

Running against All Odds

Kukimbia si kufika

To run is not to reach your destination.

Swahili Proverb

January Makamba and Ismail Ladhu Jussa first formally met in 2010 in the *Bunge* building on Dar es Salaam Avenue in Dodoma. A small, dusty city at the geographic center of Tanzania, Dodoma is where the *Bunge* (Parliament) has met since the country's capital was relocated from Dar es Salaam in the 1970s at the height of Tanzania's political and economic development vision known as *Ujamaa*. About two kilometers east of the legislature lies the green and yellow painted headquarters of Chama Cha Mapinduzi (CCM), situated between *Madaraka* ("power/mandate") and *Mwangaza* ("light") Avenues. Most would say that, having governed for more than half a century, the halls of the CCM building are where the *madaraka* of Tanzania's government really lies.

That January Makamba and Ismail Jussa would come to meet in Dodoma seems inevitable. They were rising stars in their parties – the CCM and the opposition party Civic United Front (CUF), respectively – and, to many, central figures of Tanzania's political future. They were informally introduced in Dar es Salaam years earlier in a sit-down arranged by a wealthy businessman and CCM financier. Both were also in Dodoma at the behest of the same person: then Tanzanian President Jakaya Mrisho Kikwete. The reason that each was in Dodoma differed: Ismail Jussa to advance the core ideological issue that defined his politics and January Makamba to solve the political headache that was costing CCM internal party cohesion and votes on election

day – Zanzibar’s autonomy within Tanzania. Their pathways to Dodoma were also different.

January Makamba knew Dodoma well. After leading Kikwete’s successful 2005 presidential campaign, he became the president’s personal assistant at age thirty-one. As a child, he spent time in Dodoma as his father Yusuf Makamba – a leader in Tanzania’s war with Uganda – climbed the political ranks. By January’s fifth birthday, his father had secured a position in CCM’s secretariat. Yusuf would eventually serve as the party’s secretary-general (2007–2011). January first joined CCM as a “Young Pioneer” in primary school and described his ascendancy to political prominence within the party as a matter of course.

Jussa – the name Ismail Ladhu Jussa prefers to use – was in Dodoma because he was plucked out of Zanzibar by President Kikwete to represent Zanzibari opposition’s interests in negotiating efforts to enhance peace and stability in the archipelago. The issue of Zanzibar’s autonomy within the Tanzanian union defines the politics of CUF and is one that activists have fought and died for since Tanzania was created in the 1960s. Jussa’s brief stint in Dodoma was not an effort to co-opt a staunch regime challenger. The government gave up on silencing him long before, when he turned down its first attempt to buy him out in his twenties in spectacular fashion. Approached by an elder, respected CCM leader who offered roughly US\$ 25,000 to join CCM or quit politics – about 150 times the country’s per capita GDP at the time – he responded with a lament that the elder had decided “to be used as a pimp.”

When Jussa was born – in August 1971 – there was no political opposition in Tanzania. By the time multipartyism had been reintroduced, he had already been arrested for his civic activism as a student in pursuit of the dream of a prosperous, empowered Zanzibar. When the 2020 elections concluded – a contest marred by significant election fraud and intimidation – he reaffirmed his lifelong commitment to the betterment of Zanzibar from a hospital bed, saying he was “ready to make any sacrifice needed to make sure Zanzibar regains its freedom and our people live in a free and a just system.” Police had kidnapped him on election day and broke his leg and shoulder during a multiday interrogation.

Like Jussa, James Mbatia’s path into the opposition stood at the intersection of student activism, personal costs of political participation, and political reform. A founding member of Tanzania’s National Convention for Construction and Reform – Mageuzi (NCCR-Mageuzi; NCCR, for short), politics found their way to James Mbatia, rather than the other way around. As an engineering student nearing graduation from

the University of Dar es Salaam, he was expelled as a student activist not for political activism but for pushing the university to provide better conditions for students. The expulsion changed him – his career path to engineering derailed and he was displaced from his civic and social networks on campus. More fundamentally, his willingness to fight the system reemerged in the only alternative venue available at the time: opposition parties.

This book asks the following question: *Why do people run for the legislature for opposition parties in electoral authoritarian regimes?* On one hand, there appears to be little to be gained from running on opposition tickets in those settings: ruling parties will do nearly anything to hold onto power, and it is opposition candidates who pay the costs of campaigns thwarted by the government and the political, economic, and even physical repression that comes with fighting an authoritarian regime. When opposition candidates do win seats in the Parliament, they face ruling party majorities and supermajorities that undermine them. On the other hand, any chance of forcing those regimes out of office or into accepting reforms that curb corruption, deepen human rights, promote development, and protect civil liberties requires that formidable challengers bear the risks that come with candidacy and skillfully navigate their environment to enact change.

What we know about candidacy to date mostly comes from democracies and concludes that candidates weigh cost-benefit expectations regarding what they get out of being a legislator. This framework in its current form cannot explain candidacy in electoral authoritarian regimes. This is significant because regimes like that in Tanzania – where ruling party politics reign supreme – are not exceptions: they are the norm. Electoral authoritarianism is the most prevalent form of governance found in the developing world. The majority of countries in sub-Saharan Africa are electoral authoritarian regimes, and it is in the subcontinent where the greatest number of the world's electoral authoritarian regimes are found. Every single year, candidates around the globe stand for opposition parties in authoritarian elections to fight for a better future that is more fair, just, and democratic, and yet, we as scholars cannot explain why. Approaches to political ambition that cannot account for the authoritarian character of contemporary elections ignore the most important normative questions about the fate of democracy in the twenty-first century.

My book offers an explanation of opposition candidacy in electoral authoritarian settings that emphasizes the role of early life experiences with civic activism and vocational careers in the civil society sector

in shaping later decisions to run for the opposition years or decades down the road. It follows Jussa, January, and James through experiences long before they considered running for office. It shows that Ismail Jussa and James Mbatia followed a path of civic activism and that this engagement translated later into opposition candidacy. January Makamba's early life experiences in party politics positioned him to run for CCM, a phenomenon I call "career partisanship." Their accounts combine with surveys of hundreds of legislative aspirants, the biographies of more than 700 Tanzanian legislators, qualitative interviews, and archival data to provide a rich, in-depth narrative of the politics of Tanzania, where the second longest-standing ruling party in the world currently governs.¹

The book illustrates how political paths not only shape the candidacy options available to prospective office seekers but also the goals they hope to achieve in doing so. I reveal that the prevailing framework that casts candidates as strategic decision makers can be adapted to electoral authoritarian settings, but what shapes the cost-benefit calculations in that approach all ties back to early life experiences with civic versus political party activism. Experiences in civic activism early in life underlie a desire to seek policy-oriented benefits that running for opposition parties can deliver, even in electoral defeat.

Who runs for office and why they run are the two most essential questions for elections, representation, and political accountability in democracies. They are even more important in electoral authoritarian regimes because the answers determine whether those regimes stand any chance of growing into democracies in the future.

I.1 THE PUZZLE OF OPPOSITION CANDIDACY

Even Democratic Elections Favor Incumbents and Ruling Parties

Theories of why political actors participate as voters and candidates commonly focus on some combination of calculated costs and benefits of action. It is generally assumed that the benefits motivating any given candidate hinge on their chance of winning. Theorizing that candidacy motivations rest on the chances of defeating incumbent officeholders and governing parties, however, is problematic. In the history of democracy, governing party defeat via the ballot box is uncommon. In electoral

¹ CCM's reign is second only to the People's Action Party, which has ruled Singapore since 1959.

authoritarian regimes, such outcomes are even rarer. In consideration of these dynamics alone, why political actors would fight important but, ultimately, losing battles at the ballot box is not at all obvious.

Elections in general have always strongly favored the incumbent party. From 1788 through 2011, there were 2,230 contested elections held in the world. Nearly 1,500 of them resulted in victory for the incumbent government. Opposition success rates in the first half of the twentieth century were less than 20 percent and in the nineteenth century rarely more than 10 percent.² Examples of long-standing incumbent parties abound in democracies, particularly in Europe. Sweden's Socialdemokratiska Arbetarpartiet was elected democratically to rule uninterrupted for forty-four years. Only two parties held government in Austria from 1945 to 2000: the Austrian People's Party for twenty-five years, followed by thirty-five years of the Sozialdemokratische Partei Österreichs. Liechtenstein has experienced two periods of party government lasting more than twenty years; the same holds true for Luxembourg. Christian Democrats governed Italy for more than three decades after the Second World War, and the list goes on.³ It is true that opposition-induced turnover has been on the rise in the past half century. Nonetheless, nearly a third of the countries around the world have never experienced a turnover in the party in power through the ballot box (Przeworski 2015, 102).

At the level of the legislative candidate, the rates of incumbent success are similarly high. Reelection rates of standing congressional representatives in the United States rarely fall below 80 percent and House of Representatives reelection rates hover around 90 percent (Jackson 1994a, 40–41). Standing legislators have regularly won 80 to 85 percent of reelection campaigns in Germany (Boll 1994, 165) and Denmark (Pedersen 1994, 221). Perhaps the lowest odds facing challenger candidates are where individual incumbency and party hegemony align: during the forty years of the Liberal Democratic Party's rule in Japan, the reelection rates of LDP incumbents averaged nearly 80 percent (Reed 1994, 282). The same holds for the Labor/Mapai tenure of thirty years, when 65 percent or more of incumbent legislators were elected in each election for the Israeli Knesset (Arian 1994). In Taiwan, a prototypical dominant party

² Calculated by the author based on Version 1 (September 1, 2011) of Przeworski et al.'s (2011) "Political Institutions and Political Events" (PIPE) dataset.

³ These statistics are reported in Templemann (2014b) and drawn from an original dataset created by that author.

system, “permanent representatives” who established the legislature in 1945 remained in office through the 1990s (Templemann 2014a), and the new seats introduced went to members who proved to be resilient in subsequent elections (Jackson 1994b, 270).

In sub-Saharan Africa, ruling parties have remained in control via the ballot box: across all multiparty elections held in Africa, less than twenty percent of them yielded turnover of the party in power. The legislature of Botswana – considered by many observers as one of Africa’s exemplary democracies and rated a 2 or 2.5 (“free”) by Freedom House from 1998 to 2020 – has been ruled for nearly fifty years by a single political party that will continue to govern at least until 2024. At the level of the individual legislator, rates of incumbent return to the legislature are comparably lower. Much is driven by internal party competition and reelection rates increase with the strength of legislative institutions (Opalo 2019).

Opposition Chances Are Worse under Electoral Authoritarianism...

Electoral authoritarian regimes are settings in which ruling parties are subjected to electoral contests at regular intervals, but such competitions are so heavily stacked in favor of incumbents that the opposition has little chance to win. According to Schedler (2006, 3),

Under electoral authoritarianism, elections are broadly inclusive (they are held under universal suffrage), as well as minimally pluralistic (opposition parties are allowed to run), minimally competitive (opposition parties, while denied victory, are allowed to win votes and seats), and minimally open (opposition parties are not subject to massive repression, although they may experience repressive treatment in selective and intermittent ways).

In the aggregate, these conditions mean that there is little or no potential for the opposition to defeat incumbents and ruling parties. From 1980 to 2014, only 13 percent of elections in authoritarian regimes have resulted in a change in the ruling party (Lucardi 2015). This is not surprising, as elections in such settings feature “hyper-incumbency advantages” (Greene 2007, 39) and are manipulated so much they cannot be classified as democratic (Schedler 2006). Prospects for the opposition are marginally better when challenger parties collaborate through preelectoral coalitions (Wahman 2013); however, when they do not, parties fare even worse: odds of victory drop below one in ten (Lucardi 2015). In notable cases, the opposition manages to wrest power out of the hands

of the authoritarian guard. The most studied example is Mexico's Partido Revolucionario Institucional (PRI), which governed for seventy-one years uninterrupted. Against a rising tide of discontent and waning access to state resources, it was finally defeated in 2000 (Greene 2007). In Africa, the Parti Socialiste du Sénégal (PS) lost control of the presidency and the legislature in Senegal after 2000. Such outcomes are exceptions, rather than the norm. Even if opposition is strong and appears poised to defeat incumbents, it may not be permitted to do so.

First, incumbents who are facing possible defeat may intervene to ensure victory. Such was the case in the 2015 elections in Zanzibar, a semiautonomous region of Tanzania where Chama Cha Mapinduzi faced strong challenges from CUF. As official results from the Zanzibar Electoral Commission trickled in by constituency, parallel tallies showed opposition victory was imminent. After validating some 60 percent of constituencies, the commission suspended counting and annulled the polls. The opposition ultimately boycotted the new election held months later, marking the second time CUF had been robbed of victory at the vote-counting stage in Zanzibar's multiparty history (Burgess 2009). Gabon's 2016 presidential elections offer another contemporary example where incumbents may appear to lose elections and still manufacture a victory through the tools of authoritarian rule such as fraudulent counting and manipulating election management bodies (Obagome 2016).

Second, incumbents who are voted out of power may simply not concede defeat. Incumbents may lose and admit loss but simply refuse to step down. Of the 660 instances in the global history of elections from 1788 to 2011 where opposition parties defeated incumbent governments, 57 of them never saw the opposition winner take office (Przeworski 2015). The incumbent government instead remained in power. Stated differently, even when the opposition wins an election officially, there is almost a 10 percent chance it will never make it to the state house or government. Gambia's 2016 presidential elections nearly followed this narrative. After conceding defeat to the opposition, incumbent President Yahya Jammeh backtracked and instead insisted that the victory of his challenger Adama Barrow was fraudulent. He remained in power for nearly two additional months until international actors negotiated his exit (Bleck and van de Walle 2018, 3). Laurent Gbagbo remained in power for a year after his 2010 election defeat in Côte d'Ivoire until he was deposed by the military with the support of the United Nations and France.

Third, incumbents who anticipate defeat in an impending election may delay or indefinitely suspend elections or selectively ban opposition

parties. Elections and competition are only guaranteed to the extent that they serve the goals of ruling regimes. Leaders may shutter electoral institutions altogether after learning that fraud and repression alone will not guarantee victory (Thompson and Kuntz 2006).

Alongside the prospects of electoral defeat, it is also notable that opposition challengers in electoral authoritarian regimes bear the risk of a different kind of loss. Opposition candidates and supporters risk repression and physical harm, especially around election times. Using violence against opposition candidates may be electorally advantageous in that it represses dissent and protest (Brass 2003, Charurvedi 2005), mobilizes supporters (Wilkinson 2004), and/or captures new voters (Collier and Vicente 2014, Wilkinson and Haid 2009).⁴ Some candidates who are poised to defeat incumbents may never take office because they lose their homes, businesses, or lives.

In sum, the opposition's prospects are poor in electoral authoritarian regimes. Incumbency advantages predominate in many types of regimes, and the asymmetries of competition are especially severe in authoritarian settings. Even in the rare event that the opposition is strong enough to rival the ruling party, incumbents can ignore election results or cancel the polls. Little of the promise of competition that electoral authoritarian regimes offer the opposition is guaranteed.

...Yet, Opposition Candidacy Is Ubiquitous

Given the barriers to success in electoral authoritarian regimes, opposition candidacy seems like it should be an empirical irregularity. A review of authoritarian elections in the world shows the opposite: opposition candidates proliferate in legislative contests. Figure 1.1 illustrates this pattern, visualizing constituency-level election data from countries around the world. The figure is created with data from the Constituency-Level Election Archive (CLEA), a resource that records constituency-level election data from more than 1,800 elections in 162 countries. Focusing on majoritarian systems, I calculated the average number of candidates per constituency for each legislative election included in the CLEA dataset. Making the conservative assumption that ruling parties run candidates in every constituency, I estimated the average number of opposition

⁴ Straus and Taylor (2012), for example, estimate 58 percent of elections in Africa from 1990 to 2007 featured repression and about 20 percent of them resulted in twenty or more deaths (Bekoe 2012).

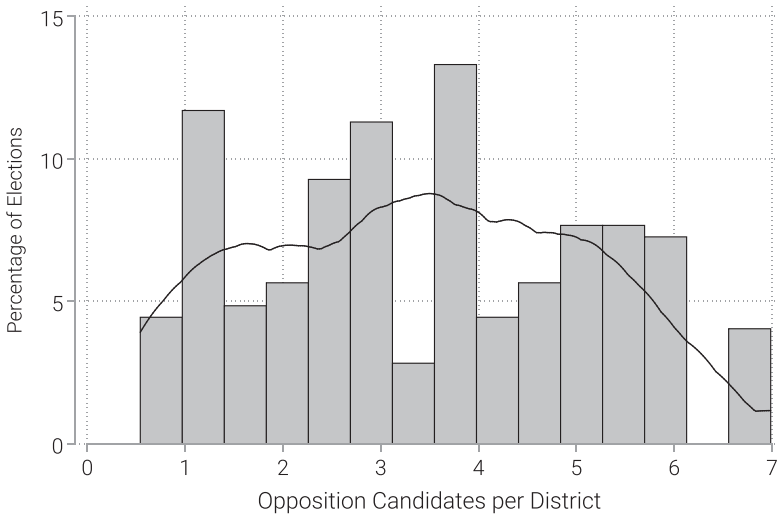


FIGURE 1.1 Opposition candidacy in authoritarian elections

candidates as the total number of candidates minus one. The figure shows the distribution of national averages of opposition candidates per constituency for single-member district systems across electoral authoritarian regimes.⁵

In contrast to foundational work in political science that predicts two-party competition in single-member district settings (Duverger 1954), Figure 1.1 shows that the average number of *opposition* candidates in single-member districts is much higher. In competitive democracies the fourth or fifth candidate in a race or, nationally, the fourth or fifth most powerful party, has little chance to win. In electoral authoritarian regimes the prospects of opposition victory are even lower. And yet, the average number of opposition candidates for the legislature in these regimes is between three and four.

We know that electoral authoritarian settings are ones in which parameters of benefits of office, prospects of victory, and costs of running for office differ in ways that should predict low rates of opposition candidacy. And yet, we see that these regimes actually feature more opposition

⁵ This figure uses Wahman and Teorell's (2013) regime classification scheme because of its superior data coverage in contemporary elections. Elsewhere, I rely on Morse's (2019) approach, which focuses on sub-Saharan Africa, and Schedler (2013), which runs from 1972 to 2004. The figure does not include mixed-member systems with both majoritarian and proportional constituencies.

challengers than democracies do. These two seemingly incompatible facts shape the puzzle this book engages.

1.2 EXISTING EXPLANATIONS OF LEGISLATIVE CANDIDACY

Election challengers often face little chance of victory but they endure. Even in settings where opposition supporters are not regularly targeted by the government and are allowed to exist without significant interference, they face substantial barriers to victory. So why then would anyone ever run for the opposition in general, much less in electoral authoritarian regimes? The existing literature offers some insight into the motivations of candidates that can be adapted to the puzzle of opposition candidacy in electoral authoritarian regimes.

The Rational Office Seeker

For decades, scholars have looked for the answer to the question of political candidacy in the same place: the rational, utility-maximizing assumptions underlying many theories of political behavior, including participation and candidacy. They rest on the idea that political actors consider the costs and benefits of a given set of choices and act upon whichever choice will deliver the greatest expected benefit. Strategic consideration of political ambition guides the decisions of prospective candidates (Aldrich 2011, Schlesinger 1966). Throughout the book, I generally refer to this approach as the strategic candidacy framework.

This theoretical approach has dominated studies of why people run for office in advanced democracies and this is for good reason: politicians generally act strategically and manifest behavior consistent with their political goals. Black (1972), Rohde (1979), and others offer that actors consider running with a political party and compare the expected utility of a number of alternatives; this provides a framework in which opposition versus ruling party candidacy decisions can be analyzed. The payoff of running is shaped by the benefits of winning and holding office, the costs of campaigning, and the chances of winning.

This approach has some intuitive appeal but it cannot tell us much about opposition candidacy. The disadvantages that opposition parties and their candidates face under electoral authoritarianism are constitutive of those regimes. An “uneven playing field” is the critical feature that distinguishes them from democracies (Levitsky and Way 2010a). Even

opposition candidates who manage to overcome the significant hurdles erected before them and actually win offices still benefit less than ruling party members of parliament (MPs). Incumbent strangleholds over co-fiers deprive the opposition of the material benefits of office. Ruling party supermajorities thwart opposition lawmakers through legal and extralegal avenues. The costs of running are substantial. Candidates cannot rely on financial support from opposition parties, and challengers in electoral authoritarian regimes routinely face interference with financial affairs, extrajudicial arrests, and sometimes personal injury and death.

Strategic Defection

An explanation of opposition candidacy most closely related to strategic calculations of the benefits, costs, and prospects of candidacy offers that individuals hold expectations about the future that impact current candidacy decisions. This literature argues that opposition candidates emerge at critical times of ruling party weakness and are not political outsiders. They come from within the ruling elite as defectors. This intuition draws from research on democratic transitions that has long recognized that the breakdown of authoritarian regimes is “the consequence – direct or indirect – of important divisions within the authoritarian regime itself” (O’Donnell and Schmitter 1986, 19).⁶

Some work has supported this account of ruling party defection by demonstrating the relative frequency with which it occurs. For example, about 19 percent of executive elections in authoritarian regimes from 1946 to 2004 featured at least one opposition candidate who defected from the ruling party. When defections occur and the opposition fields candidates cooperatively, the odds of incumbent defeat are one in four, twice what they are absent those conditions (Lucardi 2015). When electoral institutions foment ruling elite factionalism, defection can contribute to the downfall of long-standing authoritarian parties (Langston 2006). Ruling party defections dilute the “image of invincibility” of the governing party and directly impact the probability of opposition victory (Magaloni 2006). The incentives to defect to challenger parties are particularly high during an economic crisis (Reuter and Gandhi 2011). If this constrains the public resources available for use by the ruling party, it may help balance the disadvantages of running for the opposition versus the ruling party (Greene 2007).

⁶ Geddes (1999) and Przeworski (1991) raise similar points.

Strategic defection offers a convincing explanation of why opposition candidates may run for office. However, it does not account for what was revealed earlier: opposition candidates proliferate in elections across time, across regimes, and no matter the prospects of the party in power. Candidacy thus remains incompletely explained.

Co-optation

A significant literature on authoritarianism focuses on the role of elections in prolonging regime duration by creating opportunities to co-opt challengers (Gandhi and Przeworski 2007). It speaks to co-optation at three distinctive levels: the legislature, political parties, and individual candidates. Most accounts are focused on the creation of legislatures as a co-optation strategy whereby the targeted group is represented by broad opposition forces – formal and informal – rather than specific individuals, groups, or political parties. Legislatures institutionalize dissent by credibly guaranteeing a modicum of representation and influence to the opposition, while silencing the opposition's dissent to formal parliamentary proceedings (Gandhi 2008). Legislatures permit the ruling party to constrain and contain potentially critical political elites, while regulating the process of candidate entry through access to the spoils of office. Authoritarian elections, in this view, constitute a contest over access to state resources rather than a space for policy making (Lust-Okar 2009, Lust-Okar 2005). In this view, co-optation means that opposition forces concede some capacity to challenge the legitimacy of the regime outright in exchange for access to some of those resources. To borrow Schedler's (2006) concept of the "nested game," the opposition has sacrificed some stakes in the overarching competition with the government over the rules of the regime in exchange for guarantees for the less consequential but more immediate game of electoral competition. Growing reliance on this lower-level game as the primary arena of competition makes opposition complicit with, if not dependent on, the sustained rule of the authoritarian regime (Gandhi and Lust-Okar 2009). At the same time, evidence indicates that parliaments can become powerful checks on executives, presumably a role that was not envisioned when the executives created them in the first place and is driven instead by the accumulation of power outside the statehouse (Collard 2019, Opalo 2019).

Others point to co-optation at the level of the political party. Weak and poorly institutionalized opposition parties have proliferated in sub-Saharan Africa (Rakner and van de Walle 2009*b*); while parties in some

countries are solidifying (Weghorst and Bernhard 2015), the weakness of opposition is baked into an authoritarian regime's strategy toward managing opponents (Riedl 2014). Many opposition parties operate as shells for the ambition of individual elites and are organizationally flimsy. An array of so-called briefcase parties only exist as institutions on papers held by the head of the "party" (Kelly 2019) with little on-the-ground presence (Randall and Svasand 2002). In this perspective, parties are filled with spurned ruling party elites and primarily exist as vehicles to return to the party (Morse 2015) or for amassing resources through avenues that do not exist in civil society, where the combination of ethnic salience and heterogeneity lends itself to highly localized parties (Wahman 2017). Organizations of these types are hardly capable of winning meaningful political power and, so the thinking goes, they attempt to extract material resources from the ruling party because that is the best option available to them.

At the individual level, opposition candidacy is explained by a logic similar to that of the party-level story: rent-seeking behavior demonstrated by individuals who desire clientelistic goods. By standing on an opposition ticket, a candidate can illustrate their power to the incumbent party and that they are sufficiently valuable to be bought off (Frantz and Kendall-Taylor 2014, Gandhi 2008, Gandhi and Przeworski 2007). Scholars claim that the opposition attracts rent seekers because policy goals are generally not attainable for the opposition and, if achieved, are attributed to the ruling party (Reuter and Robertson 2015). Thus, strong ideologists are argued to be unlikely to run for office for the opposition, as doing so is "both ideologically distasteful and a poor investment for ardent oppositions of the ruling government" (Lust-Okar 2009, 239).

It is absolutely the case that some opposition parties exist simply to amass resources from the ruling party, and the leaders of those parties are extracting whatever they can from the government. This, after all, is the dominant narrative of African politics that has been written and reiterated from Chabal and Daloz (1999) to the scholarship of the current day. It is also the case that many opposition parties are electorally weak, but electoral performance is a bad heuristic for opposition viability because election outcomes are endogenous to the strategy of authoritarian rule.

Some opposition parties are strong on formal organizational, conflict mediation, and linkages dimensions that lend credibility to opposition (LeBas 2011, 25). These parties – whose messaging resonates with voters and who have built experience and reputation over time and

space – are viable challengers to the regime (LeBas 2011, Rakner and van de Walle 2009*b*, Wahman 2017). There is little empirical evidence that these parties are rent-seeking, that they are willing to accept the terms of competition dictated by the government, or that their candidates are responsive to co-optation overtures. The opposition has comparative advantages in criticizing the government for rampant corruption and being overrun with such rent-seeking behavior, and they appear to be capitalizing on it (Bleck and van de Walle 2018, 213–215).

Most insight on candidate-level co-optation comes from a handful of case studies outside sub-Saharan Africa. Ultimately, my book is about the individuals who choose to run for legislative office on the ballots of durable and strong opposition parties. In developing my theory of opposition candidacy in the next chapter, I will detail a number of reasons why co-optation is fundamentally incompatible with the aspirants who stand for those types of political parties, the ones that matter for the future of democracy and authoritarianism in Africa. Indeed, the most systematic evidence we have about co-optation in autocracies convincingly demonstrates these kinds of opposition parties are very unlikely to be co-opted (Kavasoglu 2021).

Ideology

The guiding appeal of candidacy in each of the previously discussed approaches is the promise of material gains from running for office. The final explanation in the literature takes the most distinctive view toward candidacy in proposing that some prospective candidates are driven by nonmaterial aspirations. They instead run as candidates to advance ideological goals. This account is advanced most persuasively by Greene (2007), who demonstrates that opposition candidacy may facilitate expressive benefits like demanding democratization, human rights, the rule of law, or in some cases extremist or niche policies. The account of opposition candidacy advanced in my book builds upon this foundation. I aim to explain not just that individuals are motivated by different goals or that opposition parties facilitate obtaining different candidacy goals, but from where differences in political goals and benefits of running for office originate. Why do staunch proponents of ideology take on those views in the first place? The theoretical approach of this book wedds insights about the origins of political ambition to an understanding of how this shapes later candidacy calculations.

Legacies of Single-Party Rule

Finally, two related, yet distinctive, macro-level accounts of the origins of competitive party politics and party institutionalization in Africa offer insight germane to theorizing individual-level decision making under electoral authoritarianism. In both accounts, party-level dynamics at the onset of multiparty rule take on character from the antecedent era of single-party rule. Riedl (2014) argues that party systems in Africa are shaped by legacies of single-party rule. When authoritarian governments marginalized rival social and political actors by creating their own substitute institutions instead of incorporating those rivals, they played a less central role in setting up the multiparty system. The resulting framework was less regulated and this promotes less institutionalized political parties. The implication for candidacy is that variation in the difficulties of opposition candidacy is due to legacies of the party system.

Speaking directly to opposition mobilization, LeBas (2011) offers that strong opposition parties emerge when they draw upon mobilization structures in society that existed before multiparty transitions. This allows them to build broad, national constituencies with extensive linkages to voters and to stoke conflict with ruling parties. In the case of Zimbabwe, this takes the form of trade unions but may include other civic organizations. In many ways, the claims of my book are complementary to those of LeBas (2011), offering micro-level evidence related to opposition strength from the perspective of candidates.

1.3 THE ARGUMENT IN BRIEF

The theory guiding this book centers on three core ideas. First, most research on candidacy considers the decision to run in a snapshot moment ahead of an election. I instead argue that candidacy decisions are best understood as the result of years- sometimes decades-long paths in public and private life that impose strong path dependencies on candidacy decisions. Specifically, civic activism and careers in the civil society organization (CSO) and nongovernmental organization (NGO) sectors forge pathways to opposition candidacy, while cultivating experience through political party activism – what I call career partisanship – that leads to ruling party candidacy.

Second, the strategic model of candidacy can be innovated to account for opposition candidacy in electoral authoritarian contexts. My book does so by expanding on the parameters of that model – benefits of

office, chances of election, and costs of candidacy – such that opposition candidacy can actually be attractive to some aspirants. Due to hyper-incumbency advantages and access to state resources, opposition parties simply cannot compete on the ground of providing material benefits to aspirants and legislators. The benefits they offer aspirants and the ease of winning party nominations compared with the ruling party make opposition candidacy more appealing under the strategic candidacy framework.

Third, the civic and party activist experiences that precede candidacy ambition directly shape strategic candidacy calculations. I show that civic activism versus career partisanship impacts the benefits candidates seek from office, their expectations regarding electoral victory, and their willingness to pay nonfinancial costs of running for office. Experiences with civic activism boost nomination and election prospects, increase the value of ideological and policy benefits, underlie the belief that there are benefits in losing elections, and increase the willingness to bear the risks of running for office. It is ultimately life experiences that shape long-term paths to candidacy and how they make sense of the strategic considerations facing individuals when aspirants do decide if they will run for office.

Civic Activism and Career Partisanship

Neither Ismail Jussa nor James Mbatia ever planned on entering politics. To this day, James Mbatia holds that the manner in which multipartyism returned to Tanzania in the 1990s was far too rushed, and the government needed to slow reforms to allow government challengers to develop. He nonetheless has been in the opposition since 1992. It was only after he was expelled from the University of Dar es Salaam that he found himself in the June 21 and June 22, 1991 meetings of the NCCR-Mageuzi's steering committee leading the push to multipartyism and broader government reforms. Although he remains the longest-standing member of the party that grew from the convention, it is deeply personal experiences with student and civic activism that brought him there. His drive in Tanzanian politics remains now as it has been since 1991: to fundamentally reform the constitution no matter win or lose for his own personal political stake.

Similarly, while Jussa was active civically in his youth in Zanzibar, he was far from weighing political ambition. It was later – through experiences in secondary school and afterward studying law in the United

Kingdom – that his social and political activism pushed him toward legislative office. These experiences laid bare to him fundamental political injustices in Tanzania: the policies that defined the role of Zanzibar in the Tanzanian state. Unable to return home in between semesters for fear the Tanzanian government would revoke his passport over pro-Zanzibari activism, he came to see the solutions to those problems came through policy change in the legislature.

By contrast, January Makamba was essentially a member of CCM from birth. He was first formally involved in primary school and officially joined the party's youth wing at age fifteen. He advanced rapidly within the party, due to both his father's lifelong commitment to the political party and his own steadfast loyalty to former President Jakaya Kikwete. He describes his eventual emergence in politics as an advisor to the president at age thirty-one as "inevitable." He first ran for office in 2010; in a period of five years, he became an MP, a cabinet minister, and was one of the final five nomination seekers for the 2015 CCM presidency at age of forty-one. By 2010, he had paid sufficient dues to the party and his political stakes were tied to CCM.

These three accounts suggest a path dependence into candidacy and that the real kernel of candidacy lies in initial decisions to become involved in politics in the first place. Thus, rather than narrowing our focus on expressive ambition (candidates presenting themselves for office), we need to trace candidacy to a more "nascent" form of ambition that inspires initial considerations of candidacy (Fox and Lawless 2005, 644). I argue that understanding individuals' lifetime trajectories is very important for explaining ruling party versus opposition candidacy in electoral authoritarian regimes. The most defining feature of life trajectory that differentiates opposition versus ruling party candidates in such environments is demonstrating civic activism versus career partisanship.

Civic activists and opposition parties are natural allies: from a policy-outcome perspective, they pursue broadly similar goals like protecting human rights, alleviating poverty, and promoting transparency. Opposition parties have distinct advantages over civic activists in shaping policies directly through political channels, but have limited resources to allocate to training and recruiting candidates, mobilizing supporters during elections, and basic infrastructure like offices, phone banks, and so on. Civil society organizations have advantages in financial and organizational resources, public visibility and name recognition, and network and mobilization infrastructure, but cannot directly change government policy. These complementarities mean that opposition parties and civic

activists coalesce to form “social-electoral coalitions” (Trejo 2014) where opposition parties recruit civic activists to run for office. Civic activism experiences therefore establish pathways to later opposition candidacy.

The goal of my book is to explain opposition candidacy for legislatures; to comprehensively do so, I must also understand alternative routes to power through the ruling party. For this pathway, I propose career partisanship as a new concept akin to the trajectory of a career politician (Mattozzi and Merlo 2008, Sousa and Canon 1992), where individuals come to “live off” this career as a vocation (Weber 1921). Career partisanship is the process by which individuals come to rely on partisanship as their key source of political capital and as a means of primary or supplementary financial gain. Entry into the ruling party at an early age – in party-sponsored soccer teams, youth programs, and so on – and later party service are critical factors leading to candidacy that occur long before individuals act on running for office. Ruling party candidacy is preceded by partisanship, service in local party politics, and further participation in elite party circles years before more advanced opportunities like candidacy exist (Reuter and Turvosky 2014). These activities are important to ruling party elites because they signify commitment and loyalty, which head off internal factionalism that can break the party.

The empirical analysis presented in this book affirms the role civic activism plays in legislative candidacy for opposition parties, while career partisanship underlies running for the ruling party. These analyses span two chapters of the book and draw upon original survey data collected from legislators, sequence analysis of biographical, vocational, and political careers of an additional 700 Tanzanian lawmakers, and extensive qualitative interviews with the major players in Tanzanian politics. These are complemented by years of my own experience on the ground and a wealth of archival resources collected through the process. The traditions in the study of candidacy explain what factors a prospective candidate weighs at the moment of leaping into candidacy (or not), but we have almost no idea how they ended up at that crossroads. The tale we often tell of a political career and candidacy only begins at the conclusion of the story; my book sheds light on that journey.

Adapting the Strategic Candidacy Model

It is possible to explain opposition candidacy in electoral authoritarian regimes using the predominant rationalist account that conceives of candidacy as a choice driven by cost-benefit calculations at the moment

an aspirant decides whether or not to run. Doing so, however, requires adding greater depth to each parameter in the framework.

The existing approach conceives of the probability of victory as driven by election prospects; instead, I take into account the combined prospects of nomination and election. While election victory is more difficult for opposition candidates in electoral authoritarian regimes compared with their ruling party rivals, securing nominations is much easier. The comparable ease of making it onto an electoral ballot offsets some of the electoral disadvantages opposition candidates face.

The benefits consideration in the conventional approach generally assumes candidates want material benefits and that those benefits are only delivered by holding office. I point to how opposition parties in electoral authoritarian regimes offer different benefits to prospective legislators, and politicians also vary in terms of what they want out of running for office. Drawing from survey data and in-depth interviews, the book will show that opposition candidates place greater value on nonmaterial benefits associated with office and, further, that opposition parties are better positioned to deliver those benefits. In settings where being in the opposition all but shuts off access to material benefits of legislative service, the compatibility between what opposition candidates want and what opposition parties offer is key to adapting the strategic framework.

Following Greene (2007), I also argue that prospective candidates may gain something out of losing elections and that these gains are uniquely suited for opposition candidates. Unsuccessful election contests may provide the campaign experience and know-how that is needed for later success. These are the very types of skills that opposition parties cannot provide through conventional channels of candidate recruitment and training. By contrast, losing as a ruling party candidate in spite of all of the advantages the party enjoys can end a political career. The act of expressing commitment to policy positions and standing up for a cause can provide value to candidates, even if they lose the election. As the book will show, these kinds of expressive gains from losing elections are more common among opposition candidates and also are more compatible with the nonmaterial, ideologically driven benefits opposition candidates seek. In the context of the strategic framework, this expanded understanding of benefits ultimately means the probability of opposition candidates obtaining benefits from candidacy is greater than just the odds of nomination and election victory.

The strategic candidacy framework conceives of costs as campaign expenditures and this requires adaptation for electoral authoritarian contexts. Costs may also relate to the heightened prominence that comes with candidacy, particularly for unsuccessful government challengers who are subsequently punished by the authoritarian regime. These nonmaterial costs can be high, but empirical analysis shows will show that opposition candidates demonstrate much greater willingness to pay those costs.

Linking Activism to the Strategic Model

The third tenet of my theory ties the two previous components together and emphasizes the path dependent nature of civic activism's role in shaping candidacy decisions. I contend that each parameter of the adapted strategic candidacy model I offer – the prospects of nomination and election, the benefits of winning and losing elections, and nonmaterial costs of running for office – are directly shaped by experiences in civic activism. Drawing from the insight of legislators, candidates, nomination seekers, and prospective aspirants who chose not to run, the chapters of the book offer evidence that civic activism drives perceived and actual election success for opposition candidates, shapes which benefits candidates seek, and influences consent to accept the high risks associated with running for a challenger party. It is possible to innovate the strategy candidacy framework to account for opposition candidacy under electoral authoritarianism, but the reasons for this strategic choice are found in the paths to candidacy ahead of that choice.

1.4 CONTRIBUTIONS

This book joins a growing literature on electoral authoritarian regimes and contributes to this scholarship. While the importance of authoritarian rule in the twenty-first century is undeniable, these regimes are commonly secretive and closed to outside observers, meaning insight provided by scholars and policy makers is not commonly drawn directly from first-hand elite accounts. In this tradition of current work on electoral authoritarianism, “authoritarian institutions do exactly what their creators want them to do” (Pepinsky 2014, 632).⁷ Theories about political

⁷ Meng's (2020) book stands out from this practice, offering an account where the authoritarian leaders' early decisions about executive constraints have counter-intuitive

decision making, particularly opposition activism, are generated at the elite level but often rely on subnational elite or citizen-level perspectives to draw conclusions about regime-level dynamics, perhaps because of the closed nature of authoritarian research environments. My book follows national-level political elites – potential legislators, especially those who may run for the opposition – as they navigate through the environment of authoritarian institutions, a setting that is elaborately detailed through rich archival and qualitative interview data. It theorizes their experiences, strategies, and decision making and then evaluates that theory using systematic, quantitative data on their choices and experiences. In this way, it bridges a deep divide in scholarship between the focus on political institutions and the behavior of political actors.

This approach allows my book to make sense of something that has been largely overlooked in this literature: opposition candidacy for legislative office. Opposition parties and their candidates are generally treated as ancillary or unimportant in electoral authoritarian regimes. As Morse (2012) notes regarding Levitsky and Way (2010a, 186–187), “Using the metaphor of the ‘three little pigs,’ they argue that it is the strength of the ‘house’ (regime) that matters, not the fact that there are ‘wolves’ (oppositions).” Applying an analogy of playing cards, the opposition participates knowing the deck is stacked and can do little but play with the hand dealt, as this is the only game the house is willing to play. With few exceptions, discussion of the political opposition as theoretically distinctive actors is rare and secondary. This is even more pronounced in sub-Saharan Africa – a point raised by Rakner and van de Walle (2009b). When scholars do consider what opposition actors may want, many point to material rewards such as access to the state and the role of “competitive clientelism” (Lust-Okar 2009), while few suggest they are driven to shape both electoral outcomes and the overall framework of strategic competition over political power (Schedler 2006).

What I hope is clear at this point is that in spite of the institutional disadvantages that are defining characteristics of electoral authoritarian regimes, opposition actors must be taken seriously. Ruling parties may hold the power to resist pressure from challengers; however, when the opposition acts in unity to mobilize civil society, it can induce political

downstream consequences for those leaders. She demonstrates that autocrats who are initially strong can resist institutionalized constraints like powerful cabinets, term limits, and succession rules but that foregoing these constraints ultimately results in less durable autocracy.

change (Kaya and Bernhard 2013). The opposition in electoral authoritarian regimes can and sometimes does win. Several of sub-Saharan Africa's most competitive regimes first experienced episodes of electoral authoritarian rule, and the strategies of opposition actors then impact what those parties do in government now.⁸ Even absent victory, tens of thousands of candidates run on the legislative tickets of opposition parties around the globe each year; the existing explanations why this is so are deeply unsatisfying.

My account links civic activism as a long-term pathway to opposition candidacy and also establishes a framework of candidacy decision making that emphasizes nonmaterial drivers of political candidacy ambition, a motivation that links back to civic activist experiences. By contrast, ruling party candidacy under electoral authoritarianism conforms to much of what the "new institutionalism" in electoral authoritarian scholarship anticipates: career partisanship channels political ambition into the ruling party and manages the process of candidate emergence, thus allowing electoral and party institutions to operate in service of the elites who implement them. Elites who do run for the ruling party are constrained by selection procedures; when they do get onto electoral ballots, they seek the material spoils of office that ruling parties are equipped to offer. These insights are important and inform four critical academic and policy literatures. I discuss each in the text that immediately follows.

Performance and Accountability

Elections regularize political competition and draw rival factions to stand in opposition to incumbent governments. Political theorists and scholars have long attributed this to the power of elections to induce alternation. As far back as Athenian democracy, the principles of "freedom consisted not in obeying only oneself but in obeying today someone in whose [position] one would be tomorrow" (Manin 1997, 17). Elections are more than a system of rule in which parties compete; the most meaningful quality of elections is whether and how often they induce parties to take turns losing (Przeworski 1991). What ruling parties would do if they lost an election – concede defeat or suspend elections altogether – can only be known once it occurs (Przeworski, Stokes, and Manin 2000, 22).

⁸ Based on Morse's (2019) typology, Ghana and Kenya stand out in this regard.

Without the assumption of one (or many) opposition challenger(s), few existing theories of governance and elections yield novel conclusions. Voters choose from a theoretically infinite slate of candidates or party policies arrayed spatially on policy dimensions (Congleton 2002, Downs 1957). Moral hazard and adverse selection problems steeped in political accountability cannot be overcome without choice. When incumbents face no punishment for failing to deliver on public goods (Rogoff 1990) and little pressure to articulate policy preferences (Ferejohn 1986), they have little reason to pursue citizen interests (Barro 1973). Elected leaders who compete in contested versus uncontested constituencies perform better in office across a number of outcomes and settings.

Challengers are critical in electoral authoritarian settings in a number of ways. First, though competition in the aggregate may be weak, regional pockets or other forms of subnational opposition can be important features that shape the national level of contestation (Dahl 1971, 11–13). Second, incumbents regularly overestimate the popularity of their challengers and may consequently improve performance. In electoral authoritarian regimes, ruling party politicians are more responsive to constituent demands and performance evaluations when they face a challenger from another party (Grossman and Michelitch 2018). Ruling parties may also attempt to marginalize the opposition and dilute their support by offering platforms that incorporate opposition policy issues (Greene 2008), thereby improving citizen-level outcomes. Thus, even if readers find nothing of interest in this volume with regard to the long-term prospects of democracy in electoral authoritarian regimes, there is value in understanding opposition candidacy for the sake of authoritarian government accountability.

Civil Society, Party Building, and Democracy

A long tradition of scholarship on democracy has pointed to the role of civic actors in mobilizing against autocratic regimes. In the Colour Revolutions, for example, public protests over election fraud at the hands of autocrats ultimately forced those autocrats to leave office (Beissinger 2007). Successful transitions in post-Communist Europe and Eurasia relied on the opposition's ability to "build ties with organizations in civil society in order to pursue the common goal of free and fair elections" (Bunce and Wolchik 2011, 254–255). This notion underlies the "socio-electoral coalitions" Trejo (2014) argues form between opposition parties and civic actors surrounding authoritarian elections. Statistical evidence

affirms the collaborative role of opposition and civil society in elections; as Schedler (2008, 198) finds, “parties strong and bold enough to take their followers to the streets have impressive chances of reducing official margins of victory.”

Opposition parties can link to civil society organizations and civic activism networks for more than just mobilization: my book will show their complementarities extend to candidates and elections if parties are able to draw upon the mobilization capacity of civic networks. Indeed, foundational concepts like party system “freeze” (Lipset and Rokkan 1967) are based on the idea that political parties are founded around existing social cleavages in society like religious organizations and labor groups. Successful Western European parties used these preexisting organizations to rally supporters and coordinate political choice (Boix 2007, Kalyvas 1996).

While accounts of electoral reforms in sub-Saharan Africa in the 1990s identify the key role of citizen mobilization (e.g., Bratton and van de Walle 1997), Riedl (2014) convincingly demonstrates that civil society in contemporary Africa is hampered by the legacies of single-party rule: ruling cadres that incorporated existing rivals into the regime rather than subverting them through new structures were able to manage and oversee transitions to multipartyism. In doing so, they maintained a persistent influence over emergent political challengers, leading to more regime stability and more institutionalized political parties. Tanzania is an example where the single-party state developed parallel institutions to completely marginalize alternative sources of political power and, in doing so, completely flattened civil society. My book thus shows that even under worst-case scenario conditions for robust civil society and well-institutionalized opposition political parties, civil society organizations and civic activism can underlie opposition candidacy motivations.

This conclusion has important implications for policy makers. Every year, foreign governments and other international donors spend billions of dollars to support the development of democracy throughout the globe. These donors choose where they invest their resources and need to know what levers are most effective for promoting short- and long-term political change. My book suggests that resources dedicated to direct party support like financial aid, training and capacity-building workshops, and networking opportunities from partner/sibling members of global party alliances (e.g., the National Democratic Institute and the International Republican Institute in the United States; Fredrich-Ebert-Stiftung in Germany) may be better allocated elsewhere. The same is true for foreign

governments whose financial support comes with conditionalities tied to opening the political party environment. Political parties in electoral authoritarian regimes are subject to widespread interference from the government, while in these settings civil society operates with comparably fewer restraints. Efforts to strengthen civic space and civil society actors may be easier to effectively implement in these regimes. This provides opposition parties with sources of mobilization capacity to draw upon in future elections. More fundamentally, if pathways to candidacy begin long before the manifestation of candidacy ambitions, then activities like candidacy training workshops put on by an international actor are missing the key entry point to engage prospective candidates. Engaging in capacity building at the stage of expressed interest in candidacy is analogous to focusing on planting a single, mature tree with the expectation of it yielding a future forest; promoting civil society activism reaches potential future opposition legislators earlier in candidacy pipelines and is more like planting hundreds or thousands of seedlings that may each grow into a robust tree.

Relatedly, the volume also offers a wrinkle to the “democratization by elections” thesis that consecutive elections have the causal power to improve democracy, even if the elections themselves are poor quality. That civic actors learn to better challenge the government in power and opposition parties improve their ability to mobilize voters and campaign are two distinctive mechanisms through which holding elections promotes democratic growth (Lindberg 2006*b*). If opposition parties draw from civic activists to field candidates and mobilize supporters, then these two mechanisms feed on each other. Going back to motivations of policy makers to support democracy, there appear to be multiple possible pathways through which investments in civil society strengthening programming can improve democratic outcomes.

African Politics

This book is the first to comprehensively document the decision-making process regarding candidacy for national legislatures in Africa. African regimes are overwhelmingly presidential, and this has important consequences for the comparable strength of Africa’s legislatures (van de Walle 2003), which scholars mostly overlooked until recently. Legislatures are of critical importance in Africa and often the main point of interaction between citizens and the state. Legislators in Africa play a prominent role in lawmaking and oversight, but they are also seen

as the primary agents of economic development in the eyes of voters. More than simply representative institutions, authoritarian legislatures can evolve into more empowered institutions over time (Collard 2019) and check executive power (Opalo 2019), particularly if their members are oriented toward political reform (Barkan 2009). Legislatures and legislative elections are – alongside media and the judiciary – the primary arenas of contestation in which opponents can challenge authoritarian regimes (Levitsky and Way 2010b, 58–60). Legislatures are where the opposition has the chance to win some legislative seats and to show their character as potential alternatives to the government. In Africa, opposition parties gain greater vote share in legislative elections than they do in presidential ones (Rakner and van de Walle 2009b, 209). Legislatures are institutions that serve as focal points of opposition activism and coordination (Levitsky and Way 2002) and can induce antecedent autocratic governments into further liberal reforms and ultimately democratic transition (Fish 2006). My book also provides unparalleled insight into the institutions that shape the candidacy process, including documenting what candidate selection looks like with actual results from primaries and detailed data on campaign expenditures, finance, and mobilization strategy.

The narrative of what drives political behavior in Africa emphasizes material motivations, rent seeking, and clientelism. Political parties are viewed as institutionally weak with little to differentiate them regarding policy views or ideology. Only recently have scholars noted that opposition parties and candidates may differ from their ruling party counterparts in their willingness to deploy policy messaging and discourse to mobilize voters (Bleck and van de Walle 2018, 213–215). My book shows that at the candidate level, opposition actors are more motivated by policy-related and ideological goals and that opposition parties are better equipped to provide those benefits. Chapter 10 – the final empirical chapter of the book – affirms that across Africa's electoral authoritarian regimes and dominant party democracies, opposition legislators differ greatly from ruling party MPs on legislative policy dimensions: across executive oversight, budgetary procedures, lawmaking, and local development. This suggests an important reframing of how we think about policy making and ideology under the conditions of electoral hegemony that predominate across sub-Saharan Africa. The emphasis opposition places on promoting democracy, criticizing incumbents, and expanding social pluralism is, in fact, the domain of policy making over which they can exercise control. The opposition may share much in common with

the ruling party in terms of on-the-ground campaign rhetoric, but that is the game they are meant to lose. The higher-level contest in the nested game of electoral authoritarianism – the competition over the rules that structure the system and entrench the ruling party in power – is where the opposition's policy gains are most consequential and where their efforts are oriented.

The book offers an in-depth investigation of the puzzle of opposition candidacy through a rich and multifaceted research study anchored in Tanzania, which features the longest-standing ruling party in Africa and second-longest in the world today. While there is interest in Tanzania, it is often dismissed by scholars who see it as unique and not worth comparison: the dominant role of politicized ethnic and religious cleavages in Africa is more muted there; it features a ruling party that invested in party-state building in a way that few African regimes had; Tanzania's first President Julius K. Nyerere's single-party regime, while just as economically disastrous as those of other peers in the postcolonial era, left behind a level of nationalism uncommon to the subcontinent. The picture that is becoming clearer from the emergent research on Tanzania – Carlitz (2017), Carlitz and McLellan (2021), Collard (2019), Croke (2017), Kwayu (2015), Morse (2019), Paget (2020), Rosenzweig (2018), Tsubura (2018), among others – is not that these legacies make Tanzania unique.

My volume, like many of the other works coming out of Tanzania, shows the opposite: theoretical and empirical insights derived from Tanzania travel well to other comparative contexts in Africa and more broadly among electoral authoritarian regimes. It may be that Tanzania is viewed by some as too peculiar to warrant greater engagement because the research environment is more difficult than many more commonly studied countries. The challenges of collecting high-quality qualitative and quantitative research is especially pronounced for studying national-level political elites. Swahili is the *lingua franca* and a language with layers of complex meaning; fluency is critical to building trust and rapport that underlie informative and revealing qualitative interviews. Government authorities tightly regulate research permissions for academics, and they enforce compliance in ways that researchers in other settings may evade. Parties and candidates may be closed off for their own reasons, including suspicion of outsiders and fear of exposing their internal workings. My book presents survey data that is one-of-a-kind both in Tanzania and in the study of African politics. It is one of only two surveys conducted

with Tanzanian MPs in Tanzania's quarter century of multiparty politics,⁹ and the only survey conducted in the Zanzibar House of Representatives in the existence of the institution. It is the only survey ever conducted with candidate aspirants who are not legislators (losing candidates, losing nomination seekers, prospective "noncandidates") in Tanzania and, one of only a handful of studies with surveys of non-MP legislative aspirants in Africa.¹⁰ Interviews with party elites and documents like political party primary returns were obtained from connections developed over the decade this project has spanned.

Collecting difficult to obtain data is not a particularly meaningful contribution to the study of African politics in its own right, but doing so points to how deep engagement in a case over time, especially one with high barriers to entry, can yield novel empirical strategies. In the book, I employ quantitative methods for studying behavioral implications of path dependence in the form of sequence analysis of civic activism and career partisanship. Path dependence is a phenomenon that pervades political decision making, and the careers of politicians and scholars have shown the role of underlying "nascent" political ambition in downstream candidacy choices, but the application of sequence methods to studying paths is rare.¹¹ My surveys utilize *methali*, cultural proverbs that offer novel ways of measuring attitudes toward risk and time that address underlying ethical and measurement concerns associated with conventional behavioral measures. Retrospective survey reports of candidacy ambition and the beginning of paths toward candidacy are subject to several sources of bias; the use of innovative techniques like the life history calendar and carefully designed survey instruments can address these issues. I hope I show that lower-tech solutions to measurement and identification problems unlocked by knowledge of existing social practices, norms, and institutions are powerful.¹² This is particularly important in sub-Saharan Africa, where there exist oral and aural traditions of sharing information about political and social values.

⁹ The African Legislature Project is the other; it surveyed fifty legislators. Most other legislator surveys were conducted prior to or shortly after independence. See, for example, Hopkins (1970) and McGowan and Bolland (1971).

¹⁰ Cloward and Weghorst's (2019) work on legislative aspirants in Kenya's 2017 elections is another.

¹¹ MacKenzie's (2015) study of American legislators uses sequence methods.

¹² Kramon and Weghorst (2019) raise a similar point with regard to survey questionnaire design.

Candidacy and Careers across Regime Contexts

The study of candidacy mostly focuses on the United States. To make sense of candidacy decisions in different regions and regimes, scholars may employ one of two strategies. One approach is to follow the model in the American politics subfield and develop a theory that is rooted in the specificities of a given case. Theoretical scope and externally valid empirical findings are fundamental concerns for scholars of comparative politics – particularly those working in countries in the Global South – so this tactic is not productive for broadening our knowledge of candidacy. The alternative strategy is to engage existing theories on their own terms and innovate and adapt them to be externally valid, for example, bridge building. My book seeks to do this in the study of candidacy. Rational models of candidacy ambition have typically embedded within them assumptions about the dynamics of electoral prospects, benefits of office, and costs of competition that do not track well outside established democracies with advanced economies. While my volume will leave the reader with the impression that pathways to candidacy through civic activism and career partisanship are more powerful drivers of candidacy decisions in electoral authoritarian regimes, it also speaks to this existing literature and contributes in three ways.

First, it introduces additional parameters into the strategic candidacy that account for imbalanced nomination and election competition,¹³ choice specificity in benefits based on candidate preferences over benefit types and party capacity to deliver them, benefits derived from losing nominations and elections, and an expanded understanding of nonmaterial, non-campaign costs associated with campaigns. This expanded understanding of benefits can be particularly useful outside contexts of electoral authoritarian regimes, including advanced democracies. Second, my theory of pathways into political office and the way in which candidacy is shaped by prior life and career experiences speaks to a growing literature on the role of pre-candidacy experiences in shaping ambition. From Fox and Lawless's (2005) work on how "nascent ambition" accounts for why women choose to run (or not) for office in the United States to a resurgence of interest in how career background impacts representation (Carnes and Lupu 2015), shifting our focus from the moment of strategic decision making to the precipitating events that led to the decision is valuable for understanding candidacy across comparative

¹³ I am not the first to do this in non-US contexts: see Greene (2007).

contexts. Relatedly, my book shows that doing so can help elucidate why strategic actors evaluate the utility of a given decision in the way that they do. That is, the work provides insight on what populates the parameters of strategic choice related to candidacy. Such an account not only tells us why someone runs for office on the basis of an array of factors that shape that decision, but also establishes why that individual cares about those particular factors at all in the first place.

1.5 ORGANIZATION OF THE BOOK

Why do individuals run for the legislature on opposition tickets in electoral authoritarian regimes? In the rest of this book, I answer this question in the context of Tanzania, where Africa's longest-ruling party has governed for more than fifty years. I do so by drawing upon survey data collected from members of Tanzania's two legislatures, as well as from losing candidates, unsuccessful nomination seekers, and prospective candidates. I augment these data with archival research, in-depth interviews with political elites, and a database of the CVs of more than 700 Tanzanian politicians. The book's narrative is carried by my own words, as well as the voices of current faces of Tanzanian politicians: January Makamba, Ismail Jussa, and James Mbatia.

Chapter 2 further explicates my theory of opposition candidacy in electoral authoritarian regimes. It reviews existing explanations of why individuals present themselves for office and offers insight on how such applications might apply to nondemocratic settings. It then unpacks my theory of the origins of candidacy in civic activism and career partisanship. The chapter exposes how many differences observed between ruling party and opposition candidates can be uncovered by turning the clock back on candidacy to the processes prior to elections.

Chapter 3 provides more detail on the analytical strategy for evaluating the theory. It discusses electoral authoritarianism broadly and contextualizes the case of Tanzania among two sets of peers: contemporary electoral authoritarian regimes in Africa and historically important electoral authoritarian regimes in other regions of the world. It then provides more detail on the history of Tanzania as it relates to its system of government and makes an argument for why Tanzania is an ideal case to study these dynamics. I discuss scope conditions of the theory and external validity of the case as well, particularly regarding the types of opposition parties I study and the strength of CCM as a political party. The

chapter details the data resources I draw upon to test the theory guiding the book and provides a centralized discussion of the measurement and analysis strategies used in later chapters.

Chapters 4 through 10 form the empirically driven section of the book. Chapters 4–9 address implications of existing literature and original theory by empirical analysis of data from Tanzania. The final empirical chapter considers the applicability of my theory to other electoral regimes in Africa, testing scope conditions of the theory across regime type and competitiveness.

Chapter 4 focuses on the first stage of my theory of candidacy by looking to prospective candidates' journeys into politics. It studies how early experiences with civic activism and career partisanship shape why individuals run for office. The central statistical analyses in this chapter demonstrate that civic activism in the form of grassroots mobilization experience and membership and leadership in civic associations are associated with substantially higher chances of running as a part of the opposition. Career partisanship, by contrast, points to ruling party candidacy. In the chapter's narrative, we hear extensively from January, Jussa, and James on how experiences in their formative years led to where they are today and anchor their experiences with the stories of other candidates and information about the civil society sector in Tanzania and formative linkages between opposition parties and that sector.

Chapter 5 also evaluates the impact of civic activism and career partisanship on opposition versus ruling party candidacy with a different empirical resource and approach. Drawing on biographical records of more than 700 past and present Tanzanian legislators, I use sequence analysis to assess how vocational and political careers prior to candidacy shape party choice when aspiring to run for office. Sequence methods are relatively new to the social sciences but are powerful for studying path dependencies like life trajectories into legislative office. Using these techniques, I establish that vocational careers spent in the CSO/NGO sector are significantly more commonly found among opposition legislators, while lawmakers from CCM have much more career experience in paid political party positions and government jobs of a political character. The chapter also carries out a detailed sequence analysis of career partisanship in different forms, including low-level party service and progressive advancement within a political party. It rules out party service as a prominent path to the opposition, showing instead that the political careers of CCM MPs are much more similar to these operationalizations of career partisanship.

Chapters 6 through 9 are dedicated to the parameters of the modified strategic candidacy framework – probability of nomination, probability of election, benefits, and costs. Each chapter studies a parameter in its own right and evaluates its role in candidacy decisions in electoral authoritarian regimes with evidence from Tanzania. They also establish how civic activism impacts the parameter of focus in that chapter to reinforce how early life trajectories drive opposition candidacy decision making represented in those parameters.

Chapter 6 investigates what shapes nomination prospects in electoral authoritarian regimes. It briefly reviews the scope of candidate selection techniques available to parties and describes the procedures used by political parties in Tanzania. Drawing on survey data from nomination seekers and archives of actual primary results, the key intuition from the first portion of this chapter is that nominations are comparably much easier to obtain for Tanzania's opposition aspirants compared with those from CCM, and this is the case across a host of subjective and objective indicators. I also study the role of civic activism on nomination choices and outcomes for opposition actors. Survey data show that among prospective candidates in the opposition who consider legislative candidacy, those with greater civic activism experiences are more likely to follow through on their desire to run for office. And while nominations are easier to win in the opposition compared with CCM, among nomination seekers in the opposition, those with more civic activism experience had better chances of getting nominated.

Chapter 7 studies what shapes the prospects of being elected to office in electoral authoritarian regimes. In these regimes, incumbency stacks elections in favor of ruling party candidates; this is validated by data that show higher campaign expenditures for ruling party winners. However, I also highlight how opposition candidates can overcome these financial disadvantages through effective election campaign strategies and elucidate which tactics distinguish opposition winners from losers. I unpack the role civic activism plays in shaping campaign strategy, which correlates with better election prospects on both subjective and objective dimensions. The impact of election expenditures on opposition candidate success is conditional on civic activism; no amount of money opposition candidates lacking links to civic associations spend on their campaign boosts their prospects of victory, while spending has a substantively meaningful influence on success even at modest levels of activism. The chapter points to the role of civic activism in transferring mobilization capacity and infrastructure from civic to campaign spaces.

Chapter 8 addresses differences between prospective candidates in terms of the benefits they seek from office. Through several analyses of Tanzanian survey data, I show differences between ruling party and opposition candidates in terms of benefits sought, evaluations of party proficiency in delivering benefits, and perceived benefits of losing election contests. The analyses provide evidence that opposition legislators value ideological benefits of office and that these can be obtained, even when losing elections. This supports the adaptation of the strategic candidacy framework I offer. I also establish how civic activism versus career partisanship underlies the differences in which benefits matter to prospective candidates. While civic activists are more motivated by ideological and policy benefits, career partisans value those benefits less and instead place greater emphasis on material benefits.

Chapter 9 concentrates on the final parameter of the strategic candidacy framework: costs. It turns attention to the costs outside campaign expenditures that are particularly associated with candidacy in authoritarian regimes and studies the variable willingness of prospective candidates to bear the risks of candidacy and to wait for long-term objectives of political change. The chapter employs a novel approach toward measuring risk attitudes and time perspectives using cultural proverbs. The reader will be familiar with these *methali* by this chapter, as each of the previous chapters features them at its opening. Analysis of these *methali* links risk tolerance and longer time horizons and opposition candidates. Civic activism is also linked to risk tolerance, echoing scholarship arguing that risk begets risk. Opposition candidacy may emerge out of civic activism because early experiences in civil society amplify the willingness of activists to challenge incumbent governments no matter the costs.

Chapter 10 explores the external validity of my findings and assesses scope conditions of the theory and its broader applicability across other African countries. Using data from sixteen countries included in the African Legislatures Project (ALP), I analyze surveys from national legislators to address whether my findings regarding paths into opposition versus ruling party candidacy extend to other cases. This includes countries that are most similar to Tanzania in terms of electoral authoritarianism (e.g., Burkina Faso, Mozambique, Uganda, and Zimbabwe), ones featuring less violence and repression but still dominated by a long-standing ruling party (Botswana, Lesotho, Nigeria, Namibia, and South Africa), and other regimes that are both more democratic and competitive (Benin, Ghana, Kenya, Malawi, Senegal, and Zambia). The analysis

in this chapter affirms that the civic activism pipeline to the opposition can be found in other electoral authoritarian contexts but not democratic regimes, pointing to the role that civil society plays in cultivating political ambition in settings where challenger parties are weak and subject to regular antagonism from the government. There is suggestive evidence of career partisanship as well, particularly in terms of the enforcement of party discipline by electoral authoritarian ruling parties. Opposition legislators in electoral authoritarian regimes and in dominant party democracies differ greatly from ruling party MPs on policy dimensions, holding distinctive views over development, legislative mandates, and more.

Chapter 11 concludes. It summarizes the main findings and highlights broader contributions to political science and the policy world for understanding electoral politics of authoritarian regimes and their paths to democracy. It ends by charting a future agenda of research for studying opposition growth and development in electoral authoritarian settings.