

*Much of the literature in distributive politics suggests that parties are advantaged nationally when they control office at the local level. But is this invariably true? Whatever advantage control over the local patronage machinery may offer, local governments might under some conditions sully their parties' labels and thus hurt up-ticket candidates. My analysis, which features a regression discontinuity design in mayoral races in Brazil, demonstrates the critical role that party labels play in linking national and local elections. I show that the presidential tickets of parties with strong brands suffer a large electoral penalty in municipalities governed by co-partisans, especially when voters are dissatisfied with the local government. Loosely organized parties with weak party labels do not suffer from a similar disadvantage. Hence, this study shows that for programmatic parties with strong party brands, mayors can be more of a burden than an asset*