

Tax Thy Neighbor

How Italian Mayors Increase Taxation in their Hometowns

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Abstract

How do social ties between elected officials and the community impact tax governance? Do they facilitate collection or do they encourage rent-seeking and state capture? In this paper, I argue that hometown mayors are more capable to deal with tax politics, being endowed with personal local knowledge and insulated by greater community trust. Analyzed through a multi-method design, the case of Italian municipalities yields evidence for this argument. Mayors born in the town raise tax enforcement spending by 20%, rates by 4%, and revenue by 9%. When running for office, they discuss tax policy and noncompliance more extensively, particularly when putting forward a personalistic campaign. When in office, they elicit greater trust from the community and face less contestation when enforcing taxes. As decentralization across countries has granted substantial fiscal autonomy to municipal government, this study has deep implications, showing that connections to the community can improve revenue generation.

Keywords: local tax politics; fiscal decentralization; social embeddedness

Introduction

When are local elected officials well-positioned to tax their communities? The question is both timely and timeless. In 1788, Hamilton already contended the usefulness of local knowledge for tax policy Hamilton (2012). Yet, the majority of studies on fiscal decentralization highlight administrative and political constraints to local tax extraction Treisman (2007). Over the past few decades, the debate has risen to renewed policy and political relevance. National governments have increased the fiscal autonomy of sub-national government, curtailed intergovernmental transfers, and bolstered the role of local “own resources” Hooghe, Marks and Schakel (2010); Qiao, Ding and Liu (2019). Across OECD countries, sub-national tax revenue accounts today for an average of over 42% of total taxation Dougherty, Harding and Reschovsky (2019). For many of these nations, the lowest level of sub-national politics involves communities with only a few thousand, if not a few hundred, individuals¹. In this paper, I argue that the switch from a distant, socially-detached government to one deeply embedded in the local community carries profound and complex fiscal implications.

Local fiscal extraction is generally understood as being constrained by both the limited resources available to local administrations as well as the political cost of raising and enforcing taxes Smoke (2014). Following this intuition, the long-standing “leviathan hypothesis” predicts that the lower the level of government, the smaller the size of government Brennan, Brennan and Buchanan (1980). Fiscal decentralization studies have linked this argument to a number of theoretical dynamics. Voters have an array of strategies to keep in check the extractive behavior of local elected

¹For instance, the median population size of municipalities is 2400 in Italy, 500 in Spain, and 380 in France.

officials: from the electoral booth Bosch and Solé-Ollé (2007) to inter-municipality factor mobility Tiebout (1956); Martinez (2017); Ly and Paty (2020). However, the existing literature has fallen short of theorizing and testing the role of social proximity between state officials and community, which increases at lower levels of government.

In this study, I argue that socially-embedded local government influences tax governance. When they are more closely connected to the community they govern, mayors raise tax rates, enforcement, and revenue. Exploring the mechanisms behind this hypothesized dynamic, I outline three concurrent leader-level explanations.

First, socially-embedded leaders should hold a greater interest in the long-term prosperity of their community. Since local tax revenue translates into greater public-good provision and long-term financial stability, embedded officials may be more willing to pay the political cost of increasing tax extraction. Second, social connections may grant officials greater knowledge of the local tax base, which would translate into better enforcement Kasara (2007); Bhavnani and Lee (2018); Balan et al. (2020). Finally, embedded officials may be able to rely on greater community trust, which should both make enforcement more effective Bergman (2009) and insulate them from political backlash.

Taking the case of Italian municipalities, this study proxies embeddedness with place of birth and documents how mayors native to the town increase local revenue generation. Seeking to diversify the empirical tests for my hypotheses, I employ a multi-method approach and explore the dynamics of embedded fiscal politics at three different levels. First, extensive administrative data offers insights in policy decisions by local government and downstream budgetary outcomes. Second, in order to focus on mayors preferences, I examine an original sample of local electoral manifestos,

which shed light on the policy priorities expressed by candidate mayors. Finally, I leverage both an original survey as well as a large cross-sectional survey series to study the beliefs and attitudes of local communities.

Thanks to the rich local administrative data environment in Italy, I show that mayors native to the town increase enforcement, rates, and revenue, by 20%, 3%, and 9% compared to average levels. Seeking to isolate the impact of place-of-birth from potential confounders, I adopt an electoral regression discontinuity approach and focus on close elections where a candidate born in the municipality competes with a candidate born outside of the municipality. Electing native mayors is associated with greater spending on the tax office and more tax-related contracts, as well as higher tax rates and higher revenue across tax types.

Honing in on the mechanism, my text analysis of local electoral manifestos reveals that hometown candidates discuss more tax policy, both in terms of rates and noncompliance. This relationship further strengthens for personalistic manifestos, which repeatedly display the mayor's name. Second, leveraging two different survey datasets, I show that individuals report higher trust when a native candidate wins. Similarly, respondents expect embedded mayors to have better information about the community and be less prone to corruption. Importantly, these relationship strengthen when respondents report being socially-connected to the mayor.

In addition, my empirical framework allows to rule out two key alternative explanations: changes in voter preferences and state capture by local elites. First, social embeddedness might shape demand for local tax policy. A large literature shows that voters often employ place of birth of candidates as a voting heuristic Tavits (2010); Collignon and Sajuria (2018). Social ties with local officials may also then engender greater demand for taxation, given expectations of better governance and

social good provision. However, my survey data shows no evidence of changes in policy preferences. Additionally, socially-embedded local officials may be more vulnerable to capture by local elites, which would in turn exploit local government for rent extraction Bardhan and Mookherjee (2006); Bhavnani and Lee (2018). I show that embedded mayors are no more likely to be suspended for mafia ties and are less likely to experience judicial interventions concerning public procurement. Additionally, forensic analysis of electoral results reveal no evidence of vote manipulation when hometown candidates win.

At a theoretical level, this study makes a twofold contribution. With respect to the longstanding fiscal decentralization literature, I highlight the previously under-theorized impact of local social ties on tax policy-making. At the same time, I expand previous arguments on the political role of embeddedness Kasara (2007); Balan et al. (2020). Studies thus far have only looked at single components of the fiscal contract, nominal rates or revenue; focused on either national politicians or non-elected local leaders; and analyzed social embeddedness through the lenses of identity politics. Looking at the whole of the fiscal contract, I include enforcement and thus connect decisions by elected officials to the constraints of tax noncompliance Levi (1988). In the case of Italian mayors, I single out the impact of embeddedness in a context where elected local officials pursue mostly programmatic politics and identity is not the dominant political dimension, thus disentangling the role of embeddedness from both clientelistic logic and identity-group politics.

Theory

In the theoretical section of this study, I articulate how social embeddedness can impact the local tax governance. Conceptually, I consider social embeddedness as a characteristic of elected officials, indicating the degree to which they are personally tied to local interpersonal networks Granovetter (1985). Embedded officials should have numerous and deep social ties to a large part of the population, being themselves long-standing members of the community. In turn, tax governance refers to the broad political processes behind taxation, involving both administrators and the community of voter-taxpayers. I conceptualize this space along two key dimensions, the political and the administrative, represented by two policy levers, rate-setting and enforcement. While the centrality of rate-setting is obvious, I argue that enforcement is an equally relevant policy dimension. In fact, in both lower and higher-capacity countries, research has highlighted that subnational revenue systems suffer from higher tax gaps than national systems Smoke (2014); Scharff (2014).

My main argument focuses on the supply side of politics. Social embeddedness endows elected officials with greater political and administrative capacity, enabling them to better deal with local tax governance. This approach runs parallel to two alternative dynamics. From the demand side, social embeddedness may shape how the community interacts with local government, either allowing greater taxation because of trust or further constraining it through social monitoring and sanctioning. Additionally, ties between officials and local elites may upend democratic politics and facilitate state capture, turning programmatic fiscal extraction into rent-seeking.

The Political and Capacity Constraints of Local Tax Policy

Taxation is central to the functioning of local state institutions. Across countries, national policies of fiscal decentralization have conferred ample tax powers and responsibilities to local government, while decreasing the flow of intergovernmental transfers Hooghe, Marks and Schakel (2010); Qiao, Ding and Liu (2019). As a result, local government increasingly have to fund their spending through “own resources”, that is local revenue. In turn, fiscal needs give rise to the contentious politics of local taxation, which juxtaposes elected leaders to the population of elector-taxpayers.

On the one side, local elected officials have strong extractive incentives and pursue revenue in order to fund their governing Levi (1988); Weingast (2009). On the other side, the local community seeks to curtail fiscal extraction Treisman (2007). Faced with local taxation, community members can punish their leaders electorally or they can evade their tax burden Revelli (2002); Bosch and Solé-Ollé (2007); Christensen and Garfias (2021). In anticipation of these dynamics, elected officials must set rates and enforcement in order to maximize revenue while minimizing the electoral and noncompliance backlash from fiscal extraction².

As such, rate setting and enforcement are tied as cornerstones of fiscal policy. Without enforcement, noncompliance severely constrains tax rates. Higher rates may increase evasion, therefore nullifying or even reversing the relationship between rates on revenue – this is one of the underlying dynamics to the longstanding idea of the Laffer curve Treisman (2007). Additionally, a smaller tax base concentrates the costs of higher extraction on compliers, who should thus impose higher political

²Existing studies have explored several potential ways through which taxpayers can respond fiscal extraction. For instance, the tax base can move to other municipalities with lower taxation levels Tiebout (1956); Martinez (2017); Ly and Paty (2020)

costs on leaders.

In turn, the challenge of tax enforcement can be attributed to both the technical and political constraints of local governance. First, town administrations often lack the resources and training of central tax agencies. Enforcing taxation is an administratively complex task. Municipal offices must gather substantial information about the tax base and put in motion lengthy legal mechanisms, exposing the municipality to legal action in the case of mistakes. In fact, when noncompliance is widespread and tax morale is low, enforcement could even produce backlash, further increasing evasion and weakening public support for the fiscal contract Bergman (2009). Second, increasing coercive capacity may also come at political cost, drawing the reaction from noncompliers, who come in direct conflict with the administration, but also from compliers, whose compliance costs may increase due to stricter scrutiny Christensen and Garfias (2021). Unsurprisingly, research has shown that, when alternatives revenue sources are available, such as intergovernmental transfers, local administrators prefer not to invest in higher enforcement capacity Jia, Ding and Liu (2020).

Socially-Embedded Tax Governance

At the lowest tiers of government, state power comes to the hands of local politicians who may be deeply embedded in the communities they govern Oliver and Ha (2007). When this happens, government officials are no longer distant socially-detached actors but rather themselves long-standing members of the community, with personal ties connecting them to a large segment of their electoral constituency and tax base. In other words, borrowing Levi's terminology, the *rulers* are long-time acquaintances,

if not friends and neighbors, of the *ruled* Levi (1988). This switch introduces a personal dimension of politics with potentially momentous consequences for tax governance Weingast (2009); Martinez-Vazquez, Lago-Peñas and Sacchi (2017). In this study, I argue that the impact of embeddedness may unfold at three different levels: local leaders, community, or elite capture.

HYPOTHESIS #1: LEADER-LEVEL MECHANISMS

First, embedded elected officials may have greater interest in the long-term prosperity of the community. Existing research has shown this to be the case for bureaucrats Bhavnani and Lee (2018) and for national politicians Carozzi and Repetto (2016). As such, embedded leaders would have an incentive to steer fiscal governance towards own resources, that is tax revenue, a more sustainable source of government funding compared to intergovernmental transfers. Relying on transfers creates a dependence on central state institutions and exposes the community to national political fluctuations. By contrast, funding the local government action with local taxation is more stable on the long term and creates incentives for fiscal responsibility, due to political accountability to the local electorate.

Second, personal ties with the community may endow embedded leaders with greater *administrative capacity*. By tapping into their personal knowledge, embedded administrators should enjoy a greater legibility of the local tax base and thus should be able to enforce taxation more efficiently. Existing studies have verified a link between personal knowledge and tax extraction, especially in the context of low-capacity countries Kasara (2007); Balan et al. (2020). Higher legibility entails greater efficiency in enforcing tax rates for several reasons Okunogbe (2021). To begin with, embedded officials may leverage personal knowledge to detect tax noncompliance. For instance, greater information about the tax base may help identifying unknown

sources of revenue and discrepancies between taxes paid by specific individuals and their apparent income based on lifestyle. Furthermore, greater legibility leads to a greater capacity of punishing noncompliance, making enforcement more efficient – for instance knowing how to find individuals when local institutions only possess fake residence addresses or outdated identifying data. Finally, if social embeddedness is public knowledge, investment in enforcement may gain in credibility and people may become more likely to comply due to beliefs of higher detection and punishment probability.

Third, embedded elected officials should enjoy have greater *political capacity*, that is the ability to pursue electorally costly policy-making. To begin with, embedded politicians perform better at the ballot, as voters employ their shared identity as a selection heuristic Collignon and Sajuria (2018). Additionally, a personal connection with the electorate may make it easier for embedded officials to sell unpopular policies, such as a tax hike. Finally, as discussed below, embedded leaders may enjoy greater trust from the community, which may then partially insulate them from the backlash of unpopular policies.

All three leader-level mechanisms point to a strengthening of local tax governance. In particular, the leader hypothesis predicts that embedded local government should lead to stronger enforcement, higher rates, and ultimately greater revenue. Additionally, embedded leaders should feel able to discuss tax policy more openly, especially if they believe that they hold greater political capacity in this policy realm. Therefore, embedded politicians may discuss tax policy to a greater detail during their electoral campaigns.

HYPOTHESIS #2: COMMUNITY-LEVEL MECHANISMS

The social embeddedness of elected officials may also influence local tax governance

through the preferences and behaviors of the community of voter-taxpayers. These dynamics may impact governance in two diverging ways. Greater trust in a socially-embedded government may engender preferences for higher taxation, encourage compliance, and thus facilitate a fiscal expansion of local government. However, social embeddedness may instead further constrain the fiscal action of local government, through greater monitoring and the threat of social sanctioning for embedded leaders.

Following the first reasoning, embeddedness may increase tax extraction through a change in community preferences. A longer shared history may decrease the community's uncertainty about the future behavior of elected officials and decrease expectations of bad governance. Similarly, the electorate may believe that embedded officials, being themselves members of the community, have a personal interest in local prosperity. Therefore, taxpayers may want to increase funding for government services overseen by an embedded leader.

At the same time, greater trust in local authorities may also elicit greater tax compliance and therefore relax the constraint that evasion places on rates. Indeed, a large literature on the non-coercive sources of compliance shows that individuals' decision to pay taxes is linked to trust in institutions as well as second-order beliefs about others' compliance behaviors, factors grouped under the umbrella concept of "tax morale" or "quasi-voluntary compliance" Levi (1988); Frey and Torgler (2007); Kirchler, Hoelzl and Wahl (2008). Studies have found that tax morale can play a crucial role in supporting a strong local fiscal contract Torgler, Schneider and Schaltegger (2010). In fact, low trust weakens coercive policies Batrancea, Nichita and Olsen (2019) and may even make them counterproductive, increasing the hostility between state institutions and taxpayers Bergman (2009).

These dynamics would produce observable implications that are largely equivalent

to the leader-level hypotheses, at least the level of downstream policy outcomes. Indeed, according to this argument, socially-embedded government should engender higher tax rates and revenue, together with an increase in tax compliance. However, distinctly from the leader-level argument, there should also be changes at the level of public demand and electoral outcomes. Individuals should report preferences for higher taxation and beliefs about lower noncompliance when their local government is socially embedded. As a result, socially-embedded incumbent leaders should lose fewer votes after tax hikes.

However, the community may instead limit local fiscal extraction, by further constraining embedded leaders. Indeed, recent work has shown that greater trust in the government does not necessarily entail different fiscal policy preferences Peyton (2020). Instead, a closer connection between members of the community and elected officials may facilitate monitoring of the local government. At the same time, embedded officials may face the threat of social and electoral retaliation if they pursue unpopular policy options. Finally, embedded leaders may have greater information about the preferences of their community and the possibility of a negative reaction to fiscal extraction. Therefore, social embeddedness may act as deterrent against local taxation.

This second argument about community-driven mechanisms would associate social embeddedness with lower fiscal extraction. Socially-embedded elected officials should set lower tax rates and be able to raise lower revenue.

HYPOTHESIS #3: STATE CAPTURE

While my study thus far proposes mechanisms within the democratic process, social embeddedness may also operate outside regular policy-making. Social proximity to public officials may in fact disrupt facilitate the capture of local state institutions,

either by local elites or crime groups Bardhan and Mookherjee (2006); Bhavnani and Lee (2018). Indeed, research has shown that socially-embedded bureaucrats are vulnerable to elite control, leading to increased corruption and favor-buying, especially when local socioeconomic conditions are not conducive to accountability Treisman (2007); Kiser and Sacks (2009). Additionally, access to social networks may make it easier for embedded politicians to engage in clientelistic politics and exploit public office for rent-seeking rather than for programmatic politics Cruz, Labonne and Querubín (2017); Ravanilla, Haim and Hicken (2021).

State capture would change the dynamics of tax governance, leading to lower investment in enforcement. From the standpoint of extractive incentives, captured administrators should still maximize revenue. However, they would face different constraints. On the one hand, their policy choices may not be kept in check by electoral accountability, given the disruption of the democratic process. On the other hand, they may face a stronger noncompliance constraint. In fact, tax morale would likely decrease, as people trust less local government. At the same time, corrupt, clientelistic or criminal local leaders should not be incentivized to strengthen local institutions Selee (2011); Christensen and Garfias (2021). Indeed, greater investment in local state capacity might make capture more costly and undermine their control of the state apparatus.

Empirical Analysis

Studying the effect of social embeddedness on tax governance is challenging on at least two grounds: measurement and causal identification. First, local embeddedness is a complex latent variable that is rarely observed systematically. In other

words, it is difficult to find data sources on the social ties between local politicians and the community. Second, the impact of social embeddedness is hard to identify causally. The social embeddedness of local political institutions is endogenous to local circumstances. As such, observational estimates will be biased from third factors affecting both social embeddedness and tax politics. For instance, communities that produce socially-embedded leaders should also have higher social capital and political participation, which in turn should affect the local fiscal contract.

In this study, I advance a twin strategy to deal with the challenges of measurement and identification. First, I employ information about the place of birth as a proxy for social embeddedness. Mayors governing their hometown are likely to have deeper social ties with the community. Second, I advance an electoral regression discontinuity design to isolate the causal effect of electing a hometown mayor. Therefore, my analysis focuses on close elections where a hometown candidate competes against a candidate born elsewhere.

To test my argument on the impact of social embeddedness on tax governance, as well as its underlying mechanism, I put forward a multi-method approach, combining several types of data. First, I test the main hypotheses leveraging extensive administrative data. Second, I provide evidence for the leader-level hypotheses by analyzing electoral manifestos to study whether hometown candidates campaign differently. Third, I shed light on the community-level hypotheses by employing a novel source of survey data, an original survey of Italian adults, and by analyzing the electoral outcomes of incumbent candidates. Finally, in Appendix A.2.1, I employ administrative and judicial data to test the third hypothesis of local state capture.

Table .1: Data Sources and Empirical Outcomes

Variable	Description	Source
Rates	Income Tax Rate	Ministry of Finance
	Property Tax Rate	Institute of Local
	Trash Tax Rate	Finance (IFEL)
Enforcement	Budget of municipal tax office	Municipal Budgets
	Number of tax-related public contracts posted by the municipality	National Registry (ANAC)
	Percentage of municipal property-tax valuations contested by owner	IFEL
Compliance	Income Tax (realized / expected revenue)	Municipal Budgets
	Property Tax (realized / expected revenue)	
	Trash Tax (realized / expected revenue)	
Revenue	Tax revenue per capita (Euros)	Municipal Budgets

All administrative data is merged with a number of municipal characteristics from the national statistical agency (ISTAT) and aggregated at the municipality-year level (see Table A.1 in the appendix for the summary statistics of the main variables of interest).

The Context: Italian Municipalities

Italian municipalities offer an ideal case study to test my hypothesis framework, providing a unique combination of theoretically-relevant empirical variation, data availability, and influence as a traditional case in the literature on the functioning of state institutions Putnam, Leonardi and Nanetti (1994). A large number of studies has examined the impact of decentralization on the size and composition of the local state in the Italian context, focusing on the slate of reforms from the past decades Boetti, Piacenza and Turati (2012); Grisorio and Prota (2015). Similarly, recent studies have focused on the role of local leaders, showing that mayors can have a large impact on the quality of local governance Carreri (2021). However, my study is the first to explore the embeddedness dimension of local governance.

From the empirical standpoint, Italian municipalities display optimal characteristics to test my hypotheses. First, the median Italian town has 2400 inhabitants

and displays low levels of inter-municipal mobility, which entails a small and closely-knit social structure. As figure A.1 in the appendix shows, in smaller municipalities, survey respondents are more likely to report being personally connected to local government officials and embeddedness is thus more likely to influence municipal politics. Second, Italian municipal government has considerable control over taxation and spending, which in turn makes local fiscal politics salient for members of the community. Since the 1990s, the Italian state infrastructure decentralized essential state services and increased the powers of municipalities Mussari and Giordano (2013). Additionally, Italian local politics are relatively autonomous with respect to national politics, with the great majority of mayors unaffiliated with national parties. As a result, mayors have sweeping and independent oversight over their local fiscal functions.

HOMETOWN MAYORS

Leveraging biographical information about public administration in Italy, I characterize elected local leaders as “hometown mayors” if they were born in the municipality they govern. This is the case for about half of the country’s mayors in the considered time period (1998-2018). As figure A.2 illustrates, the variation in mayoral place of birth is largely uniform across the peninsula. Behind this variation are several factors: the high turnover rate of mayors due to consecutive term limits (three below 3000 inhabitants, two above); the idiosyncratic variation of municipal electoral calendars; as well the frequency of early elections, most often due to no-confidence votes from the town councils.

Governing their town of birth endows hometown mayors with deeper ties to the community, embedding local government in the local social structures. Native mayors are more likely to be long-time acquaintances, if not friends and family, of a

large segment of the population. Evidence from an original survey indicates that individuals are more likely to report a personal connection to mayors born in the municipality (table A.5 in the appendix). Moreover, as reported in table A.3, hometown mayors are much more likely to gather political collaborators that are also born in the town – hometown mayors lead councils with twice as many “hometown councilors” as their non-native counterparts. Similarly, hometown mayors have a stronger historical connection to the area, with a higher number of previous roles in the town administration and more than three times as many relatives serving in previous town councils.

While using place of birth as proxy for social embeddedness grants my analysis wide data coverage, hometown mayors constitute a hard case for my hypotheses. Indeed, a non-hometown mayor could also be socially-embedded in the local community – after all they were elected. This type of mis-classification produces a downward bias on my estimates, making them a lower-bound for the impact of embeddedness. In other words, my analysis only estimates the impact of the marginal increase in social embeddedness due to being native to a community³. Additionally, relying on place of birth may also introduce compound bias, if hometown mayors are also systematically different in other ways. As table A.3 illustrates, mayors born in the town are largely similar, with a couple of notable differences, being on average five years older, less likely to be a women, self-employed, and more likely to associate with a national party, especially on the left. Therefore, my analyses control for all available mayoral characteristics, in order to isolate the sole impact of social embeddedness.

ITALIAN MUNICIPAL FISCAL POLICY

³In order to strengthen the tie between being native to and being embedded in the community, I restrict my analysis to municipalities with a population under 15000. In the appendix, I present additional results for the full sample, which shows consistent but less precise estimates, as well as results for municipalities under 5000 individuals, which show either similar or stronger effects.

The fiscal landscape of Italian municipalities is a multifaceted policy space including several stages of rate-setting and enforcement. Italian municipalities levy three main taxes, two based on real estate property, the property tax and the trash tax, and one based on individual income, which is levied on top of the national personal income tax. For all three taxes, municipal offices are responsible for setting the tax rate, ascertaining the amounts due by taxpayers, sending notices, and enforcing collection in case of non-payment. Table 1.1 summarizes the quantitative data sources leveraged to analyze the impact of hometown mayors along the various policy dimensions of local fiscal politics.

For all three tax instruments, I collect the nominal rate and revenue levels. With respect to enforcement, my first indicator is the expenditure on the municipal tax office, which is responsible for the administration of all local taxation. To further probe enforcement-related spending, I turn to the more granular data of public contracts. Looking at the recently-published universe of public contracts, I identify over 34 thousand contracts that can be associated with the tax office, based on the contract wording (see Appendix E for data collection and processing). These contracts include all services and goods provided by external firms to the tax office, including materials for enforcement (e.g. postage or software), specific training of employees, and outsourcing of coercive tax collection.

Additionally, I focus on a specific anti-evasion program launched by the Italian Revenue Agency in 2013 to identify unregistered constructions, the so-called “ghost buildings” Casaburi and Troiano (2016); Rubolino (2020). Going beyond existing studies on this policy event, I gather disaggregated data on the registration procedure followed for each building. In particular, I am able to discern whether taxpayers

contested the valuation attributed by the municipal authorities⁴ – a crucial step to determine the property value and therefore the taxation level Agenzia del Territorio (2012). The absence of contestation indicates that the mayoral office has enough information to identify the valuation that will not trigger a reaction by the owner – a potentially lengthy and costly legal process.

Finally, I estimate compliance rates for all three taxes, comparing projected and realized revenue in the municipal budgets. Following the procedure employed by Italian ministerial studies, I take realized tax revenue, reported in the finalized municipal budget at the end of the fiscal year, as a percentage of projected tax revenue, reported in prospective budgets published at the beginning of the year. On the one hand, this measure offers the large advantage of giving a stable coverage of tax payment across municipalities and across tax types. On the other hand, it compounds different sources of underpayment, as any percentage lower than 100 could stem from belayed payments, accounting errors on the part of either municipal offices and taxpayers, or actual tax evasion MEF (2020). Moreover, it does not include “total evasion”, noncompliance on assets that are never declared and therefore do not figure in projected budgets.

THE CHALLENGES OF ITALIAN LOCAL FISCAL POLITICS

In the field of municipal fiscal policy-making, Italian mayors face complex challenges. The political space behind local taxation is highly contentious and mayors risk facing severe social and electoral backlash when setting and enforcing taxes. To begin with, Italian municipal government experience high evasion rates – the mean compliance rate being in the low 40% for both local income and trash tax (table A.1 in the appendix). In addition to low tax morale, local communities are highly tax-averse.

⁴Municipal governments were obligated to publish all buildings and attributed values, and taxpayers had 60 days to contest the valuation.

In annex F, I report several instances of local tax protests and even death threats delivered to the mayor following tax enforcement. In local news articles, the term “cartelle pazze” (crazy bills) has become a well-known buzzword to indicate administrative mistakes in tax assessments. It summarizes well the contentious politics of local taxation. Local governance is highly scrutinized and missteps provoke strong reactions (Appendix F). Facing such a challenging environment, mayors often resort to open letters and interviews to explain and justify their tax policy decisions (Appendix F). Additionally, regression analysis also shows that tax policy-making carries substantial electoral implications. As reported in table A.6 in the appendix, tax hikes are associated with large electoral losses for incumbent mayors running for re-election.

The strong accountability dynamics associated with tax politics resonate with the key role that mayors play, often intervening directly in local tax governance. In many cases, the local leader leverages their personal knowledge of the community to enforce taxation, for instance recognizing individuals who declare no assets or income but lead lavish lives (Appendix F). In one exemplary display of personal involvement from 2017, a northern Italian mayor reported calling personally tax evaders and using his social authority to ensure compliance⁵. In fact, Italian national institutions also acknowledge the value of municipal administrators to tax governance. The central tax authority has created systems through which municipalities can report tax evaders and then share in the tax amounts recovered⁶. Similarly, training seminars by national agencies encourage tax offices to use their knowledge of the community

⁵The mayor governed Barzago, a town of 2400 individuals, and declared “Some citizens, when called by the office manager, turn a deaf ear. But when I call, most of the time we get the credit back. Maybe because we all know each other in the village. We meet on the street and I think that looking into my eyes they are ashamed to look like tax evaders, especially if they have no economic problems” (Appendix F).

⁶D.P.R. n. 600 del 29 settembre 1973, art. 44; Legge n. 662/1996, art. 3, comma 58

when enforcing taxes (Appendix F).

Taken together, the contentious nature of municipal fiscal politics and the personal role of Italian mayors raises the question at the center of this study: will hometown mayors tax their communities differently? Will deep social ties between rulers and ruled strengthen the hand of the administrators and ease the constraints on tax governance? Or will they instead increase social monitoring and further limit fiscal extraction by local state institutions?

Administrative Data: Do Hometown Mayors Tax Differently?

REGRESSION DISCONTINUITY DESIGN

Following a regression discontinuity approach, I focus on close elections where a candidate born in the municipality ran against a candidate born in another municipality. Within a certain margin of victory (bandwidth), this approach considers as the *treated group* municipalities where the hometown candidate wins, whereas the *control group* consists of municipalities where the non-hometown candidate wins. Taking the continuity paradigm of the RD design, the identification strategy of my analysis relies on the assumption that, within a certain bandwidth, municipalities where the hometown candidate wins can be considered similar to those where the non-hometown candidate wins along all relevant dimensions aside from the place of birth of the mayor Calonico, Cattaneo and Farrell (2020). In other words, all covariates should be continuous across the threshold of victory, with no distinct jumps at the change in type of mayor. Therefore, the jump in the outcome variables at the threshold can be considered as the local treatment effect (LATE) of the mayor characteristic of interest, in this case place of birth and therefore social embeddedness.

From an econometric standpoint, my design follows the multiple-cutoff regression discontinuity model Cattaneo et al. (2016). Italian municipal elections follow a first-past-the-post voting method. Under the 15000 population threshold, the candidate with plurality of votes win even if they do not reach a majority of the votes, which instead triggers a runoff round in larger towns. Therefore, instead of looking at a fixed threshold of victory (usually 50%), I look at the margin of victory (MoV) between the winner and the candidate with the second-most votes and focus on elections where the top two candidates include one hometown candidate and one non-hometown candidate. The MoV constitutes my running variable, with its cutoff at zero, where the two top candidates would be tied, and the bandwidth representing the electoral distance between winner and runnerup.

For all reported estimation and visualizations, I employ a data-driven approach, minimizing the number of researcher choices in specifications and model parameters Calonico, Cattaneo and Titiunik (2015). Based on the variance of the outcome variable, the RD estimator chooses automatically the bandwidth, that is how to define a “close” election. In doing so, this approach optimizes the trade-off between “smoothing bias” for higher bandwidths, whereby including municipalities too far from the cutoff misrepresents the local trends, and higher estimation variance for lower bandwidths, due to a lower number of observations near the cutoff Cattaneo, Idrobo and Titiunik (2019). Additionally, my approach relies on a linear local polynomial to estimate the trends on either side of the cutoff, and a triangular kernel, which weights less observations further away from the cutoff. Finally, my approach employs a bias-correcting procedure, which has been shown to recover the correct estimate via cross-validation with experimental results Hyytinen et al. (2018).

FALSIFICATION TESTS AND CONCEPTUAL CHALLENGES

In order to guarantee the robustness of my estimates, I put forward the standard battery of falsification and sensitivity tests. First, I employ the McCrary Density Test to rule out that sorting might impact the distribution of elections around the threshold (figure A.13 in the appendix). Hometown candidates may have an advantage in manipulating close elections, which would invalidate the RD analysis and result in a higher proportion of close elections won by the hometown candidate. Second, I show that available town-level covariates do not present discontinuities at the threshold of victory for hometown mayors (figures A.15 in the appendix). Similarly, I show that mayor-level characteristics do not jump, which rules out the potential compound effect of correlates of place of birth (figure A.16 in the appendix).

While this battery of tests bolsters the RD setup, there remain empirical challenges. First, as Marshall Marshall (2019) points out, RD designs may be invalidated by the presence of compensating differentials. According to Marshall, the LATE estimate may identify not only the effect of the characteristic of interest (place of birth) but also all other characteristics that make it possible for a hometown candidate a close election against a non-hometown candidate. In this case, close-election hometown candidates may be of lower quality, and indeed less connected to the community. Indeed, embeddedness generally improves the chances of a candidate and a close-election native candidate may either be sub-par or be running against a higher quality non-hometown candidate. Therefore, the RD setup constitutes a hard case for my hypotheses and should estimate a lower-bound of the effects of embeddedness.

Second, given that my competing theoretical hypotheses are partly based on the concept of political accountability, close elections may constitute an easy case for community-driven mechanisms and a hard-case for leader-driven mechanisms. Indeed, the closer the margin of victory, the more vulnerable elected officials may

be to accountability. When mayors are elected by slim margins, they may have less political capital at their disposal and be more cautious in their governance, especially in the case of contentious policy areas. Therefore, beyond the main data-driven RD analysis, I also perform a bandwidth-sensitivity test by varying the bandwidth considered and checking whether the estimated effect of embeddedness changes.

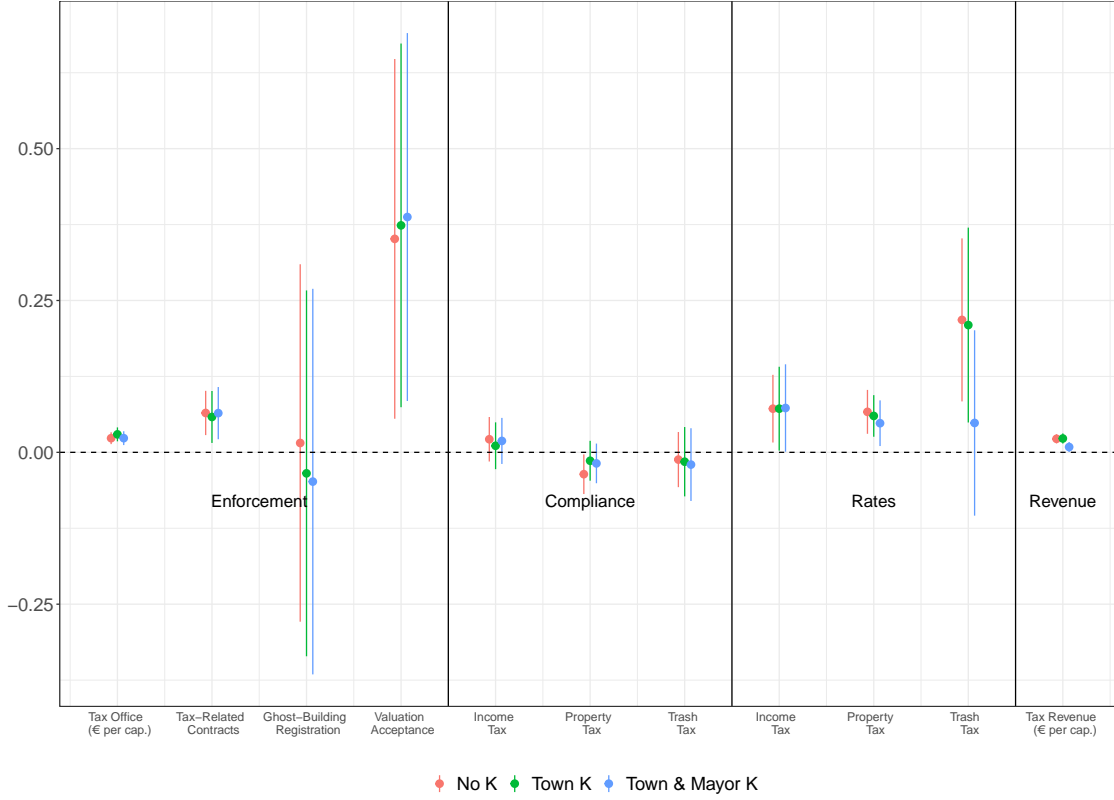
RDD RESULTS

Figure 1.1 displays the coefficients estimated through RD analysis across administrative outcomes and model specifications. Each outcome is analyzed with three specifications: the first (red dot) represents the simple RD without additional covariates; the second (green dot) includes town-level characteristics; the third (blue dot) also adds mayor characteristics. The bandwidth selection is data-driven and the full model output and discontinuity visualizations are available in appendix C. Additionally, in the appendix, I report the same RDD analysis with a fixed bandwidth for very close elections, where political accountability dynamics would constrain mayors the most.

The RDD estimates show that social embeddedness increases tax extraction, largely supporting the leader-level argument. Compared to the median municipality, hometown mayors increase enforcement and tax rates by 20% and 2 to 5% respectively. The null effect on tax compliance may be explained on two accounts. First, the countervailing effects of greater enforcement and higher rates may cancel each other out. Second, compliance is measured by an imperfect proxy and could capture late or staggered payments. Indeed, anecdotal evidence points to embedded mayors offering payment schemes to facilitate compliance from taxpayers (Appendix F). Ultimately, hometown mayors do extract more as tax revenue increases by 8.7%.

Previewing evidence on the underlying mechanisms, the data on the ‘Ghost-

Figure .1: RDD Results: The Impact of Hometown Mayors
(data-driven bandwidth selection)



All outcomes are normalized and coefficients should be interpreted in terms of standard deviations. Lines represent the 95% confidence interval. The full specification is as follows:

$$Outcome_{i,m} \sim \beta Native_{i,m} + \kappa_1 f(MoV_{i,m}) + \kappa_2 f(MoV_{i,m}) * Native_{i,m} + \lambda_1 Z_{i,m} + \lambda_2 X_{i,m} + \omega FE_{i,m} \quad (2)$$

A binary variable for whether the winning candidate is native to the town; a polynomial $f(MoV)$ which models the margin of victory on either side of the cutoff; town covariates Z (population, surface, urbanization); mayor covariates X (age, gender, education, incumbency status); fixed effects for province, region, and year. The first (No K) specification only includes fixed effects, while the other two focus respectively on town covariates only or the full battery. Full results are reported in the appendix.

Building” program reveals that hometown mayors faced lower levels of contestation when enforcing the property tax. In other words, homeowners were less likely to file a petition against the valuation decided by the municipal government. This improvement could be explained by proposed theoretical mechanisms at both leader and community levels. Embedded government may rely on the mayor’s better per-

sonal knowledge, and thus advance more accurate valuations, or benefit from greater community trust, and thus greater homeowner tolerance for extraction.

Leader Data: Do Hometown Candidates Campaign Differently?

Employing textual analysis of local electoral manifestos, my study provides direct evidence of the impact of embeddedness on the behavior of political leaders, whereas my analysis thus far has focused on administrative data sources. While arguably more important, policy outcomes are the product of a theoretically complex process and can only be partially related to the mayor’s identity. Instead, policy promises can be linked directly to the mayoral candidates – especially in the Italian context where town politics are mostly independent of national politics.

Through a systematic data-collection effort, I gathered over 2800 local electoral manifestos from mayoral elections of the past 10 years. In Italian mayoral elections, it is commonplace for candidates to publish a “programma elettorale” outlining the major policy priorities for the coming term. Thanks to recent improvements in digital infrastructure of Italian public institutions, a sizable proportion of municipalities publishes these manifestos on their institutional website. Employing a crowd-sourcing data gathering approach Sumner, Farris and Holman (2020), I gathered all publicly-available electoral manifestos (more information in appendix E). The resulting sample covers at least one electoral cycle in about 15% of all Italian municipalities, and on average includes all candidates for any given election.

To analyze the manifesto data, I employ a dictionary approach, a standard supervised text classification tool Grimmer and Stewart (2013/ed). For each relevant

theoretical dimensions, I construct a word dictionary that covers the most relevant language associated to the topic. The dictionaries are built upon critical reading of a random sample of manifestos to populate the initial selection of keywords and further refined through manual cross-validation – assessing the match quality between scores and actual texts. For each dictionary dimension, manifesto are assigned a score based on the number of mentions of dictionary’s keywords. Using these scores, I the analyze the link between manifesto policy dimensions and candidate characteristics with a standard regression approach.

The dictionary method is particularly appropriate to this application as the interest lies in theoretically-determined categories – as opposed to data-driven topic modeling. Additionally, my study is concerned with the salience of a topic, rather than a specific policy position. This is because politicians never campaign on increasing taxes. However, how much candidates decide to discuss tax issues, and particularly tax evasion, informs us about how comfortable they are with the policy area of enforcement and rate-setting. Therefore, a dictionary containing all general terms specific to the policy area identifies unequivocally the theoretically-relevant variation across electoral manifestos.

As detailed in table 1.2, candidates mention tax policy in the majority of electoral manifestos. This pattern underscores how local taxation represents a salient policy issue. Indeed, though less frequently, candidates discuss tax noncompliance and enforcement as well, which indicates how these concepts are present in the electoral politics of local taxation. However, the median manifesto only devotes a couple of keywords, as thus a couple of sentences, to the topic. That candidates do not focus too much attention to taxes also highlights their baseline difficulty in navigating the policy field.

Table .2: Dictionary Dimensions

Dimension	Present in # Manifestos	Median Frequency	Keywords
Tax Policy	1823 (66%)	3 (0.21%)	‘tax’, ‘taxation’, ‘fiscal’, ‘tributes’, ‘taxpayers’, ‘tax bracket’, ‘local tax acronyms’
Compliance	416 (15%)	1 (0.07%)	‘evasion’, ‘elusion’, ‘evadors’, ‘enforcement’, ‘collection’
Local Ties	410 (15%)	1 (0.07%)	‘born in’, ‘raised in’, ‘grew up in’, ‘native to’
Personalism	1841 (66%)	3 (0.21%)	Candidates’ first and last name

The table presents the number of manifestos employing keywords; the median number of keywords when the topic is discussed. For ease of reading, the table presents a representative selection of keywords before text processing, which entails reducing words down to their roots (stemming). Full dictionaries and random samples of matched text are available in the appendix.

In second instance, I analyze how electoral manifestos discuss the candidates themselves. Indeed, if the place of birth of the candidate matters for tax policy, when electoral campaigns of hometown candidates are more centered around the candidate’s persona, they should also discuss taxation more often. My main indicator of personalism is based on the presence of the candidate’s name in the electoral documents. Indeed, the majority of manifestos display at least once the name of the candidate. However, there is wide variation. On the one hand, some manifestos display the name on every page. Conversely, others focus on programmatic promises, avoiding to mention the mayoral candidate at all.

Furthermore, only about 1 in 7 discusses the candidates’ personal ties to the municipality, in terms of where they were born and how long they have lived in the town. On the surface, this pattern conflicts with the existing literature on the electoral advantages conferred by “local native” status Tavits (2010); Collignon and Sajuria

(2018). However, this counterintuitive finding may be explained by the widespread public knowledge of the candidates' place of birth, as detailed in my survey analysis. Additionally, anecdotal evidence in Appendix F shows how candidates discuss their place of origins extensively elsewhere.

Table .3: Manifesto Text Analysis

	Outcome Variable					
	Tax Policy Language			Evasion Policy Language		
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Hometown Cand.	0.142*** (0.056)	0.107** (0.050)	0.100** (0.050)	0.171*** (0.046)	0.163*** (0.052)	0.158*** (0.052)
Female Cand.		-0.002 (0.053)	0.009 (0.053)		0.088 (0.056)	0.097* (0.055)
Cand. Education		0.026 (0.021)	0.023 (0.021)		-0.014 (0.022)	-0.017 (0.022)
Cand. Age		-0.007 (0.023)	-0.001 (0.023)		-0.036 (0.024)	-0.031 (0.024)
Manifesto Length		0.551*** (0.024)	0.562*** (0.025)		0.397*** (0.026)	0.405*** (0.027)
Town Pop.		0.0003 (0.026)	0.014 (0.026)		-0.003 (0.027)	0.009 (0.027)
Urbanization		0.018 (0.023)	0.017 (0.023)		0.020 (0.023)	0.019 (0.023)
Town Surface		0.026 (0.040)	0.021 (0.039)		-0.001 (0.042)	-0.005 (0.041)
Cand. Mentions			-0.082*** (0.024)			-0.066*** (0.025)
HT Cand.* Cand. Mentions			0.184*** (0.048)			0.159*** (0.051)
Observations	1,898	1,662	1,662	2,292	1,662	1,662
Fixed Effects: Province and Year						

Note:

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

Table 1.3 reports the relationship between candidates' place of birth and manifesto policy language. The top-line results indicate that hometown candidates discuss tax policy more frequently in their electoral promises. This finding supports my argument that native leaders increase tax extraction because they themselves believe that they are capable of dealing with this policy field. Additionally, the relationship strengthens when focusing on mentions of tax noncompliance and enforcement, in models 4-6. This highlights how enforcement and noncompliance are a crucial point of connection between embeddedness and tax policy.

Furthermore, models 3 and 6 indicate a significant and large interaction between the personalistic nature of the manifesto and the candidates' place of birth. I measure personalism via the number of mentions of the candidate's name in the manifesto. When hometown candidates run a more personalistic campaign, they are much more likely to discuss taxation and compliance. By contrast, when non-native candidates center the manifesto on their persona, they are less likely to discuss tax policy issues – as shown by the negative coefficient on candidate mentions. Additionally, the third model shows that both types of candidate are more likely to associate mentions of their name to talk of their personal place of birth and residence.

Community Data: Do Individuals Treat Hometown Mayors Differently?

The third section of my empirical analysis sheds light on the specific relationships between elected officials and the local community of voter-taxpayers. Going beyond administrative and candidate data, I put forward both survey and electoral evidence to show how social embeddedness changes the way mayors are perceived and treated

at the electoral ballot. In other words, this section investigates the political environment that hometown mayors encounter, whether it is more permissive or more constraining than that faced by non-hometown mayors. Additionally, I am able to further discern whether the social embeddedness of hometown mayors impacts the whole community through perceived localism or whether it works through the specific social network of the mayor, that is their friends and acquaintances.

SURVEY RESULTS

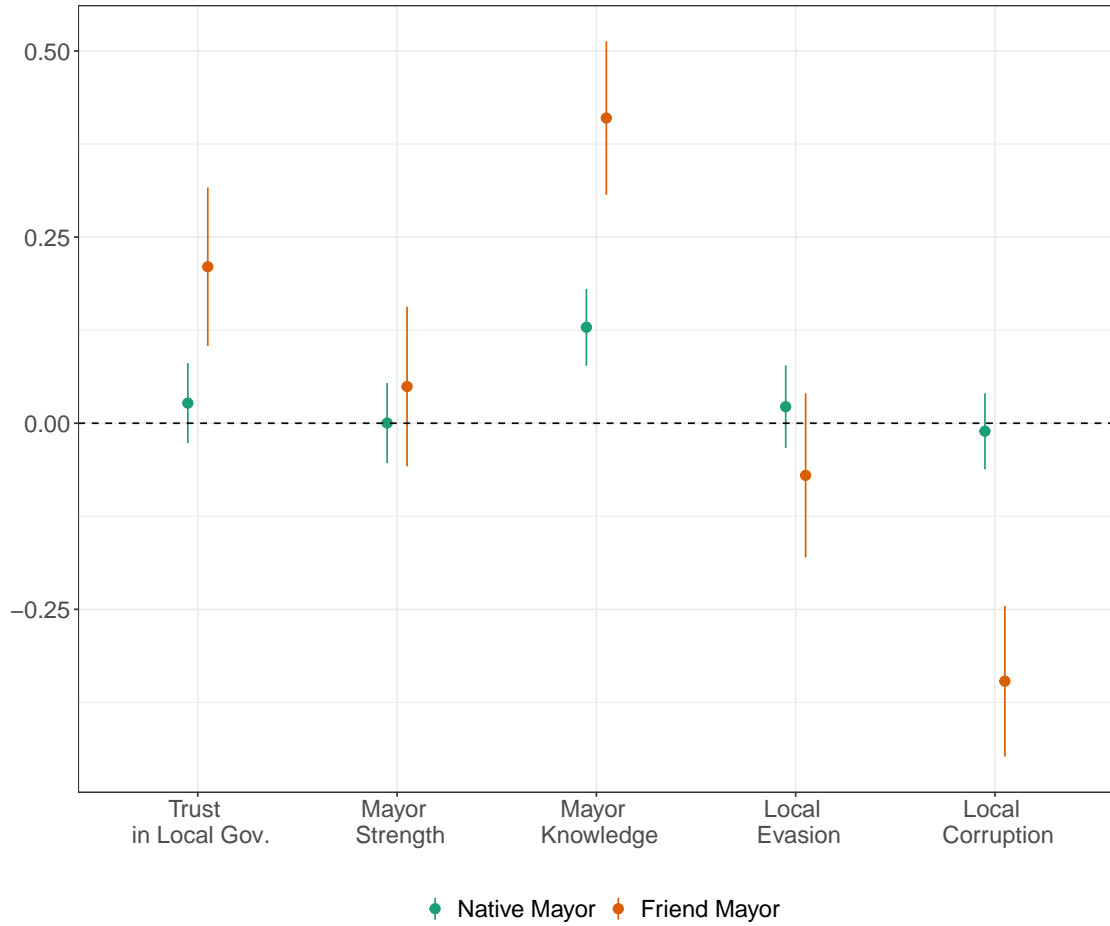
The first battery of evidence comes from an original survey conducted online in June 2021 over a nationally-representative sample of 2077 Italian adults⁷. To begin with, respondents were asked their beliefs about local government, including general attitudes such as trust as well as positive and negative expectations of local governance. In turn, survey-takers reported their personal connection to local government, including whether they knew the place of origin of the mayor and whether they knew the mayor personally. Highlighting the salience of place of origin, out of all the survey respondents, 85% were able to correctly identify whether the mayor was born in their hometown.

In figure 1.2, I report the estimated coefficients from standard regression models, analyzing the influence of personal connections to the mayor on perceptions of local government. The two main predictors concern whether the mayor is native to the town and whether the respondents has a personal connection to the mayor.

These results are in line with the logic of the main argument, for both the mechanism of higher trust and increased knowledge of the community. Individuals with closer connections to municipal government tend to trust local institutions more.

⁷This research was IRB-approved. Additional information can be found in Appendix E, section 5.1.

Figure .2: Social Embeddedness of Government and Citizen Beliefs



All outcomes are normalized and coefficients should be interpreted in terms of standard deviations. The specification is as follows:

$$Outcome_i \sim \beta_1 Native_i + \beta_2 Friend_i + \lambda X_i + \omega FE_i \quad (3)$$

The model specification includes as individual-level covariates X (age, gender, education, income, left-right partisanship) and regional FE. The outcome question wordings are as follows:

Trust: “How much do you trust your municipal government?”

Strength: “How much do the mayor’s decisions affect the life of your community?”

Knowledge: “How well does the mayor know the local community?”

Evasion: “What % of residents in your municipality evade their taxes?”

Corruption: “How corrupt is your town gov.?” (definition provided)

Full regression results are available in the appendix.

Additionally, they believe that mayors have a deeper knowledge of the community and that the decisions of the mayor carry more weight for public life in the area. At

the same time, they reported lower perceived public corruption and local evasion – both of which lend suggestive indirect evidence of the hypotheses.

Additionally, the findings from my original survey suggest that much of the influence of embeddedness could work through networks of personal connections between public officials and members of the community. Indeed, the two measures of personal connections to local government show largely the same patterns, while the simpler variable of native mayor matches the previous two only for knowledge of the community. Unsurprisingly, a personal connections with the mayor carries the largest weight for beliefs about local governance. This pattern could just be due to “friendship bias”. However, even if the effect was purely due to a network of local friendships, this type of public-opinion environment might impact governance dynamics, especially in smaller communities, by either increasing tax morale or reducing political backlash to otherwise unpopular policy-making, such as higher enforcement or higher taxation.

To complement my original survey findings with causal evidence, I replicate the RD analysis with a large and previously unexplored source of individual-level data, the annual household survey conducted by the Italian Statistical Agency. Every year, these surveys question around 50,000 new respondents in a random sample of around 800 municipalities⁸. By focusing on responses from municipalities with a close-call elections between hometown candidate and non-native candidate, I am able to extend the RD setup to two key survey responses. First, I employ a standard measure of trust in local government, which directly tests my theoretical mechanisms. Second, I turn to a question on the cost of the local trash service, and therefore of the local trash tax, to check whether there is any backlash to increases of rates by hometown

⁸This data is only accessible through a secure data labs maintained by the statistical agency network, upon approval by the latter.

mayors. In table 8.C in the appendix, I report placebo tests on additional questions where no effect should be detected, including trust in others, regional and provincial government.

Table .4: Survey RDD Results

	Outcome Variable:			
	Trust in Local Gov.		Trash Tax High?	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Hometown Mayor	1.442** (0.753)	1.357*** (0.381)	−0.058* (0.019)	−0.070* (0.031)
Covariates		✓		✓
N. Obs.	4811	3992	5715	6887
N. Elections	170	146	251	241
Bandwidth	2.8	3.1	13.7	15.8
Mixed Effects	Town, Year Region	Town, Year Region	Town, Year Region	Town, Year Region
<i>Note:</i>		*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01		

As table 1.4 reports, in municipalities where the hometown candidate narrowly won, individuals report higher trust in local government – with a sizable increase of 1.4 over a 10-point scale. Additionally, despite the increase in the trash tax, survey respondents actually consider the cost of local trash service more adequate, by 0.7 on a 4-point scale. These twin findings corroborate the evidence in favor of both leader-level and community-level mechanisms. Hometown mayors face a more favorable political environment, relying on greater community trust and tolerance for fiscal extraction.

Conclusion

How does fiscal governance change when local elected officials are socially embedded in the community that they govern? Putting forward a diverse body of evidence, this study shows that Italian hometown mayors increase local taxation, leveraging personal knowledge of the community and the greater trust by voter-taxpayers. Endowed with these advantages, embedded officials relax the constraint of noncompliance on tax policy-making, increasing enforcement, setting higher rates, and generating greater revenue.

Studying decentralized systems can help us shed light on long-standing comparative questions Wibbels (2006). Indeed, showing that social embeddedness can positively impact local fiscal politics, I contribute to a number of long-standing research agendas, with both theoretical and policy implications.

From one broad theoretical perspective, the Italian case demonstrates that, even in high-income national contexts, personal connections between elected officials and the community can influence the functioning of formal state structures. In most existing literature, informal societal structures are considered either second-best solutions to their formal counterparts, thus useful in contexts of low state development, or predatory mechanisms that actively hinder state-building and programmatic politics Radnitz (2011); Lauth (2015); Baldwin (2016). Instead, Italian mayors are able to use their embeddedness in social networks to strengthen local government and invest in fiscal capacity.

Speaking to the long tradition of federalism studies, this study underlines a dynamic that goes counter to the core “leviathan hypothesis”, which predicts that fiscal decentralization should limit the size of government Brennan, Brennan and

Buchanan (1980). This idea has been linked to several different mechanisms, from the electoral booth Bosch and Solé-Ollé (2007); Christensen and Garfias (2021) to the inter-municipality factor mobility Tiebout (1956); Martinez (2017); Ly and Paty (2020). By contrast, I show that transferring tax autonomy to lower levels of state governance opens the possibility for embeddedness to strengthen the local fiscal contract. In smaller communities, there is an increasing probability that a non-negligible share of the population is personally connected to local government. In such cases, the connection between elected officials and community increases tax extraction, and thus the size of local government.

At a policy level, this study suggests that subnational enforcement can aid achieving greater fairness in taxation systems. Countries across development levels may benefit from granting lower levels of government a larger role in the detection and prevention of noncompliance. Focusing on the mechanisms behind effective tax governance, this study further underlines the importance of trust and information. On the one hand, I extend a long literature on the central role of trust in establishing a strong fiscal contract Levi (1988); Bergman (2009). On the other hand, my results point to the crucial role played by local knowledge. While these dynamics had been detected in previous works, the impact of embeddedness on tax collection had been chiefly studied in developing contexts and outside the realm of local politics Kasara (2007); Balan et al. (2020).

Having established the role of social embeddedness for tax governance in Italy, this article opens several avenues for further research. First, as Bergman Bergman (2009) emphasizes, analyses of the politics surrounding noncompliance are heavily dependent on their cultural context and policy history. Therefore, expanding to other contexts may yield variation in the type of impact of embeddedness on fis-

cal politics. For instance, does efficiency also improve in cases of state capture, if so, embeddedness might be doubly harmful in places where accountability is weak, increasing the potential for rent extraction.

Finally, what are the distributive implications of embeddedness and how does it interact with inequality and the politics of redistribution? Noncompliance has clear-cut regressive implications for the income distribution. Therefore, facilitating enforcement policies, embeddedness may favor the creation of pro-redistribution coalitions and ultimately increase local economic equality.

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Supplementary Material

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A Additional Evidence

A.1 Municipal Data Summary Statistics

Table A.1: Italian Municipalities: Summary Statistics

Variable	N	Mean	St. Dev.	Min	Max
Mayors Characteristics					
Native Mayor	117,225	0.5	0.5	0.0	1.0
Mayor Age	88,960	50.6	10.4	22	90.0
Mayor Female	117,261	0.1	0.3	0.0	1.0
Mayor Education	88,962	3.3	0.7	0.0	5.0
Mayor Incumbent	128,973	0.4	0.5	0.0	1.0
Fiscal Outcomes					
Tax Revenue	144,355	1,324,626.0	2,754,063.0	0.0	343,690,092.0
PIT Rate	69,123	0.4	0.3	0.0	0.9
PIT Progressivity	69,123	0.01	0.03	0.0	0.2
Prop Tax Rate (1st Home)	148,918	4.9	0.9	0.0	10.6
Prop Tax Rate (Other)	148,992	6.8	1.6	3.0	20.6
Trash Tax Rate (1st Home)	33,327	1.3	0.9	0.0	3.3
Trash Tax Rate (Other)	33,551	0.7	0.8	0.0	25.0
Enforcement Expenditure	143,045	54,317.7	160,990.9	0.0	15,164,437.0
PIT Tax Compliance (%)	93,754	42.7	37.6	0.0	100.0
Property Tax Compliance (%)	134,541	74.1	20.5	0.0	100.0
Trash Tax Compliance (%)	103,333	43.5	38.4	0.0	100.0
Tax Public Contracts (#)	144,357	0.3	0.9	0.0	30.0
Uncontested Valuations (%)	131,641	9.9	9.4	0.0	100.0
Town Characteristics					
Population	144,357	3,366.7	3,297.4	29.0	14,998.0
Urban Area (%)	135,414	16.6	24.2	0.0	100.0
Survey Respondents					
Age	2,077	49.7	16.6	22	82
Education Level	2,073	2.6	1.2	0.0	5.0
Female	2,073	0.5	0.5	0.0	1.0
Yearly Income	1,845	21,669	23,438	4,152	98,924
Partisanship (l-r)	2,066	5.4	2.5	1.0	10.0
Native Mayor	1,506	0.7	0.5	0.0	1.0
Mayor Strength	2,065	2.7	1.1	0.0	5.0
Mayor Known Personally	2,064	0.3	0.5	0.0	1.0

A.2 Survey Summary Statistics

Table A.2: Survey Summary Statistics (Italy Survey)

Fielding Dates	June 22nd-29th, 2021		
Sample Size	2200		
	Mean	Min	Max
Men	50.4%	-	-
High-School Graduates	55.3%	-	-
College Graduates	35.2%	-	-
Full-time Employed	42%	-	-
Self-Employed	10%	-	-
Retired	21%	-	-
Age (mean)	50	18-24	80-89
Yearly Income (mean)	22,600	under 6000	over 120,000

A.3 Compliance and Taxation Levels

Table A.3: Compliance and Tax Rates

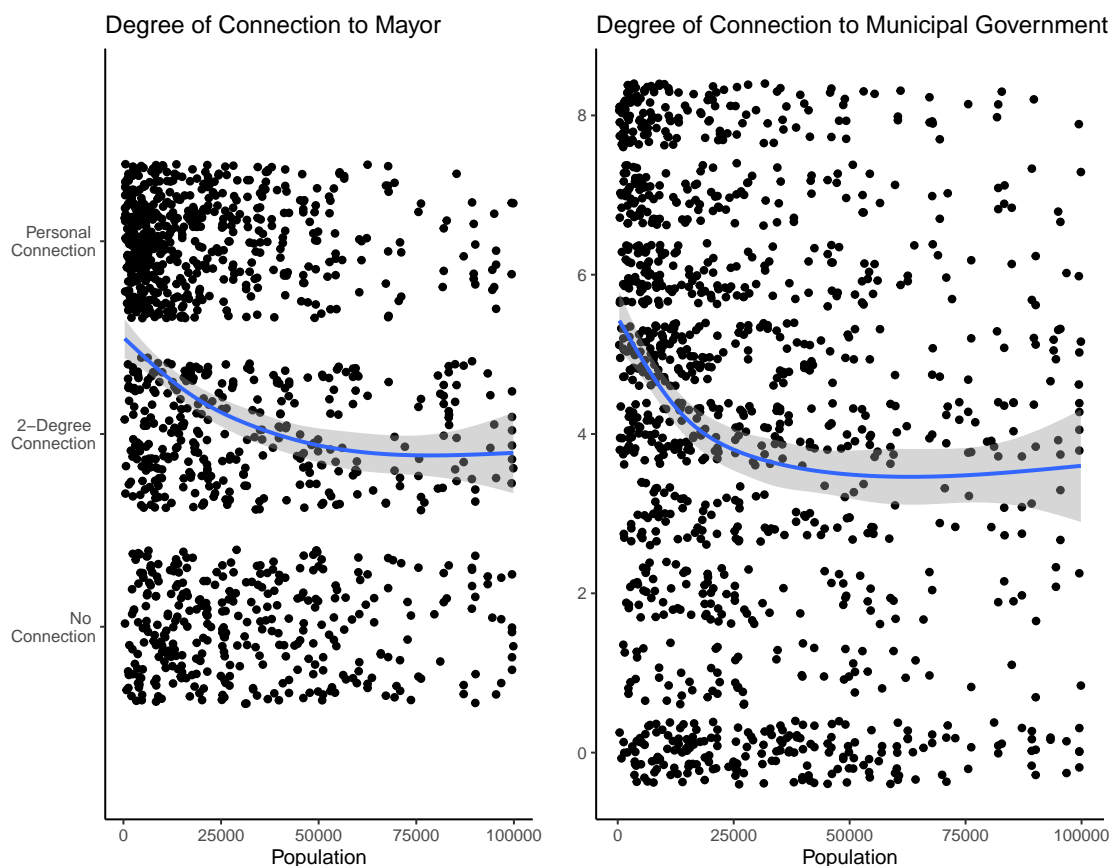
	<i>Outcome variable:</i>
	Income Tax Rate
Income Tax Compliance	−0.016*** (0.004)
Income Tax Revenue (per Capita)	0.085*** (0.009)
Urbanization	0.012*** (0.004)
Population	−0.009 (0.007)
Observations	56,785
Mixed Effects	Town, Province, Year
<i>Note:</i>	*p<0.05; **p<0.01; ***p<0.001

All variables are scaled and coefficients should be interpreted in terms of standard deviations.

A.4 Community Size and Embeddness

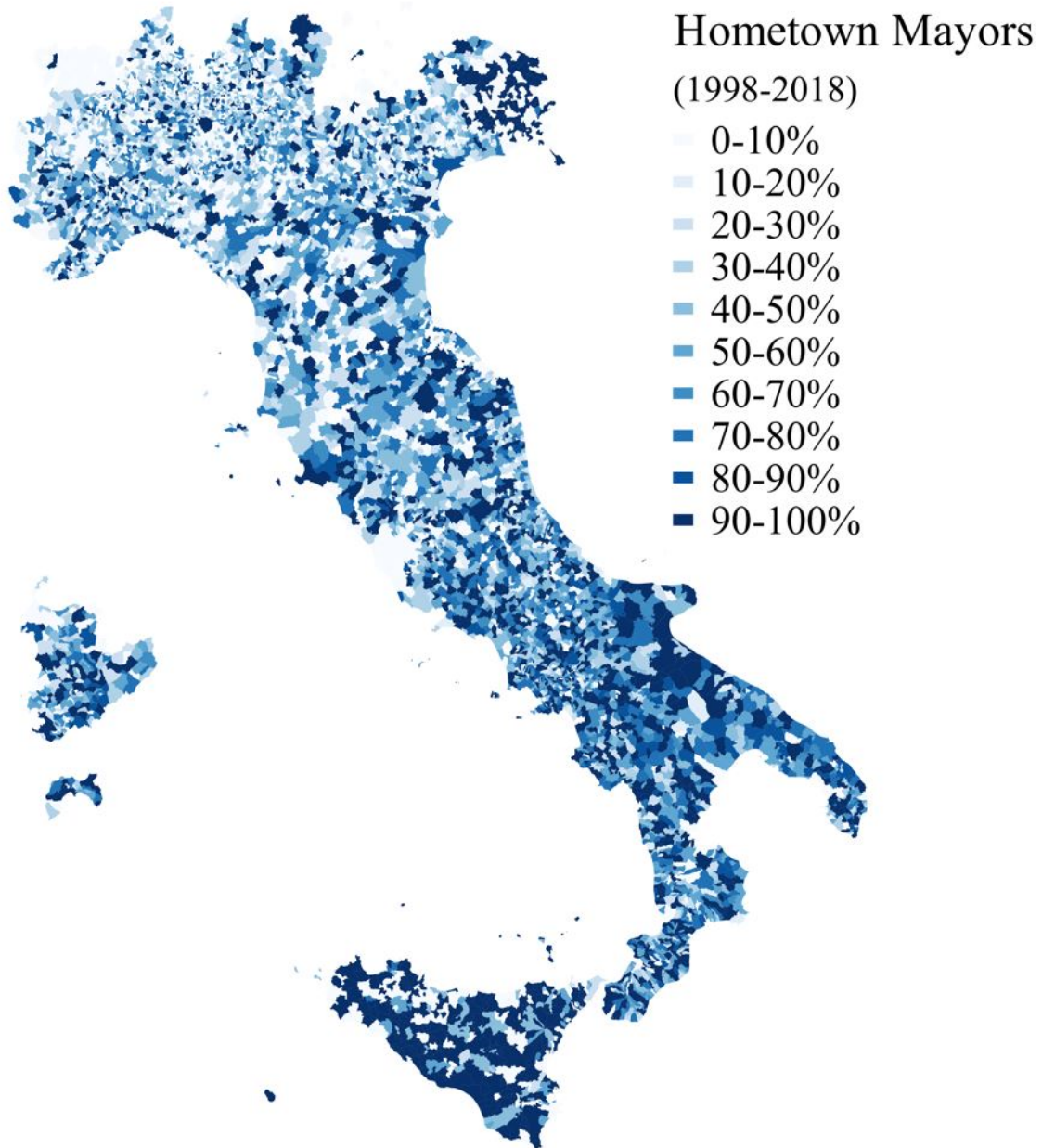
Figure A.1 below illustrates graphically how reported personal connections to the municipal government change as town size increases. I base this analysis on the original survey conducted, focusing on two questions: whether the respondent had connections to the mayor or to someone working the municipal government (mayor, council, administration, police force). Each question asked for either a personal connection or a 2-degree connection (friend of a friend).

Figure A.1: Population Size and Social Embeddedness of Government



A.5 Hometown Mayors and Embeddness

Figure A.2: Geographical Distribution of Native Mayors



Hometown mayors are defined as being born in the municipality. Information about place of birth comes from the national biographical registry of local public officials.

Table A.4: Hometown and Non-Hometown Mayors

	Hometown Mayor	Non-Hometown Mayor
N		
Education (1-5)	3.22	+0.09
Female (%)	5.2%	+5.7%
Age	49.7	-2.7
Self-Employed (%)	35.2%	+2.4%
Entrepreneurs (%)	4.9%	+2.3%
Retired (%)	1.1%	-0.4%
Administrative Experience (%)	1%	+1.3%
Left-Wing (%)	23.9%	-6.4%
Right-Wing (%)	26.4%	-8.7%
Non-Partisan (%)	45.6%	+15.7%
Town Council Education	2.88	+0.05
Town Council Age	43.16	+0.93
Town Council Born in Town (%)	54.7%	-22.9%
Town Council Female (%)	16.3%	+7%
Previous Town Roles (N)	2.24	+0.13
Previous Mayor Tenures (N)	0.61	+0.01
Relatives' Previous Town Roles (N)	1.04	-0.71
Future Town Roles (N)	1.67	-0.2
Future Out-Town Roles (N)	0.09	+0.03
Future Higher Roles (N)	0.14	-0.01

Table A.5: Hometown and Non-Hometown Mayors (Difference in Means)

	All Elections		Close Elections (<3% Margin)	
	Hometown Mayors	Non-Hometown Mayors	Hometown Mayors	Non-Hometown Mayors
N	15,787	21,506	4,269	6,224
Mayor's Characteristics				
Age	52.82	-5.62	53.13	-5.32
Women (%)	7.8%	+6.2%	8.2%	+7.6%
Education (1-5)	3.29	+0.07	3.41	+0.02
Self-Employed (%)	35.7%	+5%	35.8%	+2.9%
Entrepreneurs (%)	5.4%	+1%	5.5%	+0.7%
Retired (%)	1.3%	-0.6%	1.2%	-0.5%
PA Experience (%)	19.3%	-1%	18.7%	-3.3%
Left-Wing (%)	15.9%	-4.7%	15.6%	-4.8%
Right-Wing (%)	9.9%	-1.7%	13.3%	-2.4%
Non-Partisan (%)	70%	+7.9%	65.9%	+8.8%
Political Career in Town				
Previous Roles (N)	3.2	-0.36	2.83	-0.57
Future Roles (N)	1.08	-0.03	0.93	+0.02
Relatives' Roles (N)	1.67	-1.2	1.65	-1.33
Town Council's Characteristics				
Age	44.72	+0.42	44.47	-0.02
Women (%)	23.7%	+5.5%	23.4%	+6.2%
Education (1-5)	3.06	-0.01	3.1	+0
Hometown (%)	43.3%	-18.6%	45.5%	-19.2%

[
All differences between means are statistically significant at the 95%, since the large sample size grants substantial statistical power to the difference-in-means estimator. However, many of the differences are of negligible magnitude.

Table A.5 below employs the data from the original survey and explores the predictors of knowing the mayor personally. As expected, individuals from municipalities where the mayor is native are more likely to have a personal connection. Like in figure A.1, we can additionally see that the population size has a negative impact on the probability of a personal connection.

Table A.6: Predictors of Knowing the Mayor Personally

	<i>Outcome variable:</i>
	Personal Connection to Mayor
Hometown Mayor	0.136** (0.069)
Female	-0.140 (0.123)
Education Level	-0.030 (0.052)
Age	0.113*** (0.035)
Income Level	-0.007 (0.064)
Population	-1.318*** (0.163)
Observations	1,297
Mixed Effects	Region
<i>Note:</i>	*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

A.6 Electoral Results

In the table A.6, I display the regression results on the relationship between tax policy-making and incumbents' electoral performance. In other words, I study whether tax governance in the first term affects the electoral share of incumbent mayors running for re-election. In each of the four models illustrated, I interact one main component of tax governance with a dummy for hometown mayors, in order to capture whether the electoral consequences of tax policy are different for hometown and non-hometown mayors.

Table A.7: Electoral Consequences of Tax Policy

	Electoral Share			
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Income Tax Increase	1.307* (0.705)			
Property tax Increase		-1.035** (0.413)		
Enforcement Increase			0.111 (0.252)	
Compliance Increase				1.107*** (0.270)
Hometown	-2.152* (1.288)	-1.080** (0.460)	-0.913** (0.455)	-0.803* (0.442)
Mayor's Education	-2.468*** (0.912)	-3.045*** (0.308)	-3.212*** (0.319)	-3.064*** (0.308)
Mayor's Age	-3.367*** (0.602)	-3.864*** (0.215)	-3.862*** (0.222)	-3.847*** (0.215)
Female Mayor	-5.423*** (1.840)	-3.789*** (0.666)	-3.829*** (0.682)	-3.764*** (0.666)
Population	-1.301*** (0.440)	-2.083*** (0.235)	-2.028*** (0.233)	-2.094*** (0.235)
Urbanization	-0.754 (0.469)	-1.223*** (0.198)	-1.233*** (0.204)	-1.232*** (0.198)
PIT*Hometown	-1.963** (0.976)			
Prop. tax*Hometown		-1.064** (0.506)		
Enforcement*Hometown			-0.356 (0.509)	
Compliance*Hometown				-0.563 (0.380)
Observations	1,278	9,994	9,183	9,996

Note:

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

A.7 Mayor’s Birth Distance

In the main analysis, I compare mayors native to the municipality to mayors born in a different municipality. This clear dichotomous variable is amenable to the RDD design and provides an intuitive proxy for social embeddedness – which may also be used as a clear heuristic for embeddedness by voters.

As a validation exercise, I perform here the same analysis differentiating between mayors born in the immediate vicinity of the municipality (close-birth) and mayors born father away (distant-birth). The immediate vicinity is defined as a 30-minute car-ride radius around the municipality.

The results largely confirm the patterns emerging from the main analysis. Indeed, this set of results appears to suggest that the main break between native and non-native mayors concerns the difference between native and close-birth mayors. In other words, the impact of embeddedness is already visible when the mayor is born just outside the municipality. This finding resonates with the parochial nature of many Italian local communities, where adjacent towns can develop adversarial relationships rather than amicable ones.

However, the results illustrated in the tables below also deviate from the main findings of this study in a couple of notable ways. First, distant-birth mayors seem to be associated with higher compliance in property and income taxation (models 3 and 4). This may be because they are also associated with lower tax rates (model 7). Additionally, close-birth mayors seem to be associated with higher income tax rates and distant-birth mayors with higher acceptance rates of property valuation.

Table A.8: Mayor Birth Distance

	Outcome Variable:			
	Tax Office	Tax-Related	Income Tax	Property Tax
	(€ per capita)	Public Contracts	Compliance	Compliance
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Close-Birth Mayor	−0.027** (0.011)	−0.045*** (0.009)	−0.0003 (0.008)	−0.014* (0.008)
Distant-Birth Mayor	−0.011 (0.013)	−0.057*** (0.011)	0.021** (0.010)	0.021** (0.010)
Town Income (Av)	0.063*** (0.008)	0.034*** (0.007)	0.048*** (0.008)	0.066*** (0.007)
Urbanization	0.007 (0.005)	0.011*** (0.004)	−0.010*** (0.004)	−0.012*** (0.004)
Population	−0.080*** (0.007)	0.084*** (0.006)	−0.022*** (0.006)	0.002 (0.005)
Mayor Age	0.001 (0.0005)	−0.003*** (0.0004)	0.0003 (0.0003)	0.0002 (0.0003)
Mayor Education	0.016** (0.007)	0.006 (0.005)	−0.007 (0.005)	0.005 (0.005)
Incumbent	0.008 (0.008)	−0.043*** (0.006)	0.018*** (0.005)	0.008 (0.006)
Mayor Female	0.001 (0.014)	−0.013 (0.012)	0.017* (0.010)	−0.009 (0.011)
Observations	95,613	95,739	71,767	89,424

Note:

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

Table A.9: Mayor Birth Distance (Cont.)

	Outcome Variable:				
	Trash Tax Compliance	Income Tax Rate (av)	Income Tax Progressivity	Tax Revenue (€ per capita)	Property-Value Acceptance
	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)
Close-Birth Mayor	−0.003 (0.011)	0.018* (0.011)	−0.012 (0.012)	−0.043*** (0.012)	−0.023*** (0.007)
Distant-Birth Mayor	−0.013 (0.013)	−0.031** (0.013)	−0.053*** (0.014)	0.002 (0.014)	0.020** (0.009)
Town Income (Av)	0.060*** (0.007)	0.117*** (0.010)	−0.050*** (0.011)	0.136*** (0.009)	0.002 (0.004)
Urbanization	−0.0005 (0.005)	0.014*** (0.004)	0.011** (0.005)	−0.004 (0.005)	−0.0002 (0.003)
Population	0.004 (0.005)	0.003 (0.009)	0.086*** (0.009)	−0.145*** (0.007)	0.023*** (0.003)
Mayor Age	0.001 (0.0005)	0.0001 (0.0004)	−0.002*** (0.0005)	0.0003 (0.0005)	0.0004 (0.0003)
Mayor Education	0.015** (0.006)	0.016** (0.007)	0.008 (0.007)	0.009 (0.007)	−0.001 (0.004)
Incumbent	0.011 (0.008)	−0.014** (0.006)	−0.013* (0.007)	0.007 (0.008)	−0.013** (0.006)
Mayor Female	0.025* (0.015)	−0.019 (0.012)	−0.004 (0.014)	−0.007 (0.015)	0.031*** (0.010)
Observations	68,227	49,077	49,077	95,738	90,526

Note:

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

B Alternative Stories

Turning an eye to the scope conditions of my argument, the initial levels of legitimacy and trust, regardless of the embeddedness of local politicians, should play an important role for this dynamic. In cases where compliance is already high, and embeddedness further enhanced compliance, disinvestment may become the optimal choice. More effective enforcement may require less investment for the same extractive performance. Similarly, higher tax morale dynamics may also either lead to the decrease of enforcement spending, if increased compliance makes it unnecessary. In this case, local leaders could decrease funding of tax offices and divert the money to more popular or productive policy areas, while supporting the fiscal contract via non-state means.

At the same time, the dynamics put forward by my argument may depend on the strength of democratic institutions and the prevalence of programmatic politics. In particular, we may expect the first argument about state strengthening to perform best in cases where democratic institutions are well-established and generally shielded from distorted governance. In turn, countries of lower state capacity may face dynamics of state capture, as it has been explored in the literature Selee (2011); Ly and Paty (2020).

B.1 Local State Capture

H2 State Capture

Socially-embedded mayors will:

- a) decrease spending on tax enforcement.
- b) experience lower tax compliance.
- c) increase or maintain local tax rates.
- d) lower tax revenue.

In order to test the alternative hypothesis directly, I report RDD estimates on three proxies of local state capture. First, I gathered data on town council disbandment for mafia ties. Since the late 1990s, over 700 municipal governments have been found to have links with organized crimes, which leads to the disbandment of the locally-elected council Openpolis (2021). Second, I investigate whether native mayors are more likely to face suspensions of public contracts due to judicial interventions, which could be either be linked to anti-mafia procedures or law-related issues (as opposed to temporary suspensions due to weather conditions or other contingencies). Finally, I employ administrative expenditure as a proxy of kickbacks and rent-seeking behavior, following existing studies in the literature on corruption in the Italian context Acconcia, Corsetti and Simonelli (2014) – administrative expenditure is the broadest category in the municipal budget and therefore the most likely cover for misappropriation of public funds. As illustrated in figure A.3 below, there is no statistically significant difference in occurrence of disbandment and administrative expenditure, whereas there is a reduction in the number of judicial interventions for public contracts.

While the three proxies of state capture are not perfect measures, taken together with the results from both local fiscal outcomes and reported individual attitudes, my findings suggest that embeddedness does not increase the probability of state capture.

In order to show that hometown candidates are not associated with electoral manipulation, I employ a standard electoral forensic method (Beber and Scacco, 2010). This method leverages Benford’s law of last digits, which predicts that regular elections should produce a uniform distribution of the last digit across polling stations. In Figure A.2 I contrast the distribution of last digits in municipalities where close elections were won by the hometown candidate versus where the non-hometown candidate won. The two distributions are not statistically different from a uniform distribution. This result is in line with the null finding from the McCrary density test and further substantiates the claim that hometown candidates do not increase the chance of electoral manipulation.

Figure B.1: State Capture (RDD Estimates)

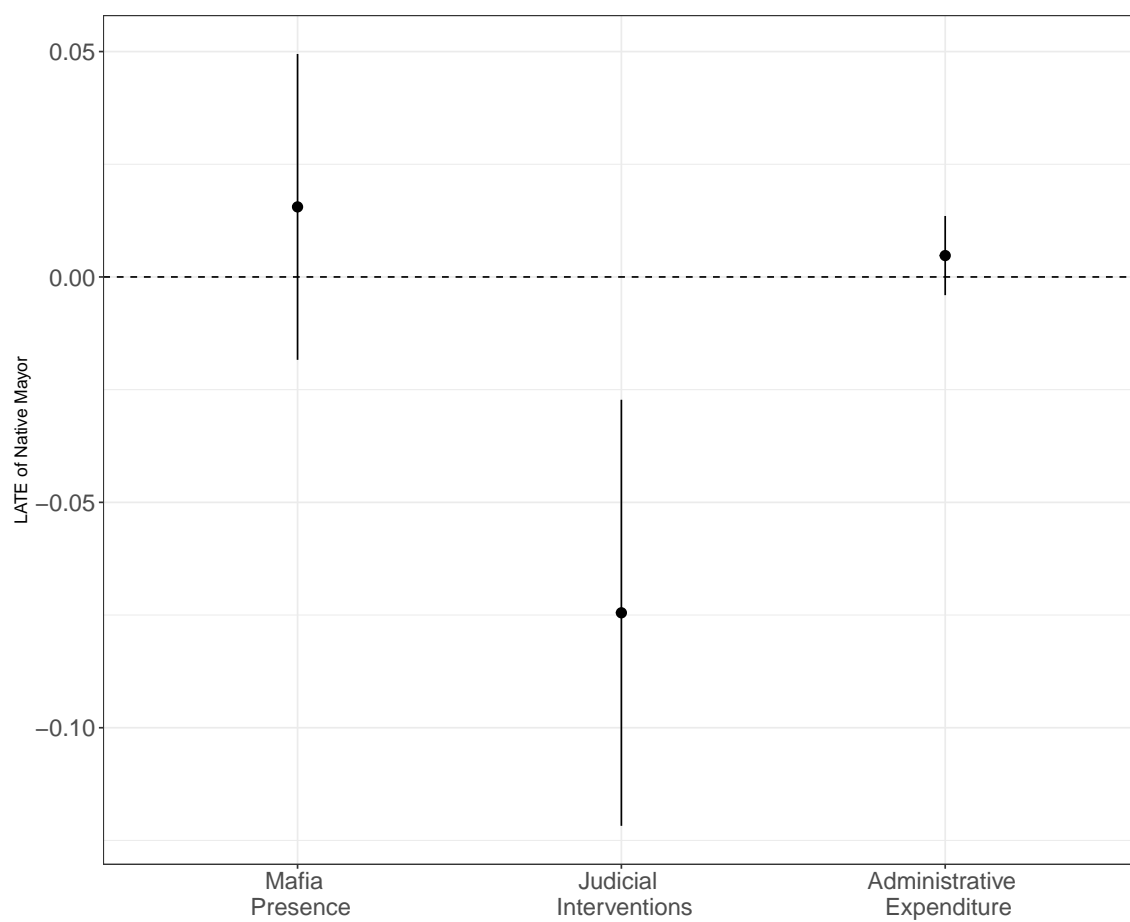
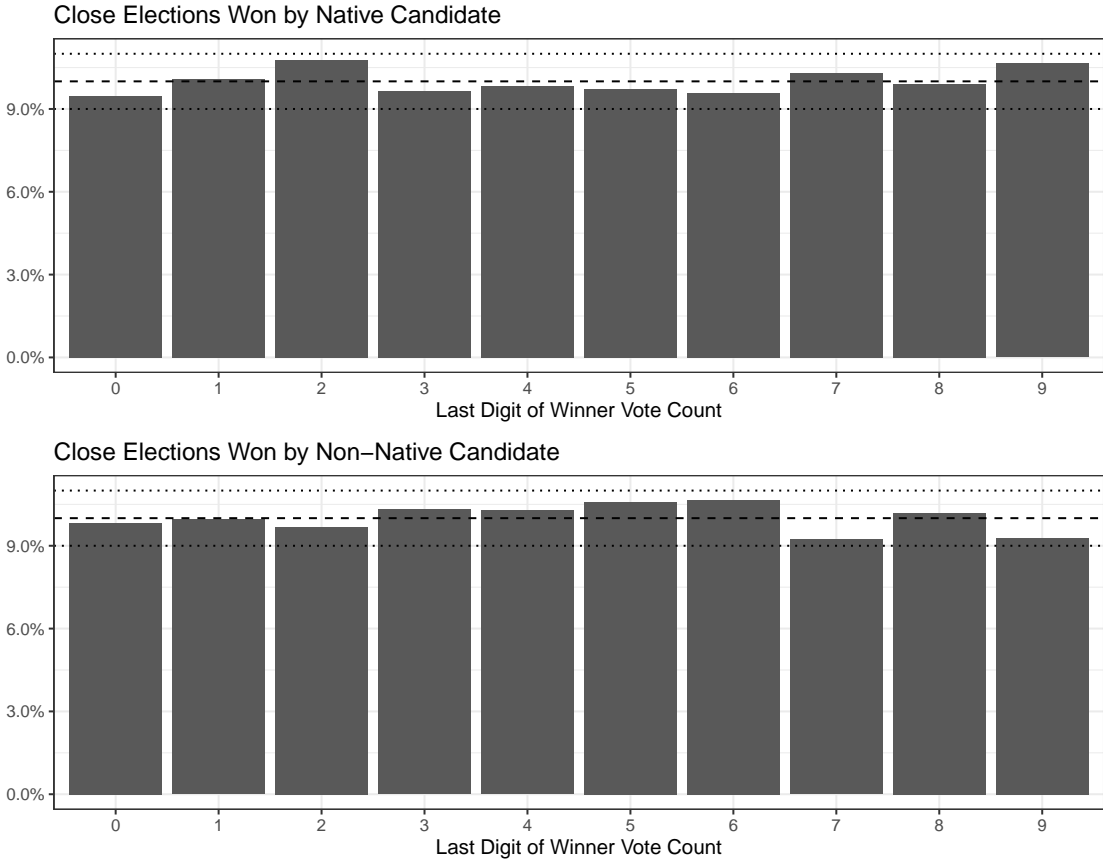


Figure B.2: Electoral Manipulation



C Full Results

C.1 RDD Results

Table C.1: Full RDD Results

	Outcome Variable:				
	Tax Office (€ per capita)	Tax-Related Public Contracts	Income Tax Compliance	Property Tax Compliance	Trash Tax Compliance
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Native Mayor	0.022*** (0.006)	0.067** (0.022)	0.019 (0.019)	-0.020 (0.016)	-0.020 (0.030)
N. Elections Bandwidth	2, 281 9.2	3, 184 13.8	3, 143 21.8	4, 364 23.2	1, 992 11.8
Mixed Effects	Town, Year Region	Town, Year Region	Town, Year Region	Town, Year Region	Town, Year Region

Note:

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

Table C.2: Full RDD Results (Cont)

	Income Tax (Average)	Income Tax Progressivity	Property Tax (1st Home)	Property Tax (Other)	Trash Tax (1st Home)
	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)
Native Mayors	0.067	0.214	-0.090	0.050	-0.197
	0.036	0.045	0.022	0.019	0.061
N. Elections	1, 802	1, 318	3, 557	2, 219	762
Bandwidth	16.8	11.3	16	9	15.6
Mixed Effects	Town, Year Region	Town, Year Region	Town, Year Region	Town, Year Region	Town, Year Region

Note:

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

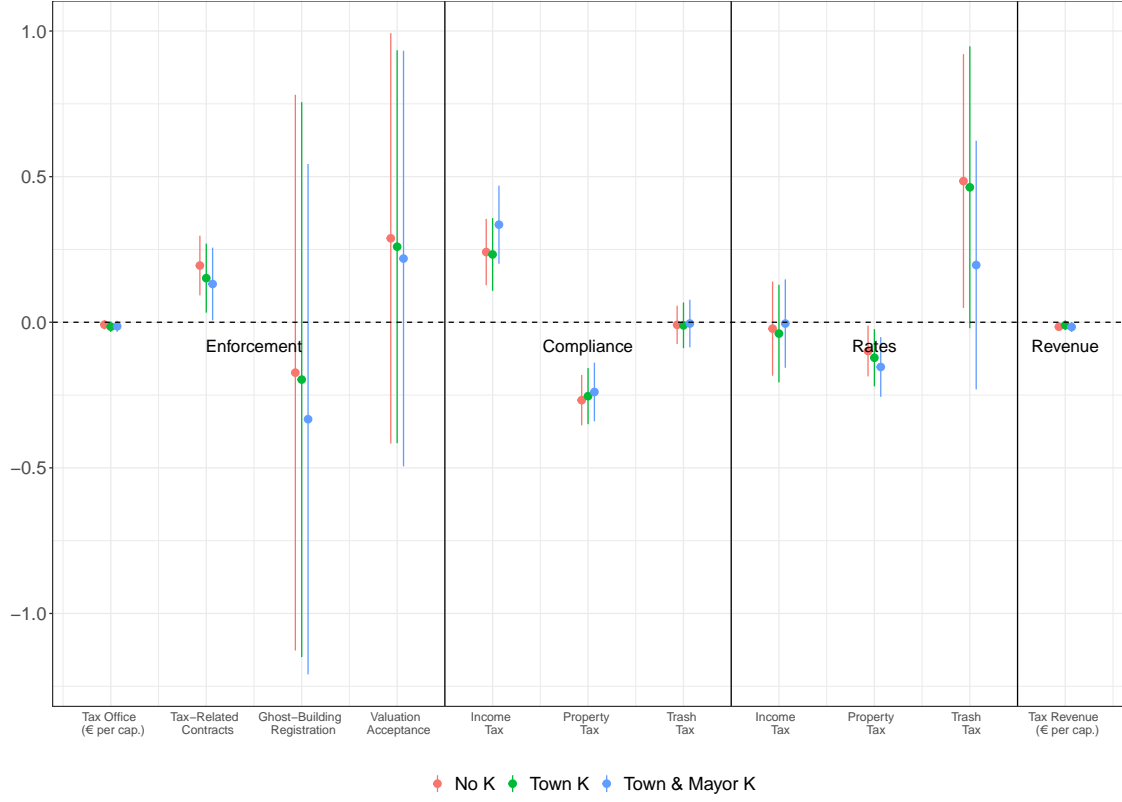
Table C.3: Full RDD Results (Cont)

	Trash Tax (Other)	Tax Revenue (€ per capita)	Property-Value Acceptance
	(11)	(12)	(13)
Native Mayors	0.061	0.009	0.112
	0.076	0.004	0.027
N. Elections	804	1, 719	2, 644
Bandwidth	16.5	6.8	11.7
Mixed Effects	Town, Year Region	Town, Year Region	Town, Year

Note:

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

Figure C.1: RDD Results: The Impact of Hometown Mayors
(fixed bandwidth, 2%)



[

All outcomes are normalized and coefficients should be interpreted in terms of standard deviations. Lines represent the 95% confidence interval. The full specification is as follows:

$$Outcome_{i,m} \sim \beta Native_{i,m} + \kappa_1 f(MoV_{i,m}) + \kappa_2 f(MoV_{i,m}) * Native_{i,m} + \lambda_1 Z_{i,m} + \lambda_2 X_{i,m} + \omega FE_{i,m} \quad (4)$$

]

A binary variable for whether the winning candidate is native to the town; a polynomial $f(MoV)$ which models the margin of victory on either side of the cutoff; town covariates Z (population, surface, urbanization); mayor covariates X (age, gender, education, incumbency status); fixed effects for province, region, and year. The first (No K) specification only includes fixed effects, while the other two focus respectively on town covariates only or the full battery.

C.2 MLM Results

As a second empirical strategy, I conduct an observational analysis on the universe of Italian municipalities between 1998 and 2018, employing a multilevel modeling (MLM) approach (Bell and Jones, 2015; Gelman, Hill and Vehtari, 2020). This approach complements the regression discontinuity, expanding the scope of the analysis beyond close elections between a native and non-native candidates. In doing so, while it does not allow for causal identification, it corroborates the external validity of the LATE from the RDD analysis. Additionally, this second strategy fully leverages the hierarchical nature of the panel data available. Indeed, observations are nested within groups (year, municipality, province, region) and this structure invite a more realistic parametric modeling of the relationships studied. In other words, across groups, a multilevel modeling approach allows for outcomes to vary in their baseline value and predictors to have varying coefficients. Just like for fixed-effects models, enforcement spending, for instance, may be larger in a given municipality because of idiosyncratic factors. This is captured by a municipality-specific intercept, or baseline enforcement level. However, going beyond simple fixed-effects, native candidates may also have different impacts in different municipalities. The multilevel model allows for coefficients to vary within groups, that is, it estimates the influence of having a native mayor for each specific municipality, and then averages across to yield a summary coefficient. Following the same outcome and covariate specification strategy as the RDD, the table below shows the results from the multilevel models.

Table C.4: MLM Results

	Outcome Variable:				
	Tax Office (€ per capita)	Tax-Related Public Contracts	Income Tax Compliance	Property Tax Compliance	Trash Tax Compliance
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Native Mayor	0.018** (0.009)	0.049*** (0.007)	−0.002 (0.006)	0.005 (0.007)	0.012 (0.009)
Mean Town Income	0.067*** (0.008)	0.035*** (0.007)	0.057*** (0.008)	0.065*** (0.007)	0.065*** (0.007)
Urbanization	0.003 (0.005)	0.008** (0.004)	−0.010*** (0.003)	−0.012*** (0.004)	−0.0004 (0.004)
Population	−0.087*** (0.007)	0.087*** (0.005)	−0.025*** (0.006)	0.003 (0.005)	0.004 (0.005)
Mayor Age	0.001 (0.0004)	−0.002*** (0.0004)	0.00002 (0.0003)	0.001 (0.0003)	0.00002 (0.0004)
Mayor Education	0.017*** (0.006)	0.008 (0.005)	−0.011** (0.004)	0.006 (0.005)	0.011* (0.006)
Incumbent	0.010 (0.007)	−0.044*** (0.006)	0.014*** (0.005)	0.010* (0.005)	0.014* (0.008)
Mayor Female	−0.004 (0.013)	−0.029*** (0.011)	0.032*** (0.009)	−0.007 (0.010)	0.034** (0.014)
Observations	106,355	106,496	80,633	99,483	75,137
Mixed Effects	Town, Year Region	Town, Year Region	Town, Year Region	Town, Year Region	Town, Year Region

Note:

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

Table C.5: MLM Results (Cont.)

	Outcome Variable:			
	Income Tax Rate (Av)	Income Tax Progressivity	Tax Revenue (€ per capita)	Property-Value Acceptance
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Native Mayor	−0.007 (0.009)	0.019* (0.010)	0.031*** (0.009)	0.012** (0.006)
Mean Town Income	0.111*** (0.009)	−0.062*** (0.010)	0.128*** (0.009)	−0.004 (0.004)
Urbanization	0.020*** (0.004)	0.019*** (0.004)	−0.004 (0.005)	0.0005 (0.003)
Population	−0.002 (0.009)	0.082*** (0.009)	−0.153*** (0.007)	0.025*** (0.003)
Mayor Age	0.0005 (0.0004)	−0.002*** (0.0004)	0.0004 (0.0004)	0.001** (0.0003)
Mayor Education	0.005 (0.006)	0.001 (0.007)	0.009 (0.006)	0.003 (0.004)
Incumbent Mayor	−0.009 (0.006)	−0.0003 (0.007)	0.008 (0.008)	−0.011** (0.005)
Mayor Female	−0.030*** (0.011)	−0.005 (0.013)	−0.006 (0.014)	0.038*** (0.009)
Observations	55,344	55,344	106,495	100,736
Mixed	Town, Year	Town, Year	Town, Year	Year
Effects	Region	Region	Region	Region

Note:

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

C.3 Text Analysis

Table C.6: Text Analysis Results

	Outcome Variable			
	Tax Policy	Tax Compliance	Local Ties	Personalism
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Native Candidate	0.104** (0.050)	0.162*** (0.053)	0.034 (0.057)	−0.071 (0.057)
Manifesto Length	0.535*** (0.024)	0.388*** (0.026)	0.009 (0.026)	0.315*** (0.028)
Female Candidate	−0.008 (0.052)	0.080 (0.056)	0.054 (0.054)	0.099* (0.059)
Candidate Education	0.044 (0.032)	−0.014 (0.034)	−0.010 (0.035)	−0.019 (0.037)
Candidate Age	−0.003 (0.022)	−0.036 (0.024)	−0.014 (0.025)	0.010 (0.026)
Town Population	−0.010 (0.025)	−0.001 (0.026)	−0.021 (0.042)	0.151*** (0.029)
Urbanization	0.033 (0.023)	0.043* (0.024)	−0.028 (0.044)	−0.026 (0.027)
Town Surface	0.023 (0.041)	0.003 (0.043)	−0.039 (0.069)	−0.034 (0.047)
Observations	1,686	1,686	1,686	1,686
Mixed	Town, Year	Town, Year	Town, Year	Town, Year
Effects	Region	Region	Region	Region

Note:

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

C.4 Survey Analysis

Table C.7: Survey Analysis Results

	Outcome Variable				
	Mayor Strength	Mayor Knowledge	Local Evasion	Local Corruption	Trust in Local Gov.
Native Mayor	0.0003 (0.027)	0.129*** (0.026)	0.022 (0.028)	−0.011 (0.026)	0.027 (0.027)
Friend Mayor	0.049 (0.055)	0.410*** (0.053)	−0.070 (0.056)	−0.346*** (0.052)	0.210*** (0.054)
Female	−0.006 (0.055)	0.076 (0.052)	0.079 (0.056)	−0.073 (0.051)	0.068 (0.054)
Education	0.027 (0.023)	−0.036* (0.022)	−0.027 (0.023)	0.024 (0.021)	0.003 (0.022)
Age	−0.003 (0.015)	−0.046*** (0.015)	−0.003 (0.016)	−0.067*** (0.014)	0.003 (0.015)
Partisanship (l-r)	−0.014 (0.010)	−0.004 (0.010)	0.005 (0.011)	0.025** (0.010)	−0.034*** (0.010)
Income	0.028 (0.029)	−0.007 (0.028)	−0.040 (0.030)	−0.050* (0.027)	0.071** (0.029)
Observations	1,369	1,369	1,369	1,369	1,369
FE	Region	Region	Region	Region	Region

Note:

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

Table C.8: Placebo Survey RDD Results

	Others	Trust in: Provincial Gov.	Regional Gov.
	(1)	(2)	(3)
Hometown Mayor	0.022 (0.015)	-0.284 (0.181)	-0.255 (0.190)
Covariates	✓	✓	✓
N. Obs.	5687	4905	4984
N. Elections	140	135	137
Bandwidth	7.1	7.3	8.1
Mixed Effects	Town, Year Region	Town, Year Region	Town, Year Region
<i>Note:</i>		*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01	

D Robustness

D.1 Multiple Comparisons

The empirical design of this study covers a vast array of outcome measures, across three different sets of evidence. As a result, the evidence brought forth rests on at least 29 different regression models (counting only the preferred-specification model for each outcome): 10 for each outcome leveraging the cross-sectional municipality dataset (multiplied by 2 considering the parallel RDD and MLM approaches); 4 main models to analyze the text analysis; 5 main models to analyze the original survey data.

As such, the presence of 29 different coefficients raises the issue of multiple comparison adjustment. In other words, if we were to run 29 models, we should expect to find some statistically-significant results by chance.

In order to address for this problem, I adopt here a standard multiple comparison adjustment approach. This strategy consists in altering the level of statistical confidence required to report, in a frequentist framework, that coefficients are “statistically-significant”. In particular, I employ the Bonferroni adjustment, which provides a conservative estimate of significance by multiplying p-values by the number of hypothesis-tests performed (that is, the number of coefficients estimated).

Table A.17 below gathers the estimated coefficients and standard errors for each main regression model and displays the level of statistical confidence that the true estimand is different than 0. For each coefficient, I report one of four standard levels of statistical confidence (10%, 5%, 1%, 0.1%). I present first the adjustment based on the number of coefficients within the same approach (RDD, MLM, Text analysis, Survey Analysis), and in second place a more stringent adjustment based on the total number of coefficients estimated across methods.

As the table illustrates, statistical confidence in most estimates remains unchanged after both adjustments. Out of 18 initially significant coefficients, 12 remain so with the second (more stringent) adjustment.

Table D.1: Multiple Comparison Adjustment

Outcome	Coef.	SE	No Adj.	Adj. 1	Adj. 2
RDD Results					
Tax Office (€ per capita)	0.022	0.006	***	**	**
Tax-Related Public Contracts	0.067	0.022	**	.	.
Income Tax	0.019	0.019			
Property Tax	-0.020	-0.016			
Trash Tax	-0.020	-0.030			
Income Tax (Average)	0.067	0.036	*		
Income Tax Progressivity	0.214	0.045	***	***	***
Tax Revenue (€ per capita)	0.009	0.004	.		
Property-Value Acceptance	0.113	0.027	***	***	***
Reported Trust	0.283	0.056	***	***	***
MLM Results					
Tax Office (€ per capita)	0.018	0.009	.		
Tax-Related Public Contracts	0.049	0.007	***	***	***
Income Tax Compliance	-0.002	0.006			
Property Tax	0.005	0.007			
Trash Tax	0.012	0.009			
Income Tax (Average)	-0.007	0.009			
Income Tax Progressivity	0.019	0.010	*		
Tax Revenue (€ per capita)	0.031	0.009	***	**	.
Property-Value Acceptance	0.012	0.006	.		
Reported Trust	0.047	0.011	***	***	***
Text Analysis Results					
Tax Policy	0.104	0.050	.		
Compliance	0.162	0.053	**	**	.
Local Ties	0.034	0.057			
Personalism	-0.071	0.057			
Survey Results					
Mayor Strength	0.049	0.055			
Mayor Knowledge	0.410	0.053	***	***	***
Local Evasion	-0.070	0.056			
Local Corruption	-0.346	0.052	***	***	***
Trust in Local Gov.	0.210	0.054	***	***	**

Note: .p<0.1; *p<0.05; **p<0.01; ***p<0.001

D.2 Smaller and Larger Municipalities

Figure D.1: RDD Results for Municipalities under 5000

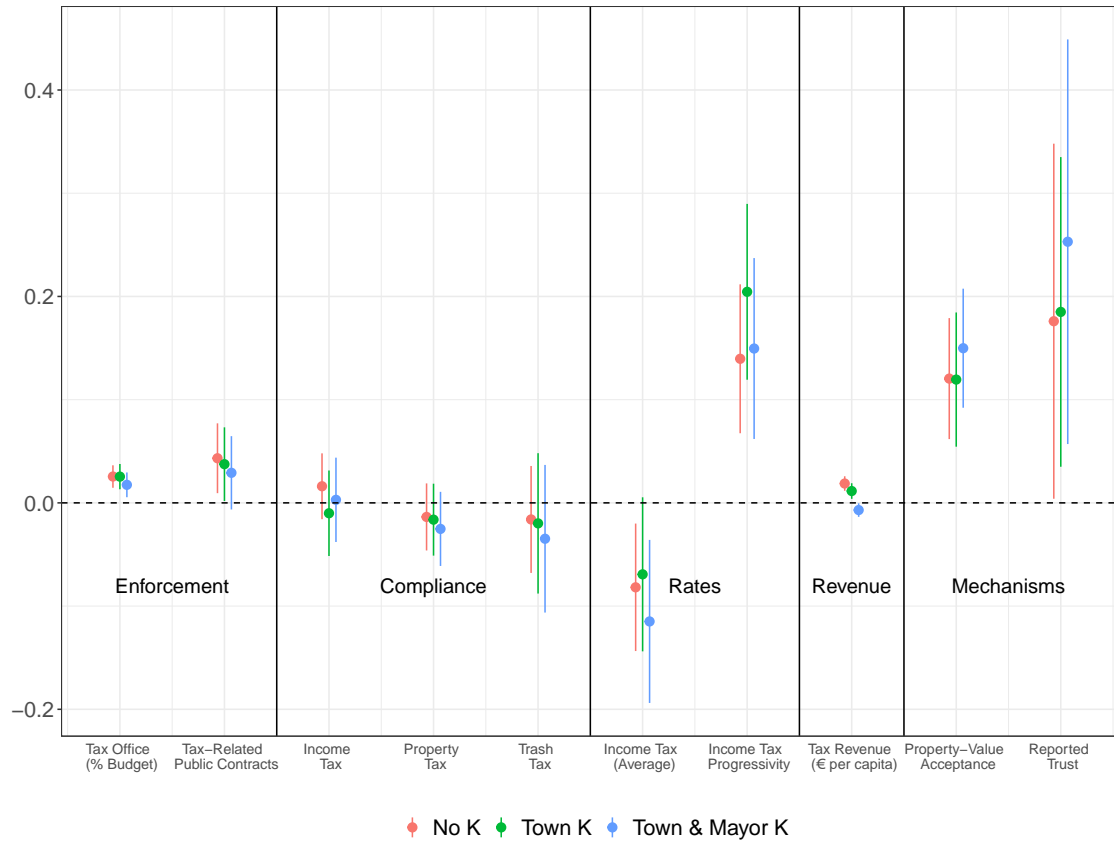
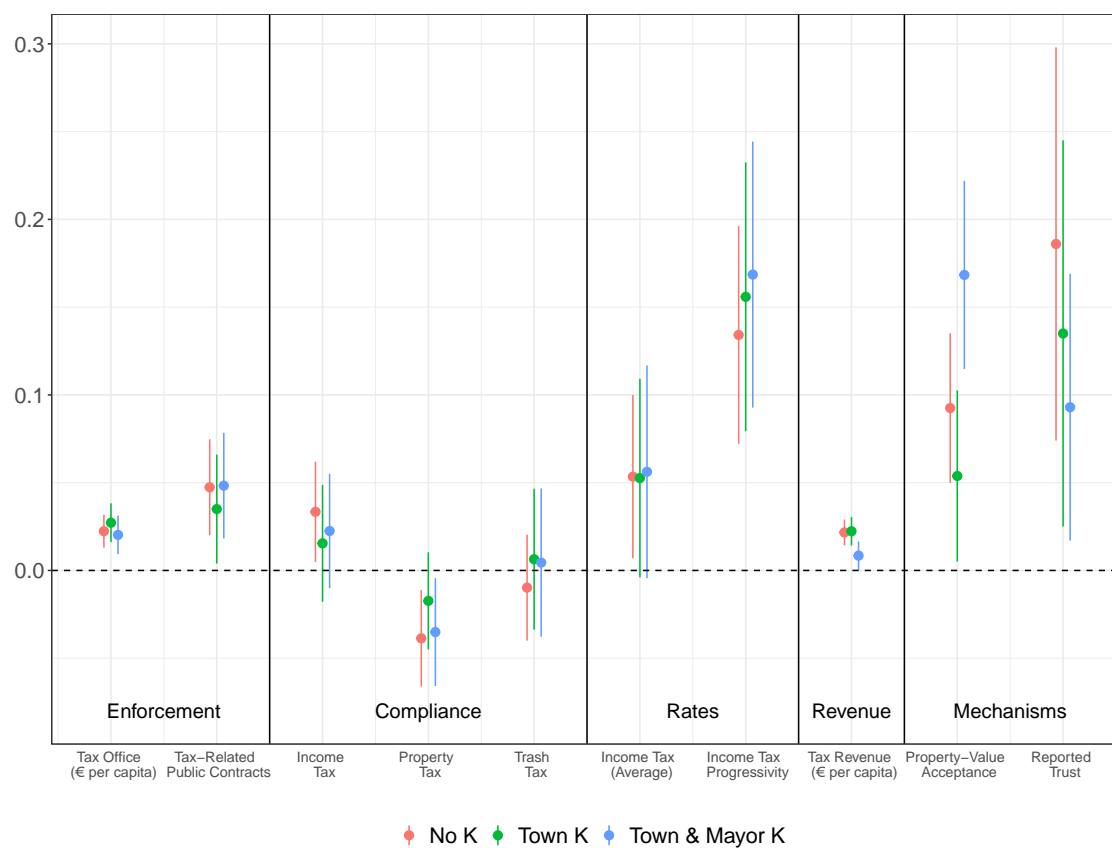


Figure D.2: RDD Results for All Municipalities



D.3 RDD - Multiple Cutoff Design

Figure D.3: Distribution of Runner-Up Vote Shares

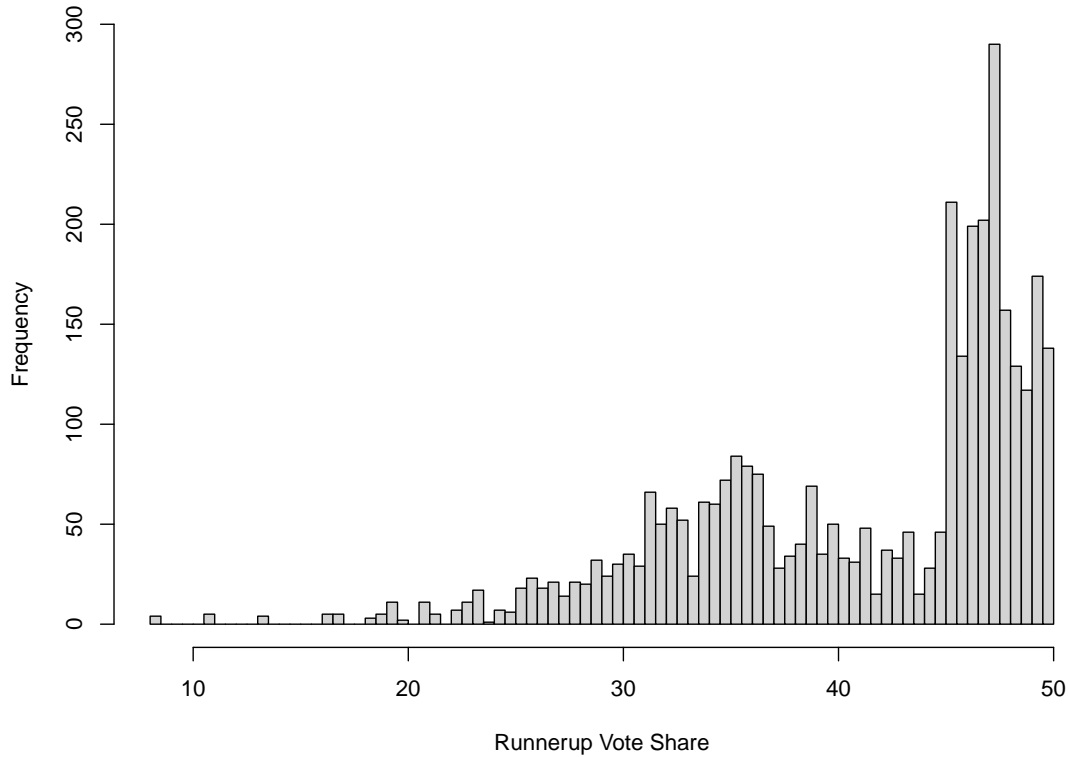


Figure A.8 above represents the distribution of the runner-up vote share for all municipal elections where the margin of victory is lower than 10%. While in most such elections, the runner-up gathered above 45% of the vote, which means that the two leading candidates split the vote, many are below the threshold, which means that the election saw multiple candidates and the two leading were both below 50%.

D.4 RDD Visualization

Figure D.4: RDD Results: Enforcement Expenditure

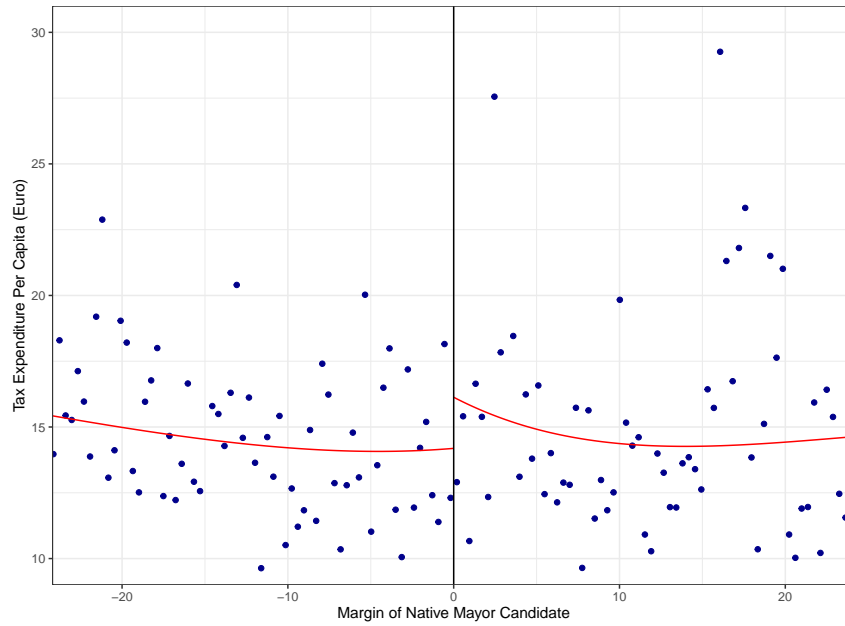


Figure D.5: RDD Results: Tax Contracts

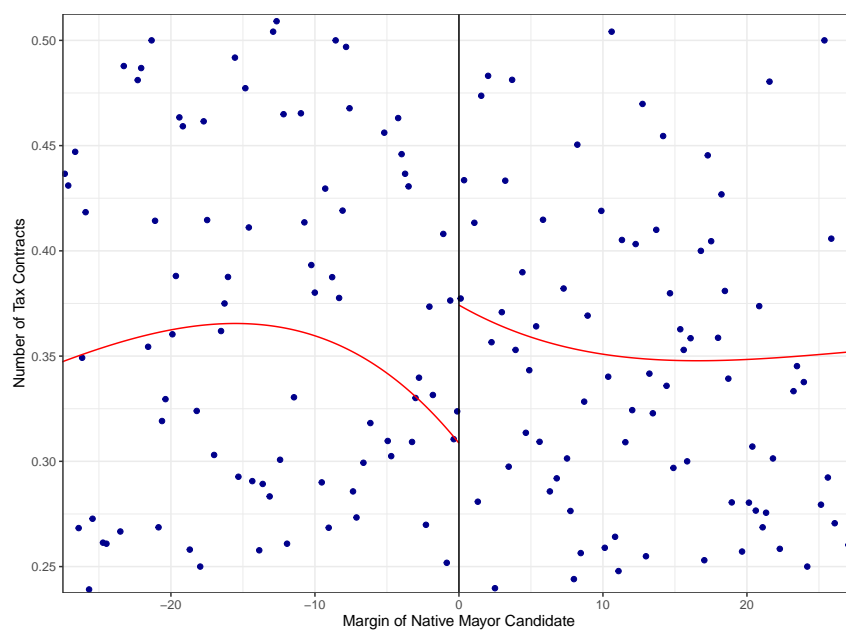


Figure D.6: RDD Results: Income Tax Rate

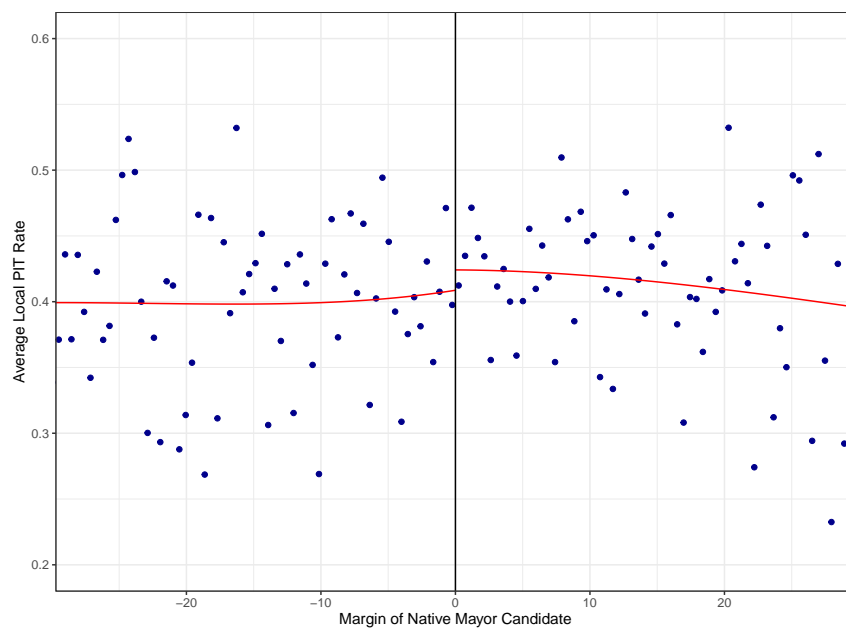
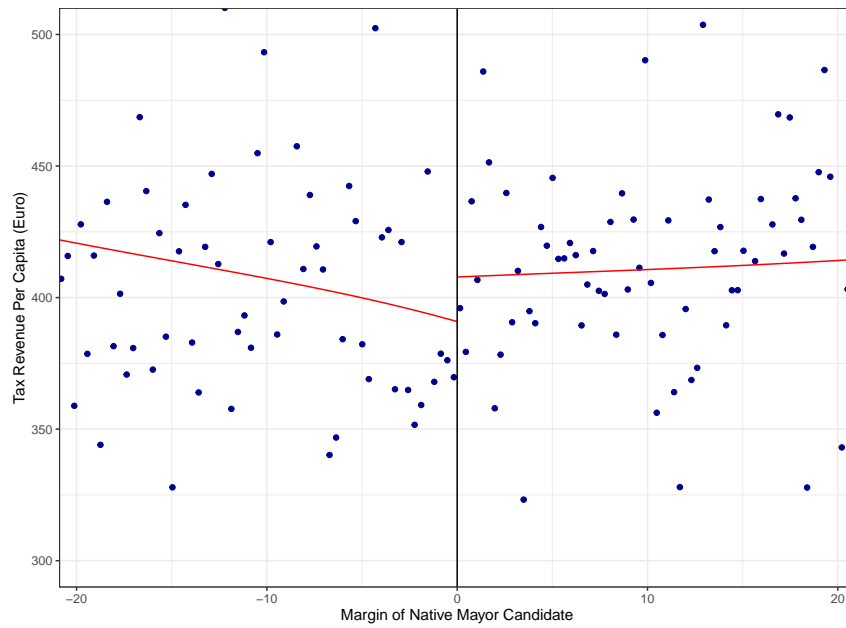


Figure D.7: RDD Results: Tax Revenue Per Capita



D.5 RDD Falsification Tests

First, I check whether the discontinuity design might be affected by sorting. Indeed, native candidates might have an advantage in electoral manipulation, which could determine a higher likelihood of winning in close elections. However, as illustrated in figure A.13, there is no significant difference in density of elections between the two sides of the discontinuity.

Second, I employ four placebo outcomes, which should not be connected to the mayor place of birth, and show that the RDD estimate is null. Third, I report the LATE estimate for different “fake” cutoff points, which should mostly show non-significant results, aside from the inevitable false-positive detection due to multiple comparisons, which is corrected through a standard p-value adjustment. Fourth, I repeat the analysis with different bandwidth around the discontinuity.

Addressing the issue of compound treatment, figure A.16 in the appendix presents a continuity test on available candidate characteristics, showing that when native candidates win close elections, the mayor displays no significant difference in age, gender, entrepreneur status, or education level⁹.

However, this analysis does not address the argument by Marshall (2019) on the issue of compensating covariates, which may invalidate the results of electoral RD designs that seek to identify the effect of a candidate’s characteristic. According Marshall, the LATE estimate for close elections may identify not only the effect of the characteristic of interest (place of birth) but also all other candidate covariates that make it possible for a candidate with the characteristic of interest to reach a close election. In the case of native candidates, however, compensating differentials would entail lower quality. Indeed, embeddedness generally improves the chances of a candidate and a close-election native candidate may either be sub-par or be running against a higher quality non-native candidate. Therefore, my design would estimate the effect of lower levels of trust and information than usually endowed by embeddedness. As such, we could consider the RDD results as lower-bound estimates.

⁹While such battery of tests is hardly comprehensive, it has been shown that age and education do function as compensating characteristics in the case of female candidates Gagliarducci and Paserman (2012)

Figure D.8: McCrary Density Test

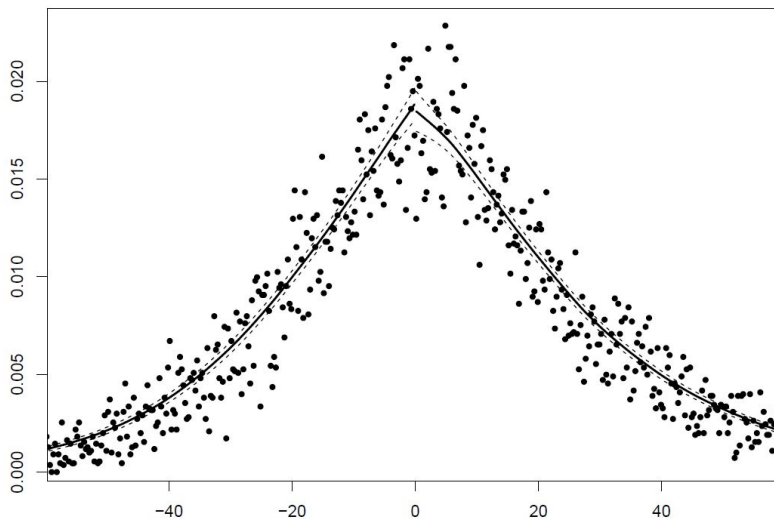


Figure D.9: Frequency of Elections Across Margins of Victory

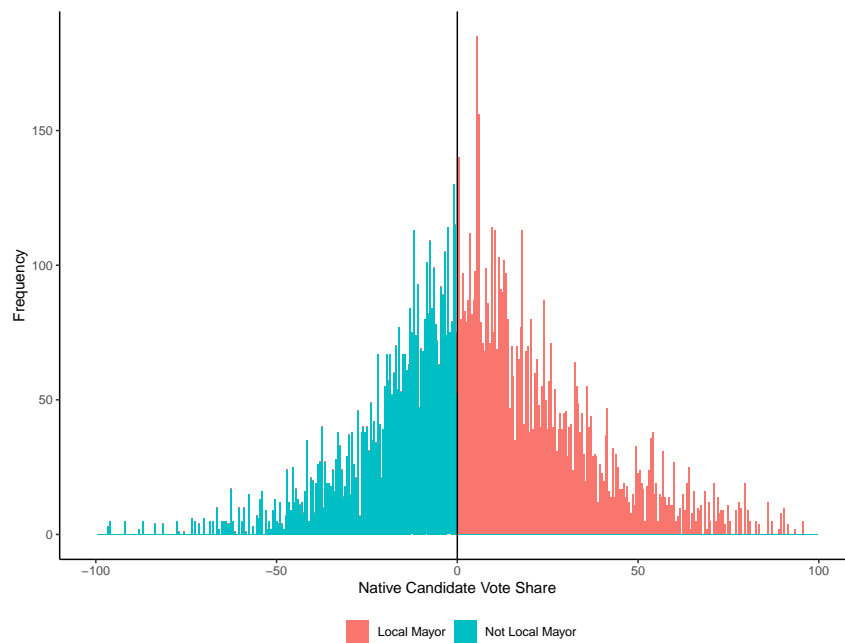


Figure D.10: Continuity Test: Placebo Predetermined Outcomes

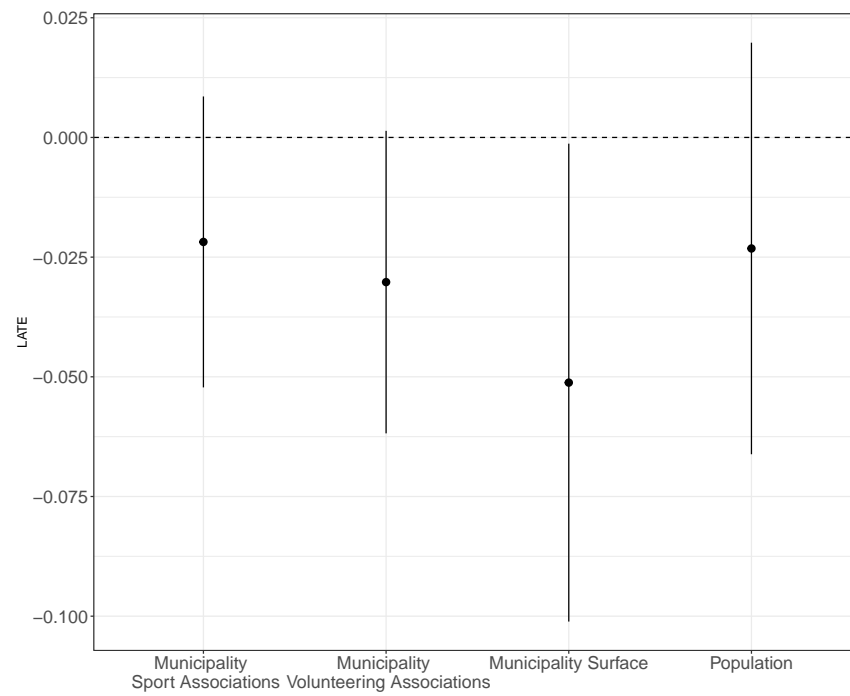


Figure D.11: Continuity Test: Candidate Covariates

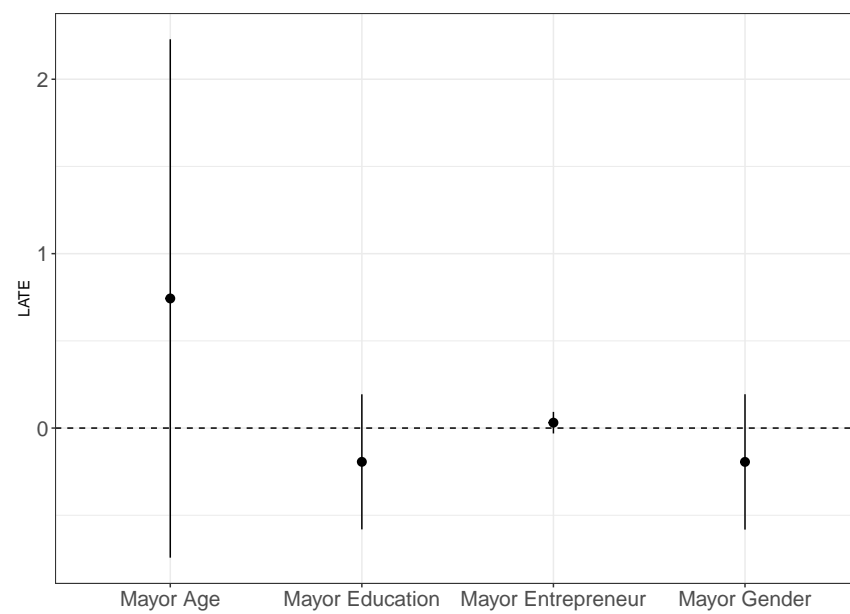


Figure D.12: Different Cutoffs: Enforcement Expenditure

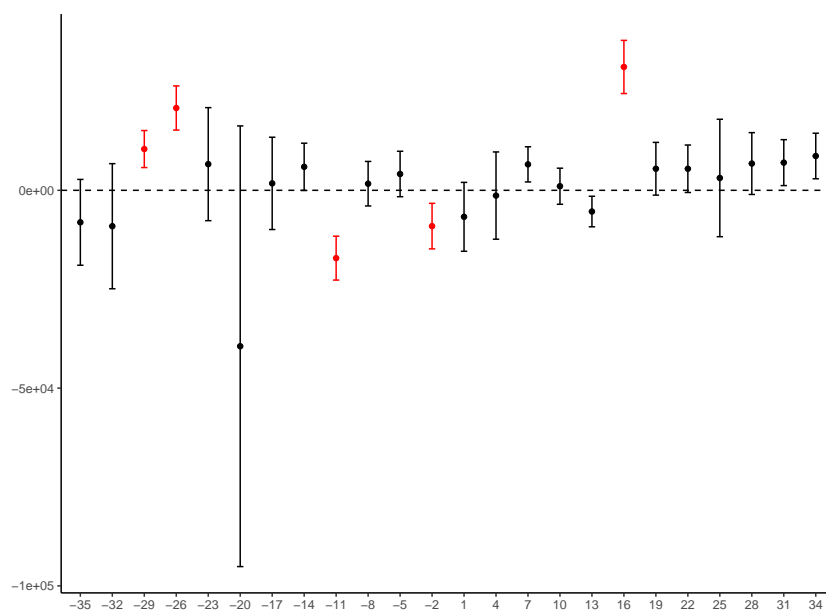


Figure D.13: Different Bandwidths: Enforcement Expenditure

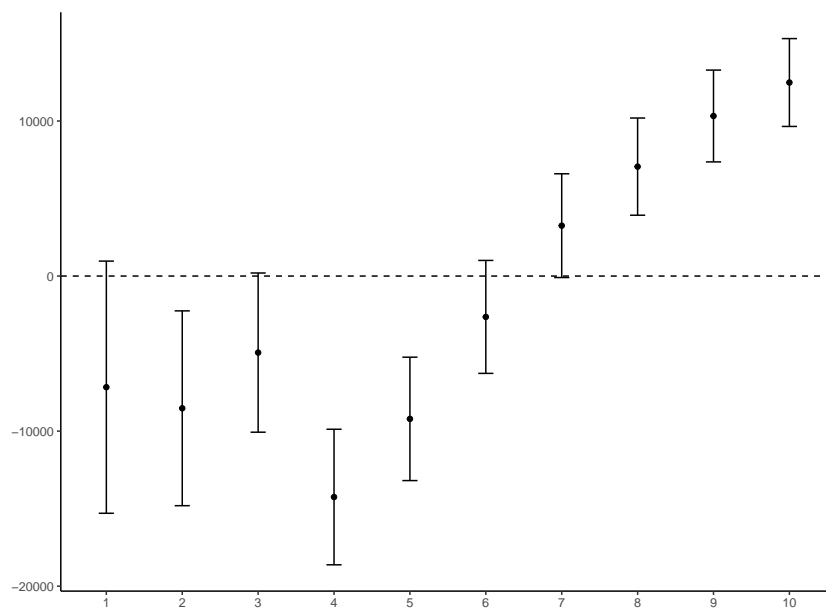


Figure D.14: Different Cutoffs: Tax Contracts

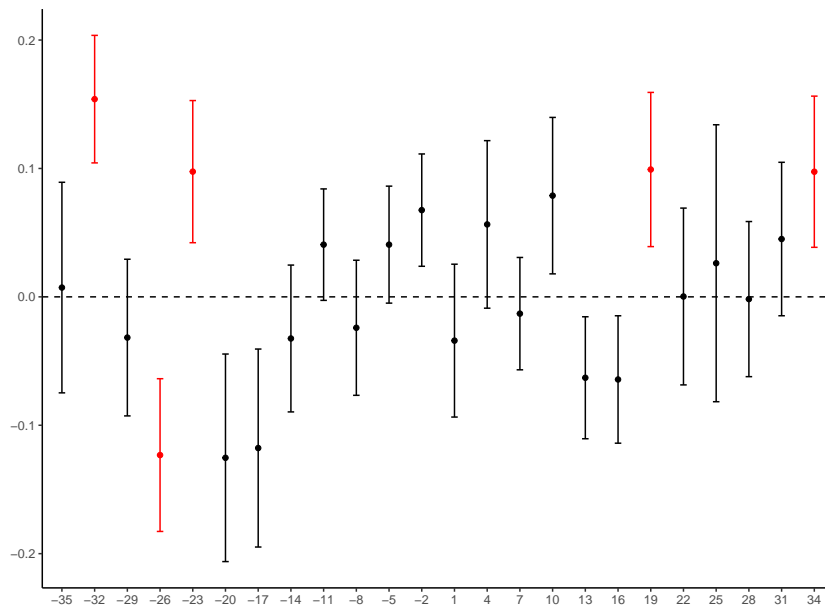


Figure D.15: Different Bandwidths: Tax Contracts

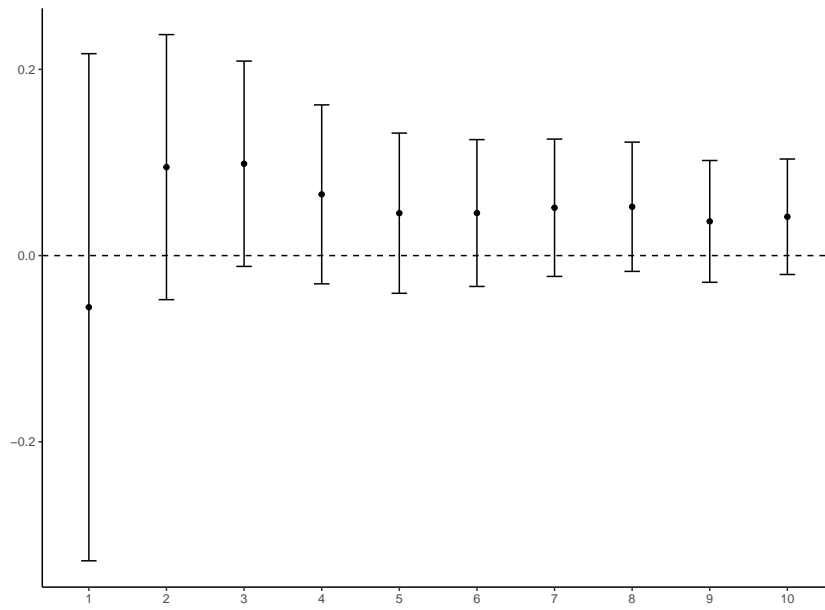


Figure D.16: Different Cutoffs: Local Income Tax Rate

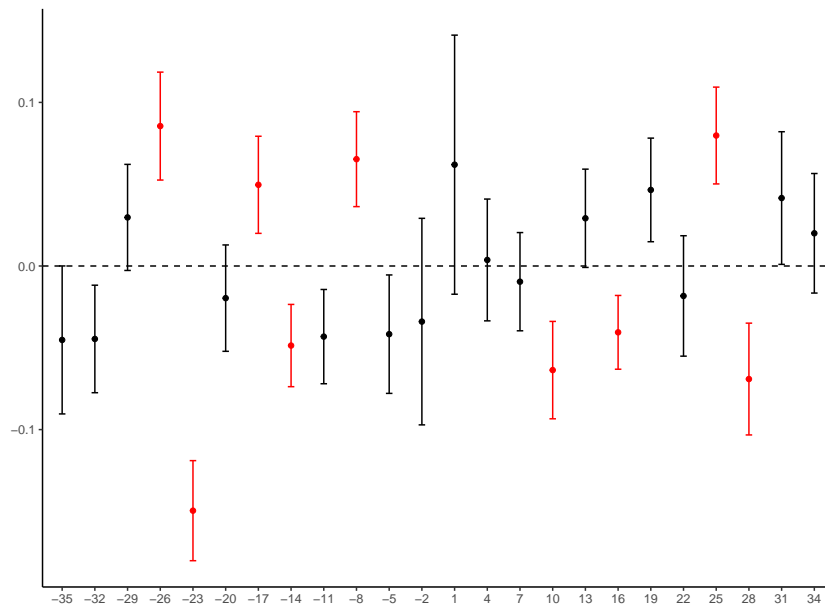


Figure D.17: Different Bandwidths: Local Income Tax Rate

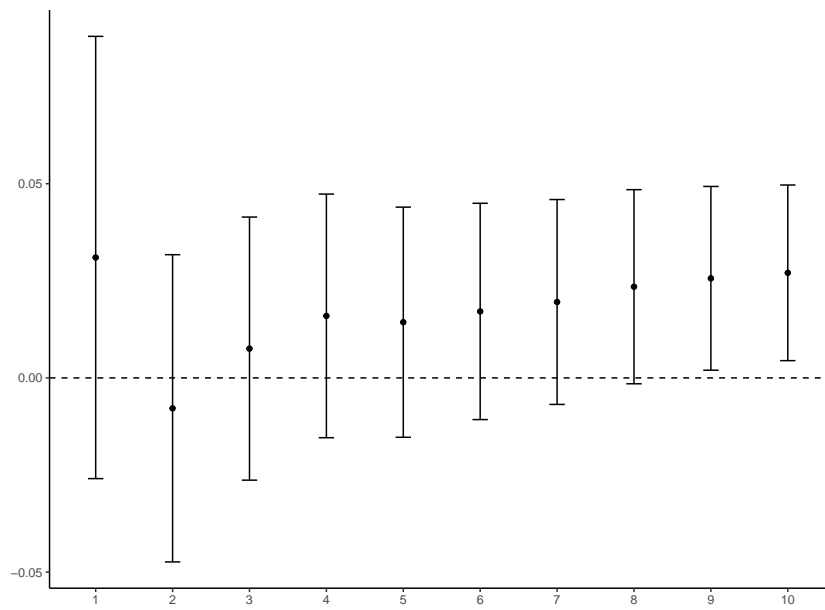


Figure D.18: Different Cutoffs: Local Property Tax Rate

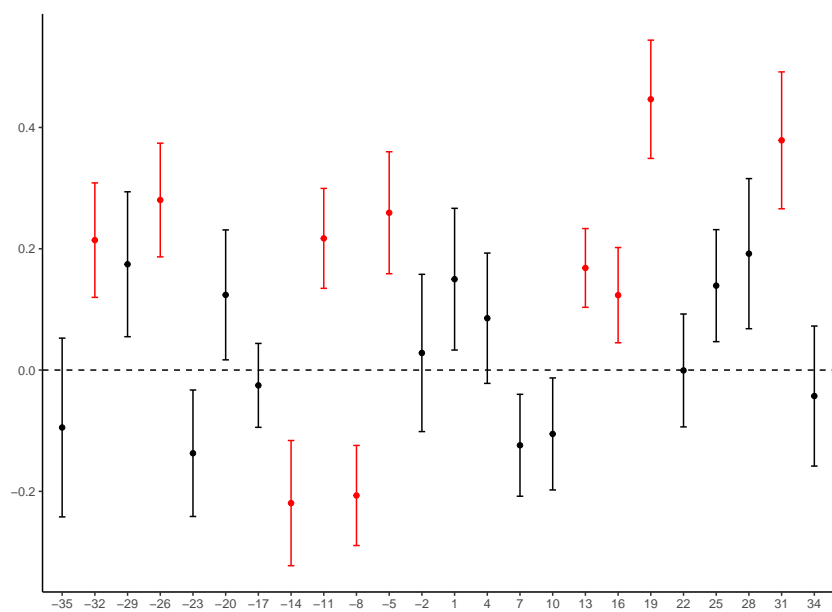


Figure D.19: Different Bandwidths: Local Property Tax Rate

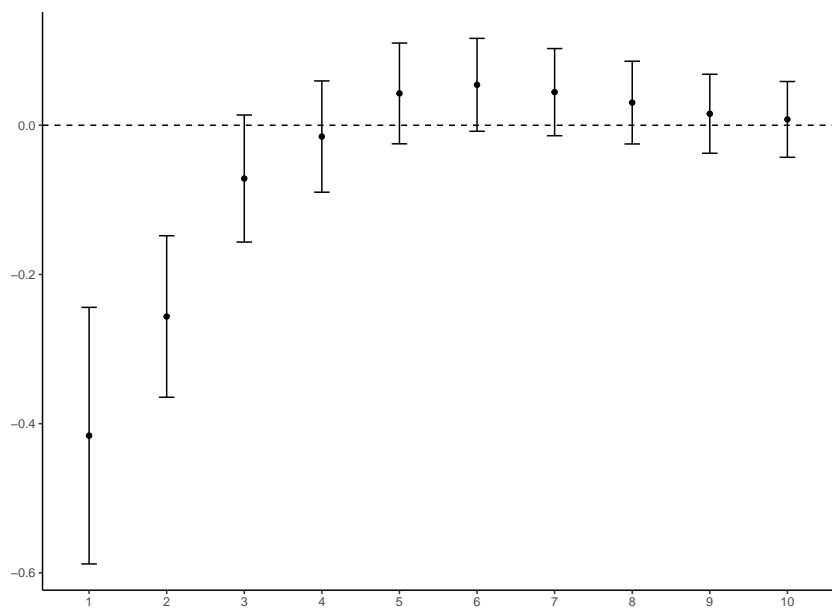


Figure D.20: Different Cutoffs: Local Trash Tax Rate

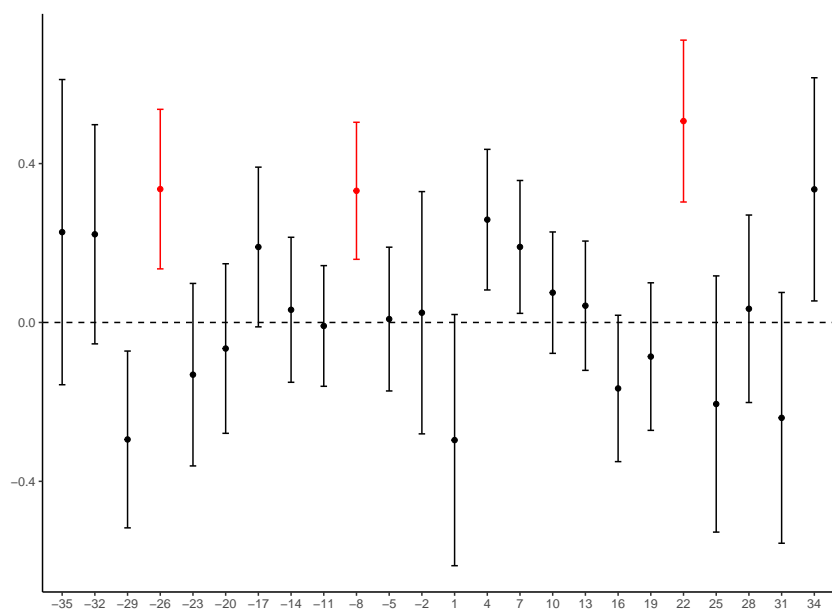


Figure D.21: Different Bandwidths: Local Trash Tax Rate

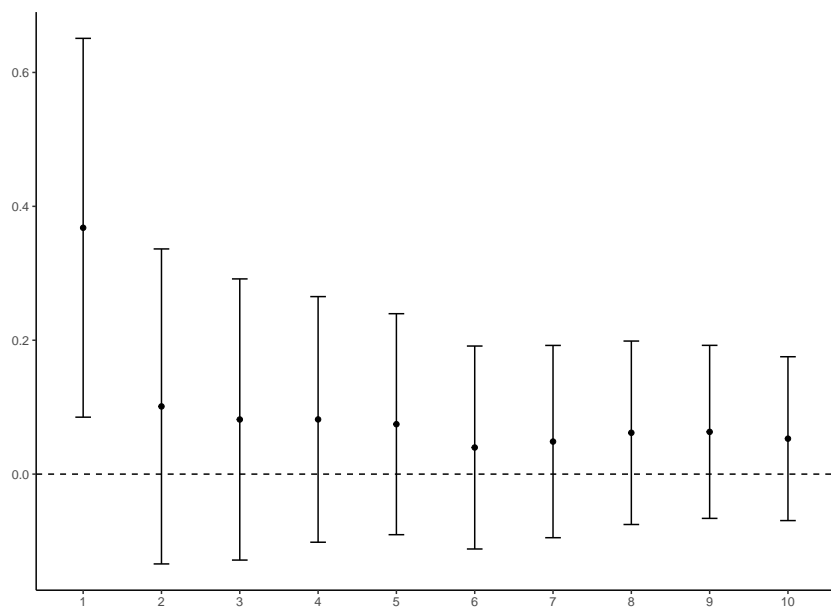


Figure D.22: Different Cutoffs: Local Income Tax Compliance

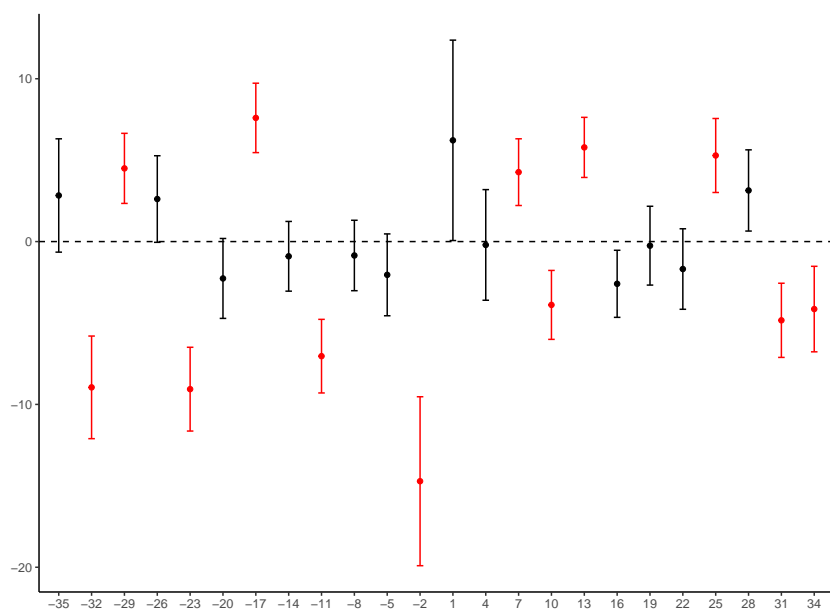


Figure D.23: Different Bandwidths: Local Income Tax Compliance

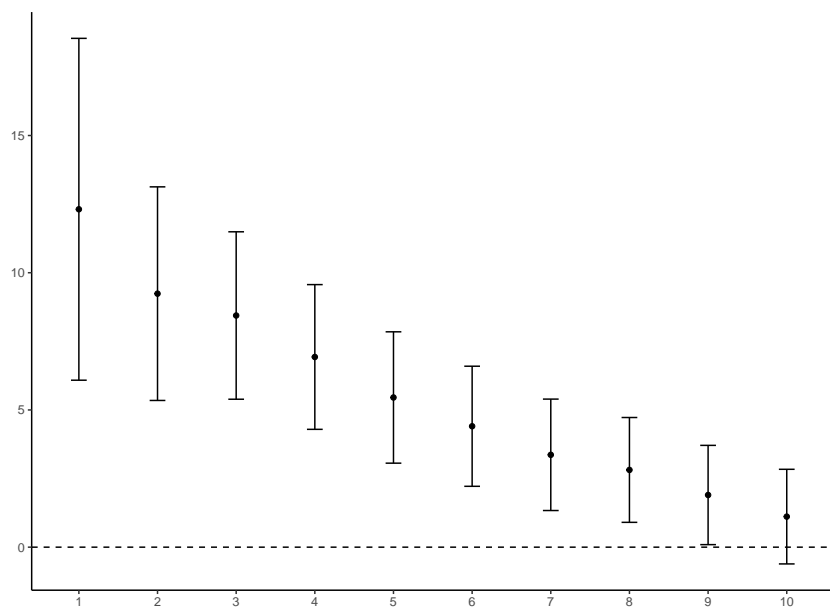


Figure D.24: Different Cutoffs: Local Property Tax Compliance

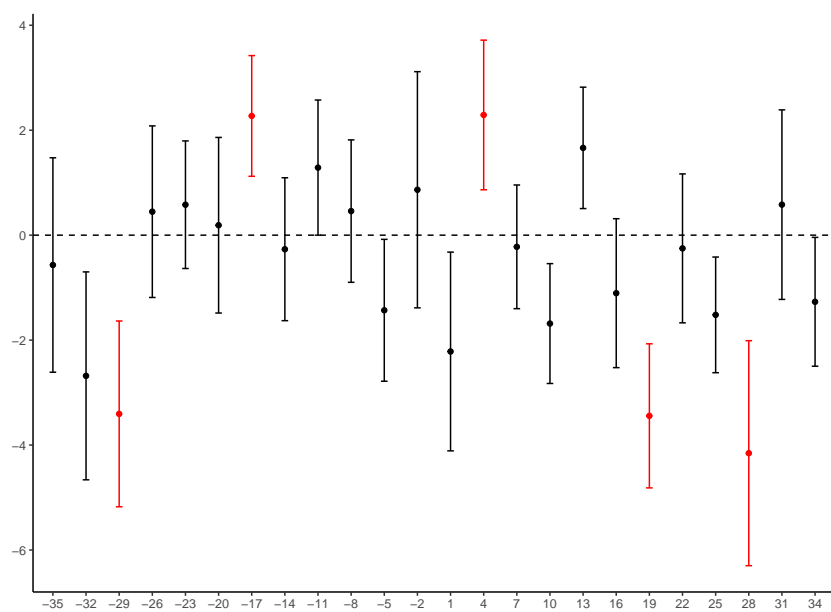


Figure D.25: Different Bandwidths: Local Property Tax Compliance

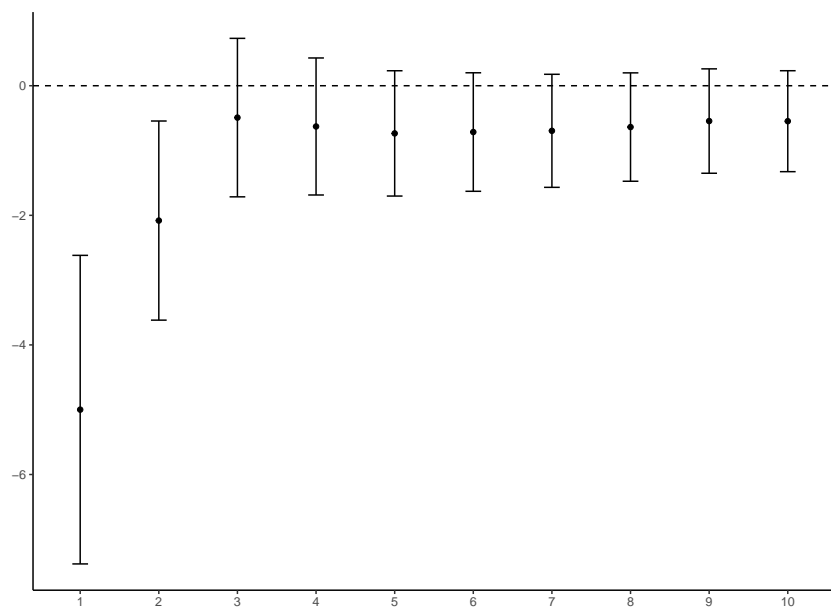


Figure D.26: Different Cutoffs: Local Trash Tax Compliance

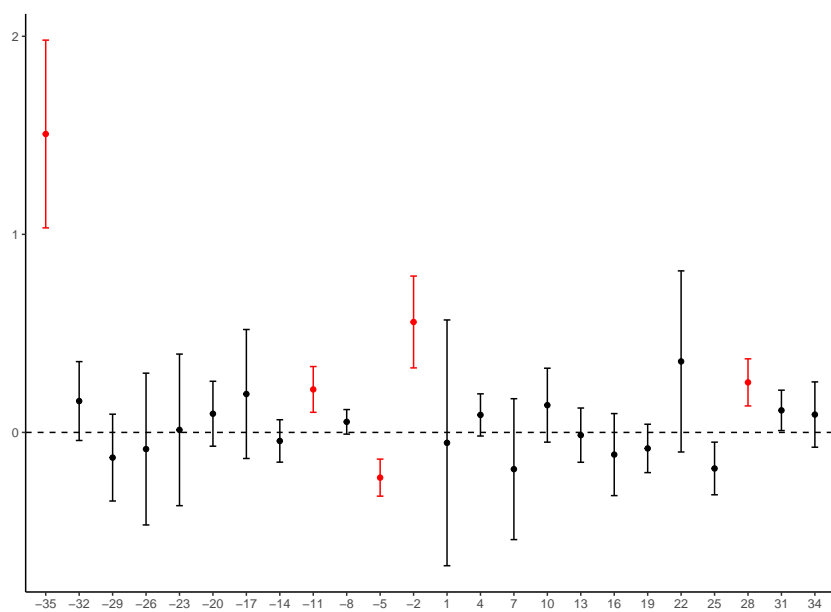


Figure D.27: Different Bandwidths: Local Trash Tax Compliance

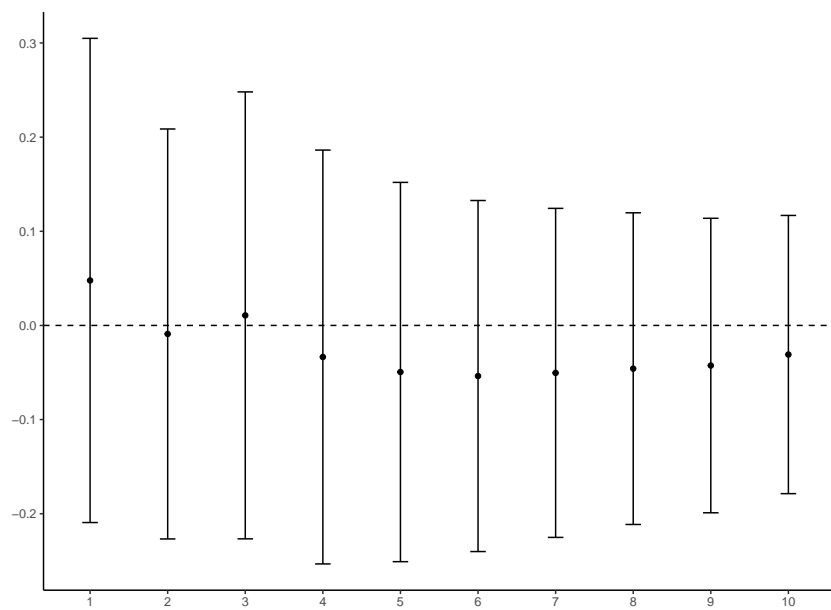


Figure D.28: Different Cutoffs: Local Tax Revenue

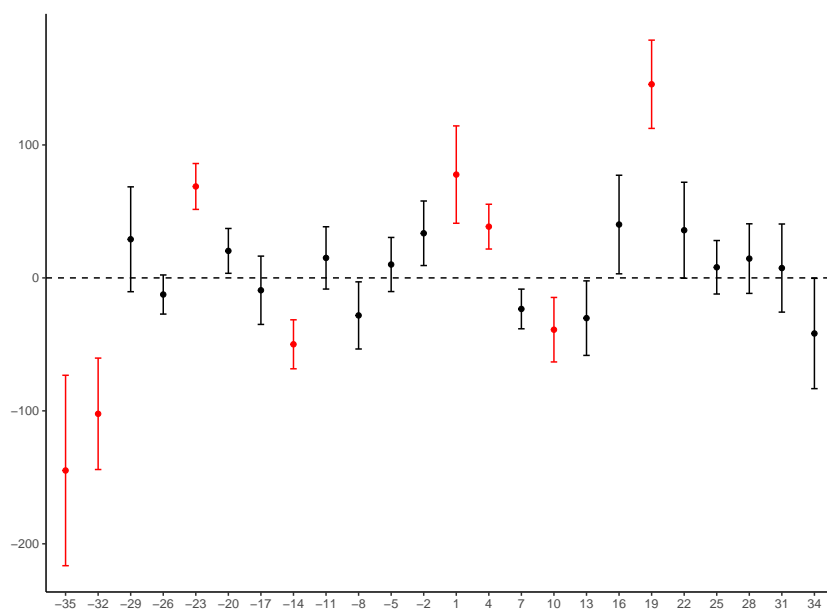


Figure D.29: Different Bandwidths: Local Tax Revenue

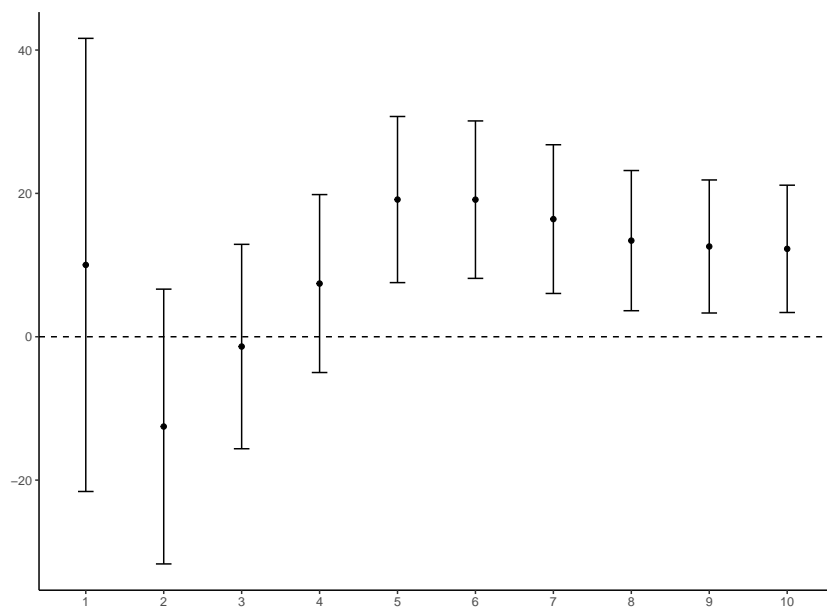


Figure D.30: Different Cutoffs: Property Valuation Contested

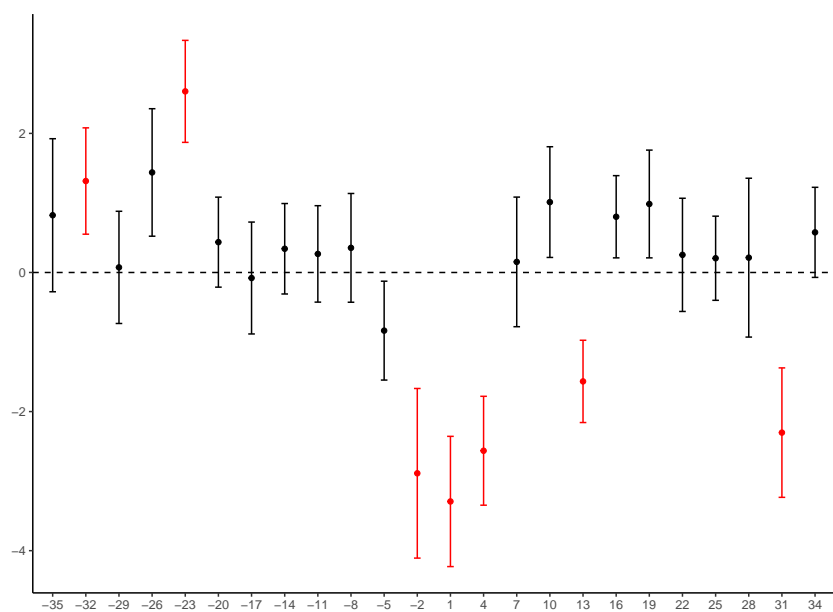
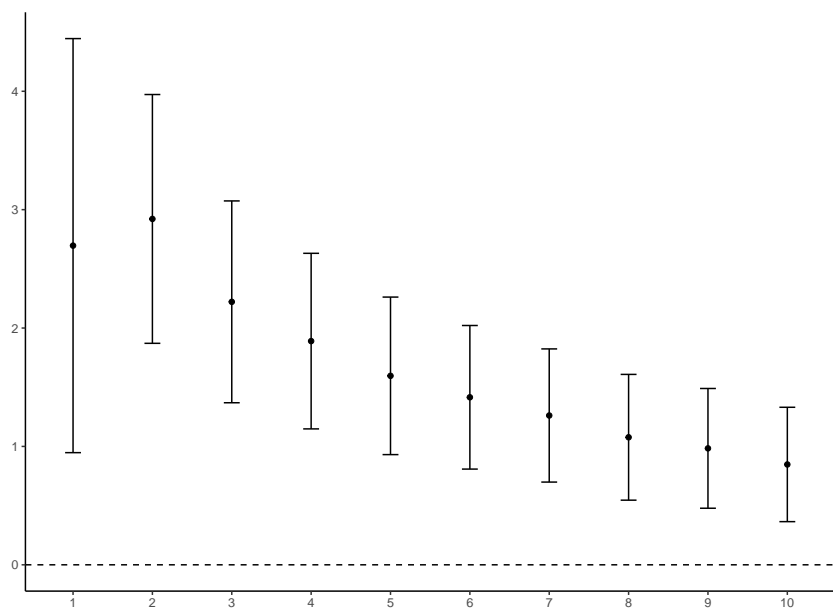


Figure D.31: Different Bandwidths: Information (Property Valuation Contested)



D.6 Text Analysis Validation

Table D.2: Dictionaries

Variable	Dictionary	Translation
Main Manifesto Dimensions		
Taxation	‘tassazione’, ‘fisco’, ‘tasse’, ‘tributi’, ‘imposte’, ‘contribuenti’, ‘aliquota’, ‘imu’, ‘tares’, ‘tari’	‘taxes’, ‘taxation’, ‘fiscal’, ‘tributes’, ‘taxpayers’, ‘tax bracket’, ‘local property tax’, ‘local trash tax’
Compliance	‘evasione’, ‘elusione’, ‘evasori’, ‘riscossione’, ‘accertamento’	‘evasion’, ‘elusion’, ‘evadors’, ‘tax collection/enforcement’, ‘tax assessment’
Local Ties	‘nato a’, ‘nativo di’, ‘cresciuto a’, ‘vissuto a’, ‘residente a’	‘born in’, ‘native of’, ‘raised in’, ‘lives in’, ‘resident in’
Placebo Manifesto Dimensions		
Education	‘scuola’, ‘educazione’, ‘studente’, ‘insegnanti’	‘school’, ‘education’, ‘student’, ‘teacher’
Environment	‘ambiente’, ‘ecologi’, ‘verde’, ‘fauna’, ‘flore’, ‘rifiuti’	‘environment’, ‘ecology’, ‘green’, ‘fauna’, ‘flora’, ‘trash’
Police	‘polizia’, ‘sicurezza’, ‘sorveglianza’	‘police’, ‘security’, ‘surveillance’

The lists of keywords for the dictionaries are presented before text processing (stemming) for ease of reading. In other words, the dictionaries employed gather all possible root versions of these terms (such as “tass” and “tassar” and “tassazion”).

In order to address the issue raised by Egami et al. (2018), I develop the dictionaries on an initial random sample of 20% of the manifestos – following the iterative approach described in the main paper. This split sample approach can avoid issues of over-fitting or experimenter-induced bias, when the same data is used to develop a measurement strategy and then test a set of hypothesis with said measurement strategy.

The excerpts translated in table A.19 above illustrate the language dimensions explored in the analysis, with representative examples from the text identified by the relative dictionaries.

Table D.3: Random Sample of Text Detected by Dictionaries

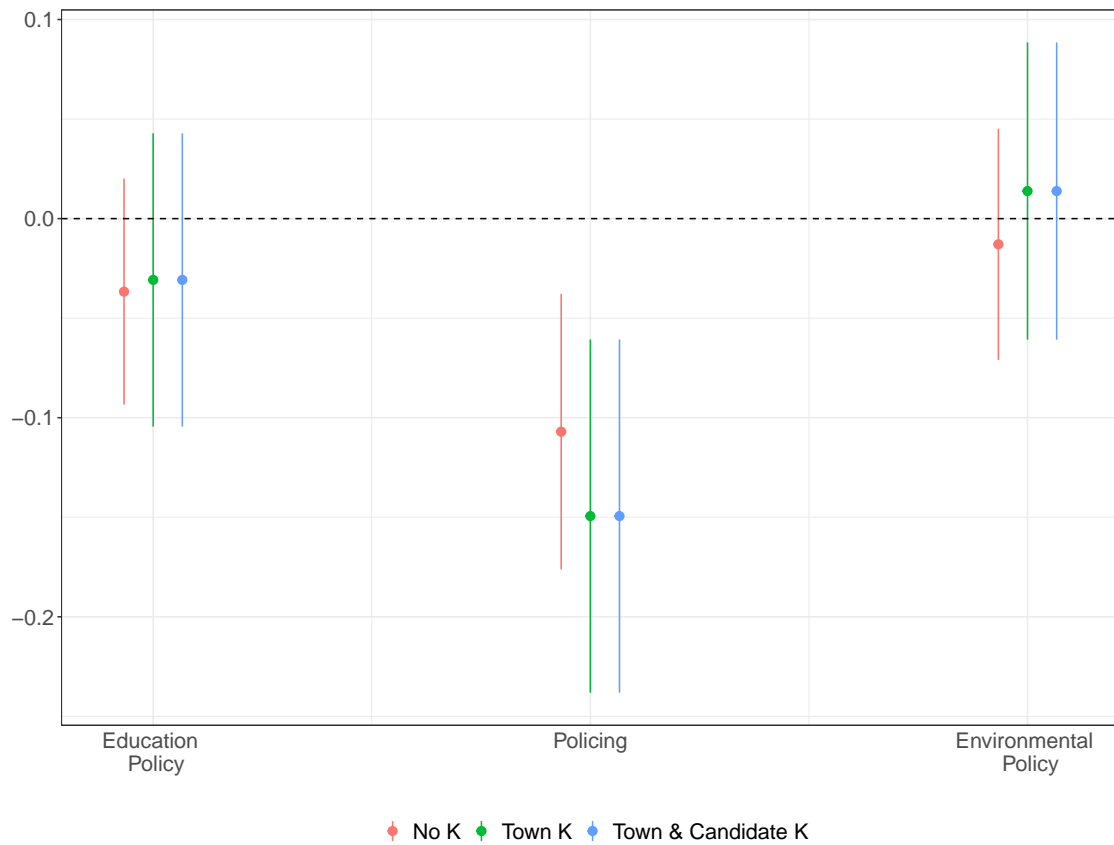
Tax Policy	Town	Year
“facilitate the opening of new production activities through tax relief”	Uzzano	2020
“wisely administer the municipal budget, with attention to costs and performance, to contain local taxation so as not to weigh on families”	Castione della Presolana	2021
“obtain lower local taxation levels when compared with municipalities similar to Casatenovo in our territory”	Castenovo	2019
Tax Compliance and Enforcement		
“recover evasion through a careful reconstruction of the positions of taxpayers without discrimination and without privileges”	Fabriano	2017
“strengthen tax evasion recovery policies for the benefit of all citizens: we all pay, we pay less”	Comasco	2021
“concrete fight against tax evasion with the sacrosanct commitment to allocate the greatest revenue to the reduction of tax rates”	Cervino	2021
Personal History Tied to the Community		
“I am thirty years old I was born and raised in fagnano, spending my whole life in my country”	Fagano Olona	2019
“I grew up in lomagna, playing football and working. For this reason I decided to return some of what i received to my country”	Lomagna	2019
“Mother of two girls, I’ve resided in Borgosatollo since August 2004”	Borgosatollo	2019

D.7 Text Analysis Placebos

In the figure below, I explore the relationship between the native status of mayoral candidates and additional policy dimensions. The goal is to rule out the possibility that native candidates talk about all sorts of policies more. I explore this with respect to three policy areas that are relevant for Italian municipal governments: education, environment, and policing.

As figure A.37 shows, native candidates are no more likely to talk about environmental or education policy. However, they are less likely to discuss policing. These results, although outside the theoretical scope of this study, show that native candidates do not simply talk more about all sorts of policies – in fact they discuss some less than their non-native counterparts.

Figure D.32: Text Analysis Placebos



E Data Collection

E.1 Survey

The survey was fielded in Italy on a nationally-representative online sample (N=2200) between June 22-29 2021, via the Italian survey firm NORSTAT Italia. The research was approved by an IRB (protocol # AAAS7394).

This survey was conducted in accordance to the APSA 2020 Principles and Guidance for Human Subjects Research. Respondents gave their informed consent before taking part in the survey. Participation was voluntary and anonymous. As part of this step, respondents reviewed an IRB-approved page that provided information about the study, including potential risks (namely privacy), compensation, and the contact of the PI. Individuals were compensated for their participation, at a rate of 1.8 USD for the 10-minute survey, which is over the NYS minimum wage at purchasing power parity. Finally, the survey did not utilize deception and all information provided in the treatment was truthful.

E.2 Public Contracts

To further probe enforcement-related spending, I turn to the more granular data of public contracts in the area of taxation. The Italian National Anti-Corruption Authority (ANAC) has recently published the universe of public contracts for the past decade, containing over a million documents with information on the contract type, the type of procedure, and the amount of the contract. This novel dataset allows for unprecedented precision in the study of local government expenditure. The contracts include all sorts of services and products bought by government entities: from large public-infrastructure projects (such as the building of activity centers) to more mundane replenishing of office supplies.

Based on the contract summary wording, I identify over 34 thousand contracts that can be associated with the tax office. In order to do so, I adopt a conservative dictionary-based approach, employing keywords that uniquely classify tax-related expenses. The classification of contracts was manually verified and cross-validated by checking random samples of tax contracts and ensuring that no contract was mis-classified as tax-related.

These contracts include all services and goods provided by external firms to the tax office, including materials for enforcement (e.g postage or software), specific training of employees, and outsourcing of coercive tax collection.

Table E.1: Tax-Contract Keywords

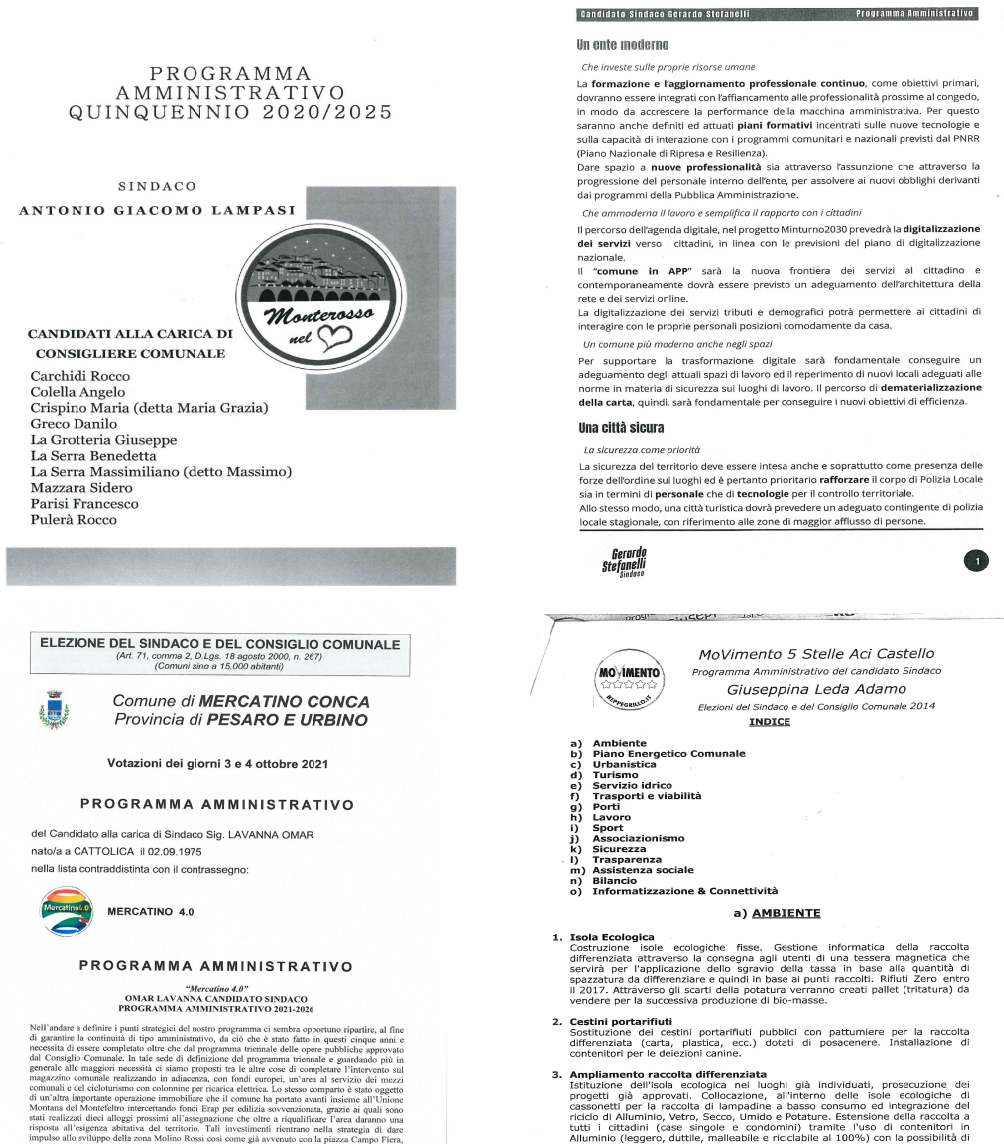
Dictionary	Translation
‘tasse’, ‘accertamento’, ‘riscossione’, ‘aliquota’, ‘imposta’, ‘IMU’, ‘ICI’, ‘TARES’, ‘TARI’, ‘TARSU’, ‘IRPEF’	‘taxes’, ‘assessment’ (for tax purposes), ‘collection’ (for tax purposes), ‘bracket’ (for income tax purposes), ‘taxpayers’, ‘tax rate’, local taxes acronyms (property, income, trash)

For ease of reading, the table presents the keywords before text processing, which entails reducing words down to their roots (stemming).

While outsourcing enforcement may seem to contradict my theoretical claim, I argue that this policy choice is in line with embedded fiscal governance. Even when collection is conducted by a private firm, the political legitimacy of coercive extraction remains associated with the municipal government and its functioning may still benefit from the informal knowledge of the native mayor. In fact, direct coercion is only the last step of the enforcement process, which is only possible after the discovery of noncompliance. Additionally, most municipalities do not outsource this part of the process – there are only 88 firms that are approved by the Ministry of Finance for public tax collection and they mostly take care of minor taxes, such as the advertisement tax.

E.3 Electoral Manifestos

Figure E.1: Manifesto Examples



The sample of electoral manifestos was collected via a systematic online search on Google. The search covered the universe of municipalities with less than 20,000 inhabitants ($N=7,239$). The search was conducted by research assistants hired through the UpWork platform – which follows recent suggestions on leveraging crowd-sourcing for data collection of local politics Sumner, Farris and Holman (2020). In doing so, I followed the ethical recommendations from Williamson Williamson (2016), and made sure to compensate properly research assistants – the average hourly compensation was 10.5 in PPP dollars (all upworkers were based in Italy). While Italy does not currently have a minimum hourly wage, proposals in the Parliament have hovered around 9 euros, which would be around 10/10.5 dollars.

Each data collector was given a random sample of municipalities and for each municipality search on Google “Comune [MUNICIPALITY NAME] programmi elettorali” (municipality ... electoral manifestos). If they could find in the first page of results any electoral program since the 2000s, they saved it as a PDF file, recording the link, along with candidate and party names. The task was therefore fairly mechanical and “simple” in its highly standardized and repetitive nature. Additionally, the main threat would be a type I error – not finding manifestos for a municipality when they were instead available. Instead, type II errors are much less likely – as coders had to download the platform and open it to record the name of the list and candidate, thus verifying that it actually was a manifesto.

Looking qualitatively at the online search process, manifestos were available in most cases from municipal institutional websites, fairly common given recent transparency and digital democracy efforts in Italy. In some cases, platforms were available from local news outlets or campaign websites.

One way to cross-validate the coder reliability is to compare coder performance. Table A.21 below presents the breakdown of worked delivered by 8 researcher assistants. All coders received an initial quota of 100 municipalities to check the quality and reliability of their work and then received additional quotas depending on their availability. While there some variance in the manifesto-per-municipality ratio, with the exception of coder #2, all workers were able to recover between .3 and .5 electoral platforms per municipality. This indicates that searching over “null results” may yield an additional amount of platforms missed in the first search, but the improvement should be marginal. In the most optimistic of cases, where the current average of .4/Mun increased to the maximum of .5/Mun, the additional .1 platforms would translate to about 500 more platforms, in addition to the 2500 already recovered.

The search yielded electoral manifestos for about 15% of municipalities, with an average of 2.5 manifestos per municipalities. This compares favorably with the average of 2.57 mayoral candidates per electoral cycle across municipalities. The match in averages indicates that the search recovered the manifestos of all candidates.

Table E.2: Coder Performance

Coder	Municipalities Assigned	Manifestos Found
Coder #1	700	220 (.31/Mun)
Coder #2	500	75 (.15/Mun)
Coder #3	750	273 (.36/Mun)
Coder #4	1000	480 (.48/Mun)
Coder #5	1000	418 (.42/Mun)
Coder #6	1850	795 (.43/Mun)
Coder #7	150	46 (.3/Mun)
Coder #8	200	101 (.5/Mun)

Given that the majority of sources were institutional, it is not surprising that the yield is unbalanced with respect to candidates.

However, the sample is unlikely to be an unbiased sample of all municipalities and electoral cycles. The table below reports a logistic model with municipal and electoral covariates predicting the online availability of electoral manifestos (coded as a binary variable).

Indeed, it is more likely to recover the electoral manifestos from larger and wealthier municipalities, as well as municipalities where elections were less competitive in the previous cycle. However, importantly, there is not relationship between the presence of manifestos and the public finance profile of the town: the tax enforcement expenditure or the revenue.

Table E.3: Predictors of Electoral Manifesto Presence

	<i>Outcome variable:</i>
	Manifesto Present
Population	0.575*** (0.057)
Expenditure per capita	0.288*** (0.047)
Margin of Victory (previous election)	−0.196*** (0.060)
Tax Enforcement Exp (per capita)	−0.088 (0.090)
Tax Revenue per capita	−0.044 (0.059)
Municipality Surface	−0.363 (1.135)
Urbanization	0.051 (0.050)
Observations	6,305
Mixed Effects	Province, Year
<i>Note:</i>	*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

F Qualitative Data

The following collection are selected extracts from local news articles, open letters, social media post and electoral campaign material collected for the project “Tax Thy Neighbor” (Paci, 2022). The full sample of qualitative evidence is available upon request.

F.1 Embeddedness, Place of Birth, and Electoral Campaigning

Caramagna, 2021 – Candidate Campaign Material

“I have always lived in Caramagna and most of you citizens know me, for those new to the country here is some information about me”

“Vivo da sempre a Caramagna e la maggior parte di voi cittadini mi conosce, per chi fosse nuovo del paese ecco qualche informazione su di me.”

Source:

<https://www.facebook.com/photo/?fbid=1831441490391121&set=gm.4693242280700378>

San Vincenzo, 2021 – Candidate Campaign Material

“Good morning friends, happy Sunday everyone. This morning I have the pleasure of presenting my new civic list to you. Made up of people of consolidated trust, each with different skills and professions, with deep roots in the territory of San Vincenzo, therefore able to understand its every problem.”

“Buongiorno amici, buona domenica a tutti. Stamani ho il piacere di presentarvi la mia lista civica tutta nuova. Composta da persone di consolidata fiducia, ognuna con capacità e professioni diverse, con profonde radici nel territorio di San Vincenzo, quindi capaci di comprenderne ogni problematica.”

Source:

<https://www.facebook.com/photo/?fbid=10226679868924063&set=gm.1191597311326481>

Volla, 2021 – Candidate Campaign Material

“I have lived in Volla for 42 years and I have always wondered what I could have done to make a contribution in improving this town which, despite having grown demographically, still maintains that air of a small village ... where when you leave you just have to stop at a bar and you all know each other, where you never feel alone and at times it feels like being in a bit of an extended family.”

“Vivo a Volla da 42 anni e mi sono sempre chiesta cosa avrei potuto fare per dare un contributo nel migliorare questa cittadina che pur essendo cresciuta demograficamente mantiene ancora quell’aria di Paese. . . dove quando si esce basta fermarsi ad un bar e ci si conosce tutti, dove non ci si sente mai soli e a volte sembra di essere in una famiglia un po’ allargata.”

Source:

<https://www.facebook.com/photo/?fbid=10227676695606111&set=gm.1855368211338477>

Additional sources

(14 maggio 2019 martedì). Più aziende in città per generare lavoro. *Il Giorno (Italy)*.

(23 aprile 2022 sabato). “Noi, uniti per il bene comune”; Nicola Infante candidato sindaco con “Primavera per Dresano”: siamo un gruppo che da sempre vive in paese. *Il Giorno (Italy)*.

(11 luglio 2021 domenica). Zocca, Covili candidato sindaco: “Il paese non si arrenda al declino”; Un altro Federico contenderà la poltrona a Ropa: “Vivo qui da sempre, questo territorio ha potenzialità inesprese”. *Il Resto del Carlino (Italy)*.

(13 luglio 2021 martedì). Corsa a sindaco, si candida anche Scaruffi; Pavullo, si presenterà con la lista civica ‘Idee in Comune’. Da sempre è stato attivo nel mondo del volontariato e dello sport. *Il Resto del Carlino (Italy)*.

(10 marzo 2022 giovedì). Matteucci propone la democrazia diretta; Il candidato sindaco è nato a Milano, ma da anni ha uno studio notarile nella nostra città: “Carrara diventerà come l’Atene di Pericle”. *La Nazione (Italy)*.

F.2 Embeddedness, Local Information, and Tax Governance

Barzago, 2017 – Local News Article

In Barzago the mayor, exponent of a center-left civic list, father of Veronica Tentori,

deputy of the Democratic Party, is one who does not give up, especially when he has the impression of being faced with people who would have every opportunity to pay. "It was precisely this that prompted me to act. First we sent a letter to all interested parties, then we interested a collection company and after numerous reminders we waited, but the results in some cases were made to wait. What do they answer when I call? They often feign indifference. They say they have forgotten about it, that they have put their bills in some drawer, but there are also those who admit to having had economic problems and ask for an installment. And of course we go to meet him. Calling personally also means being able to feel the pulse of many unknown situations and intervene in time. Let's also clear away the clichés, according to which it is mainly foreigners who do not pay the due, rather the opposite is true".

The method adopted by the mayor seems to have given the desired effects. Anyone who acted due to misunderstandings or oversights, immediately proceeded with the payment. Others waited for some extra family income, still others asked to pay the amount due a little at a time. "Some citizens, when called by the office manager, turn a deaf ear. But when I call, most of the time we get the credit back. Maybe because we all know each other in the village. We meet on the street and I think that looking into my eyes they are ashamed to look like tax evaders, especially if they have no economic problems. Then, on the other hand, there are the social cases, the propertyless, those who just can't manage to pay the bills: in these situations the phone call is always to ask what they need, to try to find a solution together".

A Barzago il primo cittadino, esponente di una lista civica di centrosinistra, padre di Veronica Tentori, deputata del Pd, è uno che non molla, soprattutto quando ha l'impressione di trovarsi di fronte a persone che avrebbero tutte le possibilità per pagare. "E' stato proprio questo che mi ha spinto ad agire - racconta -. Prima abbiamo inviato una lettera a tutti gli interessati, poi abbiamo interessato una società di riscossioni e dopo numerosi solleciti abbiamo aspettato, ma i risultati in alcuni casi si sono fatti attendere. Cosa mi rispondono quando chiamo? Spesso fingono indifferenza. Dicono di essersene scordati, di aver infilato le bollette in qualche cassetto, ma c'è anche chi ammette di aver avuto problemi economici e chiede una rateizzazione. E noi naturalmente gli andiamo incontro. Telefonare personalmente significa anche poter tastare con mano il polso di tante situazioni sconosciute e intervenire per tempo. Sgombriamo inoltre il campo dai luoghi comuni, secondo cui sarebbero soprattutto gli stranieri a non versare il dovuto, piuttosto è vero il contrario".

Il metodo adottato dal sindaco sembra aver dato gli effetti sperati. Chi ha agito per disguidi o dimenticanze, ha provveduto subito al pagamento. Altri hanno atteso qualche entrata familiare extra, altri ancora hanno chiesto di versare il dovuto poco per volta. "Alcuni cittadini, se chiamati dalla responsabile dell'ufficio, fanno orecchie da mercante. Invece quando telefono io, la maggior parte delle volte recuperiamo il credito. Forse perché in paese ci conosciamo tutti. Ci incontriamo per strada e credo

che guardandomi negli occhi si vergognino di fare la figura degli evasori, soprattutto se non hanno problemi economici. Poi invece ci sono i casi sociali, i nullatenenti, chi non ce la fa proprio a pagare le bollette: in queste situazioni la telefonata è sempre per chiedere di cosa hanno bisogno, per cercare di trovare una soluzione insieme”.

Source:

Barbara Gerosa. (23 dicembre 2017 sabato). Se evadi le tasse ti telefona il sindaco. *Corriere della Sera (Italy)*.

San Giovanni in Persiceto, 2022 – Local News Article

The mayor has no doubts, the knowledge of the territory, linked to the information that is received [from the tax agency], is fundamental. “If in my municipality, for example, there is a building area of 10 thousand square meters and an IMU value of 500 thousand euros is declared, it is clear that in a territory like this the price is absolutely lower,” he says. “From this we understand that something is wrong”. Taxes can be charged; For three years, the mayor of San Giovanni (Bo) has been the first in Italy in tax recovery.

Il sindaco non ha dubbi, la conoscenza del territorio, quella legata alle informazioni che vengono acquisite, è fondamentale. “Se nel mio Comune per esempio c’è un’area edificabile di 10mila metri quadri e viene dichiarato un valore Imu di 500mila euro, è chiaro che su un territorio come questo il prezzo è assolutamente al ribasso”, dice. “Da questo capiamo che qualcosa non va”.

È possibile far pagare le tasse; Da tre anni il sindaco di San Giovanni (Bo) è primo in Italia nel recupero di imposte.

Source:

<https://www.italiaoggi.it/news/e-possibile-far-pagare-le-tasse-2548716>

Massarosa, 2019 – Local News Article

The former mayor therefore feels that he has not remained immobile in the face of the problems: “After all, the administration must take its responsibilities - he continues - I know a citizen of Massarosese who a couple of weeks ago published photos of his holidays by the sea, he was at when he owes the Municipality of Massarosa about 11 thousand euros in arrears on taxes”. But there are other cases: like that of a lady residing in a hamlet who books a seasonal umbrella on a good beach in Viareggio when she owes the administration about 8 thousand euros in taxes on school services such as canteens and transport. “But the cases are numerous - says Mungai - in 2014 we even found people who took the municipal subsidy but did not declare it. The most curious fact that I saw in the period that I was mayor was that of a woman who

had brought her own Isee to ask for municipal contributions, crossing her name with the other databases we had discovered that she had 860 thousand euros of income at the year”.

L'ex sindaco dunque sente di non essere rimasto immobile di fronte ai problemi: “Del resto l'amministrazione deve prendersi le proprie responsabilità - continua - conosco un cittadino massarosese che un paio di settimane fa pubblicava le foto delle vacanze al mare, era all'estero quando deve al Comune di Massarosa circa 11mila euro di arretrati sulle imposte”. Ma ci sono altri casi: come quello di una signora residente in una frazione che prenota l'ombrellone stagionale in un bagno bene di Viareggio quando deve all'amministrazione circa 8mila euro di tasse sui servizi scolastici come mense e trasporti. “Ma i casi sono numerosi - dice Mungai - nel 2014 abbiamo addirittura trovato delle persone che prendevano il sussidio comunale ma che non lo dichiaravano. Il fatto più curioso che ho visto nel periodo che sono stato sindaco è stato quello di una donna che aveva portato il proprio Isee per chiedere i contributi comunali, incrociando il suo nominativo con le altre banche dati avevamo scoperto che aveva 860mila euro di reddito all'anno”.

Source:

<https://iltirreno.gelocal.it/versilia/cronaca/2019/12/10/news/la-verita-di-mungai-or-38192618>

Legnano Castanese, 2011 – Local News Article

“The Tax Council - adds the mayor - will have this function, starting from the advantage that the Municipalities, being very often in direct contact with the country and the citizens, have a better and detailed knowledge of local situations. You know the real estate properties, the ways and habits of all”.

Il Consiglio Tributario - aggiunge il sindaco - avrà questa funzione, partendo dal vantaggio che i Comuni, essendo molto spesso a contatto diretto con il paese e i cittadini, hanno una conoscenza migliore e dettagliata delle situazioni locali. Si conoscono le proprietà immobiliari, i modi e le abitudini di tutti.

Source:

(4 dicembre 2011 domenica). Il Comune dà la caccia agli evasori; Riflettori puntati su proprietà immobiliari e stili di vita “sospetti”. *Il Giorno (Italy)*.

Sassuolo, 2011 – Local News Article

The Revenue Agency puts the know-how, the municipality the knowledge of the territory and of the situations: the areas of investigation are commerce and professions,

urban planning and territory, building properties and real estate assets, fictitious residences. In addition, of course, to all the factors indicative of ability to pay: the Jaguar in the garage of low-income housing, in fact. A paradox, which nevertheless makes it clear what kind of situations will end up under the magnifying glass of the anti-evasion 007s.

L'Agenzia delle entrate mette il know how, il comune la conoscenza del territorio e delle situazioni: gli ambiti di indagine sono commercio e professioni, urbanistica e territorio, proprietà edilizie e patrimoni immobiliari, residenze fittizie. Oltre, naturalmente, a tutti i fattori indicativi di capacità contributiva: la Jaguar nel garage di una casa popolare, appunto. Un paradosso, che tuttavia fa capire bene che tipo di situazioni finiranno sotto la lente di ingrandimento degli 007 antievasione.

Source:

(26 maggio 2011 giovedì). Nuovi controlli anti-evasori; Firmato un patto di collaborazione fra Comune e Agenzia entrate. *Il Resto del Carlino (Italy)*.

Pavia, 2016 – Local News Article

To lower the risk of evasion, some municipalities have signed agreements with the Revenue Agency to carry out checks and inspections. Few, however, wanted to do so. Only 18 out of the 188 total. The notable presence of small towns under 5 thousand inhabitants discourages this type of agreement. "More municipalities should be agreed" said the mayor of Pavia, Massimo Depaoli "and small towns where everyone knows each other should also do so, because with the funds stolen from tax evasion, socially relevant interventions can be carried out".

Per abbassare il rischio di evasione, alcuni Comuni hanno sottoscritto accordi con l'Agenzia delle Entrate per effettuare controlli e verifiche. Pochi, però, hanno voluto farlo. Soltanto 18 sui 188 totali. La notevole presenza di piccoli centri sotto i 5mila abitanti scoraggia questo tipo di accordi. "Piu Comuni si dovrebbero convenzionare" ha detto il sindaco di Pavia, Massimo Depaoli "e dovrebbero farlo anche i piccoli centri dove ci si conosce tutti, perché con i fondi sottratti all'evasione si possono realizzare interventi di rilevanza sociale".

Source:

(23 gennaio 2016 sabato). Medici e dentisti: furbetti della fattura. *Il Giorno (Italy)*.

F.3 The Contentious Politics of Local Tax Governance

Certaldo, 2013 – Local News Article

What would prevent a greater success of the agreement, which is in the process of being renewed, is above all the lack of knowledge of the subject, but also the difficulty of the mayors to expose themselves as - it has been said - they risk not being re-elected. "I would like - said Andrea Campinoti - that broad agreements should be made on the fight against tax evasion. In Italy this question is political and must be interpreted in this way. Structural interventions are needed and the results must be made visible, as well as similar strategies between municipalities ". The mayor of Certaldo, speaking of his own experience, said that a person from his town, whom he had denounced, came to his office and told him: "How dare you, I will not be voting for you again". "If this happens in a region like Tuscany, it means that we are in really bad shape".

Quello che impedirebbe un maggior successo dell'accordo, che è in via di rinnovo, è anzitutto la scarsa conoscenza della materia, ma anche una difficoltà dei sindaci ad esporsi in quanto - è stato detto - rischiano di non essere rieletti. "Io vorrei - ha detto Andrea Campinoti - che le larghe intese si facessero sulla lotta all'evasione. In Italia questa questione è politica e così va interpretata. C'è bisogno di interventi strutturali e bisogna rendere visibili i risultati, oltre a mettere in campo strategie simili tra Comuni". Il sindaco di Certaldo, parlando della propria esperienza, ha raccontato che una persona del suo paese, che lui aveva denunciato, si è presentata nel suo ufficio e gli ha detto: "Come ti sei permesso, io non ti rivoto". "Se questo succede in una regione come la Toscana, significa che siamo veramente messi male".

Source:

(December 5, 2013 Thursday). Fisco: avviso pubblico, lo Stato premi Comuni contro evasione; 3.086 segnalazioni ma solo 147 valide. *ANSA Notiziario Generale in Italiano*.

Certaldo, 2013 – Conference on Local Tax Enforcement

This struggle must be faced in the awareness that there is a real risk of losing social consensus. The battle against tax evasion must be political - concluded Campinoti - and as such it must be continued. We need to make our citizens understand that the fight against tax evasion and legality are convenient and lead to more services ".

Questa lotta si deve affrontare nella consapevolezza che esiste il rischio concreto di perdere consenso sociale. La battaglia all'evasione fiscale deve essere politica – ha concluso Campinoti - e come tale va portata avanti. Bisogna far capire ai nostri

cittadini che la lotta all'evasione fiscale e la legalità convengono e portano ad avere maggiori servizi".

Source:

<http://archiviostorico.avvisopubblico.it/news/il-ruolo-degli-enti-locali-nel-contrasto-061213.shtml>

Fivizzano, 2011 – Local News Article

"We want to make everyone pay taxes, underlines the mayor Paolo Grassi to make everyone pay less, this is our goal". In September, 500 payment slips left, another 1000 in December: a bad start to the year for citizens called to put their hands in their wallets to settle unpaid accounts. But in the avalanche of folders there is no lack of errors and requests for payment to people in good standing with the payments of Ici and Tarsu. "In large numbers the errors are there continues the mayor, our offices are available to correct them." And the involvement of the offices "after" the sending of the files triggered the protest of the Uil Fpl. Contracting the collection of taxes says the provincial secretary of Uil Fpl Fabrizio Dazzi like any public service, is the wrong path. Last year we protested against the outsourcing of main activities for the body, entrusted to an external agency when the Municipality has instead redundant staff. "Crazy folders" in hand the citizens have already begun to besiege the tax office "thus forced to tour de force absurd continues Dazzi and to work overtime".

"Vogliamo far pagare le tasse a tutti sottolinea il sindaco Paolo Grassi per fare pagare meno a tutti, è questo il nostro obiettivo". A settembre sono partite 500 cartelle di pagamento, a dicembre altre 1000: un pessimo inizio d'anno per i cittadini chiamati a mettere le mani nel portafogli per saldare conti non pagati. Ma nella valanga di cartelle non mancano errori e richieste di pagamento a persone in regola con i versamenti di Ici e Tarsu. "Nei grandi numeri gli errori ci stanno continua il sindaco, i nostri uffici sono a disposizione per correggerli". E proprio il coinvolgimento degli uffici dopo l'invio delle cartelle ha scatenato la protesta della Uil Fpl. "Appaltare la riscossione dei tributi dice il segretario provinciale di Uil Fpl Fabrizio Dazzi come qualsiasi servizio pubblico, è la strada sbagliata. Già l'anno scorso abbiamo protestato per l'esternalizzazione di attività principali per l'Ente, affidata a un'agenzia esterna quando il Comune ha invece esuberi di personale in organico". Cartelle pazze alla mano i cittadini hanno già cominciato ad assediare l'ufficio tributi costretto così a tour de force assurdo continua Dazzi e a fare lo straordinario.

Source:

(28 gennaio 2011 venerdì). Cartelle pazze a Fivizzano: ufficio tributi preso d'assalto; Protesta dei sindacati. "Sbagliato esternalizzare il servizio". *La Nazione (Italy)*.

Northern Italy, 2013 – Local News Article

Topics that have monopolized every discussion in the North for months. Taxes. Money that doesn't run. Consumption stopped. There have been many unread signals, such as the queues of entrepreneurs who go to sue against tax assessment reports for hypothetical and unproven incomes; minutes, moreover, burdened with interest of up to two, three hundred percent. Faced with the cry of pain of a whole world that, already marked by the economic crisis, complained of being harassed as never before in history, many leftists thought they were the usual crafty ones, the usual tax evaders.

Argomenti che al Nord da mesi monopolizzano ogni discussione. Le tasse. I soldi che non girano. I consumi fermi. Ci sono stati molti segnali non colti. Come le code degli imprenditori che vanno a far causa contro verbali di accertamento fiscale per redditi ipotizzati e non dimostrati; verbali, per giunta, gravati da interessi anche del due, trecento per cento. Di fronte al grido di dolore di tutto un mondo che, già segnato dalla crisi economica, si lamentava di essere tartassato come mai nella storia, molta sinistra ha pensato si trattasse dei soliti furbastri, dei soliti evasori.

Source:

Michele Brambilla. (26 febbraio 2013 martedì). Tasse e crisi riconsegnano il Nord al centrodestra. *La Stampa*.

Fano, 2020 – Local News Article

Cross-checks with the tax agency and with the land registry to ascertain the size of the industrial buildings in question”, however, applying the full tariffs also to the offices and warehouses, where a 30% discount was agreed upon, among other things”. On the basis of these investigations, they went backwards until 2015, tracing the waste tax: a five-year back payment that led to the issue of very heavy bills, real sting. “The reaction was very violent - continues Andrea Baroni - so we are trying to understand and evaluate if the problem only concerns the territory of Fano. Since it is not possible to act as a group, but appeals must be made individually by each company, we are giving indications on the professionals who can be contacted for appeals”. This is the legal part of the story, because there is also an area that tries to work in diplomacy, because the president of the industrialists Mauro Papalini, who was also immediately contacted by some associated entrepreneurs, has already made contact with the mayor Massimo Seri to have a clarification on this matter for which the mayor will have to meet tomorrow with the president of the industrialists to understand how this assessment can be somehow eased.

Accertamenti incrociati con l'agenzia delle imposte e con il catasto per accertare la grandezza dei capannoni industriali in questione “applicando però le tariffe piena

anche sugli uffici e sul magazzino, dove fra l'altro era concordato uno sconto del 30%". Sullo scorta di questi accertamenti sono andati a ritroso fino al 2015 andando a ricalcare l'imposta sui rifiuti: un pagamento di arretrati di cinque anni che ha portato alla emissione di bollette pesantissime, delle vere e proprie stangate. "La reazione è stata molto violenta - continua Andrea Baroni - per cui stiamo cercando di capire e valutare se il problema riguarda solamente il territorio di Fano. Siccome non si può agire di gruppo, ma i ricorsi devono essere fatti singolarmente da ogni impresa, stiamo dando indicazioni sui professionisti a cui ci si può rivolgere per i ricorsi". Questa la parte legale della vicenda, perché c'è anche un'area che cercare di lavorare di diplomazia, perché il presidente degli industriali Mauro Papalini, anche lui subito contatto da alcuni imprenditori associati, ha già preso contatto con il sindaco Massimo Seri per avere un chiarimento su questa vicenda per cui il primo cittadino si dovrà incontrare domani con il presidente degli industriali per capire come questo accertamento possa essere in qualche maniera 'calmierato'.

Source

(1 ottobre 2020 giovedì). Stangata sulla tassa rifiuti. Scatta la rivolta; Chiesti ad alcuni imprenditori arretrati anche per 240mila euro. Le bollette inviate dalla società Andreani Tributi. Coinvolto il sindaco. *Il Resto del Carlino (Italy)*.

Massarosa, 2017 – Local News Article

"The mayor has received very serious threats on the Facebook page of the municipality - reads a very hard note from Noi per Massarosa, Pd and Sinistra Comune - A declared tax evader claimed to know his home address to make 'justice' of the notice that he received for the taxes he evades. Faced with these umpteenth, shameful threats, we address the embrace and support of the council groups to Mungai, certain that he will not be intimidated. Mungai suffers these attacks because he does not shirk his duties of solidarity and because he demands that everyone pay taxes ". "WE KNOW that the majority of Massarosesi are on the side of the mayor - the majority groups continue -, they are the ones who pay their taxes with responsibility. On the recovery of voluntary evasion we want to say a clear word: in Massarosa honest citizens are the majority, we are on their side and we are alongside those who have difficulties. This is demonstrated by the numbers of exemptions, reductions and requests for installments that we have always accepted because it is right for the community to take charge of those who do not make it. Those who evade still benefit from all the services provided by the public administration but do so on the shoulders of those who pay ".

"Il sindaco ha ricevuto gravissime minacce sulla pagina facebook del comune - si legge in una nota durissima di Noi per Massarosa, Pd e Sinistra Comune - Un evasore dichiarato ha affermato di conoscerne l'indirizzo di casa per fare 'giustizia' dell'avviso che ha ricevuto per le tasse che evade. Di fronte a queste ennesime, vergognose

minacce, rivolgiamo a Mungai l’abbraccio e il sostegno dei gruppi consiliari, certi che non si farà intimidire. Mungai subisce questi attacchi perché non si sottrae ai propri doveri di solidarietà e perché esige che tutti paghino le tasse”. “SAPPIAMO che la maggioranza dei massarosesi sta dalla parte del sindaco - continuano i gruppi di maggioranza -, sono quelli che pagano le tasse con responsabilità. Sul recupero dell’evasione volontaria vogliamo dire una parola netta: a Massarosa i cittadini onesti sono la maggioranza, noi siamo dalla loro parte e siamo al fianco di coloro che hanno difficoltà. Lo dimostrano i numeri delle esenzioni, delle riduzioni e delle richieste di rateizzazione che abbiamo sempre accolto perché è giusto che la collettività si faccia carico di quanti non ce la fanno. Chi evade usufruisce comunque di tutti i servizi erogati dalla pubblica amministrazione ma lo fa sulle spalle di chi paga”.

Source:

(11 novembre 2017 sabato). Minacce a Mungai su Facebook “Stai attento, perché so dove abiti”; Dopo le offese un nuovo caso per le lettere di recupero delle tasse. *La Nazione (Italy)*.

Viareggio, 2017 – Local News Article

A similar thing happened with tax evasion in the years preceding the collapse: one in three did not pay Tari Tia Ici Imu Tasi, and it ended as everyone knows. Even then there was no reaction from the administrators. A malicious one like Giulio Andreotti would have sinned and, thinking badly, would have imagined that tolerating tax evaders did not bother the voters. Certainly today a gush, trivially, makes you happier than finding a fine in the mailbox.

Una cosa simile è accaduta con l’evasione fiscale negli anni precedenti il dissesto: uno su tre non pagava Tari Tia Ici Imu Tasi, ed è finita come tutti sanno. Anche allora non ci fu reazione degli amministratori. Uno malizioso come Giulio Andreotti avrebbe peccato e, pensando male, avrebbe immaginato che tollerare evasori non disturbava gli elettori. Di certo oggi uno zampillo, banalmente, rende più felici che trovare una multa nella cassetta della posta.

Source:

(21 febbraio 2017 martedì). Proteste contro l’abbandono di rifiuti Il fenomeno sconcerta anche i social; Foto e commenti: ma il Comune si rifiuta di far fare le contravvenzioni. *La Nazione (Italy)*.

Certaldo, 2013 – Local News Article

Nine citizens who saw as many notices arrive at home, deemed them illegitimate and appealed to the provincial tax commission. The measures would be part of a batch

of 400 notices, that is an avalanche: we are in the order of thousands of euros of evasion to be recovered, but with the risk of increasing the volume of the dispute. [...] At this point, the council authorized the mayor Campinoti to appear before the tax commission, while a subsequent act will designate the trusted lawyer to represent the municipality in this battle that promises to be very long.

Nove cittadini che si sono visti arrivare a domicilio altrettanti avvisi, li hanno reputati illegittimi e hanno fatto ricorso alla commissione tributaria provinciale. I provvedimenti farebbero parte di un lotto di ben 400 avvisi, ovverosia una valanga: siamo nell'ordine delle migliaia di euro di evasione da recuperare, però con il rischio di far aumentare il volume del contenzioso. [...] A questo punto, la giunta ha autorizzato il sindaco Campinoti a costituirsi in giudizio dinanzi alla commissione tributaria, mentre con un successivo atto verrà designato il legale di fiducia per tutelare il Comune in questa battaglia che si preannuncia assai lunga.

Source:

(19 febbraio 2013 martedì). Accertamenti Ici illegittimi; Il Comune invia quattrocento avvisi contro l'evasione dell'imposta. La Nazione (Italy).

Sarzana, 2016 – Local News Article

In particular, however, Frassini was satisfied with the intervention made in the fight against tax evasion which led to 4,600 files for 3 million assessments relating to Ici and Tarsu for the years 2009-2010 ". It is NOT even afraid of the reaction of those who voted for it after jumping over the ditch. "My constituents - explains Frassini - voted for a program made for the city, hence the name of my list.

In modo particolare però la Frassini è rimasta soddisfatta per l'intervento fatto nella lotta all'evasione fiscale che ha portato a 4.600 cartelle per 3milioni di accertamenti relativi a Ici e Tarsu per gli anni 2009-2010". NON teme neppure la reazione di chi l'ha votata dopo il salto del fosso. "I miei elettori - spiega la Frassini - hanno votato un programma fatto per la città, da cui il nome della mia lista.

Source:

(22 maggio 2016 domenica). "Questo sindaco merita supporto" La Frassini entra in maggioranza; La svolta in consiglio con il voto a favore del rendiconto. La Nazione (Italy).

Sondrio, 2011 – Local News Article

There is also a problem connected with this Government fiscal maneuver and concerns the online publication of citizens' incomes, which would favor "social control" in the

territory. "It doesn't seem to me a great idea, warns the mayor of Piateda Aldo Parora - also because the state delegates to the mayors something that is within its competence. The publication, then, of citizens' incomes becomes a weapon that turns against the administrators of small municipalities. In a village like ours we all know each other and this would end up putting us in an unpleasant position".

C'è poi un problema collegato con questa Manovra fiscale del Governo e riguarda la pubblicazione on line dei redditi dei cittadini, che favorirebbe il controllo sociale sul territorio. "Non mi sembra una grande trovata ammonisce il sindaco di Piateda Aldo Parora - anche perché lo stato delega ai sindaci una cosa che è di sua competenza. La pubblicazione, poi, dei redditi dei cittadini diventa un'arma che si ritorce contro gli amministratori dei piccoli comuni. In un paese come il nostro ci si conosce tutti e questa cosa finirebbe col metterci in una posizione antipatica".

Source:

(2 settembre 2011 venerdì). Noi non siamo degli sceriffi Basta con questi spot ad effetto. Il Giorno (Italy).

Ponte dell'Olio, 2011 – Local News Article

" We are not here to ruin families - explained the mayor Roberto Spinola, contacted by ANSA - but to make everyone pay taxes. The anomaly is not us, but the municipalities that do not. It is a matter of fairness: we protect honest citizens and try to find resources to provide services, especially to the elderly and children ".

"Noi non siamo qua per rovinare le famiglie - ha spiegato il sindaco Roberto Spinola, contattato dall'ANSA - ma per far pagare le tasse a tutti. L'anomalia non siamo noi, ma i Comuni che non lo fanno. E' un fatto di equità: tuteliamo i cittadini onesti e cerchiamo di trovare risorse per dare i servizi, soprattutto agli anziani e ai bambini".

Source:

(March 17, 2011 Thursday). FISCO:COMUNE PIACENTINO ANTI-EVASORI;'DENUNCIA' 10%CITTADINI; SINDACO PONTE DELL'OLIO, ANOMALIA E' CHI NON COMBATTE EVASIONE. *ANSA Notiziario Generale in Italiano*.

Monte Argentario, 2018 – Local News Article

Mayor of Monte Argentario, Arturo Cerulli. "There is no doubt that citizens pay a lot for municipal taxes, but to pay less you have to pay everyone - specifies the mayor - for this reason we will stay behind these situations of insolvency to be able to collect them and to protect those citizens who honestly comply with the their tax obligations. Unfortunately, in this range of tax evaders there are also people who

really cannot pay and we therefore try to identify those types of situations for which help is needed”.

Sindaco di Monte Argentario, Arturo Cerulli. “E’ indubbio che per i tributi comunali i cittadini pagano tanto, ma per pagare di meno si deve pagare tutti - specifica il sindaco - per questo staremo dietro a queste situazioni di insolvenza per riuscire a riscuoterle e per tutelare quei cittadini che ottemperano onestamente ai loro impegni fiscali. Purtroppo in questa fascia di evasori ci sono anche persone che veramente non possono pagare e noi, per questo, cerchiamo di individuare quelle tipologie di situazioni per le quali c’è bisogno di aiuto”.

Source:

(27 gennaio 2018 sabato). Imu, Tasi e Tari eluse Un milione di tasse evase; Dal Comune argentarino dato preoccupante. *La Nazione (Italy)*.

Reggio, 2012 – Local News Article

It can be difficult in smaller and less structured municipalities. “I imagine that in the very small towns it is more difficult, we all know each other ... A mayor risks having to be an inspector with a relative: there must be precise parameters”. Isn’t there a risk that reporting becomes an improper weapon in certain hands? “The risk is always there, but it is avoidable if the reports follow objective criteria”.

Può essere difficile nei Comuni più piccoli e meno strutturati. “Immagino che nei piccolissimi Comuni si faccia più fatica, ci si conosce tutti... Un sindaco rischia di dover fare l’ispettore con un parente: devono esserci parametri precisi”. Non si corre il rischio che la segnalazione diventi un’arma impropria in certe mani? “Il rischio c’è sempre, però è evitabile se le segnalazioni seguono criteri oggettivi”.

(6 febbraio 2012 lunedì). “Comuni, la lotta contro gli evasori fiscali non diventerà una caccia alle streghe”; Intervista a Graziano Delrio, sindaco di Reggio e presidente Anci. *Il Resto del Carlino (Italy)*.

Lunigiana, 2015 – Local News Article

It would be a joke for honest taxpayers, the mayor insisted in recent weeks if the administration were forced to resort to the most hateful of solutions due to crafty taxpayers [evaders]: “increase tariffs”. In short, if it becomes necessary to make oneself unpleasant, it is better to do it in the eyes of those who behave as crafty.

Sarebbe una beffa per i contribuenti onesti ha insistito in queste settimane il sindaco se per colpa dei furbetti l’amministrazione si vedesse costretta a ricorrere alla più odiosa delle soluzioni: aumentare le tariffe. Se diventa necessario rendersi antipatici,

insomma, meglio farlo agli occhi di chi si comporta da furbetto.

Source:

(10 maggio 2015 domenica). Non paghi le tasse: gogna mediaticaIl Comune mette gli evasori sul web; In Lunigiana ok definitivo all'idea del sindaco: Incentivo a regolarizzarsi. *La Nazione (Italy)*.

Reggio, 2009 – Local News Article

IN FACT, there are numerous complaints for building abuse against citizens who own huts and buildings for agricultural use. Inevitable queues in the offices of the various mayors of the area to which the owners are addressing without hiding their big concerns. Unfortunately, I cannot reassure the citizens, said Ivano Ferri, Mayor of Cavriglia, also because the operational profile of the Revenue Agency is purely fiscal and has very little to do with urban planning. The mayor adds: The spirit of the law is clear and noble and can only be shared. The aim is to discover any abuses committed in the area. This type, for example, can include surreptitious houses or increases in portions of unreported houses. We are therefore faced with a way of charging taxes to those who have tried to evade them. But at the same time it must be said that applying the measure without taking into account the various situations creates an important inconvenience to my municipality but more generally to the entire Valdarno as well as to the province and in full to the rest of the country. It seems to me that now, rather than targeting the real abuses, a kind of war is being waged against chicken coops.

STANNO INFATTI stanno arrivando numerose contestazioni per abuso edilizio a cittadini proprietari di capanne e fabbricati a uso agricolo. Inevitabili le code negli uffici dei vari sindaci del territorio ai quali i proprietari si stanno rivolgendo senza nascondere le loro grosse preoccupazioni. Purtroppo, non posso tranquillizzare i cittadini ha detto Ivano Ferri, sindaco di Cavriglia anche perché il profilo operativo dell'Agenzia delle Entrate è puramente fiscale e ha davvero poco a che vedere con l'urbanistica. Aggiunge il sindaco: Lo spirito della legge è chiaro e nobile e non può che essere condivisibile. Lo scopo è quello di scoprire eventuali abusi commessi sul territorio. In tale tipologia, ad esempio, possono rientrare case surrettizie oppure o aumenti di porzioni di abitazioni non denunciate. Siamo dunque di fronte a un modo di fare pagare le tasse a chi ha cercato di evaderle. Ma allo stesso tempo va detto che applicare a tappeto la misura senza tenere conto delle varie situazioni crea un disagio importante al mio comune ma più in generale all'intero Valdarno come alla provincia e per esteso al resto del Paese. Mi pare che adesso più che a colpire i veri abusi si stia facendo una specie di guerra contro i pollai.

Source:

(17 aprile 2009 venerdì). di GIORGIO GRASSI GUERRA SÌ agli abusi edilizi, ma non ai pollai&#.... *La Nazione (Italy)*.

Other Sources

(14 agosto 2020 venerdì). “Ci aspettano scelte difficili Lotta all’evasione tributaria”; La sindaca di Poviglio Cristina Ferraroni: “Abbiamo grandi responsabilità Bisogna superare le criticità rilevate dalla Corte dei Conti: vinceremo questa sfida”. *Il Resto del Carlino (Italy)*.

“Se ho ben capito: nei primi cinque anni un sindaco non rompe le scatole, poi nei successivi non potendosi più presentare tira fuori i problemi spinosi”.

(22 aprile 2018 domenica). “Tari, l’amministrazione si dimetta”; Opposizione compatta sul questionario per stanare gli evasori. *Il Resto del Carlino (Italy)*.

(22 gennaio 2012 domenica). Il sindaco sta alimentando l’odio sociale; Politici di tutti i colori contro la frase di Aguzzi sui fighetti cittadini... presunti evasori. *Il Resto del Carlino (Italy)*.

(17 maggio 2019 venerdì). Trecento in piazza contro la Tares “Ci sono arrivati conteggi impazziti”; Commercianti e artigiani in presidio davanti al municipio. *Il Giorno (Italy)*.

(11 novembre 2019 lunedì). Cartelle Imu, il sindaco Garosi “Non è mia la frase sugli evasori”. *La Nazione (Italy)*.

(16 giugno 2015 martedì). La black list’ finisce sulla Rai: I riomaggiorese non sono tutti evasori; Anche i cittadini schierati contro la delibera antimorosi. *La Nazione (Italy)*.

(7 marzo 2017 martedì). Caos Tari, malumore tra i cittadini: “Ingiusto fare pagare gli arretrati”. *Il Resto del Carlino (Italy)*.

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(21 gennaio 2010 giovedì). Ma lo sciacallo non è un pozzese doc. *Il Giorno (Italy)*.

(5 giugno 2013 mercoledì). Non buttiamo benzina sul fuoco, al paese serve unità. *La Nazione (Italy)*.

Aristea Canini. (20 marzo 2012 martedì). Ma quali evasori? Il paese non ci crede; Vilminore Si difendono i titolari del market accusato di emettere scontrini annullati.

I compaesani: Qui c'è una spia, e pure esperta. *Corriere della Sera (Italy)*.

Masci Raffaello. (October 15, 2006). PROTESTA LA RIVOLTA DEL POPOLO DELLE PARTITE IVA PARTE DA TREVISO Gli evasori in piazza "E' schiavismo di Stato" "In nero il 25-30%, ma solo per sopravvivere". *La Stampa*.