Regional Governance in Divided Societies:
Evidence from the Republic of Congo and Kenya[*]

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Abstract

We argue that leaders employ one of two strategies to govern sub-national regions. These governance strategies, in turn, condition how leaders appoint and manage the regional executives to whom they delegate authority. In the *co-optation* strategy, leaders advance local welfare by appointing *locally embedded* regional executives, who are drawn from the local population and enjoy relatively long tenures. In the *suppression* strategy, leaders ensure that regional executives suppress local threats to the regime by minimizing local embeddedness, which entails appointing non-native executives and shuffling them frequently. The regional governance strategy that a leader employs, we argue, depends on the region's *ex ante* level of regime support. We test the theory with original data from the Republic of Congo and Kenya, encompassing 250 regional executives across three presidents. Although incumbent governments in Congo and Kenya confront different local threats, our findings highlight how similarly they manage the tradeoffs of local embeddedness.

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1 Introduction

In many countries, leaders govern local areas through appointed regional executives. These regional executives serve as the chief agents of the central government in their jurisdictions, constituting the state's local "face."[1] Responsible both for implementing local development policy and for overseeing the security apparatus, they are among a government's most critical appointees. When necessary, regional executives engage in *suppression*, which we define broadly: from rigging elections in favor of the government to ordering security forces to employ violence against protesters. Regional executives are also critical to government efforts to *co-opt* local residents: by crafting local policies and engineering development projects, which help sustain support for the government. Precisely because of their utility, regional executives exist across regions and regime types: from electoral regimes in modern-day Ghana (Brierley 2018) and Russia (Reuter & Robinson 2010, Taylor 2011) to historic ones in Prussia (Ziblatt 2009), from former autocracies in Zaire (Young & Turner 1985, Schatzberg 1988) and the Ottoman Empire (Barkley 1994) to current regimes in China (Landry 2008) and Sudan (El-Battahani & Gadkarim 2017).

We refer to suppression and co-optation as *governance strategies*, and they require conflicting skills of the regional executives who implement them. In this paper, we examine the role of *local embeddedness*, which we define as the extent to which a regional executive is integrated into the jurisdiction she governs. Local embeddedness can stem from a range of sources. It may be innate, a product of shared ethnic, religious, or other identity-based attachments. But local embeddedness can also be learned, as regional executives spend more time in their jurisdictions and become ensconced in its social networks.

Whether tasked with co-optation or suppression, a regional executive's capacity to discharge her responsibilities is a function of her local embeddedness.[2] We identify two mechanisms whereby local embeddedness conditions a regional executive's capacity to discharge her responsibilities. First, locally embedded regional executives have a superior *ability* to both co-opt and suppress. More familiar with local issues and stakeholders, locally embedded executives are better able to craft policy that responds to local needs; likewise, locally embedded regional executives are better able to identify dissidents who may organize protests

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[1]These officers go by many names, including provincial governors, area prefects, appointed mayors and district commissioners. Unlike other state officials, such as military commanders or army generals, regional executives are often the only appointees who oversee both local policymaking and security.

[2]For clarity, we refer to regional executives as "she" and leaders of central governments as "he."

or emerge as opposition leaders. Local embeddedness, however, has conflicting implications for a regional executive's *willingness* to comply with central government directives. Personally invested in their communities, locally embedded regional executives are more willing to co-opt local citizens: to implement sound policies that improve their livelihoods. However, these same personal attachments render locally embedded regional executives less willing to suppress citizens: to employ violence against protesters or to engineer electoral fraud that invalidates their neighbors' political preferences. In short, from the center's perspective, local embeddedness is a clear advantage for co-optation, but a potential liability for suppression.

When do leaders of central governments task regional executives with co-opting the local population rather than suppressing them? And how do leaders ensure their regional executives comply with the chosen governance strategy, especially when monitoring is difficult? To answer these questions, we build a theory of regional governance in divided societies. We argue that leaders choose a region's governance strategy – either co-optation or suppression – according to the region's *ex ante* support for the regime. In regions of core support, leaders employ co-optation by fostering local embeddedness; they appoint in-group regional executives and grant them relatively long tenures. Outside core regions, where support is less assured, leaders employ suppression. They appoint regional executives who are drawn from afar and shuffle them frequently. By preventing shared social bonds between regional executives and the local population, leaders aim to ensure the compliance of regional executives during moments of crisis. Scholars have long recognized the persistence of political cleavages in divided societies (Bates 1983, Padrò i Miquel 2007). We locate the origins of that persistence, in part, in these governance strategies. In core support regions, the co-optation strategy sustains their *ex ante* levels of support. Outside core support regions, the suppression strategy hardens the grievances that induced the leader to privilege suppression in the first place.

We examine the theory's observable implications with data on regional executives from the Republic of Congo under Denis Sassou Nguesso and Kenya under Daniel arap Moi and Mwai Kibaki. For each country we construct a jurisdiction-year dataset, which enables us to probe how regional executives are appointed and how their tenures are determined. Our datasets count more than 250 executives across some 75 jurisdictions, and include a range of information about their demographic backgrounds and the jurisdictions they govern.

Congo and Kenya make for an appealing comparison. Their regional executives are appointed and managed directly by the President and the Interior Ministry. They craft local policy and are at times charged

with local suppression. They are also critical to regime survival, as scholars have long recognized (Throup & Hornsby 1998, Branch 2009) and our key informant interviews affirm.[3] Yet the political environments in Congo and Kenya differ in two key respects that give us analytic leverage. First, Sassou Nguesso, Moi, and Kibaki governed under different regime types and hence confronted different threats to their survival. Since Sassou Nguesso can guarantee electoral victory with fraud, the chief popular threats to his survival are mass protests and rebellions. By contrast, Moi held meaningful but flawed elections, and so governed within a classic competitive authoritarian regime; Kibaki maintained a more open electoral regime. These three leaders thus span the range of popular threats that African presidents confront. Second, politics in Congo and Kenya are animated by different identity cleavages. In Congo, the cleavage is regional; in Kenya, it is ethnic. Despite these differences, our results across presidents are consistent with our theoretical expectations. By examining the theory in such different contexts, we gain confidence in its external validity: its ability to illuminate regional governance in the presence of different popular threats and identity cleavages.

This paper makes several theoretical contributions. First, it advances our understanding of politics in divided societies. There is considerable evidence that African leaders – especially those who confront weak political institutions – implement policies that disproportionately benefit their native regions or political in-groups (Franck & Rainer 2012, Hodler & Raschky 2014) and generate political grievances among out-groups (Bates 1983, Padrò i Miquel 2007). Scholars generally attribute these benefits and grievances to variation in public goods provision. We propose a new mechanism, which privileges governance. The native jurisdictions of African presidents are routinely governed by executives who are locally embedded. In regions outside a leader's core support, sound public policy is subordinated to regime survival. These regions may receive fewer public goods, but they are also more likely to be governed by individuals with less local knowledge, and who are shuffled before those individuals acquire it. Over time, as we observed above, this may foster a particularly intractable equilibrium: regions outside the leader's core support are governed poorly, which exacerbates popular frustration, increases dissent, perpetuates identity-based cleavages, and reinforces the suppression governance strategy.

Second, scholars often regard the "elite shuffle" – the tendency for leaders to frequently shuffle their

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[3]In 2012, the Congolese Interior Minister described the regional prefect's responsibilities this way: "You, Mr. Prefect, are thus the guarantor of state sovereignty, of its authority, and of the preservation of peace." (*La Semaine Africaine*, number 3161, 24 January 2012, p9.) Similarly in Kenya, Branch (2009, 164) writes: "Few scholars . . . would need convincing of the importance of [regional executives in] the governance of Kenya throughout the past century."

appointees to limit incentives for malfeasance (Landry 2008, Blaydes 2011, Reuter & Robinson 2012) – as a critical principle of personnel management. Our results underscore this. But our results also make clear that the elite shuffle exhibits dramatic variation: in this case, across space, according to a region's prevailing political alignment towards the center. Moreover, we find that the elite shuffle is used to optimize over multiple goals. Not only is it a management technique to ensure agent loyalty, as existing literature makes clear, but it also serves a governance purpose: to control the periphery.

Finally, this paper advances our understanding of Africa's stalled democratic transitions. Newly elected presidents in young electoral regimes often retain the governing institutions constructed by their autocratic predecessors, including the ability to appoint and shuffle regional executives at will. We show that in Kenya under Kibaki's more open regime, regional executives were managed in precisely the same way as under Moi: to co-opt citizens in core areas, and to ensure that, in non-core areas, regional executives suppress local threats to the regime. In short, as long as they confront similar institutional environments, we should expect newly elected presidents to employ roughly the same governance strategies as their autocratic predecessors. Most broadly, then, we suggest that one underlying cause of stalled democratic transitions may be the persistence of political institutions created by autocratic predecessors (Albertus & Menaldo 2018).

2   A Theory of Regional Governance

2.1   Local Embeddedness and Co-optation

A regional executive's ability to discharge the twin responsibilities of co-optation and suppression is a function of her local embeddedness. We think of local embeddedness as encompassing a regional executive's *knowledge* of the local population and her *social affinity* for them. Local embeddedness may be innate. Regional executives who are from the region's local in-group are, by definition, locally embedded. These regional executives speak the same language, practice the same customs, and share overlapping social networks. They enjoy an innate social bond. But local embeddedness can also be learned. Since the regional executive lives in the region she governs, she forges bonds with the community. As a result, her preferences may shift over time: from unqualified loyalty to the leader to genuine concern for the community's welfare.

However it is achieved, local embeddedness enables regional executives to craft and implement more ef-

fective local policies. In turn, these superior policies enable locally embedded regional executives to *co-opt* the local population: to build or sustain genuine support for the government. We identify two mechanisms that enable locally embedded regional executives to implement superior policies. First, local embeddedness increases their policy making *ability*. They have a deeper knowledge of local needs (Eaton & Kostka 2014, Pepinsky et al. 2016), are more efficient at policy implementation (Woldense 2016), and know which local stakeholders must be won over. Second, local embeddedness renders regional executives more *willing* to implement sound policies, even absent monitoring by the central government. Locally embedded regional executives provide public goods at substantially higher rates for a variety of reasons. They receive "moral standing" from their local communities, and so have stronger incentives to implement better policy (Tsai 2007). Their preferences are aligned with the local population's (Alesina et al. 1999, Lieberman & McClendon 2012). They are subject to social sanctioning mechanisms that are uniquely effective among members of a common in-group (Habyarimana et al. 2007, Baldassarri & Grossman 2011).

For all these reasons, locally embedded regional executives are better positioned to craft policies that improve local living standards. This renders the government more popular, elections easier to win, and mass protests less likely.[4]

2.2 Local Embeddedness and Suppression

In addition to their policy roles, regional executives are expected to maintain law and order in their jurisdictions, and so generally oversee the local security apparatus. Accordingly, regional executives must be willing to suppress local threats to the central government. The nature of these threats, and hence the type of suppression required, varies by regime type. In closed autocracies, where elections either do not occur or the leader can guarantee electoral victory with massive fraud, these threats are generally popular protests and armed insurgencies. In turn, regional executives are routinely charged with rigging elections, as well as physical integrity violations such as jailing dissidents and ordering local security services to employ violence against protesters (Davenport & Armstrong 2004). Where electoral competition is more meaningful, suppression more commonly takes the form of civil liberties violations such as harassing opposition supporters,

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[4]If relationships of trust provide opportunities for corruption, then local embeddedness may increase corruption. This does not obviate the tradeoff between suppression and co-optation, but does imply a comparative static: As local embeddedness increases corruption among regional executives, the benefits of local embeddedness to the leader decline.

blocking opposition rallies, and raiding opposition offices (Davenport 2007, Levitsky & Way 2010).

In Section 2.1, we argued that local embeddedness enables regional executives to craft better public policies. Local embeddedness also has implications for a regional executive's *ability* and *willingness* to suppress. First, embedded regional executives may render suppression more efficient through the ability mechanism. Building on Kalyvas (2005), Lyall (2010) suggests that in-group security officials provide higher quality intelligence during civil wars. In turn, regional executives may be able to use their positions in local social networks to identify dissidents and employ targeted violence. In so doing, regional executives may enable the government to avoid the popular frustration that indiscriminate violence often entails.

But second, and in contrast, locally embedded regional executives are generally less willing to suppress local citizens. This is critical to our theory. Whereas the first three effects of local embeddedness are advantageous to the leader, this fourth effect entails profound risks. Since locally embedded regional executives are less likely to view local citizens as "others," locally embedded regional executives are less likely to order the local security apparatus to employ violence against locals (Davenport et al. 2011, Saha 2014). They are also less likely to engage in electoral fraud, which suppresses the political preferences of local citizens. Conversely, non-locally embedded regional executives are especially unlikely to shirk. With no natural constituency, past research has found that non-locally embedded regional executives are less likely to cooperate with local opposition leaders or build rival fiefdoms to challenge the regime (Migdal 1988), are more effective at breaking up local power brokers (Taylor 2011), are better able to extract forced labor (Harms 1974), detaining political dissidents, and are generally more willing to privilege the regime's interests over those of local citizens (Barkey 1994) or local elites (Xu et. al, 2018).

In short, local embeddedness is a clear asset for leaders who aim to co-opt local citizens. For leaders who employ suppression, however, local embeddedness entails some benefits, but also serious risks.

2.3   Scope Conditions

In Section 2.4, we use this framework to generate hypotheses about how leaders choose regional governance strategies and, in turn, manage a regional executive's level of local embeddedness. Before doing so, we identify scope conditions for our theory.

First, we focus on countries with some politically salient identity cleavage. This identity cleavage pro-

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vides the leader with a credible signal about the political preferences of different groups. We are agnostic about the nature of this identity cleavage. In Congo, the cleavage is regional; in Kenya, it is ethnic. Other identity cleavages may have political salience as well, such as sect and caste. These cleavages often have historical origins: in legacies of colonialism or political institutions that incentivize cleavage-based electoral strategies (Posner 2005). Second, this identity cleavage must also cluster geographically. This enables the leader to target groups on either side of the identity cleavage with different regional governance strategies. Together, these two scope conditions enable leaders to identify core supporters and the jurisdictions in which they live. We view them as broadly applicable.

Third, we focus on countries where the leader enjoys sufficient authority over the management of regional executives, either because he makes appointments directly or delegates authority to a trusted advisor, whose interests are aligned. Note that this scope condition may obtain across regime type. As our empirical settings in Section 3 make clear, our theory applies to different degrees of political competition: from a relatively closed autocracy like Sassou Nguesso's Congo, to a competitive authoritarian regime like Moi's Kenya, to a more open electoral regime like Kibaki's Kenya. Though this scope condition is more likely satisfied in autocracies, our theory applies broadly.

Finally, our theory is most relevant in environments where regional executives enjoy authority over both local development policy and the local security apparatus. These dual responsibilities make regional executives critical to both co-optation and suppression, and hence give rise to the tradeoffs for local embeddedness that we identify above. Although this is the case in many countries, there may be cross-country variation in the extent to which regional executives oversee the local security apparatus. Where regional executives have less control over the local security apparatus, we expect the tradeoff we identify above to be attenuated.

2.4 Hypotheses

Our argument is that leaders choose regional governance strategies according to a region's *ex ante* expected likelihood of threatening the regime, whether through mass protests or at the ballot box. This strategy, in turn, determines how the leader manages a regional executive's level of local embeddedness.

To retain power, leaders need the support of some share of the population (Bueno de Mesquita et

al. 2003).[5] In countries with some politically salient identity cleavage, leaders look to their in-group to constitute their core support. Scholars have identified a range of reasons for this. Leaders can credibly commit to channeling state resources to core support regions after election day (Posner 2005, Magaloni 2006, Albertus 2013). Likewise, if core supporters also derive non-material utility from a co-ethnic government, their support may be cheaper for the leader to purchase. Conversely, leaders in divided societies routinely block non-core support regions from receiving state resources. This fosters a sense in core support regions that an alternative government, populated from across the cleavage, would be far less generous, which reinforces their incentives to support their in-group government (Bates 1983, Padrò i Miquel 2007).[6]

Together, these forces create an environment of mutual in-group favoritism. Accordingly, in core support regions, where a leader's chief supporters are clustered, leaders can pursue a regional management strategy that generates regime stability by sustaining local support, and potentially even cultivating more. To do so, leaders employ a co-optation governance strategy. Leaders foster local embeddedness between the regional executive and local citizens by appointing regional executives who are drawn from the local population, and then granting them long tenures in office. Over time, we expect this strategy to be self-reinforcing: to sustain the local support that made co-optation viable in the first place. This constitutes our first hypothesis.

> H_1 (Co-optation): In core support regions, leaders appoint regional executives from the local population and grant them longer tenures.

In non-core support regions, by contrast, co-optation is less viable. Indeed, local citizens often have powerful incentives to oppose a government from across the political cleavage. In countries with a legacy of violence across the politically salient cleavage, for instance, residents may refuse on principle to support a government that committed human rights violations against their in-group (Yengo 2006). Local residents may also have material incentives to oppose an out-group government, as they expect to benefit more if their in-group takes power (Posner 2005). These material incentives are especially powerful where the leader's

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[5]This is clear in countries where leaders face (real) re-election challengers. But even in closed autocracies, a leader without a base of popular support is more at risk of a coup from elites, since other elites can paint the leader's rule as illegitimate and gain other elites for a coup attempt. Further, a leader without a base of popular support is more at risk for large-scale popular protests. Individuals are more likely to participate in protests if they know that the leader is unpopular, since they expect others to join in the protests too.

[6]Indeed, Posner (2005) argues that even though leaders do distribute resources to out-group areas in an attempt to broaden their base of support, there is a strong perception that leaders only favor their own, and so incumbents often do not get rewarded by non-core regions.

political party has weak networks among out-groups, which limits their ability to credibly commit to each other: The leader cannot credibly commit to provide public goods after election day, just as the out-group cannot credibly commit to support the out-group leader after receiving public goods (Albertus 2013).[7] For these reasons, threats to the leader are far more likely to emerge from non-core regions, and co-optation is unlikely to prevent these threats.

Precisely because the forces that compel mutual in-group favoritism are so powerful, the leader is generally forced to privilege suppression over co-optation in non-core support regions. Put simply, the politically salient cleavages required by our scope conditions cannot be easily undone. Accordingly, a regional executive is forced to manage the political consequences of her jurisdiction's underlying opposition to the central government. This, in turn, conditions how the leader manages regional executives in non-core support areas. Recall from Section 2.2 that the willingness mechanism renders locally embedded regional executives *less willing* to suppress local citizens, while the ability mechanism renders locally embedded regional executives potentially *better able* to identify dissidents. The key question for the leader is this: When does the cost from the willingness mechanism outweigh the benefit from the ability mechanism? When, that is, will the leader govern non-core support regions with non-locally embedded regional executives?

We identify two conditions, though there may be others. First, the leader will govern non-core support regions with non-locally embedded regional executives when he lacks a particularly effective monitoring system. That is, unless the leader can quickly detect and reprimand shirking regional executives, the leader will not risk locally embedded regional executives in non-core support regions, where the suppression strategy obtains.[8] Two sorts of institutions could serve this monitoring function: states and political parties. In sub-Saharan Africa, both state capacity and political parties are weak, especially in non-core support regions. As a result, we view this condition as very likely to obtain.

Second, the leader will govern non-core support regions with non-locally embedded regional executives when he can build a local intelligence gathering apparatus that compensates for the ability mechanism. Put simply, when the leader can recruit local residents to his intelligence gathering apparatus, he can mitigate

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[7]This problem is attenuated in areas where the leader's party is strong because the party can make credible commitments for the future. This problem is also attenuated in the leader's in-group areas even if the party is weak as the group and the leader have recourse to social sanctioning mechanisms to punish reneging.

[8]The leader will be willing to allow higher embeddedness in places he wants co-opted, even absent monitoring; higher levels of embeddedness mean that bureaucrats who act on the community's behalf are still acting in line with the leader's demands to co-opt the population.

the costs of non-locally embedded regional executives. This enables the leader to ensure that the regional executive will suppress local threats without compromising the intelligence gathering apparatus. Again, therefore, we view this condition as likely to obtain. Regional executives generally act on intelligence, not collect it, and so are often less critical to intelligence gathering.[9]

In short, we argue that leaders will generally govern non-core support regions with non-locally embedded regional executives. Leaders do so by appointing non-native regional executives and shuffling them frequently. These regional executives are less likely to create alliances with local citizens, be bought off by local opposition leaders, or emerge as the leaders of nascent protest movements. They lack innate bonds with the local population and their tenures in office are too brief to form them. In drawing regional executives from elsewhere and shuffling them quickly, the leader manipulates their local embeddedness to ensure that their loyalties during moments of crisis are undivided: with the regime, not local residents. This constitutes our second hypothesis for empirical testing.

> H_2 (Suppression): Outside core support regions, leaders appoint regional executives from outside the local population and shuffle them frequently.

Like the co-optation governance strategy, this suppression strategy tends to be self-reinforcing: to sustain the grievances that induced it in the first place. Because non-core support regions are governed less effectively, the suppression strategy does little to alleviate the popular frustration that compelled the leader to employ it. In turn, this sustains the area's opposition to the regime, perpetuates its identity-based cleavage, and ultimately reinforces the suppression strategy. But, again, the leader is forced to subordinate sound public policy to regime survival. For these reasons, we argue, regional governance strategies tend to constitute dynamically stable equilibria.

We conclude with a note about loyalty. A leader may have access to some reliable marker of individual loyalty. If so, this creates an opportunity. By permitting locally embedded regional executives – who bear this reliable marker of loyalty – to govern non-core support regions, a leader can gain the benefits from superior public policies without incurring the risks that the regional executive will shirk from suppression.

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[9]Note that this creates a new principal-agent problem. The regime must ensure that local intelligence officials comply with orders to suppress, despite their embeddedness. Though this principal-agent problem is beyond the scope of our paper, evidence from Congo suggests that leaders resolve it by creating parallel government apparatuses to do the same job. This enables performance to act as monitoring. These parallel government apparatuses appear to be common in autocracies (e.g., Crassweller 1966, Quinlivan 1999).

That is, a leader can pursue a regional governance strategy in non-core support regions that aims to build genuine support for the regime, while also ensuring that, if popular threats emerge, the regional executive will privilege the regime's interests over the local population's. To be sure, we regard these reliable markers of loyalty as rare; loyalty is generally circumstantial. When such markers exist, however, we expect them to be employed strategically: for the regional executives who bear them to be appointed to their native regions and to be granted longer tenures.

3 Regional Executives in Two African Countries

Our theory of regional governance and local embeddedness was informed by over two years of field work in Congo and Kenya. One author carried out 18 months of research in Congo, and the other 16 months of field research in Kenya. Together, we conducted more than 100 interviews with regional executives, government elites, and citizens. We selected respondents through snowball sampling. Interviews were semi-structured, and focused on the roles, duties, and management of regional executives. This field research informed our theoretical framework, from which we derived hypotheses, and enabled us to collect data on all regional executives in Congo between 1997 and 2013, and in Kenya between 1992 and 2007.

Congo and Kenya – and the three separate presidents for which we have data – represent an appealing comparison. To place them in comparative perspective, Figure 2 plots executive constraint scores from Polity IV for both Congo and Kenya during our sample period, as well as the average for sub-Saharan Africa. Congo's executive constraint level is consistently lower than the regional average, and so is representative of countries that did not experience significant, durable democratic openings after the Cold War ended. In 2002, with the presidential election, Congo's executive constraint score increased slightly, from 1 ("unlimited authority") to 2 (intermediate category between "unlimited authority" and "slight to moderate limitation"). Kenya's executive constraint score is 3 ("slight to moderate limitation") during Moi's presidency, just below the regional average and consistent with the regime's classification as competitive authoritarian (recall that the regional average includes some democracies with high executive constraints that pull the average up). Under Kibaki, the executive constraint level jumps to 6 (intermediate category between "substantial limitations" and "executive parity"), representative of countries transitioning from autocracy.

[Figure 2 about here.]

Because their regime types differ, so too do the chief threats that these three presidents confronted. Moreover, they governed countries with different political cleavages. Sections 3.1 and 3.2 elucidate these differences and provide context for the empirical analysis in Section 4.

3.1 The Republic of Congo

Sassou Nguesso has ruled Congo for all but five years since 1979. He first seized power in a 1979 coup, ruled as a single party dictator during the 1980s, and lost power in 1992 as global food prices rose and Soviet support evaporated. He returned to power following the 1997 civil war, a brutal conflict that pitted Sassou Nguesso's northern supporters against those of President Pascal Lissouba, a native of Congo's southern regions and its only democratically elected president. Sassou Nguesso has since accumulated one of Africa's worst human rights records (Yengo 2006).

3.1.1 Political Geography: Cleavage Between North and South

Congo's politics are animated by this cleavage between north and south, a legacy of its first years of independence. In 1967, a clique of military officers, from a variety of ethnic groups but all of northern extraction, deposed President Alphonse Massamba-Débat, a southerner. The officers dubbed themselves the *Comité militaire du parti* (CMP) – the military wing of the Congolese Workers Party (PCT) – and governed as a junta, with Captain Marien Ngouabi designated president. This began the longstanding political dominance of Congo's northern regions, despite constituting only 30% of the country's population. In turn, the PCT – the only legal political party until 1990 – became a symbol of northern dominance. Save for Lissouba's tenure between 1992 and 1997, Congo's presidents since 1967 have been drawn exclusively from the CMP's original membership, and hence from the north.

The 1997 civil war, fought along regional lines, hardened the regional cleavage: northerners supported Sassou Nguesso, southerners supported Lissouba. Both groups recognized that their political and economic fortunes depended on their favored politician claiming power. The war was devastating, and had enduring political ramifications. The war cost the country 1% of its citizens and displaced an additional 35%. After

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claiming victory, Sassou Nguesso authorized his soldiers – again, all of northern extraction – to pillage areas inhabited by southerners, both as compensation and to punish southerners for their opposition.[10]

Sassou Nguesso's policies since have exacerbated the regional cleavage. With oil revenue accounting for some 95% of GDP, citizens' economic fortunes largely depend on securing political appointments, the most lucrative of which Sassou Nguesso reserves for northerners. Although the government refuses to release data on public goods provision, all available evidence suggests that northern regions receive far more resources than southern regions.[11] The only exception to northern dominance is Kouilou, birthplace of First Lady Antoinette Sassou Nguesso and home to Congo's oil industry.[12]

3.1.2 Local Governance: Regional Prefects

Executive authority in each of Congo's 12 regions is vested in a prefect, appointed by Sassou Nguesso. Sassou Nguesso draws regional prefects disproportionately, but not completely, from the north (see Figure 1).

The regime routinely reminds citizens that regional prefects are charged with suppressing local threats. The prefect is given broad powers. She commands the region's security forces, coordinates electoral fraud, and disbands protests. Although the constitution guarantees freedom of assembly, regional prefects routinely deny permits for opposition rallies.

[Figure 1 about here.]

Regional prefects are also charged with development policy. Although the constitution grants regional councils formal authority to allocate funds provided by Brazzaville, these locally-elected councils, as one council vice-president put it, are "almost completely powerless."[13] Since regional prefects enjoy veto power over *any* action passed by the regional council, they largely dictate regional policies. Indeed, regional councils have no recourse to an appeals process. Still, prefects rarely veto resolutions passed by regional councils. Given the prefect's broad powers and personal relationship with Sassou Nguesso, regional council

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[10] See Yengo (2006) and Clark (2008) on the civil war.

[11] Regional councils are given equivalent operating budgets. Since the country's five southern regions are home to some 70% of the population, regional governments in the north receive far higher operating budgets on a per capita basis.

[12] Adida et al. (2016) find that leaders can use marriages across ethnic lines as a way to credibly signal their willingness to share state resources with their spouse's ethnic group and build their winning coalition. We suggest that these dynamics apply to non-democratic regimes and to ones with different identity cleavages.

[13] Interview with Anonymous, location withheld for security reasons, 11 July 2013.

members are reticent to offend her. And given the magnitude of electoral fraud, regional councils are anyway dominated by PCT loyalists.

The chief popular threat to Sassou Nguesso's survival is the possibility of mass protests by frustrated southerners, as the unrest during the constitutional referendum of October 2015 made clear. Therefore, prefects appointed to Congo's southern regions must be prepared to suppress local residents. To ensure this, Sassou Nguesso routinely forces prefects to govern regions where they have no existing ties, the better to ensure their loyalties are undivided. This, one regional leader conceded, is "part of Sassou Nguesso's strategic framework."[14] A candidate in the 2012 parliamentary elections from Niari region elaborated:

> If [Sassou Nguesso] names a prefect from Niari [to govern Niari], [the prefect] can't implement Sassou Nguesso's politics. He can't steal or intimidate. [Local citizens] know his parents and his family, and they'll kill his family. A delegation would come to see him, and they would say: "These policies are no good, and we won't accept it. Do you want to destroy your own [region] for Sassou Nguesso?"[15]

A former aide to the Bouenza regional council president said, "the regime knows how unpopular it is. If they appoint a prefect from Bouenza, he'll be loathe to cheat, to oppress his own population. But with prefects from other regions, their loyalties are undivided."[16] One high ranking member of the Niari regional council reported something similar:

> [The government appoints non-native prefects] to control the population . . . they are always from the north, or at least from elsewhere. The regime fears having the region governed by one of its own. The regime has to control them, and if there are uprisings the prefects must be willing to suppress them. . . . A native son would know the reality, even the psychological realities. And he would be less likely to waste things, to be corrupted, and to corrupt. He would have the best interest of the region at heart.[17]

Regional prefects also play a critical role in electoral fraud. According to one high ranking staff member of the Bouenza regional council:

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[14]Interview with Anonymous, Mouyondzi, Congo, 30 April 2012.
[15]Interview with Anonymous, Dolisie, Congo, 8 July 2013.
[16]Interview with Anonymous, Nkayi, Congo, 10 July 2013.
[17]Interview with Anonymous, Dolisie, Congo, 11 July 2013.

They're instructed – obligated – by the Interior minister to ensure that such or such candidate

is elected. . . . [Two senior aides to Sassou Nguesso] announced to the population: If the results

don't favor [our candidate] in the end, what a pity it shall be for [the prefect].[18]

Regional prefects are quite open about their electoral role. Just before his appointment, one publicly acknowledged that his "objective is to make the PCT a true electoral machine."[19]

3.2   Kenya

In Kenya, during our sample period, elections were the chief threat to each president's tenure. Daniel arap Moi, a Kalenjin, took office in 1978, under an autocratic regime but was forced to legalize multi-party elections in 1992 amid the Third Wave of Democracy. Mwai Kibaki, a Kikuyu, defeated Moi's successor in 2002 and was re-elected in 2007. Neither president managed to win a majority of votes in their re-election bids, suggesting widespread domestic discontent and the potential for a united opposition to claim victory (Arriola 2012). Instead, each president has maintained power after winning a "flawed" re-election in part through the country's regional executives (Throup & Hornsby 1998, Mueller 2008, Levitsky & Way 2010).

3.2.1   Political Geography: Ethnic Cleavages

Congo's chief political cleavage is regional; in Kenya, it is ethnic (Elischer 2013 Horowitz 2016). Moi and Kibaki allocated more state spending to their co-ethnic areas (e.g., Jablonski 2014, Kramon & Posner 2016). In turn, a president's co-ethnics constitute his core constituency. Since 1992, incumbent presidents have received more than 80% of votes in co-ethnic areas.

3.2.2   Local Governance: District Commissioners

Kenya's administrative districts are analogous to Congo's regions, and its District Commissioners (DCs) to Congo's regional prefects. By 1992 Kenya's 47 districts had an average population of 500,000, slightly larger than Congolese regions. The number of districts – and DCs – increased to 71 by 2003, a fact that we account for in the empirical analysis. DCs are presidentially-appointed positions. They are posted

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[18]Interview with Anonymous, Nkayi, 10 July 2013.
[19]*La Semaine Africaine* 3120, 26 August 2011, p6.

and shuffled by the highest-ranking elites within the interior ministry. DCs are drawn from all of Kenya's prominent ethnic groups, as seen in Figure 1.[20]

Kenyan DCs, like Congolese prefects, enjoy broad autonomy over local policy, which enables them to co-opt citizens on the president's behalf. Each DC presides over a "District Development Committee," which selects development projects for implementation.[21] The quality of these projects is partly determined, citizens acknowledge, by a DC's local embeddedness. DCs who better understand local dynamics can more effectively adjudicate among claimants. A DC who speaks local languages and is sensitive to cultural customs can better adapt national-level policies to the community she serves.[22] Most officers attempt a "capstone" infrastructure project: perhaps a health facility or a large school extension. But major projects only succeed if the DC remains in office long enough to raise money, often through local fundraisers ("harambees") and obtain political support from the "correct" elders.[23] DCs also have access to discretionary funds that can be used to help locals. For instance, one MP explained that the DC in his neighboring district – who was a co-ethnic with that district's majority – used his discretion over agricultural development to forgive loans to farmers after a bad drought. Though the MP's constituents faced the same drought, his DC – a relative newcomer and a non-co-ethnic – was unwilling to give the same assistance.[24]

As in Congo, Kenyan DCs are also charged with maintaining local security. They command district police officers, chair the district security committee, and maintain a wide informant network. Since Moi and Kibaki were concerned more with the opposition's electoral performance than mass protests, Kenyan DCs employed suppression differently than Congolese regional prefects, instead using their coercive authority to advance the president's electoral interests. Under Moi, DCs routinely prevented opposition candidates from organizing rallies, disbanded rallies already underway, and refused to sign nomination papers for opposition candidates to get on the ballot in some constituencies.[25] Under Kibaki, DCs continued some election-

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[20]We measure embeddedness as whether a DC is a co-ethnic of the district majority as opposed to whether the DC is from the district she governs. DCs are barred from serving in their "home" district. That said, the country's politically relevant ethnic groups are well-represented among DCs and comprise the majority in multiple districts. We include a breakdown of majority ethnicity by district in the Appendix.

[21]This DDC was the main source of centralized district funds for the majority of the study period. In 2003, Kibaki implemented a Constituency Development Fund (CDF) that also allocated resources by legislative constituency. However the DDC still persisted during these years and the area DC sits on the CDF allocation boards for constituencies in her district.

[22]Interview with former DC, Nairobi, Kenya, 02 February 2012.

[23] Interview with then DC, 23 November 2011, Nairobi, Kenya.

[24]Interview with MP, 01 March 2012, Nairobi, Kenya.

[25]Much literature has documented the political nature of DCs under Moi during the multi-party era. Most notably, see Throup & Hornsby (1998).

tilting practices, but to a lesser degree. Raila Odinga, for instance, ran against Moi in 1997 and against Kibaki in 2007. Whereas DCs under Moi routinely denied his permits for campaign events outright, Odinga acknowledged, DCs under Kibaki permitted them, but never on bustling "market days," the one or two days per week when citizens from surrounding rural areas congregate in town to sell produce.[26] Though suppression by regional executives in Kenya is less violent than in Congo, it still played a significant role in tilting the playing field and helping each president win re-election. Indeed, Mueller (2008) observes that, throughout the multi-party era, Kenyan presidents have sought to strengthen institutions within the executive branch, including for DCs, to centralize authority.

Whereas local embeddedness improved DCs' ability to co-opt area residents through development, it hampered their ability to suppress. One DC conceded that, if he governed his co-ethnics, he would be at risk of not suppressing local opposition to the best of his abilities, such as by being lenient with local campaign managers of the opposition: "I would allow [my co-ethnics] to do the [work of the] opposition. For the people not to be allowed to oppose [the regime], they must send somebody who is not close to the people."[27] And with regards to long tenure, one former Interior Minister confirmed that DCs were rotated frequently to ensure that DCs carry out their directives as opposed to becoming subordinate to local citizens.[28]

4   Governing through Suppression and Co-optation

4.1   Data and Descriptive Statistics

To evaluate the theory, we collected analogous data on regional executives. For Congo, our dataset includes every regional prefect between Sassou Nguesso's 1997 return and 2013, along with relevant demographic information. Where possible, we collected this information from the government's *Official Journal*, where it publishes many of its appointments, as well as the archives of Brazzaville's three leading newspapers. We supplemented this with the informant interviews discussed above. The result is a region-year dataset that counts 32 individual prefects across 12 regions. We then created a series of variables based on the theory above. The variable Non-Native Prefect$_{rt}$ assumes value 1 if region r's prefect in year t was drawn

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[26]Interview with Raila Odinga, 22 May 2014, Boston, MA.
[27]Interview with DC, Nairobi, Kenya 17 November 2011.
[28]Interview with Minister of Provincial Authority (1991 - 1996), Nairobi, Kenya, 24 February 2012.

from elsewhere. The variable Tenure Length$_{rt}$ measures the number of years that region r's prefect in year t remained in office. To measure Sassou Nguesso's regional popularity, we exploit Congo's regional cleavage. The variable Hostile Region$_r$ assumes value 1 if region r fought against Sassou Nguesso in the 1997 war.

For Kenya, we recorded every DC between 1992 and 2007, along with relevant demographic information.[29] We collected this information from Interior Ministry archives. This yielded a district-year dataset that counts 220 unique DCs across 290 districts. Each DC's ethnicity is coded from their name, using three methods described in the Appendix. We then created the same three variables that we did for Congo. Non-Co-Ethnic DC$_{rt}$ assumes value 1 if district r's DC in year t was not drawn from district r's majority ethnic group.[30] This process was not as straightforward as for the Congo data given the increase in Kenya's administrative districts. We use written and visual depictions of district boundaries and their creation date, alongside sub-district census data to re-estimate district majorities.[31] The variable Tenure Length$_{rt}$ measures the number of years that district r's DC in year t remained in office. To capture the leader's support in district r, we leverage Kenya's ethnic cleavage. The variable President's Non-Co-Ethnic District$_{rt}$ assumes value 1 if the majority of district r's residents in year t were *not* co-ethnics of the president.[32] Specifically, this variable assumes value 0 if the majority of district residents were Kalenjin under Moi, or Kikuyu under Kibaki, and value 1 otherwise. We provide a map of each president's core areas in Figure 4.

[Figure 3 and 4 about here.]

Descriptive statics for our outcome variables – Non-Native Prefect$_{rt}$ and Tenure Length$_{jr}$ for Congo, President's Non-Co-Ethnic District$_{rt}$ and Tenure Length$_{jr}$ for Kenya – appear in Figure 3. Consistent with the theory, the left panel suggests that Sassou Nguesso, Moi, and Kibaki routinely appointed non-native regional executives to regions outside their core support. Likewise, the right panel indicates that regional executives appointed to non-core support regions experienced shorter tenures than their counterparts in core

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[29]In 2008 the number of districts began to expand from 71 to 290. As a result, districts were no longer the main unit of administration and so we conclude our analysis in 2007.

[30]We also re-run these models after considering whether the district contained a substantial minority of each president's co-ethnics in the Appendix.

[31]We explain this process in the Appendix.

[32]Each president has also received substantial support from other ethnic groups. But given Kenya's weak parties, a feature common in many African countries (LeBas 2011, Riedl 2014), ethnic alliances are not stable across time. Presidents thus recognize that non-co-ethnic supporters from the last election might "renege" and support the opposition. Only a president's co-ethnics are guaranteed to support him. For this reason, we do not consider measures of electoral support as the appropriate indicator for regime support.

support regions. The difference between core support regions and non-core support regions is particularly stark in Congo. In Section 6 we offer tentative explanations for why.

4.2 The Politics of Regional Executive Appointment

We begin by examining the politics of appointment: whether leaders govern non-core support regions with regional executives who are not from the local in-group. We employ a series of logit models to estimate the probability that the leader appoints to region r a non-native executive in year t. The baseline estimating equations for Congo and Kenya, respectively, are:

$$\text{logit}\left[\Pr\left(\text{Non-Native Prefect}_{rt} = 1\right)\right] = \alpha + \beta\left(\text{Hostile Region}_r\right) + \gamma X_{rt} + \epsilon \tag{1}$$

$$\text{logit}\left[\Pr\left(\text{Non-Co-Ethnic DC}_{rt} = 1\right)\right] = \alpha + \beta\left(\text{President's Non-Co-Ethnic District}_{rt}\right)$$
$$+ \gamma W_{rt} + \epsilon \tag{2}$$

where X_{rt} and W_{rt} give vectors of region-year controls. For Kenya, standard errors are clustered at the district-level. For Congo, since there are only 12 regions, we do not cluster standard errors. We estimate two specifications for each leader: one with a lagged dependent variable, as observations in sequential time periods may be correlated, and one without.

Although the control variables in vectors X_{rt} and W_{rt} are theoretically similar, Congo and Kenya have distinct political institutions and histories, and so we operationalize control variables differently. The vectors X_{rt} and W_{rt} include an indicator variable that records whether region r's executive in year t was identified as a "personal loyalist" of the president. From the theory in Section 2, this accommodates the possibility that leaders may be willing to govern hostile regions with a native executive if they are certain of the executive's loyalty. In Congo, the chief marker of personal loyalty is whether executive j occupied a senior role in Sassou Nguesso's 1997 civil war effort. For Moi, we control for the number of years since DC j was appointed a DC; since Moi appointed all DCs during the sample period – he had been in power for 15 years by 1992 – a DC's length of service is an appropriate measure of regime loyalty. Because of Kibaki's shorter tenure, we instead include an indicator variable that assumes value 1 if DC j was first appointed by Kibaki. In all models, we control for traditional administrative factors by including region r's geographic size and

total population, both logged.[33] Descriptive statistics for all variables appear in Table 1. In the Appendix, we re-run the models after controlling for local development, with substantively identical results.

[Table 1 about here.]

The results appear in Table 2. As expected, all three leaders were more likely to appoint non-native executives to non-core support regions. The bottom panel reports a series of predicted probabilities. Sassou Nguesso governs non-core support regions – which fought against him during the 1997 civil war – almost exclusively with non-natives. Indeed, it is exceedingly uncommon for Sassou Nguesso to permit a native son to govern a non-core support region. By contrast, Sassou Nguesso governs core support regions overwhelmingly with native executives: with probability 0.6 in a given year t. In Kenya, the results are similar, though less stark. Under Moi, his co-ethnic Kalenjin districts were 18 percentage points more likely to be governed by a co-ethnic than non-Kalenjin districts. Under Kibaki, his co-ethnic Kikuyu districts were 35.6 percentage points more likely to be governed by a co-ethnic than non-Kikuyu districts.

[Table 2 about here.]

4.3 The Politics of Regional Executive Tenure

Just as leaders are more likely to govern non-core support regions with regional executives drawn from afar, so too, our theory suggests, should leaders shuffle them more quickly. In so doing, leaders ensure that regional executives are less likely to become locally embedded.

We employ a series of Cox proportional hazard models to examine the politics of shuffling. We estimate the probability that the leader removes region r's executive in year t as a function of region r's core support status. The estimating equations for Congo and Kenya are analogous to those in (1) and (2), respectively:

$$h\left(t\right) \quad = \quad \beta\left(\text{Hostile Region}_r\right) + \gamma X_{rt} + \epsilon \tag{3}$$

$$h\left(t\right) \quad = \quad \beta\left(\text{President's Non-Co-Ethnic District}_{rt}\right) + \gamma W_{rt} + \epsilon \tag{4}$$

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[33] For Congo's population, we use the 2007 census, the only since Sassou Nguesso returned to power in 1997. Omitting this variable does not substantively alter the results. For Kenya, we use census data from 1989 and redetermine population based on changing boundaries. This process is detailed in the Appendix.

where $h(t)$ gives the regional executive's hazard rate at year t. The control vectors X_{rt} and W_{rt} are identical to those in equations (1) and (2), respectively, except that we also control for whether region r's executive in year t was non-native. This accommodates the possibility that leaders treat shuffling and non-native appointment as either complements or substitutes: that if regional executive j is not native to region r, quickly shuffling her may be less necessary, for her loyalty to the regime may already be assured. Again, we estimate two specifications for each leader: one with an leader-level frailty term and one without.

The results appear in Table 3. Again, Sassou Nguesso, Moi, and Kibaki shuffled regional executives in non-core support regions at a far higher rate than in core support regions. Figure 5 presents the associated survival plots. The y-axis gives the estimated proportion of all regional executives appointed in year 0 who remain in office at some year t, recorded along the x-axis. Outside of Sassou Nguesso's core support regions, some 65% of regional executives are shuffled just two years after appointment, and nearly all by year three. By contrast, in his core regions, Sassou Nguesso grants regional executives long tenures. A decade after appointment, some 70% will remain in office. In Kenya, Moi and Kibaki employed the same policy, though, again, differences across regions are less pronounced. For Moi, two years after appointment, roughly 55% of regional executives in core support regions will remain in office; in non-core support regions, only 40%. For Kibaki, two years after appointment, nearly 60% of regional executives in core support regions will remain in office; in non-core support regions, only 30%.

As in Section 4.2, the coefficients for Loyalty$_{rt}$ are consistent with our theory. For Sassou Nguesso and Kibaki, regional executives who were identified as personal loyalists were far less likely to be terminated in any year t. Indeed, when Sassou Nguesso and Kibaki appointed personal loyalists to regions outside their core support, they treated them like regional executives *appointed to core support regions*. In short, presumed loyalty to the leader enables the leader to govern potentially hostile areas with native sons – with the associated benefits for local governance – while remaining relatively confident that, if threats emerge, native sons will suppress them.

[Table 3 and Figure 5 about here.]

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5 Robustness Checks

5.1 Native Postings as Strategic

First, readers may be concerned that the non-native statistical results – presented in Section 4.2 and Table 2 – may simply be driven by the pool of potential Congolese prefects and Kenyan DCs. That is, since Sassou Nguesso, Moi, and Kibaki "pack" their regional governance apparatus with in-group officers, it may be overwhelmingly likely that non-core support regions/districts are governed by executives drawn from afar. If so, our statistical results may reflect this packing rather than the leader's strategic behavior. Put otherwise, if the leader's in-group is well-represented within the pool of potential regional executives, then this may "mechanically" generate the non-native result in Table 2.

As Figure 1 makes clear, however, neither country's officer corps was totally packed. Although each of the three did disproportionately draw regional executives from their in-group, other demographic groups were well represented. As an additional robustness check, we employ randomization inference. For each leader, we specify a pool of potential candidates for regional executive positions: individuals who, for each leader, *could have been* selected. We then randomly select a group of counterfactual regional executives from this pool of potential candidates, and randomly assign them to executive positions in region i in year t. For the randomly selected group of counterfactual regional executives, we construct our explanatory variable of interest: Non-Native Prefect$_{it}$ for Congo, Non-Co-Ethnic DC$_{it}$ for Kenya. We then estimate the baseline model, given by equations (1) and (2). We perform this simulation 1,000 times for each leader, and then compare the resulting distribution of coefficients to the observed coefficients reported in Table 2. If the strategic behavior we observe in Congo and Kenya is actually driven by a packed governance apparatus – again, a governance apparatus that is overwhelmingly comprised of the leaders' co-ethnics or co-regionals – then the simulated distribution of coefficients will converge to the observed coefficients reported above.

This randomization inference may be sensitive to the pool of potential candidates for regional executive positions. To ensure our results are robust, we define the pool in a variety of ways. For both countries, we initially consider the current pool of Congolese prefects or Kenyan DCs. We recognize, however, that selection into these elite regime positions is not random. Therefore, we run additional randomization inferences based on the potential pool of possible Congolese prefects or Kenyan DCs. In Congo, we examine 1) all

government minsters appointed since 1997 and, 2) most expansively, all government elites (generals, senior colonels, ministers, presidential advisers, local mayors, regional executives, heads of parastatals, and appointees to the various constitutional courts and advisory bodies). In Kenya, we consider the pool of District Officers, who are one tier below DCs and from which all DCs are drawn. Across these different candidate pools, we find no evidence that our results are driven by packing.

5.2 Tenure Length due to Station Difficulty or Revealed Disloyalty

Readers may also be concerned that our tenure results – presented in Section 4.3 and Table 3 – are driven by station difficulty rather than the leader's strategic behavior. That is, Sassou Nguesso, Moi, and Kibaki may shuffle regional executives in non-core support regions not because of strategic considerations about expected compliance, but simply because those postings are difficult, and so regional executives posted there perform poorly. In turn, we may observe shorter tenure spells in non-core areas because the central government views those regional executives as less competent, not because the central government is attempting to diminish local embeddedness. If this is the case, then our results may be driven by higher rates of social unrest, not the underlying politically salient cleavage.

Alternatively, readers may also be concerned that our tenure results are driven by disloyal regional executives that the leader purged. If, for instance, disloyal regional executives in non-core support regions have more opportunities to harness popular frustration to mount challenges to the central government, then disloyal regional executives may be detected – and hence purged – at higher rates than disloyal regional executives in core support regions.

To rule out these alternative explanations, we first examine the subsequent postings of all regional executives in our dataset. If these alternative explanations are salient, then former regional executives in non-core support regions should be subject to forced retirement at higher rates than former regional executives in core support regions. In Congo, this is straightforward. All former regional executives willingly entered retirement after stepping down. As a result, long-tenured regional executives share the same subsequent career trajectory as short-tenured regional executives, just as former executives in core support regions share the same subsequent trajectory as former executives in non-core support regions.[34] The reason is that regional

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[34]Note that there is no evidence that regional executives in non-core support regions were subject to forced retirement at higher rates than those in core support regions.

executive positions are regarded as the terminal point of a career in local or regional government, the military, or some other bureaucratic service to the regime. Appointees to other, similarly high ranking positions – such as government ministers or ambassadors – are typically drawn from a different candidate pool, in which experience in electoral politics is privileged over experience in regional government or the military. In Kenya, we observe a similar pattern. Although former DCs are routinely appointed to new postings, we observe no statistically significant difference ($p<.05$) in the rate of re-posting across short- and long-tenured DCs. Likewise, we observe no difference in the rate of re-posting across DCs who governed core support and non-core support regions. Again, the identical subsequent career trajectories imply that regional executives in non-core support regions enjoy shorter tenures not because of poor performance, but because of leader's strategic considerations. Further, we found no qualitative evidence that regional executives in non-core areas used their authority to create dissent against the leader.

We rule out these alternative explanations in a second way: by controlling for observed rates of protest. If the patterns we document in Sections 4.2 and 4.3 are driven by station difficulty, then controlling for observed rates of protest should attenuate the effect of the politically salient cleavage. We draw on the ACLED dataset to code the number of violent confrontations in a jurisdiction between the state and citizens.[35] Then, we reestimate the results above, but include an interaction term between the number of ACLED events in a given region and its core support status. The results are substantively unchanged. We also explore whether protest has an effect on the subsequent career trajectories of regional executives. Again, we find no statistically significant difference ($p<.05$) in retirement rates across Kenyan DCs in core versus non-core jurisdictions.[36] These results make clear that the patterns we observe in Sections 4.2 and 4.3 are driven by the underlying politically salient cleavage, not station difficulty or observed social unrest.

We regard these null effects as unsurprising. The politically salient cleavages that compel the co-optation and suppression governance strategies are causally prior to social unrest itself. These cleavages routinely have deep historical origins, and, as our theory makes clear, are sustained as equilibria by powerful political dynamics. Regional executives must manage the implications of these cleavages, but they cannot undo them. Social unrest is one way these cleavages manifest themselves.

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[35]Specifically, we code ACLED interactions 10 - 17 – those that include the state as a main actor. As we show in the Appendix, ACLED data confirms that there were substantially more violent events between locals and the government in non-core areas than core areas.

[36]Since all regional prefects in Congo retired after serving, we cannot perform a similar analysis for Congo.

6   Conclusion

Regional governance strategies are not idiosyncratic, a function of a leader's whims. Rather, leaders confront common popular threats and resolve them in common ways. Specifically, we find that leaders govern sub-national regions according to their *ex ante* level of support. In core support regions, where popular threats are unlikely to emerge, regional executives are locally embedded; they are drawn from the local in-group and serve long tenures, which enables them to craft better policy and so secure local support. Outside core regions, where popular threats are more likely, leaders limit the embeddedness of regional executives; executives are drawn from the out-group and are shuffled quickly, which helps ensure that they do not develop social attachments to the area that compromise their orders.

We find evidence in support of our argument using micro-level data drawn from three presidents across two African countries. By illuminating patterns of regional governance across countries with different political cleavages, institutions, and popular threats, we gain confidence in our theory's external validity. Our findings, indeed, resonate far beyond Congo and Kenya. Mobutu Sese Seko ruled Zaire between 1965 and 1997, and although he understood that "sub-regional commissioners ... better understand local problems" (Young & Turner 1985, 226), Mobutu nonetheless required them "to serve outside their regions of origin and [subjected] them to frequent rotation (Schatzberg 1988, 34). Likewise, Reisinger and Moraski (2013) find that regional executives in Russia's North Caucasus, where they have been required to suppress the local population, have systematically shorter tenures. Our theory explains these patterns by understanding them as part of broader strategies of governance. Leaders co-opt where they can and suppress where they must.

These patterns are especially pronounced in Congo. Sassou Nguesso governs hostile regions with non-native executives at an especially high rate, and then shuffles them especially quickly. We believe two factors may explain this cross-leader variation. First, popular uprisings constitute a more profound threat to Sassou Nguesso's survival than to either Moi's or Kibaki's. Accordingly, Sassou Nguesso may have even stronger incentives to employ suppression in Congo's southern regions. Second, Kenya's stronger bureaucratic institutions – constructed during the colonial period and inherited by subsequent presidents – imposed constraints on both Moi's and Kibaki's autonomy, and thus prevented them from appointing and terminating regional executives at will. By contrast, Congo's bureaucratic institutions were essentially destroyed by the 1997 civil war, and so Sassou Nguesso confronts weaker institutional constraints. In turn,

Sassou Nguesso may be able to employ suppression more aggressively in Congo's southern regions – and co-optation more liberally in northern regions – than either Moi or Kibaki. To be clear, these explanations for cross-leader variation are tentative. Still, they suggest new possibilities for cross-country research: how variation in regime threats and existing bureaucratic institutions condition regional governance.

More broadly, our results suggest that suppression is costly. In regions where leaders are less popular *ex ante*, they employ management strategies that render them even less so over time. Regional executives who are not locally embedded pursue inferior public policies, increasing the area's frustration with the regime. By increasing the probability of dissent, the suppression equilibrium is self-reinforcing. But leaders are forced to accept this risk, because the region's *ex ante* level of hostility forces them to privilege the loyalty of regional executives over local welfare. Though outside the scope of this paper, we regard the long-term effects of the suppression strategy as a critical topic for future research.

Our results also have a crucial policy implication. The international community has long sought to improve its conflict early warning systems. Given the scarcity of data, especially at the local level, policymakers have turned to increasingly sophisticated machine learning tools.[37] Our results make clear that policymakers also have another, very public source of information: the personnel choices that central governments make. Put simply, the regional executives that central governments appoint reveal much about the regional governance strategies they employ. Where regional executives are drawn from afar and shuffled frequently, central governments effectively signal to the international community that they privilege suppression over co-optation. These locations, we argue, are the most likely locations for state violence.

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[37] See, for instance, the African Union's Conflict Prevention and Early Warning Division at `http://www.peaceau.org/uploads/conflict-prevention-and-early-warning-booklet-13feb18-approved.pdf`.

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Table 1: Descriptive Statistics on Regional Executives and the Areas they Govern

	Congo			Kenya		
Theoretical Variable	Operationalization	Count		Operationalization	Count	
Administrative Unit	Regions	10		Districts	47 - 71	
Officer	Prefects	32		District Commissioners	220	
Units	Prefect-Years	173		District Commissioner-Years	1988	

Theoretical Variable	Operationalization	Mean	SD	Operationalization	Mean	SD
Non-Native Officer	Non-Native Prefect	0.48	0.50	Non-Co-Ethnic DC	0.91	0.29
Tenure	Years in Region	4.64	3.43	Years in District	2.35	1.20
Outside Core	Hostile Region	0.61	0.49	President's Non-Co-Ethnic District	0.84	0.37
Population	Logged Region Population	12.13	0.75	Logged District Population	8.77	0.69
Area	Logged Region Area (sq. km.)	9.65	1.96	Logged District Area (sq. km.)	8.13	1.34
Loyalty	Civil War Veteran	0.21	0.41	Years as DC under Moi	14.26	5.71
				Kibaki Appointee	0.12	0.33

Table 2: Factors Affecting Regional Executive Appointments in Congo and Kenya

	Sassou Nguesso		Moi		Kibaki	
Outside Core	6.69**	4.10**	1.66**	1.66**	2.79**	2.78**
	(1.49)	(1.16)	(0.56)	(0.56)	(0.66)	(0.66)
Loyalty	-2.47**	-19.93	0.02	0.02	-0.12	-0.13
	(0.62)	(2933.32)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.61)	(0.61)
Population	-3.87**	-2.32	-0.39	-0.39	-0.74	-0.73
	(1.38)	(1.52)	(0.53)	(0.53)	(0.67)	(0.67)
Area	-1.53	-0.88	0.15	0.15	-0.06	-0.06
	(0.47)	(0.52)	(0.17)	(0.17)	(0.27)	(0.27)
Lagged DV		22.75		-0.07		-0.25
		(2933.32)		(0.15)		(0.16)
Intercept	57.85**	32.40	3.12	3.17	7.41	7.56
	(20.21)	(22.25)	(4.98)	(4.98)	(7.37)	(7.39)
N	173	162	1308	1308	680	680

$**p < 0.01$, $*p < 0.05$, $^{\dagger}p < 0.1$. Results from logit regressions following equations (1) and (2). Dependent variable is whether a regional executive was a non-native of a jurisdiction (for Congo, this is whether the executive is from a different region; for Kenya, this is if the executive is from a different ethnic group than the majority of a district's residents, as seen in Table 1). For descriptions of other variables, also see Table 1. Standard errors clustered at the district level for Kenya.

Predicted Probability of Non-Native Regional Executives
with Loyalty and Lagged DV at 0, numerical variables at means,
and 95% confidence intervals

Within Core	0.01	0.02	0.76	0.77	0.61	0.65
	[0.00 0.06]	[0.00, 0.13]	[0.60, 0.87]	[0.61, 0.87]	[0.31, 0.81]	[0.41, 0.82]
Outside Core	0.59	0.22	0.94	0.94	0.96	0.96
	[0.34, 0.81]	[0.02, 0.60]	[0.89, 0.97]	[0.89, 0.97]	[0.88, 0.99]	[0.90, 0.99]

Table 3: Factors Affecting Regional Executive Tenure in Congo and Kenya

	Sassou Nguesso		Moi		Kibaki	
Outside Core	4.30**	4.30**	0.34*	0.34*	0.64*	0.64*
	(1.11)	(1.11)	(0.16)	(0.16)	(0.31)	(0.31)
Loyalty	-4.83**	-4.83**	0.01	0.01	-0.49**	-0.48**
	(1.46)	(1.46)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.17)	(0.17)
Non-Native Officer	-2.66**	-2.66**	-0.07	-0.07	0.10	0.09
	(0.90)	(0.90)	(0.21)	(0.21)	(0.32)	(0.32)
Population	-0.26	-0.26	-0.04	-0.04	-0.24*	-0.24*
	(0.58)	(0.58)	(0.08)	(0.08)	(0.12)	(0.12)
Area	-0.15	-0.15	0.02	0.02	0.04	0.05
	(0.26)	(0.26)	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.05)	(0.06)
Frailty term	–	Yes	–	Yes	–	Yes
N	174	174	340	340	193	189

$**p < 0.01$, $*p < 0.05$, $^{\dagger}p < 0.1$. Results from Cox proportional hazard regressions following equations (3) and (4). Outcome variable is whether a regional executive was shuffled in a particular period. For descriptions of other variables, also see Table 1.
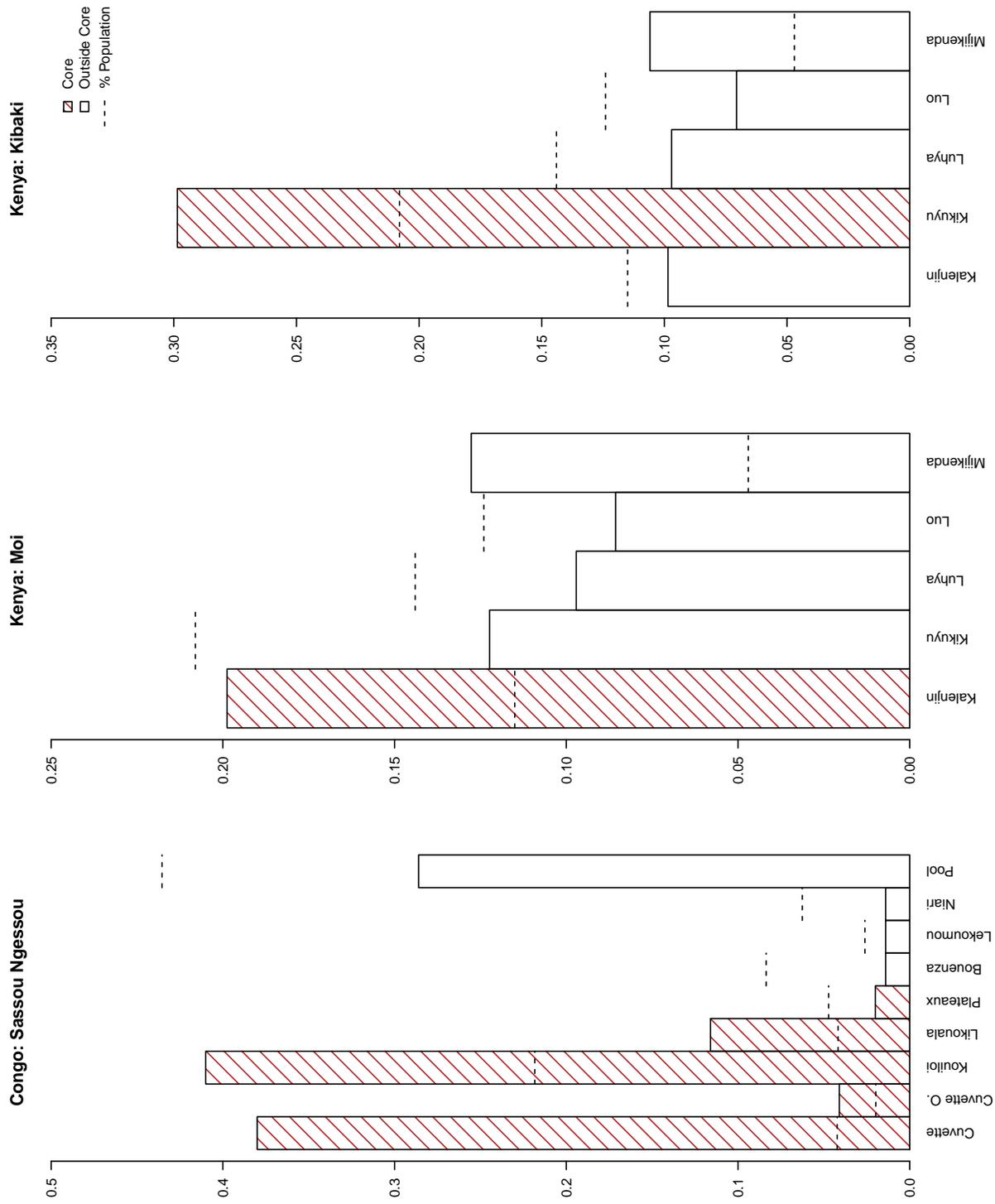
Figure 1: Regional executives appointed by Sassou Nguesso, Moi, and Kibaki, with their respective core support regions shaded. The *y*-axis gives the proportion of portfolio-years in the dataset – itself subsetted by leader – that were natives of the regions along the *x*-axis.
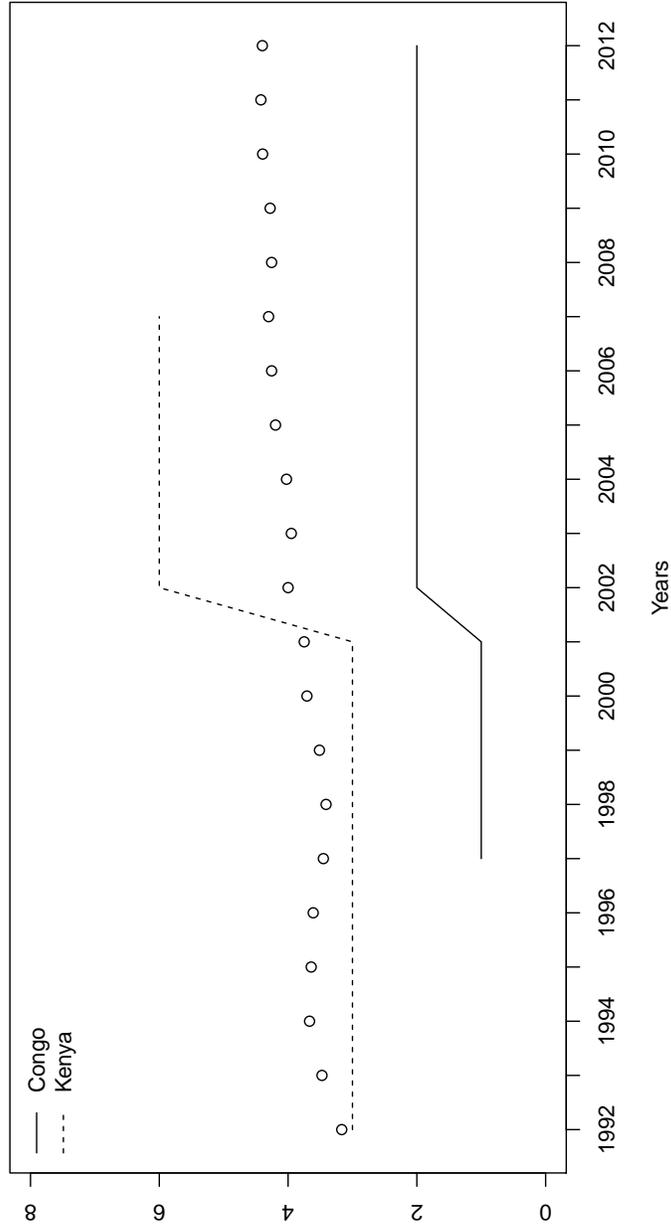
Figure 2: Polity IV executive constraints score for sub-Saharan Africa as a whole (circles), Kenya (dashed line), and Congo (full line). The executive constraint scores for Congo and Kenya cover only the study period for each case.
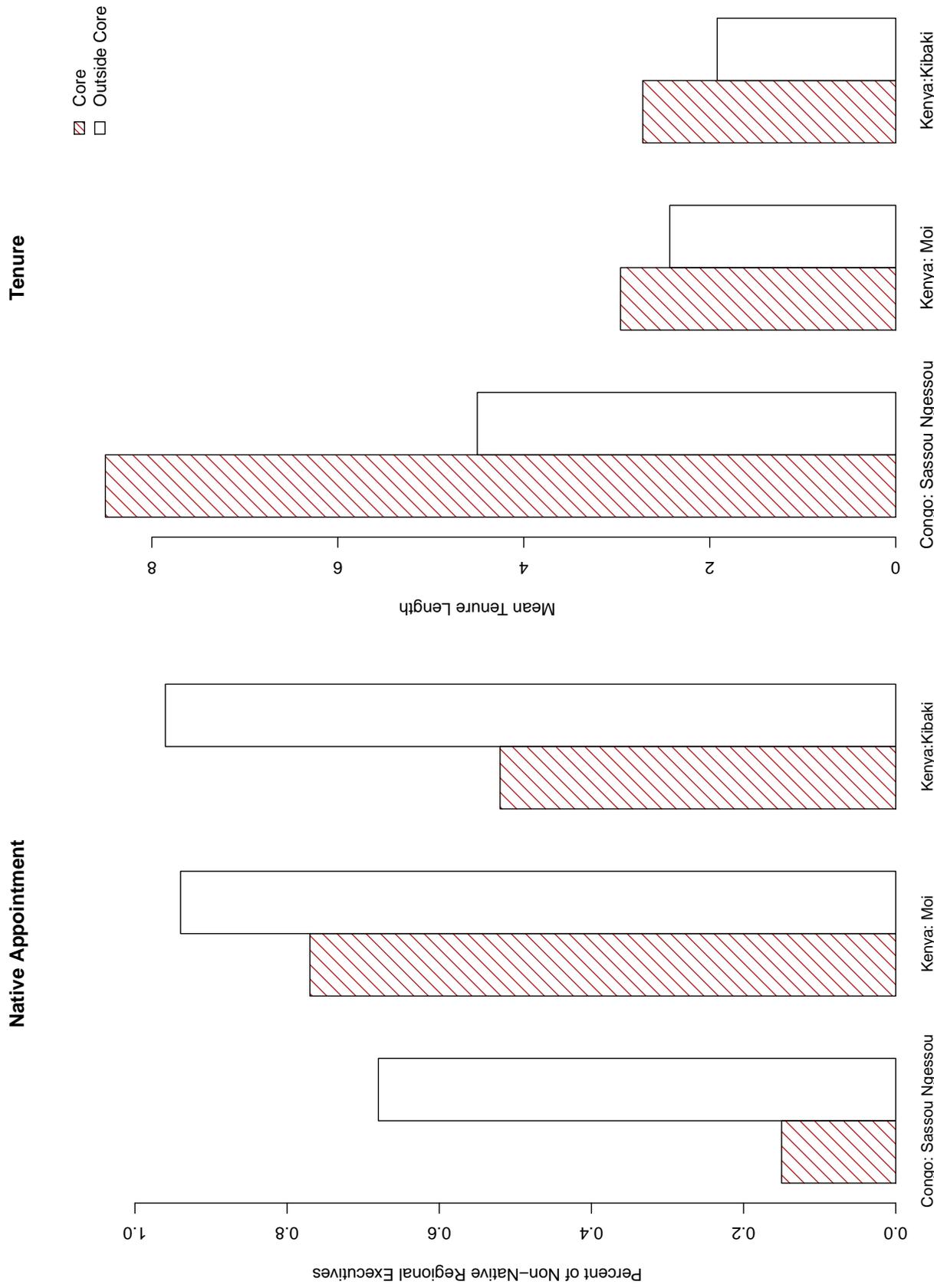
Figure 3: Descriptive statistics for the outcome variables of interest. The left barplot displays the proportion of years in which region r was governed by a non-native executive, according to core support areas and non-core support areas. The right barplot displays the average tenure of regional prefects, again according to core support and non-core support areas.

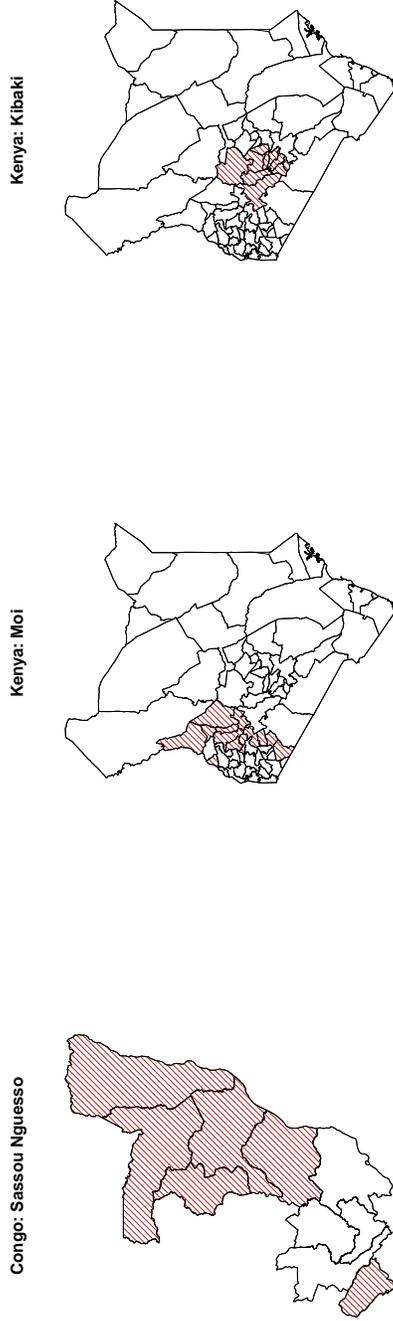**Congo: Sassou Nguesso**   **Kenya: Moi**   **Kenya: Kibaki**

Figure 4: Maps of the main independent variable, core area. The Congo map hashes the country's northern regions that constitute Sassou Nguesso's core, as well as Kouilou, his wife's core region. The Kenya maps list the country's districts and hash in those districts where a majority of residents were a co-ethnic of the president (both Moi and Kibaki's spouses were from their respective ethnic group).
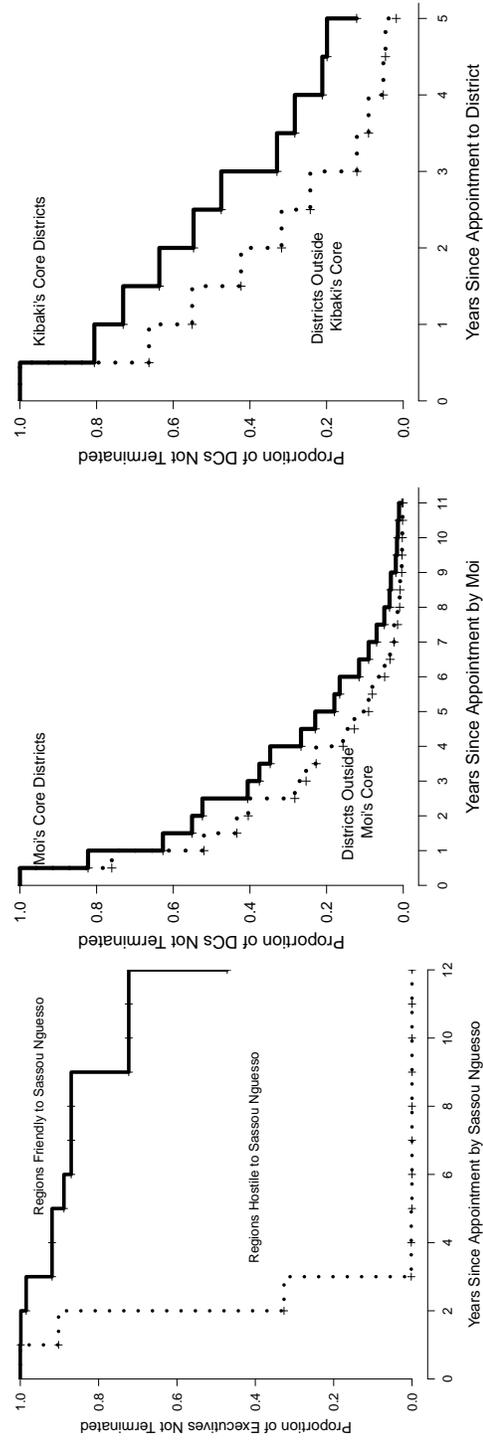
Figure 5: Survival plots associated with the statistical results in Table 3. For each, the solid line gives the survival curve for the leader's core support regions, while the dashed line gives the survival curve for the leader's non-core support regions.