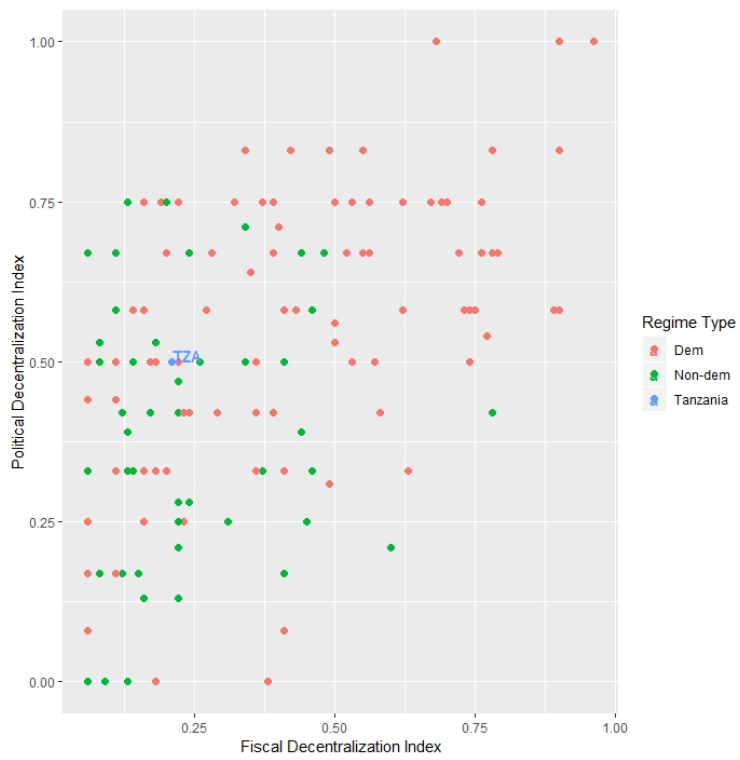
*Note: Robust SEs. Regularly refers to several times a year or more*

\* $p < 0.1$ ; \*\* $p < 0.05$ ; \*\*\* $p < 0.01$



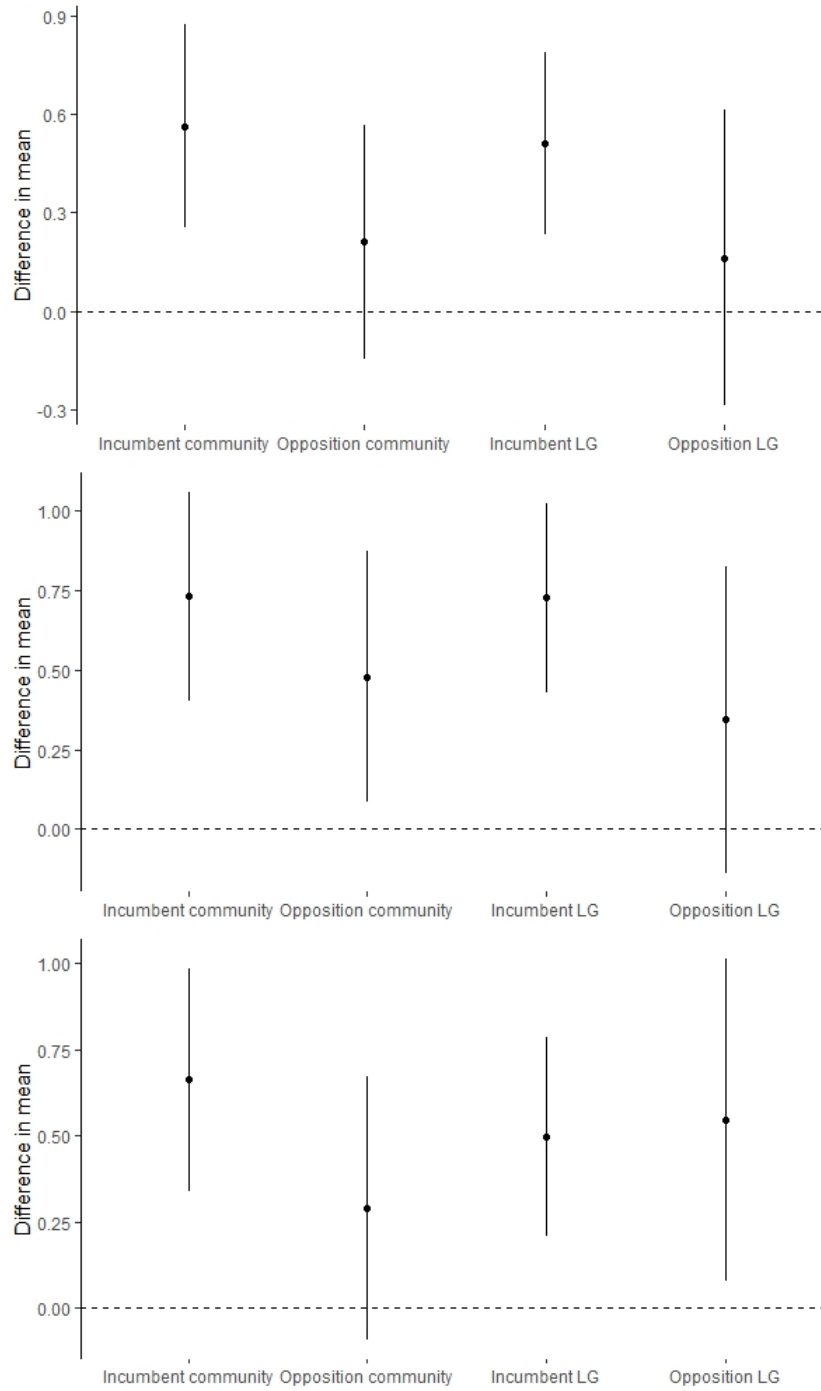


(a)

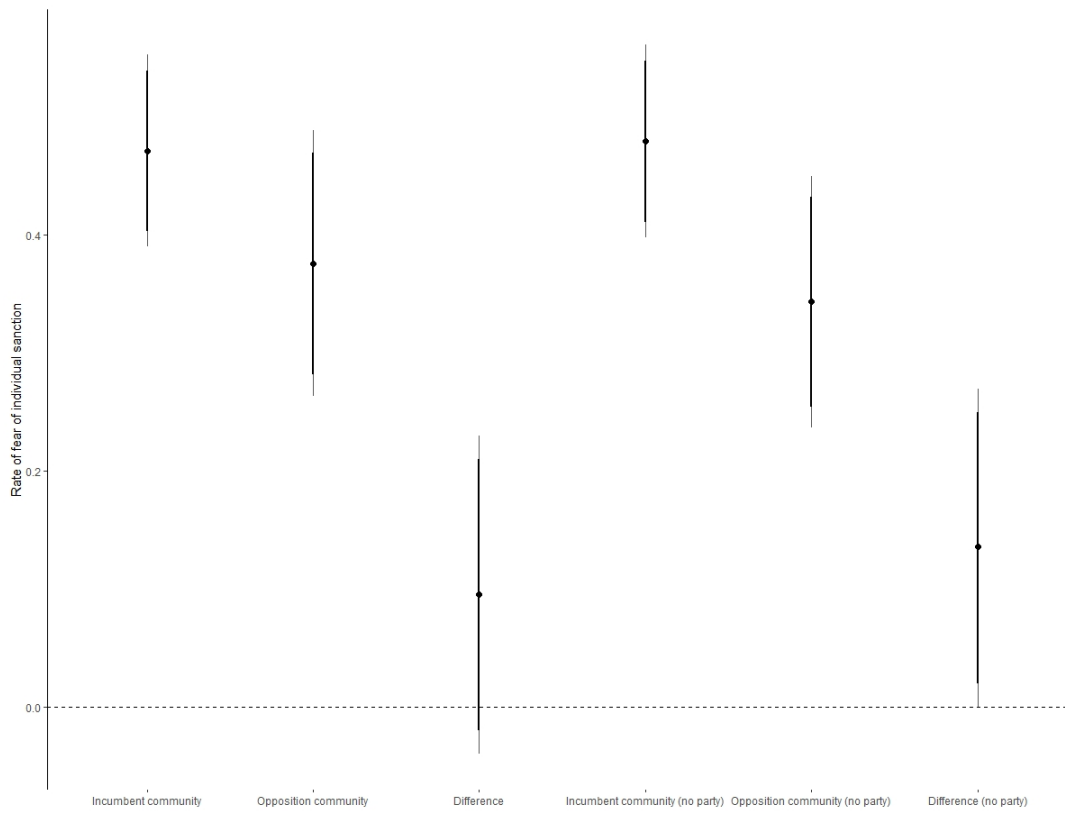


(b)

**Figure 4:** All countries plotted by levels of administrative, fiscal and political decentralization



**Figure 5:** Difference in mean item response count between treatment and control group broken down by unit type. Panel 1 (top) plots the difference in means for the fear of individual sanction experiment, panel 2 plots the difference in means for fear of community sanction experiment and panel 3 plots the difference in means for fear of discrimination experiment. Plots show 95% confidence intervals



**Figure 6:** MLE estimates of effect of community control on fear of discrimination, with partisanship controls (left) and without (right).

**Table 8:** Effect of information on fear of sanction

	OLS					
	Item response (individual sanction)			Item response (community sanction)		
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Incumbent comm	0.292*** (0.110)	0.299*** (0.110)	0.298*** (0.110)	0.147 (0.118)	0.160 (0.117)	0.161 (0.117)
Incumbent LG	0.142 (0.117)	0.156 (0.115)	0.156 (0.116)	0.281** (0.123)	0.316*** (0.122)	0.316*** (0.122)
Freq. of leaving comm	0.022 (0.040)			0.069* (0.042)		
Freq. of leaving ward		-0.006 (0.041)			0.008 (0.043)	
Freq. of radio use			0.011 (0.049)			-0.019 (0.057)
Full controls	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Observations	766	766	766	766	766	766

*Note: Robust standard errors. Frequencies are ordinal variables*

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

It is possible that my results are driven by misinformation. Low information voters may fear sanction more and they may be clustered in incumbent loyal areas. If this is the case, those respondents who are more informed should fear sanction less. I proxy for information using radio use and frequency of leaving the community. Radio is a primary source of political information in Tanzania. Those who regularly leave their community are more likely to have social networks which extend beyond their community. This measure is a good proxy for the extent to which respondents are likely to have access to political information about the performance of politicians from different political parties. In table 8, I test the information mechanism for both community and individual sanction. If misinformation is an important determinant, fear of both community and individual sanction should be lower for high information voters. I find broadly null effects suggesting that the baseline results I find are not driven by misinformation. These results are robust to use of binary categories. Interaction between my information proxies and incumbent control also generate null results. I find that frequency of leaving the community actually increases fear of community sanction and this partly mediates the effect of LG control on fear of sanction. Those with more information about treatment of other communities are more likely to fear community sanction. Misinformation is highly unlikely to explain variation in fear of sanction by local control.

## Supplemental interview evidence

This section outlines additional interview evidence. This appendix is organized into sections, which correspond to paragraphs in the main body of the case study. To identify which paragraph each section corresponds to, the sections are marked with a thematic title.

First, I give additional details on case selection logic. Focusing on a single region allows me to control implicitly in my qualitative work for a lot of possible confounders that may exist across region and focus on the effects of variation in subnational control. As discussed, I select Kilimanjaro because it exhibits substantial variation in opposition control at the community and LG level. Kilimanjaro is in the North of the country, bordering on Kenya. Its economy is primarily based on agriculture (as is the case across Tanzania) and tourism (common in many parts of Tanzania). Kilimanjaro has one major urban center, Moshi, which has a population of less than 200 000. The rural districts in Kilimanjaro are mostly composed of villages of between 500 and 4000 people. All of the rural districts each have their own main towns, often the seat of the district council, with populations of between 25000 and 40000 people. The urban/rural mix is typical of Tanzania. Kilimanjaro region is one of the wealthier regions in Tanzania although there is substantial variation within the region. As such, public good provision is comparatively less reliant on the state than in other parts of the country and the incumbent has weaker capacity to sanction. If risk of sanction worries potential opposition voters in a region where the incumbent has lower capacity to sanction, I would expect these sanctioning dynamics to be as important if not more so in voters' calculus in other parts of the country.

Within Kilimanjaro, I selected a number of districts which vary in their experience of opposition control. Moshi Municipal and those rural areas to the West (Hai, Siha) of it have a long history of opposition support. The rural areas to the East of Moshi Municipal (Moshi Rural, Rombo) were CCM controlled but have been opposition led since 2015. The areas to the South of the region (Mwanga and Same) are CCM controlled and opposition support is low but growing. These Southern districts are substantially more arid and poorer than the Northern districts. I selected districts for the survey which varied on opposition control at the time. For the interviews, I added an additional district to allow me to increase my sample of opposition chairs and communities in consistently CCM districts. This allowed me to do more interviews but also allows me to reduce the risk that my respondents are identified by the partisanship of their communities and districts alone. There is variation in terms of income, education and existing access to public goods across and within districts. I selected districts to minimize between district variation in confounders while preserving variation in local control. I do not name districts given the current crackdown in Tanzania.

### *CCM advantage in public good distribution:*

Local public goods in Tanzania are allocated through a participatory planning process. Village and street development committees (VDC) draft a plan which is then passed to the ward development committee (WDC) which is then passed up to the district where final plans are made. These are then passed for approval to the ministry in charge of local government (formerly part of the Prime Minister's office under PMO-RALG, now part of the President's office under Tamisemi). While local communities are involved in plans, scholars of public administration argue that these development plans pass through so many hands and are subject to the influence of so many decision-makers that the realised distribution of local public goods and development projects often deviates substantially from the village or street's development plan (Tuwa, 2010). This was also borne out in the interviews conducted. For example, the leader of a Chadema village in a CCM ward and district outlined how CCM influence is used to block plans at the WDC and district level.

Given this procedure, CCM control of any level above the village introduces a new level at which a village's priorities can be taken off the plan and their demands ignored. Interviews corroborate the relative ease with which CCM politicians can secure funding for renovation and repair of local public goods. In contrast, Chadema politicians and CCM leaders who had ousted Chadema politicians spoke of the frustration and difficulty faced by Chadema areas in securing the funding they request from higher levels of local and national government.

### *Decentralization and dynamics of public good provision:*

Decentralization allows decision-making power at different stages of the allocation process to be lost to opposition parties through elections. Because of this, the experience of CCM favoritism varies given the extent to which CCM remains hegemonic in a given area. Chadema leaders in CCM controlled areas spoke more of difficulties in getting access to resources accorded through development plans - money for repairs, local public goods, village development funds - than their colleagues in areas where power is shared between Chadema and CCM. One Chadema respondent in a CCM controlled area said that the distribution was becoming more and more punitive as Chadema was growing more powerful, that the CCM wanted to be seen to be punishing their disloyalty. A Chadema leader, in power for two electoral cycles, talked of how much easier it was to secure permits, funds and referrals for services for his constituents since Chadema took over the district in the 2015 election.

Outside of CCM dominated areas, Chadema interviewees focused more on the persistence of problems in securing access to resources controlled by the central government as outlined in the main body of the text. One CCM street leader talked of how his ward (the only one still controlled solely by CCM in the area) could far more easily access funds earmarked for the district by central government than his Chadema colleagues in neighboring streets and wards. He boasted that, despite their 'political isolation', their loyalty to CCM and their ability to 'speak the CCM's language' meant they were able to request and complete a number of renovation and construction projects in a short amount of time. CCM influence is weakened when the district is taken over by the opposition party. However, the influence of the regime persists through a number of channels.

### *Powers of village chairs:*

The office of village/street chair in Tanzania is highly powerful, a fact which village chairs interviewed universally acknowledged. When asked why they believed this, their responses suggested four key functions of the role of village chair. First, they are the community's primary liaison with local government. Village leaders are the community's representative to government and party officials. Who holds the role of village chair is in part so critical because the identity of the chair, in particular their partisanship, determines the bargaining power the community has.

In Tanzania, traditional leaders are notably lacking in any real influence outside of a small number of ethnic groups like the Maasai. Elected political village leaders therefore fulfill the role of the community leader. They serve as conflict mediators, their second major function. Village leaders have the final say in disputes between citizens and all matters of order and security. Village chairs convene security councils which have substantial powers and can impose heavy punishments, ranging from fines to exile, labor duties to confiscation of property. Third, the village chair acts as a patron. The village chair provides favours and support to community members. A frequently cited examples of this function is the payment of school fees for poor families and the giving of money from community funds when homes are damaged. The position of village chair endows the officeholder with a substantial amount of influence and authority over other members of the community.

Finally, the chair acts as a mobilizer. The village chair mobilizes the community to contribute their labor to development projects and duties. Village chairs post summons or send messengers to summon able-bodied residents to work on a task, often without pay. These tasks can include construction of local public goods, basic agricultural work, emergency repairs. Those who refuse are subject to punishment by the security council. Village chairs attested that very few people refused these duties. Thus village chairs have a high capacity to mobilize their constituents for the ends of the community. Given the openly political role of the position, it is therefore not surprising that village chairs described using this mobilization capacity at election time, to both ensure turnout and to make sure people voted 'the right way'.

### *Identifying partisanship:*

The centrality of the village chair in daily life of the communities allows them to garner a huge amount of information. Village chairs can call on allies in the community to communicate their suspicions about the partisanship of their neighbors. Furthermore, CCM village chairs can also call upon the substantial monitoring apparatus of the ten cell leaders. This hangover of the one party state, where a small number of households are assigned to a party member who is expected to monitor their loyalty and ensure they mobilise for political purposes, remains in operation in Tanzania. Both Chadema and CCM leaders were confident in how easily they could identify partisanship. However, CCM leaders were generally more confident than their Chadema colleagues, in part because of the additional party apparatus they can call on.

*Delivering the vote:*

Interviewees described how CCM campaigned explicitly on the basis of promises of public provision for loyal communities at rallies. Conditional campaign promises were common during the 2015 campaign. In one of the districts included in interviews, the now president promised a road to the area were it to vote CCM. The majority of voters in the area in question voted for Chadema. When asked if there was a chance the road would still be built despite this, a party official responded with an emphatic no and made clear that such promises were conditional on satisfactory electoral results.

Village leaders from both major parties meet with party officials regularly. Interviews suggested that CCM leaders met more regularly with party officials than their Chadema colleagues and that meetings increased substantially during election times. Almost all village leaders said that they were expected to ensure that their community voted for their party and that they were expected to mobilize their community to vote. CCM village chairs framed their role as part of the political machine to mobilize people to work for the advancement of CCM, including to deliver the vote to CCM.

*Clientelistic and social strategies of delivering the vote:*

The powers of the village chairs endows them with a toolkit of strategies they can use to target individual voters and make it individually costly to be identified as an opposition supporter. Respondents listed a large number of services and assistance that had been denied to them or their families. These include: referrals for hospital, university finance, high school places, funeral payments, school payments, emergency fund support, help of community labour, conditional cash transfers under TASAF.

*Use of legal powers to deliver the vote:*

One of the most persistent reasons that people cite for supporting CCM is that they maintain peace in a region where episodes of civil conflict and war are not uncommon. The goal of village government and indeed the CCM in keeping peace in Tanzania came up in a number of interviews with village chairs. Opposition supporters and politicians are often described as ‘wasaliti’ or troublemakers. The word also translates as a defector or betrayer. Opposition supporters get subsumed into the same category with thieves and noisemakers. By framing opposition supporters as troublemakers, they are then considered to be subject to the supervision and authority of the village security council and the legal powers of the village chair. This legal/security role was often listed by village chairs interviewed as their primary function and the main source of their power in the community.

*Additional evidence contrary to alternative explanations:*

Opposition control does not usher in sanctioning of CCM supporters, however. Where there is opposition control, District and Regional Commissioners, local appointees, have been known to intervene and overrule the decisions of opposition politicians. Furthermore, CCM retains control of a partial legal system. Chadema politicians cannot use the legal and coercive powers of the village chair with the same impunity. A Chadema VC in a CCM area claimed that he had been subject to several punitive legal cases, each issued after he tried to hold CCM supporters to account for violating village bylaws or failing to do their development duties. He discussed how difficult it had been to run the community since taking over because those who did not want



to cooperate were going to the ruling party for protection. The selective use of the law constrains opposition politicians and makes it difficult for them to sanction incumbent support.

Is lack of capacity driving this variation or is it lack of intent? I contend CCM still wants to sanction because they engage in strategic substitution, leaning on their more limited central resources more in opposition areas to preserve some ability to sanction. A councilor in a longstanding Chadema district discussed how schools in CCM villages often had more teachers.<sup>41</sup> Others cited difficulties in getting access to TASAF money for their eligible constituents compared to their colleagues in CCM held parts of the same district. There is substantial evidence to suggest that incumbents substitute centralized provisions for decentralized ones once they lose control of the LG office. This suggests that they still very much want to sanction but loss of local institutions restricts their ability to do so using their usual clientelist resources.

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<sup>41</sup>In Tanzania, school building is decentralized but staffing is not

## List experiments

1. Some people are worried about voting for the opposition in the upcoming election. How many of these things would you worry about in voting for the opposition:

- a) Ukawa may be corrupt
- b) Development in Tanzania may slow down
- c) I do not trust Edward Lowassa; he has been found to have done bad things in government
- d) CCM are the only party which can protect stability and peace in Tanzania
- e) I, a member of my family or a friend may be worse off if I back Ukawa, for example I or someone I know may lose a job, a business license, a position of influence.

2. Here is another list of reasons given. Please tell me again how many of this list you would worry about in voting for the opposition?

- a) They do not understand this community
- b) Ukawa are promising too much
- c) They are inexperienced and may perform poorly in local and national government
- d) There are too many divisions within Ukawa already
- e) If we vote opposition, my community may lose out; for example the community may receive fewer projects and grants to improve life here, we may have more power cuts and other shortages here

3. Here is another list of reasons given. Please tell me again how many of this list you would worry about in voting for the opposition?

- a) The idea of change in the way politics works scares me
- b) People like me don't vote for a party like Ukawa
- c) I don't like what they stand for
- d) Tanzania will be a worse country to live in if the opposition take over
- e) I may be subject to discrimination before or after the election