

# When are Junctures Critical?

## The Legacies and Non-Legacies of Interruptions in Local Self-Government

(Working Paper\*)

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### Abstract

Interruptions in local self-government are a common feature of both external imperial rule and centralized authoritarianism. Due to their similarities, the literature on historical legacies has considered both kinds of interruptions as *potentially* legacy-producing. But under which specific circumstances do these denials of local political autonomy actually lead to sustained changes in political behavior? We develop a novel framework that elucidates when interruptions in local self-rule will produce political legacies, and when they will fail to do so. Two factors are crucial: the duration of interruption and the scope of repression. Enduring interruptions characterized by encompassing repression are the most likely to generate persistent changes. Contrariwise, transient interruptions characterized by limited repressiveness are unlikely to produce legacies. Given our theory's broad character, we conduct empirical analyses in two markedly different settings: Poland, which was split between three major empires, and Brazil, where a military regime externally installed appointed mayors in a large number of cities. Our results demonstrate that interruptions in local self-government have varying potential to create legacies.

\*Comments are welcome.

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# Introduction

In recent years, social scientists have been sounding the alarm that democracy is under threat (Castells, 2018; Ginsburg and Huq, 2018; Levitsky and Ziblatt, 2018; Lührmann and Lindberg, 2019). Unlike in previous decades, serious challenges to democratic forms of government have been recorded both in polities where democracy emerged (or reemerged) relatively recently (Grzymala-Busse, 2019; Levitsky, 2018), as well as in polities that have an extensive track record of democratic stability (Carey, Helmke, Nyhan, Sanders and Stokes, 2019; Graham and Svolik, 2020). Among the headwinds faced by many contemporary democracies are the rising popularity of illiberal, anti-system leaders and parties (Norris and Inglehart, 2019) and the continued electoral viability of authoritarian successor parties (ASPs) in post-authoritarian political contexts (Loxton, 2015; Loxton and Mainwaring, 2018).<sup>1</sup>

A growing literature in political economy has turned to an in-depth analysis of history to better understand the root causes of popular support among citizens for such antidemocratic forces. The central insight of this work is that institutions and democratic values evolve *jointly* over time and are complementary to one another (Besley and Persson, 2019; Bisin, Rubin, Seror and Verdier, 2021; Persson and Tabellini, 2021; Tabellini, 2008*a*; Ticchi, Verdier and Vindigni, 2013). Consequently, plausibly exogenous shocks—such as external interventions—that impose changes in regime type can have long-lasting legacies if they induce sustainable change in both dimensions. At the local level, these types of regime changes can take place because of either imperialism or centralized authoritarian rule. The literature on historical legacies considers both these forms of interruptions in local self-government as potentially legacy producing (Simpser, Slater and Wittenberg, 2018).

Specifically, events of this kind may generate patterns of socialization and behavioral adjustment that conform with the character of the imposed regime, producing greater numbers of citizens with authoritarian mindsets in a society once dominated by democrats and vice versa (Acemoglu, Egorov and Sonin, 2021). From this perspective, instances of externally imposed regime change may constitute *critical junctures* that kickstart path-dependent feed-

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<sup>1</sup>Whether or not these challenges to democracy have produced democratic erosion at the global level is an open question. See Little and Meng (2023) for evidence of resilience.

back loops between initial institutions and political culture.<sup>2</sup> To understand contemporary support for or rejection of antidemocratic actors, it is thus imperative to identify critical junctures associated with lasting cultural and institutional change.

Yet when an externally imposed regime change constitutes a critical juncture, and when it does not, is not at all obvious *ex ante*. The US-led post-World War II reconstruction efforts in West Germany and Japan—characterized by the external imposition of democratic institutions—clearly represented critical junctures in that they catalyzed the establishment of democratic political cultures in societies where authoritarian values were previously dominant (Haddad, 2012; Puaca, 2009). On the other hand, recent US-led reconstruction efforts in Afghanistan and Iraq, which also featured the crafting of domestic institutions by external actors, have not had similar effects, as cultural values incongruent with democracy remain persistent despite major institutional changes (Coburn and Larson, 2014; Waldner, 2009). So while the existence of a complementarity between democratic institutions and values points to the *possibility* that external interventions might generate lasting legacies for political attitudes and behavior, understanding whether or not they are likely to do so in any particular instance requires further theoretical and empirical analysis.

Thus, our goal is to develop a novel argument about when interruptions of self-government (either through imperial powers or centralized authoritarianism) will lead to sustained changes in attitudes and behavior and when they will fail to do so. Our discussion emphasizes two factors: the duration of interruption (“transient” or “enduring”) and the character of repression (“limited” or “encompassing”). Interruptions that are enduring and are characterized by encompassing repression that restricts myriad aspects of political life are the most likely to generate persistent changes in political behavior. Contrariwise, interruptions that are transient and are characterized by narrowly targeted repression are the least likely to produce legacies.

Given our theory’s broad character and applicability, we illustrate the utility of our approach via empirical analyses of interruptions in self-government in two markedly different settings: Poland, which was historically split between three major empires, and Brazil, where

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<sup>2</sup>Following Collier (2022), we conceptualize “critical junctures” as episodes of innovation that generate enduring legacies. From this perspective, the existence of a legacy is what determines if a juncture is critical: “No legacy, no critical juncture” Collier (2022, 34).

a military regime externally installed appointed mayors in a large number of cities. In the former case, we show that the long-lasting and highly coercive rule of Russia generated a cultural preference for illiberal political actors, which is manifested in the present day by support for the authoritarian-populist Law and Justice party (PiS). In the latter case, we show that the relatively transient and substantively narrower repression implemented by the military regime failed to generate lasting political preferences in favor of illiberal authoritarian successor parties.

In both of our cases, we examine outcomes of local-level elections. Critical for our inferential strategy is the fact that interruptions in self-government were geographically non-uniform. This allows us to compare areas that experienced different types of interventions.

Our paper falls within the rubric of what has come to be known as “persistence studies,” a body of scholarship that locates its causal variables in the (often distant) past and its outcomes in the present day or more recent past.<sup>3</sup> Yet our contribution adopts an approach that departs from most investigations in that field. At the risk of oversimplification, the modal persistence study seeks to demonstrate that a particular historical event has had a lasting legacy, and it advances an explanation for why the event produced the legacy. In contrast, our agenda here is to: (1) demonstrate empirically that events in a similar class (e.g., interruptions of local self-government) which could plausibly constitute the basis of a legacy do not always do so, and; (2) explain why some events in the class generate legacies while others do not.

In adopting this approach, we respond to mounting disquiet among historically oriented social scientists about the absence of attention given to failed or non-existent legacies of past events that could have plausibly constituted the basis for a legacy ([Abad and Maurer, 2021](#); [Acharya, Blackwell and Sen, 2023](#); [Collier, 2022](#); [Voth, 2021](#)). Incorporating such cases into the literature on historical persistence offers two important benefits. First, consideration of failed or non-existent legacies is necessary to obtain an accurate view of how frequently contemporary political outcomes can be meaningfully explained by events in the not-so-recent past. Published persistence studies offer no variation in this respect, as they are currently

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<sup>3</sup>Comprehensive reviews of this literature are provided in [Abad and Maurer \(2021\)](#), [Acharya, Blackwell and Sen \(2023\)](#), [Cirone and Pepinsky \(2022\)](#), [Voth \(2021\)](#), and [Simpser, Slater and Wittenberg \(2018\)](#). For an overview that focuses on colonial legacies in particular, see [De Juan and Pierskalla \(2017\)](#).

almost exclusively stories of “success.” Consequently, the literature may give readers an exaggerated impression of the role of historical persistence in contemporary political life.

Second, cases of failed or non-existent legacies introduce a contrast space that promotes theory building and inference through the comparative method. At any given moment in history, many events have the potential to generate legacies—disease outbreaks, wars, and unforeseen economic collapse are among these. Yet characterizing the likelihood the a legacy will emerge is only possible if there are theoretical frameworks to draw upon that have been assessed using cases that vary on the dependent variable (Geddes, 1990; King, Keohane and Verba, 1994).<sup>4</sup> In this regard, a key contribution of our paper is that it provides a theoretical framework that is assessed in precisely such a manner.

Our paper is related to, but departs from, a literature in comparative historical analysis on the formation and logic of critical junctures (Collier and Munck, 2017; Collier and Collier, 1991; Soifer, 2012). Contributions therein have also highlighted the importance of incorporating negative cases into comparative research on legacies (Capoccia, 2015; Capoccia and Kelemen, 2007). Yet the emphasis in this scholarship differs from ours in that it concentrates primarily on decisions taken by political elites (Capoccia and Kelemen, 2007; Mahoney, 2001; Rinscheid, Eberlein, Emmenegger and Schneider, 2020). While an elite-centered approach illuminates processes of institutional adoption in many contexts, it is less helpful in addressing the legacies of *externally imposed* regime change. The relevant issue with regard to legacies in this context is whether or not there will be take-up, in terms of values and behavior, by the broader population upon whom the new regime has been imposed. Consequently, our theory and empirics focus on everyday citizens’ responses to institutional change.

Since the specific type of comparative persistence scholarship that we pursue here represents a novel research strategy, we recognize that the evaluation of the theoretical framework we propose will be far from dispositive. We do not intend it to be. Rather, our goal is to provide conceptual insight into the set of factors likely to distinguish events that produce legacies and those that do not. Given the breadth and complexity of this question, we necessarily address it in a limited fashion. We do so by focusing on the specific repercussions

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<sup>4</sup>Our point here is not that *individual* studies of historical persistence suffer from selection on the dependent variable (a claim that would be demonstrably false), but rather that the literature as a whole—perhaps due to publication bias or other factors—does in fact have this shortcoming.

of interruptions of local self-government in two country cases whose experiences lend themselves to rigorous evaluations of the presence and absence of legacies. Our hope is that the combination of our theory and the suggestive—but strong—evidence from Poland and Brazil helps inspire a much-needed research program on why and under which conditions legacies emerge.

The remainder of our study is organized as follows. First, we review existing arguments about the consequences of interruptions of self-government. Then we introduce our theoretical framework that differentiates between various types of interruptions and assesses their potential to generate lasting legacies. Subsequently, we introduce our cases and examine the character of external intervention in each. In our empirical analysis, we show that interruptions of local self-government may have vastly different implications for political behavior. In the conclusion, we summarize our insights and situate our study in the broader literature.

## Perspectives on Interruptions of Local Self-Government

Interruptions of local self-government materialize in a wide variety of forms. They may emerge after foreign conquest, as when a colonizing power installs officials from the metropole to directly administer a conquered territory (De Juan and Pierskalla, 2017). They may also be the consequence of conflict dynamics internal to a nation-state, as in post-civil war settings where the victor installs loyal overseers to rule over the territories of their vanquished foes (Liu, 2022). More quotidianly, they often occur in the wake of transitions from democratic to authoritarian rule, as when newly empowered authoritarian elites eliminate or abridge the capacity of particular communities to select their local political officials. In all these cases, interruptions of self-government are synonymous with “alien rule” (Hechter, 2013, 2): rule by authorities in a given territory who do not themselves come from said territory.

Given their similarities, the persistence literature has investigated both kinds of interruptions (Simpser, Slater and Wittenberg, 2018). In a particularly influential contribution, Robert Putnam and colleagues argue that the flourishing of autonomous communal republics in Northern Italy during the early medieval period—taken in conjunction autocratic rule under the Norman Kingdom at the same time in the South—explains why the two regions

exhibited starkly different levels of civic community and performance of local government in the twentieth century (Putnam, Leonardi and Nanetti, 1993, 121–162). Subsequent research comparing the former communal republics in the North to other areas of Italy further accounts for these differences by showing that interruptions of self-government may mitigate the intergenerational transmission of the belief that one’s actions can meaningfully shape life prospects (Guiso, Sapienza and Zingales, 2016). More generally, interruptions in self-government have been linked to low-quality governance, weak economic performance, and attitudes hostile to democracy (Besley and Persson, 2019; Di Liberto and Sideri, 2015; Neundorff, 2010; Pop-Eleches and Tucker, 2017).

Legacies of interruptions of self-government are often studied at the local level, particularly in the form of mayors (or village heads) appointed by authoritarian regimes. These types of interventions can shape attitudes and governance outcomes in myriad ways. Studies on Indonesia, for instance, find that villages which had appointed (as opposed to elected) leaders during the Soeharto dictatorship were more likely to support the authoritarian successor party once the country had democratized (Martinez-Bravo, 2014), and that exposure to a dictatorship-appointed mayor reduced public good provision (Martinez-Bravo, Mukherjee and Stegmann, 2017). In the case of Chile, the presence of a mayor appointed by the Pinochet regime has been associated with greater support for candidates from parties sympathetic to the dictatorship during the democratic era (González, Muñoz and Prem, 2021). Evidence from Romania indicates that external rule can provoke resistance against institutions at the local level, generating poor public service delivery in the long-term (Vogler, 2022). Moreover, research on Vietnam links the selection of local councils through elections in the past to greater civic engagement and improved economic outcomes in the present (Dell, Lane and Querubin, 2018).

Scholarship conducted in laboratory settings concurs that self-government (and, *ipso facto*, its forced abandonment due to the actions of an external actor) can have important implications. Opportunities for self-government have been shown to increase levels of cooperation (Dal Bó, Foster and Putterman, 2010), contributions to public goods (Grossman and Baldassarri, 2012), the effectiveness of strategies for curbing free-riding (Markussen, Putterman and Tyran, 2014), and the efficiency of redistributive policy (Sausgruber, Son-



ntag and Tyran, 2021). There is also suggestive lab-based evidence that self-government can produce positive political and social legacies. Specifically, Kamei (2016) shows that subjects permitted to choose policies through democratic procedures continue to exhibit high levels of cooperative behavior even when policies are subsequently externally imposed upon them.

Although much of the literature has concluded that a history of local self-government is a boon for democracy and high-quality governance—and, by implication, that more severe interruptions of self-government undermine these outcomes—there are objections to this claim. This is particularly evident in the contentious scholarship on colonialism and imperial rule. Several studies link direct colonial rule and/or longer exposure to colonial rule, both of which imply weaker local self-governance, to positive long-run outcomes such as enhanced prospects for democracy (Hariri, 2012; Lange, 2004), less corruption (Lange, 2004) and political violence (Mukherjee, 2018), and stronger norms of cooperation (Chaudhary, Rubin, Iyer and Shrivastava, 2020). On the other hand, indirect rule and/or colonial neglect, both of which imply stronger local self-governance, have been tied to improved public good provision (Iyer, 2010) and higher levels of economic development (Mahoney, 2010).

A cautionary note is also sounded by scholarship on foreign military intervention. If past interruptions of self-government have consistently imposed lasting harm on the development of pro-democratic attitudes and behavior, then an implication is that interventions in the opposite direction—those that create institutional change in favor of *more* self-government—would consistently bring lasting benefits. Yet this is not the case. Foreign military interventions dedicated to installing self-government have not been particularly successful in jump-starting democracy (see, for instance, De Mesquita and Downs, 2006; Downes and Monten, 2013).

In sum, the scholarship on the consequences of interruptions of self-government is divided. In some instances (e.g., studies of Italian regions), the contribution of historical legacies of self-government for present-day pro-social attitudes and behavior seems clear. Findings in the lab give some credence to the mechanisms invoked therein. Yet studies on colonialism and military intervention imply that interventions that generate long-run changes in *both* institutions and political culture may be less common than previously thought. Below, we attempt to reconcile these facts by developing a novel argument about when interruptions

of self-government create lasting legacies, and when they fail to do so.

## When do Interruptions of Local Self-Government Create Legacies?

According to theories of dynamic complementarity between institutions and political culture, institutional interventions (such as the introduction of formal elections) matter because they gradually increase the proportion of citizens who embrace compatible values (Besley and Persson, 2019; Persson and Tabellini, 2021). This, in turn, increases the likelihood that said institutions will persist into the future, as they are more likely to receive broader political support. As the new institutions become more and more entrenched, political culture shifts further in their favor, until a point is reached where the institutions become very difficult to dislodge. The intervention can now be said to have a legacy.

But not all institutional interventions will trigger a dynamic adjustment process that leads to such a legacy. Whether or not a sustained legacy is created depends on the societal reaction to the initial change in institutions. If the characteristics of the intervention are such that a sufficiently large proportion of citizens adopts a political culture compatible with the new institution, then the aforementioned adjustment process—leading to the legacy—will take place. However, if a sizable portion of the citizenry is resistant to the intervention or indifferent toward it—perhaps because they view it as fleeting or not sustainable—then the likelihood that an encompassing institution-compatible political culture will emerge is low. This leads instead to an adjustment process that ultimately reinstates the institutional configuration prior to the intervention. In this case, intervention does not have a legacy.

In terms of contemplating the consequences of interruptions of local self-government, the above discussion implies that the *characteristics* of the intervention are of central importance. More specifically, said characteristics are relevant inasmuch as they shape the cultural reaction to institutional change. We focus here on two key elements of political culture that may be affected by interruptions: values and skills. By values, we refer to citizens' core preferences over institutions and procedures, such as the degree to which they intrinsically prefer

deliberative processes over top-down forms of decision making (Eckstein, 1966; Welzel and Inglehart, 2009). By skills we refer to forms of expertise or learned capabilities—consciously adopted—that are tailored to the specifics of the institutional environment. These might be professional capabilities, such as a vote broker’s expertise in bureaucratic intermediation or a pollster’s competence in fielding opinion polls. More commonly, they are capabilities relevant for the everyday life of citizens, such as knowing how to lobby municipal officials to fix a pothole or impress party apparatchiks with one’s mastery of the official regime ideology. Our contention is that the characteristics of interruptions relevant to the formation of legacies are ones that play an important role in shifting these aspects of political culture.<sup>5</sup>

Two such characteristics of interruptions in self-government are (1) duration and (2) the scope of repression.<sup>6</sup> In terms of the former, one can conceptualize interruptions as being either *transient* or *enduring*. Although the precise dividing line between these labels is somewhat arbitrary, for reasons we will explicate below, we categorize interruptions lasting less time than a typical human generation (roughly thirty years) as transient, and interruptions lasting longer as enduring.<sup>7</sup> In terms of the latter, restrictions on self-government imposed during a period of external intervention can either be *limited* or they can be *encompassing*. An interruption with a limited scope of repression curtails only certain clearly delineated forms of self-government, while maintaining or even creating some residual opportunities for meaningful political participation. By contrast, an interruption with an encompassing scope of repression extinguishes self-government almost entirely, with a nearly universal prohibition on forms political participation other than those which serve to venerate the extant regime.

Given these preliminaries, consider how an interruption of local self-government might affect the propagation of values. Drawing on seminal contributions in evolutionary anthropology (Boyd and Richerson, 1988; Cavalli-Sforza and Feldman, 1981), modern treatments of cultural change emphasize the critical role of parents in socializing their children to hold certain types of values (Bisin and Verdier, 2001; Bisin and Verdier, 2022; Tabellini, 2008b).

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<sup>5</sup>By incorporating skill formation within our notion of political culture, we follow Nunn (2021), who articulates a broad view of culture that incorporates knowledge acquisition and innovation.

<sup>6</sup>We define “repression” as all forms of the suppression of full local political autonomy through externally imposed institutions or organizations, ranging from the mere use of propaganda to influence political views to the physical arrest and execution of political opponents.

<sup>7</sup>For evidence on the length of average intergenerational intervals, see Tremblay and Vézina (2000).

Moreover, numerous empirical studies indicate that intergenerational socialization from parent to child is particularly important for the development of political values (Beck and Jennings, 1991; Jennings, Stoker and Bowers, 2009; Jennings and Niemi, 1968). Such socialization takes hold at specific impressionable age ranges, including late childhood and adolescence (Neundorf and Smets, 2017). Value change is thus a slow moving process, instigated by actions taken by parents in the home and accumulating across multiple generations.

Why might parental strategies of socialization change in response to an interruption of self-government? To the extent that the institutional change implemented by the interruption is deemed credible, that is, self-government is perceived as unlikely to reemerge in the foreseeable future, then parents may wish to instill outlooks and orientations that will maximize their children's ability to achieve social (and economic) success given the realities of the new institutional environment. Extolling the virtues of popular deliberation and principled dissent, for example, would hinder their children's ability to connect to or navigate social, economic, or political groups that are critical under the current (more authoritarian) regime; better, in this context, to inculcate a pride in obedience to authority and satisfaction with political disengagement. Embracing and displaying such values will give citizens the ability to better navigate the contemporary (less participatory) political-economic order. Note, however, that the credibility of the institutional change is essential to this calculus. If self-government is expected to reemerge shortly, then maintaining the old value system would be preferable. For this reason, the longevity of the interruption is critical for the transmission of values: longer interruptions convince ever greater numbers of parents that the absence of self-government today will continue on indefinitely into the future, whereas shorter interruptions often leave open the possibility of a reversion to the old order.

The longevity of an external intervention is relevant for another, purely mechanical, reason. Since value change occurs intergenerationally, and since at any given time the number of parents with children in the impressionable age range is limited, a significant amount of time under an interruption must pass in order for a critical mass of newly socialized citizens to emerge. Even if most parents were disposed to bequeath authoritarian-compatible values to their offspring, multiple waves of children in the relevant age range would need to be socialized before a large aggregate shift in values could take place. A timespan of roughly a

human generation would seem to be the minimum length of time in which this could occur.

Also relevant for the likelihood of sustained value change is the *scope of repression*. Scope matters because it determines the degree of mismatch that exists between values that produce self-fulfillment under self-government and the realities of life under external intervention. Interruptions characterized by a limited scope of repression, which offer real albeit abridged opportunities for political participation, present a much smaller mismatch than do interruptions characterized by encompassing repression. Consequently, some parents may find it attractive to bequeath democratic values to their children when repression is limited, as they anticipate their offspring may at least experience true opportunities for political participation in the arenas of politics that remain open. Naturally, this would limit the magnitude of value change in an interruption with limited repression.

In addition to changes in values, we also consider the effect of an interruption of self-government on the acquisition of political *skills*. While cultural values are more closely connected to the concept of preferences, skills are more closely connected to the concept of capabilities. In line with contemporary perspectives in the welfare state literature ([Estevez-Abe, Iversen and Soskice, 2001](#); [Iversen and Soskice, 2001](#)), one can think of political skills as investments in human capital whose returns depend upon the institutional environment. Indeed, many political skills can be thought of as regime-specific, offering different payoffs under a system of self-government than under authoritarian rule. In the absence of self-rule, outward manifestations of regime loyalty may be central to professional advancement and personal wellbeing ([Egorov and Sonin, 2011](#)). For instance, in China’s well-studied cadre system, so called “party spirit” and a history of ‘correct’ political action are explicitly assessed for individuals seeking to move up the bureaucratic ranks ([Manion, 1985](#); [Tsai and Kou, 2015](#)). In such an environment, investing in one’s capacity to be an ideological thought leader and in cultivating ties to party factions pays large dividends ([Liu, 2019](#); [Shih, Adolph and Liu, 2012](#)). However, under self-government those same investments might prove virtually worthless, as avenues to advancement would likely shift in favor of those with different assets, such as expertise in law and finance or ties to private capital.

The implications of the duration and scope of repression for skills formation run in the same direction as those for values. As previously touched upon, duration matters because it

shapes perceptions of the long-term viability of the external intervention. To the degree that citizens in the intervened community come to perceive the interruption as likely to persist throughout the course of their professional lives, many will begin to invest in the political skills that allow them to succeed in their new environment. As the number of citizens making such investments grows, the solidity of the regime increases, since these individuals will be loath to see the value of their regime-specific capabilities diminish due to institutional change. However, if a critical segment of the population perceives the likelihood of an institutional reversion in the future to be high, then they will be disinclined to make costly changes in political skills in response to the interruption. To the contrary, in this case it would be preferable to maintain a skill set appropriate to self-government and await its return.

The scope of repression matters because it reduces the degree of regime-specificity of political skills. The greater the number of arenas for participation and/or electoral contestation during the interruption, the greater the opportunities for citizens to take advantage of the skills they honed during the previous epoch of unabridged self-government. By the same token, the greater the continuity in the set of relevant political elites, the less need citizens will feel to develop new talents or invest in new social networks. Encompassing repression, as we have defined it, thus incentivizes large aggregate changes in political skills, whereas limited repression reduces the extent to which an interruption will lead to changes in skills.

Figure 1: When do interruptions in self-government create legacies?

|                           | Limited<br>Repression                                 | Encompassing<br>Repression                            |
|---------------------------|---|---|
| Transient<br>Intervention | <u>Minimal</u> potential<br>for long-term<br>legacies | Moderate<br>potential for long-<br>term legacies      |
| Enduring<br>Intervention  | Moderate<br>potential for long-<br>term legacies      | <u>Highest</u> potential<br>for long-term<br>legacies |

A key implication of our theoretical framework is that only external interventions that combine a high level of repression with a sufficiently long duration exhibit the highest potential to constitute long-term legacies. Even highly repressive episodes of foreign rule only have a moderate potential to create sustained changes to political equilibria if they are short-lived.

Our argument is summarized by [Figure 1](#). An interruption of self-government that is both enduring and characterized by encompassing repression has the greatest potential to generate a long-term legacy as we expect considerable shifts in political values and skills. In contrast, an interruption that is transient and which has a limited scope of repression has the least potential to generate a long-term legacy as neither political values nor skills are likely to shift much. Interruptions that are either (1) enduring but limited in their scope of repression or (2) transient but encompassing in their repression represent intermediate cases. In these instances, shifts in political culture among some segments of the population may take place, creating evidence of a legacy in the short to intermediate run. However, since the shifts are likely to fall short of the critical mass needed create a new equilibrium, any legacies are likely to have a high “decay rate” ([Acharya, Blackwell and Sen, 2023](#)).

## The Cases: Interruptions of Self-Government in Poland and Brazil

We illustrate our argument through the analysis of two fundamentally diverging cases: the imperial partition of Poland and centralized military rule in Brazil. While varying significantly in terms of region and certain aspects of (preexisting) culture, the cases are united in having experienced clearly defined interruptions in local self-government. We selected these cases because: (1) we view our argument as broadly applicable to interruptions of local self-government in many regions and under various circumstances; (2) the cases inhabit distinctive locations in the theoretical framework elaborated above, presenting different prospects for generating legacies; (3) for reasons detailed below, the interruptions that they experienced lend themselves to empirically rigorous assessments of the existence of legacies.

With respect to demonstrating the applicability of our framework, our choice of cases

partly builds on [Simpser, Slater and Wittenberg \(2018\)](#), who emphasize the similarities between imperial and authoritarian regimes and advocate for analyses that incorporate both.

Another virtue of the cases is that, according to expectations generated by the existing literature, *both* Poland and Brazil are plausible candidates for legacies. The literature on local self-determination and colonialism would suggest a high likelihood of a legacy in Poland, whereas the literature on appointed mayors under authoritarianism would suggest a high likelihood of a legacy in Brazil. Yet our framework predicts a legacy in Poland but not in Brazil. Here we elaborate on why that is so.

In the case of Poland, different areas of the country are associated with different prospects for legacies based on the characteristics of the imperial rule they experienced. Major European powers began to partition the Polish lands in the late eighteenth century. In 1815, after the Napoleonic Wars, Poland's fate was again decided by multiple empires: At the Congress of Vienna, the territories inhabited by the Poles were split between the three imperial powers of Austria, Russia, and Prussia. These imperial partitions lasted until Polish independence in 1918. A map of the historical boundaries can be found in the Appendix (Figure A1).

The duration of the interruption of self-government experienced by the Poles was long lasting by any criterion: 123 years if dated to the third partition (1795) and 103 years if dated to the fourth (1815). This represented more than enough time for Poles living under foreign occupation to adapt their cultural values in response to the character of foreign intervention, be it through a shift in values transmission, political skills, or both. However, while the duration of imperial intervention was (roughly) constant across the territories controlled by the foreign powers, the scope of repression differed markedly.

The scope of repression was most encompassing under Russian rule. Russia governed its Polish territories in a top-down fashion and with a high level of coercion and arbitrariness, precluding opportunities for meaningful political participation ([Davies, 2005](#), ch. 2; [Vogler, 2019](#), 814–815). Attempts by Poles to advocate for their rights were quashed through the relentless use of military power, demonstrating that there was no alternative to submission to the imperial hierarchy ([Davies, 2005](#); [Prazmowska, 2011](#)).

By contrast, the scope of repression was relatively limited under Prussian rule ([Davies, 2005](#), 85; [Vogler, 2019](#), 812–813). While the Prussian state denied full self-government to the



Poles, it was reliable and restrained (especially when compared to Russian institutions). It also provided them with meaningful channels of participation, including, as of 1849, the right to limited political representation in the Prussian *Landtag* (a representative assembly of the Prussian state). Moreover, in the period of Imperial Germany (1871–1914), Poles were given full voting rights in federal parliamentary elections and were permitted to establish political parties that represented their minority interests. Thus, we can most clearly distinguish between the character of foreign rule of Prussia and Russia. While comparable in duration, Russian rule remained highly repressive throughout the entire period, while Prussia’s state persistently had a *Rechtsstaat* character (strictly limiting the level of repression) and even allowed for forms of democratic political participation for several decades.<sup>8</sup>

Compared to Prussia and Russia, the character of Austrian rule was more ambiguous and shifted over time. The early years of Austrian occupation featured strict censoring of the Polish press and the severe oppression of Polish attempts at self-government. We would clearly categorize this as encompassing repression. In later years, however (especially after 1867), Poles were given the opportunity to participate in the Austrian bureaucracy. Yet political rights—including voting rights—remained severely restricted until the last few years of foreign rule (Davies, 2005; Prazmowska, 2011; Vushko, 2015).

In terms of our theoretical framework outlined in Figure 1, the Russian-ruled territory of Poland is located in the lower righthand quadrant, indicating a high potential for a long-term legacy. The area ruled by Prussia is located in the lower lefthand quadrant, indicating a moderate potential for a legacy. The location of the Austrian-ruled territory is more ambiguous given the shifting character of Austrian rule over time, which makes it difficult to clearly place it into the four categories.

In the case of the military government in Brazil, interruptions of self-government at the local level were of much shorter duration and much less encompassing in their scope. The entire interlude of military rule lasted only twenty-one years, from 1964 to 1985. Moreover, the restrictions placed on political liberties, while certainly severe relative to the democracy that preceded it, nevertheless maintained numerous avenues for political participation.

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<sup>8</sup>Given this clear distinction between Prussia and Russia specifically, our empirical analysis primarily focuses on this comparison. We include the comparisons with Austria for full transparency in the Appendix, but as elaborated below, this case is ambiguous in light of our theoretical framework.

Specifically, unlike other military regimes in the Southern Cone during this period, Brazil's authoritarian leadership permitted open political competition among (pre-approved) political actors for a fairly wide set of offices. Although the military government was critical of how party competition was practiced prior to its so-called revolution of 1964, it neither extinguished party politics altogether nor organized society into a single-party system. Rather, in its second institutional act (AI-2) of 1965, it dissolved the highly fractionalized existing party system, substituting in its place an officially sanctioned two-party system.<sup>9</sup>

In addition to creating the foundations of the new party system, AI-2 created a two-tiered system for the selection of political officeholders. The president and vice-president were chosen by the Chamber of Deputies and governors by their state legislatures. This ensured that high-level executive officeholders would either be military officers (the president) or clients of the military (governors). On the other hand, legislative offices were contested at regular intervals through popular elections that took place at the state, federal, and municipal levels. Thus, while the highest-level executive offices were removed from democratic contention, the vast majority of formerly elected offices remained subject to the popular vote.<sup>10</sup>

The interruptions of local self-government in Brazil that we focus on here took place within this larger institutional context. Due to AI-2 and subsequent decrees promulgated by the military government, state capitals, municipalities designated as areas of strategic interest, municipalities deemed to have hydromineral wealth, and municipalities contained within federal territories were prohibited from selecting their mayors through popular elections. Rather, the mayors in these locations were appointed by the governor (a military loyalist), in concordance with either the state legislative assembly or the President. In total, 188 different municipalities (out of more than 4000) had appointed mayors during this time.

Where it occurred, this was a potentially impactful intervention, especially given the traditional importance of mayors in Brazil's political system. During the democratic period prior to the onset of military rule, mayors and mayoral candidates routinely operated as

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<sup>9</sup>The parties that made up this system were the Brazilian Renewal Alliance (ARENA) and the Brazilian Democratic Movement (MDB). ARENA was the official support party for the authoritarian government. The MDB was the officially tolerated opposition party.

<sup>10</sup>Not every citizen was allowed to run for office, however. Politicians considered too leftist and those suspected of having communist sympathies were stripped of their political rights and unable to participate in party politics (Klein and Luna, 2017; Skidmore, 1988).

vote brokers, bringing to bear teams of ward heelers to mobilize voters in favor of selected candidates on election day (Gingerich, 2020).<sup>11</sup> Given the existence of concurrent elections, they often did this in exchanges called *dobradinhas*, which entailed receiving campaign donations from high-level legislative candidates in order to simultaneously mobilize voters on behalf of their candidacies and the candidacies of their patrons (Gingerich, 2020, 1090–1092). Mayors and their ward heelers also played an important role in registering voters in rural areas (Carvalho, 1958; Limongi, Cheibub and Figueiredo, 2019). Thus, by eliminating mayoral elections in the targeted municipalities, the military government was potentially refashioning one of the central linkages in the Brazilian electoral process.

Yet the location of the Brazilian case in our theoretical framework is nevertheless quite clear: it belongs in the upper left-hand quadrant of Figure 1, indicating a minimal potential for a long-term legacy. The interruptions in municipal self-government (most with a duration of less than twenty years) were likely too brief to catalyze major shifts in the transmission of values or in fundamental approaches to political life. Moreover, the continued use of elections for such a wide variety of offices implies that the values and skills acquired under the prior democratic regime would still have offered a reasonable fit for the realities of life for citizens in affected municipalities.<sup>12</sup>

In addition to capturing relevant aspects of variation in our theory, our cases also facilitate the measurement of our outcome (the presence or absence of a legacy). To properly assess whether or not an interruption of local self-government has generated a legacy, the dynamics of the interruption need to have unfolded in such a way as to permit causal inference. Ideally, there would either be some quasi-random element to the interruption or exact knowledge of the conditions that generated it. The interruptions that occurred in both Poland and Brazil share this rare virtue of facilitating inference, thereby permitting us to categorize the cases according to the presence or absence of a legacy with a high degree of confidence. For the case of Poland, multiple studies have examined and confirmed that border placement by the great powers was quasi-random, with no significant variation in geography or socioeconomic pretreatment indicators across the imposed boundaries (Grosfeld and Zhuravskaya, 2015,

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<sup>11</sup>For evidence of the continuing importance of local politicians as brokers in Brazil, see Gingerich (2014), Novaes (2018), and Frey (2019).

<sup>12</sup>We provide an extended discussion of the historical background of both cases in the Appendix.

56–60; Bukowski, 2019; Vogler, 2019). Moreover, historians describe the conditions on the ground as not influencing border placement in any way (Hoensch, 1990, 180). Thus, we have a strong claim of quasi-randomness for the interventions that took place in Poland. For the case of Brazil, we have exact knowledge of the municipal conditions that led to the appointment of mayors through by the authoritarian regime. Additionally, we can measure these factors in a fairly direct manner, thereby accounting for systematic determinants of selection into intervention. This buttresses our claim of being able to control for/match on all relevant determinants of intervention in the Brazilian case.

In the empirical analyses that follow, our interest lies in discerning if geographical variation in experiences with external intervention in the two cases can explain, in the present-day or recent past, political behavior indicative of preferences for authoritarianism among the electorate. We operationalize such preferences by utilizing the electoral support for populist anti-system parties and/or authoritarian successor parties. Numerous studies have shown that cultural attributes often associated with interruptions of self-government—such as low social capital and trust—are linked to these outcomes.<sup>13</sup> For our purposes, a legacy exists if the evidence indicates that the external intervention, after it has formally ended, remains causally related to electoral support for the aforementioned types of parties. If the evidence indicates no such link is present, then we conclude that there is no legacy.

## A Lasting Legacy of Interruptions of Self-Government: Evidence from Poland

For the case of Poland, we examine the electoral success of the party “Law and Justice” (*Prawo i Sprawiedliwość*, PiS) in mayoral elections. In the 2000s and 2010s, this major populist party with strong antidemocratic tendencies had growing electoral success at all levels of government. The PiS embraced illiberal political view points throughout these decades (Charnysh, 2017). Its antidemocratic orientation was most clearly visible in the dismantling of Poland’s constitutional system of checks and balances (Sadurski, 2019). To many

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<sup>13</sup>For analyses tying low social capital and trust to support for anti-system parties in Europe, see Coffé, Heyndels and Vermeir (2007) and Berning and Ziller (2017). For studies on Latin America tying low trust to voting for anti-system candidates and support for the policies advocated by such candidates, see Doyle (2011) and Keefer, Scartascini and Vlaicu (2019).

observers, the party presented a danger to Polish democracy (Markowski, 2019; Sadurski, 2018). Given the PiS’s antidemocratic tendencies, we consider its success as indicative of tastes for authoritarianism among the electorate.

As previously discussed, we expect that municipalities in the formerly Russian parts will be significantly more likely to have mayors that are affiliated with this party than municipalities in the Prussian part. Due to the more ambiguous character of Austrian rule, we abstain from making strong predictions about this case and relegate the relevant results to the Appendix (section A.8). In order to conduct our analysis, we primarily use data by Charasz and Vogler (2021), which is mainly based on data by Statistics Poland (2021).

## Dependent Variables

We use a number of different ways to measure the PiS’s electoral success:

1. **Mayor PiS:** This variable is equal to 1 if the mayor elected in a given municipality belonged to the party Law and Justice (PiS) for the time period indicated (2010–2014, 2014–2018); 0 otherwise.
2. **Mayor PiS (Broad Definition):** This variable is equal to 1 if the mayor elected in a given municipality either belonged to the PiS or was supported by its electoral committee in 2014–2018; 0 otherwise.

## Independent Variables

Our theory points to the crucial importance of sustained interruptions in self-government as determinants of citizens’ electoral behavior. Using “Prussia” as our baseline category, we use the following key independent variables:

1. **Russia:** This dummy variable indicates if a municipality’s territory historically belong to the Russian partition of Poland (1815–1914). This is our primary variable as Russian rule was both highly repressive and enduring, which constitutes the highest potential for long-term legacies.
2. **Austria:** This dummy variable indicates if a municipality’s territory historically belong to the Austrian partition of Poland (1815–1914). Results are mostly in the Appendix (section A.8).
3. **Interwar Germany:** This dummy variable indicates if a municipality historically belong to Interwar Germany (1918–1939). These territories experienced significant population transfers from the formerly Russian partition and from eastern Galicia

after World War II.<sup>14</sup> Thus, they need to be distinguished from other parts of the Prussian partition. Thus, as visualized in the Appendix (Figure A2), in all our GRDD models we fully exclude them.

## Covariates

To account for the possibility that our results merely reflect cross-regional socioeconomic differences, we also present models with a number of control variables:<sup>15</sup>

1. ***Elevation:*** This variable reflects a municipality’s level of elevation.
2. ***Population Density:*** This variable reflects a municipality’s population density.
3. ***Urban Share:*** This variable reflects the percentage of a municipality’s population that lives in urban areas.
4. ***Unemployment Rate:*** This variable reflects the unemployment rate of the county.
5. ***Average Monthly Salary:*** This variable reflects the average monthly salary as a percentage of the national average of the county that a municipality is part of.
6. ***Working Age Population Share:*** This variable reflects the share of the population that can be classified as “working age” (ages 18–64 for men, 18–59 for women).
7. ***Elderly Population Share:*** This variable reflects the share of the population that can be classified as “elderly” (ages 65+ for men, 60+ for women).
8. ***Population (Log.):*** This variable shows the population size (natural logarithm).

Descriptive statistics for our Polish data are presented in the Appendix (Table A1).

## Models

**Simple Dummy Variables:** Our first empirical test is based on simple dummy variable analyses. These analyses have the following format:

$$y_i = \beta_0 + \sum_{j=1}^n \beta_j EMP_{ji} + \beta_{n+1} ELV_i + \mathbf{x}_i' \boldsymbol{\beta} + \varepsilon_i \quad (1)$$

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<sup>14</sup>For detailed discussions, see Charnysh (2019) and Charnysh and Peisakhin (2022).

<sup>15</sup>Please note that using these control variables potentially introduces posttreatment bias, which is why our preferred models are those without covariates. Nevertheless, for full transparency, we present results with both types of models.

where  $y_i$  is the dependent variable for municipality  $i$ .  $\beta_j$  represents the difference in the value of the dependent variable between municipalities that belonged to empire (EMP)  $j$  and those that belonged to the baseline category. When multiple empires are compared, the baseline category are Prussian municipalities that did not belong to interwar Germany.  $\beta_{j+1}$  is the coefficient for elevation (ELV). The control variables are contained in vector  $\mathbf{x}$ , with  $\boldsymbol{\beta}$  representing the respective coefficients.

**Geographic Regression Discontinuity Design:** In utilizing the GRDD approach, we treat the imperial borders as quasi-random cutoffs and use the geographic distance to the border (in km) as our forcing variable. The regressions have the following format:

$$y_i = \beta_0 + \beta_1 EMP_{ji} + \beta_2 ELV_i + \mathbf{x}_i' \boldsymbol{\beta} + f(\text{geographic location}) + \varepsilon \quad (2)$$

The key difference with the previous regression is the addition of a new component to the regression:  $f(\text{geographic location})$ . There are three variants of this function. The first expresses geographical location as a linear function of distance to the border and the interaction of distance with the relevant empire dummy. The second expresses location as above but uses a second-order polynomial for distance. The third expresses location as a linear function of distance, but also includes latitude and longitude. Mathematical details are presented in the Appendix (section A.5).

## Results

**Table 1** shows the results of the dummy variable regressions. In the Appendix (Table A2 and Table A3), we also add a set of socioeconomic and demographic control variables. While this introduces the possibility of posttreatment bias, said variables might also have an important independent influence on our outcomes.

In general, the results confirm that there are significant differences across the imperial partitions in accordance with our expectations. This is most evident for the Prussia–Russia comparison, where we consistently find evidence that the historical divergence between more limited repression (Prussian partition) and more encompassing repression (Russian partition) produces long-term differences in political outcomes.

Importantly, as shown in the Appendix, the initial finding that Austria is more likely to have PiS mayors does not hold in some of the more rigorous geographic regression discontinuity regressions. This indicates that underlying geographic patterns and their possible effects on social organization could play a role in explaining the discrepancy.

Table 1: Local Political Leadership Outcomes

|                         | <i>Dependent variable:</i> |                     |                     |
|-------------------------|----------------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
|                         | Mayor PiS                  | Mayor PiS (Broad)   | Mayor PiS (2010)    |
|                         | (1)                        | (2)                 | (3)                 |
| Russia                  | 0.080***<br>(0.015)        | 0.087***<br>(0.016) | 0.065***<br>(0.012) |
| Interwar Germany        | 0.006<br>(0.016)           | 0.008<br>(0.017)    | 0.005<br>(0.014)    |
| Austria                 | 0.112***<br>(0.019)        | 0.123***<br>(0.019) | 0.053***<br>(0.015) |
| Constant                | 0.016<br>(0.013)           | 0.016<br>(0.013)    | 0.008<br>(0.011)    |
| Observations            | 2,445                      | 2,445               | 2,448               |
| R <sup>2</sup>          | 0.028                      | 0.031               | 0.020               |
| Adjusted R <sup>2</sup> | 0.027                      | 0.030               | 0.019               |

Note: OLS

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

Figure 2 illustrates our geographic discontinuity approach for the comparison of the Prussian and Russian partitions. It depicts the change in the proportion of mayors belonging to the PiS in the 2014 elections as one crosses the geographic boundary (at  $x = 0$ ). In addition, Figure 3 provides an alternative visualization of the geographic discontinuity. It shows that the distribution of mayors belonging to the PiS in the 2014 elections is geographically concentrated in the partition previously controlled by Russia.<sup>16</sup>

<sup>16</sup>The Appendix (Figure A3 – Figure A6) contains additional figures and maps that present the findings for our alternative dependent variables. The contrasts presented therein are equivalent to those presented here.



Figure 2: Impact of Prussia vs. Russia Partition on Having a PiS Mayor

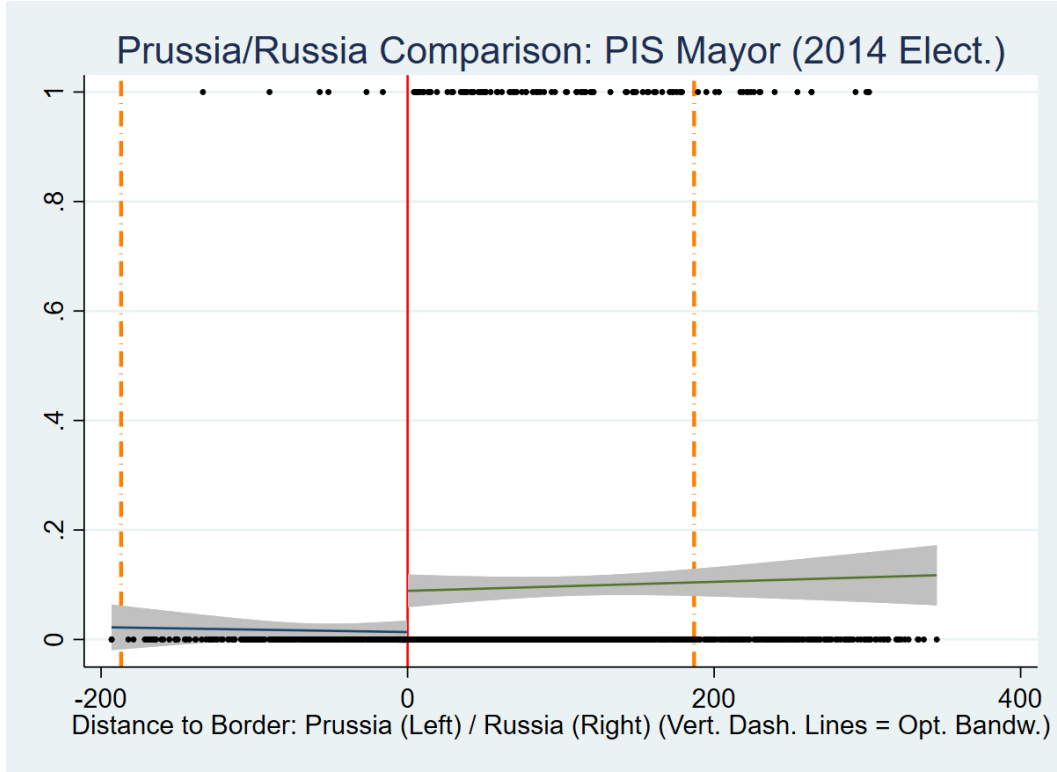


Figure 3: Map of PIS-affiliated Mayors in the 2014 Elections

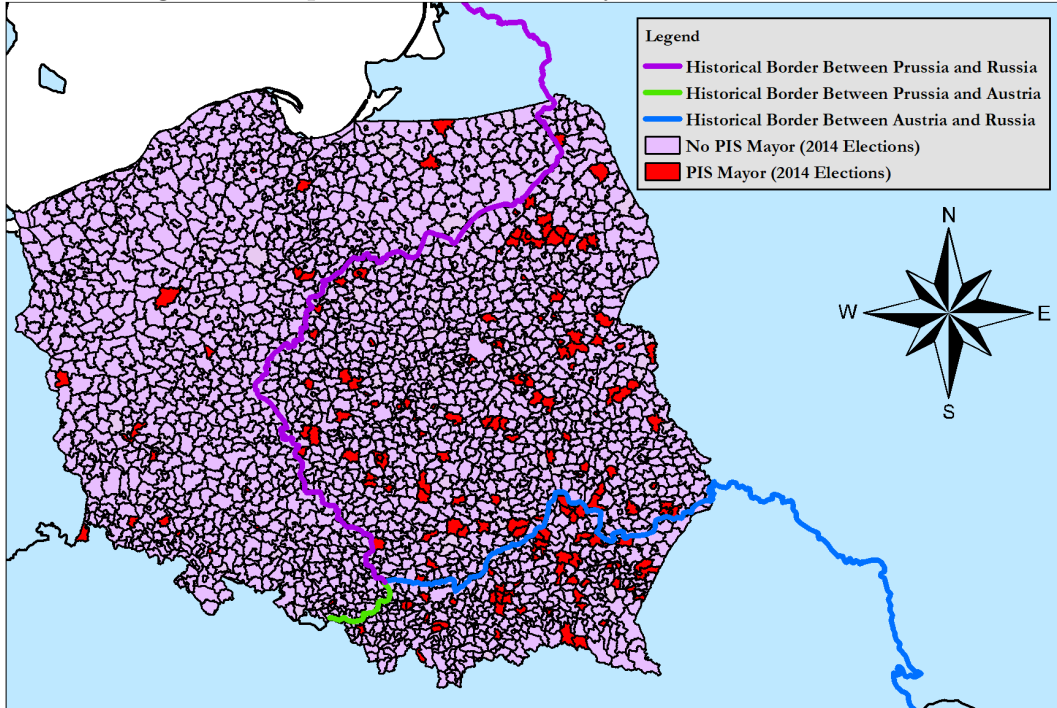


Table 2 presents the GRDD results for the Prussia/Russia comparison without control

variables. They show that municipalities in the formerly Russian partition are significantly more likely to have a PiS-affiliated mayor. These findings are robust to the adoption of the latitude/longitude specification and the inclusion of controls (as shown in the Appendix).

Table 2: Local Political Leadership Outcomes (Prussia/Russia Comparison)

|                         | <i>Dependent variable:</i> |                        |                         |                       |                        |                         |
|-------------------------|----------------------------|------------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------|------------------------|-------------------------|
|                         | Mayor PIS<br>(1)           | Mayor PIS (Br.)<br>(2) | Mayor PIS (2010)<br>(3) | Mayor PIS<br>(4)      | Mayor PIS (Br.)<br>(5) | Mayor PIS (2010)<br>(6) |
| Russia                  | 0.075***<br>(0.026)        | 0.081***<br>(0.027)    | 0.056**<br>(0.023)      | 0.066*<br>(0.035)     | 0.075**<br>(0.036)     | 0.029<br>(0.031)        |
| Elevation               | 0.00003<br>(0.0001)        | 0.00004<br>(0.0001)    | 0.0002<br>(0.0001)      | 0.00005<br>(0.0001)   | 0.0001<br>(0.0001)     | 0.0002*<br>(0.0001)     |
| Dist. PR-RU             | -0.0001<br>(0.0003)        | -0.0001<br>(0.0003)    | 0.0001<br>(0.0003)      | -0.0004<br>(0.001)    | -0.0004<br>(0.001)     | 0.00001<br>(0.001)      |
| Dist. PR-RU Sq.         |                            |                        |                         | 0.00000<br>(0.00001)  | 0.00000<br>(0.00001)   | 0.00000<br>(0.00001)    |
| Russia*Dist.            | 0.0001<br>(0.0003)         | 0.0001<br>(0.0003)     | -0.0001<br>(0.0003)     | 0.001<br>(0.001)      | 0.001<br>(0.001)       | 0.001<br>(0.001)        |
| Russia*Dist. Sq.        |                            |                        |                         | -0.00000<br>(0.00001) | -0.00000<br>(0.00001)  | -0.00000<br>(0.00001)   |
| Constant                | 0.010<br>(0.028)           | 0.007<br>(0.029)       | -0.007<br>(0.025)       | -0.0001<br>(0.036)    | -0.002<br>(0.037)      | -0.013<br>(0.031)       |
| Observations            | 1,435                      | 1,435                  | 1,437                   | 1,435                 | 1,435                  | 1,437                   |
| R <sup>2</sup>          | 0.019                      | 0.021                  | 0.018                   | 0.020                 | 0.021                  | 0.022                   |
| Adjusted R <sup>2</sup> | 0.016                      | 0.018                  | 0.015                   | 0.016                 | 0.017                  | 0.018                   |

Note: OLS

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

In accordance with our theory, the PiS is systematically stronger in local elections in the formerly Russian partition. These findings can be explained by the fundamental divergence between the character of foreign rule by Prussia and Russia. While Prussia's rule allowed limited political organization after 1849 and the German Empire allowed for broad electoral participation, Russian rule was highly militarized, repressive, and extractive. In the long run, this absence of participatory traditions contributes the higher success rate of mayors affiliated with the populist right-wing party PiS.

Additional comparisons between Austria/Russia and Prussia/Austria included in the Appendix show some initially significant results, but these are not present in the GRDD models when controls are included. We believe the ambiguous findings in this respect reflect nuances in these broader comparisons due to the shifting character of Austrian rule.

# An Interruption of Self-Government *without* a Legacy: Evidence from Brazil

For the case of Brazil, we examine the electoral success of the country's two authoritarian successor parties during the 1988 and 1992 mayoral elections. These two parties were the Social Democratic Party (*Partido da Social Democracia Brasileira*, PDS) and the Liberal Front (*Partido da Frente Liberal*, PFL).<sup>17</sup> Given previous findings about the legacies of dictatorship-era mayors in the region (González, Muñoz and Prem, 2021), it is possible that the PDS and PFL might have had a higher chance of winning mayoral elections as a consequence of a municipality having been governed by an appointed mayor during the authoritarian period. However, our theoretical framework classifies this intervention as both transient and limited in terms of repressiveness. Thus, we deem the likelihood of a lasting legacy as being low. To assess if a legacy existed, municipal-level electoral data on mayoral elections held by each of Brazil's twenty five state-level electoral tribunals were collected and coded specifically for this study (excluding the federal district).<sup>18</sup>

## Dependent Variables

We examine two dependent variables in our analysis:

1. ***PDS Mayor***: This variable is equal to 1 if the mayor elected in a given municipality belonged to the Social Democratic Party (PDS) or was elected by a coalition of parties that included the Social Democratic Party; 0 otherwise.
2. ***PFL Mayor***: This variable is equal to 1 if the mayor elected in a given municipality belonged to the Liberal Front (PFL) or was elected by a coalition of parties that included the Liberal Front; 0 otherwise.

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<sup>17</sup>The PDS was the direct descendent of the official authoritarian party, ARENA: ARENA was simply renamed as the PDS in 1980. The PFL was composed of leading figures from the PDS who split with the party over its nomination of Paulo Maluf as the PDS's presidential nominee in 1985 (Power, 2018). In the 48th Congress (1987–1991), nearly 90% of the PDS's congressional delegation was made up of former ARENA politicians and officials; for the PFL, the figure was nearly 80% (Power, 2000, 75).

<sup>18</sup>In the majority of cases where the data were not in electronic format, this entailed coding the data from PDFs of the original electoral acts.

## Treatment Variable

Our single treatment variable is *Intervened*, equal to 1 for municipalities that had an appointed mayor during the authoritarian period; 0 otherwise. This variable is coded from the Supreme Electoral Tribunal’s compilation of electoral statistics for the 1972 municipal elections, which includes a list of all municipalities that had appointed mayors by that time (Tribunal Superior Eleitoral (TSE), 1988). That list was then supplemented using the information contained in decree laws dealing with national security areas promulgated after the election (1973–1981), which listed additional municipalities that had elected mayors replaced by appointed ones.<sup>19</sup> Municipalities that were newly created in the post-authoritarian period and located within the previous boundaries of a municipality that had an appointed mayor during the authoritarian period were also coded as having been intervened.<sup>20</sup>

## Covariates

In selecting the covariates to employ in our analysis, we exploit knowledge about the factors considered by the military government in deciding which municipalities to prohibit from having popular elections. Specifically, we make use of the fact that the features of municipalities that made them of national security interest were clearly defined, as were the characteristics that made them sites of hydromineral wealth. We also exploit knowledge about the dimensions upon which state capitals tend to differ from other Brazilian municipalities.

When using the language of national security in reference to municipalities, the military government was typically referring to concerns about controlling its interior border zones. These concerns were manifested in efforts like the National Integration Scheme in 1970, which brought colonists from more populated areas of Brazil to settle in the Amazon (Flynn, 1978, 452), and the promulgation of Law N<sup>o</sup>. 6.634 (May 2, 1979), which prevented foreigners from acquiring land in border areas. In this sense, the degree of national security concern a

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<sup>19</sup>The aforementioned laws were Decree Law N<sup>o</sup> 1.272 of May 29, 1973, Decree Law N<sup>o</sup> 1.273 of May 29, 1973, Decree Law N<sup>o</sup> 1.284 of August 28, 1973, Decree Law N<sup>o</sup> 1.316 of March 12, 1974, Decree Law N<sup>o</sup> 1.480 of September 9, 1976, Decree Law N<sup>o</sup> 1.481 of September 9, 1976, and Complementary Law N<sup>o</sup> 41 of December 22, 1981.

<sup>20</sup>The coding for these cases is based on the municipal administrative histories provided by the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics (IBGE) in its *Cidades* website ([cidades.ibge.gov.br](http://cidades.ibge.gov.br)).

municipality represented was a function of its distance to the nearest land border.

In targeting sites of hydromineral wealth for intervention, the actions of the military government reflected a long-term preoccupation in Brazil with the therapeutic and medicinal value of mineral water, one dating back to the early/mid-nineteenth century (Marrichi, 2017). Such sites also played an important role in the growth of the hotel and tourism industries (Franco, 2017). Thus, the decision of the military government to prohibit popular elections in locations with hydromineral wealth can be interpreted as an attempt to shield these valued resources from the perceived risks of political mismanagement and exploitation.

As stated earlier, a third major rationale for intervention was that a municipality was a state capital. Of course, Brazilian state capitals are *sui generis* in a variety of respects, so structuring relatively pure as-if-random comparisons based on these units is not feasible. However, we do know some of the major ways they differ from other municipalities in their states. Besides the fact that they are the seats of government, state capitals tend to be much more populous than most other municipalities and have higher levels of human development.

Given these considerations, we employ a select set of covariates in order to maximize the credibility of our causal inferences based on (conditional) differences between municipalities that experienced an intervention and those that did not. Our covariate set is as follows:

1. ***Distance to Border (Log.)***: This is the logarithm of the distance (in kilometers) from the center of a municipality to the nearest land border. Municipalities close to a land border should have been more likely to experience interventions in self-government than municipalities distant from a border given the territorial nature of the military government’s national security concerns.<sup>21</sup>
2. ***Mineral Water***: This variable is equal to 1 if a municipality was listed as having an active or inactive concession to extract mineral water according to a study commissioned by the Ministry of Mines and Energy on the distribution of mineral water (Queiroz, 2004); 0 otherwise. Municipalities which contain mineral water should have been more likely to be assessed as medically and scientifically valuable, thereby being more likely targets for intervention.
3. ***Population (Log.)***: This variable is equal to the logarithm of the population size of the municipality (measured in 1996). All else equal, larger municipalities are more

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<sup>21</sup>Distances were constructed using shape files for Brazilian municipalities (for the year 1991) compiled by the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics (IBGE) (IBGE, 2011), as well as data on latitude and longitude compiled from the IBGE by Kelvin S. do Prado (<http://github.com/kelvins/Municipios-Brasileiros>).

economically and politically influential, thereby potentially generating greater incentives among the military to intervene in local elections. Moreover, state capitals are typically much larger than non-state capitals, so the military government’s decision to impose appointed mayors in the former may have created an overrepresentation of populous municipalities among those that were intervened. Data come from the Institute for Applied Economic Research (IPEA; [www.ipeadata.gov.br](http://www.ipeadata.gov.br)).

4. ***Human Development:*** This variable is the municipal human development index (measured in 1991). It is a composite indicator of well-being based on municipal-level outcomes in the dimensions of health, education, and economic prosperity. Municipalities with greater human development are not only more economically vibrant, but are also likely to have more students, members of union organizations, and government workers. For that reason, they may have been more likely to be targets for intervention. On the other hand, municipalities near Brazil’s land border tend to be poorer than average, so the military government’s geographical targeting strategy may have resulted in an overrepresentation of municipalities with low human development among those that were intervened. Data come from the Institute for Applied Economic Research (IPEA; [www.ipeadata.gov.br](http://www.ipeadata.gov.br)).

Descriptive statistics for our Brazilian data are presented in the Appendix (Table A8).

## Design

We adopt a research design that maximizes comparisons across municipalities with similar characteristics. In particular, we focus on within-state variation between municipalities that experienced interventions and those that did not, holding constant the covariates described above. In this regard, we employ two functionally similar estimation strategies. First, we estimate the impact of intervention by utilizing a linear probability regression model with fixed effects by state. Second, we estimate the impact of intervention by utilizing exact matching on state and the presence of mineral water in conjunction with coarsened exact matching on distance to the nearest land border, population, and human development.<sup>22</sup>

The underlying identification strategy that motivates these estimation procedures is as follows. For municipalities within a given state, once one holds constant security concerns associated with distance from the nearest land border, the presence of mineral water, and

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<sup>22</sup>To implement coarsened exact matching (Iacus, King and Porro, 2012), we discretized the distance to the nearest land border into the following categories:  $\leq 250\text{km}$ ,  $[250\text{km}, 500\text{km})$ ,  $[500\text{km}, 1000\text{km})$ ,  $\geq 1000\text{km}$ . Population size was discretized into categories defined by the quartiles of that variable. Human development was discretized into categories defined its terciles. The R package **cem** was utilized to conduct the analysis.

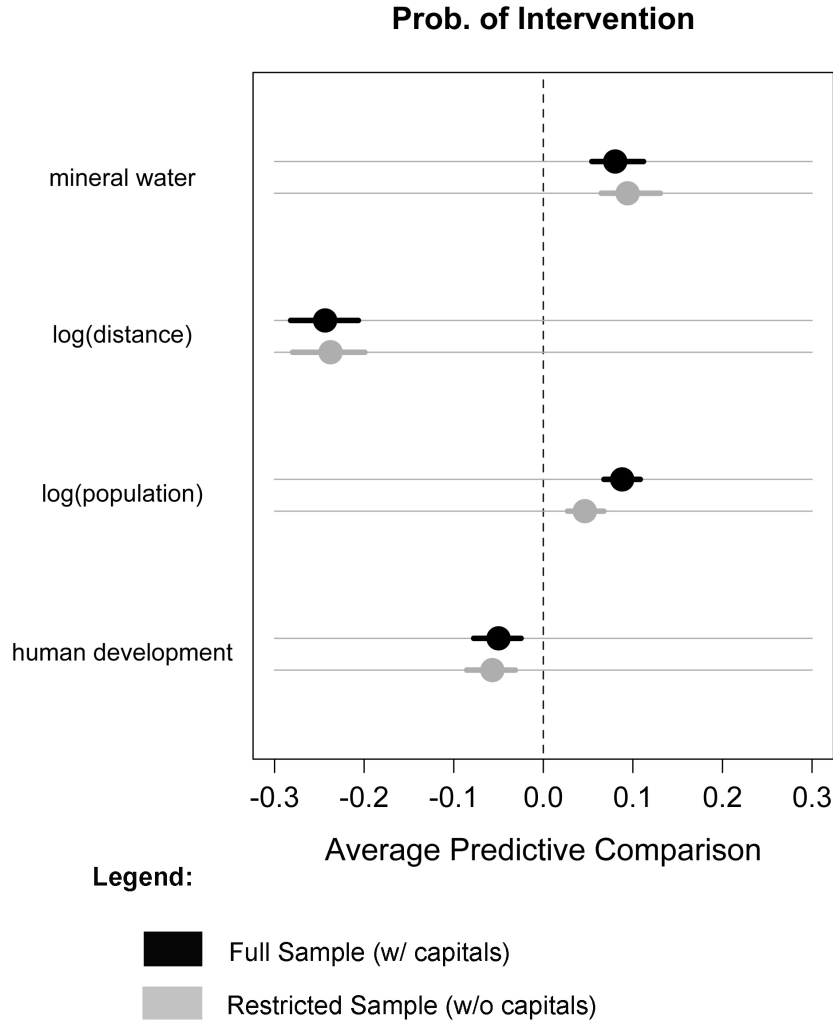
levels of population and development, whether or not intervention actually occurred is idiosyncratic, that is, functionally a coin toss. Thus, conditional comparisons of outcomes across intervention status should be informative about causal effects. Of course, we recognize that this logic runs into challenges with the inclusion of state capitals, since they differ from non-state capitals along many dimensions beyond population size and human development and may in some respects be incomparable to other municipalities in their states. For that reason, we present all our results both with state capitals included as well as excluded.

## Drivers of Intervention

Since our empirical strategy is based on knowledge of the factors that drove the military government’s decisions to install appointed mayors, here we provide evidence that the factors we indicated as important were indeed strongly associated with interruptions of local self-rule. To that end, we estimated a logistic regression in which we regressed *Intervened* onto the four covariates described above. We then plotted average predictive comparisons (APCs) (Gelman and Pardoe, 2007) for the covariates to depict the influence of each on the likelihood of intervention.

Figure 4 presents the findings. For *Mineral Water*, the APC was calculated as the average predicted change in the probability of intervention due to all municipalities being assigned a value of 1 instead of 0 on this variable. For the remaining covariates (which are continuous), the APCs were calculated as the average predicted changes in the probability of intervention due to all municipalities being assigned a value equal to the 95th percentile on a given covariate instead of the 5th percentile. As seen in the figure, in all cases the APCs were statistically significant. Most striking was the influence of *Distance to Border (Log.)*: A change from the 5th percentile of this variable to the 95th percentile leads to an increase in the likelihood of intervention of approximately 24 percentage points. The impact of *Mineral Water* was also substantial, leading to a 8–9 percentage point increase in the likelihood of intervention. The associations of population and human development with intervention were generally weaker, with the former being positively associated with intervention and the latter negatively associated with it.

Figure 4: Impact of Covariates on the Likelihood of Intervention (Logistic Regression)



Note: Shown are average predictive comparisons (APCs) (Gelman and Pardoe, 2007). For the binary covariate (*Mineral Water*), the APC shown is the average predicted change in the probability of intervention due to all municipalities being assigned a value of 1 instead of 0. For the continuous covariates, the APCs shown are the average predicted changes in probability due to all municipalities being assigned a value equal to the 95th percentile on a given covariate instead of the 5th percentile.

## Ruling Out Ideological Selection

One potential source of concern about the empirical strategy described above is ideological selection. Specifically, it is possible that the military government was more likely to impose appointed mayors in municipalities that exhibited support for Leftist candidates in the years leading up to the intervention in 1964. If this was indeed the case, then our estimates of the effect of interruptions in local self-rule could suffer from omitted variable bias, since the



ideological leanings of municipalities before military rule are likely correlated with support for the two authoritarian successor parties after democracy reemerged.

To address this possibility, we examine support for Brazil’s most prominent left-wing politician of the era: João Goulart. Goulart was the sitting president deposed by the military. His support for broad social reforms and his perceived sympathy with communist regimes was used by military and civilian actors to justify the coup. Goulart came to the presidency by way of the vice-presidency, an office to which he was independently elected in 1960. (Presidents and vice-presidents ran for office separately at that time.) Thus, if the Brazilian military was engaged in ideological selection when choosing where to impose appointed mayors, one would expect that this would be evident in vote patterns for Goulart in the 1960 vice-presidential election—with more pro-Goulart areas being more likely to have experienced intervention. Figure A9 in the Appendix presents the data using box-and-whisker plots. As shown therein, there is no evidence for ideological selection: The distribution of vote shares for Goulart in municipalities that were assigned appointed mayors was nearly identical to that encountered municipalities that were allowed to continue electing their mayors. This is true examining the full sample, including state capitals, as well as in a restricted sample with state capitals excluded.<sup>23</sup>

## Results

Our key findings with respect to interruptions of self-government in Brazil are presented in **Figure 5** (based on a linear probability model, LPM) and **Figure 6** (based on coarsened exact matching, CEM). The underlying conclusions from both sets of estimations are very similar: We detected no appreciable effect of a legacy of intervention during the authoritarian period on electoral support for authoritarian successor parties after the transition to democracy. **Figure 5** presents the point estimates and 95%-confidence intervals of the impact of having had an appointed mayor for sixteen different specifications of the LPM.

Estimates are presented separately by outcome (PDS victory, PFL victory), electoral cy-

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<sup>23</sup>Kolmogorov-Smirnov tests confirmed the similarity of the distributions. P-values for said tests were equal to 0.125 and 0.220 in the full and restricted samples, respectively.

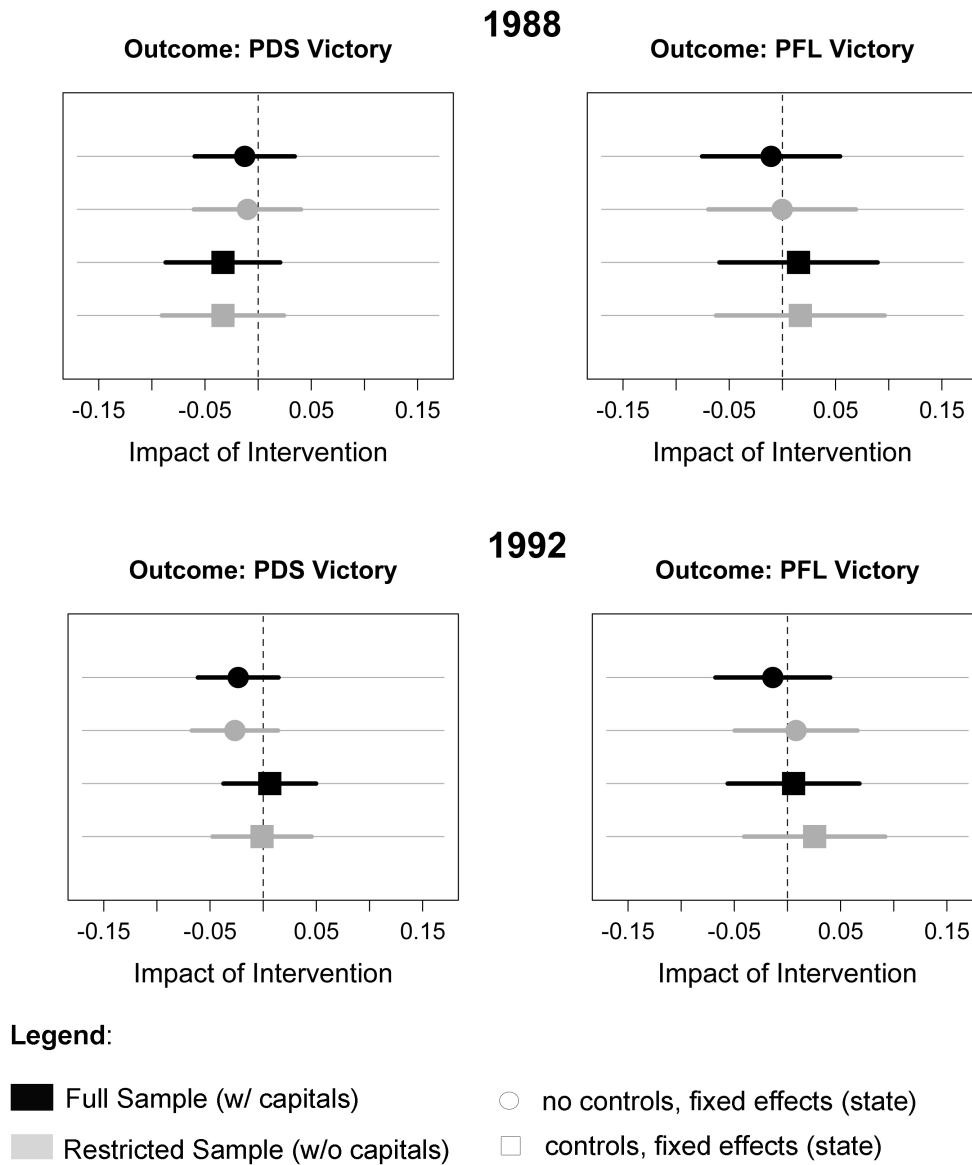
cle (1988, 1992), inclusion of state capitals in the sample (included, excluded), and inclusion of control variables (included, excluded). Given the historical importance of geography for Brazilian voting behavior, state fixed effects were included in all analyses. As is evident in [Figure 5](#), in none of the various specifications estimated did the coefficient on *Intervened* reach statistical significance by conventional standards. Moreover, the estimated effects were consistently close to zero in magnitude (ranging from a reduction of three percentage points to an increase of the same amount, depending on the outcome and specification).

Focusing on the CEM results, [Figure 6](#) presents the point estimates and 95%-confidence intervals depicting the average treatment for the treated (ATT) due to having had an appointed mayor. Estimates are broken down by outcome, electoral cycle, and inclusion of state capitals. Here again we find that estimates of the effect of *Intervened* were statistically indistinguishable from zero and had small magnitudes.

Why might this be so, and why might our findings in this respect differ so markedly from those encountered in Poland? First, the length of interruptions of self-rule under the Brazilian military government were short, typically lasting no more than twenty years. In light of our framework, this may not have been a sufficiently long timeframe to shape patterns of interpersonal trust and social capital at the local level. The comparison with Poland is striking in this respect: While Poland was under foreign rule for a total of approximately one hundred years (or even longer if the previous partitions of Poland are taken into consideration), the length of the interruption in local self-government in Brazil was only one-fifth of this time period. Importantly, this period is less than one generation, which we consider the crucial threshold at which a higher potential for long-term legacies is created.

Second, the character of authoritarian rule in Brazil was very different from the character of imperial rule in Poland, especially in comparison with the ruling strategies used in the Russian partition. The intervention in Brazil occurred in somewhat of a halfway fashion. In those municipalities suffering intervention in the mayor's office, traditional elites still had the option of maintaining local influence by pursuing other offices: state deputy, municipal councilman, or, for those sufficiently powerful, perhaps even federal deputy. Consequently, it is possible that intervention simply led to the displacement of local elites to other offices, with the fundamental structure and influence of their political machines remaining intact.

Figure 5: Linear Probability Model of Impact of Intervention on Support for Authoritarian Successor Parties in Brazil

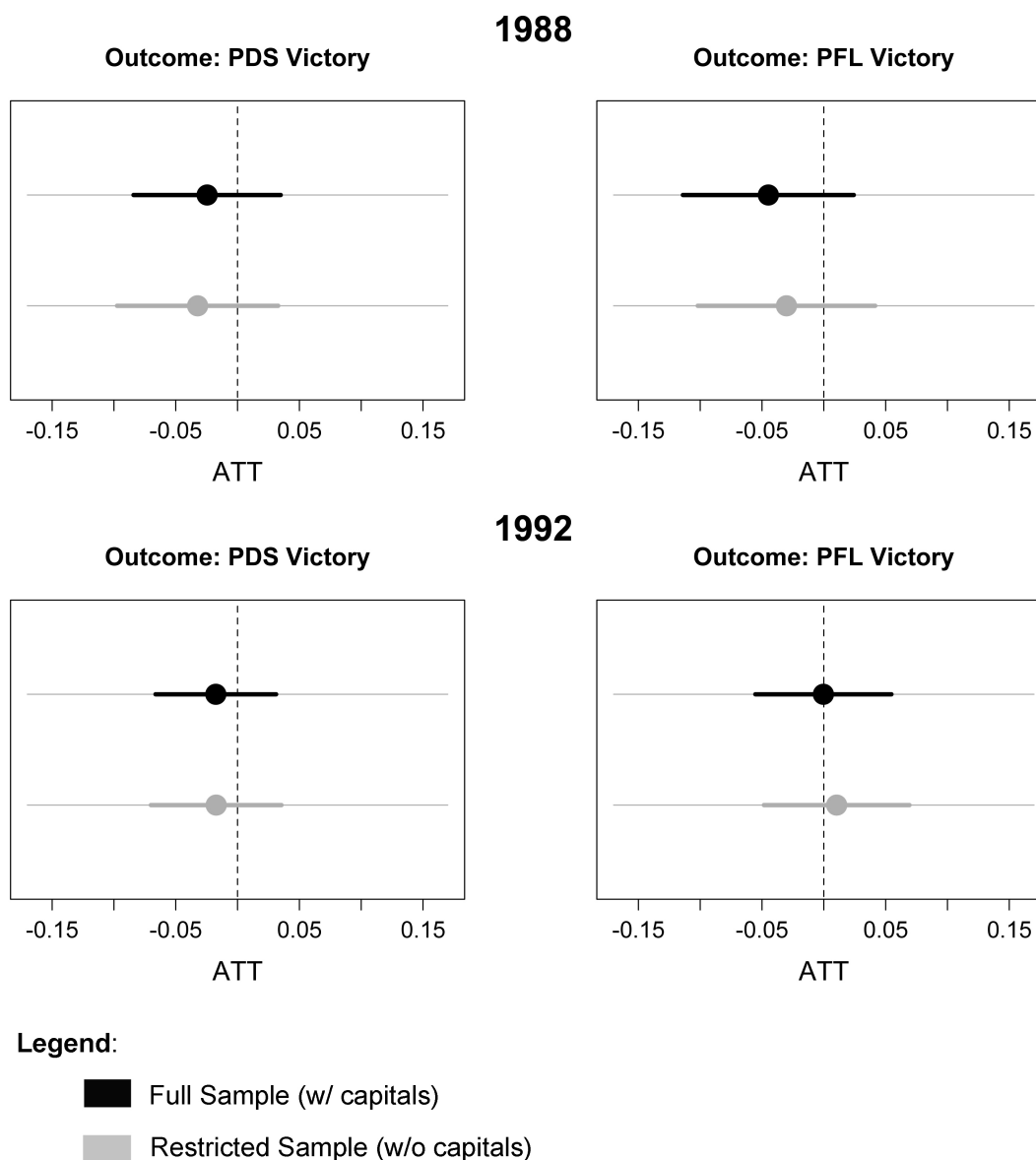


Note: Fixed effects for state included in all regressions.

Relatedly, the fact that municipalities experienced intervention on an individual/ geographically limited basis, as opposed to being part of a larger geographic cluster of adjacent municipalities simultaneously experiencing intervention, may have tempered the legacy of appointed mayors. Citizens and politicians in municipalities experiencing intervention would

have had plentiful contact with those in non-intervened municipalities, potentially limiting the extent to which distinctive attitudes and values would emerge in the former. Here, again, the contrast with the Polish case is instructive, where the encompassing character of forceful repression across the entirety of the Russian partition generated a shared experience of intervention for many citizens contained within large geographic units.

Figure 6: Coarsened Exact Matching Estimates of Impact of Intervention on Support for Authoritarian Successor Parties in Brazil



## Conclusion

Historically, interruptions in local self-government by empires or centralized authoritarian regimes have been a regular occurrence all over the world (Simpser, Slater and Wittenberg, 2018). Under which conditions can we expect such denials of local political autonomy to result in sustained legacies? We develop a systematic theoretical account of the circumstances that give rise to long-term changes in political equilibria. Specifically, we suggest that *enduring* interventions associated with *encompassing* repression have the highest potential to sustainably change political behavior. In contrast, interventions that are *limited* in both duration and repression are the least likely to produce a legacy.<sup>24</sup>

As our argument is broadly applicable to various kinds of interventions, we examine the vastly different interruptions of local self-government that occurred in Brazil during the military regime and in Poland during its imperial partition. In the case of partitioned Poland, there were crucial differences between the imperial powers that occupied it for more than a century: Prussia allowed for more extensive forms of broad political participation by the Poles, while Russia's rule remained highly repressive throughout. Moreover, in the case of Brazil, an authoritarian regime installed its own political allies as mayors of certain cities. Yet, in Brazil, the intervention was limited in both duration and the level of repression.

Our results highlight that interruptions of self-government have *vastly* different potentials to create sustained legacies depending on their characteristics. Specifically, in the case of Poland, citizens in the areas that were subject to more than a century of highly repressive and militarized foreign rule (through Russia) show a clear tendency to elect mayors that belong to the populist and antidemocratic right-wing party Law and Justice (PiS). In Brazil, on the other hand, the experience of externally appointed mayors imposed during the military regime did not appear to leave a legacy in terms of support for authoritarian successor parties (PDS, PFL). The short duration of the intervention (less than a generation) and its relatively limited repressive scope help explain this outcome.

In general, this paper deepens a prominent strand of the political economy literature:

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<sup>24</sup>In the Appendix, we extend the main theory presented above through a supplement that more explicitly focuses on concrete mechanisms and explains why these mechanisms are conditional on the characteristics of intervention.

the scholarship on historical persistence and legacies. Several studies in this literature have already pointed to the necessity of considering complex within-colonizer variation in legacies (e.g., [Bruhn and Gallego, 2012](#); [De Juan and Pierskalla, 2017](#); [Iyer, 2010](#); [Vogler, 2022](#)). Our paper goes one step further by systematically explaining “non-legacies”—a topic that receives little attention in existing studies. In this respect, our theory points to the importance of null findings as crucial empirical evidence for a theory about the conditions under which external rule has high or low potential to create legacies. One simply cannot theorize about the conditions under which legacies emerge without providing evidence about the contexts in which they fail to do so. To that end, we hope this paper encourages the growth of a broader research program that examines the conditions under which legacies materialize. For instance, our framework could explain why regional differences in the repressive character of Nazi rule across Poland—that only lasted for a few years—did not create a sustained political legacy as shown by [Charnysh and Pique \(2023\)](#).

Prolonged as well as severe interruptions of local self-government in the form of either imperialism or authoritarian rule have been a regular experience of the inhabitants of a large set of diverse geographic areas. While our empirical focus was on Europe and Latin America, future studies could expand the empirical analysis to other world regions. In this sense, we hope to have provided an important step toward a general theory and empirical body of evidence of the long-term consequences of interruption in self-government, but there is clearly ample space for other scholars to build upon these results.

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When are Junctures Critical?  
The Legacies and Non-Legacies of  
Interruptions in Local Self-Government

Online Appendix

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# A Appendix

This appendix includes additional empirical evidence and further discusses claims that were made in the main body of the paper. In [subsection A.1](#), we complement our main theoretical framework through a more detailed look at the concrete underlying mechanisms that connect sustained and repressive forms of interruptions in self-government with long-term legacies. In [subsection A.2](#), we present an extended discussion of the historical background of the Polish case. In [subsection A.3](#), we provide additional information on the Polish party that we use as the primary outcome measure. In [subsection A.4](#), we discuss the data we use for in our analysis of Poland and show which specific municipalities are included. In [subsection A.5](#), we provide the exact mathematical formulas used for the different distance measures in our GRDD. In [subsection A.6](#), we show descriptive statistics for the case of Poland. In [subsection A.7](#) we provide additional tables and figures that complement the results in the main body of the study. In [subsection A.8](#), we show the results with respect to the more ambiguous case of Austria (which evolved from using extremely high repression to less repression and ultimately permitted limited forms of political participation). In [subsection A.9](#), we provide additional information about the Brazilian case, especially in the form of two maps of the municipalities that experienced intervention. Finally, in [subsection A.10](#), we show descriptive statistics for the case of Brazil.

## A.1 Theory Supplement: Extended Discussion of the Mechanisms

In the main body of our study, we elaborate on the conditions under which interruptions in self-government can be expected to result in long-term legacies. Therein, we also distinguish between the extent of repression and the duration of intervention as key factors that determine whether or not a political legacy will materialize. In this supplementary section, we provide additional detail on the specific mechanisms that we expect to lead to changes in political behavior as a consequence of the removal of local self-government. Importantly, as we describe below and in line with our main theory, all these mechanisms are most likely to apply to a case of *enduring* interventions with *encompassing repression* and least likely to apply in the case of *transient* interventions with *limited repression*.

In general, we consider two main types of external interventions as interruptions of local self-government: imperial conquest and rule (both of a direct and indirect character) and local political control through a centralized authoritarian state. The commonality between these two kinds of interventions is the denial of full local political autonomy by a non-local actor. When political autonomy is denied, the negative effects on affected communities are multifaceted.

### A.1.1 An Overview of Relevant Mechanisms

What are the consequences of interruptions in local self-government? Especially if sustained over time, the inability of individuals to participate in and take responsibility for political leadership in their community may shape the manner in which they view their fellow citizens and even come to view themselves. The classic treatise by Putnam, Leonardi and Nanetti (1993) was among the earliest and most influential works to make this point, tying regional variation in civic community in the present day to historical experiences of political autonomy or subjugation. An implication of Putnam, Leonardi and Nanetti’s argument is that in the long run self-government breeds interpersonal trust, which facilitates citizens’ capacity to coordinate their electoral support around political leaders who provide better public goods and services. Sustained interruptions of self-government, by the same token, may undermine interpersonal trust and weaken electoral accountability.

Extant evidence from laboratory settings is consistent with the postulated link between experience with self-government and a cooperative disposition among citizens. Dal Bó, Foster and Putterman (2010) show that individuals are significantly more likely to engage in cooperative behavior if they are able to choose policies themselves (through voting) than if policies are imposed upon them. Grossman and Baldassarri (2012) demonstrate that cooperation depends on how leaders are chosen: Individuals able to choose their leaders themselves contribute more to public goods than individuals whose leaders are chosen by lottery. Similarly, Markussen, Putterman and Tyran (2014) report that formal and informal mechanisms of curbing free-riding are more effective when they have been democratically selected by subjects. Furthermore, Kamei (2016) finds evidence of legacy effects: Individuals who participate in a democratic policymaking process continue to exhibit high levels of cooperative behavior even when subsequently placed in undemocratic contexts. Sausgruber, Sonntag and Tyran (2021) show that individuals react more pro-socially to policies that are selected democratically than to those for which they have no input. Most recently, Haas, Hassan



and Morton (2020) provide evidence that interpersonal trust among subjects from established democracies is more resilient to negative shocks than is the case for subjects from new democracies. As indicated in our main theory section, if these effects can persist over long time periods, they are most likely to lead to sustained changes in political behavior—even after an external intervention has come to an end. Similarly, the many different highlighted pathways through which removal of local autonomy negatively affects political behavior indicate that forms of intervention that affect more dimensions (i.e., that are more extensive in their repressiveness) will have the most comprehensive consequences.

Moreover, all of these findings imply that interpersonal trust and cooperative attitudes spring from sustained experiences with self-government, and that they are likely to wither as a consequence of interruptions of self-government, especially if such interruptions are sustained over long periods of time. Yet a disposition towards cooperation is not the only aspect of citizens’ worldviews that may be affected by interruptions of self-government. Guiso, Sapienza and Zingales (2016) suggest an additional channel of influence: individuals’ beliefs about self-efficacy. Revisiting Putnam, Leonardi and Nanetti’s arguments about the legacies of communal government in Italy, the aforementioned study demonstrates that schoolchildren from the former communal republics in the North hold fundamentally different beliefs about the role of effort versus luck in shaping life outcomes than do schoolchildren in other areas. For the first group of children, effort trumps luck, whereas the opposite is the case for the second group. Thus, interruptions of self-government—by weakening a community’s opportunity to fully develop a sense of self-efficacy and responsibility for governance—may mitigate the intergenerational transmission of the belief that one’s actions can meaningfully shape life prospects. A key insight from these findings about potential long-term changes to culture and the intergenerational transmission of values is that the norms undergirding citizen participation and democratic governance can be influenced in ways such that the effects are visible long after self-government has resumed.

The implications of a sustained and repressive interruption in self-government for downstream political behavior follow largely from the norms and belief systems outlined above. We postulate that, depending on context, interruptions in self-government contribute to: (1) support for populist or anti-system politicians and parties; or (2) support for authoritarian successor parties (ASPs).

### A.1.2 Specific Mechanisms Regarding Populist (Anti-System) Parties

Consider first support for populist or anti-system politicians and parties. A growing body of evidence links the electoral prospects of anti-system actors to low levels of social capital and trust. This is particularly well documented for European party systems, with the extant studies on Latin America similarly indicating the existence of such a relationship.<sup>1</sup>

Keefer, Scartascini and Vlaicu (2019) provide a theoretical framework that explains why this should be so. In politics characterized by low levels of interpersonal trust, voters can-

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<sup>1</sup>For analyses tying low social capital and trust to support for anti-system parties in Europe, see Coffé, Heyndels and Vermeir (2007), Hooghe, Marien and Pauwels (2011), Berning and Ziller (2017), and Hooghe and Dassonneville (2018). For studies on Latin America tying low trust to voting for anti-system candidates and support for the policies advocated by such candidates, see Doyle (2011) and Keefer, Scartascini and Vlaicu (2019).

not count on one another to coordinate around responsible candidates with the skill and willpower to provide high-quality public goods and services. Rather, in the spirit of ‘each voter for themselves,’ a pattern of electoral free riding emerges where voters gravitate towards politicians offering immediate, simple, and often personalized solutions to complex policy problems (the hallmark of populist parties).

In such a context, political platforms that promise to dispossess (so-called) elites, that scapegoat immigrants or other out-groups, and/or that advocate the transfer of resources to ‘virtuous’ members of the polity are likely to draw in large segments of the electorate. Of course, such appeals are the ‘bread and butter’ of populist, anti-system politicians. Thus, by undermining interpersonal trust, interruptions in self-government may in the long-run prime the electorate in favor of anti-system actors.

Long-run changes in self-efficacy beliefs may likewise play a role in generating support for anti-system actors. Social psychological research has shown that reducing subjects’ personal control in an experimental setting strengthens beliefs about the existence of powerful political and personal enemies (Sullivan, Landau and Rothschild, 2010) and leads to the perception of conspiracies (Whitson and Galinsky, 2008).<sup>2</sup> Anti-system politicians are in this way inherently advantaged by a polity characterized by a low sense of self-efficacy, since the use of conspiratorial language about elites operating as “enemies of the people” (to borrow a phrase frequently used by Joseph Stalin, and more recently by Donald Trump) is a nearly universal feature of their political rhetoric (cf. Hawkins, 2009; Mudde, 2007; Myers and Hawkins, 2011). Accordingly, the fact that interruptions of self-government may undermine collectively held beliefs about self-efficacy provides another reason to expect that they will favor anti-system political actors. As with the previous mechanism, this mechanism is more likely to apply when interruptions of self-government are sustained and associated with encompassing repression.

### A.1.3 Specific Mechanisms Regarding Authoritarian Successor Parties

Now consider support for ASPs. Scholarship points to two factors that may play a role in shaping the relationship between a sustained interruption in self-government and support for these organizations: (1) ideology and (2) political organization. ASPs will be most successful when citizens internalize rather than reject the regime ideology (Neundorff and Pop-Eleches, 2020; Pop-Eleches and Tucker, 2017). Internalization clearly occurs in certain contexts, especially in societies where the authoritarian regime is able to heavily invest in indoctrination efforts over a long time period (Alesina and Fuchs-Schündeln, 2007; Cantoni, Chen, Yang, Yuchtman and Zhang, 2017; Pop-Eleches and Tucker, 2020). Where interruptions are most prolonged and/or comprehensive, the internalization of regime ideology will likely be greatest. Because a sustained absence of self-government undermines communal cohesiveness as well as citizens’ collective sense of self-efficacy, authoritarian subjects in such contexts may not have the independence of mind nor social support necessary to resist the regime’s indoctrination efforts. Consequently, if sustained for an extensive period, indoctrination takes root, creating an ideological bias in favor of authoritarian successor parties after self-government has resumed.

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<sup>2</sup>Conspiracy beliefs, in turn, have been empirically linked with populist attitudes that drive support for anti-system politicians (Castanho Silva, Vegetti and Littvay, 2017).

Support for authoritarian successor parties also rests on organizational factors (Grzymala-Busse, 2002; Loxton, 2018; Miller, 2021; Serra, 2013). Possibly one of the most important among these is the capacity to mobilize voters. Generally speaking, authoritarian successor parties that have extensive clientelist networks and enjoy privileged access to state resources will be most successful on election day. Where interruptions of self-government are sustained over long periods of time, one would expect authoritarian successor parties to have these attributes. Indeed, examining a sample of political parties around the world, Kitschelt and Singer (2018) find evidence for precisely this link: Authoritarian successor parties emergent from interruptions of self-government lasting ten years or more have more extensive clientelist networks and expend more effort on clientelism than other parties. This is compatible with our expectations: Sustained and comprehensive interruptions of self-government may permit authoritarian elites to co-opt and/or subsume local notables and family dynasties within the official party, thereby giving the authoritarian successor party a significant advantage in its capacity to exploit practices such as vote brokerage for electoral gain.

#### **A.1.4 Summary**

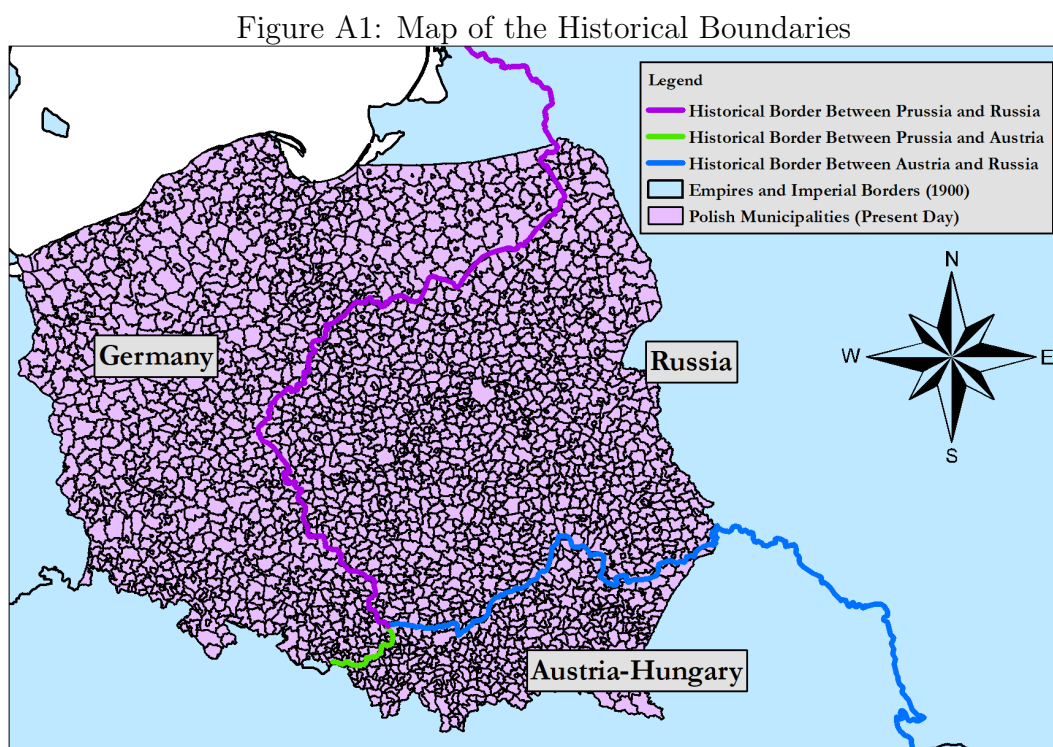
In short, in this section we have proposed a variety of mechanisms that connect sustained and repressive interruptions in self-government to long-term changes in political behavior. For this reason, the applicability of each of these mechanisms is clearly moderated by the two factors discussed in our main framework. In general, there is ample evidence from a broad range of studies that any sustained denial of local political autonomy has the potential to negatively affect participatory behavior and bolster the efforts of parties that are explicitly anti-system (such as many populist parties and authoritarian successor parties).

## A.2 First Case Supplement: Extended Discussion of the Historical Background

In this section, we provide additional discussion and information about the Polish case that complements and expands upon the historical background section in the main body of the study. We begin by providing a map of the historical borders and proceed by describing the character of imperial occupation through the three powers in more detail.

### A.2.1 The Historical Borders

Figure A1 shows both the historical borders of the imperial partitions of Poland in combination with the administrative boundaries of contemporary municipalities.



### A.2.2 Interruption in Self-Government through Prussia

The first one among the imperial powers that ruled parts of the Polish lands was Prussia. Prussia began introducing its own legal-administrative system in the occupied Polish territories in the late eighteenth century (Hoensch, 1990, 181; Lukowski and Zawadzki, 2006, 137; Prazmowska, 2011, 131; Wandycz, 1975, 14–15; Vogler, 2019, 812–813).

After 1815, Prussia controlled large parts of Western Poland, including many territories with significant Polish population majorities. Even in those territories, the Polish people had to follow Prussian laws and accept the Prussian system of government. Accordingly, they were denied the right to fully self-govern.

While the Prussian state denied full self-government to the Poles, its institutions were highly reliable and effective, especially when compared to Russian rule in the eastern parts of Poland. Additionally, as of 1849, the Polish minority enjoyed limited political representation in the Prussian *Landtag* (an important representative assembly of the Prussian state), which provided some initial avenues for political participation. Particularly in comparison with early Austrian rule and the extremely coercive and militarized Russian rule throughout the entire period 1815–1914, Prussia’s system was seen as relatively benign (Davies, 2005, 85; Vogler, 2019, 812–813).

Most importantly, in the period of Imperial Germany (1871–1914), the Poles were given full voting rights in federal parliamentary elections and were permitted to establish political parties that represented their minority interests. While self-government was inhibited when it came to the design of administrative and legal institutions, the fact that the Polish minority had the right to organize politically over several decades gave the Poles important and sustained experience with democratic processes and political participation.

### A.2.3 Interruption in Self-Government through Russia

The second imperial power that ruled large parts of the Polish lands throughout the nineteenth century was Russia. Compared to Prussia, Russia’s foreign rule was significantly more repressive, antagonistic, and militarized.

The Russian state was primarily seen as an oppressive force against the Polish people that used coercion and military force to maintain its rule. It governed the Polish territories with a high level of coercion and arbitrariness (Davies, 2005, ch. 2; Raphael, 2000, 67–71, 74–75; Vogler, 2019, 814–815). This state of affairs, taken in conjunction with the absence of any democratic forms of self-government and poor living standards, provoked several armed uprisings against the Russian state and military throughout the nineteenth century. Unsurprisingly, these uprisings were smashed by Russia through the relentless use of military power (Davies, 2005; Lukowski and Zawadzki, 2006; Prazmowska, 2011; Wandycz, 1975).

Accordingly, while the Poles in the western territories were forced to accept Prussian institutions but had the right to have their own political parties in the German parliament, in the east they were not only completely denied the right to self-govern, but also experienced a militarized suppression that lasted for decades. Any attempts at collective action against the suppressive Russian state were brutally put down and squashed hopes for an independent state with forms of democratic/inclusive self-government.

### A.2.4 Interruption in Self-Government through Austria

The third imperial power that ruled some of the Polish territories was Austria. The lands of the Austrian partition are historically known as Galicia. With respect to Polish self-government, Austria had a more mixed history than Prussia and Russia. Even though it also acted as a highly oppressive state from 1815 to 1867, after 1867 it gradually began to give more rights to the Poles, including the hiring of Polish personnel in the regional/local bureaucracy and the use of the Polish language in administrative affairs (Davies, 2005; Lukowski and Zawadzki, 2006; Prazmowska, 2011; Vogler, 2019; Vushko, 2015).

Austrian rule also began with a very strict censoring of the Polish press and the oppression of all Polish attempts at self-government. Especially in the period 1849–1859, the so-called period of *neoabsolutism*—as a response to the failed 1848 revolution—the Austrian state intensified its attempts to control its entire territory, including through political repression in Galicia (Deak, 2015; Judson, 2016). Yet, after 1867, the Austrian state began to change its strategy of rule. Beginning in this year, Austria granted greater levels of administrative participation to the Poles. More Polish personnel were hired to work in the public administration and Poles were permitted to send representatives to Vienna.

At the same time, several social and political hierarchies persisted. First and most importantly, while administrative autonomy had been given to the province of Galicia, it was still subject to the general laws of the Austrian state, meaning that foreign rule persisted (albeit in less severe form). Moreover, unlike the German Empire in 1871, the Austrian state did not introduce full and equal voting rights to the Poles of Galicia. Instead, there was a class-based voting system that prevented many people from having any influence on political processes. Only for two elections (in 1907 and 1911) were full voting rights given to the Poles, meaning that the majority of inhabitants of the Austrian partition (like their counterparts in the Russian partition) gained little experience with democratic processes. Accordingly, the greater level of Polish participation in the bureaucracy of Galicia did not change the fact that the Austrian state did not allow for full democratic participation until 1907, a few years before the end of Austrian rule in the territory.

In short, when it comes to the interruption in self-government, the Austrian case is more ambiguous than the other two. At first, the Austrian state's rule in Poland was highly repressive. While it allowed for administrative decentralization after 1867, the introduction of fully democratic institutions happened so late in the Austrian Empire (1907) that it might not have had a sufficiently profound impact to shape long-term prospects for effective and sustained experience with self-government.



### A.3 First Case Supplement: Expanded Discussion of the PiS (Outcome Measure in the Polish Case)

The Polish “Law and Justice” (PiS) party in the 2010s represents a perfect measure of the strength of populist, anti-system parties.<sup>3</sup> This is because both ideologically and practically its antidemocratic orientation was clear to observers of Polish politics. For instance, Charnysh (2017) describes how the party did not condemn—and thus often implicitly legitimized—extremist right-wing political positions. Among others, she also points to a growing radicalization of the PiS party elite in the late 2000s and early 2010s.

This radicalization of the PiS was not limited to rhetoric or superficial displays of antidemocratic positions. Instead, once the party had gained political power in the mid-2010s, it very actively sought to dismantle Poland’s democratic system of checks and balances. Specifically, it not only disempowered the Constitutional Tribunal—one of Poland’s most important judicial institutions at the federal level—to remove a possible (democratically and legitimately instituted) veto player to its legislative goals (Sadurski, 2019, chap. 3), but also shaped the entire rest of the justice system in accordance with its own partisan interests, concentrating an enormous amount of legal (and political) power (Sadurski, 2019, chap. 4). These actions were accompanied by assaults on a whole host of other institutions that are central to functioning democracies, including the Polish media system, a viable political opposition, and a neutral civil service (Sadurski, 2019, chap. 5).

Accordingly, the assessments of scholars have been extremely critical and indicate a severe form of democratic backsliding. Drinóczy and Bień-Kacała (2019) think of the developments in Poland at this time as the emergence of “illiberal constitutionalism”—a process that includes the relativization and undermining of democratic principles. Similarly, Markowski (2019) suggests that the PiS created a form of “authoritarian clientelism,” which is at odds with the principles of liberal democracy and the rule of law. All of these arguments show that the PiS was not only a perceived, but a real threat to democracy.

Despite the aforementioned developments, Nalepa (2021) presents evidence that suggests that there was some degree of uncertainty on the part of many Polish citizens regarding the authoritarian tendencies of the PiS. Importantly, this argument and evidence does not represent a direct contradiction to our theory. After all, PiS was and is a fundamentally populist party (with the strength of populism being a key consequence of interruptions in self-government). Populist parties typically do not have a strong commitment to democratic and/or constitutional norms, making them at least a *potential* threat to democracy. In line with our framework, the inability of citizens to clearly recognize such a potential threat and to allow for its political leaders to rise to power can be seen to at least in part be related to previous (enduring) interruptions in self-government (via the mechanisms outlined by us above). Indeed, that using more aggressive political rhetoric and borrowing from extreme

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<sup>3</sup>We chose the period of the 2010s (rather than the 1990s or early 2000s) as our main observation time because in the preceding two decades the Polish political system was still in a state of flux and the debate over whether to join the west or the east overshadowed most other discourses on political issues. Moreover, during these earlier decades, the viability of parties and party-citizen interactions were oscillating, implying that the Polish party system was not in a state of equilibrium. In the 2010s, however, the debate over the overall geopolitical orientation in terms of capitalism vs. communism had been settled and the Polish political system moved closer to a stable equilibrium.

agendas represent potential threats to democracy was known long before PiS received the opportunity to dismantle Poland’s constitutional system (see, for instance, [Rupnik, 2007, 24](#)). In line with this anticipation, exclusionary identity politics (rhetoric) became a key component of (justifying) democratic backsliding in Poland ([Sata and Karolewski, 2020](#)).<sup>4</sup>

Based on our framework in the main body of the study and our comprehensive analysis of the historical background of the Polish case (see [subsection A.2](#)), we predict that Law and Justice (PiS) party should be strongest in areas that had the most severe interruptions of self-government and the least experience with democratic participation. In the comparison of Prussia and Russia, the Russian areas clearly were subject to more militarized, repressive foreign rule that also did not have any truly democratic components that could serve as the template for self-governance processes. While Prussian rule also had some repressive elements, it offered the Poles significantly more robust channels for political participation, including full voting rights for males above the age of 25 as of the year 1871.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>4</sup>On this issue, see also [Charnysh \(2017\)](#).

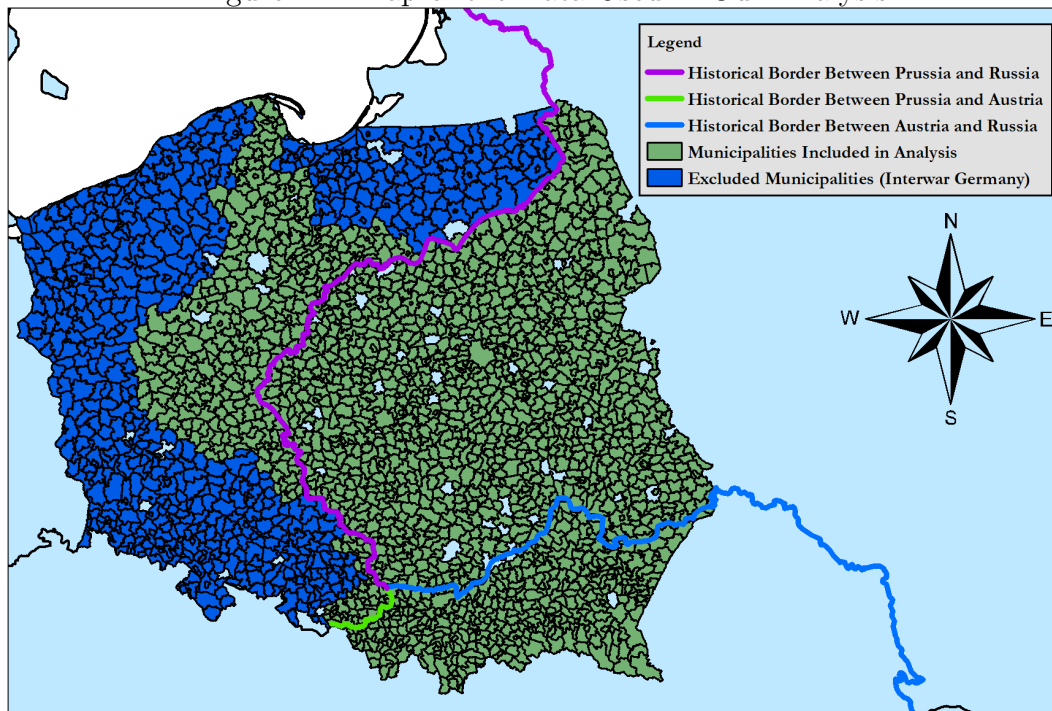
<sup>5</sup>Furthermore, as we discuss in more detail below, the Austrian case does not allow for a straightforward prediction due to the ambiguous/shifting character of Austrian rule over time.



## A.4 Empirical Examination (Case 1) Supplement: Further Information on the Underlying Dataset—Relevant Polish Counties

With respect to Poland, for historical reasons, we exclude a number of municipalities from our analysis. Specifically, we exclude all territories that historically belonged to interwar Germany. The reason for us to remove this set of observations is that, after World War II, a massive population resettlement took place. Many Poles from the easternmost and southern parts of Poland were forced to relocate to the west. As a part of this process, they were resettled into the former territories of Germany (while the previous German inhabitants of these areas fled to the west or were forcibly removed). Given these massive population resettlements (Charnysh, 2019; Charnysh and Peisakhin, 2022), we cannot treat the areas of interwar Germany in the same way as the parts that belonged to interwar Prussia. Thus, we have excluded them from our geographic regression discontinuity analysis. This decision is visualized in Figure A2.

Figure A2: Map of the Data Used in Our Analysis



## A.5 Empirical Examination (Case 1) Supplement: Further Information on the Underlying Dataset—Relevant Polish Counties

In this section, we provide the explicit mathematical functions that we use to measure the geographic location of Polish municipalities in the different versions of our GRDD.

### Distance to Border:

$$f(\text{geographic location}) = \gamma_1 \text{ distance to border}_i + \gamma_2 \text{ distance to border}_i * EMP_{ji} \quad (1)$$

Distance to the border is measured in km, with negative values denoting one empire in a pairwise comparison, positive values denoting another one. Coefficients of the distance terms are represented by  $\gamma$ .

### Distance to Border with Second-Order Polynomial:

$$f(\text{geographic location}) = \gamma_1 \text{ distance to border}_i + \gamma_2 \text{ distance to border}_i^2 + \gamma_3 \text{ distance to border}_i * EMP_{ji} + \gamma_4 \text{ distance to border}_i^2 * EMP_{ji} \quad (2)$$

Distance to the border is again measured in km, with negative values denoting one empire in a pairwise comparison, positive values denoting another one. Coefficients of the distance terms are again represented by  $\gamma$ .

### Distance to Border with Latitude and Longitude:

$$f(\text{geographic location}) = \gamma_1 x + \gamma_2 y + \gamma_3 \text{ distance to border}_i + \gamma_4 \text{ distance to border}_i * EMP_{ji} \quad (3)$$

In this regression format,  $x$  stands for latitude and  $y$  stands for longitude. Coefficients are again represented by  $\gamma$ .

## A.6 Descriptive Statistics: Poland

Table A1 shows descriptive statistics for the Polish case.

| Variable                      | n    | Min   | q <sub>1</sub> | $\bar{x}$ | $\tilde{x}$ | q <sub>3</sub> | Max     | IQR    |
|-------------------------------|------|-------|----------------|-----------|-------------|----------------|---------|--------|
| Mayor PiS (2014–2018)         | 2445 | 0.00  | 0.00           | 0.07      | 0.00        | 0.00           | 1.00    | 0.00   |
| Mayor PiS (Broad) (2014–2018) | 2445 | 0.00  | 0.00           | 0.07      | 0.00        | 0.00           | 1.00    | 0.00   |
| Mayor PiS (2010–2014)         | 2448 | 0.00  | 0.00           | 0.05      | 0.00        | 0.00           | 1.00    | 0.00   |
| Russia                        | 2448 | 0.00  | 0.00           | 0.44      | 0.00        | 1.00           | 1.00    | 1.00   |
| Interwar Germany              | 2448 | 0.00  | 0.00           | 0.26      | 0.00        | 1.00           | 1.00    | 1.00   |
| Austria                       | 2448 | 0.00  | 0.00           | 0.15      | 0.00        | 0.00           | 1.00    | 0.00   |
| Elevation                     | 2448 | -2.49 | 105.49         | 186.25    | 155.57      | 228.27         | 1207.07 | 122.78 |
| Pop. Density                  | 2448 | 4.37  | 41.46          | 221.12    | 64.08       | 129.04         | 3991.21 | 87.58  |
| Urban Share                   | 2448 | 0.00  | 0.00           | 24.20     | 0.00        | 46.98          | 100.00  | 46.98  |
| Unemployment Rate             | 2448 | 0.97  | 3.45           | 5.43      | 4.87        | 7.02           | 18.17   | 3.57   |
| Avg. Monthly Salary (%)       | 2448 | 65.40 | 77.20          | 83.50     | 81.45       | 87.10          | 166.00  | 9.90   |
| Working Age. Pop. Share       | 2448 | 46.90 | 61.00          | 62.08     | 62.10       | 63.20          | 68.60   | 2.20   |
| Elderly Pop. Share            | 2448 | 10.80 | 17.10          | 19.25     | 19.10       | 21.10          | 40.70   | 4.00   |
| Population (Log.) (2014)      | 2448 | 7.20  | 8.52           | 9.08      | 8.93        | 9.48           | 14.37   | 0.96   |
| Population (Log.) (2010)      | 2448 | 7.22  | 8.53           | 9.09      | 8.93        | 9.47           | 14.35   | 0.94   |

Table A1: Descriptive Statistics: Poland

## A.7 Empirical Examination (Case 1) Supplement: Additional Results

The following tables and figures complement the discussion of the results in the main body of the paper. [Table A2](#) shows the results of the simple dummy variable regressions with covariates added. [Table A3](#) shows the regression results of our Prussia/Russia comparison with a number of covariates included. [Figure A3](#) and [Figure A4](#) represent additional RDD graphs of the alternative outcome measures. Finally, [Figure A5](#) and [Figure A6](#) represent additional maps of the alternative outcome measures.

Table A2: Local Political Leadership Outcomes (With Controls)

|                         | <i>Dependent variable:</i> |                        |                       |
|-------------------------|----------------------------|------------------------|-----------------------|
|                         | Mayor PIS                  | Mayor PIS (Broad)      | Mayor PIS (2010)      |
|                         | (1)                        | (2)                    | (3)                   |
| Austria                 | 0.111***<br>(0.017)        | 0.119***<br>(0.017)    | 0.088***<br>(0.014)   |
| Russia                  | 0.017<br>(0.018)           | 0.020<br>(0.018)       | 0.018<br>(0.015)      |
| Interwar Germany        | 0.146***<br>(0.022)        | 0.157***<br>(0.023)    | 0.054***<br>(0.018)   |
| Elevation               | −0.0001**<br>(0.00005)     | −0.0001**<br>(0.00005) | 0.00004<br>(0.00004)  |
| Pop. Density            | 0.00004**<br>(0.00002)     | 0.00004**<br>(0.00002) | 0.00003*<br>(0.00001) |
| Urban Share             | 0.0005**<br>(0.0002)       | 0.0004<br>(0.0002)     | 0.0003<br>(0.0002)    |
| Unemploy. Rate          | −0.002<br>(0.002)          | −0.002<br>(0.002)      | −0.001<br>(0.002)     |
| Avg. Monthly Salary     | −0.001*<br>(0.001)         | −0.001**<br>(0.001)    | −0.0005<br>(0.0005)   |
| Work. Age Pop. Share    | 0.005<br>(0.004)           | 0.005<br>(0.005)       | −0.003<br>(0.004)     |
| Elderly Pop. Share      | −0.003<br>(0.003)          | −0.003<br>(0.003)      | −0.006***<br>(0.002)  |
| Pop. (Log) (2014)       | 0.001<br>(0.009)           | 0.009<br>(0.010)       |                       |
| Pop. (Log) (2010)       |                            |                        | 0.001<br>(0.008)      |
| Constant                | −0.155<br>(0.328)          | −0.213<br>(0.339)      | 0.285<br>(0.272)      |
| Observations            | 2,445                      | 2,445                  | 2,448                 |
| R <sup>2</sup>          | 0.044                      | 0.047                  | 0.029                 |
| Adjusted R <sup>2</sup> | 0.040                      | 0.043                  | 0.025                 |

Note: OLS

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

Table A3: Local Political Leadership Outcomes (Prussia/Russia Comparison) (With Controls)

|                         | <i>Dependent variable:</i> |                          |                         |                      |                          |                         |
|-------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------|----------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------|
|                         | Mayor PIS<br>(1)           | Mayor PIS (Broad)<br>(2) | Mayor PIS (2010)<br>(3) | Mayor PIS<br>(4)     | Mayor PIS (Broad)<br>(5) | Mayor PIS (2010)<br>(6) |
| Russia                  | 0.066**<br>(0.028)         | 0.072**<br>(0.028)       | 0.050**<br>(0.024)      | 0.092***<br>(0.032)  | 0.102***<br>(0.033)      | 0.053*<br>(0.027)       |
| Elevation               | -0.00000<br>(0.0002)       | 0.00001<br>(0.0002)      | 0.0002<br>(0.0002)      | 0.00001<br>(0.0001)  | 0.00001<br>(0.0001)      | 0.0002*<br>(0.0001)     |
| Lat.                    | -0.003<br>(0.017)          | -0.003<br>(0.017)        | 0.004<br>(0.014)        |                      |                          |                         |
| Long.                   | 0.011<br>(0.009)           | 0.010<br>(0.010)         | 0.002<br>(0.008)        |                      |                          |                         |
| Pop. Density            |                            |                          |                         | 0.00004<br>(0.00003) | 0.00004<br>(0.00003)     | 0.00000<br>(0.00002)    |
| Urban Share             |                            |                          |                         | 0.0001<br>(0.0004)   | 0.0001<br>(0.0004)       | 0.0001<br>(0.0003)      |
| Unemply. Rate           |                            |                          |                         | -0.002<br>(0.004)    | -0.002<br>(0.004)        | 0.0003<br>(0.003)       |
| Avg. Monthly Salary     |                            |                          |                         | 0.001<br>(0.001)     | 0.001<br>(0.001)         | 0.0002<br>(0.001)       |
| Work. Age Pop. Share    |                            |                          |                         | 0.019**<br>(0.009)   | 0.022**<br>(0.009)       | -0.006<br>(0.008)       |
| Elderly Pop. Share      |                            |                          |                         | 0.002<br>(0.005)     | 0.002<br>(0.006)         | -0.008<br>(0.005)       |
| Pop. (Log) (2014)       |                            |                          |                         | 0.004<br>(0.015)     | 0.007<br>(0.015)         |                         |
| Pop. (Log) (2010)       |                            |                          |                         |                      |                          | -0.001<br>(0.013)       |
| Dist. PR-RU             | -0.0002<br>(0.0004)        | -0.0002<br>(0.0004)      | 0.0001<br>(0.0004)      | -0.0002<br>(0.0005)  | -0.0003<br>(0.001)       | 0.0002<br>(0.0004)      |
| Russia * Dist. PR-RU    | 0.0001<br>(0.0003)         | 0.0001<br>(0.0004)       | -0.0001<br>(0.0003)     | 0.0004<br>(0.001)    | 0.0003<br>(0.001)        | -0.0001<br>(0.001)      |
| Constant                | -0.003<br>(0.760)          | 0.002<br>(0.781)         | -0.248<br>(0.664)       | -1.339**<br>(0.637)  | -1.535**<br>(0.652)      | 0.498<br>(0.544)        |
| Observations            | 1,435                      | 1,435                    | 1,437                   | 867                  | 867                      | 868                     |
| R <sup>2</sup>          | 0.020                      | 0.022                    | 0.018                   | 0.037                | 0.040                    | 0.022                   |
| Adjusted R <sup>2</sup> | 0.016                      | 0.018                    | 0.014                   | 0.024                | 0.027                    | 0.009                   |

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

Note: OLS

Figure A3: GRDD Graph 2: Mayor PIS (Broad)

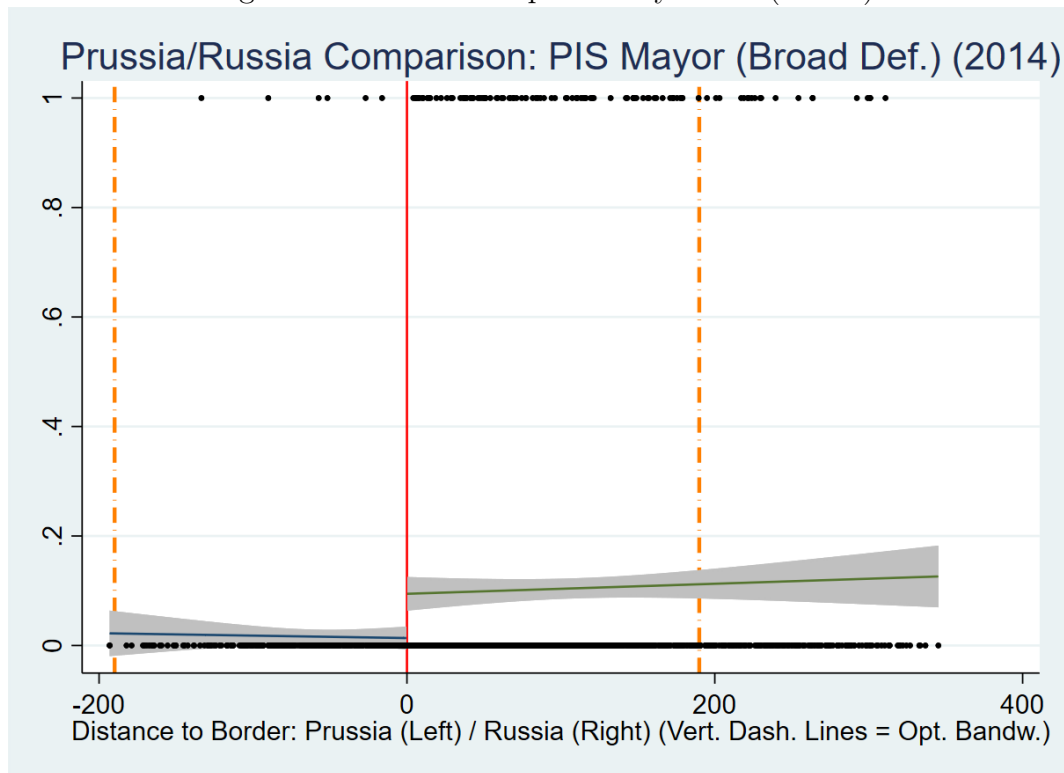


Figure A4: GRDD Graph 3: Mayor PIS (2010)

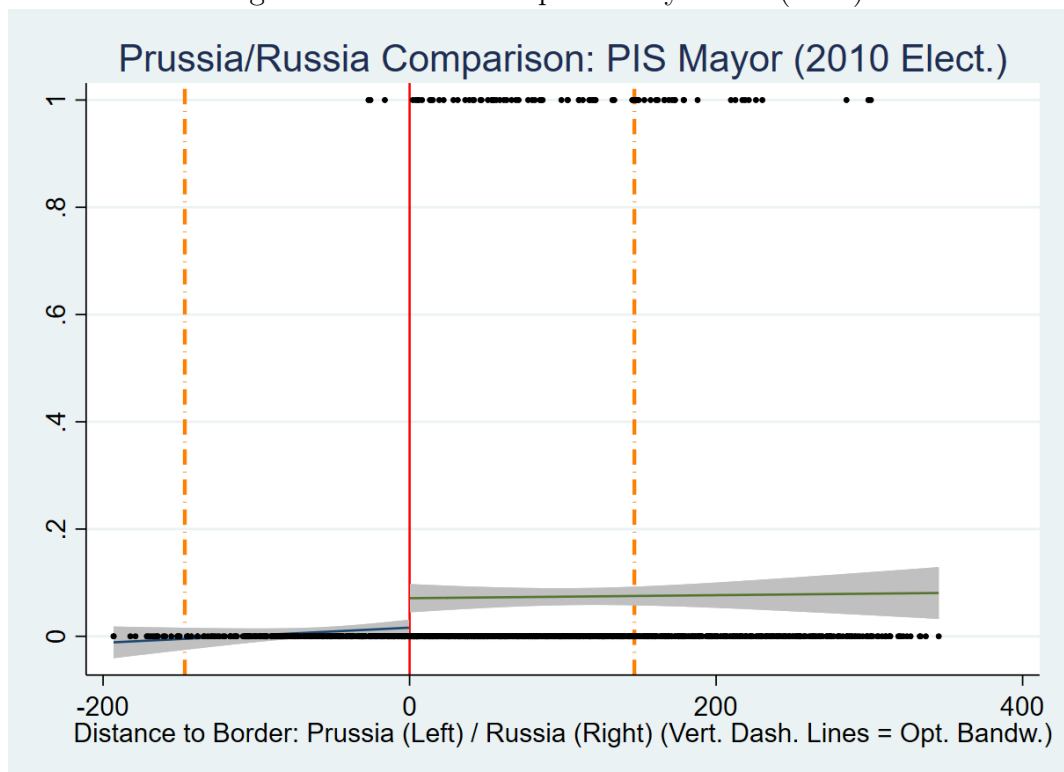


Figure A5: Map of PIS-affiliated Mayors (Broad Definition) in the 2014 Elections

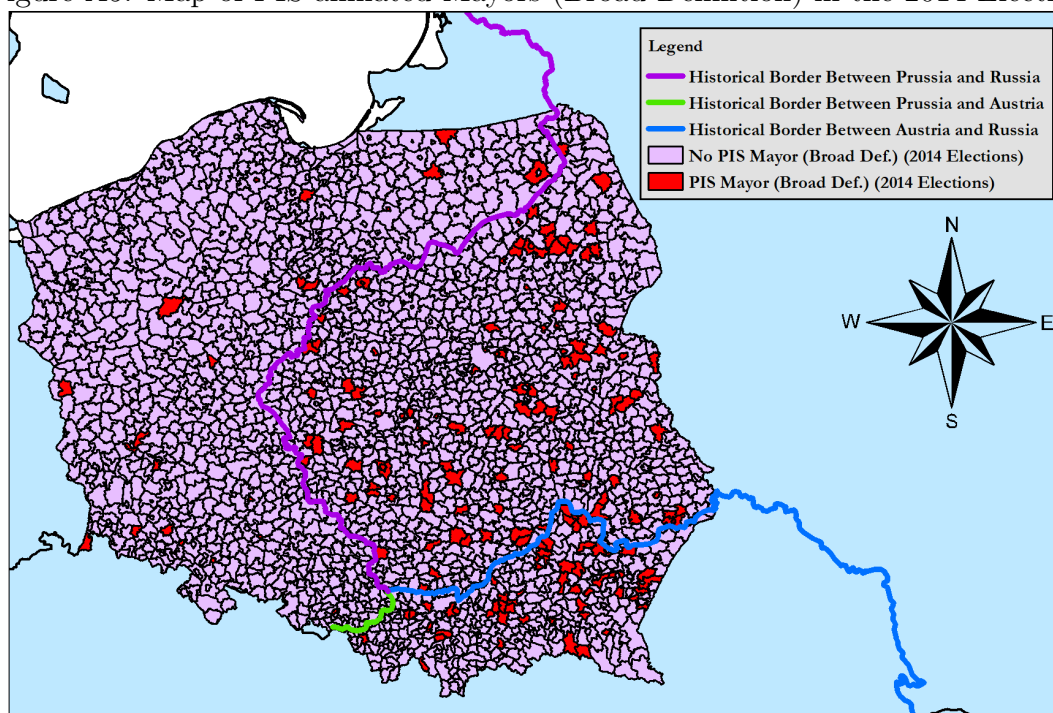
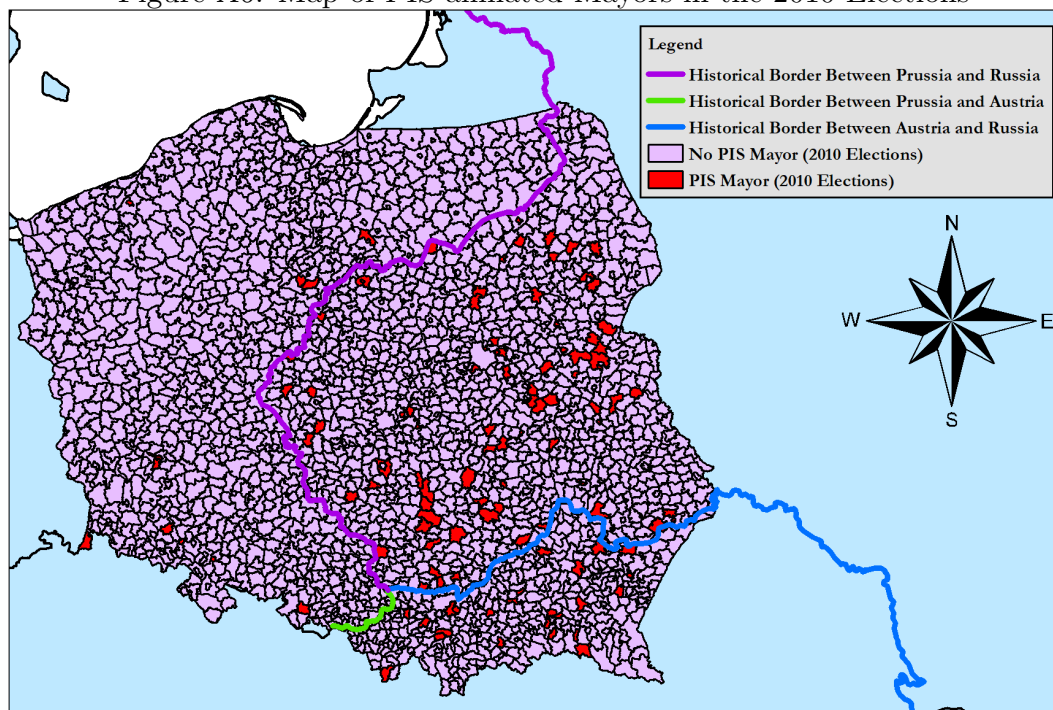


Figure A6: Map of PIS-affiliated Mayors in the 2010 Elections



## A.8 Empirical Examination (Case 1) Supplement: Results of Comparisons with Austria

In the main body of the study we have omitted the comparison of Prussia/Austria and Austria/Russia. We have done this because the classification of the Austrian case is more ambiguous due to the shifting character of Austrian rule over time. As explained in some more detail above ([subsection A.2](#)), Austria’s rule initially was highly oppressive, but later adopted a more participatory style in administrative affairs. Nevertheless, Austria only introduced full democratic participation in federal elections very late (in 1907), meaning that it might not have had a profound long-term impact on the dynamics discussed by us. Finally, socioeconomic structures and the urban landscape might differ to an extent in the Austrian partition that an effective comparison with Prussia and Russia is more difficult ([Charasz, 2021](#)). For these reasons, in the main body of the study we focus on the distinction between Prussia and Russia.

Despite these important points, we include the results of the additional comparisons for full transparency below.

### A.8.1 Austria/Russia Comparison

[Table A4](#) includes the main GRDD results for the Austria/Russia comparison without control variables. The results highly depend on specification and can therefore be classified as inconclusive. The initial results no longer show any level of significance when alternative DVs or second-order polynomials of distance are used.

[Table A5](#) includes additional results for the Austria/Russia comparison with the latitude/longitude specification and control variables. In many cases, the significance of the key variable depends on model specification, making the initial results fragile.

Overall, these findings highlight the more ambiguous character of Austrian rule in the southern partition of Poland. Specifically, the results clearly show that this ambivalent character of Austrian rule did not produce a coherent legacy that differs from the long-term effects of Prussian or Russian rule in a consistent way.



Table A4: Local Political Leadership Outcomes (Austria/Russia Comparison)

|                         | <i>Dependent variable:</i> |                          |                         |                       |                          |                         |
|-------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------|
|                         | Mayor PIS<br>(1)           | Mayor PIS (Broad)<br>(2) | Mayor PIS (2010)<br>(3) | Mayor PIS<br>(4)      | Mayor PIS (Broad)<br>(5) | Mayor PIS (2010)<br>(6) |
| Russia                  | -0.075**<br>(0.037)        | -0.085**<br>(0.038)      | 0.039<br>(0.031)        | -0.102*<br>(0.053)    | -0.103*<br>(0.055)       | 0.003<br>(0.045)        |
| Elevation               | -0.0002**<br>(0.0001)      | -0.0002**<br>(0.0001)    | -0.00002<br>(0.0001)    | -0.0002**<br>(0.0001) | -0.0002**<br>(0.0001)    | -0.00001<br>(0.0001)    |
| Dist. AU-RU             | 0.001<br>(0.001)           | 0.001<br>(0.001)         | -0.00002<br>(0.001)     | 0.002<br>(0.002)      | 0.002<br>(0.002)         | 0.001<br>(0.002)        |
| Dist. AU-RU Sq.         |                            |                          |                         | -0.00002<br>(0.00002) | -0.00002<br>(0.00002)    | -0.00001<br>(0.00002)   |
| Russia * Dist. AU-RU    | -0.001<br>(0.001)          | -0.001<br>(0.001)        | 0.00002<br>(0.001)      | -0.003<br>(0.002)     | -0.003<br>(0.002)        | -0.001<br>(0.002)       |
| Russia*Dist. AU-RU Sq.  |                            |                          |                         | 0.00002<br>(0.00002)  | 0.00002<br>(0.00002)     | 0.00001<br>(0.00002)    |
| Constant                | 0.230***<br>(0.035)        | 0.253***<br>(0.036)      | 0.062**<br>(0.030)      | 0.265***<br>(0.048)   | 0.281***<br>(0.049)      | 0.084**<br>(0.040)      |
| Observations            | 1,420                      | 1,420                    | 1,422                   | 1,420                 | 1,420                    | 1,422                   |
| R <sup>2</sup>          | 0.009                      | 0.011                    | 0.002                   | 0.010                 | 0.012                    | 0.003                   |
| Adjusted R <sup>2</sup> | 0.007                      | 0.008                    | -0.0004                 | 0.006                 | 0.008                    | -0.001                  |

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

Table A5: Local Political Leadership Outcomes (Austria/Russia Comparison) (With Controls)

|                         | <i>Dependent variable:</i> |                          |                         |                       |                       |                          |
|-------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------|
|                         | Mayor PIS<br>(1)           | Mayor PIS (Broad)<br>(2) | Mayor PIS (2010)<br>(3) | Mayor HE<br>(4)       | Mayor PIS<br>(5)      | Mayor PIS (Broad)<br>(6) |
| Russia                  | -0.082**<br>(0.038)        | -0.089**<br>(0.039)      | 0.031<br>(0.032)        | -0.033<br>(0.051)     | -0.051<br>(0.053)     | 0.069<br>(0.043)         |
| Elevation               | -0.0002*<br>(0.0001)       | -0.0002*<br>(0.0001)     | 0.00001<br>(0.0001)     | -0.0002**<br>(0.0001) | -0.0003**<br>(0.0001) | -0.00001<br>(0.0001)     |
| Lat.                    | 0.010<br>(0.057)           | -0.015<br>(0.059)        | 0.053<br>(0.048)        |                       |                       |                          |
| Long.                   | 0.009<br>(0.008)           | 0.012<br>(0.008)         | -0.003<br>(0.007)       |                       |                       |                          |
| Pop. Density            |                            |                          |                         | 0.00003<br>(0.0001)   | 0.00000<br>(0.0001)   | 0.0001**<br>(0.00005)    |
| Urban Share             |                            |                          |                         | 0.00004<br>(0.001)    | -0.0002<br>(0.001)    | 0.00005<br>(0.0005)      |
| Unemply. Rate           |                            |                          |                         | -0.001<br>(0.005)     | -0.001<br>(0.005)     | 0.0003<br>(0.004)        |
| Avg. Monthly Salary     |                            |                          |                         | -0.002<br>(0.001)     | -0.002<br>(0.001)     | 0.0001<br>(0.001)        |
| Work. Age Pop. Share    |                            |                          |                         | -0.004<br>(0.011)     | -0.010<br>(0.011)     | 0.002<br>(0.009)         |
| Elderly Pop. Share      |                            |                          |                         | -0.010<br>(0.007)     | -0.011<br>(0.007)     | -0.008<br>(0.005)        |
| Pop. (Log) (2014)       |                            |                          |                         | 0.029<br>(0.025)      | 0.050*<br>(0.026)     |                          |
| Pop. (Log) (2010)       |                            |                          |                         |                       |                       | 0.006<br>(0.021)         |
| Dist. AU-RU             | 0.001<br>(0.001)           | 0.001<br>(0.001)         | -0.001<br>(0.001)       | 0.001<br>(0.001)      | 0.001<br>(0.001)      | -0.00005<br>(0.001)      |
| Russia * Dist. AU-RU    | -0.001<br>(0.001)          | -0.001<br>(0.001)        | -0.0001<br>(0.001)      | -0.002*<br>(0.001)    | -0.002*<br>(0.001)    | -0.0003<br>(0.001)       |
| Constant                | -0.491<br>(2.751)          | 0.722<br>(2.835)         | -2.524<br>(2.307)       | 0.553<br>(0.819)      | 0.833<br>(0.848)      | -0.012<br>(0.676)        |
| Observations            | 1,420                      | 1,420                    | 1,422                   | 710                   | 710                   | 711                      |
| R <sup>2</sup>          | 0.012                      | 0.014                    | 0.003                   | 0.035                 | 0.041                 | 0.022                    |
| Adjusted R <sup>2</sup> | 0.008                      | 0.009                    | -0.001                  | 0.020                 | 0.026                 | 0.006                    |

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

### A.8.2 Prussia/Austria Comparison

**Table A6** includes the main GRDD results for the Prussia/Austria comparison without control variables. Similar to the Austria/Russia comparison, the initial results are not confirmed by the more complex models.

**Table A7** includes additional results for the Prussia/Austria comparison with the latitude/longitude specification and control variables. Once additional covariates are introduced, the results are no longer significant.

Similar to the previous Austria/Russia comparison, the results remain inconclusive. This may be partly related to the smaller sample size that is available to us (when it comes to the analysis of Austrian municipalities), but it may also be a long-term outcome of the more ambiguous and changing character of Austrian rule in Galicia (the southern partition of Poland).

Table A6: Local Political Leadership Outcomes (Prussia/Austria Comparison)

|                         | <i>Dependent variable:</i> |                          |                         |                        |                          |                         |
|-------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------|------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------|
|                         | Mayor PIS<br>(1)           | Mayor PIS (Broad)<br>(2) | Mayor PIS (2010)<br>(3) | Mayor PIS<br>(4)       | Mayor PIS (Broad)<br>(5) | Mayor PIS (2010)<br>(6) |
| Austria                 | 0.116***<br>(0.042)        | 0.127***<br>(0.044)      | 0.062**<br>(0.031)      | 0.043<br>(0.052)       | 0.054<br>(0.054)         | 0.038<br>(0.038)        |
| Elevation               | -0.0003***<br>(0.0001)     | -0.0003***<br>(0.0001)   | -0.00004<br>(0.0001)    | -0.0003***<br>(0.0001) | -0.0003***<br>(0.0001)   | -0.00005<br>(0.0001)    |
| Dist. PR-AU             | 0.0001<br>(0.0001)         | 0.0001<br>(0.0001)       | -0.00001<br>(0.0001)    | 0.0004<br>(0.0003)     | 0.0005<br>(0.0003)       | -0.00004<br>(0.0002)    |
| Dist. PR-AU Sq.         |                            |                          |                         | -0.00000<br>(0.00000)  | -0.00000<br>(0.00000)    | 0.00000<br>(0.00000)    |
| Austria * Dist. PR-AU   | 0.0002<br>(0.0002)         | 0.0002<br>(0.0002)       | 0.00005<br>(0.0002)     | 0.001<br>(0.001)       | 0.001<br>(0.001)         | 0.001<br>(0.001)        |
| Russia*Dist. PR-AU Sq.  |                            |                          |                         | -0.00000*<br>(0.00000) | -0.00000<br>(0.00000)    | -0.00000<br>(0.00000)   |
| Constant                | 0.070**<br>(0.035)         | 0.077**<br>(0.036)       | 0.010<br>(0.025)        | 0.100**<br>(0.042)     | 0.108**<br>(0.044)       | 0.009<br>(0.031)        |
| Observations            | 729                        | 729                      | 729                     | 729                    | 729                      | 729                     |
| R <sup>2</sup>          | 0.075                      | 0.085                    | 0.023                   | 0.082                  | 0.091                    | 0.026                   |
| Adjusted R <sup>2</sup> | 0.070                      | 0.079                    | 0.018                   | 0.074                  | 0.084                    | 0.018                   |

Note: OLS

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

Table A7: Local Political Leadership Outcomes (Prussia/Austria Comparison) (With Controls)

|                         | <i>Dependent variable:</i> |                          |                         |                      |                      |                          |
|-------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------|----------------------|----------------------|--------------------------|
|                         | Mayor PIS<br>(1)           | Mayor PIS (Broad)<br>(2) | Mayor PIS (2010)<br>(3) | Mayor HE<br>(4)      | Mayor PIS<br>(5)     | Mayor PIS (Broad)<br>(6) |
| Austria                 | 0.113***<br>(0.044)        | 0.123***<br>(0.045)      | 0.050<br>(0.032)        | 0.092<br>(0.065)     | 0.099<br>(0.068)     | 0.045<br>(0.056)         |
| Elevation               | -0.0001<br>(0.0001)        | -0.0002*<br>(0.0001)     | -0.0001<br>(0.0001)     | -0.00001<br>(0.0001) | -0.00004<br>(0.0001) | 0.00000<br>(0.0001)      |
| Lat.                    | 0.129**<br>(0.065)         | 0.111*<br>(0.066)        | -0.074<br>(0.047)       |                      |                      |                          |
| Long.                   | -0.014<br>(0.019)          | -0.010<br>(0.020)        | 0.027*<br>(0.014)       |                      |                      |                          |
| Pop. Density            |                            |                          |                         | 0.00002<br>(0.00005) | 0.00001<br>(0.0001)  | -0.00001<br>(0.00004)    |
| Urban Share             |                            |                          |                         | 0.0002<br>(0.001)    | 0.0001<br>(0.001)    | -0.0001<br>(0.001)       |
| Unempl. Rate            |                            |                          |                         | -0.017<br>(0.018)    | -0.015<br>(0.019)    | -0.010<br>(0.015)        |
| Avg. Monthly Salary     |                            |                          |                         | 0.0002<br>(0.002)    | 0.0003<br>(0.002)    | 0.0004<br>(0.002)        |
| Work. Age Pop. Share    |                            |                          |                         | -0.019<br>(0.018)    | -0.021<br>(0.019)    | 0.008<br>(0.015)         |
| Elderly Pop. Share      |                            |                          |                         | -0.020*<br>(0.012)   | -0.022*<br>(0.012)   | 0.00004<br>(0.010)       |
| Pop. (Log) (2014)       |                            |                          |                         | -0.015<br>(0.029)    | 0.00002<br>(0.030)   |                          |
| Pop. (Log) (2010)       |                            |                          |                         |                      |                      | 0.014<br>(0.025)         |
| Dist. PR-AU             | 0.001**<br>(0.001)         | 0.001*<br>(0.001)        | -0.001<br>(0.0004)      | -0.001<br>(0.002)    | -0.001<br>(0.002)    | -0.0004<br>(0.002)       |
| Austria * Dist. PR-AU   | -0.001<br>(0.0005)         | -0.001<br>(0.0005)       | 0.0003<br>(0.0003)      | -0.0001<br>(0.002)   | 0.0002<br>(0.002)    | 0.001<br>(0.002)         |
| Constant                | -6.144**<br>(3.006)        | -5.317*<br>(3.096)       | 3.216<br>(2.185)        | 1.698<br>(1.260)     | 1.745<br>(1.318)     | -0.609<br>(1.074)        |
| Observations            | 729                        | 729                      | 729                     | 191                  | 191                  | 191                      |
| R <sup>2</sup>          | 0.081                      | 0.089                    | 0.028                   | 0.051                | 0.051                | 0.026                    |
| Adjusted R <sup>2</sup> | 0.073                      | 0.082                    | 0.020                   | -0.008               | -0.007               | -0.034                   |

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

Note: OLS

## A.9 Second Case Supplement: Extended Information on the Historical Background

In this section, we provide additional information about the Brazilian case that complements and expands upon the historical background section in the main body of the study. We begin by providing two maps of the municipalities that experienced intervention and proceed by describing our measure for left-wing vote share in more detail.

### A.9.1 The Municipalities with Appointed Mayors

Figure A7 shows the municipalities of our 1988 sample and Figure A8 shows the municipalities of our 1992 sample. Please note that data availability was slightly higher for 1992 than 1988, which is the main reason for a minor divergence in the number of observations between the two time periods.

Figure A7: Map of the Municipalities with Appointed Mayors (1988)

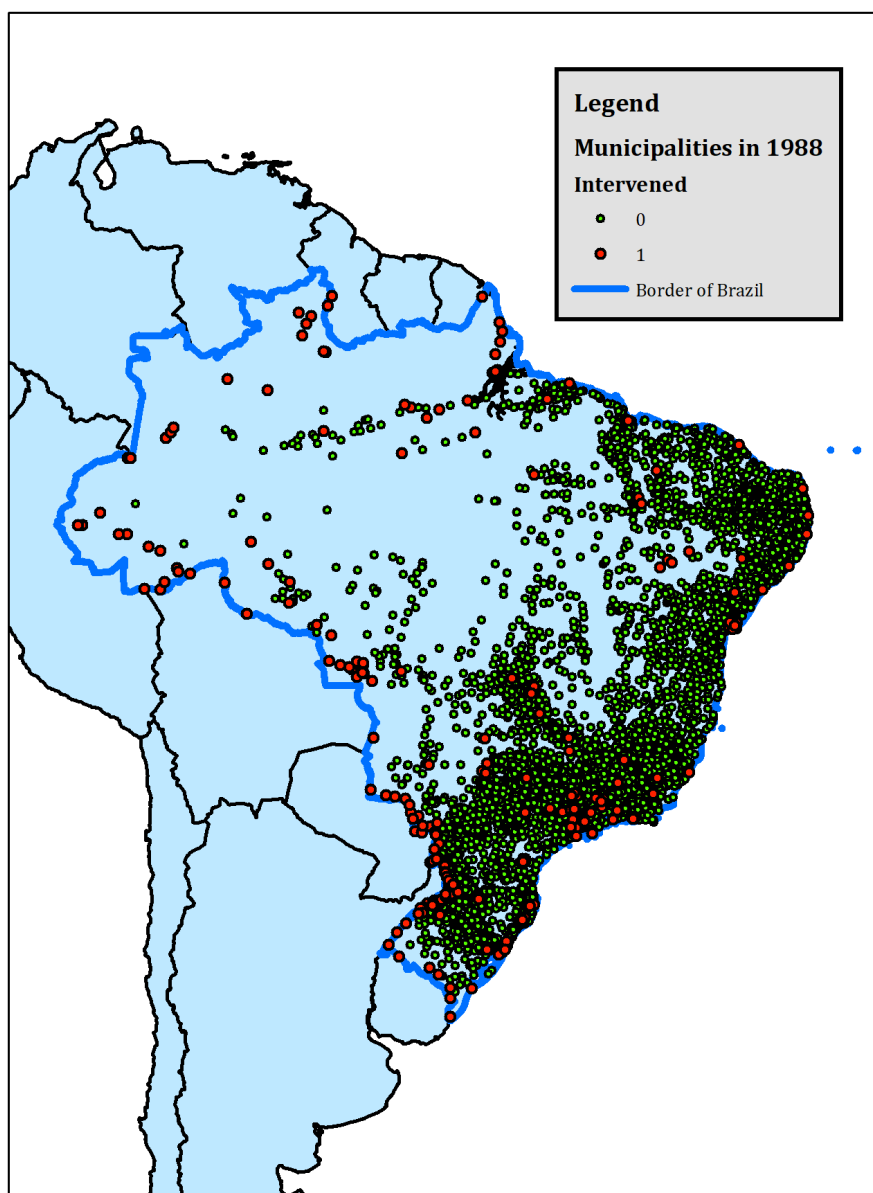
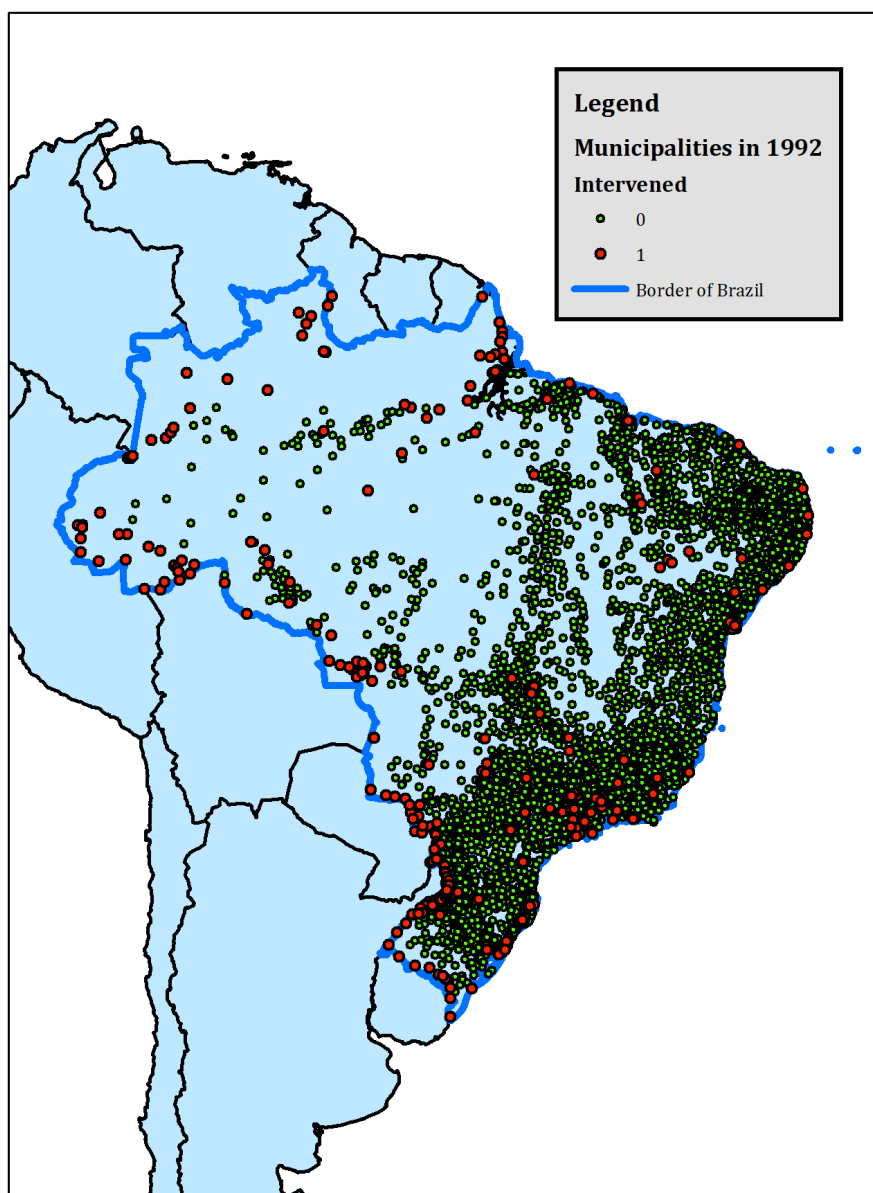


Figure A8: Map of the Municipalities with Appointed Mayors (1992)

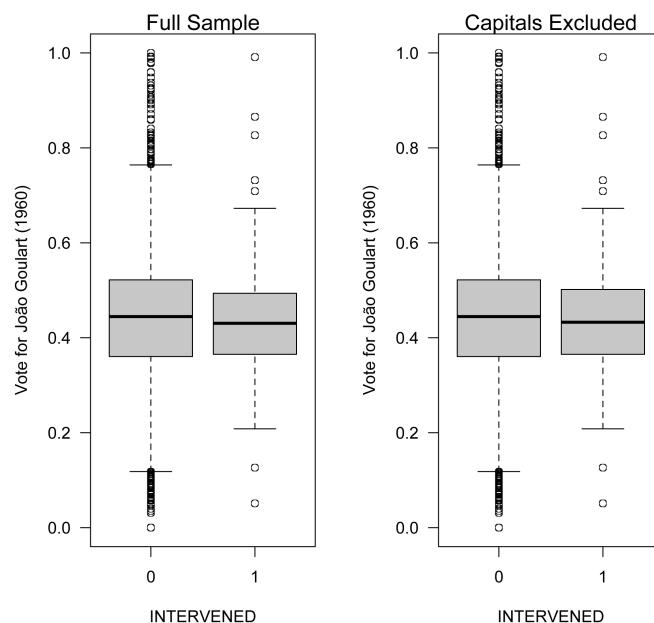




### A.9.2 Vote Shares for João Goulart in the 1960s

As discussed in the main body of the study, it is important for us to account for the political orientation of a municipality prior to the authoritarian regime (as this may influence the likelihood of intervention). In this respect we chose the vote share for João Goulart in the 1960 vice-presidential election as a strong proxy. **Figure A9** shows its distribution between the two types of municipalities, indicating that this is not a strong explanatory factor for intervention.

Figure A9: Vote Shares for João Goulart in the 1960 Vice-Presidential Election



## A.10 Descriptive Statistics: Brazil

Table A8 shows descriptive statistics for the case of Brazil.

| Variable                 | n    | Min   | q <sub>1</sub> | $\bar{x}$ | $\tilde{x}$ | q <sub>3</sub> | Max   | IQR  |
|--------------------------|------|-------|----------------|-----------|-------------|----------------|-------|------|
| PDS Mayor (1988)         | 4349 | 0.00  | 0.00           | 0.13      | 0.00        | 0.00           | 1.00  | 0.00 |
| PDS Mayor (1992)         | 4923 | 0.00  | 0.00           | 0.10      | 0.00        | 0.00           | 1.00  | 0.00 |
| PFL Mayor (1988)         | 4349 | 0.00  | 0.00           | 0.28      | 0.00        | 1.00           | 1.00  | 1.00 |
| PFL Mayor (1992)         | 4923 | 0.00  | 0.00           | 0.20      | 0.00        | 0.00           | 1.00  | 0.00 |
| Intervention             | 4930 | 0.00  | 0.00           | 0.05      | 0.00        | 0.00           | 1.00  | 0.00 |
| Mineral Water            | 4930 | 0.00  | 0.00           | 0.08      | 0.00        | 0.00           | 1.00  | 0.00 |
| Distance (Log.)          | 4923 | -0.92 | 6.07           | 6.55      | 6.87        | 7.39           | 7.74  | 1.32 |
| Population (Log.) (1996) | 4923 | 6.64  | 8.64           | 9.42      | 9.34        | 10.03          | 16.10 | 1.39 |
| Human Development (1991) | 4923 | 0.36  | 0.53           | 0.62      | 0.64        | 0.70           | 0.85  | 0.17 |

Table A8: Descriptive Statistics: Brazil

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