LSQ
LEGISLATIVE STUDIES QUARTERLY
Published by the
Department of Political Science
at Washington University
in St. Louis

RABIA MALIK
University of Essex

Lesser of Two Evils: Allocating Resources to Opposition Districts in Pakistan

Though many scholars find that incumbent party legislators benefit from higher access to distributive resources than opposition ones, there is less attention on how resources are distributed *among* opposition districts. In most contexts, opposition districts cannot be fully cut off from funds and opposition legislators get credit for spending in their constituencies, which harms the ruling party. I argue that, in such situations, the incumbent party will discriminate between its own legislators and opposition ones but this discrimination will be based on opposition swing districts being punished rather than opposition strongholds. Using data on federal development funds from Pakistan and fixed-effects estimators, I show that the difference in funds between opposition and ruling party legislators is driven by opposition swing districts while their core areas have similar access as the incumbent party's own districts. The findings further our understanding of distributive politics and have potential implications for long-term development patterns.

How do incumbent parties distribute resources to opposition districts? Many scholars have found that incumbents distribute more funds to their co-partisans (e.g., Ansolabehere and Snyder 2006; Keefer and Khemani 2009; Khemani 2003; Lazarus 2010; Lee 2003; Malik 2021; Schady 2000) and that they will also often "punish" opposition legislators (e.g., Diaz-Cayeros, Magaloni, and Weingast 2003; Magaloni 2006; Rodden 2004); these are particularly sensible strategies when incumbents are concerned that opposition members will get credit for any spending incumbents incur in opposition constituencies. At the same time, however, it is often impossible to entirely cut off opposition areas from resources, which leads to the question of how incumbent parties distribute funds *within* opposition areas.

In this article, I propose an argument for a distributive strategy by the incumbent party whereby opposition swing district

DOI: 10.1111/lsq.12398

legislators are punished while opposition legislators who win by large margins are provided access to resources. This argument is based on two realistic assumptions I discuss in detail subsequently. First, that opposition legislators can claim credit for spending in their constituencies and, second, that the ruling party cannot entirely cut off the opposition from access to resources.

The intuition for the argument is as follows: when opposition legislators are likely to get credit for spending from voters, this hurts the ruling party. Given that the ruling party cannot entirely cut off all opposition legislators from distributive resources, due to potential electoral and reputational concerns, it is less costly for them to provide opposition strongholds with resources rather than marginal opposition districts. The opposition strongholds are the ones where the ruling party is unlikely to win any way so potentially "increasing" the opposition legislator's popularity there is low cost to the ruling party. At the same time, withholding access to resources from an opposition legislator who won by a small margin is more beneficial since opposition marginal districts are more likely to swing back to the incumbent party if the current (opposition) legislator is unable to provide projects to her district. I clarify this argument through a simple formal model as well.

I test the resultant hypothesis of distributive fund allocation patterns using data on Pakistan from a Constituency Development Fund (CDF) that ran from 1988 to 2013 and promised, on paper at least, the same amount of money to each federal legislator for undertaking small development projects in her electoral district. Several features of this fund, including the equal-access rule and how strongly projects from it are associated with each individual legislator, make it ideal for testing my argument. Despite the promised equal allocation, the actual distributive patterns often differed (Malik 2021); features of Pakistani politics that allow such manipulation are also discussed. The main finding is that opposition core districts are associated with approximately 50 percentage points higher access to their share of the fund than opposition swing districts. Importantly, electoral margins do not matter within ruling party districts, indicating that this is not just a symmetric core-swing allocation pattern that incumbent parties pursue regardless of party affiliation; rather, opposition districts are dealt with strategically. These findings are robust to controlling for differences between legislators and their districts, and to accounting for time-invariant differences between administrations and administrative districts.

This article makes several contributions. First, it adds to the distributive politics literature that often finds politicians distributing resources to electorally benefit themselves and their copartisans across many countries and contexts (e.g., Ansolabehere and Snyder 2006; Keefer and Khemani 2009; Khemani 2003; Lazarus 2010; Lee 2003; Malik 2021; Schady 2000). Second, it contributes to the smaller body of work that focuses on how incumbent parties distribute resources to opposition districts when the opposition can claim credit for such spending (e.g., Bueno 2018; Niedzwiecki 2016). The results have potential implications for how we think about electoral competition and long-term development patterns, which I discuss after presenting the main findings. Third, I focus on the domestic politics of a strategically important yet understudied country, building on a primarily qualitative recent literature on the electoral politics of Pakistan (e.g., Javid 2020; Mohmand 2019; Rollier 2020; Zhirnov and Mufti 2019). More importantly, despite the focus being on a single country, the findings from this article speak to a much broader set of countries, especially developing ones, where the party in power tends to have a large amount of control over how development funds are allocated across the country. Finally, I contribute to the literature on CDFs that examines how politicians allocate distribute such resources for electoral benefits (e.g., Harris and Posner 2019; Jensenius and Chhibber 2022; Malik 2021; Ravanilla and Hicken 2012), highlighting that even fixed-allocation funds can be distributed in partisan ways that will benefit certain legislators over others.

The article proceeds by laying out the main argument in more detail in the next section. I explicate the proposed mechanism formally, and situate it within the existing literature, which leads to the empirical hypotheses. The section "Pakistani Politics and Development Funds" outlines Pakistani politics and the CDF I use data on, before I discuss the data and methods. I subsequently present the main results and discuss robustness checks and further implications of the results before concluding.

Distributive Politics: Core versus Swing

Much of the relevant distributive politics literature can be divided into two strands: parties as symmetric actors targeting core versus swing supporters, and incumbent parties' disproportionate control over resource allocation influencing distribution. When opposition districts are discussed, it is usually in terms of opposition core districts being "punished" with low access to distributive resources. The empirical evidence in this regard emerges primarily from non-competitive regimes in developing countries where low chances of a power change at the center in the near future make such a strategy viable. By contrast, I focus on cases with competitive elections, especially where credit for spending is associated with the individual politician, which leads to incumbent parties distributing resources to their own districts and to opposition core districts while discriminating against swing opposition districts.

The canonical theoretical literature on resource allocation focuses on symmetric strategies for parties, regardless of their power status at the center. Some scholars make the case for risk-averse candidates spending resources on their core supporters for re-election (Cox and McCubbins 1986), which others find evidence for (e.g., Stokes et al. 2013), while others build on this to establish conditions where parties instead focus on swing groups or voters who are more responsive to small material benefits compared to loyal voters (Dixit and Londregan 1996, 1998; Lindbeck and Weibull 1987, 1993; Stokes 2009). A related well-established empirical finding is that legislators elected by narrow margins need to work the hardest to bring more projects to their home constituencies to consolidate their thin support as they are the most electorally vulnerable (Berry, Burden, and Howell 2010; Keefer and Khemani 2009; Lee 2003; Rodden and Wilkinson 2004; Ward and John 1999).[1] This literature essentially treats parties and legislators as symmetric actors, focusing on their strategy in terms of different types of voters and districts rather than on who has easier access to distributive resources.

A second strand of the literature is interested in how the ruling party's control over resources influences distributive patterns. A core finding in many contexts is that ruling party members are generally advantaged in accessing resources (Ansolabehere and Snyder 2006; Diaz-Cayeros, Magaloni, and Weingast 2003; Keefer and Khemani 2009; Khemani 2003; Lazarus 2010; Lee 2003; Malik 2021; Schady 2000) with some evidence that swing legislators benefit only if they belong to the ruling party (Lazarus 2009). These findings imply a disadvantage for opposition members but do not look at distributive patterns *within* opposition areas. When variation within opposition districts has been analyzed, it is primarily in terms of core opposition being punished with evidence largely coming from relatively non-competitive periods of rule in developing countries such as India (Rodden and Wilkinson 2004) and Mexico (Magaloni 2006).[2] In both cases, the ruling party was able to exploit its asymmetric control over resources because it did not foresee losing power in the near future and, in fact, used this system of punishing opposition districts to further cement power in areas that otherwise preferred the opposition (Diaz-Cayeros, Magaloni, and Weingast 2003).

Most of the time, however, elections are competitive and power at the center can change hands. The concern for the incumbent party is that spending in opposition constituencies will often result in opposition legislators (or mayors et cetera) getting credit (Bueno 2018; Niedzwiecki 2016), which is detrimental to the incumbent party. Scholars have considered this credit claiming in different ways. In Brazil, Bueno (2018) terms this "credit hijacking," and explores incumbent party mayors strategically "bypassing" the opposition by channeling funds to opposition constituencies through non-state organizations, which prevents the opposition from credibly claiming credit for such spending. Focusing on multi-layered governments in India, scholars find that federal legislators allocate more money in state-level constituencies where a co-partisan won recently (Bohlken 2018) and politicians who control upper level governments reduce budgets to lower level opposition governments in West Bengal (Bardhan et al. 2018). In the Philippines, Ravanilla and Hicken (2012) examine how electoral pressures affect senators' resource distribution choices while Diaz-Cayeros, Magaloni, and Weingast (2003) discuss how the PRI in Mexico, during its one-party rule, allocated fewer resources to the opposition, which then led to lower service provision that eventually reduced the opposition's re-election rates.

Therefore, across contexts, this scholarship highlights the importance of electoral pressures and credit claiming in resource distribution. In this article, I explore another strategy where the incumbent party, knowing that it cannot simply cut off the entire opposition from distributive resources, chooses to minimize its costs by channeling resources to opposition strongholds while cutting off opposition swing districts from access.

In most democracies, even weak ones, there are several reasons why the ruling party, even if it has a lot of control over resource distribution, is unlikely to *completely* cut off all opposition districts from access. Discriminating excessively against *all* opposition legislators can rouse media attention, especially instigated by well-known opposition politicians, which may have electoral and reputational costs for those in power. Even without explicit media attention, electoral costs could emerge. In extreme cases, if outrage against blatant discrimination gathers enough steam, this could lead to government dismissals on grounds of incompetence or corruption, which is plausible in weak democracies.[3]

At the same time, as already discussed, there are many situations where spending in opposition constituencies benefits opposition politicians as they get credit for it. Therefore, this is a more acute concern for the ruling party when credit claiming is easier for the politician associated with a specific constituency. Consequently, the ruling party will distribute resources in a way that benefits its own party the most and hurts the opposition the most, which will result in opposition strongholds being given a higher share of distributive resources than opposition marginal districts.

The underlying mechanism is straightforward: The marginal return of distributive spending is highest in swing districts and, if legislators are blamed by voters for low spending, withholding access from marginally elected opposition legislators is likely to hurt them much more than withholding access from opposition strongholds.[4] Put differently, this allocation strategy also benefits the ruling party the most because it prevents opposition marginal legislators from consolidating their thin cushion of support, which is likely to help the ruling party and its candidates in those districts in the next election. In addition, opposition strongholds are those where the ruling party is unlikely to win even if the legislator is unable to deliver large amounts of funds, especially in the short run, because she has a large margin of support, so providing resources there is less costly for the ruling party.

The resultant empirical expectation is that the ruling party will distribute more resources to opposition strongholds while punishing marginal opposition constituencies. Though the primary interest is in distributive patterns *within* opposition constituencies, in line with existing literature, I also expect the ruling party to distribute higher resources to its own constituencies, on average. The afore-mentioned intuition is sufficient for this hypothesis but providing resources to core opposition legislators may also have an additional long-term benefit for the ruling party: the strongest opposition legislators might be in decision-making positions if their party comes to power at the center in the future. Thus, not withholding funds from these individuals in the present time period may mean that they do the same for the current ruling party's elites in the future.

Formalizing the Mechanism

This section formalizes the basic intuition of the substantive argument in a minimalistic, decision theoretic set up. There is a ruling party G that distributes resources between four districts, one of each type from the preceding discussion: core ruling, swing ruling, swing opposition, and core opposition. In reality, a country of course has many electoral districts but the crux of the argument can be sufficiently explained with this straightforward set up, and the intuitive logic below would hold with more districts of each type as well.[5]

Party G's goal is re-election, so it attempts to distribute the given resource $R = [0, 1]$ between the four districts (denoted r_i for each district i) such that it maximizes its total utility, which is simply the sum of the probability of winning each district multiplied by the benefit of winning in each district (See Equation A1 in the online supporting information for the utility function). Since it is a parliamentary democracy with single-member districts, the benefit of winning each district is assumed to be the same, and is normalized to 1 here.

As I am primarily interested in explaining distribution within opposition districts, where the opposition party is denoted by O, I limit my focus to the distribution of resources between the two opposition districts $i \in \{O_s, O_c\}$, denoted s and c, where O_s refers to the opposition swing district and O_c denotes the opposition core district. I assume, based on the earlier substantive discussion, that G cannot completely shut out the opposition's access to resources, meaning that it must allocate at least $\phi \in (0, 1]$ to the opposition districts in total. Therefore, $0 < \phi \leq r_s + r_c \leq 1$. Intuitively, G should never allocate more than ϕ to the opposition when it can instead use those resources in its own districts. Finally, $p_i\,(r_i)$ denotes the probability of the governing party, G, winning in district i and, for simplicity, it is a function of r_i.

It is important to note that the utility is calculated from the point of view of G since G decides the distribution. Because of that, the returns to spending on *any* opposition district must be negative, since the funds increase the likelihood of the opposition winning, which automatically hurts the governing party's chances.

Thus, $p_i\,(r_i)$ is strictly decreasing in all opposition districts. In addition, because the opposition benefits more if there is spending in a swing district that it controls rather than in a core district, $p'\,(r_s)$ is lower (i.e., "more negative") from the point of view of the ruling party than $p'\,(r_c)$. Specifically, the probability functions, which are continuous and twice differentiable, are defined as follows:

$$p_s(r_s): R \rightarrow [0,1]; p_c(r_c): R \rightarrow [0,1],$$
$$\frac{\partial p_s}{\partial r_s} < \frac{\partial p_c}{\partial r_c} < 0,$$
$$\frac{\partial^2 p_s}{\partial r_s}, \frac{\partial^2 p_c}{\partial r_c} > 0$$

This setup leads to the utility maximizing resource allocation stated in Theorem 1.

> **Theorem 1** For an exogenously determined amount $\phi > 0$ that must be distributed among opposition districts, and given the assumptions stated above, there exists a unique utility maximizing equilibrium where G allocates ϕ to the opposition core district and nothing to the opposition swing district. That is, $r_c^* = \phi, r_s^* = 0$. (Set up of maximization problem and proof in the online supporting information Appendix A.)

This simple set up confirms the intuitive argument made earlier: the best approach for G is to maximize resource allocation to opposition core districts and minimize allocation to opposition swing districts. The assumptions driving the result in Theorem 1 stem directly from two substantive points discussed earlier. One, credit and blame for spending these resources are associated with the individual politicians. This is taken in to account by the shape of the probability functions. Two, the ruling party must transfer at least *some* resources to opposition districts overall, which is true in almost all contexts with electoral competition.[6]

The given logic should apply to democracies in general because it is applicable to any context that is driven by electoral pressures. However, such considerations are likely even stronger in hybrid regimes that have features of electoral authoritarianism, that is, those regimes where there is more pressure and ability to misallocate public resources. Pakistan provides such a context, as I discuss next (Adeney 2017).

Pakistani Politics and Development Funds

The empirical sections of the paper use data from a federal constituency development fund (CDF) in Pakistan, primarily because it has several suitable features for answering the question of interest. In addition, Pakistan's single-member districts within a parliamentary set up also mean that individual development projects can be easily linked to specific legislators who can then claim or "hijack" credit more credibly than would be possible in different electoral systems. In particular, the two assumptions that drive my theory hold up well in the context I study.

CDFs in Pakistan

The CDF was allocated in the federal budget from 1985 to 2013, in all years that the national legislature existed.[7] It promised the same amount to each legislator annually, regardless of party affiliation, and I discuss the allocation process in more detail in the following paragraphs.[8] Though few details are available about the fund's introduction, it was initiated by a government elected under a military dictatorship on the basis of non-partisan elections. Thus, it is likely that the fund's original purpose was helping legislators establish personalized connections directly with their constituents, thereby reducing the importance of party labels. There are three features of the CDF that make it particularly suitable for this project.

First, though the CDF made up a fairly small portion of the overall development budget, it was one of the rare sources of development spending that let individual legislators credibly claim credit for specific projects, which is a meaningful component of legislators' reelection strategies (Blair 2017; Lee 2003). The credit-claiming link is further strengthened by these projects having to be infrastructural, which makes them more tangible to voters. Interviews with Members of National Assembly (MNAs) and senior officials at the (now defunct) Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development, which had been in charge of running this particular fund, revealed that legislators prioritized projects based on constituent preferences, with many of them being small "farm to market" roads that help connect communities to main roads, especially in rural areas. Both ruling and opposition MNAs mentioned identical sectors and preferences, implying that differential fund distribution is unlikely due to different types of spending priorities.[9]

The projects' infrastructural nature made it even easier for legislators to link specific undertakings to themselves and credibly claim credit from their constituents. In India, a similar CDF (the MPLADS) includes construction of a plaque to honor the relevant legislator (Blair 2017). Though Pakistan did not have compulsory plaques, this highlights the relevance of such projects in linking legislators to their constituents, and there are certainly instances in Pakistan where a legislator gets similar recognition. For instance, one of the interviewed legislators described a large project he undertook that involved construction of a hostel block in a women's college in a large city of Pakistan; he mentioned that the hostel block was subsequently named after him.[10] Such instances help with claiming credit and reaping long-term electoral benefits.

The clean association of individual legislators with projects undertaken through this CDF is important because it further supports the first assumption from earlier. That is, the ruling party cannot simply funnel development resources to marginal opposition districts to swing them back to the ruling party or simply invest in those parts of opposition districts where its own supporters reside; doing so would only strengthen opposition legislators in those constituencies.

Second, the process of applying for projects through this fund required little effort by individual legislators, unlike similar CDFs in other countries. This came up repeatedly in interviews with both politicians and bureaucrats. Each MNA annually submitted a prioritized list of projects for her constituency to the relevant Ministry, which forwarded all lists to the federal Planning and Works Department (PWD) for cost estimates. Upon receiving estimates, the Ministry approved the maximum possible projects for each legislator, and subsequently released funds accordingly. Thus, identifying and prioritizing projects was the only effort required from the MNAs at the application stage. Ministry officials corroborated this saying that almost all legislators submitted more projects each year than could be funded, implying that everyone was—at least on average—applying for more than 100% worth of their fund share.

A third relevant feature is that the CDF came under the purview of a single federal ministry. In many contexts, differential resource allocation can be driven by differences in local government efficiency or local bureaucratic capacity. In this case, however, the processing of proposals and fund release for all MNAs were controlled by one federal ministry. And, in fact, that also made it easier for the ruling party to have influence, both formal and informal, over how it operated. For one, the ruling party had almost complete control over who was appointed as Minister. Second, since the bureaucracy in Pakistan is heavily politicized and often faces major re-shuffling when the government changes, officials in charge of processing these funds were likely even easier to influence for the ruling party elite than they would be otherwise (Ali 2018, 2020).

In interviews, several MNAs who had served as opposition legislators talked about the difficulty in having their fund share released due to (intentional) bureaucratic delays and hurdles, merely because they were from the opposition. This ranged from slow quotes from the PWD to bureaucrats creating unnecessary trouble and delays in releasing their funds even after project approval. This sentiment fits with scholarship on Pakistan's bureaucracy that explores how bureaucrats know which politicians are close to party leaders and, therefore, know that their demands need to be met (Ali 2020). In addition, the CDF lacked any third party or independent audits and information on its spending was never released publicly either, as happens in certain other developing countries, including Brazil and India (Ferraz and Finan 2008; Pal and Das 2010). Consequently, it becomes easier for the ruling party to inordinately influence fund distribution despite the official rules of "equal" distribution.

Finally, knowing what the total amount that each legislator "should" be able to access is useful as it implies—in combination with earlier fund features—that lower amounts are likely to emerge for political reasons, on average. In addition, having a fund that was meant to be non-discretionary, on paper at least, makes my second theoretical assumption more plausible as well. That is, the ruling party could not simply cut off *all* opposition districts from access to resources as it would likely gain higher backlash in this case.

Politics in Pakistan

Pakistan, since its independent in 1947, has experienced frequent regime changes, alternating between fragile democratic rule and military rule following military coups. In democratic periods, the country has almost always been a parliamentary democracy.[11] There are 342 federal legislators in the Lower House, also known as MNAs, of which 272 are to be elected directly by voters at least every 5 years in single-member districts with plurality electoral rules.[12] The data for this article come from the only development fund in Pakistan that provided, theoretically at least, equal development resources to each of these 272 MNAs.[13]

Even during democratic periods, Pakistani politics have been marred by high government instability, with no administration serving a full 5-year term in the period of my data. Most governments in this time were dismissed due to the president dissolving the National Assembly on charges of "inability to govern" and corruption.[14] Consequently, most scholars likely categorize Pakistan as a hybrid regime attempting to consolidate democracy rather than as a stable democracy or autocracy (Adeney 2017).

Pakistan has also faced high regime instability with several military interventions and high indirect military involvement in politics even during democratic periods. The high regime and government instability naturally affect politicians' time horizons when they are in power and also their calculus for strategic spending. Though not integral to the argument being made here, knowing that elections can be called prematurely perhaps sharpens the incumbent party's desire to distribute development resources to benefit one's own party members as soon as possible after being elected in preparation for a possible early election in the future.[15]

It is also worth noting that no party in Pakistan has won consecutive national elections. Though this may indicate that resource manipulation is perhaps insufficient for an incumbency advantage at the center, it does not detract from the ruling party's likely desire to establish closer links with its voters, and harm the opposition, through patronage. In particular, though small, the CDF is important for building a relationship with constituents, especially given the credit-claiming opportunities it provides.

There is also recent work on how voters in Pakistan decide who to vote for depending on who they think is likely to win (Rollier 2020) and, therefore, be able to provide patronage (Javid 2020). This scholarship highlights the importance of development spending as a potential source of patronage, which is similar to how Wilkinson (2006) discusses development spending in India such that politicians try to control as many infrastructural projects as possible because goods delivery leads to more votes. Similarly, Bussell (2019) emphasizes the importance of citizen-politician linkages in patronage-based countries like India not just in terms of resource distribution but also constituency service, which is non-contingent and non-partisan but can still be used to complement other forms of distributive politics. One would expect a similar dynamic in Pakistan with this CDF helping legislators further build a strong link with their constituents given how targeted and specific the projects are.

Data and Methods

Research Design

Within this political setting, I am interested in empirically estimating the relationship between each type of electoral district (also known as constituency) and the proportion of promised CDFs that were actually released to it.[16] District *type* depends on two dimensions: which party controls it in a given year—ruling or opposition—and whether it is core or swing. Variable construction is discussed in the next sub-section.

A primary challenge in estimating this relationship is that there are confounding variables that need to be accounted for. That is, there may be differences between districts that are correlated both with which party controls them and with how much development money they get access to. Some of these are measurable but others may not be. To take these in to account to the extent possible, I follow some of the recent empirical literature on distributive politics (such as work by Golden and Picci (2008) and Berry, Burden, and Howell (2010)), and use a fixed effects estimation strategy to rule out time-invariant unmeasured confounding between partisan control and fund allocations. In addition, I attempt to eliminate time-varying confounders by controlling for relevant covariates.

Data

The main outcome of interest is *Fund Access %*, which measures what percentage of the allotted CDF the legislator actually got access to in each electoral constituency year; the total possible allocation was Pakistani Rupee (PKR) 5 million or PKR 10 million, depending on the year. I use data from all national constituencies in Punjab, from all democratic years between 1991 and 2013.[17,18] Descriptive statistics (Table 1) indicate that the *Fund Access %* maximum is higher than 100% due to cases where some legislators were given more than the official amount allowed. Such outliers are observed for political reasons and therefore relevant, but the main results are robust to forcibly recoding these as 100% and to using the raw PKR amounts as the dependent variable instead, which I discuss subsequently.

There are two main independent variables. First, *Opposition Legislator* is a dummy variable indicating whether a given constituency's legislator belongs to the Opposition (1) or Ruling Party (0).[19] The second is *Margin of Victory*, which is calculated as the difference in vote share between the winning candidate and the first runner-up.[20] An alternative approach would be to dichotomize core and swing though that would necessitate deciding on arbitrary cutoffs for each definition. Nonetheless, I do take that approach as a robustness check, presented after the main results. The raw data relationship between these three variables is presented in Figure B2 in the online supporting information.

The remaining variables are other factors that may be associated with the fund percentage a legislator gets. *Previous MNA* (dummy) and *Previous MNA Terms* (count) measure experience as a federal legislator.[21] Additionally, *Federal Minister* is a dummy variable that proxies being an "important" and well-known

TABLE 1
Descriptive Statistics

Statistic	Mean	*SD*	Min	Median	Max
Fund Access %	83.078	75.449	0	81	366
Opposition Legislator	0.369	0.483	0	0	1
Margin of Victory	0.137	0.119	0.001	0.104	0.653
Previous MNA	0.470	0.499	0	0	1
Previous MNA Terms	0.706	0.929	0	0	5
Federal Minister	0.084	0.277	0	0	1
Election Year	1998	7.637	1990	1993	2008
Turnout	47.052	7.149	26.064	47.136	66.310
# Registered Voters	279,314	48,593	158,054	271,396	429,937
# Candidates	6.289	3.011	2	6	21
Urban	0.549	0.498	0	1	1

politician; it indicates whether an MNA has ever been a cabinet member (1) or not (0).[22]

Next, *Turnout*, # *Registered Voters*, and # *Candidates* measure election characteristics at the constituency level, while *Urban* is a dummy indicating whether a constituency overlaps, fully or in part, with an "urban" area, since the government may be more or less responsive to citizens in certain types of geographical regions.[23] The next section presents results from linear models to analyze the effect of legislators' party affiliation on their subsequent access to development funds. I am primarily interested in how electoral margins condition this relationship for legislators who are not from the incumbent party.

Empirical Analysis

Table 2 presents results from the main specifications using OLS models with various fixed effects. The interaction between *Opposition Legislator* and *Margin of Victory* helps to differentiate between core and swing districts in conjunction with which party actually controls the district. The base term on *Margin of Victory* thus refers to ruling party districts. There are several things of note. First, the negative base term on *Opposition Legislator* implies that, when races are close—that is, when *Margin of Victory* is zero essentially—there is a large negative difference in access to development funds for opposition legislators versus ruling party ones. More importantly, the positive, significant interaction term implies that, within opposition constituencies, as the margin of victory *increases*, access to resources also increases, supporting the core hypothesis. In addition, *Margin of Victory* does not affect CDF access within ruling party constituencies, indicated by the insignificant base term, suggesting that this strategy of punishing opposition swing districts is likely conscious rather than discrimination against all marginal legislators.

It is helpful to visualize the results. Figure 1 plots predicted *Fund Access %* for the range of *Margin of Victory* from the data, using coefficients from Model 1, with the left panel showing predicted *Fund Access %* for opposition legislators while the right panel does so for ruling party legislators (*Opposition Legislator* = 0). All other variables are held at their mean (for continuous variables) and medians (for binary variables). For close races, opposition legislators are definitely discriminated against with a huge difference in predicted access to CDF money, but this discrimination

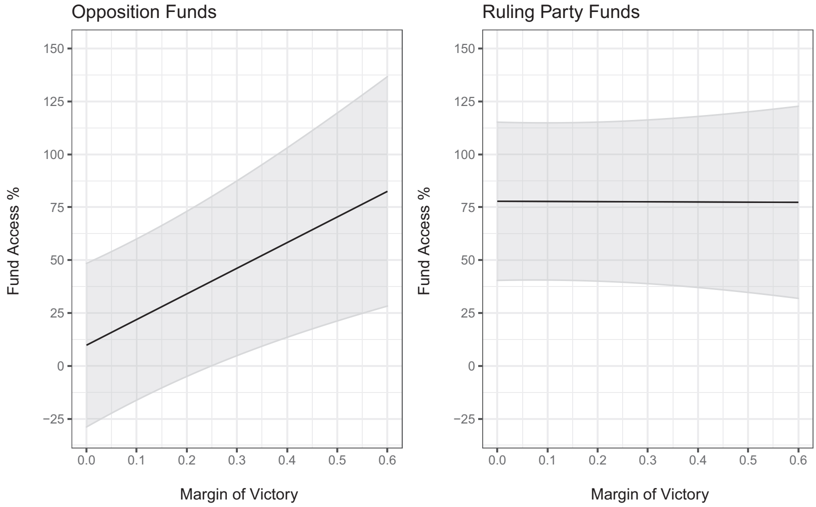
TABLE 2
Core-Swing Districts and Development Funds

	Fund Access %		
Opposition Legislator	−68.0***	−50.9***	−51.6***
	(7.2)	(6.2)	(6.7)
Opp. × Margin of Vic.	122.0***	103.1***	57.2
	(41.8)	(37.6)	(41.8)
Margin of Victory	−0.8	8.7	7.2
	(25.9)	(25.6)	(26.9)
Urban	−0.5	−0.1	2.3
	(5.4)	(4.3)	(5.0)
Previous MNA	2.8	3.4	1.4
	(4.7)	(4.2)	(4.3)
Federal Minister	−8.3	−3.3	−5.1
	(8.7)	(7.3)	(8.0)
Year	−1.9***	−7.8***	−7.8***
	(0.3)	(1.7)	(1.7)
Turnout	0.2	−0.04	−0.9**
	(0.5)	(0.3)	(0.4)
# Cand.	2.1**	0.8	0.1
	(0.9)	(0.8)	(0.8)
District FE	✓		✓
Admin. FE		✓	✓
N	1092	1092	1092
Adj. R^2	0.6	0.7	0.7

Note: This table summarizes the main regressions analyzing the effect of being an opposition versus ruling party legislator and of winning by a large or small margin on the constituency's subsequent access to its share of development funds. The first model has administrative district fixed effects, the second administration fixed effects, and the third has both.
***$p < 0.01$;
**$p < 0.05$;
*$p < 0.1$.

decreases as opposition legislators' margin of victory increases. In fact, the predicted difference between an opposition candidate who won in a clear core district and one who won in a very tight swing race is approximately 50 percentage points. That difference is substantively large, corresponding to PKR 5 million in a single year. Over the course of an entire administration, this difference can thus amount to a PKR 25 million (250,000 USD in 2015). In a poor country where the nominal GDP per capita in 2015 was approximately 1500 USD, these numbers are meaningful for development expenditures.

FIGURE 1
Effect of Victory Margin on Development Fund Access
Note: The predicted values of the dependent variable, *Fund Access %*, are calculated for these figures using coefficients from Model 1, shown in Table 2, with the left panel having Opposition set to 1 and the right panel having Opposition = 0. Gray areas indicate the 95% confidence intervals. Dummy control variables are held at their medians, continuous at their means. *Margin of Victory* varies based on its actual range in the data set. The district of *Pakpattan* is used to calculate the predicted values.



The figure also highlights that electoral margin does not matter for ruling party legislators who enjoy, on average, a high level of CDF access. The lack of variation among ruling party districts acts as a "placebo" test; it is not merely the case that *all* swing districts are discriminated against in favor of party strongholds. Rather, there is systematic variation, depending on *who* will benefit from the spending. Although the higher returns from spending in a swing district should also apply to ruling party districts, this lack of variation may emerge simply because, with this type of fund, the ruling party is hesitant to cut off any of its own districts from accessing resources, particularly when certain opposition districts are receiving funds. Especially in the case of a CDF where, on paper at least, there are equal-access rules for distributing resources, it may be even less likely that the ruling party will withhold resources from any of its own constituencies.

Model 1 has administrative district fixed effects, Model 2 administration fixed effects and Model 3 has both.[24] Taking in to account differences between the administrations that have held power at the center in Pakistan does not significantly affect the results, indicating that patterns of resource distribution are not driven by any single party or cabinet. As the coefficients indicate overall, most of the control variables do not have consistently meaningful effects on fund access, though there is some evidence of overall allocation of the CDF linearly decreasing a little over time. The control variables are important, however, in helping rule out several alternative explanations.

Though the fixed effects go a long way in controlling for unobserved variation between districts, arguably constituencies where a candidate wins by a large versus small margin could be different. For instance, a legislator's "importance" may matter, which I measure in several ways including whether she has been a fed legislator or a Federal Minister before.[25] Constituency competitiveness is measured in other ways too such as through turnout or the total candidates on the ballot; constituency urbanity is controlled for too.[26]

Another possible explanation is that the ruling party gives funds to core opposition legislators to lure them to the ruling party in the long term, especially because high electoral volatility and low partisan attachments between voters and parties have led to high levels of party switching in Pakistan (Zhirnov and Mufti 2019). There are several reasons this is unlikely to be driving the results. First, there is no strong evidence in Zhirnov and Mufti (2019) that opposition margin of victory, which is of central interest here, is significantly associated with propensity to switch parties, and to switch to the current ruling party, in particular, before the next election. Second, if a primary motive is to attract legislators, presumably this would also require allocating larger sums of money to their own core legislators to *prevent* defection, which we do not see. In particular, given that no party has held power at the center in Pakistan for consecutive terms, it remains unclear if opposition legislators will want to switch to the current ruling party close to election time in any case.

Third, opposition legislators with more previous experience will be attractive for the ruling party. Table B6 in the online supporting information addresses this possibility explicitly by interacting the *Opposition Legislator* dummy variable with *Previous_MNA_Terms*, which measures the number of terms a federal legislator has served as an MNA before. This interaction is insignificant, as is the triple interaction between these two variables and the *Margin of Victory*. This result implies that opposition legislators who are more experienced and therefore likely more popular, competent and well-connected are *not* more likely to get development funds.

Similarly, it is unlikely that the ruling party merely allocates funds to those parts of opposition districts where it has pockets of support or where it holds power at the provincial level akin to what Bardhan et al. (2018) find for West Bengal in India. For one, such a pattern should emerge in all types of opposition districts rather than just those where the opposition legislator had a lot of support. Second, the *federal* legislator submits the projects for the given constituency so it is the opposition legislator who determines where the project will be rather than the ruling party. Third, federal and provincial elections occur concurrently in Pakistan so, unlike what Bohlken (2018) finds for India, there is less incentive in Pakistan to reward or buy support from co-partisan provincial legislators for a coattails or reverse-coattails type argument.

Therefore, overall, though one cannot ensure that the findings are causal given the research design, these variables and fixed effects strengthen the evidence significantly and help to rule out many alternative explanations. Importantly, these results suggest a discernible pattern of distributing CDFs in Pakistan. This pattern is motivated by political considerations, and conditioned not only by each legislator's party affiliation but also by the margin of victory if he is from the opposition. Though the opposition is, on average, discriminated against compared to ruling party constituencies, this distortion is driven by opposition swing districts.

Further Discussion

I conduct robustness checks on the two main variables to ensure that the results are not driven by how core and swing districts are conceptualized or by using the percentage of CDF released to a constituency as the dependent variable. I also discuss potential long-term implications of the main findings.

Dichotomizing Core & Swing Districts

Table B1 in the online supporting information strengthens the main findings showing that coding core districts as a binary variable does not change the results. *Core District* is coded 1 if the race is won by a margin of 20% or more of the vote share, which is the 3rd quartile of *Margin of Victory*. Table B3 in the online supporting information presents further checks using different thresholds for what counts as a core district.[27]

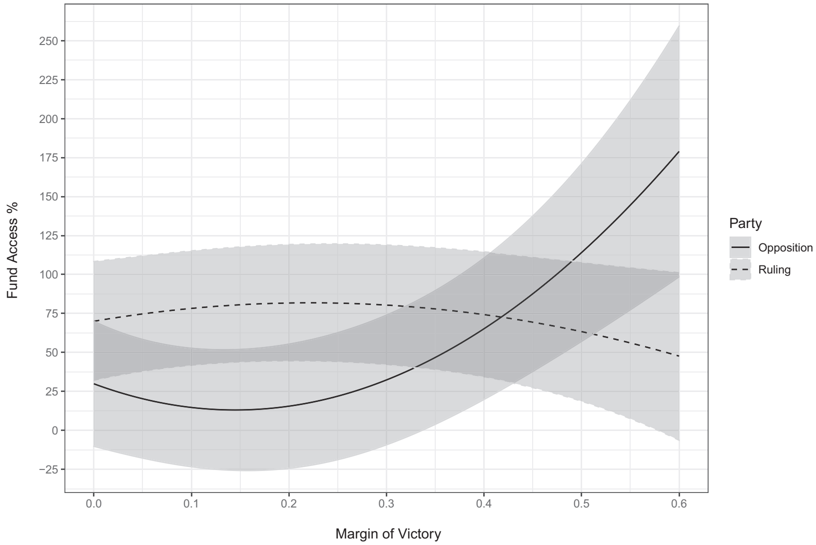
The models in Table B1 in the online supporting information are the same specifications as the main results. The insignificant base term on *Core District* refers to ruling party core constituencies. As before, such legislators do not get significantly different funds than their colleagues who won in closer races or their opposition counterparts who also won by a large margin. *Opposition Legislators* who won by relatively small margins get significantly lower fund access than ruling party legislators. And, most importantly, opposition legislators who won by large margins—as denoted by the interaction term—got significantly higher CDF access, in line with the main hypothesis.[28]

Finally, online supporting information Appendix B presents results from the same specifications but adding a quadratic term for *Margin of Victory* to allow for potential nonlinearities. Both the regression results, summarized in Table B2 in the online supporting information, and associated Figure 2, show the same pattern of resource allocation as before. The results here are the same as before, with opposition districts being discriminated against in terms of their CDF access with this difference driven by swing districts.

Alternative CDF Measures

Next, I conduct two robustness checks on my dependent variable. First, I use the raw amount of rupees that were actually released to each constituency (in millions of PKR) rather than the percentage of the fund that was released. Second, even though the observations in the main analysis where the *Fund Access %* is >100% are meaningful because the higher than "allowed" amount reflects political factors, I nonetheless show that recoding these higher amounts to 100% does not change the main findings. Both sets of results are presented in Table B4 in the online supporting information, with the first three specifications referring to the total rupees allocated and the latter three to the recoded dependent variable with a ceiling. Each specification is the same as before and, as the table indicates, the main findings do not change.

FIGURE 2
Quadratic Relationship between Ruling Party Victory Margin and Development Fund Access
Note: The predicted values of the dependent variable, *Fund Access %*, are calculated for this figure using coefficients from Table B2 in the online supporting information. The dummy control variables are held at their median values (Urban = 1, Previous MNA = 1, Federal Minister = 0), the continuous control variables are held at their mean values (Year = 2000, Turnout = 47.05, # Candidates = 6.2), while Margin of Victory is allowed to vary based on the actual range of the variable in the data set. Finally, the district of *Pakpattan* is used to calculate the predicted values.



Implications for Development

These findings also have potential long-term implications for development outcomes. The prevalent finding in the literature is that electoral competition is good in democracies because it is associated with higher accountability and responsiveness among politicians. Though that is certainly intuitive, these results indicate a possible perverse pattern. If competitive electoral districts tend to often have competitive races, there may be broader development implications for these swing districts over the long term. While this fund does not represent total development spending by all levels of the government, it is indicative of a broader pattern of spending. From interviews and newspapers, it is evident that the frequent government changes in Pakistan often lead to projects being initiated by one set of legislators under one administration and then abandoned by the new administration. There are various ways through which the competitive electoral districts may suffer worse outcomes than the strongholds.

Since these funds are spent on infrastructural projects, there is a long way from project approval to completion. In countries where most governments complete their tenure, projects are likely to begin and end within that administration. That is not the case in Pakistan where projects are often left abandoned when new elections occur, especially because no political party has held office in consecutive terms. Consequently, there are two likely outcomes for a legislator who wins in any pair of consecutive elections.

If she represents a core district then, even if the party in the center has changed, the results above indicate similar access to her share of development resources. If, however, she wins by a narrow margin both times and her party is in the opposition in the second time period, there is likely a large decrease in resource access.

If patterns of competition and electoral volatility are somewhat stable over long periods of time, core districts will benefit from more steady streams of development funds. For competitive districts, if they are lucky and happen to always pick the candidate from the eventual ruling party, they will benefit from a consistently high inflow of development resources. Even then, however, it could be the case that these areas have a high number of projects started and left incomplete, since in this scenario the winning legislator is from a different political party each time. Or, swing districts could get perpetually unlucky and always elect a legislator whose party was in power the last time but not this time, in which case they suffer not just from fewer development resources all the time but even those projects are perhaps left incomplete as parties exchange power in the area. The last possibility for such districts is that they sometimes pick a winner from the eventual ruling party and sometimes do not. Then, even though projects may be completed if the legislator is from the same party, the variation in funds being channeled to this district is much higher than in other electoral districts, and that may have an adverse impact on development outcomes in the long term.

Therefore, the results here are not just interesting for understanding how parties strategically approach building—or dismantling, in the case of opposition districts—electoral support but they may have far-reaching consequences for development outcomes as well.

Conclusion

This article has made an argument for why and when political parties in power may distribute resources to opposition districts in a way that opposition strongholds have higher access to funds than opposition marginal districts. In most electorally competitive regimes, incumbent parties have to provide *some* development resources to opposition districts due to the potential reputational and electoral costs associated with cutting off opposition access entirely. At the same time, they do not want opposition legislators to be able to benefit electorally by claiming credit for such spending. Consequently, the ruling party distorts access to resources conditional on party affiliation and electoral margins in a way that is most beneficial to its own legislators. That is, providing resources to opposition legislators in constituencies that the incumbent party is unlikely to win anyway is less costly than doing the same to opposition swing districts. In the latter, providing funds would strengthen the opposition so with holding their access is more beneficial to the ruling party. This strategy makes particular sense when distributing funds where credit is associated with the individual legislator rather than the incumbent party.

Using data on two decades of federal development spending and elections in Pakistan, I provide empirical support for the proposed arguments, finding that opposition core districts have significantly higher access to their allotted development fund share than opposition swing districts. Additionally, there is little difference in access between the ruling party's own districts and opposition strongholds, indicating that the big average difference in resource access that we observe between ruling and opposition districts is primarily driven by the opposition swing districts being severely discriminated against.

Due to data limitations, the current analysis focuses on the province of Punjab. Though it is the largest province, it would be interesting in future work to extend the analysis to other provinces. On the one hand, the logic espoused here should apply to other provinces as well. On the other hand, however, a core assumption of the theory is that the opposition cannot be cut off entirely from access to resources for multiple reasons, which would need to be considered individually for different provinces.[29] Such analysis is left to future work.

It is interesting to note that Pakistani political parties have not enjoyed an incumbency advantage at the center with no party winning elections consecutively. Despite that, such a strategy of manipulation may still be us at the level of the individual legislator to help her build a stronger relationship with constituents. The funding amount through this CDF may be insufficient to create an overall incumbency advantage but that does not detract from the importance of credit claiming that legislators will work toward. Pakistan is a fairly representative example of many countries, especially developing ones, where somewhat weak institutions allow incumbent parties to have a lot of control over how resources are distributed while competitive elections necessitate providing some resources to the opposition as well. Thus, the patterns found here are relevant for many other countries, both within the region and beyond.

The findings are also relevant for the broader literature on CDF-spending, much of which in recent years examines how politicians spend their CDF share *within* their constituencies (e.g., Harris and Posner (2019) in Kenya, Jensenius and Chhibber (2022) in India, and Ravanilla and Hicken (2012) in the Philippines). The findings highlight the importance of an earlier step in the allocation process in that, before analyzing how politicians distribute CDF resources within their areas, it is relevant and important to ensure that they are being given their fair share to allocate as they wish.

Finally, the contributions of this article's findings go beyond the classic core-swing debate in distributive politics: there are possible long-term implications for development patterns. Swing districts receive the most and least amounts of development money, depending on which side of the ruling-opposition coin they land on each time. Thus, the variance in development fund access in such districts is likely to be much higher than that in districts that are strongholds for either party. Consequently, in the long run, these findings point toward the possibility of electoral competition breeding distorted development under certain conditions.

Acknowledgements. I thank Sergio Ascencio, Matt Blackwell, Casey Crisman-Cox, Gretchen Helmke, Bethany Lacina, Bing Powell, Brad Smith, and Svanhildur Thorvaldsdottir for helpful suggestions and comments. I am particularly grateful to three anonymous reviewers and the editor at *Legislative Studies Quarterly* for their thoughtful comments, which greatly improved the paper.

DATA AVAILABILITY STATEMENT

The data and replication files that support the findings of this study are available in the Harvard Dataverse Repository: https://doi.org/10.7910/DVN/SOQPOM.

Rabia Malik *is a Lecturer in the Department of Government at the University of Essex. She can be contacted at rabia.malik@essex.ac.uk.*

NOTES

1. Similar results emerge when the unit of analysis is the state instead, and scholars are interested in analyzing center-state transfers of resources in the same vein (Khemani 2003; Schady 2000).

2. In Mexico, this was during the PRI's hegemonic rule; in India during a period of one-party dominant rule under the Congress.

3. As I discuss later, Pakistan has seen several such 'dismissals' through controversial powers given to the President.

4. This association of spending with the individual legislator is important because if credit was clearly linked to the central government then there would be little incentive to punish opposition swing districts and provide resources to opposition strongholds. In fact, channeling resources to swing districts, regardless of the party identity of their legislator, would be a plausible electoral strategy because it would increase support for the ruling party, since it would get credit from voters for its spending. Given that credit-claiming is, at best, shared in cases where funds go directly to a legislator and his constituency (Ansolabehere and Snyder 2006; Arulampalam et al. 2009), any resources that go to opposition swing districts electorally hurt the ruling party sharply, so such a distribution will be avoided.

5. With multiple swing and core districts, there are theoretically an infinite number of possible resource divisions: the ruling party could give the same amount of funds to each district within each type, or it could condition it by the margin of victory in each. However, irrespective of these specifics, the basic logic proposed here will still hold, such that any opposition core district receives a higher amount of resources than all opposition swing districts.

6. This logic will hold even if the specific constraints on ϕ change. For instance, if ϕ increases exogenously, the ruling party will still allocate that to the core opposition districts until perhaps it reaches a maximum amount beyond which more funds cannot be channeled to those districts. At that point, it will be ‘forced’ to allocate the remainder to the opposition swing districts. In other words, the basic strategy will always be to distribute the overall minimum possible to the opposition and, within that minimum amount, to allocate as much of it as possible to the core rather than the opposition swing districts.

7. When the Pakistan People’s Party (PPP) was in power, the *People’s Works Programme* was the federal fund that provided these development resources. The Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) governments called it the *Tameer-e-Watan Programme*, while the Pakistan Muslim League-Quaid (PML-Q) government called it the *Tameer-e-Pakistan Programme* and *Tameer-e-Watan Programme* in different years.

8. When first introduced in 1985, the fund promised PKR 5 million annually to each MNA, which was increased to PKR 10 million in the early 2000s. PKR 10 million was roughly equivalent to USD 100,000 in 2013.

9. Interviews and data collection were done over 5 months during 2013 and 2014. The 15 interviewed politicians represented the 5 biggest political parties and belonged to 10 (out of 35) different administrative districts of Punjab. 5 of the MNAs were retired while the others were serving at least a second federal ter. Interviewees differed in whether they had, when elected, belonged to the largest party, the main opposition party, a smaller coalition party, or a smaller opposition party. The purpose of the open-ended interviews was not to form a large-n data set for analysis but, rather, to shed light upon the process of applying for CDF money as there is no systematic information available on that.

10. This respondent belongs to one of the long-standing religious parties in Pakistan and has served multiple terms, first as a provincial legislator and then as a federal one.

11. The exception was 1959–1969 when General Ayub Khan was president after a military coup. A new constitution in 1962 turned the country to a Presidential democracy but this was changed once again in the 1973 constitution, which is still in place today.

12. This number was increased from 207 before the 2002 elections. The remaining 70 seats are reserved for women and minorities (60 and 10, respectively), which are allocated to parties on a proportional basis after elections to the direct seats have already been held. These 70 MNAs are not linked to specific electoral constituencies, and were therefore not part of the development fund I use data on (Chief Executive Order n.d.).

13. Due to access constraints, the empirical section uses data from the province of Punjab.

14. Despite the president being a figurehead according to the current Constitution of Pakistan, various controversial amendments by military leaders-turned-presidents have, at certain times, given the President of Pakistan the ability to ‘dissolve the National Assembly’ at his or her discretion.

15. Another way to think about the regime instability is in terms of the assumption that the ruling party cannot completely withhold fund access from *all* the opposition. That is, in Pakistan, military interventions have often been 'justified' by the government's 'inability to govern;' mounting complaints against the ruling party cutting off all opposition from development funds could potentially heighten such justifications and also act as effective constraints in a context like Pakistan's.

16. I use *district* to mean electoral district/constituency rather than the larger administrative district, which is not an electoral unit but a larger administrative unit.

17. Though I was only granted access to data from Punjab, which is 1 of 4 provinces in Pakistan, it accounts for over half (148 of 272) of the country's national constituencies. I discuss generalizability in the conclusion.

18. Thus, the data used are from 1991–1998 and 2008–2013. The only exception is the fiscal year starting in 1997 where no money was allocated to anyone due to budget constraints; this year is dropped from analysis.

19. According to bureaucrats at the Ministry, money from the fund was disbursed between October and December each year. Thus, for years with an election, the dummy variable is coded based on who was in power in the last three months of that year.

20. This variable, and all other independent variables, were hand-coded by the author. The four elections relevant here were in 1990, 1993, 1997, and 2008. As of July 2020, election results can be accessed through: http://ecp.gov.pk/GE.aspx.

21. 1988 is the starting point election for calculating these variables because it was the first democratic election since the formation of Pakistan in its current geographical form.

22. During interviews, some legislators described having an easier time getting resources for their constituencies in their second terms because they had learned how to "work the system" by then. Others, who had headed federal ministries, mentioned having no trouble accessing their share of resources even when in opposition.

23. I coded *Urban* by reading through the geographical description of each constituency and coding as a 1 any constituency that was part of a "city," "municipality," "municipal corporation," or "cantonment" (also referred to as "Saddar" in Pakistan).

24. Ideally I would include electoral district fixed effects as well. However, due to re-districting in 2002, which also increased the number of national constituencies from 207 to 272, it is impossible to accurately track constituencies consistently. Punjab has a total of 36 administrative districts.

25. I also control for *number of past terms* as legislator, instead of the dummy variable version presented here; the results are the same and are available upon request.

26. Ordinarily, one may expect such politically motivated allocation patterns to be even more stark closer to elections. However, as discussed earlier, Pakistan's political instability has meant that all the administrations in the data set were

dismissed early without completing their tenure, leading to fresh elections. The dismissals were all under controversial circumstances such that they could not have been predicted earlier. Consequently, I do not expect allocation patterns to be significantly different in election years than other years. Table B5 in the online supporting information tests this and the triple interaction between *Margin of Victory*, *Opposition Legislator* and a dummy for *Election Year* is insignificant, as expected.

27. Table B3 in the online supporting information uses both 30% and 40% as the threshold for a *Core District* with similar results. Larger thresholds are not used since already only 55 observations (out of 1099) have victory margins larger than 40% and just a handful—12 observations precisely—have victory margins larger than 50%. Subsequently, it is not surprising that the interaction coefficient on *Opposition* × *Core District* is insignificant for all specifications when using the 40% threshold due to large standard errors. However, even there, the coefficient remains positive and substantively large.

28. The interaction term marginally loses significance ($p = 0.12$) in the third model, which is very restrictive with two types of fixed effects but the coefficient is in the same direction as the other specifications.

29. Though a direct answer to this question requires more data, it may be the case that provinces such as Balochistan and KPK in Pakistan, which have traditionally been largely ignored by the center, may not see strong patterns of core opposition legislators getting CDF access as they may be perceived as less of a 'threat' to the ruling party. At the same time, however, the province of Sindh (where the largest city in the country, Karachi, is) would likely reflect patterns similar to those found in Punjab.

REFERENCES

Adeney, Katharine. 2017. "How to Understand Pakistan's Hybrid Regime: The Importance of a Multidimensional Continuum." *Democratization* 24: 119–37.

Ali, Sameen Andaleeb Mohsin. 2018. *Staffing the State: The Politicisation of Bureaucratic Appointments in Pakistan*. PhD thesis. SOAS University of London.

Ali, Sameen Andaleeb Mohsin. 2020. "Party Patronage and Merit-Based Bureaucratic Reform in Pakistan." *Commonwealth & Comparative Politics* 58: 184–201.

Ansolabehere, Stephen, and James M. Jr. Snyder. 2006. "Party Control of State Government and the Distribution of Public Expenditures." *The Scandinavian Journal of Economics* 108: 547–69.

Arulampalam, Wiji, Sugato Dasgupta, and Amrita Dhillon Bhaskar Dutta. 2009. "Electoral Goals and Center-State Transfers: A Theoretical Model and Empirical Evidence from India." *Journal of Development Economics* 88: 103–19.

Bardhan, Pranab K., Sandip Mitra, Dilip Mookherjee, and Anusha Nath. 2018. *Resource Transfers to Local Governments: Political Manipulation and Household Responses in West Bengal*, Technical Report. Boston, MA: University-Department of Economics.

Berry, Christopher R., Barry C. Burden, and William G. Howell. 2010. "The President and the Distribution of Federal Spending." *American Political Science Review* 104: 783–99.

Blair, Harry. 2017. "Constituency Development Funds in India." *Economic & Political Weekly* 52: 99.

Bohlken, Anjali Thomas. 2018. "Targeting Ordinary Voters or Political Elites? Why Pork Is Distributed Along Partisan Lines in India." *American Journal of Political Science* 62: 796–812.

Bueno, Natália S. 2018. "Bypassing the Enemy: Distributive Politics, Credit Claiming, and Nonstate Organizations in Brazil." *Comparative Political Studies* 51: 304–40.

Bussell, Jennifer. 2019. *Clients and Constituents: Political Responsiveness in Patronage Democracies (Modern South Asia)*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Chief Executive Order. n.d. *The Conduct of General Elections Order 2002*. Accessed August 23, 2022. https://www.ilo.org/dyn/natlex/docs/ELECTRONIC/96214/113651/F1497294124/PAK96214.pdf.

Cox, Gary W., and Mathew D. McCubbins. 1986. "Electoral Politics as a Redistributive Game." *Journal of Politics* 48: 370–89.

Diaz-Cayeros, Alberto, Beatriz Magaloni, and Barry R. Weingast. 2003. "Tragic Brilliance: Equilibrium Hegemony and Democratization in Mexico." Working Paper.

Dixit, Avinash, and John Londregan. 1996. "The Determinants of Success of Special Interests in Redistributive Politics." *Journal of Politics* 58: 1132–55.

Dixit, Avinash, and John Londregan. 1998. "Ideology, Tactics, and Efficiency in Redistributive Politics." *Quarterly Journal of Economics* 113: 497–529.

Ferraz, Claudio, and Frederico Finan. 2008. "Exposing Corrupt Politicians: The Effects of Brazil's Publicly Released Audits on Electoral Outcomes." *Quarterly Journal of Economics* 123: 703–45.

Golden, Miriam A., and Lucio Picci. 2008. "Pork-Barrel Politics in Postwar Italy, 1953–1994." *American Journal of Political Science* 52: 268–89.

Harris, J. Andrew, and Daniel N. Posner. 2019. "(Under What Conditions) Do Politicians Reward Their Supporters? Evidence from Kenya's Constituencies Development Fund." *American Political Science Review* 113: 123–39.

Javid, Hassan. 2020. "Winning 'Friends' and 'Influencing' People: Democratic Consolidation and Authoritarianism in Punjab." *Commonwealth & Comparative Politics* 58: 139–59.

Jensenius, Francesca R., and Pradeep Chhibber. 2022. "Privileging One's Own? Voting Patterns and Politicized Spending in India." Working Paper.

Keefer, Philip, and Stuti Khemani. 2009. "When Do Legislators Pass on Pork? The Role of Political Parties in Determining Legislator Effort." *American Political Science Review* 103: 99–112.

Khemani, Stuti. 2003. *Partisan Politics and Intergovernmental Transfers in India*, Vol. 3016. World Bank Publications. Accessed August 23, 2022. https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/bitstream/handle/10986/18257/multi0page.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y.

Lazarus, Jeffrey. 2009. "Party, Electoral Vulnerability, and Earmarks in the US House of Representatives." *The Journal of Politics* 71: 1050–61.

Lazarus, Jeffrey. 2010. "Giving the People What They Want? The Distribution of Earmarks in the US House of Representatives." *American Journal of Political Science* 54: 338–53.

Lee, Frances E. 2003. "Geographic Politics in the US House of Representatives: Coalition Building and Distribution of Benefits." *American Journal of Political Science* 47: 714–28.

Lindbeck, Assar, and Jörgen W. Weibull. 1987. "Balanced-Budget Redistribution as the Outcome of Political Competition." *Public Choice* 52: 273–97.

Lindbeck, Assar, and Jörgen W. Weibull. 1993. "A Model of Political Equilibrium in a Representative Democracy." *Journal of Public Economics* 51: 195–209.

Magaloni, Beatriz. 2006. *Voting for Autocracy: Hegemonic Party Survival and Its Demise in Mexico*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Malik, Rabia. 2021. "(A)Political Constituency Development Funds: Evidence from Pakistan." *British Journal of Political Science* 51: 963–80.

Mohmand, Shandana Khan. 2019. *Crafty Oligarchs, Savvy Voters: Democracy Under Inequality in Rural Pakistan*, Vol. 8. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Niedzwiecki, Sara. 2016. "Social Policies, Attribution of Responsibility, and Political Alignments: A Subnational Analysis of Argentina and Brazil." *Comparative Political Studies* 49: 457–98.

Pal, Rupayan, and Aparajita Das. 2010. "A Scrutiny of the MP-LADs in India: Who Is It For?" *Economic and Political Weekly* 45: 63–8.

Ravanilla, Nico, and Allen Hicken. 2012. "'Bringing Home the Pork' When 'Home' is the Entire National Electorate: Reelection Incentives of Senators of The Philippines." In *APSA 2012 Annual Meeting Paper*. Accessed August 23, 2022. https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=2106372.

Rodden, Jonathan. 2004. "Comparative Federalism and Decentralization: On Meaning and Measurement." *Comparative Politics* 36: 481–500.

Rodden, Jonathan, and Steve Wilkinson. 2004. "The Shifting Political Economy of Redistribution in the Indian Federation." Unpublished Paper. Accessed August 23, 2022. http://web.mit.edu/jrodden/www/materials/rodden.wilkinson.isnie2004.pdf.

Rollier, Paul. 2020. "The Lion's Share: Elections and Democracy in Pakistan." *Commonwealth & Comparative Politics* 58: 120–38.

Schady, Norbert Rüdiger. 2000. *Picking the Poor: Indicators for Geographic Targeting in Peru*, Vol. 2477. World Bank Publications. Accessed August 23, 2022. https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/19745.

Stokes, Susan C. 2009. "Political Clientelism." In *The Oxford Handbook of Comparative Politics*, ed. Carles Boix and Susan C. Stokes. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Stokes, Susan C., Thad Dunning, and Marcelo Nazareno Valeria Brusco. 2013. *Brokers, Voters, and Clientelism: the Puzzle of Distributive Politics*. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.

Ward, Hugh, and Peter John. 1999. "Targeting Benefits for Electoral Gain: Constituency Marginality and the Distribution of Grants to English Local Authorities." *Political Studies* 47: 32–52.

Wilkinson, Steven I. 2006. "The Politics of Infrastructural Spending in India." *Department of Political Science, University of Chicago, mimeo* 31.

Zhirnov, Andrei, and Mariam Mufti. 2019. "The Electoral Constraints on Inter-Party Mobility of Candidates: The Case of Pakistan." *Comparative Politics* 51: 519–54.

Supporting Information

Additional supporting information may be found in the online version of this article at the publisher's web site:

Appendix S1

Appendix A: Maximizing Utility for the Ruling Party
Appendix B: Additional Empirical Results
Figure B1: Quadratic Relationship between Ruling Party Victory Margin and Development Fund Access
Figure B2: Margin of Victory & Fund Access: Raw Data
Table B1: Dichotomized Core Districts and Development Funds
Table B2: Quadratic Victory Margin and Development Funds
Table B3: Dichotomized Core Districts and Development Funds
Table B4: Development Funds: Alternative Measures
Table B5: Core-Swing Districts and Election Cycles
Table B6: Previous MNA experience and Fund Access