The Global Incumbency Advantage

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Abstract

This paper explores the global incumbency advantage. We first show that existing subnational estimates of the incumbency advantage correlate positively with GDP per capita and democratic quality, and negatively with corruption across countries. Building on this meta-analysis, we then consider all presidential and parliamentary elections held since 1945 to estimate how a national electoral victory affects the probability that winning parties and candidates retain power beyond the term for which they were elected. On average, national election winners benefit from an incumbency advantage, but this effect is short-lived and differs markedly across contexts: it is large in Africa, North America, and Western Europe, but muted or even reversed in other regions. We explore how standard incumbency effects and electoral manipulation contribute to these results. In established democracies, the national incumbency advantage reflects gains in the subsequent electoral performance of election winners. In less democratic regimes, it mainly stems from manipulation of the fairness and the timing of elections. Overall, this advantage is largest in both the most and the least democratic countries, due to radically different types of equilibria.

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1 Introduction

In both democracies and autocracies, incumbents often enjoy an advantage when seeking reelection, which helps them retain power (Gelman and King, 1990; Levitt, 1994). The size of this incumbency advantage has important implications for political accountability and the health of democracy (Ashworth, 2012). Strong incumbency effects may indicate that voters reward competent leaders and value stability, but they may also reflect direct benefits from holding office, such as access to institutional resources, superior fundraising capacity, and greater name recognition and visibility. In turn, such effects might influence political selection by deterring high-quality challengers from competing against experienced incumbents (Cox and Katz, 1996). They may weaken electoral incentives and reduce performance, or conversely, foster long-term policy planning.

Since the 1970s, a large literature has studied the incumbency advantage within countries, with an early focus on U.S. congressional and state elections (Ferejohn, 1977; Fiorina, 1977). This inspired more recent empirical work leveraging causal identification methods, in particular regression discontinuity designs, to estimate the incumbency advantage (Lee, 2008) and the effects of candidates' rankings in past elections (Anagol and Fujiwara, 2016; Granzier et al., 2023). Many other studies examine the incumbency advantage at the subnational level beyond the U.S. context. However, we do not know to what extent winning a national election affects a party's or a candidate's subsequent electoral performance and political trajectory. At the national level, the existence of large incumbency effects would have important implications for the likelihood of consequential political turnovers (Marx et al., 2024) and the functioning of democracy (Levitsky and Ziblatt, 2019).

This paper provides the first estimates of the incumbency advantage at the national level. Doing so poses new conceptual challenges because national incumbents not only enjoy the common sources of advantage described in the literature, but also have the ability to affect the timing of elections and the conditions in which elections are fought. Thus, while previous work often equates the incumbency advantage with the effect of an electoral win on subsequent electoral performance, we must consider the possibility that incumbents may determine whether competitive elections take place at all, when they take place, and under which conditions (Fearon, 2011; Egorov and Sonin, 2014).

We introduce a novel characterization of the incumbency advantage as the causal effect of winning an election on the probability that a candidate or party remains in office beyond the scheduled end of their term. This allows us to consider a variety of settings, including countries with heterogeneous levels of democracy where leaders retain power through various means, including—but not restricted to—winning elections. Using data from all national elections conducted globally since 1945, we study how electoral victories affect a party's or a candidate's chances of remaining in office beyond the next scheduled election. Our analysis compares the power trajectories (i.e., the probability of being in power τ years after a given election or after the scheduled term end) of winners and losers of close elections conducted at time t.[1] We also estimate how incumbency affects the probability of winning the next election, conditional on the election taking place. In our setting, incumbency effects on subsequent

[1] Our analysis accounts for the possibility of legal transition periods: we report the effect of marginally winning an election on the likelihood of being in power at least six months (or longer) after the scheduled end of an incumbent's term in office.

electoral performance constitute one of the mechanisms driving a leader's ability to retain political power, in addition to leader-driven changes in the fairness and the timing of elections.

We first review the rich empirical literature studying the incumbency advantage *within countries*. While previous work has studied incumbency effects in many contexts, existing estimates show considerable variation in magnitude and even sign (e.g., Ferreira and Gyourko, 2009; Eggers et al., 2015; Fiva and Smith, 2018; Klašnja and Titiunik, 2017; Kartik and Weelden, 2019). Overall, we lack a unified understanding of the key insights from this literature. The first part of the paper presents a meta-analysis of this body of work, covering 94 estimates of the incumbency advantage obtained via regression discontinuity designs across 58 studies and 29 countries. Large incumbency advantages are observed in OECD countries, which are generally high-income and democratic. Emerging and developing countries, by contrast, tend to display incumbency disadvantages. We conduct several empirical exercises to identify the sources of this heterogeneity and highlight the role of three variables—GDP per capita, corruption, and democratic quality—as important predictors of the incumbency advantage at the subnational level.

We then turn to our core objective: providing a causal estimate of the *national* incumbency advantage across all presidential and parliamentary elections held since 1945, at the level of political parties and individual candidates. Using the nonparametric regression discontinuity approach from Calonico et al. (2014), we first conduct extensive placebo checks to verify the validity of our empirical design. There is no evidence of electoral manipulation overall and across various subsamples, except in the subsets of elections conducted in autocracies and elections classified (ex post) as not free and fair by the Varieties of Democracy project (Coppedge et al., 2021). Having established this pattern, we report results separately for the full sample of elections and for the subsample of free and fair elections.

Across all presidential and parliamentary elections, we document the existence of a positive but short-lived party-level incumbency advantage at the national level. Political parties that win national elections experience different power trajectories relative to runner-up parties: election winners are 13 percentage points (p.p.) more likely to be in power five years after a given election (which is significant at the 10% level) and 10 p.p. more likely to be in power six months beyond the scheduled end of their term (which corresponds to 27% of the runner-up party's probability of being in power at that point and is significant at the 10% level). However, seven years after a given election and three years after the scheduled term end, the winning party is no more likely to be in power, on average. Estimates of the incumbency advantage of individual candidates in presidential elections deliver similar insights. Winning presidential candidates benefit from a positive (10 p.p.) incumbency advantage on average, but this effect is also short-lived. All these results are robust to only considering national elections that are classified as free and fair and to various sample restrictions and alternative specification choices.

We generally do not observe substantial differences between incumbency effects in presidential elections and parliamentary elections. However, mirroring the insights from our meta-analysis of subnational results, these incumbency effects vary substantially across the world. Incumbent parties in OECD countries—in particular, those in North America and Western Europe—as well as those in African countries enjoy a more pronounced advantage. The same insights broadly hold when we consider individual candidates (rather than political parties) running in presidential elections in those

regions. By contrast, incumbent parties face a disadvantage in Latin America and in Asia and Oceania.[2] The evidence from national elections diverges from within-country estimates for low-income countries. In those settings, the literature has documented large incumbency disadvantages in local elections, while we estimate a positive party-level incumbency advantage at the national level. Finally, elections classified as not free and fair yield very large incumbency advantages for the parties and presidential candidates that win them.

We explore two sets of mechanisms to explain these findings: incumbency effects on subsequent electoral performance, and manipulation of the fairness and the timing of follow-up elections. First, we examine how incumbents fare in subsequent elections, extending the standard characterization of the incumbency advantage to the national level. We find non-significant incumbency effects on the joint probability of competing in and winning the next national election. However, this null average result masks substantial heterogeneity across subsamples that mirrors the heterogeneity we find for the power trajectories of election winners and runners-up. Election winners in North America and Western Europe have a substantially larger probability of winning the next election,[3] while incumbents in two regions (Latin America, and Asia and Oceania) face a lower probability of winning. In line with the findings from our meta-analysis, these effects tend to be larger in regions with higher levels of income, lower levels of corruption, and higher levels of democratic quality.

Second, we consider the possibility that changes in the fairness and the timing of subsequent elections affect incumbents' ability to manipulate the outcome of these elections and to retain power beyond their scheduled term. We first provide evidence that in several subsamples (e.g., elections in autocracies and those in Africa), winning a national election increases the probability of winning a follow-up election that is not free and fair. To explore the timing mechanism, we compute the difference between the dates of constitutionally mandated elections and actual election dates. National officeholders in several subsamples (e.g., autocracies and low-income regions) retain power by postponing elections or by canceling them outright. Across the least democratic countries in our sample, only 56% of national elections are followed by another election held on schedule, 26% by an election held early, and 17% by a late election or no election at all. By contrast, in the most democratic countries—where snap elections are common but elections are rarely postponed— the corresponding figures are 74%, 24%, and 2%.

In the final part of the paper, we provide a decomposition of the incumbency advantage at the national level by distinguishing between three mutually exclusive scenarios. Election winners may retain power beyond the scheduled end of their term because (i) they have won a follow-up election that was free and fair, (ii) they have won a follow-up election that was not free and fair, or (iii) no election has taken place. This decomposition delivers intuitive insights. For instance, the positive incumbency effects we observe among OECD countries and democratic countries are largely driven by the likelihood of winning follow-up elections that are free and fair. By contrast, elections held in autocratic regimes and, more generally, elections that are not free and fair yield a sizable incumbency

[2] We group countries in North America and Western Europe into one subsample, and countries in Asia and Oceania into another (see Section 4).

[3] Mayhew (2008) provides consistent descriptive evidence in the context of U.S. presidential elections.

advantage that is almost entirely driven by the absence of free and fair follow-up elections. Taken together, these results give rise to a non-linear relationship between our measure of the national-level incumbency advantage on the one hand, and levels of economic development and democratic quality on the other. While subnational estimates of the incumbency advantage correlate positively with GDP per capita, our estimates of the national incumbency advantage are lowest for middle-income countries with intermediate values of institutional quality, and largest for the most democratic and the least democratic countries in our sample.

This pattern arises due to different mechanisms in highly democratic and less democratic countries. In high-income and democratic countries, winning a national election substantially improves the winning side's performance in the subsequent election. In those settings, incumbents must typically secure re-election via democratic means, and the effects we observe may reflect legitimate electoral support for high-performing parties and candidates who successfully tap into the electoral benefits of incumbency (as in, e.g., King and Gelman, 1991; Cox and Katz, 1996; Levitt and Wolfram, 1997). This might lead to a virtuous circle shaped by voter learning, positive selection, and long-term policy-making, as described in the models of, e.g., Aruoba et al. (2019) and Kartik et al. (2025), and the reviews of Ashworth (2012) and Duggan and Martinelli (2017). Alternatively, strong incumbency effects could be sustained by clientelistic exchanges between a loyal supporter base and strong incumbents who provide targeted transfers to the former (see Weingast et al., 1981; Hicken, 2011; Golden and Min, 2013), although we note that these forces are unlikely to be more pronounced in highly democratic settings. In less democratic countries, election winners are more likely to retain office beyond their scheduled term mainly due to their ability to manipulate the timing and the competitiveness of elections. This can generate large incumbency advantages, allowing electoral autocracies and other authoritarian regimes to solidify and persist (Egorov and Sonin, 2024).

Overall, our results shed new light on the nuanced relationship between incumbency effects and the quality of democracy across and within countries. They also illustrate the importance of quantifying the incumbency advantage at an aggregate level—and uncovering its main determinants—to track the performance of democracies over time. We show that similarly large incumbency advantages can reflect radically different forces across different institutional settings.

The rest of the paper is organized as follows. Section 2 presents our meta-analysis of the literature studying the incumbency advantage within countries. Sections 3 and 4 outline the data and empirical framework we use to estimate the incumbency advantage at the national level. Section 5 reports our main results, Section 6 examines mechanisms, and Section 7 concludes.

2 Meta-analysis

We start our analysis of the global incumbency advantage with a review of the existing subnational evidence in economics and political science. We surveyed the literature to recover as many estimates of the incumbency advantage as possible and to identify robust conclusions from this body of work.

Our meta-analysis focuses on estimates of the incumbency advantage obtained via regression discontinuity designs (RDDs). This focus serves two purposes. First, while the literature provides

estimates computed via other methods (e.g., Ansolabehere et al., 2000), RDDs have become the state-of-the-art approach to measure the incumbency advantage (see Lee, 2008; Lee and Lemieux, 2010). Second, considering estimates from a single empirical approach allows us to pinpoint heterogeneity driven by contextual rather than methodological differences.

2.1 Analysis sample

In order to causally identify the incumbency advantage, close-elections RDDs examine how candidates or political parties who marginally won an election perform in the subsequent election, compared to marginal losers. Specifically, one can estimate

$$Y_{c,t+1} = \alpha + \beta T_{ct} + \gamma X_{ct} + \delta T_{ct} X_{ct} + \varepsilon_{c,t+1}, \tag{1}$$

where X_{ct} represents the margin of victory of candidate c in the election held at time t, T_{ct} is a dummy indicating candidate c's victory (it is equal to one when X_{ct} is positive, and zero otherwise), and $Y_{c,t+1}$ measures the electoral performance of candidate c in the subsequent election in the same constituency or electoral unit. The coefficient of interest β measures the electoral advantage that winners of the election conducted at time t enjoy in the election conducted at time $t+1$.

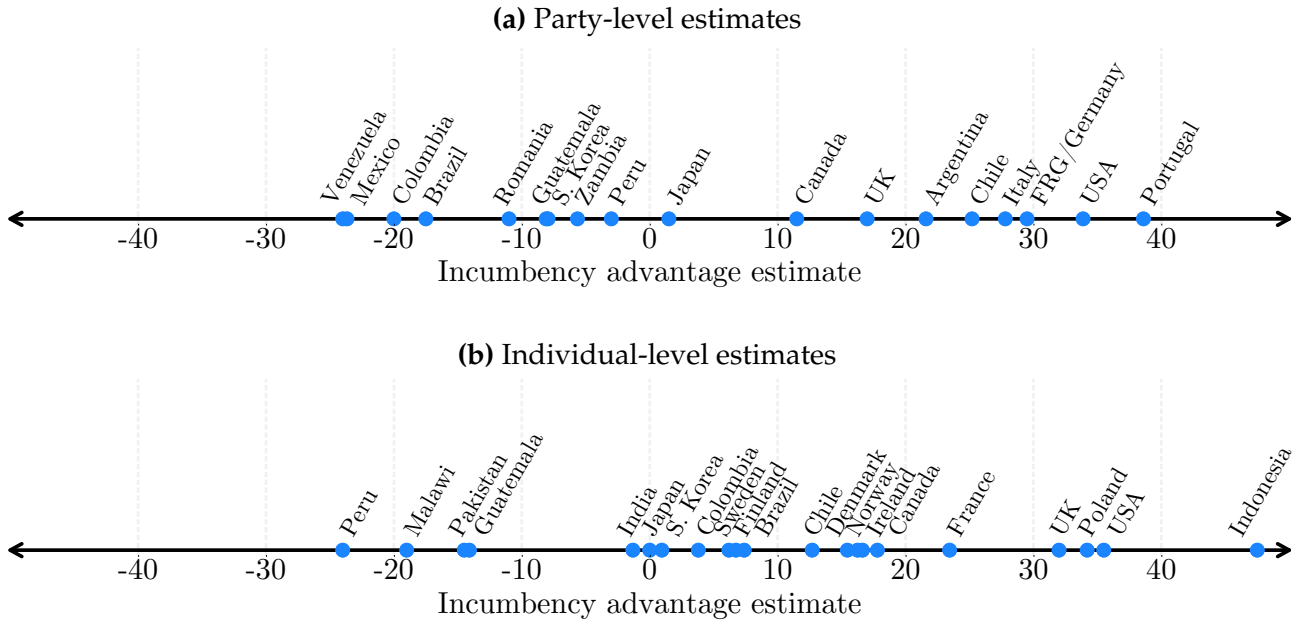
In our meta-analysis, we focus on the effect of winning an election on the probability of winning the next one, instead of other outcomes (such as the probability of running in the next election or the candidate's vote share conditional on running) because these other outcomes are not consistently reported across studies. Appendix A.1 describes the methodology we followed to comprehensively survey the literature and Appendix Table A.1 lists all the studies included in the meta-analysis. In total, we recovered 94 estimates from 58 studies, covering a total of 29 countries. Most of these estimates (58) measure the incumbency advantage for a local office (e.g., in mayoral, gubernatorial, regional, or state legislature elections). The remaining estimates (36) measure the incumbency advantage in constituencies for the national parliament (e.g., congressional districts for the U.S. House of Representatives or parliamentary constituencies in the United Kingdom). Studies of the incumbency advantage also differ in whether they measure effects of incumbency for individual candidates or their parties. We recover 46 estimates of party-level effects and 48 estimates of candidate-level effects.

2.2 Findings

Studies focusing on congressional or state elections in the U.S. have repeatedly documented a large incumbency advantage. For instance, Lee (2008) shows that when the Democratic Party marginally wins a seat in the U.S. House of Representatives, its probability of winning the same seat again in the subsequent election is 36 p.p. higher than if it had marginally lost. By contrast, estimates of the incumbency advantage outside the U.S. are typically much lower, and many countries feature an incumbency disadvantage. Figure 1 shows the wide range of available estimates across countries.

The largest incumbency advantages are typically measured in high-income countries. In Figure 2, we report the average incumbency advantage by region, electoral system, and election level. Panel (a)

Figure 1: Distribution of subnational incumbency advantage estimates across countries



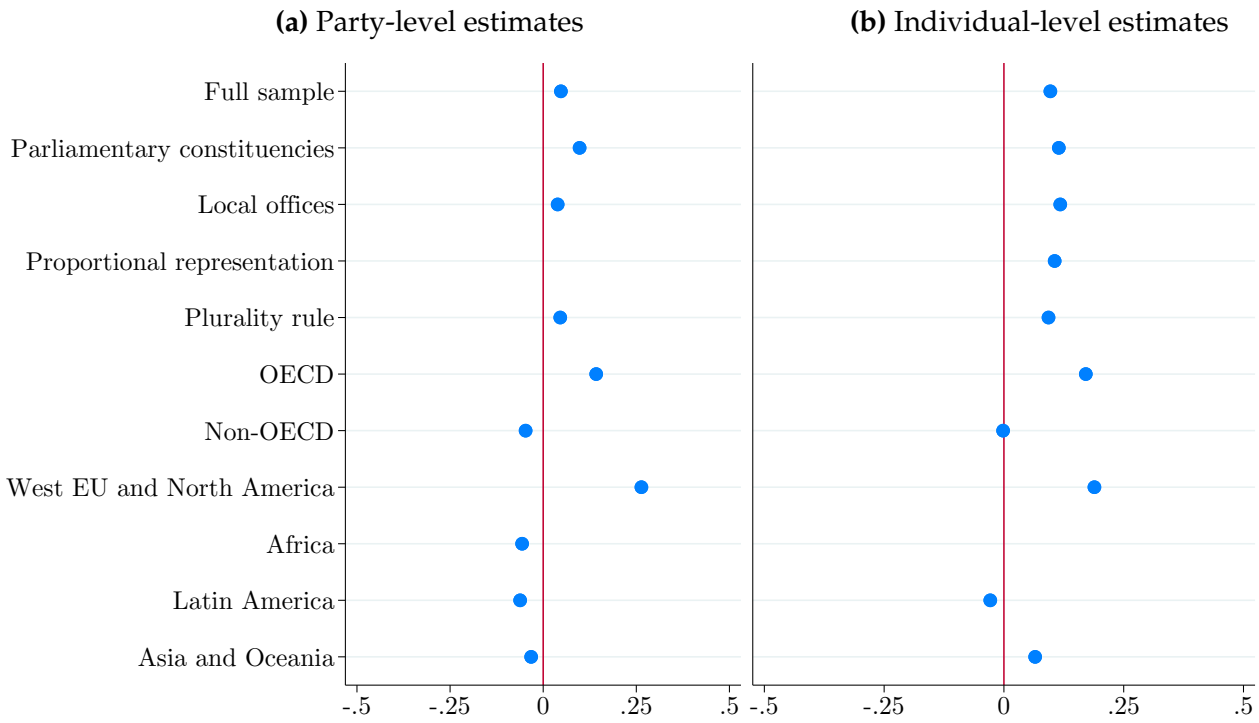
Notes: This figure shows the distribution of subnational estimates of the incumbency advantage across countries. Panel (a) (resp., b) shows party-level (resp., individual-level) estimates. When several studies measure the incumbency advantage in a country, we report the average of available estimates.

reports estimates at the party level. There is a sharp contrast between OECD countries, in which there is a large positive average incumbency advantage (14 p.p.), and the rest of the world, in which there is an average incumbency disadvantage (-5 p.p.). The incumbency advantage is positive and very large on average in Western Europe and North America (26 p.p.) but negative in developing regions such as Africa (-6 p.p.) and Latin America (-6 p.p.). We also observe major differences between OECD and non-OECD countries at the candidate level—see Panel (b).

Potential determinants of the incumbency advantage. The fact that OECD countries display large incumbency advantages while countries outside the OECD often show an incumbency disadvantage suggests that economic development and institutional quality may be important explanatory factors. Indeed, previous work has identified several channels through which economic development might shape incumbency effects.

Based on the literature, we first consider three potential economic determinants of the incumbency advantage: GDP per capita, as measured in the Penn World Tables (Feenstra et al., 2015), unemployment, from the International Labour Organization, and income inequality, as measured by the Gini index, from the World Inequality Database. Across many studies, satisfactory economic performance has been linked to support for incumbent governments (see, e.g., Pacek, 1994; Duch, 1995, 2001; Anderson et al., 2003). Uppal (2009) shows that, in India, the incumbency disadvantage is higher in states with lower incomes, higher unemployment, and worse public goods quality. Bernhard and Karakoç (2011) find that rising income inequality in post-communist countries is associated with higher party volatility and larger electoral losses for incumbents. Finally, Roberts (2008) shows

Figure 2: Average incumbency advantage at the subnational level



Notes: This figure reports the average incumbency advantage across studies of our meta-analysis, in the full sample and in various subsamples. To avoid over-weighing countries that are overrepresented in the literature, we first take averages of estimates within each country before taking averages within each subsample. We do not report results for subsamples with estimates from a single country.

that unemployment shapes voters' decision to sanction outgoing governments, in a sample of post-communist European countries where all workers were previously guaranteed employment.

Corruption is also frequently cited as a source of incumbency disadvantage (Klašnja, 2015). Indeed, when corruption is widespread, voters may assume that most incumbents are corrupt, creating an anti-incumbent bias. Klašnja and Titiunik (2017) argue that this effect increases with the length of an incumbent's tenure. Since setting up effective rent-extraction networks takes time, voters can limit the total amount of corruption by limiting reelection probabilities (see Coviello and Gagliarducci, 2017, for evidence consistent with this mechanism). To explore the role of these factors in shaping the incumbency advantage, we consider as potential predictors the measures of corruption and accountability from the Varieties of Democracy (or V-Dem) dataset (Coppedge et al., 2021).

Finally, Ariga (2015) interprets the absence of an incumbency advantage in Japan as the consequence of the strong intraparty competition in the country's multi-member parliamentary districts. When several candidates share similar ideologies, voters can easily shift away from incumbents to ideologically close competitors, weakening any incumbency advantage. To account for the influence of ideological proximity between competitors, we consider political polarization (from V-Dem) as an additional potential determinant of the incumbency advantage.

Findings. We conduct several empirical exercises to explore how the incumbency advantage correlates with the seven covariates described above. In Appendix Figure A.1, we regress party-level estimates of the incumbency advantage on its potential determinants using three different approaches. In all regressions, we control for the voting rule (plurality rule or proportional representation) as well as the level at which the election is conducted (local offices or parliamentary constituencies). Furthermore, to avoid giving excessive weight to countries covered by numerous studies (such as the U.S.), we weigh incumbency advantage estimates so as to give equal weights to all countries.[4]

We first run bivariate OLS regressions in which we successively regress the party-level incumbency advantage on each of the aforementioned covariates. This exercise identifies four predictors that are statistically significant at the 5% level: the incumbency advantage is positively correlated with GDP per capita and accountability, and negatively correlated with corruption and political polarization.

Second, we estimate a multivariate OLS regression of the party-level incumbency advantage on the full set of explanatory variables described above. The estimates are less precise, reflecting the substantial multicollinearity among the covariates,[5] and none of them is statistically significant, but their sign is consistent with the bivariate regressions.

Third, we run a Lasso regression using all covariates, choosing the penalty with a tenfold cross-validation to minimize the mean squared error. This analysis selects corruption and accountability as the most relevant correlates of the party-level advantage. When running a multivariate OLS regression on these two covariates, only corruption is significantly correlated with the incumbency advantage.

In Appendix Figure A.2, we conduct the same set of exercises for candidate-level estimates of the incumbency advantage. This analysis yields similar results, with GDP per capita, unemployment, accountability, and corruption being the only statistically significant determinants (at the 10% level) in the bivariate analysis. In the Lasso estimation, (log) GDP per capita is selected as the strongest correlate of the incumbency advantage (p-value <0.001).

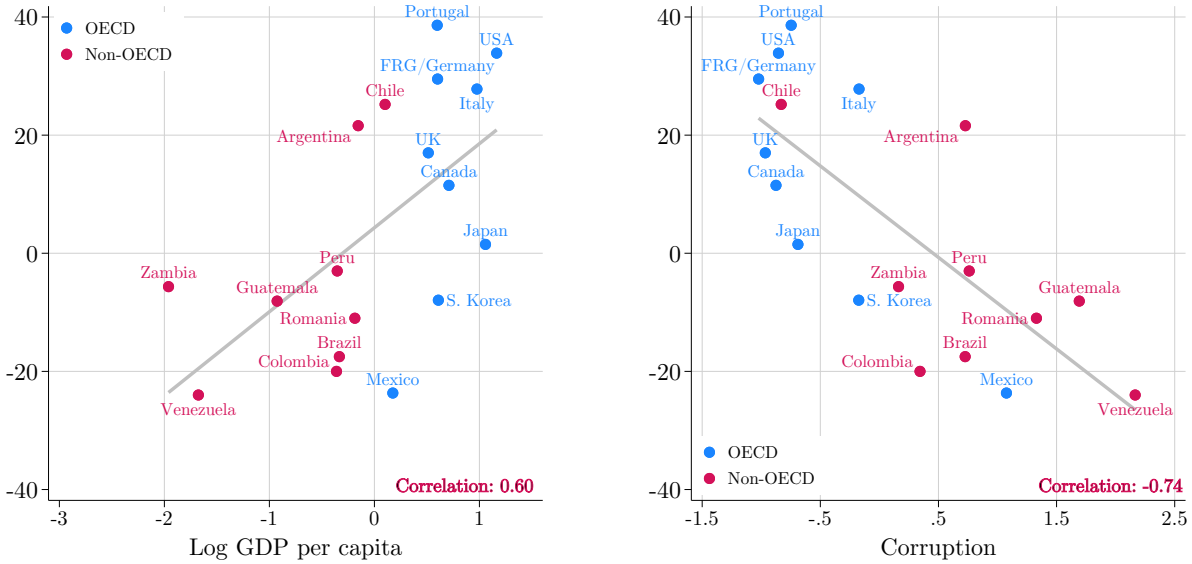
Overall, GDP per capita and corruption stand out as the strongest predictors of the incumbency advantage. In Figure **3**, we plot the average party-level incumbency advantage in each country against these covariates. The incumbency advantage steadily increases with GDP per capita and decreases with corruption. The same patterns hold in Appendix Figure A.7, where we plot individual-level estimates of the incumbency advantage against GDP per capita and corruption. These results are in line with existing descriptive evidence from Golden and Nazrullaeva (2023), who document a strong positive correlation between legislators' reelection rates and GDP per capita.

We plot the corresponding figures for the other potential determinants of the party-level advantage in Appendix Figure A.8 and for those of the individual-level advantage in Appendix Figure A.9. The takeaways from these additional results are similar. For example, both the party-level and the individual-level advantage correlate positively with political accountability.

[4] In Appendix Figures A.3 through A.6, we perform the same exercise with weights equal to the inverse standard error around each estimate of the incumbency advantage or without weights.

[5] For instance, the correlation between a country's log GDP per capita and its corruption level is 0.69.

Figure 3: Correlates of subnational incumbency advantage effects



Notes: This figure compares estimates of the subnational party-level incumbency advantage to (log) GDP per capita (as measured by the Penn World Tables) and corruption (as measured by V-Dem). Both variables are standardized, and we report Pearson correlation coefficients along with the line of best fit. Each coefficient in our meta-analysis is associated with the average GDP per capita and corruption level in the country and time period of study. We then report the average estimate by country.

Taking stock. In the remainder of the paper, we link the subnational estimates of the incumbency advantage surveyed in this section with our own estimates of the incumbency advantage at the national level. An important insight from our meta-analysis is that subnational incumbents benefit from large electoral advantages in settings with higher income and lower corruption that are often associated with high levels of democratic quality. Conversely, they tend to face a disadvantage in contexts with high corruption and low GDP per capita, which often characterize less democratic societies.

These results can be interpreted based on theoretical models in which politicians differ both in terms of their intrinsic type and the effort they exert. In democratic regimes, incumbents face the prospect of competitive reelection battles, and voters reward competent politicians who exert high effort, creating strong incentives for incumbents to perform well. In these settings, "positive" accountability forces can give rise to large incumbency advantages at the subnational level and high reelection rates in equilibrium (Ferejohn, 1986; Fearon, 1999; Besley, 2007). A vast theoretical literature describes the existence of such political equilibria and the conditions under which they emerge (e.g., Aruoba et al., 2019; Duggan and Martinelli, 2017, 2019; Kartik et al., 2025).

Incumbents may also benefit from structural advantages in terms of visibility (Franklin, 1993) or fundraising (Levitt, 1994; Pastine and Pastine, 2012; Fouirnaies and Hall, 2014; Avis et al., 2022) and they may be able to use state resources to sustain clientelistic exchanges with voters (Hicken, 2011; Golden and Min, 2013). Large incumbency effects arising from such forces would have different normative implications, both in terms of what they reveal about the nature of the political equilibrium and the risk that they decrease officeholders' incentives to exert effort. However, we note that clientelistic forces

are unlikely to explain the positive correlation between the incumbency advantage and democratic quality. Indeed, these forces are, if anything, more likely to be at play in less democratic contexts, where incumbents can more easily tap into public funds to build a loyal voter base.

Conversely, incumbency disadvantages at the subnational level are more likely to emerge in settings with low levels of democracy, where disaffected voters may form beliefs that most politicians are dishonest, and incumbents are systematically punished for participating in a system perceived as corrupt. Then, elections cease to discipline politicians and incumbents face shorter time horizons in office, providing incentives for them to engage in corruption while they can, and inducing more dishonest candidates to enter politics. Incumbents and voters may therefore be trapped in a self-fulfilling equilibrium with poor performance, high corruption, and pessimistic expectations (Svolik, 2013; Klašnja, 2015; Klašnja and Titiunik, 2017). Furthermore, the selection effects induced by such forces might imply that the overall distribution of politician quality is worse in less democratic settings, which could directly and negatively affect the incumbency advantage.

The sign and magnitude of incumbency effects may differ at the national level. In particular, the positive correlation between the incumbency advantage and democratic quality could break down at this level because country leaders in less democratic settings have many tools at their disposal to avoid competitive elections (unlike local mayors and parliamentary representatives, who typically cannot alter the electoral schedule or cancel elections outright). Thus, incumbency effects at the country level may result from the additional benefits conferred by the control of national offices, including the ability to manipulate the timing, competitiveness, and results of national elections to their advantage. In some cases, a large incumbency advantage could simply indicate that low-quality leaders have effectively silenced political competition. Overall, one cannot assess the welfare implications of national incumbency effects without also asking whether elections serve to reward positive selection and performance or get confiscated by certain individuals or parties.

3 Data

We now turn to estimating the incumbency advantage at the national level. For this analysis, we leverage data on all presidential and parliamentary elections held worldwide since 1945, combined with data on national leaders, parties, and political regimes. This section briefly describes the data leveraged in our analysis, and a detailed description is provided in Appendix B.

Elections and electoral results. We use the results of presidential and parliamentary elections held between 1945 and 2023 from the National Elections Database (Marx et al., 2025). Our data include 859 presidential elections and 2,162 parliamentary elections, for a total of 3,021 elections in 213 countries.[6] In presidential elections, we observe each candidate's party affiliation and vote share. In parliamentary elections, we observe each party's seat share. We use these data to identify election winners for each type of election, as described in Section 4.

[6]The data also cover non-sovereign entities with significant autonomy such as Hong Kong, Niue, and Anguilla.

Leaders and political parties. We build a database of individual leaders of the executive branch for each country, including the dates at which they gained and lost executive power (see Appendix B.1). We then link these data to parties and candidates competing in elections to check whether election winners stay in power beyond their constitutionally planned term.

To track the performance of political parties over time, we build a database of parties using data from PartyFacts (Döring and Regel, 2019), V-Parties (Lührmann et al., 2020; Pemstein et al., 2018), and Wikidata. Importantly, we account for name changes and organizational restructurings over time.[7] Failing to do so would generate mistakes, such as considering that a party has lost power when it retained power under a different name. We rely on Wikidata to identify these continuous linkages. Specifically, a party B is coded as the successor of another party A if Wikidata lists party A as party B's sole predecessor and, reciprocally, B as A's sole successor.[8] This conservative rule aims to minimize misclassifications by ensuring that succession links reflect true continuity rather than factional splits.[9] The resulting database includes 8,040 parties (see Appendix B.2).

Political regimes. Finally, we collect data on the institutional contexts in which national elections are held. In particular, we determine whether each election in our sample led to the designation of a member of the executive branch, and the type of regime in which it took place (see Appendix B.3). We also use V-Dem (Lührmann et al., 2020), the Comparative Constitutions Project (Elkins and Ginsburg, 2022), Baturo and Elgie (2019), and the text of national constitutions (recovered from various sources, including the vLex legal database), to identify the constitutionally defined term lengths of those appointed after each election, i.e., the length of a presidential term or the duration for which new MPs are elected in parliamentary elections (see Appendix B.4).

4 Empirical Framework

4.1 Power trajectories

When elections are held at regular constitutionally mandated intervals, the incumbency advantage can be measured as the effect of marginally winning an election on the probability of winning the next election. This is the object of interest of most studies surveyed in Section 2. However, this approach does not fully capture how winning a national election affects a winner's chances of retaining power beyond their initial term in office, whether elections take place or not. For instance, national leaders can postpone elections or cancel them outright. They may also call early elections when conditions are favorable to them. In our dataset, this is not a marginal phenomenon: 39% of elections were not held within six months of the incumbent's constitutionally planned term end (or were canceled).

[7] For instance, in Kazakhstan, the "Otan" (Fatherland) party, founded in 1999, was relabeled "Nur Otan" in 2006, and then "Amanat" in 2022. In our analysis, we group these three entities as a single party.

[8] This detection is performed using variables "follows" (P155), "replaces" (P1365), "followed by" (P156) and "replaced by" (P1366).

[9] For instance, the Italian Communist Party, which was active between 1921 and 1991, has two successors: the Communist Refoundation Party and the Democratic Party of the Left. We therefore treat these parties as three distinct entities rather than grouping them together.

Therefore, to measure the incumbency advantage at the national level, we estimate the effect of marginally winning versus losing an election on two outcomes: the likelihood of being in power τ years after the election conducted at time t, which we call the winner and the runner-up's *power trajectory*; and the likelihood of being in power $\tilde{\tau}$ years after the end of the constitutionally planned term, an effect we refer to as the *post-term incumbency advantage*.

Power trajectories in presidential elections. We first estimate the effect of marginally winning an election on the likelihood of being in power over the ten years following the election. For each year after the election, we record whether the leader or party in power aligns with the election winner, the runner-up, or neither.

For presidential elections, we compare the sitting president in each relative year τ to the winner and the runner-up of the election conducted at time t. In our main specification, we code the president as aligned with the election winner if they are the individual who won the election, if they belong to the party that won the election, or if they have been unambiguously designated as the representative or successor of the election winner. We use the same rules to determine whether the president is aligned with the runner-up.[10] Given this definition, the estimates we obtain can be interpreted as a measure of the party-level incumbency advantage at the national level. To account for post-election transition periods, outcomes for relative year τ are measured τ years and 180 days after the date of the election conducted at time t.[11] In an alternative specification, we estimate the individual-level incumbency advantage in presidential elections, coding the president as aligned with the election winner only if they are the same individual.

To illustrate our approach, consider the 2008 U.S. presidential election. This election took place on November 4th, 2008. The winner, Barack Obama from the Democratic Party, was inaugurated on January 20th, 2009, replacing George W. Bush from the Republican Party. Barack Obama remained in power until January 20th, 2017, when Donald Trump from the Republican Party became the U.S. president. For this election, outcomes for relative year $\tau = 0$ are measured on May 3rd, 2009; for relative year $\tau = -1$ on May 3rd, 2008; and for relative year $\tau = 1$ on May 3rd, 2010. For all relative years in which Barack Obama was in office (namely for $\tau \in [0, 7]$), the sitting president was the election winner, so we code the president as aligned with the winner and not aligned with the runner-up. In relative years $\tau \in [8, 10]$, the sitting president, Donald Trump, had not competed in the 2008 election, but he ran for the Republican Party, which was the party of John McCain, the 2008 election runner-up. Therefore, we code the leader in power in relative years $\tau \in [8, 10]$ as aligned with the runner-up. We proceed similarly for relative years $\tau = -1$ and $\tau = -2$ since Barack Obama's predecessor, George W. Bush, also belonged to the Republican Party. Table **1**, panel (a) reports the power trajectories for both candidates in this election.

[10] In a few rare cases, we code the sitting president as aligned with both the winner and the runner-up. For example, in the October 1981 Iranian presidential election, both candidates of interest were affiliated with the Islamic Republican Party (IRP), so the reelected president Ali Khamenei is coded as aligned with both of them. This configuration arises in 0.4% of presidential elections and 1.4% of parliamentary elections in our sample.

[11] We motivate this decision in Appendix C.2. We measured the duration of transition periods for all presidential elections followed by a leader transition. For these elections, we observe that 99.7% of power transitions had taken place within 180 days of the election.

Table 1: Power trajectories for the 2008 elections in the United States

Relative year	-2	-1	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
(a) Presidential elections													
President aligned with winner (Obama, Democrat)	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	0
President aligned with runner-up (McCain, Republican)	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1
(b) House of Representatives elections													
Party in power aligned with winner (Democratic Party)	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Party in power aligned with runner-up (Republican Party)	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0

Notes: This table reports the value of the outcome indicating the alignment of the president or party in power with the winner and runner-up of the 2008 U.S. presidential election, in panel (a), and of the 2008 U.S. House elections, in panel (b) for relative year $\tau \in [-2, 10]$.

Power trajectories in parliamentary elections. We define the winner of a parliamentary election held at time t as the party or coalition that secured a plurality of seats in that election.[12] This definition allows us to identify an election winner in systems where parliamentary elections do not lead to the designation of a member of the executive branch, such as the United States.[13] Furthermore, we group together the results of parties that were part of coalitions formed before the election. Appendix B.5 describes how we distinguish such ex ante coalitions from ex post governing coalitions formed once the election results are known.

For each relative year, we consider that the party in power in parliament is the party that controlled a plurality of seats. Given the lack of systematic data on changes in the composition of parliaments between elections, we assume that parliamentary composition is always determined by the most recent parliamentary election.[14] We then determine, for each relative year τ, whether the party in power is the election winner (or its clearly defined successor), the runner-up (or its successor), or neither. For instance, Table 1, panel (b) reports the power trajectories for the winner and runner-up parties in the 2008 elections to the U.S. House of Representatives. The Democratic Party won the 2008 elections, retaining a majority won in 2006. It was then defeated by the Republican Party, which won the 2010, 2012, 2014, and 2016 elections. The Democratic Party won a majority of seats again in 2018.

Post-term incumbency advantage. Tracking the power trajectories of election winners and runners-up also allows us to estimate the effect of winning an election on the likelihood of being in power after the constitutionally planned term has elapsed. When we measure this *post-term incumbency advantage*, we consider the number of years $\tilde{\tau}$ relative to the end of the constitutionally planned term, for $\tilde{\tau} \in [-3, 5]$, rather than the number of years relative to the election date. As before, we allow for power transition periods by measuring outcomes with a lag of 180 days. For instance, the U.S. Constitution

[12] In the rare case of a tie, we rank parties by vote shares.

[13] In principle, one could be interested in estimating an individual-level incumbency advantage in parliamentary elections that lead to the designation of a member of the executive, mirroring the individual-level specification we use for presidential elections, but data limitations prevent us from doing so. Indeed, individual candidates for executive leadership cannot be systematically identified before the election, as parties often refrain from naming a prospective head of government until after the results are known and coalition negotiations can begin.

[14] In case of a successful coup, we consider that no party is in power in parliament until new parliamentary elections are held.

mandates four-year presidential terms. To assess whether the winner of the 2008 U.S. presidential election was still in power after the end of the constitutionally planned term (at $\tilde{\tau} = 0$), we check who was the president on May 3rd, 2013, four years plus 180 days after the 2008 election took place. Outcomes for $\tilde{\tau} = -1$ and $\tilde{\tau} = 1$ are measured on May 3rd, 2012 and May 3rd, 2014, respectively.

Estimation. To estimate the incumbency advantage in our sample of national elections, our regressions include two observations for each election conducted in country i at time t: the winner and the runner-up candidate or party, indexed by c.

We estimate the following equation for each year $\tau \in [-2, 10]$ relative to the election:

$$Y_{ic\tau} = \alpha + \beta_\tau T_{ict} + \gamma_\tau X_{ict} + \delta_\tau T_{ict} X_{ict} + \varepsilon_{ic\tau}. \tag{2}$$

In this equation, $Y_{ic\tau}$ is a dummy variable equal to one if party or candidate c is in power in relative year τ, and zero otherwise.[15] The running variable X_{ict} is c's margin of victory in the election held at time t. It is measured in terms of vote shares for presidential elections and seat shares for parliamentary elections.[16] This running variable takes positive values for the winner ($T_{ict} = 1$) and negative values for the runner-up ($T_{ict} = 0$), and it is by construction symmetric around the threshold. The coefficient β_τ captures the effect of marginally winning an election on the likelihood of being in power τ years after the election. We further estimate the post-term incumbency advantage by using as outcome in equation (2) $Y_{ic\tilde{\tau}}$, a dummy variable equal to one if party or candidate c is in power $\tilde{\tau}$ years after the end of the term for which the winner was elected. For estimation, we use the nonparametric method of Calonico et al. (2020) and cluster standard errors at the election level.

To check that there is no imbalance in incumbency status at the RD threshold, we run placebo tests using outcomes measured one and two years before the election held at time t ($\tau = -1$ and $\tau = -2$). In the absence of electoral manipulation around the threshold, marginal winners should be no more likely than marginal runners-up to have been in power before the election.

Our sample for estimating equation (2) comprises 2,709 elections, including 753 presidential elections and 1,956 parliamentary elections. Appendix C.1 describes the rules we followed to determine which elections to include in the sample. 26% of these elections were held in OECD countries, 51% in democracies, and 65% were free and fair (according to V-Dem). In our heterogeneity analysis, we consider five regions: Africa (21% of the elections in the sample), Asia and Oceania (22%), Eastern Europe (11%), Latin America (27%), and Western Europe and North America (20%).

4.2 Next-election incumbency advantage

A key reason why election winners may remain in power beyond their constitutionally planned term is that winning an election may increase the probability of winning the subsequent one, conditional on that election taking place. We estimate this effect using the same RD design as the studies surveyed in

[15] We provide additional information on the construction of our outcome variables in Appendix B.6. We verified the accuracy of our coding of outcome variables through several validity checks, described in Appendix B.7.

[16] When elections have several rounds, the margin of victory is measured using the results of the last round.

Section 2:

$$Y_{ic,t+1} = \alpha + \beta T_{ict} + \gamma X_{ict} + \delta T_{ict} X_{ict} + \varepsilon_{ic,t+1}, \tag{3}$$

where $Y_{ic,t+1}$ is a dummy equal to one if party or candidate c who competed in the election at time t won the next election at time $t+1$, and zero otherwise. β measures the *next-election incumbency advantage*, which may be driven by effects on both the probability of running in the next election and the probability of winning the next election conditional on running. We estimate equation (3) using a sample of 2,691 national elections, including 714 presidential elections and 1,977 parliamentary elections, for which we can define the outcome, the treatment, and the running variable.[17] We impose the restriction that the time $t+1$ election took place no more than ten years after the time t election. To illustrate how we define the outcome variable, consider the following examples:

- **1997 South Korean presidential election**. This election was won by Kim Dae-jung from the National Congress for New Politics (NCNP). During his term, the NCNP merged with the New People Party to form the Millennium Democratic Party (MDP). Kim Dae-jung retired at the end of his term, and the MDP was represented in the 2002 presidential election by Roh Moo-hyun. Moo-hyun won this election, defeating the candidate of the Grand National Party (GNP), Lee Hoi-chang. Thus, we consider that the winner of the 1997 election won the subsequent election.[18]

- **2017 German federal election.** The coalition between the Christian Democratic Union of Germany (CDU) and the Christian Social Union of Bavaria (CSU) won this election. However, having failed to secure an outright majority, the CDU/CSU engaged in a government coalition with the runner-up party, the Social Democratic Party of Germany (SPD). Following the rules defined in Appendix B.5, we consider the CDU/CSU as a single entity because the CDU and CSU pledged to join forces before the election. By contrast, the SPD is considered as a distinct party because their union with the CDU/CSU was negotiated after the results. As the SPD won the next election in 2021, we consider that the runner-up of the 2017 election won the subsequent election.

To determine whether our estimates of β are driven by effects on the probability of running in the next election or by effects on electoral performance conditional on running, we also estimate equation (3) using a dummy indicating whether party or candidate c runs in the next election as the dependent variable. In addition, we estimate effects on the unconditional vote shares in subsequent

[17] The sample size for this estimation is similar to the sample size in Section 4.1, but the composition of the two samples differs. On the one hand, the sample in Section 4.1 includes some elections that are not followed by another election, e.g., in all instances when a follow-up election was canceled by the incumbent. On the other hand, an election may be contained in the sample used in Section 4.1 but not the sample used in Section 4.2. This is the case whenever we cannot define the variable "party/candidate is in power 6 months after the end of the constitutionally-mandated term," which occurs for two reasons: when the term length is unknown (31 elections), and when the post-term outcome is measured after December 31st, 2023, but a follow-up election was held in the meantime (52 elections).

[18] In rare cases, a candidate may leave the party with which they ran and run with another in the next election. If the candidate's former party fields a new contender, we treat that new candidate as not aligned with the previous frontrunner. For instance, Lee Hoi-chang left the GNP after losing the 2002 South Korean election and ran as an independent in 2007 against the GNP candidate. Though the latter won the election, we consider that the runner-up of the 2002 election failed to win the subsequent election because Lee Hoi-chang lost the 2007 election.

presidential elections and the unconditional seat shares in subsequent parliamentary elections, coding the dependent variable as zero if a candidate or party does not run in the subsequent election.

5 Results

5.1 Testing the identification assumption

Our empirical strategy relies on the assumption that the only discrete change occurring at the threshold is the incumbency status of parties and candidates. This identification assumption would be violated, for instance, if incumbents could manipulate election results near the threshold to stay in power.

A common method to test for manipulation is the density test designed by McCrary (2008), which measures discontinuities in the distribution of the running variable at the cutoff. This test is not informative in our setting. Indeed, as we use exactly two observations for each election—one for the winner, on the right of the threshold, and one for the runner-up, on the left—with running variables equally distant from the threshold, the density of the running variable is symmetric by construction, with no discontinuous jump at the threshold (see Appendix Figure D.1).

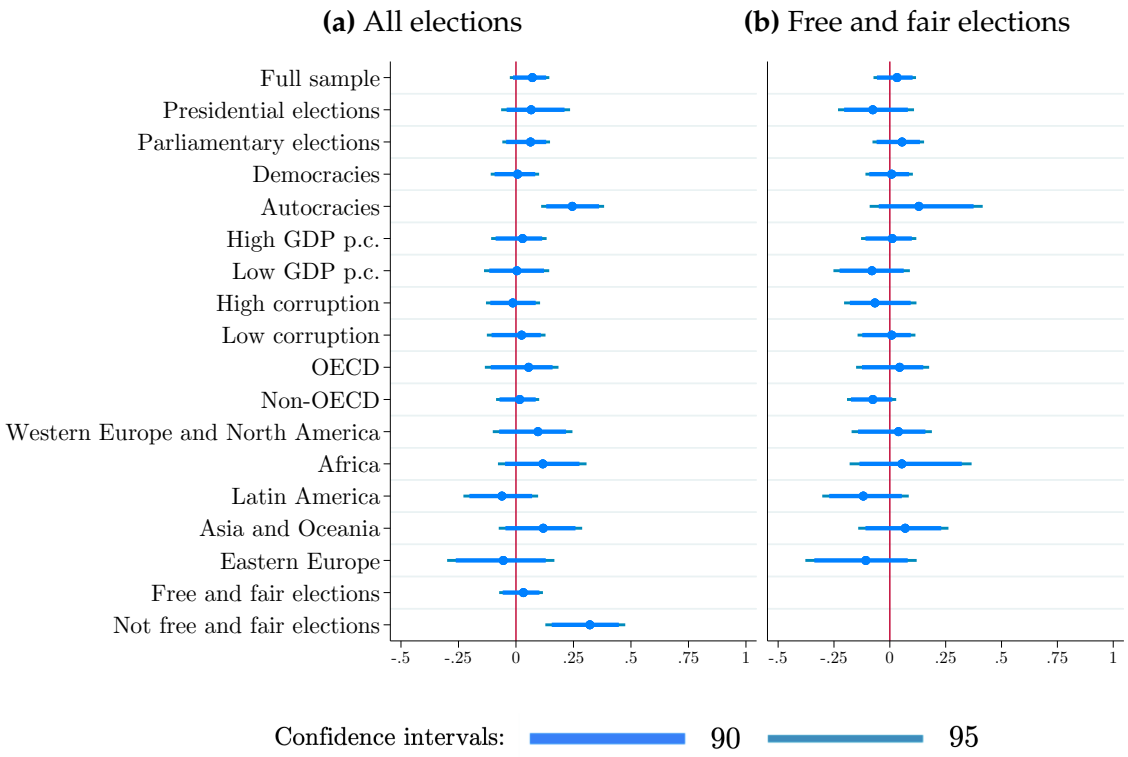
Studies leveraging a close-elections RDD to estimate incumbency effects at the subnational level generally consider elections held in democratic countries. They justify the identification assumption by pointing to the influence of exogenous factors such as weather conditions on election results, which generates quasi-randomness in the treatment assignment at the RD threshold (Eggers et al., 2015). While the same logic applies to national elections, the threat of manipulation looms larger in this context. Indeed, our sample includes elections in autocracies, where leaders may rig elections outright. To test whether incumbents systematically manipulate election results around the threshold, we implement the placebo test described in Section 4.1. Specifically, we examine whether marginally winning an election affects the probability of being in power six months *before* the election, corresponding to $\tau = -1$ in equation (2). Positive and significant effects would suggest that incumbents are able to manipulate election results to their benefit.

Panel (a) of Figure 4 presents placebo estimates for the full sample and various subsamples. We find no statistically significant effect in the full sample (p-value: 0.177), in presidential elections (p-value: 0.265), or in parliamentary elections (p-value: 0.402). There is no evidence of electoral manipulation by incumbents in most subsamples. However, we find positive and significant effects for elections classified as not free and fair by V-Dem and for those held in autocratic regimes, providing evidence of possible electoral manipulation in those settings. Appendix Figure D.2 shows similar results when we look instead at the candidates' likelihood of being in power 18 months before the election, corresponding to $\tau = -2$ in equation (2).[19]

In panel (b) of Figure 4, we display placebo estimates obtained when restricting the sample to elections classified as free and fair. We find no evidence of manipulation in that sample (p-value.:

[19] Appendix Figures D.3 and D.4 report the corresponding placebo tests for individual candidates in presidential elections, using candidates' likelihood of being in power before the election as outcome, for $\tau = -1$ (6 months before the election) and $\tau = -2$ (18 months before the election), respectively. We fail to detect a significant effect of electoral victories on this outcome except for elections held in autocracies (p-value: 0.003) and elections considered not free and fair (p-value: 0.006).

Figure 4: Placebo tests: Effect of election victory on being in power before the election



Notes: This figure shows RD estimates as well as 90% and 95% robust confidence intervals of the effect of winning an election on the likelihood of being in power six months before the election date, in our global sample of elections and in various subsamples. We include all elections, in panel (a), and restrict the sample to elections coded as free and fair by V-Dem, in panel (b). Our empirical strategy is described in Section 4.1.

0.650) or in any of the corresponding subsamples. However, the classification of elections as free and fair may be endogenous to their results, with elections marginally lost by the incumbent being more likely to be rated as free and fair. To avoid using a sample selection criterion that is endogenous to the electoral outcome, we therefore use the full sample of elections in our baseline estimation, and show in Appendix E that our results are robust to restricting the sample to free and fair elections. We also check that our results are robust to using the sample of elections *following* free and fair elections. This inclusion criterion should be less sensitive to the issue of endogenous coding while mostly selecting elections that are free and fair, given the strong autocorrelation (76%) in election fairness over time.

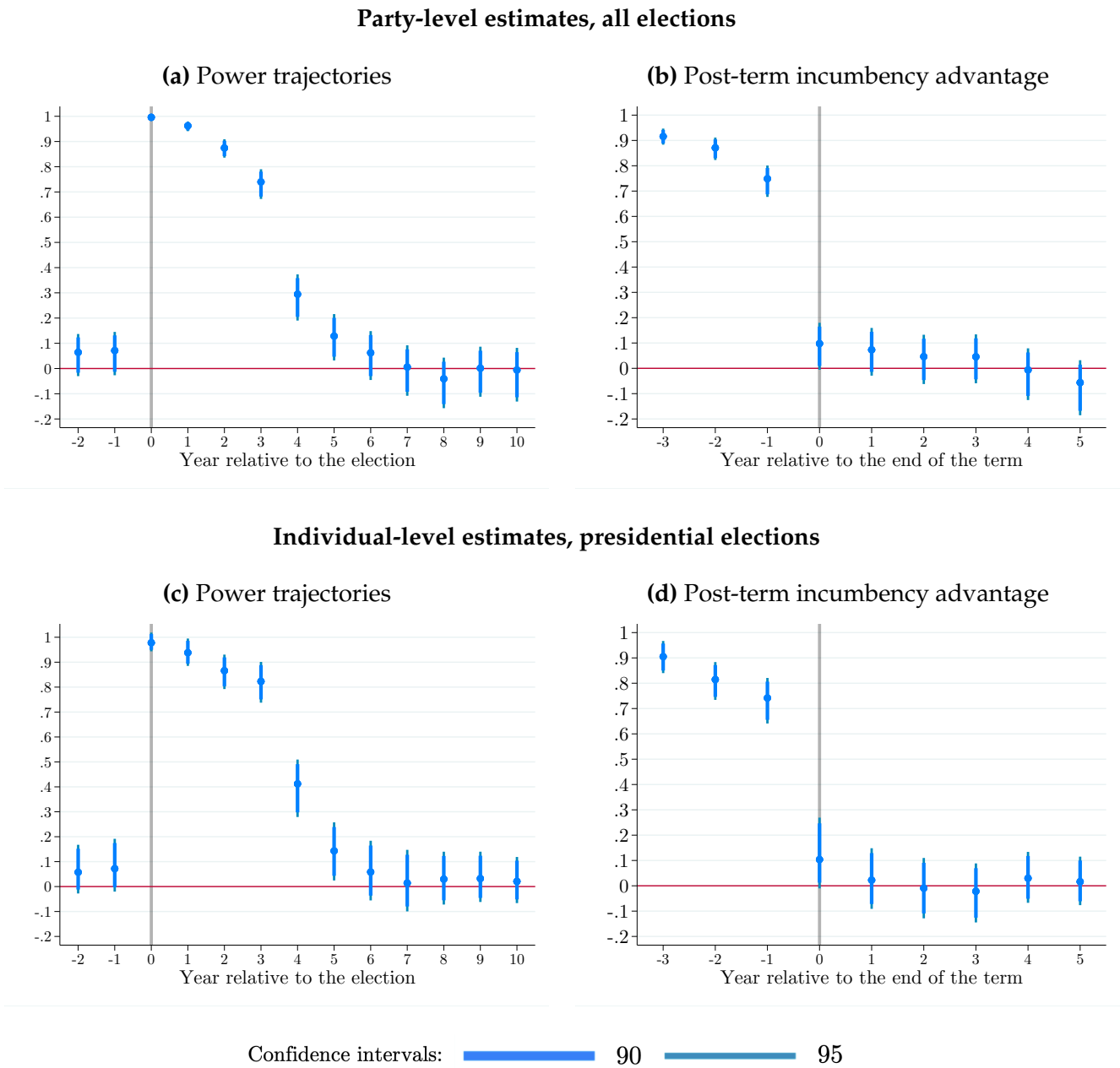
5.2 Estimates of the national incumbency advantage

We now estimate the party-level incumbency advantage in our full sample including both presidential and parliamentary elections, using the outcomes defined in Section 4.1.

Figure 5(a) plots estimates of the national party-level incumbency advantage based on the comparison of the power trajectories of winners and runners-up for years $\tau \in [-2, 10]$ relative to the election, using equation (2). On average, winning an election increases a party's chances of being in power until approximately six years after the election, with the magnitude of the RD estimate dropping substantially between $\tau = 3$ and $\tau = 6$ years after the election. Naturally, this advantage is

partly shaped by term lengths. The average term length in the full sample of elections is 4.5 years, with the majority of elections granting four-year (41%) or five-year (42%) terms.

Figure 5: Incumbency advantage at the national level



Notes: This figure reports RD point estimates as well as 90% and 95% robust confidence intervals for β_τ as defined in equation (2). Panels (a) and (b) report party-level estimates of the incumbency advantage across all elections, while panels (c) and (d) report individual-level estimates of the incumbency advantage in presidential elections. In panels (a) and (c), $\tau \in [-2, 10]$ represents years relative to the election, with a lag of 180 days. In panels (b) and (d), $\tilde{\tau} \in [-3, 5]$ is relative to the scheduled end of term.

In Figure 5(b), we show the effect of a party's victory on the likelihood of being in power for each year $\tilde{\tau} \in [-3, 5]$ relative to the scheduled end of term. The positive coefficient for year $\tilde{\tau} = 0$

indicates that there is a global post-term incumbency advantage at the party level: winning an election increases the likelihood of being in power six months after the theoretical end of the term by 10 p.p., corresponding to a 27% increase relative to the average probability for close runner-up parties. This effect is significant at the 10% level (p-value: 0.065). Appendix Figure D.5(a) shows the corresponding regression discontinuity plot. The gray dots are sample means of the likelihood of being in power 6 months after the scheduled end of term across 15 quantile-spaced bins on each side of the threshold, with a positive jump at the threshold. We also observe positive effects on the likelihood of being in power 18 months after the end of term and in the two subsequent years, as reported in Figure 5(b) but these effects are smaller and non-significant.

In Figures 5(c) and (d), we report estimates of the individual-level incumbency advantage in presidential elections.[20] The estimate for $\tilde{\tau} = 0$ is positive and significant at the 10% level (+10 p.p., p-value: 0.069) but the estimates for $\tilde{\tau} = 1$ and subsequent periods are again closer to zero and non-significant. Overall, the analysis of party-level and individual-level estimates yields evidence of a positive but short-lived average incumbency advantage at the national level. Appendix Tables D.1, D.2, D.3, and D.4 report all the coefficients shown in Figure 5 for the full sample and various subsamples, together with robust standard errors.

5.3 Heterogeneity and robustness

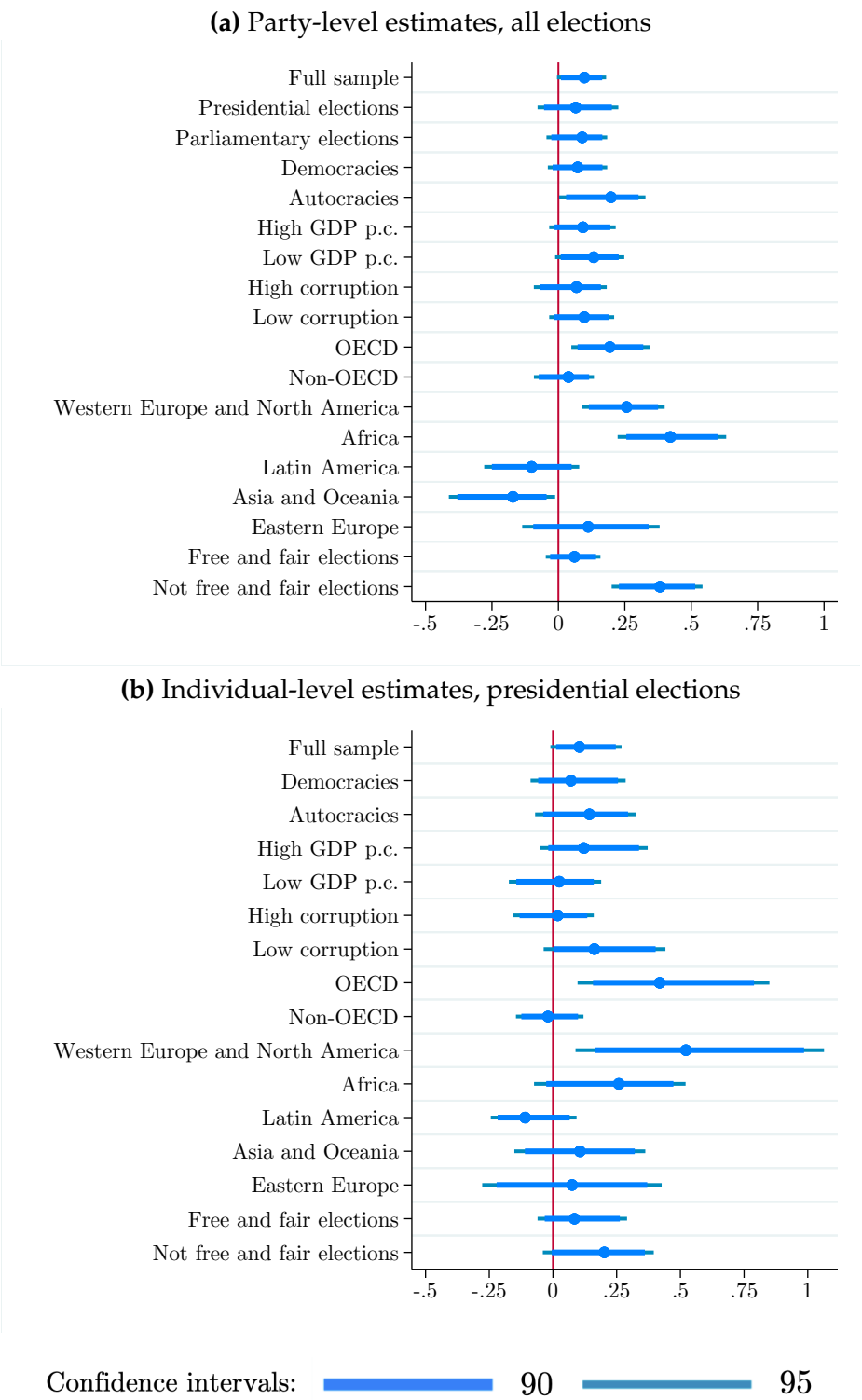
Our meta-analysis in Section 2 highlighted the wide variation in subnational estimates of the incumbency advantage across regions and levels of GDP per capita, corruption, and democratic quality. We now explore heterogeneity in the national incumbency advantage along similar dimensions.

Figure 6(a) presents the results from this heterogeneity analysis for party-level estimates across all elections. In this figure, each dot represents a separate RD estimate for $\tilde{\tau} = 0$, the effect of narrowly winning an election on a party's probability of being in office six months beyond the expected end of term for a given subsample. Appendix Figure D.6 reports the corresponding estimates for $\tilde{\tau} = 1$ and $\tilde{\tau} = 2$ (i.e., 18 and 30 months after the scheduled end of term, respectively). Together, Figure 6(a) and Appendix Figure D.6 paint a consistent picture: the heterogeneous effects we observe across different subsamples persist over an extended timeframe, and are not contingent on the specific choice of $\tilde{\tau}$ to measure the post-term incumbency advantage.

Mirroring our meta-analysis findings on the incumbency advantage at the subnational level, national elections in OECD countries are associated with a much larger incumbency advantage than those in non-OECD countries. In OECD countries, the party-level incumbency advantage is substantial (19 p.p.). This estimate is significant at the 1% level and corresponds to 55% of the likelihood of close runners-up of being in power six months after the scheduled end of term. Appendix Figures D.6 and D.7 show that this effect is persistent: incumbent parties in OECD countries enjoy a higher probability of being in power up to three-and-a-half years after the scheduled end of their term. By contrast, incumbency effects outside OECD countries are much smaller and non-significant.

[20] As explained in Section 4.1, data limitations prevent us from estimating the individual-level incumbency advantage in parliamentary elections that lead to the designation of a member of the executive (see footnote 13).

Figure 6: Heterogeneity in the post-term incumbency advantage



Notes: This figure plots RD estimates as well as 90% and 95% robust confidence intervals of the effect of winning an election on the likelihood of being in power six months after the scheduled end of term, in our global sample of elections and in various subsamples. Panel (a) reports party-level estimates across all elections while panel (b) reports individual-level estimates in presidential elections. Our empirical strategy is described in Section 4.1.

Estimates of the party-level incumbency advantage in different regions reveal even more striking differences.[21] Elections in North America and Western Europe are associated with a large positive incumbency advantage (+26 p.p.). We also find a positive, albeit non-significant, incumbency advantage in Eastern European countries (+11 p.p.). Other regions are characterized instead by sizable incumbency disadvantages. In Asia and Oceania, winning an election reduces the likelihood of being in power six months after the scheduled end of term by 17 p.p. on average, implying that close winners are 37% less likely to be in power after their term was scheduled to end than close runners-up. This disadvantage persists 18 months and 30 months after the election (Appendix Figure D.6). Latin American elections are also associated with an incumbency disadvantage (-10 p.p.), although this estimate is not statistically significant.

These differences across regions echo those found in Section 2. However, in contrast to the incumbency disadvantage found in Africa at the subnational level, this region is the one in which we find the largest national-level incumbency advantage. There, marginally winning a national election increases a party's likelihood of staying in power beyond the scheduled end of term by a staggering 42 p.p., which is significant at the 1% level and amounts to almost tripling the probability of being in power relative to a close runner-up (+191%). We also find positive effects in autocracies (+20 p.p., significant at the 5% level), elections deemed not free and fair (+38 p.p., significant at the 1% level), and countries with low GDP per capita (+13 p.p., significant at the 10% level) or high corruption levels (+7 p.p., which is non-significant).[22] Thus, while we documented monotonic relationships at the subnational level between the incumbency advantage on the one hand and economic development, corruption, and democratic quality on the other hand, our estimates of the national incumbency advantage paint a much more nuanced picture.

Appendix Figure E.2 shows similar incumbency effects when restricting the sample to elections that are free and fair or those that follow free and fair elections. Our results are also robust to restricting the sample to UN member states, excluding countries with fewer than 500,000 inhabitants (see Appendix Figure D.8), and including election-year fixed effects in the estimation (Appendix Figure D.9). Appendix Figure D.10 illustrates how little our main estimate for the full sample of elections varies when we alternatively include no fixed effects, election year fixed effects, region fixed effects, and region $\times$ election year fixed effects in the estimation. Finally, Appendix Figure D.11 compares our main results to those obtained using a RD bandwidth equal to half of the MSE-optimal bandwidth from Calonico et al. (2020); the latter estimates across different subsamples are more noisy but largely similar.

Appendix Figure D.12 reports effects separately for five different time periods: 1945–1959, 1960–1974, 1975–1989, 1990–2004, and 2005–2023. The national-level incumbency advantage was largest in the first period (shortly after 1945), negative on average though non-significant in the late 1970s and 1980s, and closest to zero during the most recent period (after 2005). The next-election incumbency

[21] Appendix Figure D.5 shows the regression discontinuity plots separately for elections held in each region, in panels b to f.

[22] Note that there is substantial overlap between these subsamples. For instance, African elections constitute 39% of those held in autocracies, 41% of those classified as not free and fair, 33% of elections in high-corruption countries, and 37% of those in low-income countries.

advantage, discussed more extensively in Section 6, is stable throughout the period. Appendix Table D.5 shows that these differences may partly stem from changes in sample composition across periods. The relative share of presidential elections has generally grown (from 15% of elections between 1945–1959 to 34% of elections between 2005–2023) and the share of non free and fair elections has also fluctuated over time, reaching a low point between 1975–1989 (20% of elections) but rising again after 2005 (27% of elections).

In Appendix Figures D.13(a) and D.13(b), we report party-level estimates of the incumbency advantage separately for presidential and parliamentary elections. The large effects observed in OECD countries are primarily driven by presidential elections. For parliamentary elections, the differences between OECD and non-OECD countries are modest and the effect is not statistically significant in either group. The incumbency advantage in Africa and that in North America and Western Europe are present and statistically significant in both presidential and parliamentary elections.

Finally, Figure 6(b) presents heterogeneity results for individual-level estimates of the incumbency advantage in presidential elections. Overall, incumbent presidents have a statistically significant advantage in presidential elections held in OECD countries (+42 p.p.) and in Western Europe and North America (+52 p.p.). This effect is also large in Africa (+26 p.p.) and in elections considered not free and fair, but both of these estimates fall short of statistical significance.

6 Mechanisms

Several channels may underlie the incumbency effects we observe. First, winning a national election might influence the likelihood of competing in the subsequent one. Second, incumbency may improve electoral performance conditional on running. This includes the possibility that incumbents might tilt the electoral playing field in their favor, preventing elections from being free and fair to retain power. Third, power holders could manipulate the electoral cycle by calling early elections when conditions are favorable to them or by postponing or canceling elections altogether. In this section, we build on our RD framework to provide evidence on these potential mechanisms.

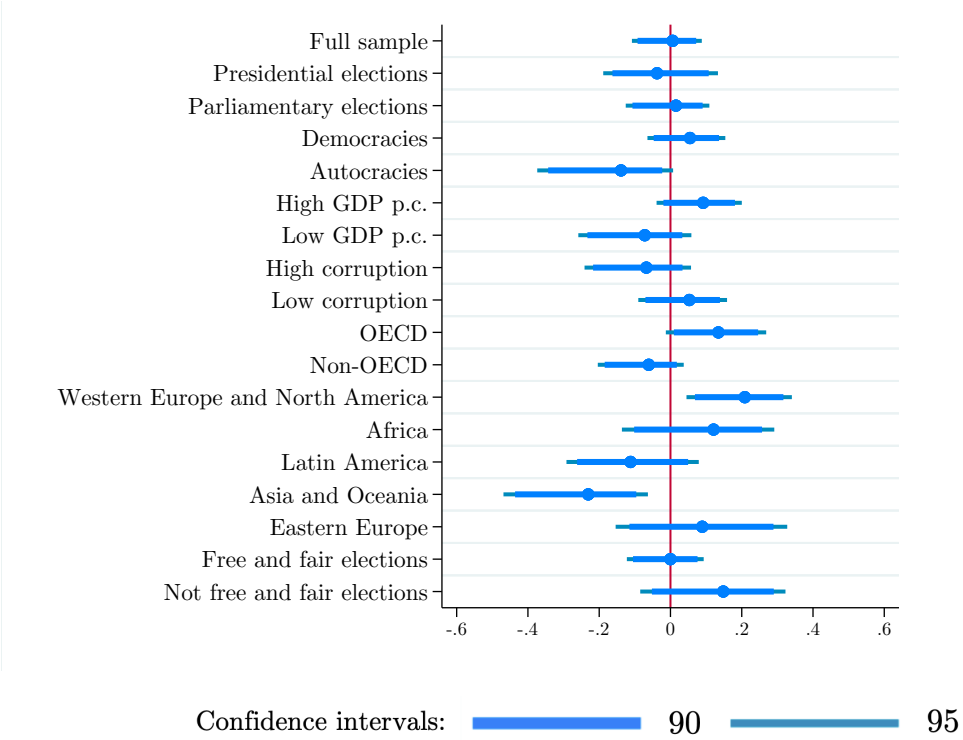
6.1 Next-election incumbency advantage

To assess the first two channels, we estimate the effect of marginally winning an election on the probability of running in and winning the subsequent one.

Impact on performance in the next election. We first estimate the effect of winning a national election on the joint probability that parties compete in and win the next election, using the approach described in Section 4.2. Our estimates are reported in Figure 7. The global incumbency advantage uncovered for the full sample of elections in Figure 5(b) does not stem from this channel. Indeed, on average, winning an election only increases a party's probability of victory in the subsequent election by 1 p.p., which is not statistically significant. We also detect no effect on winning the next election in the subsamples of

presidential or parliamentary elections.[23]

Figure 7: Next-election incumbency advantage, party-level estimates



Notes: This figure plots RD estimates as well as 90% and 95% robust confidence intervals of the effect of winning an election on a party's joint likelihood of running in and winning the next election, in our global sample of elections and in various subsamples. Our empirical strategy is described in Section 4.2.

However, we find substantial incumbency effects in several subsamples. In North America and Western Europe, close winners are 21 p.p. more likely to win the next election relative to close runners-up. This estimate is significant at the 5% level and corresponds to a 58% increase in the probability of winning. Similar effects are visible in other subsamples characterized by strong democracies, namely OECD countries (13 p.p.), countries with a high GDP per capita (9 p.p.), and those with low corruption levels (5 p.p.), although the last two estimates are not statistically significant.[24] Instead, in Asia and Oceania as well as in Latin America, incumbents suffer from substantial electoral disadvantages (of -23 p.p., significant at the 1% level, and -11 p.p., non-significant, respectively). Appendix Figure D.15 reports estimates of the next-election incumbency advantage for candidates in presidential elections. Once again, we find the strongest effects in OECD countries and in North America and Western Europe, where candidates who marginally win an election are much more likely to win the subsequent presidential election than marginal losers.

While the next-election incumbency effects in Figure 7 often mirror the post-term incumbency

[23] Appendix Table D.6 reports the coefficients displayed in Figure 7, as well as the corresponding robust standard errors and p-values. Our results are robust to including election-year fixed effects (see Appendix Figure D.14).

[24] These subsamples substantially overlap. For example, Western European and North American elections represent 66% of those in the OECD, 36% of those in countries with high levels of GDP per capita, and 39% of those in low-corruption countries.

effects reported in Figure 6, some subsamples exhibit stark differences, with negative effects on the probability of winning the next election but positive effects on the likelihood of being in power beyond the constitutionally planned term. This is particularly true in less democratic settings. In particular, autocracies exhibit a strong next-election incumbency disadvantage (-14 p.p.) but a large post-term incumbency advantage (+20 p.p.).

Impact on competing in the next election. The incumbency effects reported in Figure 7 compound two effects: an effect of incumbency on a party's likelihood of running in the next election, and an effect on electoral performance in the next election, conditional on running.

The effect on running in the next election may result from scare-off effects, whereby potential challengers are deterred from running against strong incumbents (Cox and Katz, 1996; Levitt and Wolfram, 1997; Hall and Snyder, 2015; Ban et al., 2016). Furthermore, winning parties may have a higher probability of survival, further contributing to a discontinuous increase in the probability of running in the next election (Dinas et al., 2015).[25] Conversely, in contexts where incumbents expect to be defeated, this might create a discontinuous drop at the threshold in the probability of running again.

Various channels could also affect the electoral performance of incumbents conditional on running again in the next election. For example, officeholders' electoral prospects may be enhanced if they allocate public funds strategically to increase electoral support, direct funds to local political organizations and campaigns, and exert influence over media outlets. Incumbents also typically benefit from greater name recognition and political experience accumulated in office than runners-up. Yet, holding office also subjects them to retrospective accountability: weak economic performance during their tenure could erode or even overturn these advantages.

To distinguish between these two components, we first estimate the effect of winning an election on the likelihood of competing in the next one in Appendix Figures D.16(a). We then separately report unconditional effects on seat shares in parliamentary elections and vote shares in presidential elections (with seat and vote shares coded as zero if the party does not run at time $t+1$) in Appendix Figures D.16(b) and D.16(c), respectively. The estimates in Appendix Figure D.16(a) are generally small and non-significant. This is due to the fact that in national elections, almost all marginal winning parties (94%) and marginal runner-up parties (95%) compete in the next election. Only elections in Latin America stand out: there, incumbency leads to a marginally significant (p-value: 0.094) 7 p.p. drop in the likelihood of running in the next election. This effect contributes to the incumbency disadvantage observed in this region, suggesting that strategic withdrawals may prevent incumbent parties from contesting future elections. Overall, the small effect sizes in Appendix Figure D.16(a) suggest that the next-election incumbency advantage is primarily driven by effects on subsequent electoral performance conditional on running.

[25] Losing parties may also be more likely to change their names, which could make them harder to track and lead us to erroneously code them as not competing in the next election. To mitigate this risk, we carefully linked parties across elections and identified party name changes using Wikidata (see Appendix B.2 for details).

6.2 Fairness and timing of elections

In this section, we explore whether incumbents manipulate the fairness and the timing of follow-up elections. Theoretically, such mechanisms could affect both the *next-election advantage*, if incumbents time the next election strategically, change the conditions in which electoral campaigns are fought, or directly manipulate the results; as well as the *post-term advantage*, if incumbents postpone or cancel follow-up elections outright. Evidence on the relative importance of these mechanisms could, in turn, explain the wedge between post-term and next-election effects that we observe in some regions.

Manipulation of the electoral playing field. Incumbents can tilt elections in their favor by changing the conditions in which electoral campaigns are fought or by directly manipulating the results. To explore this mechanism, we re-estimate equation (3) using as an outcome $Y_{ic,t+1}$, a dummy variable equal to 1 if party or candidate c in the election held at time t won the subsequent election (held at time $t+1$) and that subsequent election was not free and fair. Our estimates, displayed in Appendix Figure D.17, provide suggestive evidence that the manipulation of the electoral playing field contributes to the next-election incumbency advantage in less democratic contexts. Indeed, we find large positive effects of incumbency on the probability of winning a subsequent non free and fair election in autocracies (8 p.p., which is not significant) and for elections that were already not free and fair at time t (18 p.p., which is significant at the 5% level).

Manipulation of the electoral schedule. We then explore the extent to which incumbents manipulate the timing of elections. Such manipulation could contribute to the *next-election advantage*, if the incumbents strategically time elections to take place in favorable periods; and it may directly increase the *post-term advantage* simply because postponing or canceling the next election implies that the incumbent will remain in power beyond the scheduled end of their term.

In Appendix Figure D.18, we examine whether elections take place earlier or later than their constitutionally planned date, across settings with varying levels of democratic quality. We distinguish between subsequent elections held on schedule (within six months of the constitutionally planned end of term), subsequent elections held early (more than six months before the end of term), and subsequent elections held late (more than six months after the end of term) or not at all.

This analysis shows that the electoral calendar is most often manipulated in less democratic countries, and that manipulation involves both advancing and postponing elections. In countries in the bottom quintile of democratic quality, only 56% of elections were followed by another election held on schedule, compared to 74% in the third quintile and 74% in the top quintile of democratic quality. In those countries, 17% were held late or not at all, as opposed to only 7% of elections in the third quintile and 2% in the top quintile of democratic quality. By postponing elections, incumbents in the least democratic settings artificially extend their tenure and thereby secure an advantage. In democratic countries, elections are seldom postponed but snap elections are common: 24% of elections in the top quintile of democratic quality are held early, which is comparable to the fraction of elections held early in the least democratic countries (26%). Countries with intermediate levels of democratic

quality are those that adhere most closely to their constitutionally planned electoral calendar: indeed, many of these countries are located in regions (Asia and Oceania, Latin America) where we estimate mostly null or negative electoral advantages. As a result, early elections might harm incumbents, while institutional constraints may be sufficiently robust to prevent the postponement or outright cancellation of elections.

6.3 Decomposing the incumbency advantage

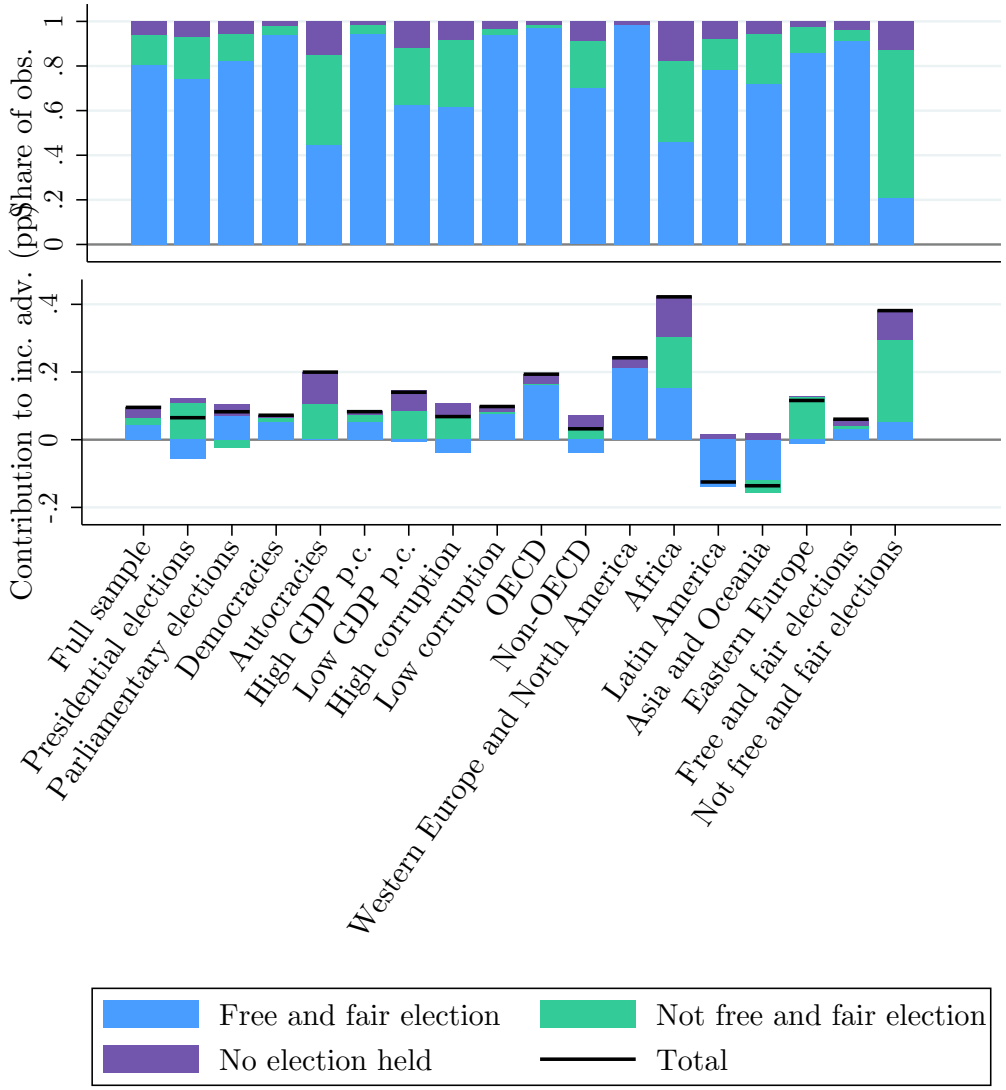
The evidence thus far shows that the incumbency effects in Figure 6 stem from multiple forces: increased likelihood of winning the next election in a fair manner; in an unfair manner; or postponing or canceling the election altogether. To quantify the relative importance of these mechanisms, we conduct a simple decomposition exercise.

When estimating equation (2), thus far we have defined our outcome $Y_{ic\tilde{\tau}}$ as a dummy variable equal to one if candidate or party c (the winner or runner-up in election t) was in power in country i in year $\tilde{\tau}$, measured relative to the scheduled end of term. This outcome can be decomposed as the sum of three dummies, all measured in year $\tilde{\tau}$: (i) $Y_{ic\tilde{\tau}}^{\text{no election}}$, equal to one if c is in power and no election has been held since t; (ii) $Y_{ic\tilde{\tau}}^{\text{free and fair}}$, equal to one if c is in power and at least one election has been held since t, the last of which was free and fair; and (iii) $Y_{ic\tilde{\tau}}^{\text{not free and fair}}$, equal to one if c is in power and at least one election has been held since t, the last of which was not free and fair. We can estimate equation (2) using $Y_{ic\tilde{\tau}}^{\text{no election}}$, $Y_{ic\tilde{\tau}}^{\text{free and fair}}$, and $Y_{ic\tilde{\tau}}^{\text{not free and fair}}$ as outcomes, allowing us to recover estimates of the effect of marginally winning an election on these outcomes: $\hat{\beta}_{\tilde{\tau}}^{\text{no election}}$, $\hat{\beta}_{\tilde{\tau}}^{\text{free and fair}}$, and $\hat{\beta}_{\tilde{\tau}}^{\text{not free and fair}}$. The overall post-term incumbency effect, $\hat{\beta}_{\tilde{\tau}}$, is the sum of these three effects, providing us with a decomposition of the overall incumbency effect into three terms: one reflecting the postponement or cancellation of elections, one capturing the incumbency advantage in free and fair elections, and one capturing the advantage in elections that are not free and fair.

We show the results of this decomposition in Figure 8, where outcomes are measured six months after the end of the constitutionally planned term. We also report the share of elections in the RD bandwidth for which, six months after the scheduled end of term, (i) no subsequent election had been held; (ii) at least one subsequent election had been held, the last of which was free and fair; and (iii) at least one subsequent election had been held, the last of which was not free and fair.

In the subsamples of OECD countries, countries in North America and Western Europe as well as Latin America, and countries with high GDP per capita and low corruption, which mostly include strong democracies, free and fair elections are almost always held by the end of constitutionally planned terms (or shortly thereafter), and incumbency effects in these contexts reflect the advantage that incumbents benefit from in free and fair elections. However, in subsamples with lower levels of democratic quality (e.g., autocratic countries, non-OECD countries, African countries, and countries with low GDP per capita and high corruption), it is common for close elections to be followed by non free and fair elections or for subsequent elections to be postponed, especially in non-democratic contexts. These substantially inflate the incumbency advantage, as estimates of $\hat{\beta}_{\tilde{\tau}}^{\text{no election}}$ and $\hat{\beta}_{\tilde{\tau}}^{\text{not free and fair}}$ are almost always positive and of a similar order of magnitude as $\hat{\beta}_{\tilde{\tau}}^{\text{free and fair}}$.

Figure 8: Decomposition of the incumbency advantage



Notes: In the top panel, we report, for our global sample of elections and for various subsamples, the share of elections in the RD bandwidth for which, six months after the constitutionally planned end of the term, (i) no subsequent election had been held; (ii) at least one subsequent election had been held, the last of which was free and fair; and (iii) at least one subsequent election had been held, the last of which was not free and fair. In the bottom panel, we decompose post-term incumbency effects using the procedure described in Section 6.3. The overall post-term incumbency effects—measured six months after the constitutionally planned end of the term and represented with horizontal black lines—are expressed as the sum of three components: one reflecting the postponement or cancellation of elections ("No election held"), one capturing the incumbency advantage in free and fair elections ("Free and fair election"), and one capturing the advantage in elections that are not free and fair ("Not free and fair election"). To categorize elections as free and fair or not, we rely on V-Dem. We exclude from the sample observations for which we could not compute an outcome because an election was not categorized by V-Dem. In all regressions, we use the optimal bandwidth selected by the procedure of Calonico et al. (2020) for the computation of the overall incumbency effect.

Appendix Figures D.19 and D.20 show the corresponding results for outcomes measured 18 months and 30 months after the end of the constitutionally scheduled term, with similar patterns to those of Figure 8. Incumbency effects in democratic settings (e.g., the subsamples of democracies, high-income countries, and OECD countries) are driven by a large advantage in free and fair elections, while those in less democratic settings (e.g., the subsamples of autocracies and elections not free and fair at time t)

reflect a boost in the performance of incumbents in follow-up elections that are not free and fair.

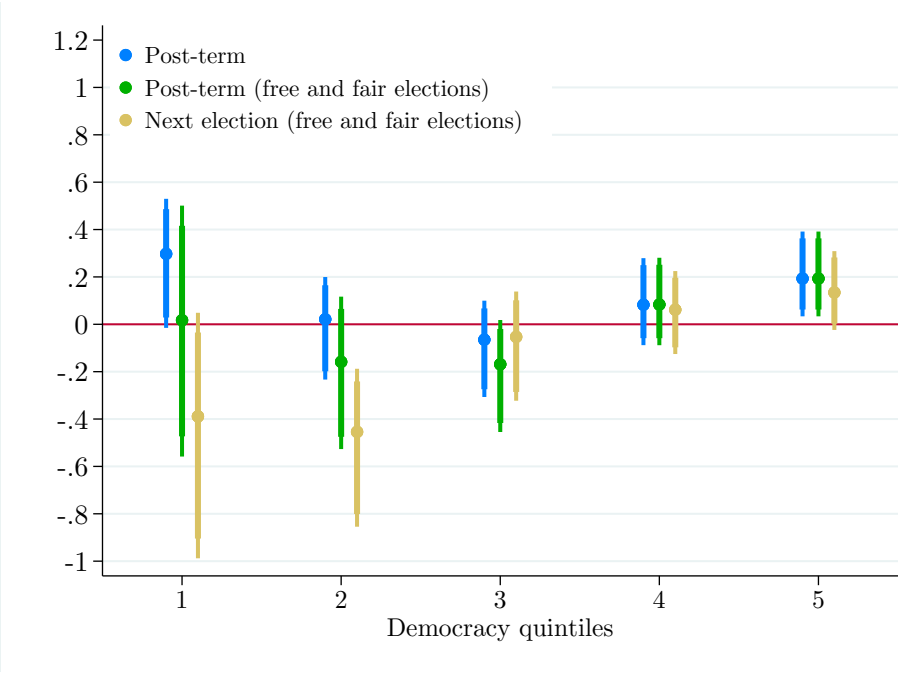
The evidence in Figure 8 could be partly driven by elections classified as not free and fair at time t. To address this concern, in Appendix Figures E.4 and E.5, we report the same decomposition exercise considering only free and fair elections at time t, or elections at time t that follow a free and fair election, respectively. While electoral manipulation at time $t+1$ plays a slightly diminished role in these subsamples, these two figures corroborate the main insights from Figure 8: even when we focus on the winners of free and fair elections, the incumbency advantage in some subsamples (e.g., the subsamples of low-income countries or countries in Africa) continues to be partly driven by electoral manipulation, in the form of incumbents either ensuring that follow-up elections are not free and fair, or postponing or canceling follow-up elections altogether.

6.4 Democratic quality and the national-level incumbency advantage

Overall, the decomposition in Figure 8 helps reconcile our measures of the incumbency advantage in national elections with the results of our meta-analysis. At the subnational level, incumbents enjoy a much stronger advantage in contexts characterized by higher levels of economic and political development. By contrast, this pattern does not hold at the national level, where we find similar incumbency effects across contexts with different levels of GDP per capita and corruption. This reflects the ability of national leaders to postpone elections or to hold elections that are not free and fair. Indeed, the contribution of free and fair elections to the national incumbency advantage, $\beta_{\bar{\tau}}^{\text{free and fair}}$, mirrors the pattern observed in the meta-analysis, with sizable advantages in contexts with high incomes, low corruption levels, and strong democracies, and muted or negative effects in poorer, more corrupt, and less democratic environments. However, in less democratic contexts, large advantages from non–free-and-fair elections and from postponing elections raise the overall incumbency advantage to levels comparable to those observed in strong democratic settings.

Figure 9 further illustrates the relationship between democratic quality and the incumbency advantage. There, we show three measures of the incumbency advantage for different quintiles of the democracy index: (i) the post-term incumbency advantage, measured using equation (2); (ii) the post-term incumbency advantage when restricting the sample of time t elections to those deemed free and fair by V-Dem; and (iii) the next-election incumbency advantage, measured using equation (3) and again restricting the sample to free and fair elections. In the most democratic contexts, the three measures almost coincide, reflecting an incumbency advantage arising from free and fair elections. As democratic quality deteriorates, the next-election incumbency advantage drops, reaching strong disadvantages in the least democratic contexts. However, in these contexts, manipulation of the timing and competitiveness of follow-up elections allows incumbents to retain power beyond the scheduled end of their term, despite the lack of positive incumbency effects on subsequent performance in free and fair elections, when they take place. Marginal election winners are least likely to stay in power beyond their term in countries with intermediate levels of democracy. In these contexts, voters regularly sanction incumbents in elections, and democratic institutions are strong enough that leaders cannot easily cling to power through undemocratic means. Overall, these forces yield a U-shaped

Figure 9: Incumbency advantage measures by level of democracy



Notes: This figure reports RD estimates as well as 90% and 95% robust confidence intervals of the incumbency advantage for different quintiles of a democracy index (extracted from V-Dem). For each quintile, we show (1) the post-term incumbency advantage for the full sample of elections; (2) the post-term incumbency advantage for the subset of time t elections coded as free and fair by V-Dem; and (3) the next-election incumbency advantage for the subset of time t elections coded as free and fair by V-Dem. Democracy levels are measured as an average of V-Dem's five corresponding variables: deliberative, egalitarian, liberal, participatory, and electoral democracy.

relationship between democratic quality and the post-term incumbency advantage.

7 Conclusion

This paper provides the first causal estimates of the incumbency advantage at the country level across a global sample of national elections. We document a positive but short-lived average incumbency effect at this level: election winners are more likely to remain in office beyond the scheduled end of their term, yet this advantage dissipates within a few years. Importantly, the magnitude and direction of incumbency effects vary substantially across contexts. OECD countries and African countries are characterized by large positive incumbency effects that last for several years after the scheduled end of term, while incumbency disadvantages emerge in other regions. These patterns are closely associated with varying levels of economic development, corruption, and democratic quality.

Our results imply that different factors contribute to the electoral advantage enjoyed by incumbents. In consolidated democracies, the national-level incumbency advantage primarily operates through improved electoral performance in free and fair elections, mirroring the effects at the subnational level established in our meta-analysis. In settings with lower democratic quality, incumbents suffer an electoral disadvantage when free and fair elections take place, echoing again the results from the meta-analysis, but the manipulation of the timing and the fairness of elections enables them to remain in power beyond the end of their term, translating into an overall incumbency advantage. These

heterogeneous patterns underscore the need to consider both electoral and institutional dynamics when evaluating how incumbency effects affect political competition worldwide.

By extending the analysis of incumbency effects to the national level, we offer novel evidence on the determinants of political turnover and bring new insights to ongoing debates about the resilience and the future of democracy globally. In contexts where the incumbency advantage is sustained by institutional manipulation, the prospects for genuine political competition remain fragile. Conversely, in established democracies, where the incumbency advantage stems primarily from improved electoral prospects, incumbency effects may contribute to strengthening political selection and accountability, as political careers remain attractive to potential entrants and incumbents can expect that good performance will help them secure re-election democratically.

Finally, our results offer a different perspective on the evolution of democracy across countries since 1945. Estimates of the national-level incumbency advantage can potentially be interpreted as a measure of democratic quality and regime stability that does not rely on expert ratings or subjective assessments. Whether we consider the full sample of presidential and parliamentary elections, or only elections classified as free and fair, we find that the national-level incumbency advantage has generally fallen over the past decades, including the period 2005–2023. The next-election incumbency advantage has also remained stable during the period. Thus, despite the mounting evidence of democratic backsliding in the twenty-first century (illustrated in our data by the recent rise in the share of non free and fair elections), this trend has not yet materialized into more entrenched incumbents on a global scale. Future research should explore how secular fluctuations in democratic quality ultimately affect political turnover and regime durability, as well as implications for economic growth and voter welfare.

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Appendix

A Meta-analysis

A.1 Methodology

Search. To conduct our meta-analysis, we searched for all studies using a close-elections RDD to estimate the impact of marginally winning an election on the probability of winning the next election. We proceeded in three steps.

First, we searched for articles that mentioned both "incumbency advantage" and "regression discontinuity" in Google Scholar. Second, we queried OpenAI's o3 and Google's Gemini Pro 2.5's Deep Research models, using the following prompt:

> Please do a comprehensive search of all academic papers using a regression discontinuity design to estimate the incumbency advantage in national or local elections. Search exhaustively for all studies published in economics and political science journals as well as high-quality working papers (e.g., NBER or CEPR working papers). When both a working paper and a peer-reviewed version of a study exist, please only list the peer-reviewed publication. Narrow the search to studies from [region]. Only consider papers that provide quantitative estimates of the incumbency advantage. Exclude non-academic sources such as opinion pieces and blog posts. Provide complete citations for all papers found. Again, please include all articles that match the former criteria.

In this prompt, [region] was successively replaced by "Latin American countries," "the US and Canada," "European countries," "Asian countries," "Australia and other Oceanian countries," and "African countries." When the models asked follow-up questions to tailor the search, we asked them to make the widest search possible and to focus on studies post-1990. Indeed, RDDs only started to be widely used in economics in the late 1990s, and the first use of an RDD to estimate the incumbency advantage that we could identify is the working paper of Lee (2001), which was eventually published as Lee (2008).

Third, we completed our search by systematically checking references to other incumbency advantage studies within the articles that we had already found.

Excluded studies. We excluded the following studies from our sample:

- Studies that only measured incumbency effects on vote shares in the next election, rather than the probability of winning that election.
- Studies that pooled elections using different electoral systems (e.g., proportional representation and plurality rule) in the same regression (e.g., Atsusaka et al., 2024; Weiler, 2021).
- Studies of elections in the judicial branch (e.g., Olson and Stone, 2023; Zoorob, 2022).

- Studies that do not explain whether they estimate the incumbency advantage conditional on the incumbent candidate or party running again in the following election or unconditionally (e.g., Schiumerini and Page, 2012; Miguel and Zaidi, 2003).
- Studies of the Uruguayan *ley de lemas* system, in which voters cast the same ballot for regional and presidential elections (e.g., Aguirre and Brum, 2023).
- Estimates derived from the decomposition method proposed by Fowler (2014) and Erikson and Titiunik (2015), which are not directly comparable to our definition of incumbency advantage because they strip the candidate advantage from the party component (e.g., De Benedetto, 2014, 2019). However, we include the pre-decomposition RDD estimates reported in these studies, which align with our definition of party-level advantage.

Information gathered. We gathered the headline estimate of the incumbency advantage from each study. In cases in which a study covered several countries, we gathered one estimate by country. When both party-level and candidate-level estimates of the incumbency advantage were reported, we collected both estimates. When estimates were provided for different types of elections (e.g., mayoral and gubernatorial elections), or different time spans, we collected them separately.[1]

For each estimate included in our meta-analysis, we gathered the following information:

- Country and time period in which the study took place.
- Level of observation (party or candidate).
- Election level: either "parliamentary constituencies" (e.g., district-level races in elections for the United States House of Representatives), or "subnational elections," for executive positions at the state, region, province, county, or municipal level (e.g., governor, state legislator, mayor, or member of a city council).
- Whether the estimate is computed conditional on the incumbent running again in the subsequent election or not.
- The estimate of the incumbency advantage and its standard error.[2]

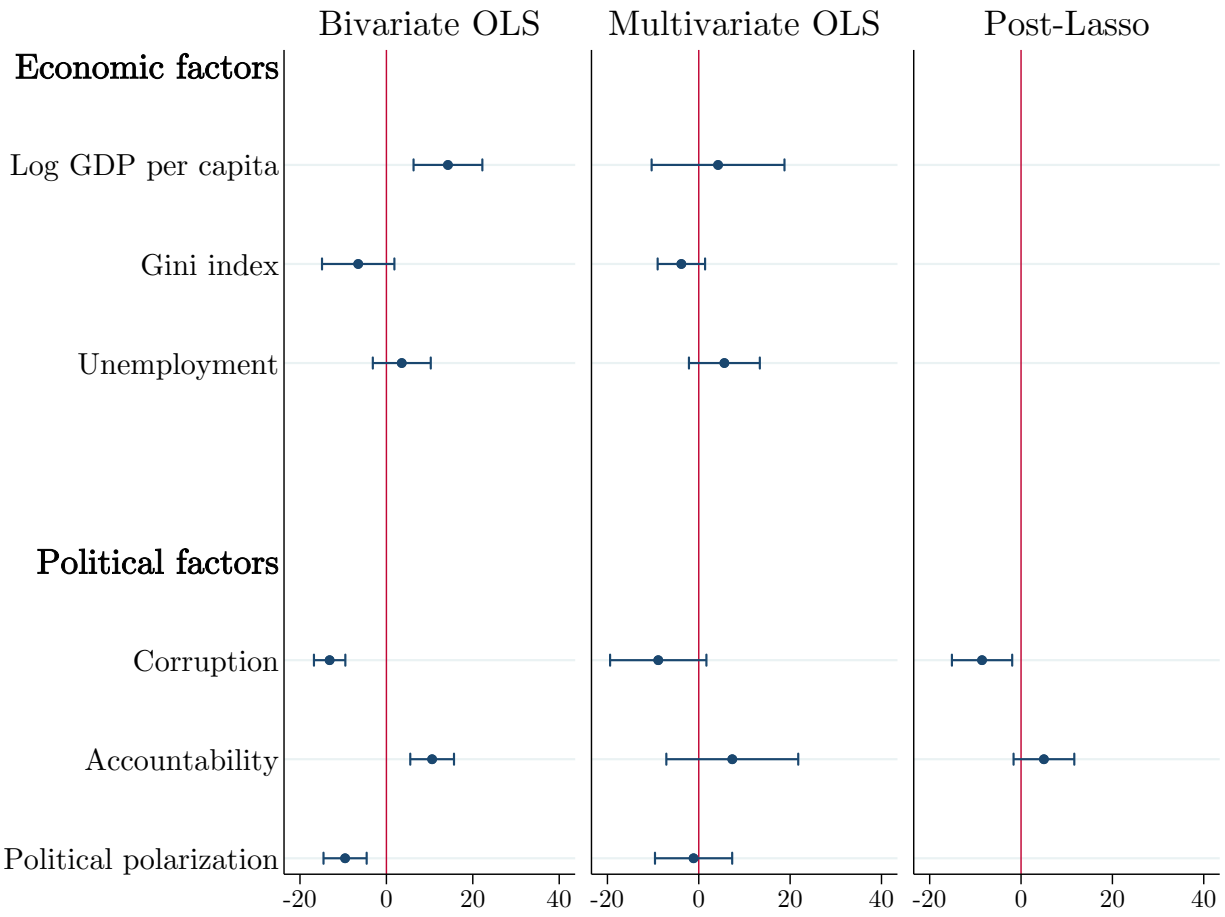
Analysis sample. The full dataset includes 117 estimates of the incumbency advantage, extracted from 64 articles. Most estimates (94) provide unconditional measures of the incumbency advantage, while the remaining are conditional on the candidate or party running again. We only include the former in our analysis as they constitute the broadest measure of the incumbency advantage.

A.2 Additional results

[1] We excluded estimates that aggregate different election levels (e.g., municipal and parliamentary elections).

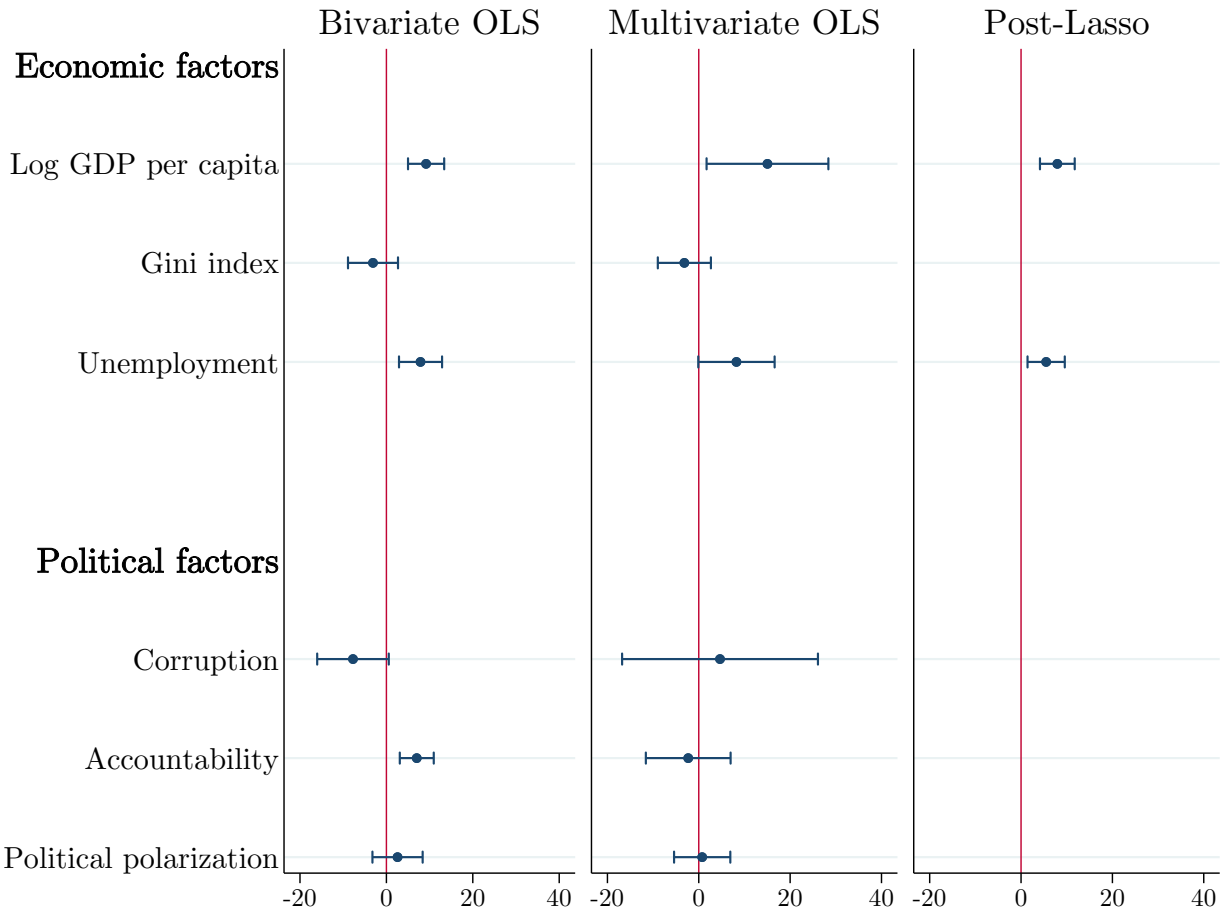
[2] When several RD estimates of the incumbency advantage were reported on equal footing, we used the average value of these coefficients and computed the corresponding aggregate standard error as $\sigma = \frac{1}{N}\sqrt{\sum_{i=1}^{N}\sigma_i^2}$, where σ_i denotes the standard errors of individual estimates.

Figure A.1: Determinants of the party-level incumbency advantage



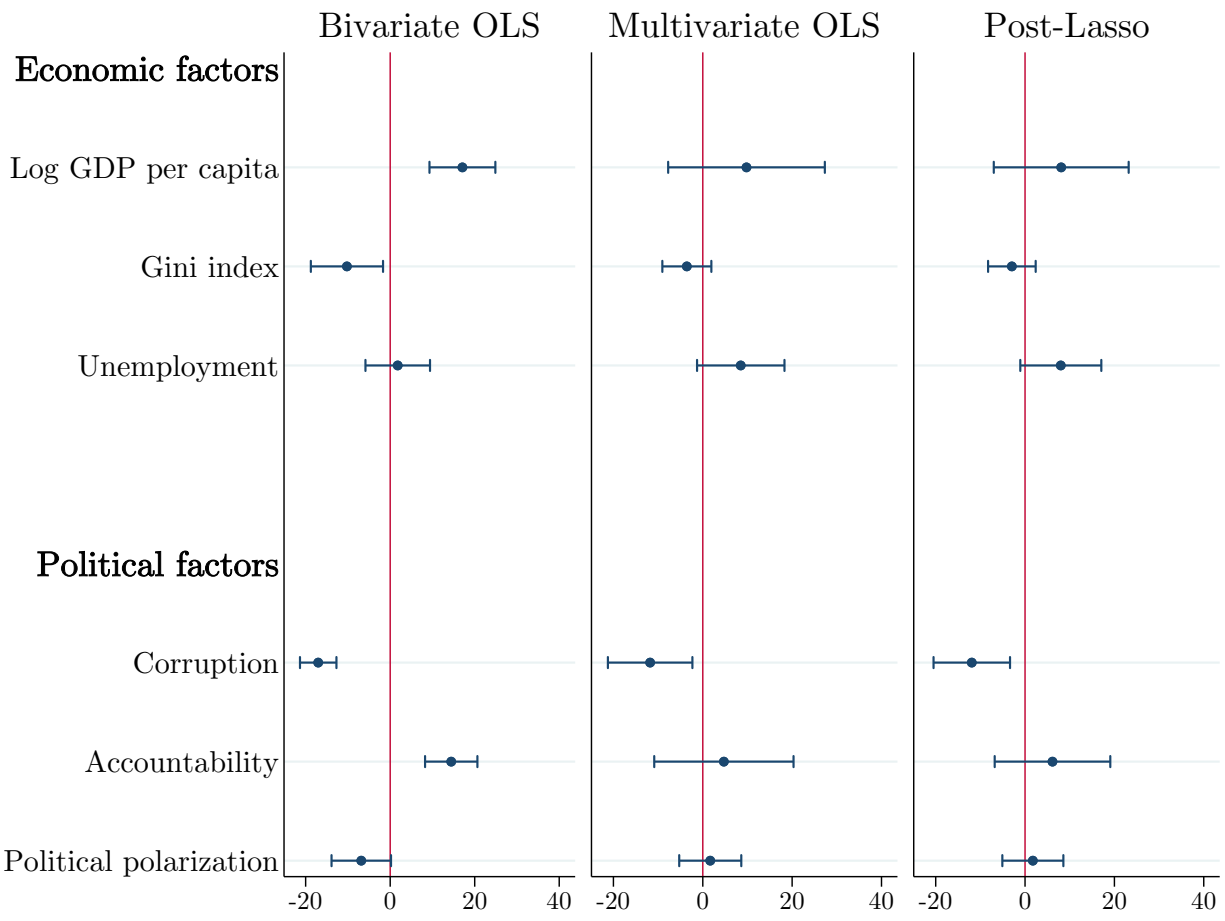
Notes: This figure reports estimates and robust 95% confidence intervals from regressions of party-level estimates of the incumbency advantage at the subnational level on covariates. The left panel reports results from bivariate OLS regressions (each estimate corresponds to a separate regression). The middle panel reports results from a multivariate regression ($R^2 = 0.6227$) on all covariates as well as two dummies identifying elections using proportional representation (rather than the plurality rule) and elections for local offices (rather than parliamentary constituencies). Coefficients on these two dummies are not reported. On the right panel, we display the results of a post-Lasso multivariate regression. To obtain these estimates, we first run a Lasso regression using all covariates, choosing the penalty with a tenfold cross-validation to minimize the mean squared error. We then run a single multivariate OLS regression on the covariates selected by the Lasso regression. In all regressions, observations are weighted by the inverse of the number of studies covering the same country, such that each country receives the same weight. All covariates are standardized to have a mean zero and a standard deviation of one.

Figure A.2: Determinants of the individual-level incumbency advantage



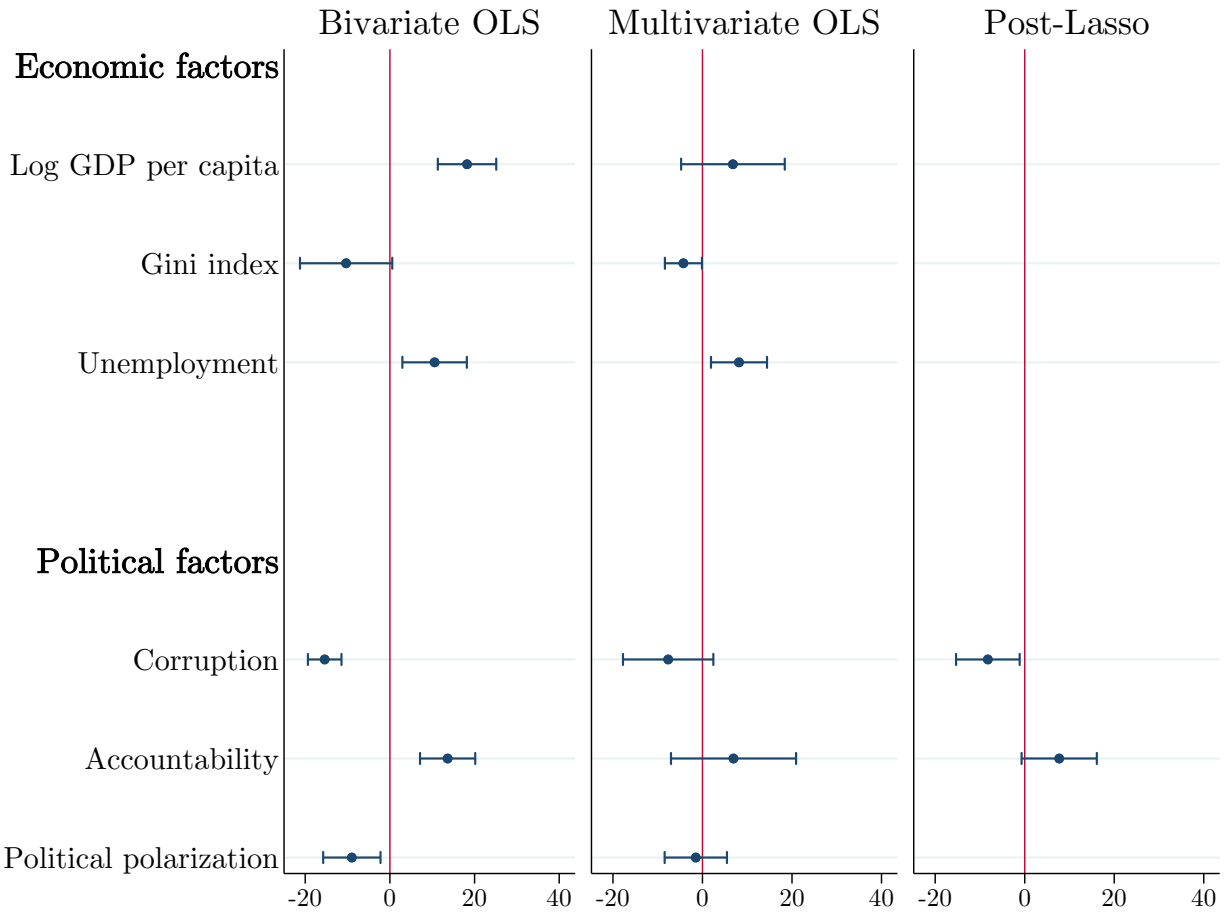
Notes: This figure reports the results of the exercise conducted in Appendix Figure A.1 for the individual-level incumbency advantage instead of the party-level incumbency advantage. The multivariate OLS regression's R-squared is $R^2 = 0.3380$.

Figure A.3: Determinants of the party-level incumbency advantage, unweighted



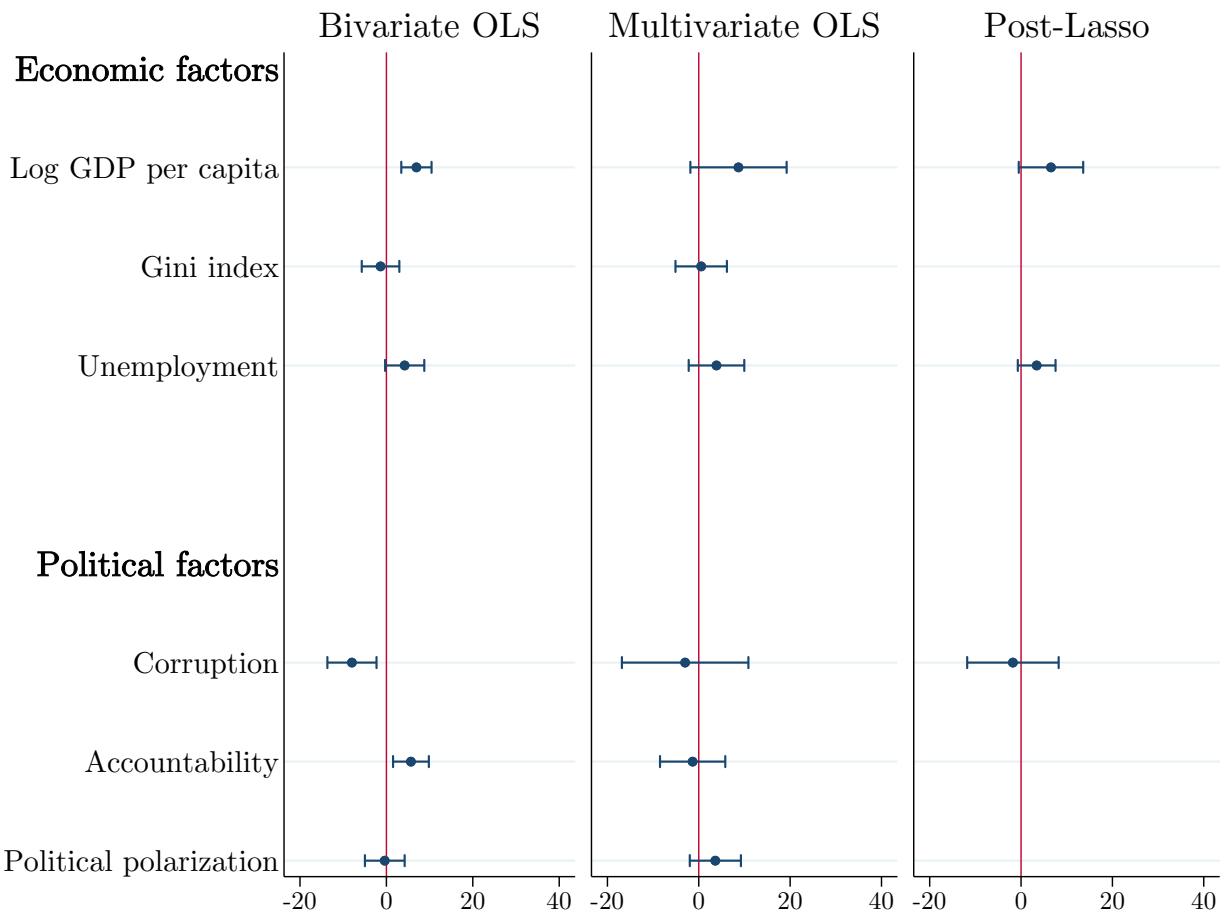
Notes: This figure reports the same results as Appendix Figure A.1, but without weights.

Figure A.4: Determinants of the party-level incumbency advantage, unweighted



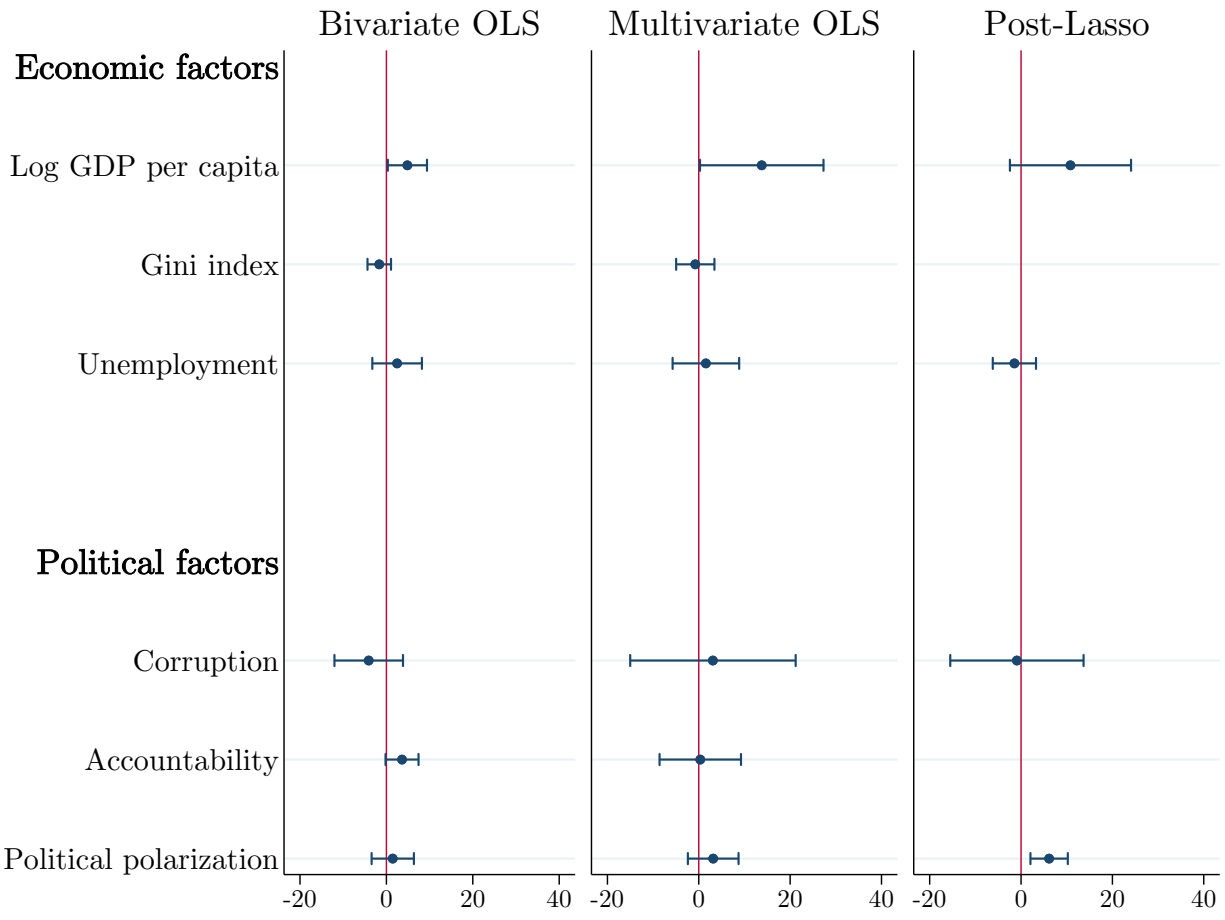
Notes: This figure reports the same results as Appendix Figure A.1, but with weights proportional to the inverse of the standard errors reported in each study. When a standard error was not reported, we used the average standard error from the other studies.

Figure A.5: Determinants of the individual-level incumbency advantage, unweighted



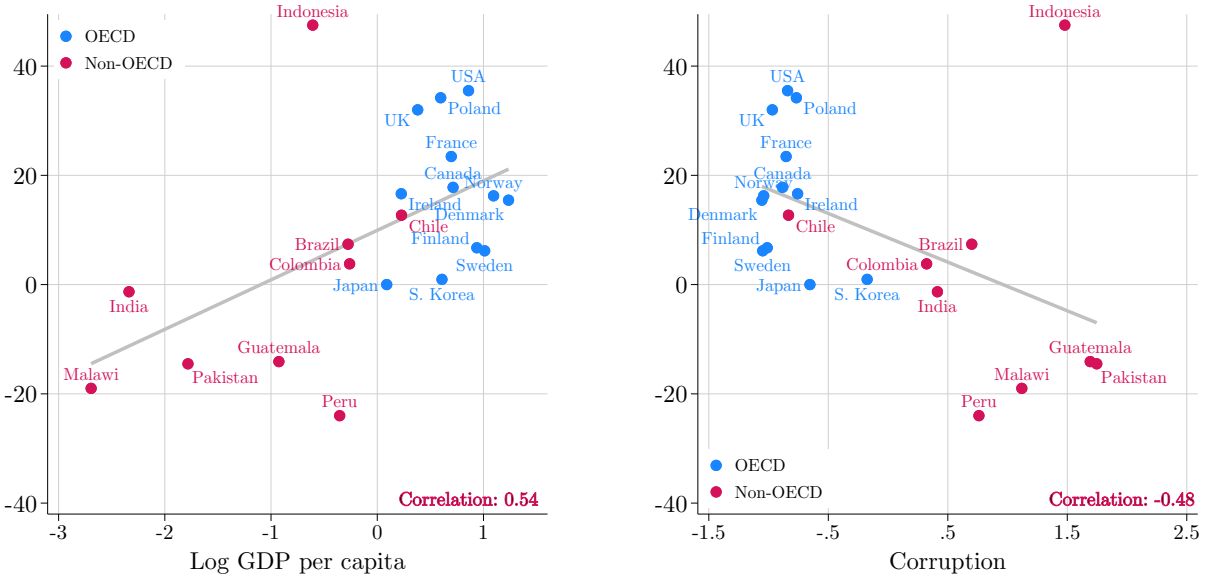
Notes: This figure reports the same results as Appendix Figure A.2, but without weights.

Figure A.6: Determinants of the individual-level incumbency advantage, with weights proportional to the inverse standard error



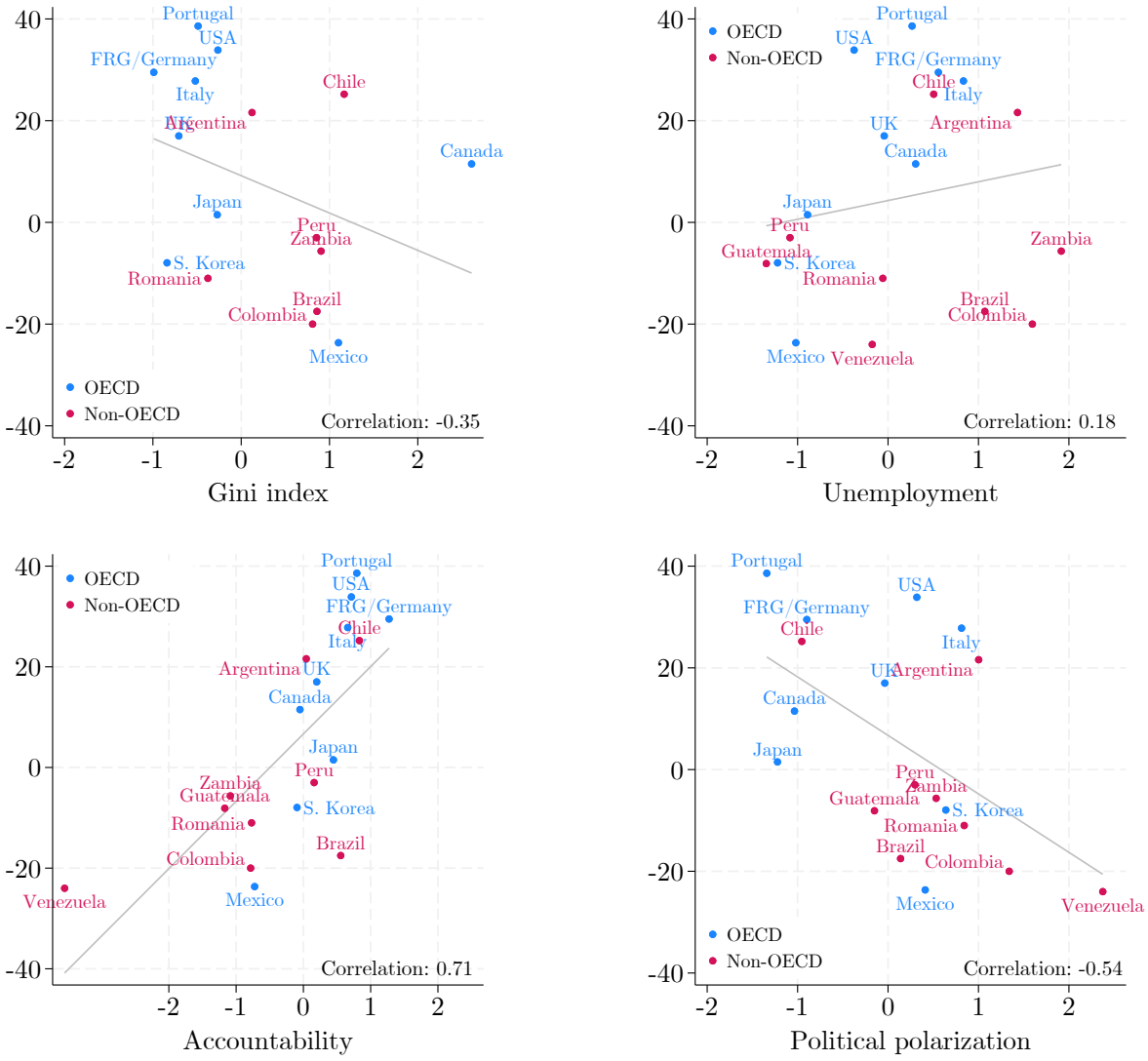
Notes: This figure reports the same results as Appendix Figure A.2, but with weights proportional to the inverse of the standard errors reported in each study. When a standard error was not reported, we used the average standard error from the other studies.

Figure A.7: Correlates of the individual-level incumbency advantage at the subnational level



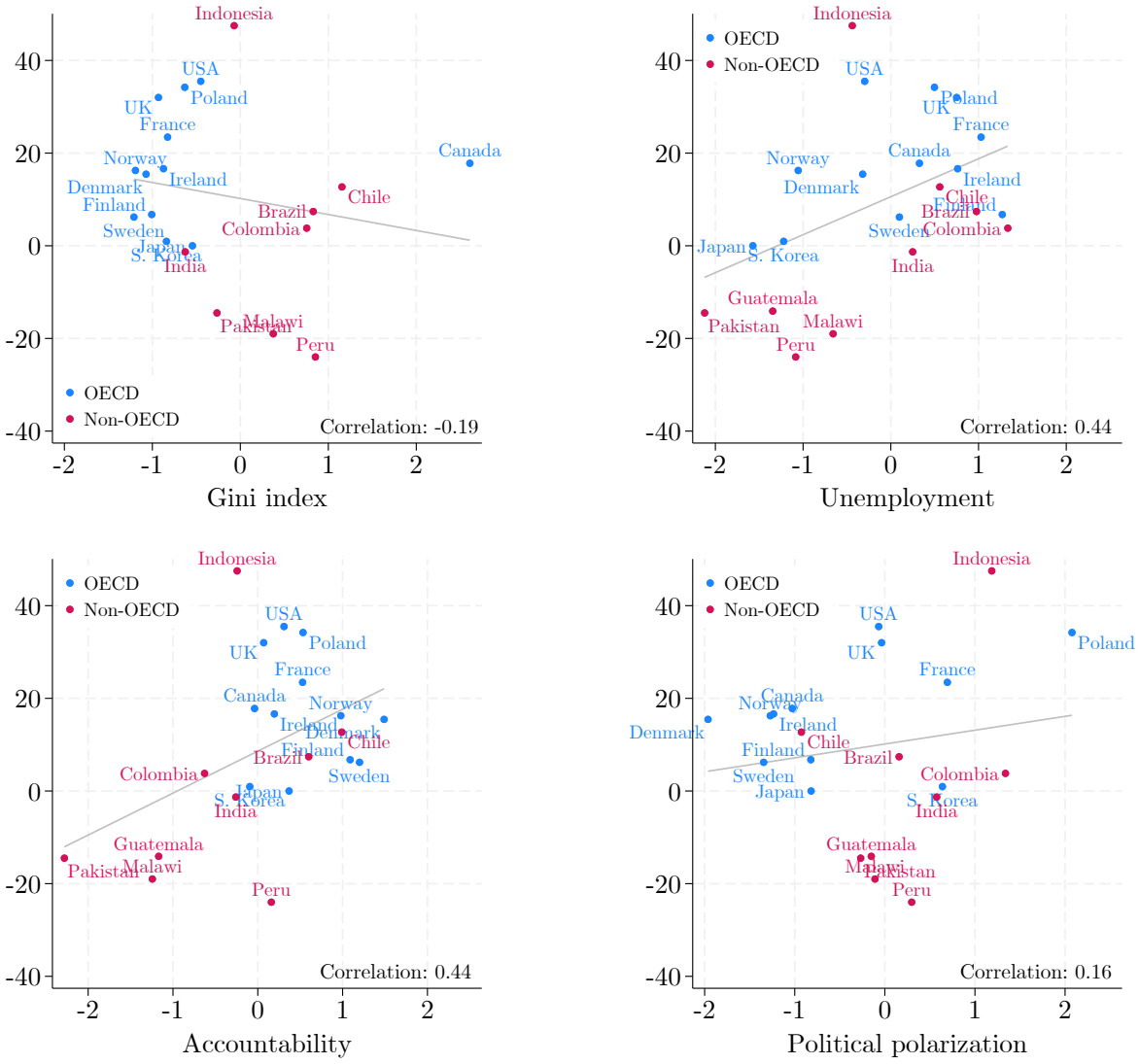
Notes: This figure compares the individual-level incumbency advantage at the subnational level to log GDP per capita (as measured by the Penn World Tables) and corruption (as measured by V-Dem), both standardized. Each dot corresponds to the average estimate of the incumbency advantage reported for a country.

Figure A.8: Additional correlates of the party-level incumbency advantage at the subnational level



Notes: Each plot compares the party-level incumbency advantage at the subnational level to a covariate, expressed in standard deviation terms. We report Pearson correlation coefficients. Estimates are pooled by country.

Figure A.9: Additional correlates of the individual-level incumbency advantage at the subnational level



Notes: Each plot compares the individual-level incumbency advantage to a given covariate, expressed in standard deviation terms. We report Pearson correlation coefficients. Estimates are pooled by country.

Table A.1: Studies included in the meta-analysis

Article	Country	Level	Electoral system	Outcome	Time span	Conditional	Effect
Feierherd and Lucardi (2023)	Argentina	Subnational office	Plurality	Parties	1983-2019	No	+
Battocchio (2018)	Argentina	Subnational office	Plurality	Parties	1983-2015	No	+
Núñez (2018)	Argentina	Subnational office	Plurality	Parties	1985-2015	No	+
De Magalhaes et al. (2025)	Brazil	Parl. constituency	Proportional	Candidates	1998-2010	No	+
Avelino Filho et al. (2022)	Brazil	Parl. constituency	Proportional	Candidates	1998-2019	No	+
Bastos and Sanchez (2024)	Brazil	Subnational office	Plurality	Candidates	2000-2008	No	N
De Magalhaes et al. (2025)	Brazil	Subnational office	Plurality	Candidates	2000-2008	No	N
Novaes and Schiumerini (2022)	Brazil	Subnational office	Plurality	Candidates	2004-2016	No	-
Klašnja and Titiunik (2017)	Brazil	Subnational office	Plurality	Parties	1996-2012	No	-
Titiunik (2009)	Brazil	Subnational office	Plurality	Parties	2000-2004	No	-
De Magalhaes et al. (2025)	Brazil	Subnational office	Proportional	Candidates	2000-2008	No	-
De Magalhães et al. (2025)	Brazil	Subnational office	Proportional	Candidates	2000-2008	No	-
De Magalhães et al. (2025)	Brazil	Subnational office	Proportional	Candidates	2000-2008	Yes	-
De Magalhaes et al. (2025)	Brazil	Subnational office	Proportional	Candidates	1994-2010	No	N
Sevi (2025)	Canada	Parl. constituency	Plurality	Candidates	1972-2021	Yes	N
Sevi (2023)	Canada	Parl. constituency	Plurality	Candidates	1990-2021	Yes	N
Sevi (2025)	Canada	Parl. constituency	Plurality	Candidates	1867-1972	Yes	+
Kendall and Rekkas (2012)	Canada	Parl. constituency	Plurality	Parties	1867-2008	Yes	+
Archambault and Winer (2023)	Canada	Parl. constituency	Plurality	Parties	1867-2019	No	+
Lucas (2021)	Canada	Subnational office	Plurality	Candidates	1904-2018	No	+
Nzabonimpa (2023)	Canada	Subnational office	Proportional	Candidates	1867-2021	No	+
Salas (2016)	Chile	Parl. constituency	Proportional	Parties	1989-2013	No	+
Munoz (2021)	Chile	Subnational office	Plurality	Candidates	2000-2016	No	+
Klašnja and Titiunik (2017)	Chile	Subnational office	Plurality	Parties	2004-2012	No	+
Klašnja and Titiunik (2017)	Colombia	Subnational office	Plurality	Parties	2003-2011	No	-
De Magalhães et al. (2025)	Colombia	Subnational office	Proportional	Candidates	2003-2015	Yes	-
De Magalhães et al. (2025)	Colombia	Subnational office	Proportional	Candidates	2003-2015	No	+
De Magalhães et al. (2025)	Denmark	Subnational office	Proportional	Candidates	2005-2014	No	+
Dahlgaard (2016)	Denmark	Subnational office	Proportional	Candidates	2005-2013	No	+
De Magalhães et al. (2025)	Denmark	Subnational office	Proportional	Candidates	2005-2014	Yes	+
Ade et al. (2014)	FRG/Germany	Parl. constituency	Plurality	Parties	1990-2005	No	+
Ade et al. (2014)	FRG/Germany	Parl. constituency	Plurality	Parties	1976-1990	No	+
Freier (2015)	FRG/Germany	Subnational office	Plurality	Parties	1945-2010	No	+
Kotakorpi et al. (2017)	Finland	Parl. constituency	Proportional	Candidates	1970-2007	No	+
De Magalhães et al. (2025)	Finland	Subnational office	Proportional	Candidates	1996-2012	No	N
Kotakorpi et al. (2017)	Finland	Subnational office	Proportional	Candidates	1996-2008	No	N
De Magalhães et al. (2025)	Finland	Subnational office	Proportional	Candidates	1996-2012	Yes	+
Hyytinen et al. (2018)	Finland	Subnational office	Proportional	Candidates	1996-2012	No	+
Dano et al. (2025)	France	Parl. constituency	Plurality	Candidates	1958-2016	No	+
Dano et al. (2025)	France	Subnational office	Plurality	Candidates	1979-2011	No	+
Morales Carrera (2014)	Guatemala	Subnational office	Plurality	Candidates	1999-2011	No	-
Morales Carrera (2014)	Guatemala	Subnational office	Plurality	Parties	1999-2011	No	-

Linden (2004)	India	Parl. constituency	Plurality	Candidates	1991-1999	No	-
Linden (2004)	India	Parl. constituency	Plurality	Candidates	1951-1967	No	+
Lee (2020)	India	Parl. constituency	Plurality	Candidates	1977-2014	Yes	-
Linden (2004)	India	Parl. constituency	Plurality	Candidates	1951-1967	Yes	+
Linden (2004)	India	Parl. constituency	Plurality	Candidates	1980-1989	Yes	N
Lee (2020)	India	Parl. constituency	Plurality	Candidates	1977-2014	No	N
Linden (2004)	India	Parl. constituency	Plurality	Candidates	1991-1999	Yes	-
Linden (2004)	India	Parl. constituency	Plurality	Candidates	1980-1989	No	+
Lee (2020)	India	Parl. constituency	Plurality	Parties	1977-2014	Yes	+
Karnik et al. (2023)	India	Parl. constituency	Plurality	Parties	1980-2014	Yes	N
Uppal (2009)	India	Subnational office	Plurality	Candidates	1991-2003	Yes	-
Uppal (2009)	India	Subnational office	Plurality	Candidates	1975-1991	No	N
Uppal (2009)	India	Subnational office	Plurality	Candidates	1991-2003	No	-
Uppal (2009)	India	Subnational office	Plurality	Candidates	1975-1991	Yes	-
Lewis et al. (2020)	Indonesia	Subnational office	Plurality	Candidates	2005-2017	No	+
Jankowski and Müller (2021)	Ireland	Parl. constituency	Proportional	Candidates	1937-2020	No	+
Redmond and Regan (2015)	Ireland	Parl. constituency	Proportional	Candidates	1937-2011	No	+
Jankowski and Müller (2021)	Ireland	Subnational office	Proportional	Candidates	1942-2019	No	+
Golden and Picci (2015)	Italy	Parl. constituency	Proportional	Candidates	1948-1992	Yes	N
Golden and Picci (2015)	Italy	Parl. constituency	Proportional	Candidates	1948-1992	Yes	+
De Benedetto (2014)	Italy	Subnational office	Plurality	Parties	1993-2011	No	+
De Benedetto (2019)	Italy	Subnational office	Plurality	Parties	1993-2011	No	+
Ariga (2015)	Japan	Parl. constituency	Plurality	Candidates	1958-1993	No	N
Ariga et al. (2016)	Japan	Parl. constituency	Plurality	Parties	1994-2014	No	N
Ochieng'Opalo (2014)	Kenya	Parl. constituency	Plurality	Candidates	1970-1992	Yes	N
Ochieng'Opalo (2014)	Kenya	Parl. constituency	Plurality	Candidates	1992-2012	Yes	+
Roh (2017)	Korea, Republic of	Parl. constituency	Plurality	Candidates	1988-2012	No	-
Kang et al. (2018)	Korea, Republic of	Parl. constituency	Plurality	Candidates	1988-2014	No	N
Kang et al. (2018)	Korea, Republic of	Parl. constituency	Plurality	Parties	1988-2014	No	-
Roh (2017)	Korea, Republic of	Parl. constituency	Plurality	Parties	1988-2012	No	-
Kang et al. (2018)	Korea, Republic of	Subnational office	Plurality	Candidates	1988-2014	No	+
Kang et al. (2018)	Korea, Republic of	Subnational office	Plurality	Candidates	1988-2014	No	+
Kang et al. (2018)	Korea, Republic of	Subnational office	Plurality	Parties	1988-2014	No	+
Kang et al. (2018)	Korea, Republic of	Subnational office	Plurality	Parties	1988-2014	No	N
Magalhães and Spirgel-Sinclair (2021)	Malawi	Parl. constituency	Plurality	Candidates	1994-2014	No	N
Lucardi and Rosas (2016)	Mexico	Parl. constituency	Plurality	Parties	2000-2015	No	N
Klašnja and Titiunik (2017)	Mexico	Subnational office	Plurality	Parties	1997-2009	No	-
Lucardi and Rosas (2016)	Mexico	Subnational office	Plurality	Parties	2000-2015	No	-
Fiva and Smith (2018)	Norway	Parl. constituency	Proportional	Candidates	1945-2014	No	+
Fiva and Røhr (2018)	Norway	Subnational office	Proportional	Candidates	2003-2015	No	+
Afzal (2007)	Pakistan	Parl. constituency	Plurality	Candidates	1988-1997	No	-
Weaver (2021)	Peru	Subnational office	Plurality	Candidates	2006-2014	No	-
Weaver (2021)	Peru	Subnational office	Plurality	Candidates	2006-2014	Yes	-
Klašnja and Titiunik (2017)	Peru	Subnational office	Plurality	Parties	2006-2014	No	-
Bartnicki et al. (2022)	Poland	Subnational office	Plurality	Candidates	2006-2018	No	+

Lopes da Fonseca (2017)	Portugal	Subnational office	Plurality	Parties	1993-2013	No	+
Klašnja (2015)	Romania	Subnational office	Plurality	Parties	1996-2012	No	-
Lundqvist (2013)	Sweden	Subnational office	Proportional	Candidates	1991-2006	No	+
De Magalhães and Hirvonen (2023)	UK	Parl. constituency	Plurality	Candidates	1966-1992	No	+
Eggers and Spirling (2017)	UK	Parl. constituency	Plurality	Parties	1955-2010	No	+
De Magalhães and Hirvonen (2023)	USA	Parl. constituency	Plurality	Candidates	1976-2018	No	+
Guriev et al. (2025)	USA	Parl. constituency	Plurality	Parties	2020-2024	No	+
Warshaw (2019)	USA	Parl. constituency	Plurality	Parties	1988-2016	No	+
Hall and Snyder (2015)	USA	Parl. constituency	Plurality	Parties	1948-2010	No	+
Guriev et al. (2025)	USA	Parl. constituency	Plurality	Parties	2006-2018	No	+
Lee (2008)	USA	Parl. constituency	Plurality	Parties	1946-1998	No	+
Guriev et al. (2025)	USA	Parl. constituency	Plurality	Parties	1976-2004	No	+
Warshaw (2019)	USA	Parl. constituency	Plurality	Parties	1988-2016	No	+
Broockman (2009)	USA	Parl. constituency	Plurality	Parties	1950-2006	No	+
De Benedictis-Kessner (2018)	USA	Subnational office	Plurality	Candidates	1950-2014	No	+
Trounstine (2011)	USA	Subnational office	Plurality	Candidates	1915-1985	No	+
Uppal (2010)	USA	Subnational office	Plurality	Candidates	1968-1989	No	+
Warshaw (2019)	USA	Subnational office	Plurality	Parties	1988-2016	No	+
Warshaw (2019)	USA	Subnational office	Plurality	Parties	1988-2016	No	+
Warshaw (2019)	USA	Subnational office	Plurality	Parties	1988-2016	No	N
Fowler (2014)	USA	Subnational office	Plurality	Parties	1996-2008	No	+
Ferreira and Gyourko (2009)	USA	Subnational office	Plurality	Parties	1950-2005	No	+
Hall and Snyder (2015)	USA	Subnational office	Plurality	Parties	1978-2010	No	+
Hall and Snyder (2015)	USA	Subnational office	Plurality	Parties	1970-2010	No	+
Warshaw (2019)	USA	Subnational office	Plurality	Parties	1988-2016	No	+
Di Bonifacio et al. (2025)	Venezuela	Subnational office	Plurality	Parties	2008-2021	No	-
Ochieng'Opalo (2014)	Zambia	Parl. constituency	Plurality	Candidates	1991-2013	Yes	+
Ochieng'Opalo (2014)	Zambia	Parl. constituency	Plurality	Candidates	1970-1991	Yes	N
Macdonald (2013)	Zambia	Parl. constituency	Plurality	Parties	1991-2011	No	N
Macdonald (2013)	Zambia	Subnational office	Plurality	Parties	2006-2011	No	-

Notes: This table lists all studies included in our meta-analysis, with one line per estimate. In the column "Effect", "-" indicates a statistically significant negative effect (at the 10% level), "+" indicates a significant positive effect (at the 10% level), and "N" indicates a non-significant effect.

B Data Construction

In this appendix, we describe the data we collected to estimate the incumbency advantage at the national level. Our dataset includes 3,021 elections held between 1945 and 2023: 859 presidential elections and 2,162 parliamentary elections. We also describe the coding of key variables used in our analysis.

B.1 Leaders and candidates

We collected data on national leaders following the procedure described in Marx et al. (2024). Using V-Dem (Lührmann et al., 2020), books by Dieter Nohlen and coauthors (Nohlen et al., 1999, 2001a,b; Nohlen, 2005; Nohlen et al., 2005; Nohlen and Stöver, 2010), and Wikipedia, we identified who was the head of state and the head of government in any country at any point in time.

We recorded the personal characteristics, most importantly the partisan affiliations, of the leaders of the executive branch as well as the candidates competing in presidential elections. To do so, we linked these individuals with their Wikipedia pages and Wikidata identifiers and recovered personal information from Wikidata. When Wikidata was incomplete or inconsistent, we completed our dataset using Wikipedia entries and other online sources. More specifically, we searched for additional data in cases where:

- Wikidata provided no information on partisan affiliation;
- A leader's party affiliation upon taking office differed from the party under which they were elected;
- A leader was affiliated with a given party without dates of membership.

B.2 Political parties

To build our database of political parties, we first created an entry for every party included in the V-Parties (Lührmann et al., 2020; Pemstein et al., 2018) and Party Facts (Döring and Regel, 2019) datasets. We linked each of these to their Wikipedia and Wikidata pages. [1]

We then identified a list of parties of interest from our election results. Specifically, we included parties that met at least one of the following criteria:

- Obtained at least 5% of the votes in a presidential election or won at least 5% of the seats in a parliamentary election.
- Ranked third or higher in an election.
- An elected leader included in the Leaders database (see Appendix B.1) was part of this party at some point in their life.

[1] Some Party Facts entries include links to Wikipedia pages, which we connected to Wikidata. We reviewed all other entries to find whether we could link them to a Wikidata element. We also surveyed cases in which a single Wikidata identifier was associated with multiple Party Facts or V-Dem entries. Incorrect matches were separated, and correct ones were consolidated as a single entry.

Each was linked to its Wikipedia page and Wikidata identifier using an automatic process followed by manual verification. This list was then merged with the crosswalk described above. To further enrich the dataset and establish party linkages, we added all parties listed by Wikipedia as predecessors or successors of parties of interest (and recursively their own predecessors and successors). Our final dataset includes 8,040 parties.

B.3 Regimes

To characterize political institutions, we follow the methodology of Marx et al. (2024). We first extract a partition of countries' history into a succession of regimes from V-Dem. For countries not covered by V-Dem, we manually define regimes. For each regime, we then identify whether presidential and parliamentary elections were held and, if so, whether they led to the designation of a head of state or a head of government. We extract this information using V-Dem variables and complete the missing data manually.

B.4 Constitutionally planned length of terms

B.4.1 Presidential elections

To identify the constitutionally planned length of presidential terms, we extracted data from V-Dem (where the `v2exfxtmhs` and `v2exfxtmhg` variables code the *de jure* term length of the head of state and head of government, respectively) and CCP (where the `hosterm` and `hogterm` variables indicate the maximum term length of the head of state and head of government, respectively).

When the information was missing from both V-Dem and CCP or when these datasets included conflicting information, we identified the constitutionally planned length of presidential terms by searching through the constitution in force at the time of the election (including amendments). When we could not find the text of that constitution, we turned to secondary sources such as Baturo and Elgie (2019) or Wikipedia.

B.4.2 Parliamentary elections

To identify the constitutionally planned length of parliamentary terms, we relied on three sources: CCP (where the variable `LHTERM` gives the maximum term length for members of the first or single chamber of the parliament), the PIPE dataset (Przeworski et al., 2013, where the `LEGTERM` variable codes the constitutionally prescribed duration of the legislative term in the lower house), and tColomer (2016), which provides the term length of the lower or single chamber for a large number of elections.

When the information was missing from all these sources or when they included conflicting information, we searched again through the constitution in force at the time of the election. In this process, we heavily relied on vLex, a legal database that encompasses constitutions from more than 100 jurisdictions. This database was particularly useful for obtaining information on elections held in colonial territories. When we could not find the text of the constitution, we turned to secondary sources such as Wikipedia.

B.5 Coalitions

We distinguish two types of party coalitions:

1. **Ex-ante coalitions**, such as the CDU/CSU alliance in Germany, that are formed before the election with a formal commitment to act as a unified block after the election.

2. **Ex-post coalitions**, such as the *Große Koalition* between the CDU/CSU and the SPD from 2013 to 2021 in Germany, that are formed after the election.

We treat ex-ante coalitions as if they were a single party. In contrast, since ex-post coalitions are endogenous to the election results, we treat their member parties as distinct entities.

B.6 Building outcomes

This section describes how we tracked the political fate of election winners and runners-up in the years following the election (see Section 4.1) and in the subsequent election (see Section 4.2).

B.6.1 Post-term incumbency advantage

Defining the leader and party in power. To measure whether election winners and runners-up were in power in the years following presidential elections, we relied on the leader data described in Appendix B.1, which indicate who the officeholder was at any point in time as well as their partisan affiliation.

For parliamentary elections, we defined being "in power" as holding a plurality of seats in parliament (as described in Section 4.1). We assumed that the party with a plurality of seats at a given time was the party that won a plurality of seats in the last election.[2]

To capture power disruptions in parliamentary elections, we supplemented our election data with information on coups from Powell and Thyne (2011). Since their data only cover 1950–2010, we used Wikipedia to extend the data's coverage to 1935–2023. Whenever a coup occurs, we leave the party in power unreported until the next election.

Measuring outcomes. For each relative year $t \in [-2, 10]$ surrounding a presidential election, we compared the president in office to the winner and runner-up of the election. We used Wikidata identifiers to make this comparison (see Appendix B.1). We manually verified all cases in which neither candidate was matched to the president in power.

To track the political outcomes of the winner and runner-up parties in both presidential and parliamentary elections, we followed a similar procedure, leveraging the party identifiers of our parties database (see Appendix B.2).

[2] In doing so, we took into account all elections, including those excluded from the regression sample following the rules defined in Appendix C.1. For instance, the 1992 Congolese parliamentary election was won by the pro-presidential Pan-African Union for Social Democracy (UPADS). That party fell short of securing an absolute majority. Opposition factions joined forces to build a coalition, thereby denying the UPADS the possibility of nominating a prime minister from its own ranks. In response, President Lissouba dissolved the National Assembly. Because this dissolution happened shortly after the 1992 election, we do not include that election in our regression sample. However, we do take that election into account when defining which party held a plurality of seats after 1992.

B.6.2 Next election incumbency advantage

To measure the effect of winning an election on success in ulterior elections, we linked the winner and runner-up candidates and parties of each election i to contestants in the following election $i+1$.

We linked candidates (in presidential elections) and parties (in both presidential and parliamentary elections) to the list of competitors in the following election using Python's `fuzzywuzzy` library. We manually verified every imperfect match and made a manual match when none could be made automatically. When the candidate or party (or a clearly designated successor) ran in the next election, we documented the rank they reached as well as their vote/seat share, enabling us to measure the outcomes defined in Section 4.2.

B.7 Data quality checks

To assess the quality of the coding of our outcome variables, we conducted the following checks:

- We extracted a random sample of 50 presidential and 50 parliamentary elections, oversampled near the regression discontinuity threshold. We manually coded next-election outcomes and power trajectories for the winner and runner-up of each of these elections and compared this coding to our main data.
- In the year following an election, the election winner should be in power. We inspected all observations in which our outcome variables suggest otherwise.
- We verified that our two empirical approaches presented in Sections 4.1 and 4.2 never contradict each other. For each election, next-election outcomes indicate whether the winner of the following election is the incumbent, the runner-up, both, or neither. Post-term variables should indicate that the leader in power right after the next election is that same candidate/party.
- When coding the performance of election winners and runners-up in the following election, we linked parties across elections by comparing their names. An alternative strategy would have been to exploit the unique party identifiers of our parties database. We checked all discrepancies between outcomes coded using the two methods.
- Marx et al. (2024) identify electoral turnovers, defined as situations in which the incumbent candidate or party fails to win reelection. If a turnover occurs in election t, then the winner of election $t-1$ was not reelected. We ensured that the corresponding next-election outcomes are coded consistently in our data.

C Empirical Strategy

C.1 Elections included in the sample

Our analysis includes all presidential and parliamentary elections held between 1945 and 2023, excluding the following cases:

- Elections excluded from the election results database (Marx et al., 2025): by-elections held for a small number of seats, elections of constitutional assemblies whose sole purpose is to draft a new constitution, and elections for the upper chamber in multi-cameral parliaments.
- Elections with a single candidate or party (including plebiscites).[1]
- Elections that are not the last of their type (i.e., presidential or parliamentary) during the calendar year.
- Parliamentary elections without political parties (e.g., because they are banned), or such that the share of seats won by independent candidates is above 90% (e.g., Jordan 1997).
- Parliamentary elections whose results were annulled, that were shortly followed by a coup, or that were shortly followed by a congressional dissolution.
- Parliamentary elections in which members were appointed rather than elected. In such cases, the appointing authority can use nominations to secure a plurality of seats, raising concerns of manipulation of the running variable. Furthermore, our electoral data do not systematically distinguish between elected seats and appointed seats, which prevents us from computing seat shares based only on elected seats.
- Presidential elections in which more than one leader is elected (e.g., in Bosnia and Herzegovina since 1995).
- Presidential elections whose results were canceled (e.g., Bolivia 1978), where the president-elect died shortly after the election (e.g., Iran July 1981), or that were shortly followed by a coup (e.g., Panama 1968).
- Indirect presidential elections, unless all the following conditions hold: (1) the electoral college was elected solely to elect the president; (2) the election took place in one round; (3) electors are pledged (as in the United States Electoral College), or there are more than 1,000 electors in the electoral college. This rule is designed to exclude elections in which precise manipulation of the election results is possible.
- The presidential election held in Argentina in 2003, where Carlos Menem won the first round but withdrew before the runoff, resulting in Néstor Kirchner being elected with a negative margin of victory.

For our study of the next-election incumbency advantage, we further exclude elections that were not followed by another election within a 10-year period.

[1] Following this criterion, we excluded elections held under the National Front agreement in Colombia (1956-1974), during which the two main parties agreed to alternate power every four years.

C.2 Transition period

When following the power trajectories of leaders and parties, we measure outcomes for each relative year with a 180-day lag, to account for transition periods (see Section 4.1).

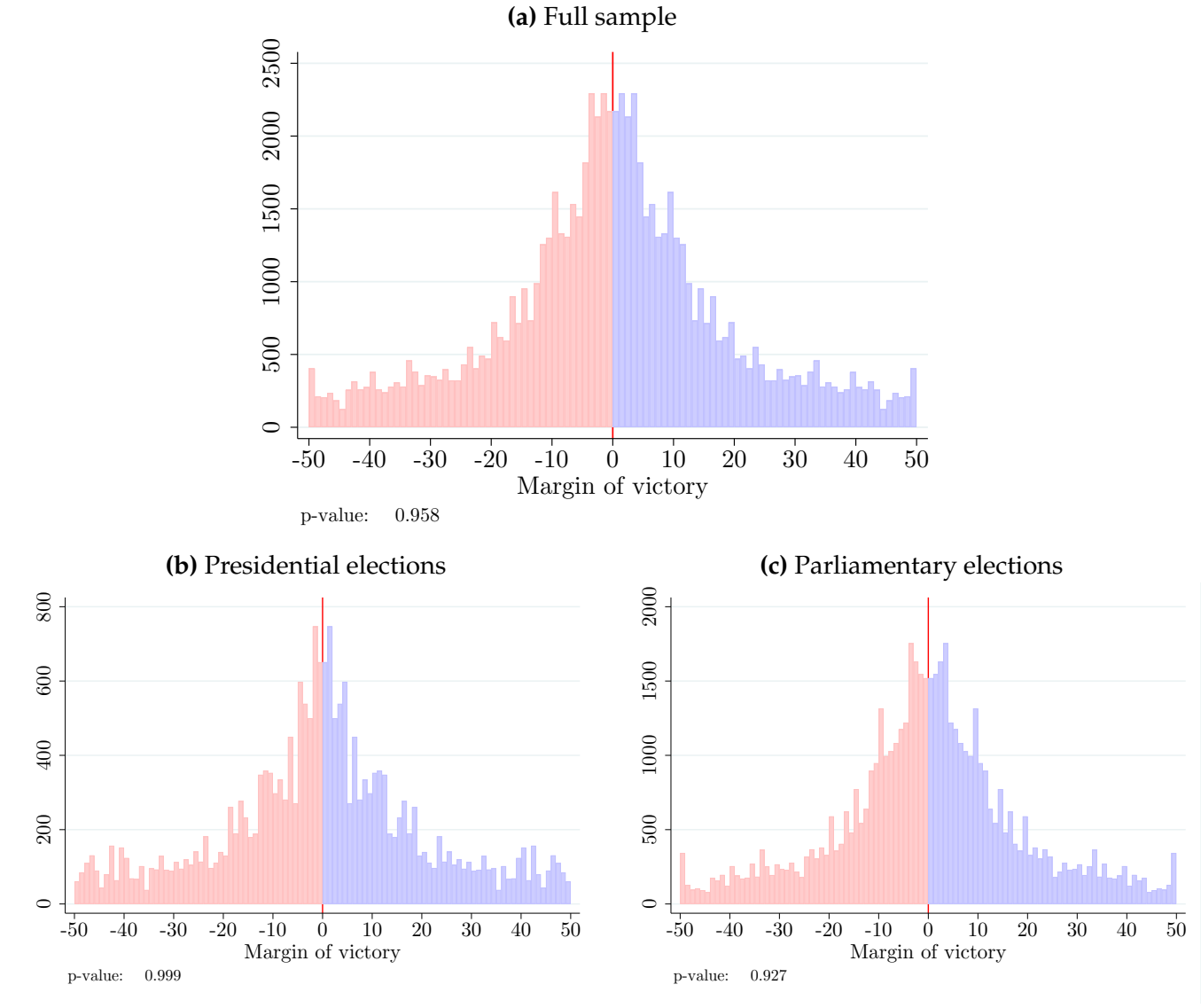
We chose this lag based on the typical length of such transitions, which we measured based on presidential elections won by a different individual than the incumbent. We first detected all elections in which the winner had not won the previous election, using our next-election outcomes. We then relied on our leader data (see Appendix B.1) to determine the inauguration date of each president-elect and computed the transition period as the difference between that date and the date of their election. We excluded all elections in which the president-elect was already in power before the election (e.g., because they seized power through a coup) and manually checked all elections followed by multiple power transitions within a year to detect exceptional situations.

In the end, we computed transition periods in 389 elections, corresponding to 33% of all presidential elections in our sample. Transition periods range from 1 to 194 days, with a mean of 56 days. We chose a 180-day delay to cover the vast majority (all but one) of transition periods.[2]

[2]The election with the longest transition period (194 days) within this sample was held in El Salvador in 1956, due to a constitutional rule mandating that presidential inaugurations take place on the eve of Independence Day.

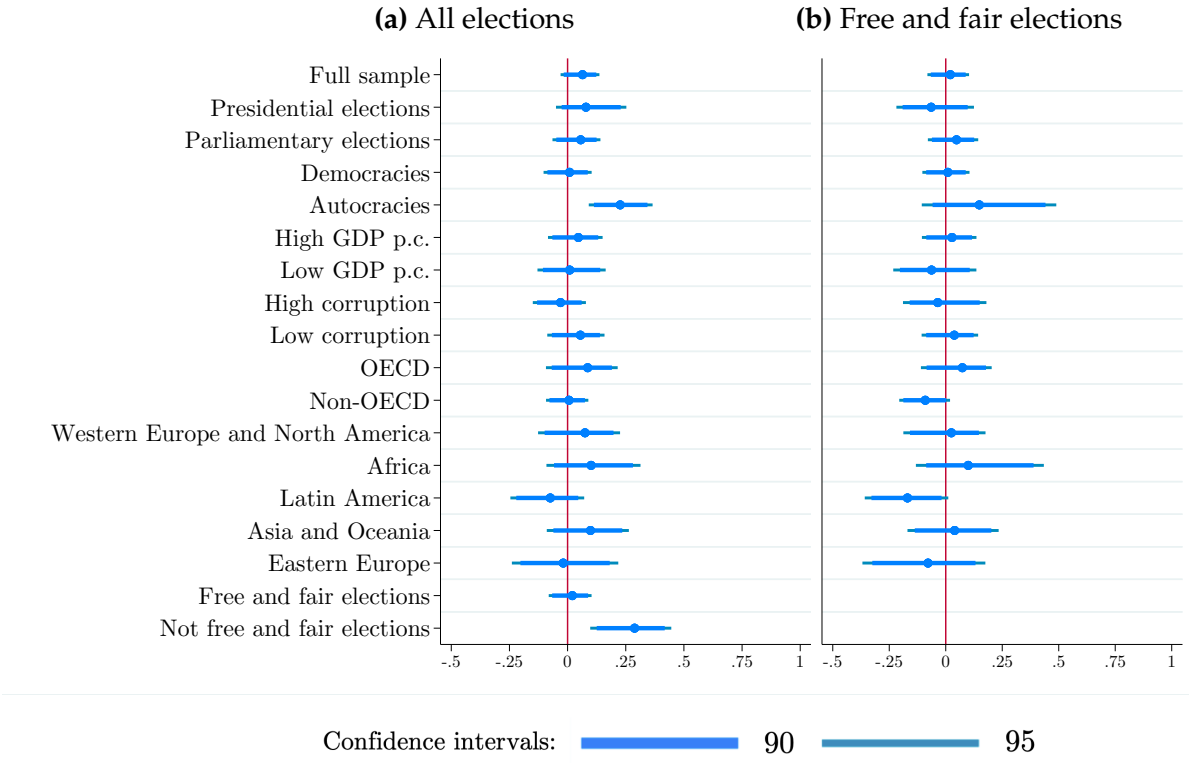
D Additional Results and Robustness Checks

Figure D.1: Density tests



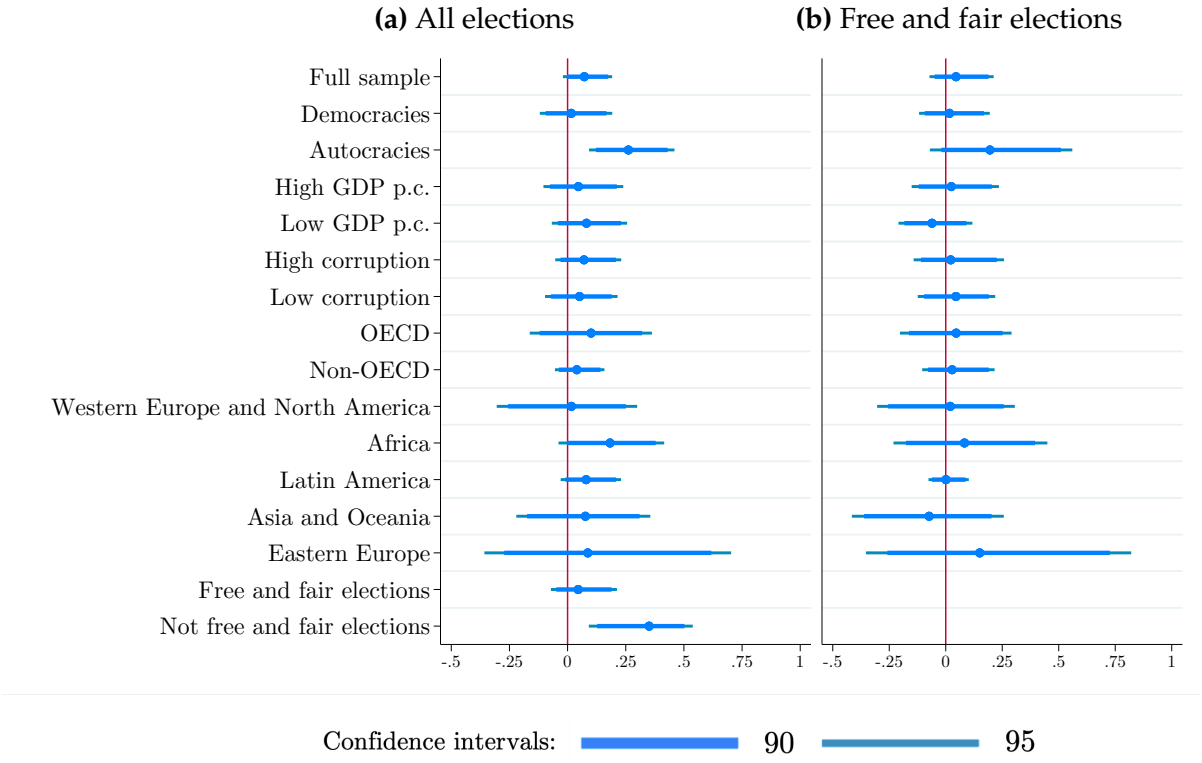
Notes: In this figure, we implement the density test of Cattaneo et al. (2018) on the sample of elections used to estimate the post-term incumbency advantage. P-values for the imbalance test are reported below each graph, and we plot the density of the running variable at the cutoff.

Figure D.2: Placebo tests: Effect of election victory on being in power one year and six months before the election



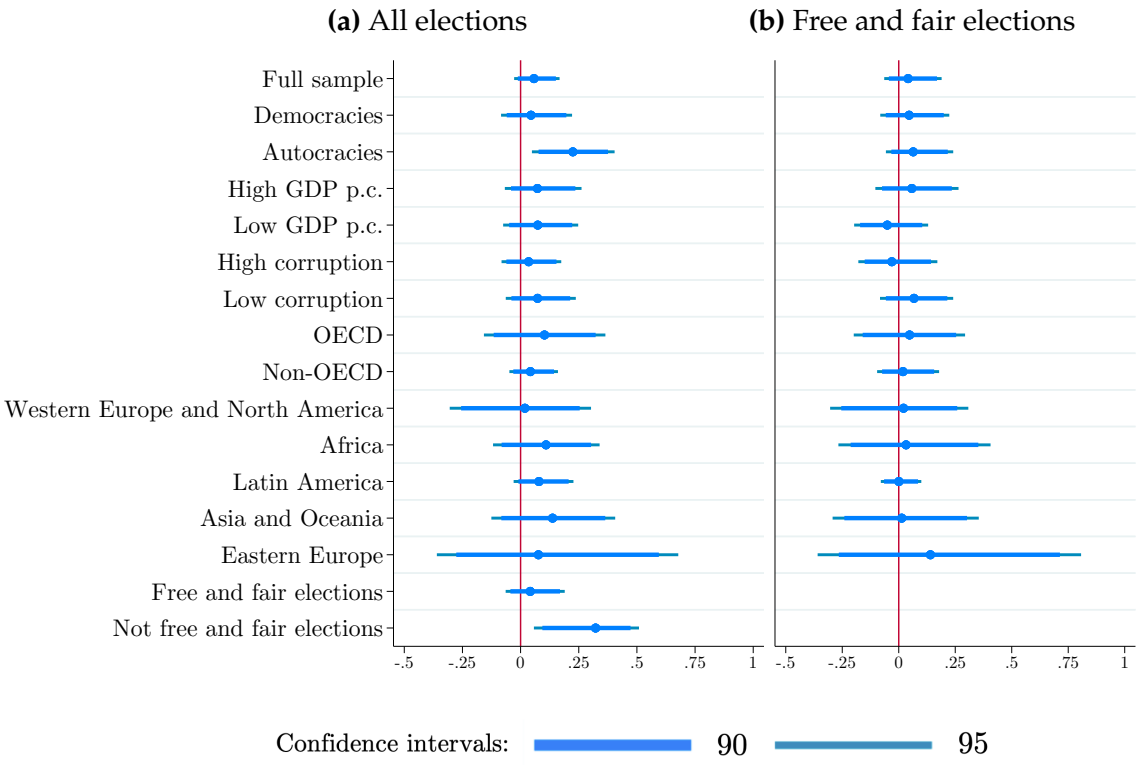
Notes: This figure shows RD estimates as well as 90% and 95% robust confidence intervals of the effect of winning an election on the likelihood of being in power one year and six months before the election date, in our global sample of elections and in various subsamples. We include all elections, in panel (a), and restrict the sample to elections coded as free and fair by V-Dem, in panel (b). Our empirical strategy is described in Section 4.1.

Figure D.3: Placebo tests: Effect of election victory on being in power before the election, presidential candidates



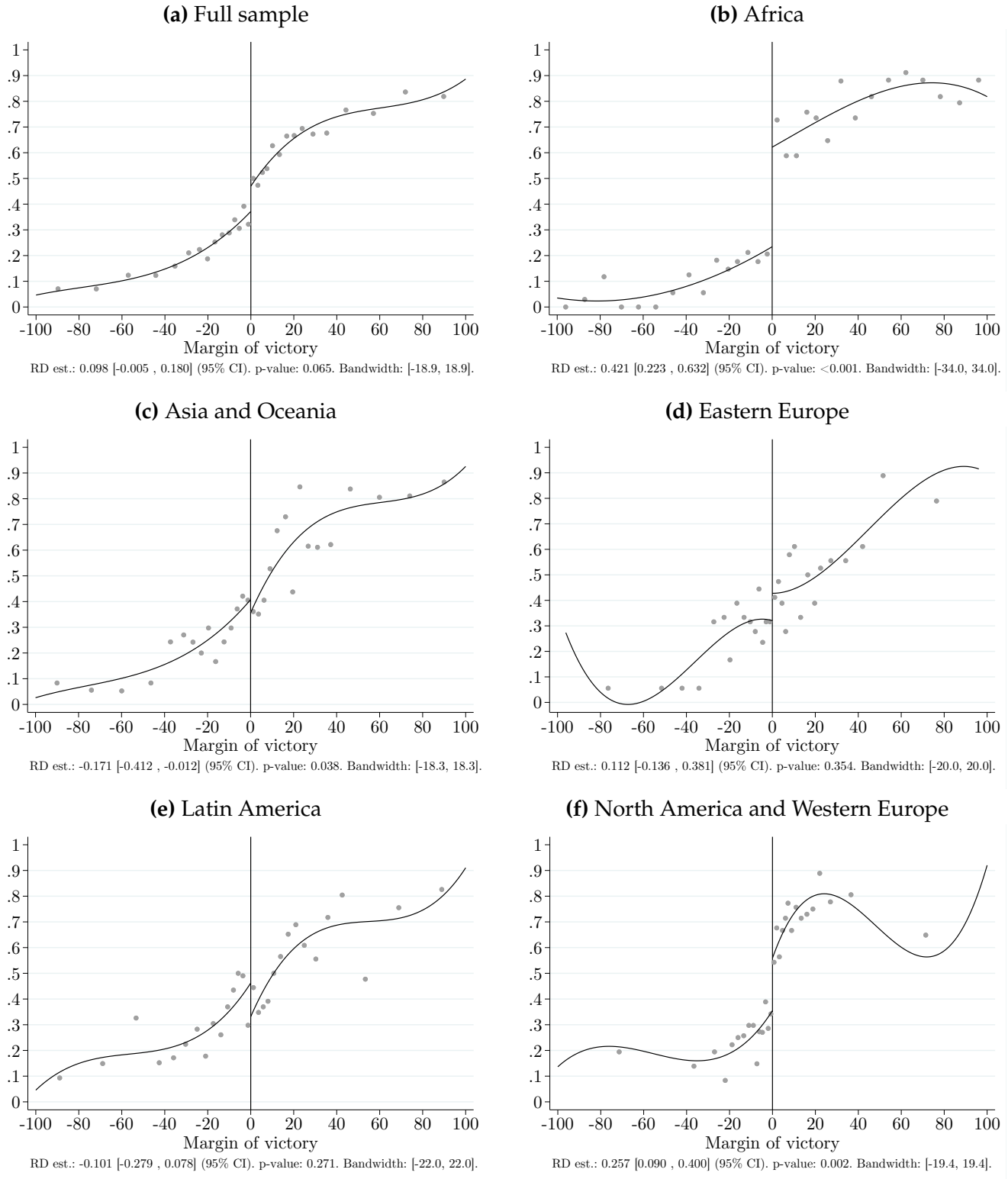
Notes: This figure shows RD estimates as well as 90% and 95% robust confidence intervals of the effect of winning a presidential election on the likelihood that the same individual is in power six months before the election date, in our global sample of elections and in various subsamples. The sample is restricted to candidates in presidential elections. Our empirical strategy is described in Section 4.1.

Figure D.4: Placebo tests: Effect of election victory on being in power one year and six months before the election, presidential candidates



Notes: This figure shows RD estimates as well as 90% and 95% robust confidence intervals of the effect of winning a presidential election on the likelihood that the same individual is in power one year and six months before the election date, in our global sample of elections and in various subsamples. The sample is restricted to candidates in presidential elections. Our empirical strategy is described in Section 4.1.

Figure D.5: Post-term incumbency advantage, RD plots



Notes: This figure presents RD plots of the effect of winning an election on the likelihood of being in power six months after the scheduled end of term, in our global sample of elections and in five geographical regions. The gray dots are sample means across 15 quantile-spaced bins on both sides of the threshold. Our empirical strategy is described in Section 4.1. At the bottom of each graph, we report the linear regression estimate from Calonico et al. (2020), with the robust confidence intervals in brackets, as well as the robust p-value and selected bandwidth.

Table D.1: Party-level power trajectories coefficients

	-2	-1	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Full sample	0.064	0.071	0.996***	0.962***	0.874***	0.740***	0.295***	0.129***	0.062	0.006	-0.041	0.001	-0.006
	(0.043)	(0.044)	(0.005)	(0.010)	(0.019)	(0.030)	(0.047)	(0.047)	(0.049)	(0.051)	(0.051)	(0.051)	(0.054)
Presidential elections	0.079	0.066	1.002***	0.987***	0.957***	0.918***	0.440***	0.156**	0.041	-0.015	0.032	0.082	0.057
	(0.077)	(0.076)	(0.002)	(0.012)	(0.020)	(0.033)	(0.067)	(0.077)	(0.081)	(0.082)	(0.084)	(0.087)	(0.089)
Parliamentary elections	0.057	0.063	0.996***	0.951***	0.840***	0.662***	0.212***	0.104	0.053	-0.009	-0.086*	-0.037	-0.030
	(0.053)	(0.053)	(0.005)	(0.014)	(0.024)	(0.038)	(0.058)	(0.059)	(0.061)	(0.063)	(0.061)	(0.059)	(0.062)
Democracies	0.009	0.007	0.995***	0.962***	0.877***	0.720***	0.270***	0.119**	0.051	0.008	-0.072	-0.071	-0.088*
	(0.053)	(0.054)	(0.006)	(0.012)	(0.023)	(0.037)	(0.052)	(0.058)	(0.059)	(0.061)	(0.059)	(0.062)	(0.062)
Autocracies	0.226***	0.245***	1.000***	0.944***	0.843***	0.783***	0.362***	0.170	0.126	-0.025	0.030	0.126*	0.207***
	(0.070)	(0.070)	(0.000)	(0.022)	(0.043)	(0.051)	(0.090)	(0.090)	(0.084)	(0.094)	(0.088)	(0.090)	(0.089)
High GDP p.c.	0.046	0.029	0.990***	0.958***	0.891***	0.767***	0.307***	0.174***	0.102	0.059	-0.032	-0.024	-0.075
	(0.060)	(0.062)	(0.008)	(0.013)	(0.027)	(0.039)	(0.057)	(0.064)	(0.065)	(0.066)	(0.066)	(0.066)	(0.071)
Low GDP p.c.	0.009	0.004	1.000***	0.968***	0.919***	0.801***	0.316***	0.089	0.001	-0.074	0.006	0.115	0.179**
	(0.075)	(0.072)	(0.001)	(0.015)	(0.032)	(0.045)	(0.071)	(0.081)	(0.080)	(0.086)	(0.081)	(0.082)	(0.085)
High corruption	-0.030	-0.014	1.000***	0.955***	0.840***	0.745***	0.319***	0.093	0.018	-0.022	-0.013	0.036	0.078
	(0.058)	(0.060)	(0.001)	(0.018)	(0.041)	(0.045)	(0.072)	(0.072)	(0.076)	(0.079)	(0.075)	(0.076)	(0.076)
Low corruption	0.055	0.025	0.990***	0.961***	0.880***	0.729***	0.275***	0.136**	0.071	-0.004	-0.090	-0.069	-0.096*
	(0.063)	(0.065)	(0.009)	(0.013)	(0.025)	(0.041)	(0.058)	(0.063)	(0.065)	(0.067)	(0.069)	(0.073)	(0.074)
OECD	0.086	0.055	1.000***	0.980***	0.882***	0.722***	0.286***	0.248***	0.157*	0.058	-0.065	-0.028	0.013
	(0.079)	(0.082)	(0.000)	(0.010)	(0.033)	(0.050)	(0.071)	(0.077)	(0.078)	(0.083)	(0.085)	(0.083)	(0.079)
Non-OECD	0.006	0.016	0.995***	0.954***	0.873***	0.749***	0.300***	0.055	0.003	-0.025	-0.018	0.022	0.004
	(0.046)	(0.048)	(0.007)	(0.014)	(0.024)	(0.039)	(0.058)	(0.058)	(0.060)	(0.060)	(0.057)	(0.058)	(0.063)
Western Europe and North America	0.075	0.096	1.000***	0.977***	0.933***	0.785***	0.358***	0.324***	0.204**	0.076	-0.049	-0.046	-0.023
	(0.090)	(0.088)	(0.000)	(0.011)	(0.038)	(0.048)	(0.079)	(0.081)	(0.078)	(0.088)	(0.088)	(0.089)	(0.091)
Africa	0.101	0.117	1.000***	0.951***	0.878***	0.804***	0.672***	0.395***	0.291***	0.174	0.076	0.140	0.065
	(0.103)	(0.098)	(0.001)	(0.028)	(0.050)	(0.069)	(0.088)	(0.095)	(0.102)	(0.111)	(0.119)	(0.118)	(0.122)
Latin America	-0.074	-0.061	1.000***	0.997***	0.891***	0.794***	0.149	-0.077	-0.116	-0.121	-0.013	-0.036	0.008
	(0.081)	(0.083)	(0.001)	(0.014)	(0.032)	(0.044)	(0.083)	(0.092)	(0.098)	(0.098)	(0.109)	(0.104)	(0.106)
Asia and Oceania	0.098	0.119	0.978***	0.921***	0.856***	0.592***	0.158	-0.082	-0.178**	-0.193**	-0.184**	-0.044	-0.094
	(0.090)	(0.093)	(0.021)	(0.035)	(0.048)	(0.067)	(0.102)	(0.095)	(0.102)	(0.101)	(0.100)	(0.099)	(0.106)
Eastern Europe	-0.019	-0.055	1.000***	0.945***	0.822***	0.689***	0.230**	0.080	0.176	0.197	0.159	0.176	0.161
	(0.117)	(0.119)	(0.000)	(0.030)	(0.060)	(0.100)	(0.122)	(0.134)	(0.134)	(0.140)	(0.133)	(0.143)	(0.136)
Free and fair elections	0.021	0.032	0.993***	0.959***	0.867***	0.709***	0.264***	0.088*	0.030	-0.028	-0.081*	-0.047	-0.060
	(0.047)	(0.049)	(0.007)	(0.011)	(0.021)	(0.038)	(0.052)	(0.054)	(0.056)	(0.057)	(0.058)	(0.057)	(0.061)
Not free and fair elections	0.288***	0.321***	1.000***	0.957***	0.875***	0.853***	0.529***	0.428***	0.261**	0.202*	0.153	0.221**	0.264**
	(0.089)	(0.089)	(0.001)	(0.028)	(0.047)	(0.047)	(0.095)	(0.087)	(0.097)	(0.102)	(0.107)	(0.113)	(0.109)

Notes: This table reports RD estimates and robust standard errors for β_τ as defined in equation (2), with $\tau \in [-2, 10]$. We report party-level estimates of the incumbency advantage in our global sample of elections and in various subsamples. Our empirical strategy is described in Section 4.1. * $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$.

Table D.2: Party-level post-term coefficients

	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3	4	5
Full sample	0.916***	0.871***	0.749***	0.098*	0.073	0.046	0.046	-0.007	-0.056
	(0.016)	(0.023)	(0.032)	(0.047)	(0.048)	(0.050)	(0.049)	(0.052)	(0.055)
Presidential elections	0.987***	0.924***	0.821***	0.065	0.046	-0.011	0.012	0.080	0.026
	(0.012)	(0.034)	(0.044)	(0.078)	(0.084)	(0.081)	(0.082)	(0.086)	(0.090)
Parliamentary elections	0.887***	0.846***	0.724***	0.090	0.077	0.051	0.039	-0.057	-0.092*
	(0.021)	(0.024)	(0.036)	(0.058)	(0.059)	(0.061)	(0.060)	(0.062)	(0.062)
Democracies	0.909***	0.876***	0.744***	0.072	0.060	0.050	0.050	-0.050	-0.117**
	(0.021)	(0.022)	(0.038)	(0.057)	(0.058)	(0.060)	(0.061)	(0.063)	(0.069)
Autocracies	0.932***	0.811***	0.717***	0.198**	0.119	0.031	0.048	0.083	0.083
	(0.032)	(0.052)	(0.053)	(0.083)	(0.087)	(0.088)	(0.090)	(0.088)	(0.091)
High GDP p.c.	0.883***	0.911***	0.773***	0.092	0.106*	0.101	0.086	0.012	-0.094
	(0.021)	(0.027)	(0.038)	(0.064)	(0.065)	(0.065)	(0.067)	(0.065)	(0.070)
Low GDP p.c.	0.970***	0.848***	0.771***	0.133*	0.012	-0.035	-0.012	0.079	0.111
	(0.023)	(0.047)	(0.049)	(0.066)	(0.080)	(0.081)	(0.082)	(0.082)	(0.081)
High corruption	0.924***	0.827***	0.728***	0.068	-0.004	-0.032	0.003	0.033	0.019
	(0.029)	(0.043)	(0.050)	(0.070)	(0.076)	(0.077)	(0.077)	(0.076)	(0.077)
Low corruption	0.902***	0.882***	0.746***	0.097	0.106	0.069	0.046	-0.057	-0.118**
	(0.022)	(0.024)	(0.041)	(0.062)	(0.064)	(0.066)	(0.065)	(0.072)	(0.072)
OECD	0.918***	0.875***	0.777***	0.194***	0.203***	0.150*	0.111	-0.007	-0.051
	(0.028)	(0.031)	(0.043)	(0.075)	(0.077)	(0.080)	(0.079)	(0.085)	(0.083)
Non-OECD	0.924***	0.864***	0.735***	0.038	-0.007	-0.021	-0.002	0.012	-0.035
	(0.021)	(0.030)	(0.041)	(0.058)	(0.059)	(0.061)	(0.059)	(0.059)	(0.060)
Western Europe and North America	0.881***	0.920***	0.797***	0.257***	0.278***	0.205**	0.156*	-0.024	-0.038
	(0.033)	(0.035)	(0.047)	(0.079)	(0.076)	(0.083)	(0.083)	(0.090)	(0.092)
Africa	0.889***	0.771***	0.758***	0.421***	0.298***	0.205*	0.204*	0.093	0.059
	(0.050)	(0.082)	(0.072)	(0.104)	(0.104)	(0.108)	(0.109)	(0.119)	(0.122)
Latin America	0.982***	0.879***	0.850***	-0.101	-0.118	-0.126	-0.081	-0.022	-0.063
	(0.020)	(0.033)	(0.036)	(0.091)	(0.093)	(0.101)	(0.103)	(0.106)	(0.103)
Asia and Oceania	0.943***	0.875***	0.635***	-0.171**	-0.176**	-0.198**	-0.148*	-0.120	-0.220**
	(0.037)	(0.043)	(0.073)	(0.102)	(0.104)	(0.105)	(0.096)	(0.097)	(0.104)
Eastern Europe	0.925***	0.833***	0.640***	0.112	0.080	0.203*	0.211	0.218*	0.098
	(0.035)	(0.067)	(0.098)	(0.132)	(0.134)	(0.131)	(0.142)	(0.140)	(0.138)
Free and fair elections	0.900***	0.870***	0.738***	0.061	0.041	0.022	0.024	-0.060	-0.100**
	(0.019)	(0.024)	(0.036)	(0.052)	(0.054)	(0.056)	(0.057)	(0.059)	(0.058)
Not free and fair elections	0.960***	0.857***	0.764***	0.382***	0.274***	0.160	0.140	0.252**	0.187*
	(0.031)	(0.053)	(0.060)	(0.087)	(0.096)	(0.106)	(0.107)	(0.114)	(0.119)

Notes: This table reports RD estimates and robust standard errors for $\beta_{\tilde{\tau}}$ as defined in equation (2), with $\tilde{\tau} \in [-3, 5]$. We report party-level estimates of the incumbency advantage in our global sample of elections and in various subsamples. Our empirical strategy is described in Section 4.1. * $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$.

Table D.3: Individual-level power trajectories coefficients

	-2	-1	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Full sample	0.058	0.072	0.978***	0.938***	0.866***	0.823***	0.412***	0.143**	0.059	0.014	0.030	0.032	0.021
	(0.050)	(0.054)	(0.019)	(0.028)	(0.035)	(0.042)	(0.059)	(0.059)	(0.061)	(0.063)	(0.054)	(0.051)	(0.047)
Democracies	0.045	0.016	0.966***	0.949***	0.890***	0.849***	0.453***	0.148*	0.054	0.066	0.082	0.072	0.053
	(0.078)	(0.080)	(0.026)	(0.033)	(0.051)	(0.055)	(0.082)	(0.084)	(0.081)	(0.088)	(0.080)	(0.079)	(0.082)
Autocracies	0.225**	0.262***	1.007***	0.894***	0.806***	0.761***	0.384***	0.228**	0.135	-0.013	-0.018	-0.007	0.014
	(0.091)	(0.094)	(0.015)	(0.058)	(0.067)	(0.080)	(0.103)	(0.095)	(0.096)	(0.101)	(0.095)	(0.083)	(0.082)
High GDP p.c.	0.072	0.046	0.965***	0.933***	0.862***	0.835***	0.548***	0.289***	0.185**	0.174*	0.184**	0.199**	0.099
	(0.084)	(0.087)	(0.031)	(0.039)	(0.056)	(0.050)	(0.081)	(0.110)	(0.106)	(0.110)	(0.097)	(0.095)	(0.082)
Low GDP p.c.	0.074	0.081	0.988***	0.930***	0.880***	0.815***	0.321***	0.081	-0.021	-0.085	-0.039	-0.034	0.014
	(0.082)	(0.083)	(0.027)	(0.050)	(0.050)	(0.066)	(0.092)	(0.101)	(0.096)	(0.093)	(0.090)	(0.084)	(0.069)
High corruption	0.035	0.071	1.003***	0.951***	0.816***	0.818***	0.362***	0.102	-0.015	-0.057	-0.042	-0.046	-0.024
	(0.065)	(0.072)	(0.004)	(0.039)	(0.062)	(0.067)	(0.087)	(0.088)	(0.084)	(0.079)	(0.080)	(0.072)	(0.065)
Low corruption	0.073	0.052	0.940***	0.917***	0.896***	0.824***	0.501***	0.312***	0.222**	0.094	0.134	0.130	0.079
	(0.077)	(0.080)	(0.041)	(0.043)	(0.047)	(0.062)	(0.089)	(0.118)	(0.113)	(0.110)	(0.090)	(0.089)	(0.081)
OECD	0.103	0.101	1.000***	1.000***	0.978***	0.978***	0.939***	0.805***	0.676***	0.410**	0.285*	0.240*	0.155
	(0.133)	(0.134)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.037)	(0.046)	(0.074)	(0.136)	(0.172)	(0.185)	(0.156)	(0.154)	(0.143)
Non-OECD	0.042	0.040	0.972***	0.923***	0.841***	0.791***	0.300***	0.015	-0.056	-0.081	-0.032	-0.017	-0.014
	(0.053)	(0.054)	(0.023)	(0.034)	(0.040)	(0.049)	(0.068)	(0.065)	(0.062)	(0.062)	(0.058)	(0.053)	(0.048)
Western Europe and North America	0.018	0.017	1.000***	1.000***	0.968***	0.968***	1.039***	0.968***	0.906***	0.511**	0.356*	0.271	0.179
	(0.155)	(0.154)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.062)	(0.071)	(0.076)	(0.103)	(0.136)	(0.247)	(0.207)	(0.182)	(0.200)
Africa	0.109	0.182	1.000***	0.873***	0.866***	0.732***	0.544***	0.298*	0.182	-0.054	-0.178	-0.016	-0.059
	(0.117)	(0.116)	(0.007)	(0.074)	(0.083)	(0.098)	(0.136)	(0.143)	(0.140)	(0.148)	(0.166)	(0.150)	(0.150)
Latin America	0.079	0.080	0.939***	0.918***	0.746***	0.751***	0.073	-0.064	-0.191**	-0.214***	0.071	-0.015	0.050
	(0.066)	(0.066)	(0.051)	(0.064)	(0.087)	(0.088)	(0.100)	(0.096)	(0.081)	(0.077)	(0.078)	(0.067)	(0.069)
Asia and Oceania	0.138	0.077	1.000***	1.010***	1.045***	0.915***	0.506***	0.205	0.096	0.102	0.012	-0.018	-0.023
	(0.136)	(0.147)	(0.000)	(0.013)	(0.028)	(0.074)	(0.126)	(0.135)	(0.128)	(0.126)	(0.114)	(0.099)	(0.080)
Eastern Europe	0.077	0.087	1.000***	1.000***	1.021***	1.039***	0.791***	0.073	0.101	0.276*	0.233	0.249*	0.072
	(0.265)	(0.271)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.026)	(0.037)	(0.176)	(0.176)	(0.173)	(0.178)	(0.184)	(0.163)	(0.130)
Free and fair elections	0.042	0.046	0.965***	0.947***	0.888***	0.853***	0.396***	0.161**	0.082	0.022	0.049	0.025	0.006
	(0.065)	(0.072)	(0.027)	(0.030)	(0.049)	(0.053)	(0.072)	(0.085)	(0.082)	(0.084)	(0.069)	(0.066)	(0.060)
Not free and fair elections	0.322**	0.351***	1.014***	0.877***	0.776***	0.764***	0.536***	0.333***	0.179	0.096	0.023	0.107	0.127
	(0.115)	(0.114)	(0.019)	(0.074)	(0.089)	(0.085)	(0.116)	(0.116)	(0.116)	(0.115)	(0.116)	(0.100)	(0.093)

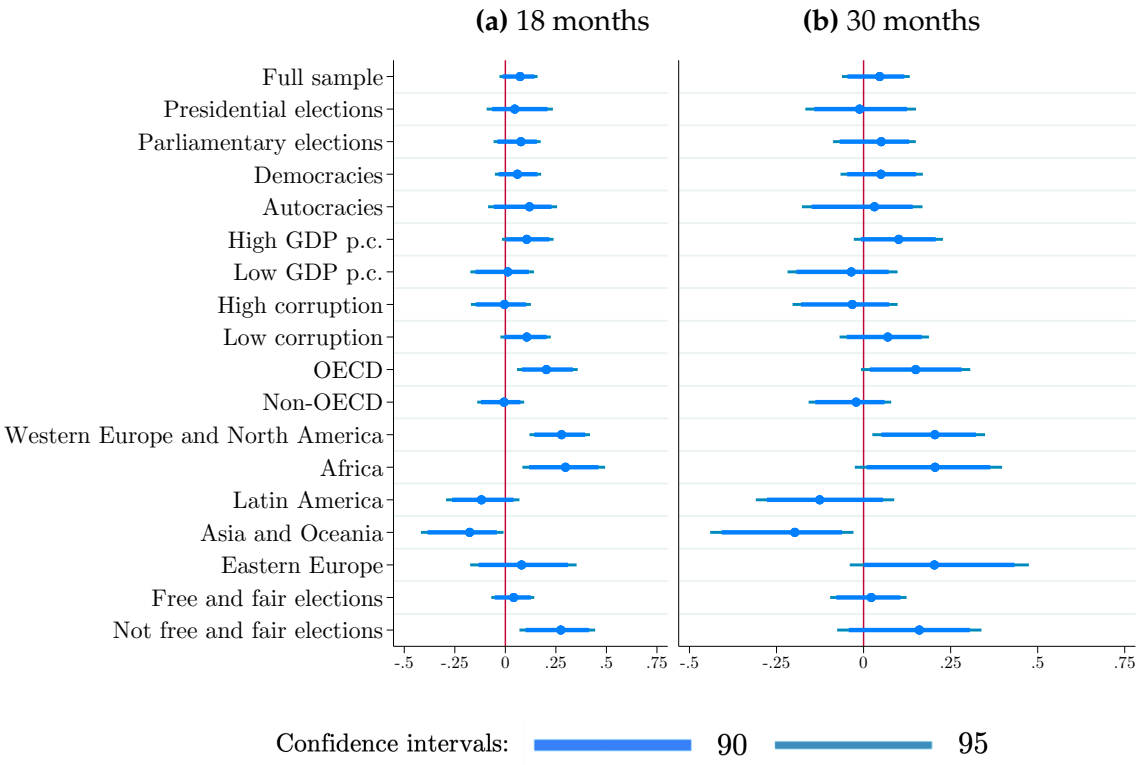
Notes: This table reports RD estimates and robust standard errors for β_τ as defined in equation (2), with $\tau \in [-2, 10]$. We report individual-level estimates of the incumbency advantage in our global sample of elections and in various subsamples. Our empirical strategy is described in Section 4.1. * $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$.

Table D.4: Individual-level post-term coefficients

	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3	4	5
Full sample	0.905***	0.815***	0.742***	0.104*	0.022	-0.009	-0.022	0.030	0.016
	(0.032)	(0.038)	(0.046)	(0.071)	(0.061)	(0.061)	(0.059)	(0.051)	(0.049)
Democracies	0.906***	0.880***	0.809***	0.070	0.013	-0.001	0.017	0.072	0.054
	(0.047)	(0.058)	(0.067)	(0.095)	(0.085)	(0.080)	(0.081)	(0.080)	(0.083)
Autocracies	0.886***	0.685***	0.590***	0.143	0.125	0.020	-0.069	0.006	-0.021
	(0.052)	(0.081)	(0.093)	(0.101)	(0.096)	(0.095)	(0.095)	(0.083)	(0.080)
High GDP p.c.	0.871***	0.856***	0.770***	0.121	0.116	0.117	0.156*	0.182**	0.045
	(0.048)	(0.052)	(0.066)	(0.108)	(0.108)	(0.108)	(0.101)	(0.091)	(0.076)
Low GDP p.c.	0.924***	0.770***	0.711***	0.025	-0.025	-0.066	-0.136*	-0.036	0.026
	(0.041)	(0.073)	(0.076)	(0.092)	(0.094)	(0.093)	(0.089)	(0.085)	(0.078)
High corruption	0.899***	0.781***	0.698***	0.019	-0.020	-0.060	-0.090	-0.043	-0.024
	(0.052)	(0.067)	(0.078)	(0.081)	(0.083)	(0.080)	(0.078)	(0.071)	(0.073)
Low corruption	0.897***	0.862***	0.786***	0.163*	0.147	0.072	0.059	0.130	0.077
	(0.052)	(0.069)	(0.074)	(0.122)	(0.114)	(0.108)	(0.102)	(0.090)	(0.079)
OECD	0.983***	1.033***	0.935***	0.419**	0.432**	0.352**	0.273*	0.236*	0.139
	(0.041)	(0.049)	(0.072)	(0.192)	(0.195)	(0.181)	(0.175)	(0.142)	(0.145)
Non-OECD	0.894***	0.789***	0.710***	-0.020	-0.057	-0.089	-0.100*	-0.023	-0.017
	(0.039)	(0.046)	(0.053)	(0.068)	(0.062)	(0.062)	(0.061)	(0.055)	(0.052)
Western Europe and North America	0.972***	0.975***	0.983***	0.522**	0.522**	0.429*	0.318	0.271	0.144
	(0.067)	(0.065)	(0.065)	(0.249)	(0.249)	(0.247)	(0.240)	(0.182)	(0.200)
Africa	0.852***	0.761***	0.668***	0.258	0.165	-0.040	-0.123	-0.026	-0.066
	(0.092)	(0.094)	(0.116)	(0.152)	(0.142)	(0.147)	(0.153)	(0.151)	(0.160)
Latin America	0.850***	0.705***	0.672***	-0.109	-0.123	-0.201**	-0.207***	0.053	0.002
	(0.074)	(0.093)	(0.095)	(0.086)	(0.085)	(0.076)	(0.076)	(0.075)	(0.060)
Asia and Oceania	1.025***	1.084***	0.797***	0.106	0.095	0.092	0.083	-0.022	-0.016
	(0.022)	(0.040)	(0.090)	(0.131)	(0.128)	(0.130)	(0.126)	(0.098)	(0.079)
Eastern Europe	1.013***	1.013***	0.837***	0.075	0.101	0.211	0.225	0.249*	0.072
	(0.015)	(0.024)	(0.162)	(0.180)	(0.173)	(0.191)	(0.178)	(0.163)	(0.130)
Free and fair elections	0.902***	0.826***	0.753***	0.085	0.035	-0.009	-0.031	0.027	0.016
	(0.045)	(0.046)	(0.055)	(0.090)	(0.082)	(0.079)	(0.074)	(0.066)	(0.060)
Not free and fair elections	0.877***	0.749***	0.680***	0.202	0.167	0.072	0.047	0.107	0.049
	(0.069)	(0.089)	(0.099)	(0.111)	(0.116)	(0.115)	(0.112)	(0.100)	(0.091)

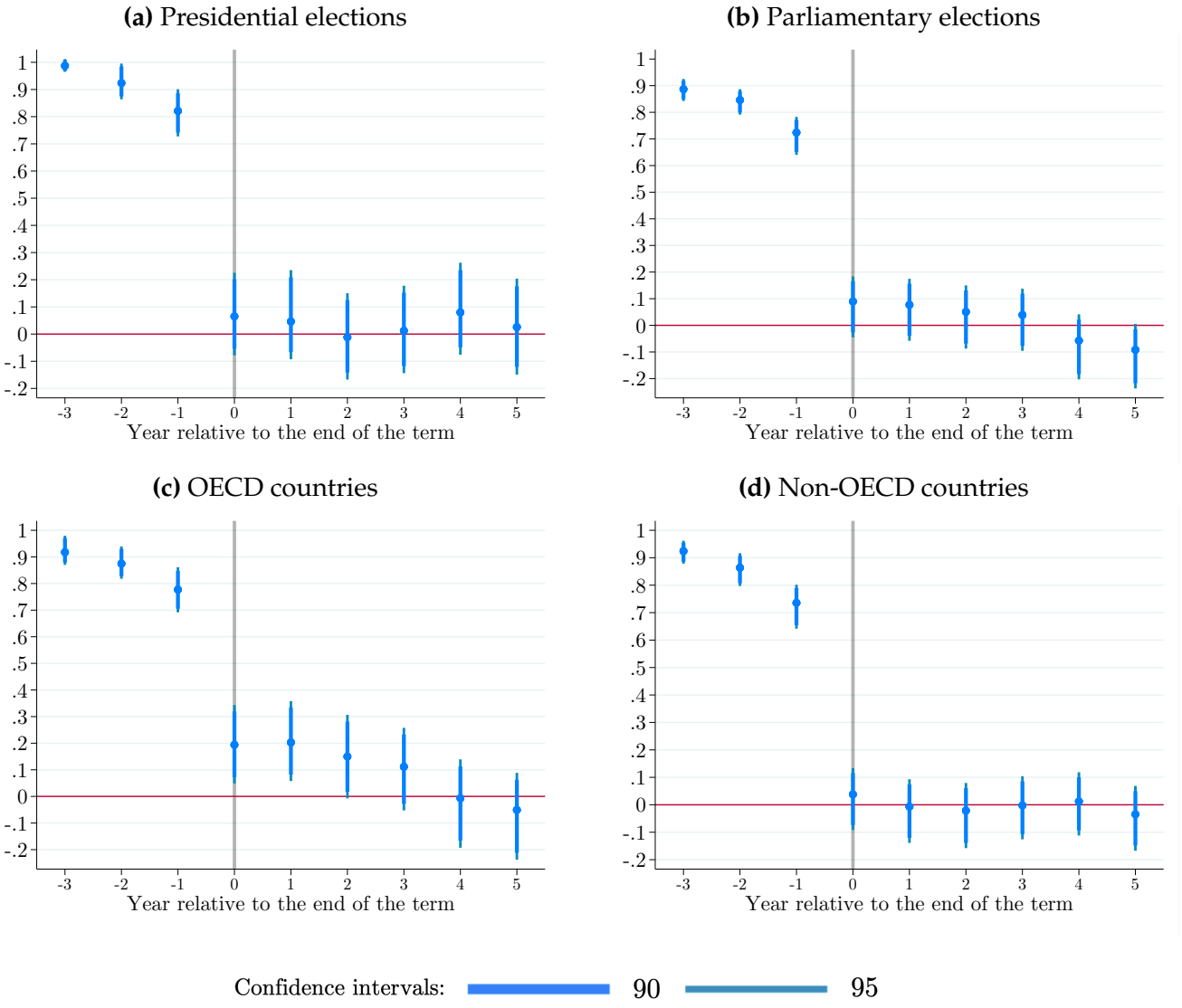
Notes: This table reports RD estimates and robust standard errors for $\beta_{\tilde{\tau}}$ as defined in equation (2), with $\tilde{\tau} \in [-3, 5]$. We report ndividual-level estimates of the incumbency advantage in our global sample of elections and in various subsamples. Our empirical strategy is described in Section 4.1. * $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$.

Figure D.6: Incumbency advantage on the likelihood of being in power 18 and 30 months after the scheduled end of term



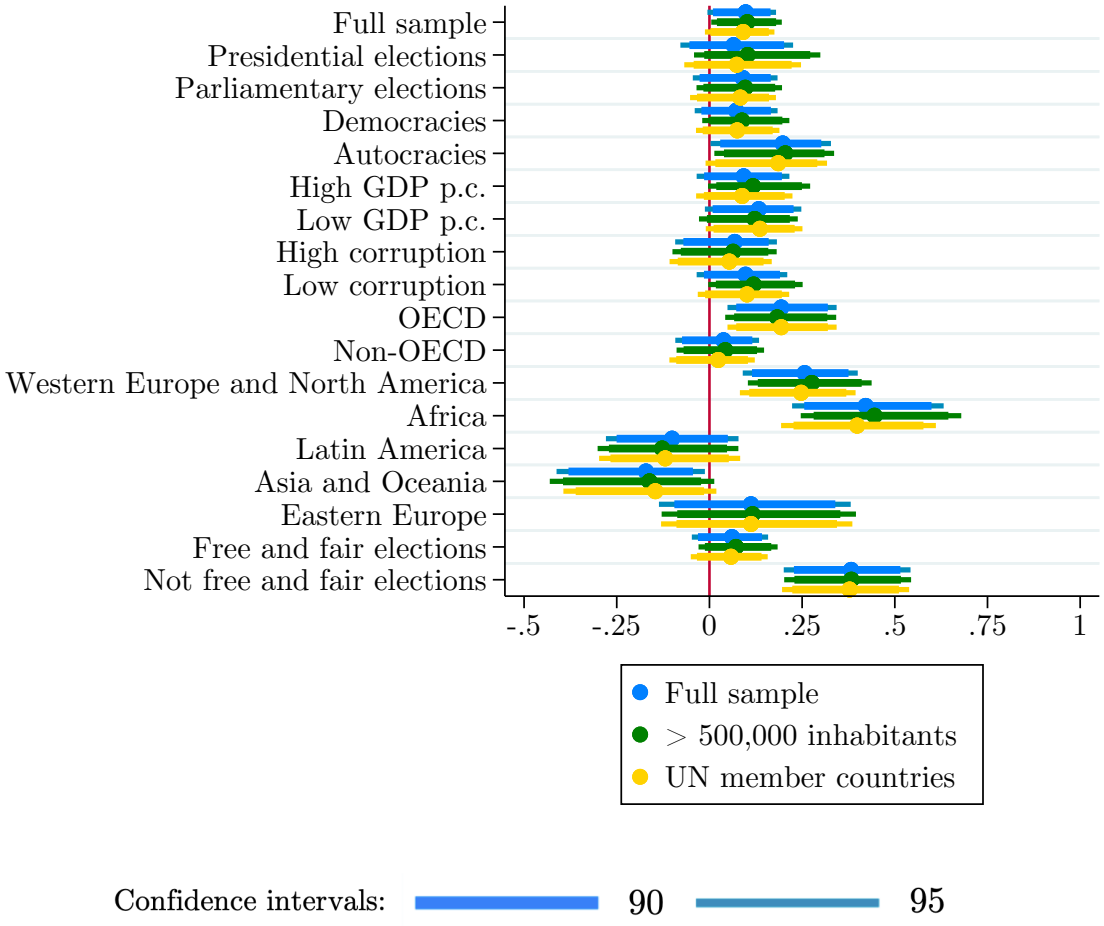
Notes: This figure plots RD estimates as well as 90% and 95% robust confidence intervals of the effect of winning an election on the likelihood of being in power 18 months (in panel (a)) or 30 months (in panel (b)) after the scheduled end of term, in our global sample of elections and in various subsamples. Our empirical strategy is described in Section 4.1.

Figure D.7: Post-term incumbency advantage, by subsample



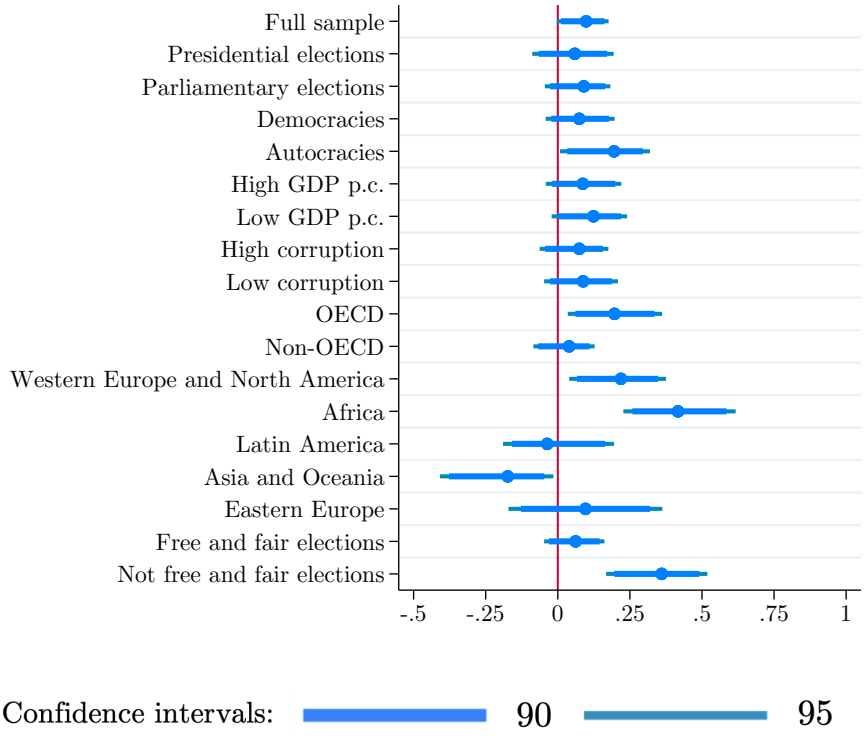
Notes: This figure reports RD point estimates as well as 90% and 95% robust confidence intervals for β_τ as defined in equation (2) in various subsamples. $\tilde{\tau} \in [-3, 5]$ is relative to the scheduled end of term.

Figure D.8: Post-term incumbency advantage, restricted sample of countries



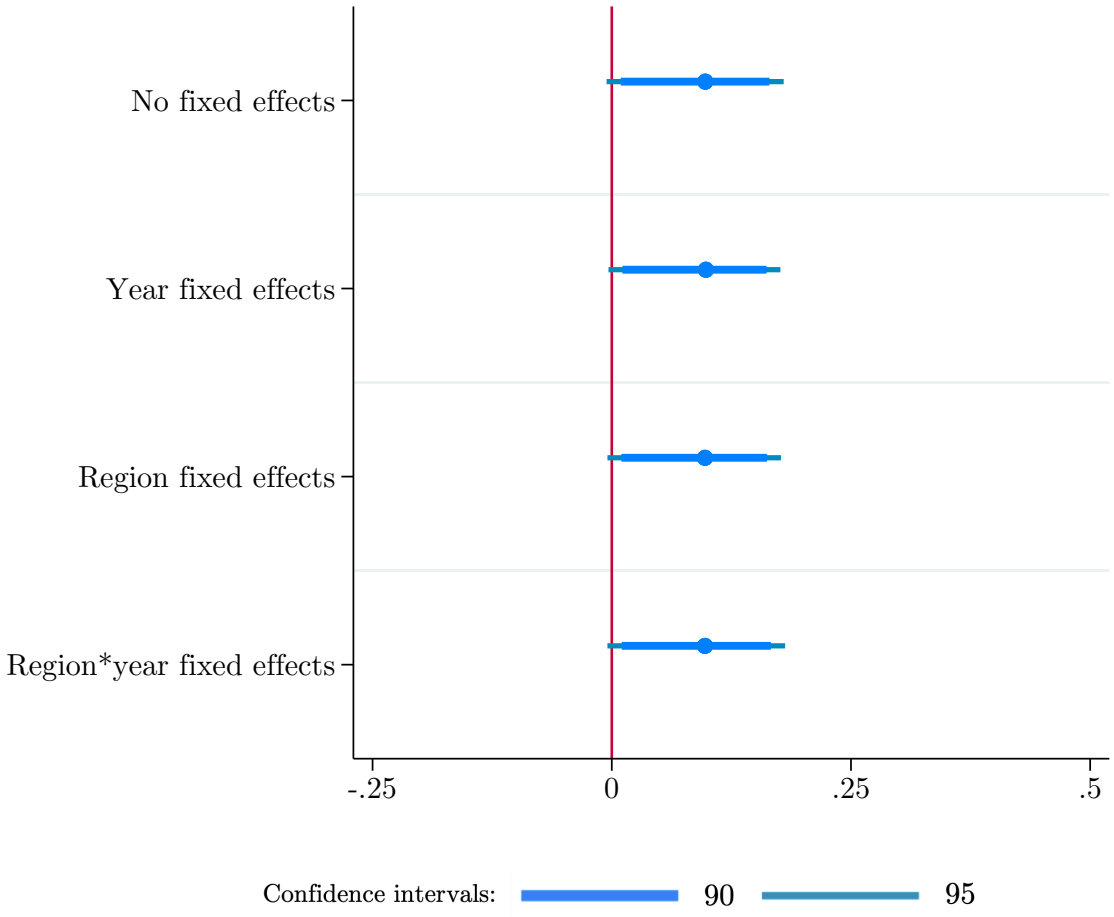
Notes: This figure plots RD estimates as well as 90% and 95% robust confidence intervals of the effect of winning an election on the likelihood of being in power six months after the scheduled end of term, in our global sample of elections and in various subsamples. We restrict the sample to countries with more than 500,000 inhabitants in 2010 (according to the World Bank) and to current UN member countries. The latter subsample includes former nations that were part of the UN before disappearing (e.g., Yugoslavia) but excludes countries that used to be part of the UN but no longer are (e.g., Taiwan) as well as observer states (e.g., Palestine). Our empirical strategy is described in Section 4.1.

Figure D.9: Post-term incumbency advantage, with election-year fixed effects



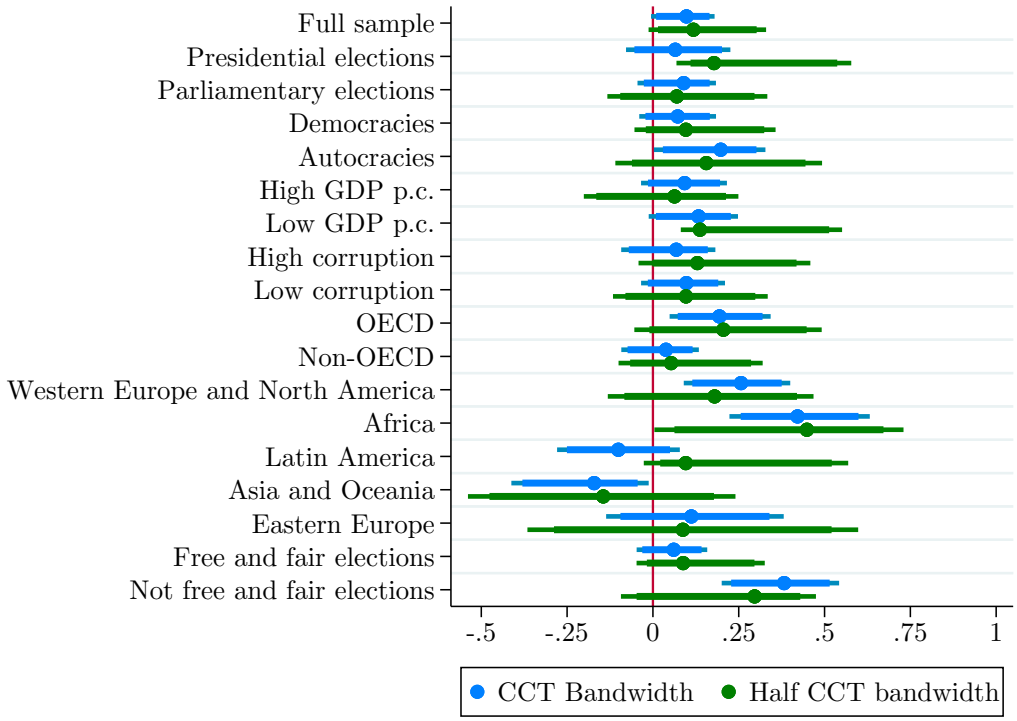
Notes: This figure plots RD estimates as well as 90%and 95% robust confidence intervals of the effect of winning an election on the likelihood of being in power six months after the scheduled end of term, in our global sample of elections and in various subsamples. We include fixed effects for the year in which the election was held. Our empirical strategy is described in Section 4.1.

Figure D.10: Post-term incumbency advantage, alternative fixed effects



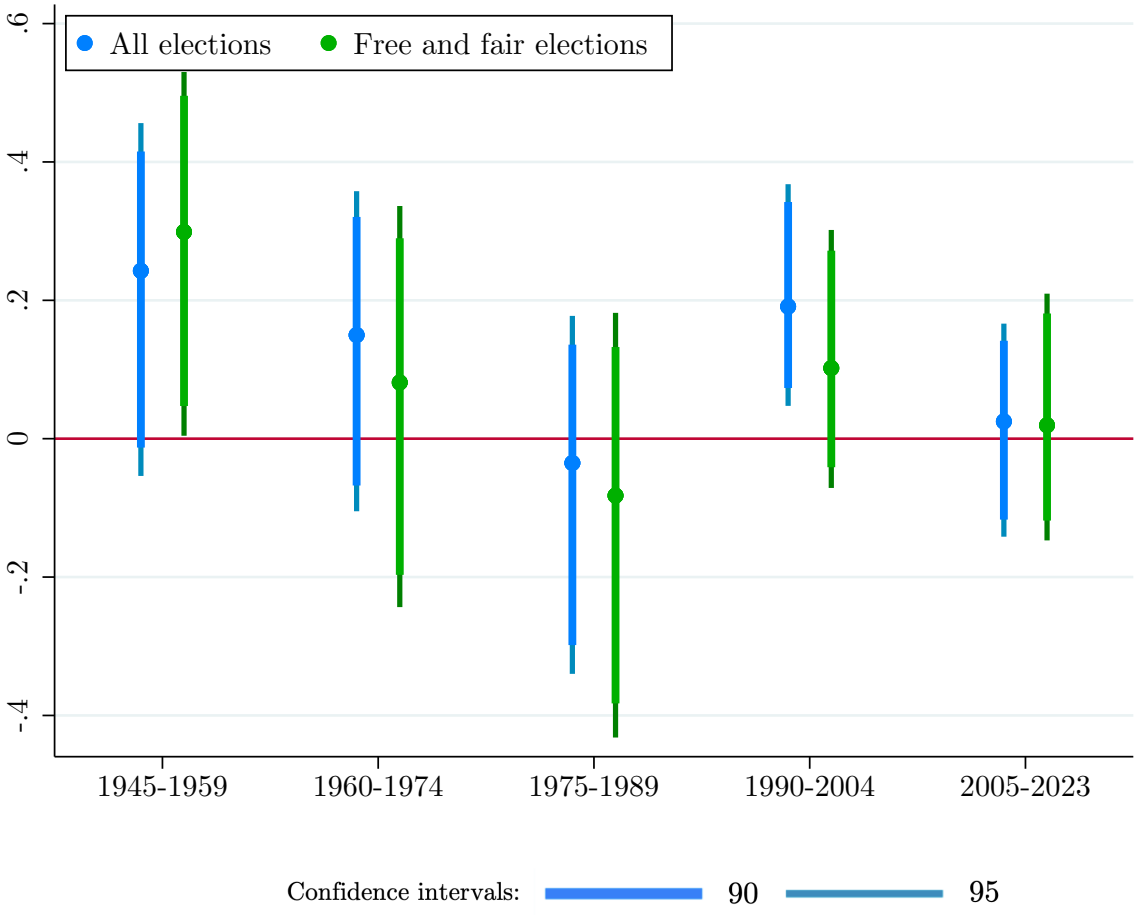
Notes: This figure plots RD estimates as well as 90% and 95% robust confidence intervals of the post-term incumbency advantage, including various fixed effects.

Figure D.11: Robustness to bandwidth selection



Notes: This figure reports the same results as in Figure 8, along with estimates computed using half of the optimal bandwidth selected by the procedure of Calonico et al. (2020).

Figure D.12: Incumbency advantage by time period



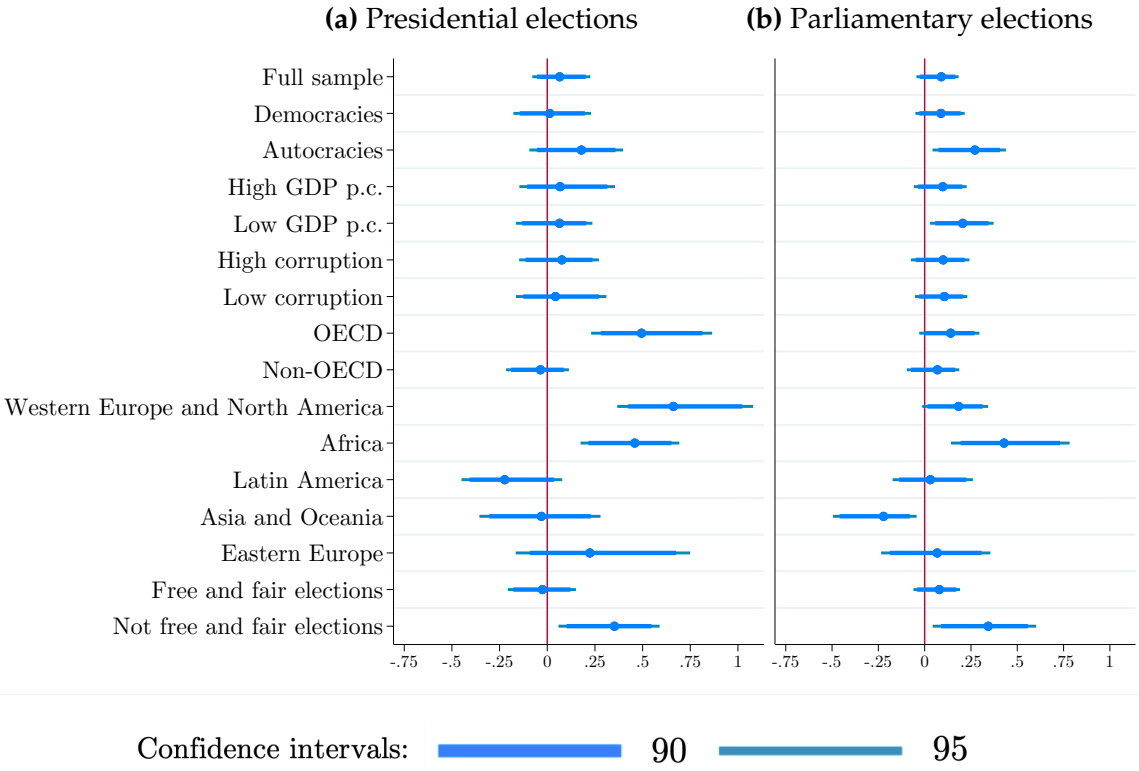
Notes: This figure plots RD estimates as well as 90% and 95% robust confidence intervals of the post-term incumbency advantage for different time periods. For each estimate, we show the incumbency advantage for the full sample of elections and the incumbency advantage for the subset of elections deemed free and fair by V-Dem.

Table D.5: Sample composition, by time period

	1945-1959	1960-1974	1975-1989	1990-2004	2005-2023
Number of elections	346	340	374	836	815
Share of presidential elections	15%	19%	22%	33%	34%
Share of elections deemed not free and fair	28%	28%	20%	24%	27%

Notes: This table reports summary statistics on the sample composition across five time periods.

Figure D.13: Post-term incumbency advantage, presidential vs. parliamentary elections



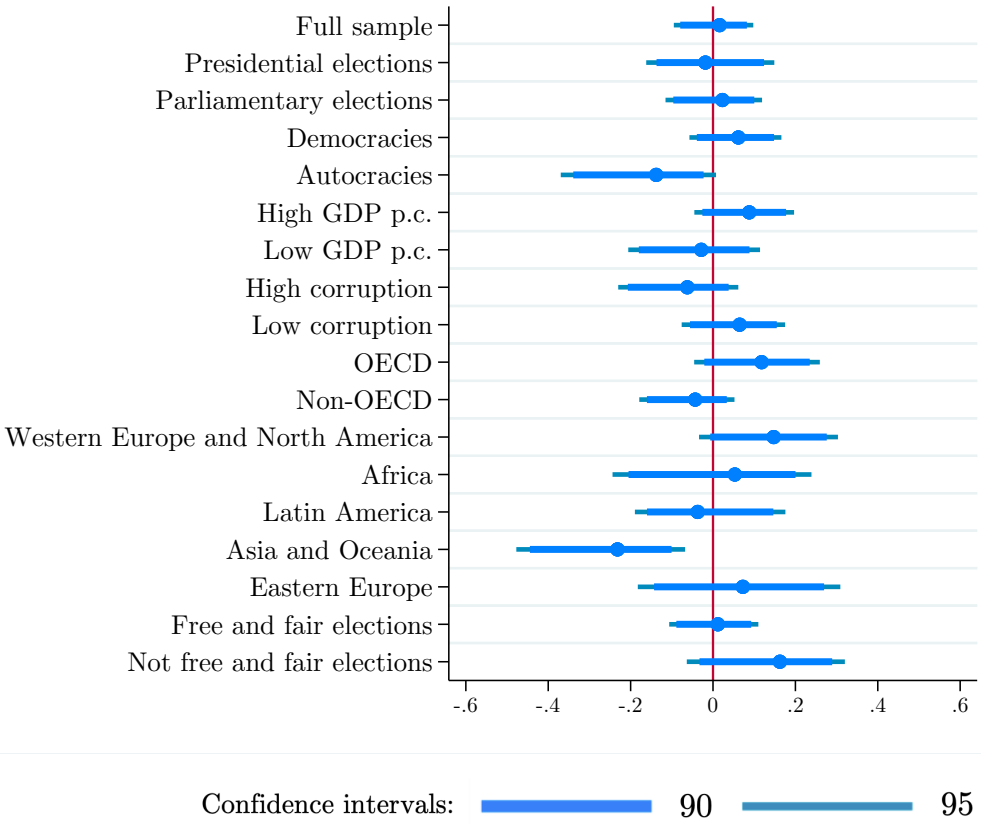
Notes: This figure plots RD estimates as well as 90% and 95% robust confidence intervals of the effect of winning an election on the likelihood of being in power six months after the scheduled end of term, in our global sample of elections and in various subsamples. We restrict the sample to presidential elections in panel (a) and to parliamentary elections in panel (b). Our empirical strategy is described in Section 4.1.

Table D.6: Next-election incumbency advantage, party-level estimates

	Est.	SE	p-val.
Full sample	0.006	(0.050)	[0.839]
Presidential elections	-0.038	(0.082)	[0.736]
Parliamentary elections	0.015	(0.060)	[0.891]
Democracies	0.055	(0.056)	[0.423]
Autocracies	-0.139*	(0.097)	[0.060]
High GDP p.c.	0.092	(0.061)	[0.187]
Low GDP p.c.	-0.072	(0.081)	[0.217]
High corruption	-0.068	(0.076)	[0.229]
Low corruption	0.053	(0.064)	[0.590]
OECD	0.135*	(0.072)	[0.075]
Non-OECD	-0.061	(0.062)	[0.175]
Western Europe and North America	0.209**	(0.075)	[0.011]
Africa	0.121	(0.109)	[0.477]
Latin America	-0.112	(0.095)	[0.262]
Asia and Oceania	-0.231**	(0.103)	[0.010]
Eastern Europe	0.089	(0.123)	[0.479]
Free and fair elections	-0.000	(0.055)	[0.791]
Not free and fair elections	0.148	(0.104)	[0.253]

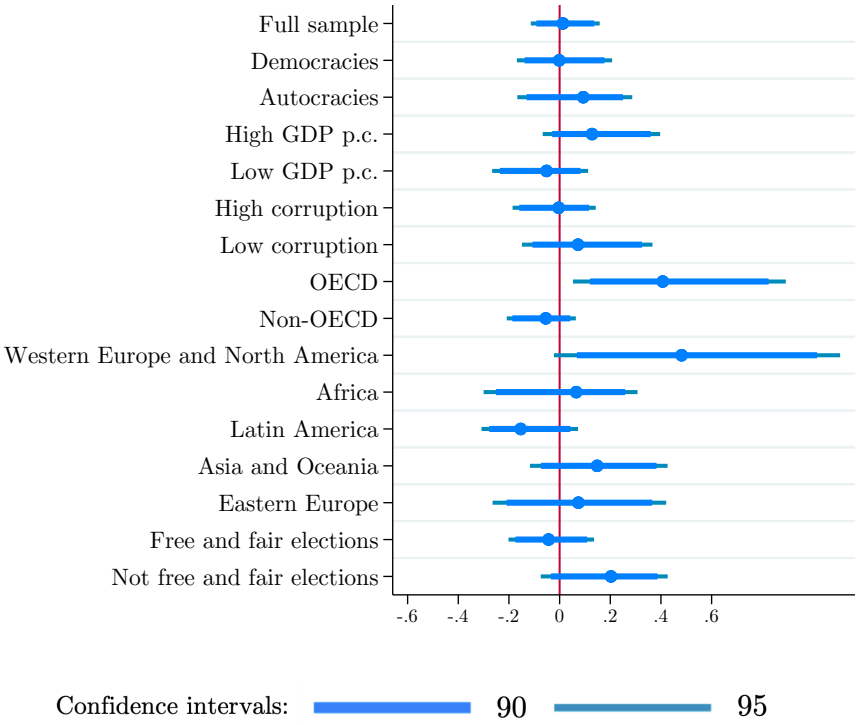
Notes: This table reports RD estimates as well as robust standard errors and robust p-values of the effect of winning an election on a party's joint likelihood of running in and winning the next election, in our global sample of elections and in various subsamples. Our empirical strategy is described in Section 4.2. * $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$.

Figure D.14: Next-election incumbency advantage, with election-year fixed effects



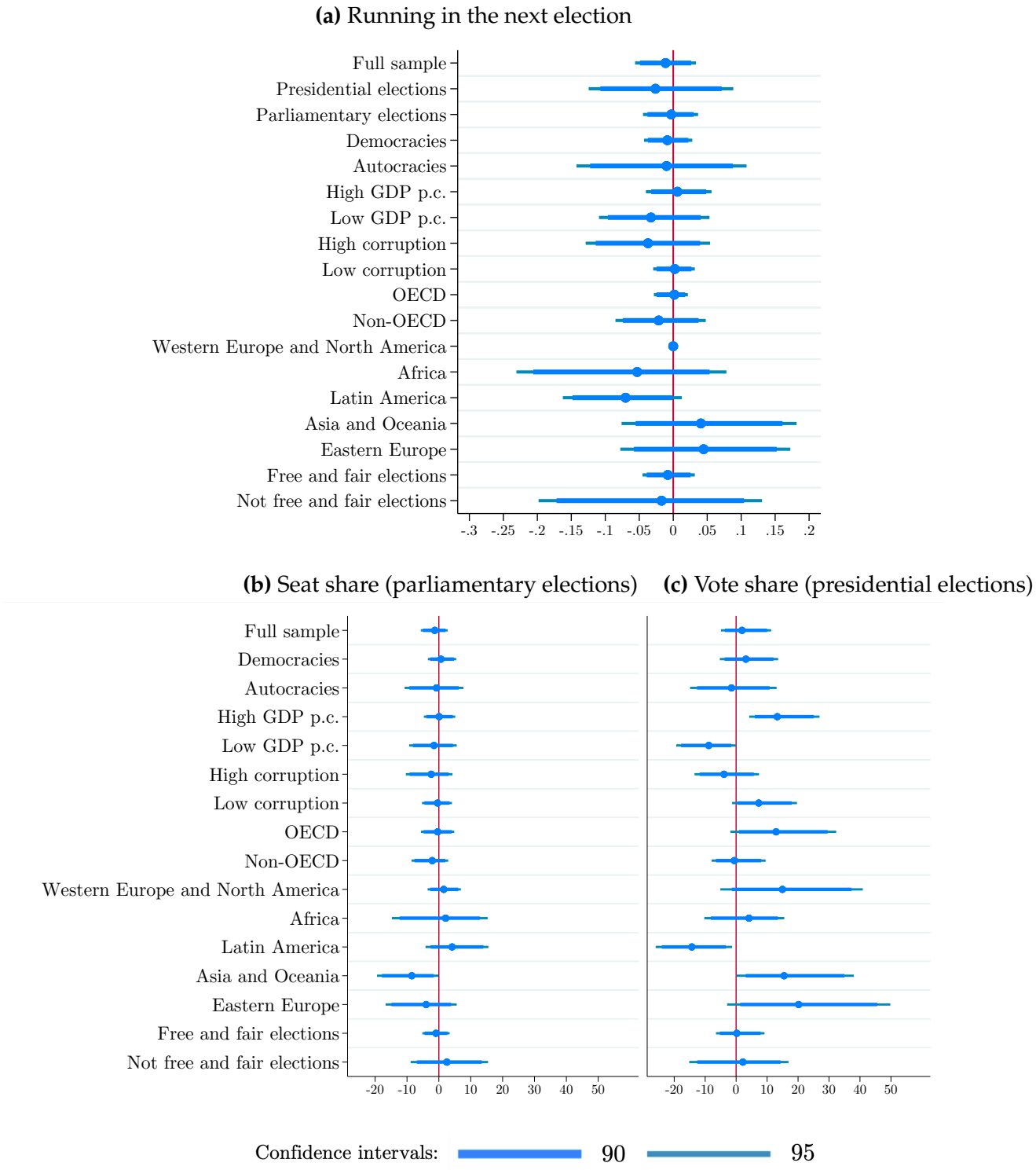
Notes: This figure plots RD estimates as well as 90% and 95% robust confidence intervals of the effect of winning an election on a party's joint likelihood of running in and winning the next election, in our global sample of elections and in various subsamples. We include fixed effects for the year in which the election was held. Our empirical strategy is described in Section 4.2.

Figure D.15: Next-election incumbency advantage, individual-level estimates in presidential elections



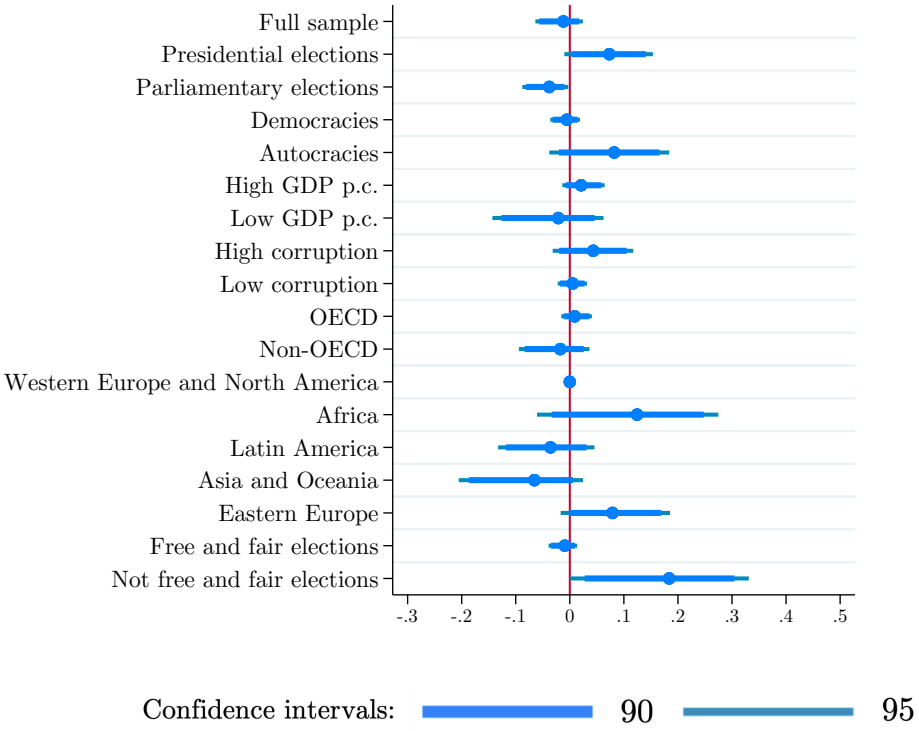
Notes: This figure plots RD estimates as well as 90% and 95% robust confidence intervals of individual-level estimates of the next-election incumbency advantage in presidential elections, in our global sample of elections and in various subsamples. Our empirical strategy is described in Section 4.2.

Figure D.16: Complementary measures of the next-election incumbency advantage



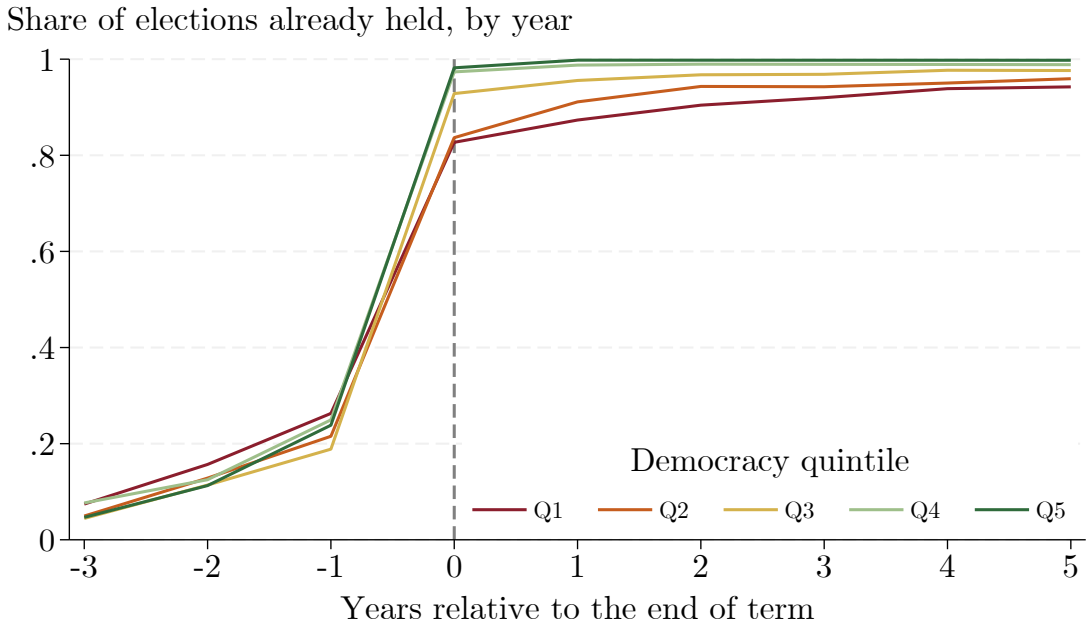
Notes: This figure plots RD estimates as well as 90% and 95% robust confidence intervals of the effects of winning an election on a party's likelihood of running again in the next election (panel a), on its seat share in parliamentary elections (panel b), or its vote share in presidential elections (panel c) in our global sample of elections and in various subsamples. Our empirical strategy is described in Section 4.2.

Figure D.17: Next-election incumbency advantage, non free and fair elections



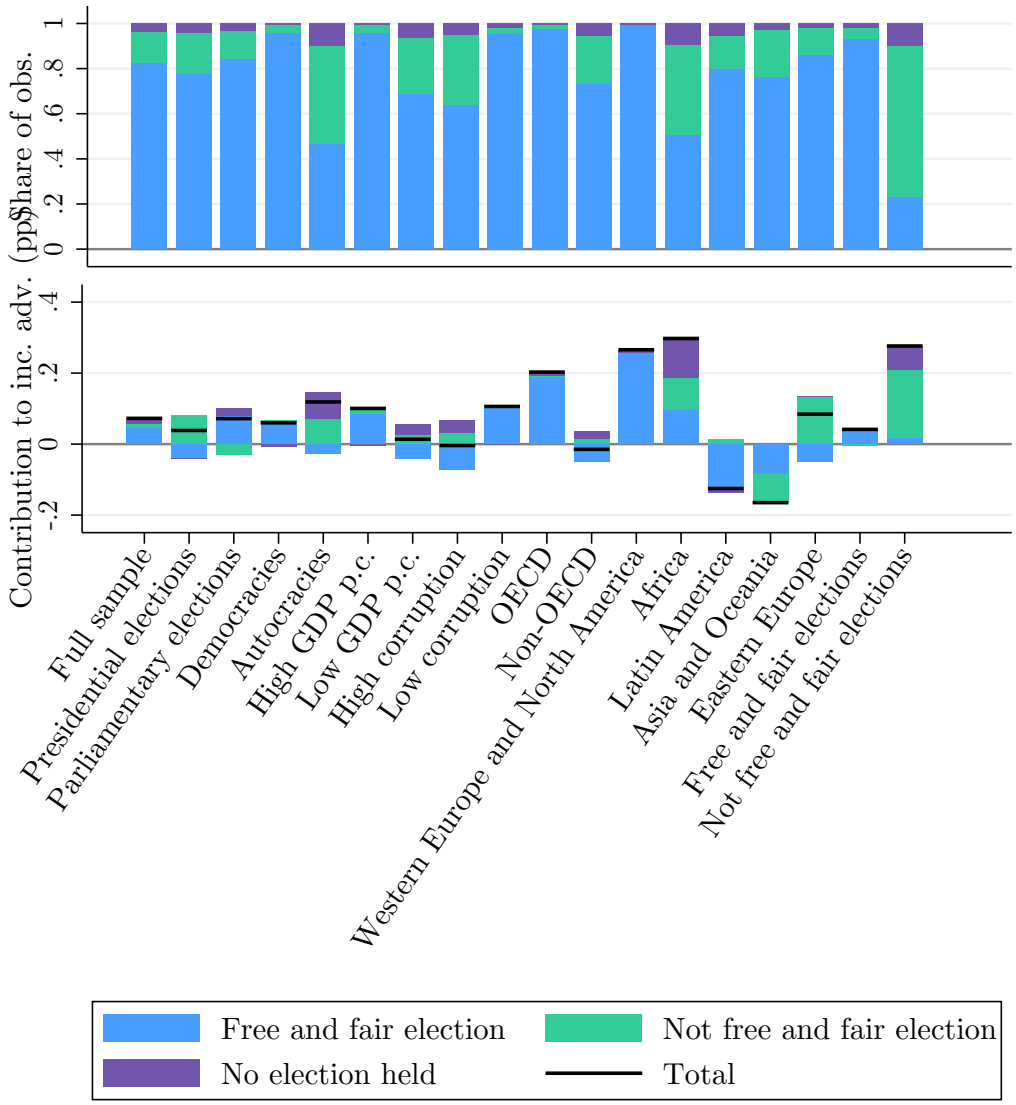
Notes: This figure plots RD estimates as well as 90% and 95% robust confidence intervals of the effect of winning an election on a party's joint likelihood of winning the next election and the next election being coded as not free and fair, in our global sample of elections and in various subsamples. Our empirical strategy is described in Section 4.2.

Figure D.18: Timing of subsequent elections by democracy quintile



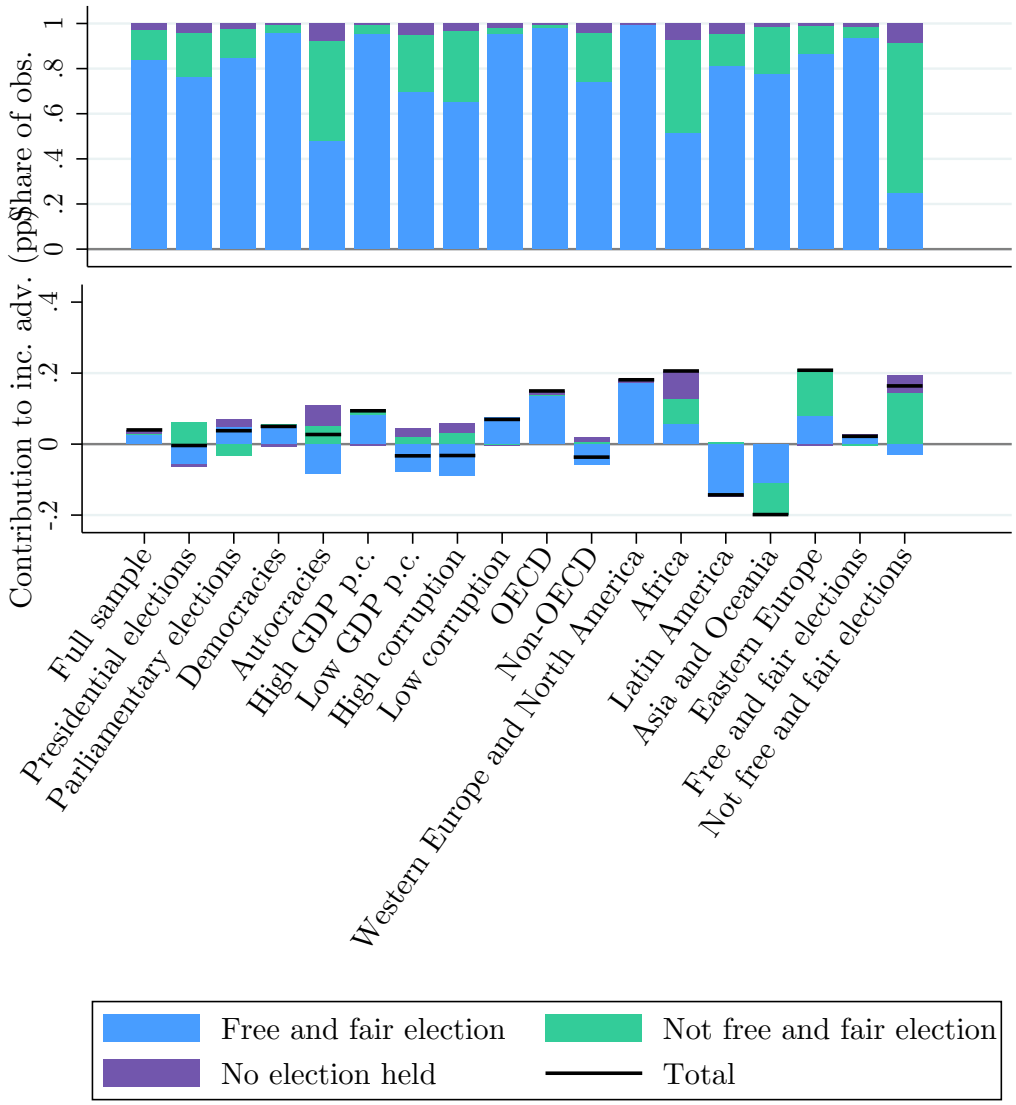
Notes: This graph reports the share of elections that were followed by another election $\tilde{\tau}$ years relative to the planned end of term, with $\tilde{\tau} \in [-3, 5]$ for different quintiles of a democracy index (extracted from V-Dem). Democracy levels are measured as an average of V-Dem's five corresponding variables: deliberative, egalitarian, liberal, participatory, and electoral democracy. The discussion in Section 6.2 distinguishes between subsequent elections held on schedule (within six months of the constitutionally planned end of term), subsequent elections held early (more than six months before the end of term), and subsequent elections held late (more than six months after the end of term) or not at all. In the bottom quintile of democratic quality, 26% of subsequent elections were held early (corresponding to the value of the series at -1), 56% of subsequent elections were held on schedule (the difference between the value at -1 and at 0), and 17% of subsequent elections were held late or not at all (1 minus the value at 0). In the top quintile of democratic quality, 74% were held on schedule, 24% were held early, and 2% of were held late or not at all.

Figure D.19: Decomposition of the incumbency advantage on the likelihood of being in power 18 months after the scheduled end of term



Notes: This figure reports the same exercise as Figure 8, but for overall post-term incumbency effects—measured 18 months after the constitutionally planned end of the term.

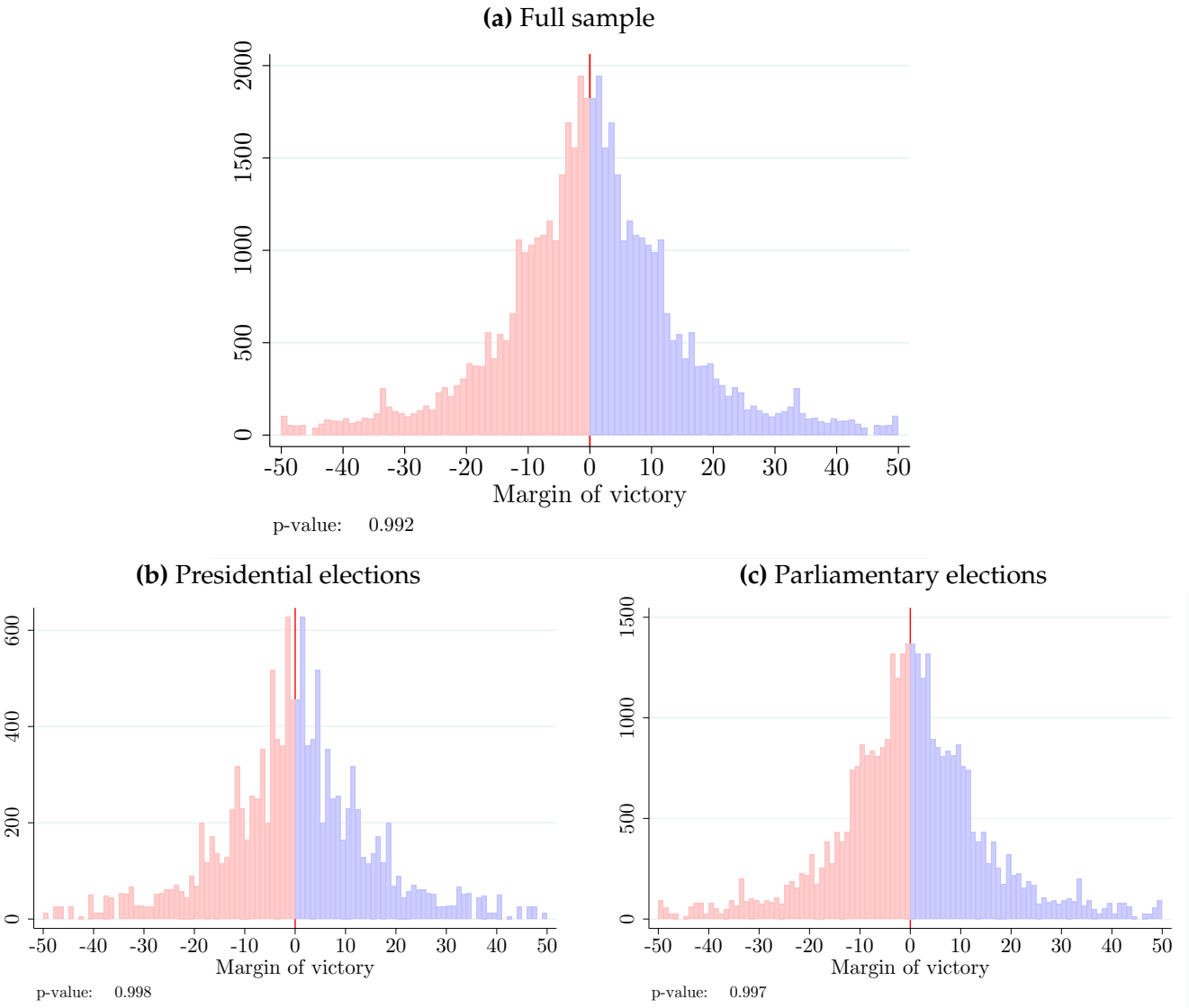
Figure D.20: Decomposition of the incumbency advantage on the likelihood of being in power 30 months after the scheduled end of term



Notes: This figure reports the same exercise as Figure 8, but for overall post-term incumbency effects—measured 30 months after the constitutionally planned end of the term.

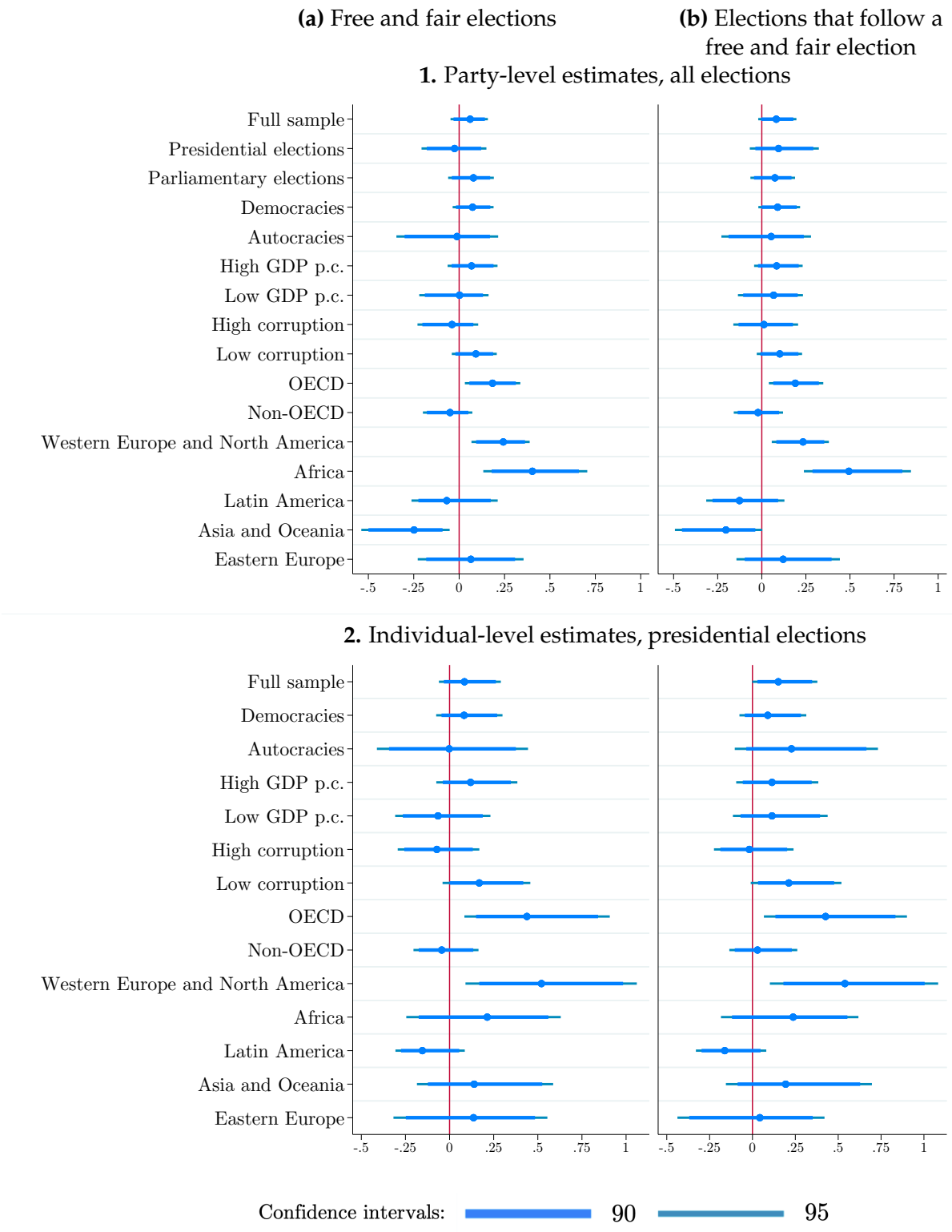
E Robustness to restricting the sample to free and fair elections

Figure E.1: Density tests, free and fair elections



Notes: This figure reports the same exercise as Figure D.1, but for elections classified as free and fair by V-Dem.

Figure E.2: Post-term incumbency advantage, free and fair elections



Notes: This figure reports the same exercise as Figure 6, but for elections classified as free and fair by V-Dem (panel (a)), and elections that follow an election classified as free and fair (panel (b)).

Table E.1: Party-level power trajectories coefficients, free and fair elections

	-2	-1	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Full sample	0.021	0.032	0.993***	0.959***	0.867***	0.709***	0.264***	0.088*	0.030	-0.028	-0.081*	-0.047	-0.060
	(0.047)	(0.049)	(0.007)	(0.011)	(0.021)	(0.038)	(0.052)	(0.054)	(0.056)	(0.057)	(0.058)	(0.057)	(0.061)
Presidential elections	-0.064	-0.076	1.000***	1.000***	1.015***	0.962***	0.432***	0.075	-0.019	-0.074	0.022	0.044	-0.004
	(0.088)	(0.087)	(0.000)	(0.001)	(0.008)	(0.039)	(0.077)	(0.089)	(0.094)	(0.092)	(0.095)	(0.099)	(0.102)
Parliamentary elections	0.048	0.055	0.994***	0.944***	0.821***	0.618***	0.189***	0.083	0.034	-0.026	-0.125**	-0.098*	-0.081
	(0.057)	(0.059)	(0.007)	(0.015)	(0.028)	(0.047)	(0.063)	(0.064)	(0.068)	(0.069)	(0.068)	(0.069)	(0.070)
Democracies	0.009	0.008	0.995***	0.962***	0.876***	0.719***	0.272***	0.124**	0.051	0.005	-0.073	-0.070	-0.086*
	(0.053)	(0.054)	(0.006)	(0.012)	(0.023)	(0.037)	(0.051)	(0.059)	(0.060)	(0.061)	(0.059)	(0.061)	(0.062)
Autocracies	0.149	0.130	1.000***	0.926***	0.801***	0.671***	0.174	-0.133	-0.067	-0.284**	-0.100	0.012	0.160
	(0.152)	(0.129)	(0.001)	(0.035)	(0.072)	(0.119)	(0.154)	(0.154)	(0.140)	(0.152)	(0.140)	(0.137)	(0.142)
High GDP p.c.	0.028	0.011	0.989***	0.955***	0.886***	0.751***	0.292***	0.150**	0.081	0.044	-0.054	-0.049	-0.090
	(0.062)	(0.063)	(0.009)	(0.014)	(0.032)	(0.044)	(0.063)	(0.073)	(0.071)	(0.072)	(0.071)	(0.069)	(0.070)
Low GDP p.c.	-0.063	-0.080	1.000***	1.029***	0.922***	0.746***	0.213*	-0.017	-0.104	-0.172*	-0.051	0.020	0.102
	(0.094)	(0.087)	(0.000)	(0.012)	(0.036)	(0.070)	(0.096)	(0.101)	(0.104)	(0.108)	(0.099)	(0.097)	(0.101)
High corruption	-0.035	-0.067	1.003***	0.958***	0.845***	0.703***	0.266***	-0.017	-0.053	-0.094	-0.073	-0.053	0.008
	(0.094)	(0.083)	(0.003)	(0.021)	(0.053)	(0.068)	(0.090)	(0.089)	(0.093)	(0.097)	(0.085)	(0.085)	(0.087)
Low corruption	0.038	0.008	0.989***	0.960***	0.875***	0.718***	0.261***	0.123*	0.055	-0.009	-0.099*	-0.082	-0.111*
	(0.064)	(0.066)	(0.009)	(0.014)	(0.025)	(0.042)	(0.058)	(0.065)	(0.067)	(0.069)	(0.071)	(0.074)	(0.075)
OECD	0.074	0.044	1.000***	0.986***	0.885***	0.721***	0.280***	0.245***	0.151*	0.056	-0.070	-0.033	-0.009
	(0.080)	(0.083)	(0.000)	(0.010)	(0.036)	(0.051)	(0.075)	(0.082)	(0.078)	(0.084)	(0.085)	(0.080)	(0.085)
Non-OECD	-0.091	-0.076	0.989***	0.944***	0.865***	0.686***	0.248***	-0.045	-0.076	-0.099	-0.065	-0.042	-0.084
	(0.057)	(0.056)	(0.011)	(0.017)	(0.032)	(0.056)	(0.069)	(0.072)	(0.074)	(0.074)	(0.068)	(0.070)	(0.079)
Western Europe and North America	0.025	0.039	1.000***	0.976***	0.928***	0.774***	0.344***	0.292***	0.182**	0.049	-0.070	-0.061	-0.024
	(0.093)	(0.092)	(0.000)	(0.012)	(0.040)	(0.051)	(0.081)	(0.085)	(0.082)	(0.093)	(0.093)	(0.091)	(0.089)
Africa	0.100	0.054	1.000***	0.981***	0.818***	0.710***	0.569***	0.275	0.190	0.051	-0.059	-0.088	-0.192
	(0.144)	(0.139)	(0.000)	(0.017)	(0.093)	(0.124)	(0.135)	(0.155)	(0.162)	(0.171)	(0.176)	(0.172)	(0.161)
Latin America	-0.169*	-0.119	1.003***	1.001***	0.967***	0.808***	0.101	-0.054	-0.212**	-0.216**	-0.101	-0.076	-0.045
	(0.094)	(0.099)	(0.004)	(0.021)	(0.041)	(0.051)	(0.100)	(0.121)	(0.100)	(0.102)	(0.101)	(0.102)	(0.127)
Asia and Oceania	0.039	0.069	0.963***	0.903***	0.819***	0.502***	0.143	-0.181*	-0.203*	-0.251**	-0.268***	-0.073	-0.125
	(0.103)	(0.103)	(0.032)	(0.044)	(0.062)	(0.093)	(0.123)	(0.123)	(0.124)	(0.123)	(0.119)	(0.116)	(0.130)
Eastern Europe	-0.078	-0.107	1.000***	0.939***	0.788***	0.616***	0.211	0.046	0.143	0.148	0.088	0.083	0.057
	(0.139)	(0.127)	(0.000)	(0.034)	(0.078)	(0.114)	(0.133)	(0.149)	(0.147)	(0.154)	(0.145)	(0.156)	(0.183)

Notes: This table reports RD estimates and robust standard errors for β_τ as defined in equation (2), with $\tau \in [-2, 10]$. We report party-level estimates of the incumbency advantage in our global sample of elections and in various subsamples, for elections classified as free and fair by V-Dem. Our empirical strategy is described in Section 4.1. * $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$.

Table E.2: Party-level post-term coefficients, free and fair elections

	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3	4	5
Full sample	0.900***	0.870***	0.738***	0.061	0.041	0.022	0.024	-0.060	-0.100**
	(0.019)	(0.024)	(0.036)	(0.052)	(0.054)	(0.056)	(0.057)	(0.059)	(0.058)
Presidential elections	1.000***	0.984***	0.846***	-0.025	-0.060	-0.053	-0.025	0.044	0.005
	(0.002)	(0.032)	(0.051)	(0.091)	(0.092)	(0.090)	(0.091)	(0.098)	(0.101)
Parliamentary elections	0.863***	0.837***	0.702***	0.079	0.067	0.037	0.018	-0.108*	-0.131**
	(0.025)	(0.028)	(0.044)	(0.064)	(0.065)	(0.067)	(0.068)	(0.070)	(0.066)
Democracies	0.909***	0.875***	0.746***	0.074	0.061	0.050	0.049	-0.051	-0.116**
	(0.021)	(0.022)	(0.037)	(0.058)	(0.059)	(0.061)	(0.062)	(0.062)	(0.069)
Autocracies	0.875***	0.781***	0.672***	-0.012	-0.071	-0.133	-0.060	-0.097	-0.027
	(0.071)	(0.084)	(0.094)	(0.143)	(0.143)	(0.138)	(0.144)	(0.130)	(0.131)
High GDP p.c.	0.884***	0.906***	0.752***	0.068	0.090	0.087	0.077	-0.015	-0.112**
	(0.025)	(0.031)	(0.043)	(0.070)	(0.072)	(0.071)	(0.073)	(0.070)	(0.068)
Low GDP p.c.	0.976***	0.876***	0.816***	0.002	-0.120	-0.127	-0.078	-0.035	0.038
	(0.023)	(0.051)	(0.056)	(0.097)	(0.101)	(0.101)	(0.104)	(0.099)	(0.096)
High corruption	0.909***	0.845***	0.743***	-0.039	-0.103	-0.100	-0.038	-0.055	-0.026
	(0.041)	(0.048)	(0.056)	(0.085)	(0.091)	(0.091)	(0.096)	(0.084)	(0.086)
Low corruption	0.902***	0.878***	0.738***	0.092	0.094	0.064	0.042	-0.071	-0.134**
	(0.024)	(0.024)	(0.043)	(0.063)	(0.065)	(0.067)	(0.067)	(0.074)	(0.073)
OECD	0.926***	0.883***	0.775***	0.184**	0.196***	0.149*	0.110	-0.014	-0.058
	(0.029)	(0.035)	(0.043)	(0.078)	(0.077)	(0.083)	(0.083)	(0.085)	(0.084)
Non-OECD	0.900***	0.865***	0.712***	-0.050	-0.091	-0.087	-0.054	-0.064	-0.074
	(0.029)	(0.036)	(0.052)	(0.069)	(0.072)	(0.074)	(0.073)	(0.069)	(0.066)
Western Europe and North America	0.882***	0.915***	0.783***	0.243***	0.267***	0.180*	0.131	-0.039	-0.048
	(0.036)	(0.036)	(0.048)	(0.082)	(0.080)	(0.087)	(0.088)	(0.093)	(0.092)
Africa	0.827***	0.747***	0.694***	0.403***	0.213	0.081	0.171	-0.163	-0.203
	(0.097)	(0.120)	(0.127)	(0.146)	(0.162)	(0.167)	(0.173)	(0.163)	(0.170)
Latin America	0.985***	1.002***	0.998***	-0.068	-0.195	-0.252**	-0.179	-0.086	-0.071
	(0.030)	(0.029)	(0.046)	(0.121)	(0.109)	(0.100)	(0.108)	(0.111)	(0.110)
Asia and Oceania	0.913***	0.821***	0.523***	-0.248**	-0.207**	-0.219**	-0.197**	-0.208**	-0.333***
	(0.048)	(0.062)	(0.109)	(0.124)	(0.123)	(0.123)	(0.116)	(0.118)	(0.130)
Eastern Europe	0.921***	0.804***	0.559***	0.065	0.036	0.174	0.159	0.127	0.010
	(0.041)	(0.074)	(0.120)	(0.149)	(0.149)	(0.147)	(0.153)	(0.144)	(0.170)

Notes: This table reports RD estimates and robust standard errors for $\beta_{\tilde{\tau}}$ as defined in equation (2), with $\tilde{\tau} \in [-3, 5]$. We report party-level estimates of the incumbency advantage in our global sample of elections and in various subsamples, for elections classified as free and fair by V-Dem. Our empirical strategy is described in Section 4.1. * $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$.

Table E.3: Individual-level power trajectories coefficients, free and fair elections

	-2	-1	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Full sample	0.042	0.046	0.965***	0.947***	0.888***	0.853***	0.396***	0.161**	0.082	0.022	0.049	0.025	0.006
	(0.065)	(0.072)	(0.027)	(0.030)	(0.049)	(0.053)	(0.072)	(0.085)	(0.082)	(0.084)	(0.069)	(0.066)	(0.060)
Democracies	0.046	0.017	0.966***	0.948***	0.889***	0.848***	0.464***	0.159**	0.079	0.090	0.086	0.077	0.048
	(0.078)	(0.080)	(0.026)	(0.032)	(0.051)	(0.056)	(0.082)	(0.084)	(0.086)	(0.091)	(0.081)	(0.082)	(0.078)
Autocracies	0.064	0.196	0.968***	0.943***	0.856***	0.834***	0.013	-0.011	0.003	-0.238	-0.044	-0.161	-0.147
	(0.076)	(0.161)	(0.023)	(0.079)	(0.094)	(0.099)	(0.210)	(0.212)	(0.208)	(0.197)	(0.146)	(0.132)	(0.129)
High GDP p.c.	0.058	0.025	0.954***	0.910***	0.841***	0.839***	0.542***	0.246**	0.165*	0.166*	0.186**	0.202**	0.084
	(0.094)	(0.098)	(0.040)	(0.053)	(0.073)	(0.073)	(0.092)	(0.115)	(0.114)	(0.119)	(0.109)	(0.107)	(0.087)
Low GDP p.c.	-0.051	-0.061	0.967***	0.987***	0.929***	0.846***	0.164	-0.030	-0.109	-0.154	-0.032	-0.067	-0.017
	(0.084)	(0.083)	(0.035)	(0.045)	(0.051)	(0.071)	(0.135)	(0.132)	(0.116)	(0.110)	(0.103)	(0.097)	(0.094)
High corruption	-0.030	0.022	1.000***	0.993***	0.864***	0.867***	0.323**	-0.009	-0.127	-0.154	-0.092	-0.114	-0.094
	(0.089)	(0.102)	(0.000)	(0.024)	(0.076)	(0.059)	(0.131)	(0.124)	(0.107)	(0.103)	(0.102)	(0.096)	(0.096)
Low corruption	0.068	0.045	0.933***	0.912***	0.890***	0.808***	0.465***	0.294***	0.239**	0.139	0.162*	0.137	0.084
	(0.083)	(0.087)	(0.039)	(0.048)	(0.050)	(0.062)	(0.091)	(0.120)	(0.120)	(0.118)	(0.092)	(0.090)	(0.086)
OECD	0.048	0.046	1.000***	1.000***	0.979***	0.977***	0.936***	0.836***	0.746***	0.431**	0.246	0.221	0.118
	(0.126)	(0.126)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.039)	(0.048)	(0.077)	(0.152)	(0.191)	(0.211)	(0.167)	(0.178)	(0.160)
Non-OECD	0.019	0.028	0.954***	0.931***	0.856***	0.811***	0.235**	-0.067	-0.115	-0.119	-0.010	-0.032	-0.031
	(0.070)	(0.082)	(0.034)	(0.037)	(0.058)	(0.064)	(0.087)	(0.085)	(0.078)	(0.081)	(0.078)	(0.073)	(0.068)
Western Europe and North America	0.021	0.020	1.000***	1.000***	0.968***	0.968***	1.041***	0.971***	0.897***	0.512**	0.356*	0.271	0.178
	(0.156)	(0.155)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.062)	(0.071)	(0.076)	(0.103)	(0.137)	(0.248)	(0.208)	(0.182)	(0.201)
Africa	0.033	0.083	1.000***	0.869***	0.865***	0.675***	0.351	0.205	0.088	-0.164	-0.182	-0.202	-0.178
	(0.172)	(0.174)	(0.000)	(0.117)	(0.119)	(0.152)	(0.198)	(0.223)	(0.202)	(0.194)	(0.217)	(0.217)	(0.211)
Latin America	0.001	0.001	0.915***	0.914***	0.791***	0.813***	0.038	-0.158	-0.166	-0.051	0.062	0.054	0.027
	(0.046)	(0.045)	(0.066)	(0.083)	(0.094)	(0.100)	(0.132)	(0.116)	(0.102)	(0.093)	(0.105)	(0.102)	(0.083)
Asia and Oceania	0.013	-0.073	1.000***	1.000***	1.023***	0.902***	0.585***	0.138	0.095	0.102	-0.010	-0.057	-0.079
	(0.165)	(0.172)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.029)	(0.111)	(0.168)	(0.175)	(0.177)	(0.189)	(0.158)	(0.134)	(0.086)
Eastern Europe	0.140	0.150	1.000***	1.000***	1.020***	1.000***	0.804***	0.145	0.177	0.314	0.306	0.434*	0.241
	(0.297)	(0.299)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.019)	(0.028)	(0.203)	(0.215)	(0.222)	(0.266)	(0.271)	(0.272)	(0.234)

Notes: This table reports RD estimates and robust standard errors for β_τ as defined in equation (2), with $\tau \in [-2, 10]$. We report individual-level estimates of the incumbency advantage in our global sample of elections and in various subsamples, for elections classified as free and fair by V-Dem. Our empirical strategy is described in Section 4.1. * $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$.

Table E.4: Individual-level post-term coefficients, free and fair elections

	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3	4	5
Full sample	0.902***	0.826***	0.753***	0.085	0.035	-0.009	-0.031	0.027	0.016
	(0.045)	(0.046)	(0.055)	(0.090)	(0.082)	(0.079)	(0.074)	(0.066)	(0.060)
Democracies	0.905***	0.879***	0.807***	0.082	0.047	0.023	0.021	0.083	0.052
	(0.047)	(0.059)	(0.067)	(0.096)	(0.090)	(0.085)	(0.082)	(0.083)	(0.080)
Autocracies	0.870***	0.595***	0.469**	-0.002	0.003	-0.162	-0.271*	-0.140	-0.147
	(0.095)	(0.153)	(0.175)	(0.218)	(0.209)	(0.183)	(0.163)	(0.137)	(0.132)
High GDP p.c.	0.845***	0.858***	0.753***	0.119	0.116	0.115	0.173*	0.192**	0.049
	(0.070)	(0.063)	(0.078)	(0.117)	(0.117)	(0.118)	(0.116)	(0.104)	(0.082)
Low GDP p.c.	0.962***	0.797***	0.747***	-0.065	-0.132	-0.128	-0.181*	-0.079	0.019
	(0.042)	(0.080)	(0.088)	(0.138)	(0.114)	(0.111)	(0.108)	(0.102)	(0.093)
High corruption	0.897***	0.832***	0.733***	-0.072	-0.123	-0.148	-0.179*	-0.099	-0.067
	(0.073)	(0.070)	(0.087)	(0.118)	(0.108)	(0.103)	(0.100)	(0.098)	(0.102)
Low corruption	0.881***	0.836***	0.768***	0.168*	0.158	0.114	0.098	0.137	0.079
	(0.051)	(0.067)	(0.072)	(0.127)	(0.121)	(0.116)	(0.107)	(0.090)	(0.084)
OECD	0.987***	1.050***	0.959***	0.439**	0.464**	0.363**	0.246	0.206	0.097
	(0.041)	(0.053)	(0.077)	(0.210)	(0.216)	(0.208)	(0.190)	(0.162)	(0.161)
Non-OECD	0.880***	0.791***	0.712***	-0.044	-0.111	-0.120	-0.130*	-0.035	-0.013
	(0.057)	(0.057)	(0.068)	(0.094)	(0.078)	(0.079)	(0.077)	(0.072)	(0.071)
Western Europe and North America	0.973***	0.975***	0.984***	0.521**	0.522**	0.429*	0.319	0.271	0.145
	(0.067)	(0.064)	(0.065)	(0.248)	(0.249)	(0.247)	(0.241)	(0.182)	(0.197)
Africa	0.860***	0.689***	0.575***	0.213	0.109	-0.163	-0.134	-0.201	-0.162
	(0.124)	(0.147)	(0.166)	(0.223)	(0.200)	(0.198)	(0.202)	(0.215)	(0.208)
Latin America	0.835***	0.770***	0.757***	-0.154	-0.089	-0.057	-0.015	0.064	0.046
	(0.089)	(0.096)	(0.099)	(0.100)	(0.097)	(0.094)	(0.097)	(0.105)	(0.091)
Asia and Oceania	1.000***	1.117***	0.724***	0.139	0.103	0.100	0.035	-0.034	-0.071
	(0.000)	(0.064)	(0.138)	(0.197)	(0.187)	(0.190)	(0.175)	(0.135)	(0.085)
Eastern Europe	1.020***	1.000***	0.749***	0.136	0.177	0.314	0.325	0.434*	0.241
	(0.019)	(0.028)	(0.191)	(0.222)	(0.222)	(0.266)	(0.274)	(0.272)	(0.234)

Notes: This table reports RD estimates and robust standard errors for $\beta_{\tilde{\tau}}$ as defined in equation (2), with $\tilde{\tau} \in [3,5]$. We report individual-level estimates of the incumbency advantage in our global sample of elections and in various subsamples, for elections classified as free and fair by V-Dem. Our empirical strategy is described in Section 4.1. * $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$.

Table E.5: Party-level power trajectories coefficients, elections that follow a free and fair election

	-2	-1	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Full sample	0.029	0.036	0.995***	0.955***	0.872***	0.718***	0.254***	0.109**	0.034	-0.018	-0.079	-0.058	-0.066
	(0.052)	(0.052)	(0.005)	(0.012)	(0.023)	(0.036)	(0.050)	(0.057)	(0.057)	(0.058)	(0.059)	(0.060)	(0.063)
Presidential elections	-0.002	0.002	1.000***	0.981***	1.004***	0.985***	0.436***	0.171**	0.030	-0.025	0.025	0.056	-0.010
	(0.098)	(0.098)	(0.000)	(0.014)	(0.018)	(0.031)	(0.073)	(0.101)	(0.105)	(0.102)	(0.106)	(0.106)	(0.109)
Parliamentary elections	0.038	0.038	0.993***	0.945***	0.827***	0.620***	0.165**	0.085	0.028	-0.033	-0.122**	-0.112*	-0.091
	(0.061)	(0.063)	(0.007)	(0.016)	(0.030)	(0.046)	(0.064)	(0.065)	(0.069)	(0.071)	(0.070)	(0.071)	(0.073)
Democracies	0.006	0.007	0.994***	0.959***	0.886***	0.731***	0.272***	0.135**	0.049	0.005	-0.090*	-0.095*	-0.106**
	(0.056)	(0.056)	(0.006)	(0.013)	(0.024)	(0.037)	(0.052)	(0.062)	(0.062)	(0.063)	(0.061)	(0.065)	(0.064)
Autocracies	0.246**	0.269**	1.000***	0.900***	0.784***	0.647***	0.112	0.002	0.003	-0.103	0.028	0.124	0.282**
	(0.118)	(0.124)	(0.000)	(0.042)	(0.070)	(0.102)	(0.138)	(0.135)	(0.128)	(0.129)	(0.129)	(0.141)	(0.141)
High GDP p.c.	0.039	0.026	0.991***	0.953***	0.905***	0.788***	0.303***	0.149**	0.071	0.036	-0.057	-0.049	-0.080
	(0.063)	(0.064)	(0.008)	(0.014)	(0.030)	(0.042)	(0.062)	(0.072)	(0.070)	(0.071)	(0.069)	(0.069)	(0.071)
Low GDP p.c.	-0.077	-0.064	1.003***	0.971***	0.905***	0.727***	0.201*	0.069	-0.023	-0.113	-0.011	0.046	0.096
	(0.087)	(0.088)	(0.004)	(0.017)	(0.035)	(0.071)	(0.094)	(0.099)	(0.106)	(0.107)	(0.106)	(0.106)	(0.108)
High corruption	-0.078	-0.027	1.003***	0.945***	0.823***	0.670***	0.216**	0.037	-0.012	-0.002	0.019	0.006	-0.010
	(0.095)	(0.098)	(0.003)	(0.025)	(0.051)	(0.068)	(0.089)	(0.091)	(0.097)	(0.097)	(0.098)	(0.099)	(0.097)
Low corruption	0.056	0.039	0.991***	0.959***	0.905***	0.738***	0.268***	0.122*	0.047	-0.032	-0.121**	-0.101*	-0.117*
	(0.065)	(0.066)	(0.007)	(0.013)	(0.028)	(0.041)	(0.059)	(0.068)	(0.068)	(0.070)	(0.072)	(0.076)	(0.077)
OECD	0.077	0.061	1.000***	0.979***	0.907***	0.735***	0.289***	0.252***	0.143*	0.042	-0.086	-0.049	0.002
	(0.082)	(0.084)	(0.000)	(0.010)	(0.033)	(0.052)	(0.076)	(0.083)	(0.079)	(0.085)	(0.087)	(0.082)	(0.081)
Non-OECD	-0.064	-0.048	0.992***	0.935***	0.852***	0.695***	0.225***	-0.021	-0.061	-0.074	-0.055	-0.047	-0.085
	(0.063)	(0.064)	(0.009)	(0.020)	(0.032)	(0.053)	(0.067)	(0.072)	(0.075)	(0.074)	(0.074)	(0.075)	(0.080)
Western Europe and North America	0.023	0.044	1.000***	0.976***	0.927***	0.771***	0.337***	0.277***	0.163*	0.033	-0.089	-0.083	-0.049
	(0.093)	(0.092)	(0.000)	(0.012)	(0.040)	(0.052)	(0.082)	(0.086)	(0.083)	(0.095)	(0.094)	(0.093)	(0.091)
Africa	0.065	0.061	1.000***	0.926***	0.770***	0.674***	0.554***	0.369**	0.287*	0.192	0.042	0.046	0.025
	(0.140)	(0.137)	(0.000)	(0.046)	(0.099)	(0.124)	(0.128)	(0.151)	(0.166)	(0.169)	(0.179)	(0.191)	(0.190)
Latin America	-0.139	-0.110	1.003***	1.001***	0.971***	0.815***	0.059	-0.181*	-0.241**	-0.224*	-0.115	-0.117	-0.111
	(0.093)	(0.095)	(0.004)	(0.021)	(0.042)	(0.052)	(0.093)	(0.102)	(0.108)	(0.112)	(0.123)	(0.101)	(0.128)
Asia and Oceania	0.070	0.093	0.967***	0.892***	0.784***	0.503***	0.114	-0.167	-0.189*	-0.222**	-0.238**	-0.117	-0.222*
	(0.126)	(0.129)	(0.029)	(0.052)	(0.076)	(0.089)	(0.125)	(0.126)	(0.133)	(0.124)	(0.129)	(0.137)	(0.140)
Eastern Europe	-0.013	-0.074	1.000***	0.928***	0.857***	0.696***	0.284**	0.126	0.175	0.201	0.119	0.120	0.159
	(0.135)	(0.142)	(0.000)	(0.033)	(0.060)	(0.104)	(0.143)	(0.150)	(0.152)	(0.158)	(0.153)	(0.165)	(0.181)

Notes: This table reports RD estimates and robust standard errors for β_τ as defined in equation (2), with $\tau \in [-2, 10]$. We report party-level estimates of the incumbency advantage in our global sample of elections and in various subsamples, for elections that follow an election classified as free and fair by V-Dem. Our empirical strategy is described in Section 4.1. * $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$.

Table E.6: Party-level post-term coefficients, elections that follow a free and fair election

	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3	4	5
Full sample	0.896***	0.867***	0.743***	0.082	0.062	0.034	0.033	-0.052	-0.111**
	(0.019)	(0.023)	(0.035)	(0.055)	(0.057)	(0.058)	(0.058)	(0.061)	(0.062)
Presidential elections	0.987***	0.932***	0.860***	0.095	0.050	-0.004	0.039	0.061	-0.012
	(0.016)	(0.036)	(0.047)	(0.100)	(0.104)	(0.102)	(0.105)	(0.109)	(0.107)
Parliamentary elections	0.862***	0.843***	0.699***	0.074	0.069	0.034	0.016	-0.098*	-0.145**
	(0.025)	(0.028)	(0.044)	(0.065)	(0.066)	(0.068)	(0.070)	(0.073)	(0.072)
Democracies	0.906***	0.881***	0.764***	0.090	0.068	0.049	0.046	-0.071	-0.140**
	(0.022)	(0.022)	(0.036)	(0.060)	(0.062)	(0.063)	(0.064)	(0.065)	(0.070)
Autocracies	0.871***	0.741***	0.636***	0.053	0.068	-0.002	0.036	0.085	0.135
	(0.063)	(0.086)	(0.099)	(0.130)	(0.130)	(0.128)	(0.132)	(0.133)	(0.138)
High GDP p.c.	0.876***	0.921***	0.785***	0.084	0.090	0.077	0.068	-0.016	-0.107*
	(0.023)	(0.027)	(0.039)	(0.070)	(0.071)	(0.071)	(0.072)	(0.070)	(0.067)
Low GDP p.c.	0.963***	0.840***	0.775***	0.067	-0.008	-0.062	-0.028	0.003	0.036
	(0.029)	(0.056)	(0.064)	(0.094)	(0.101)	(0.102)	(0.104)	(0.110)	(0.103)
High corruption	0.894***	0.810***	0.702***	0.012	-0.033	-0.004	0.058	0.020	-0.006
	(0.037)	(0.050)	(0.065)	(0.094)	(0.094)	(0.096)	(0.098)	(0.098)	(0.086)
Low corruption	0.896***	0.888***	0.766***	0.102	0.092	0.041	0.018	-0.079	-0.150**
	(0.022)	(0.024)	(0.040)	(0.066)	(0.067)	(0.069)	(0.069)	(0.075)	(0.076)
OECD	0.914***	0.905***	0.792***	0.190**	0.199***	0.136	0.102	-0.026	-0.074
	(0.028)	(0.032)	(0.042)	(0.079)	(0.079)	(0.084)	(0.085)	(0.088)	(0.086)
Non-OECD	0.892***	0.844***	0.706***	-0.021	-0.060	-0.058	-0.036	-0.050	-0.090
	(0.028)	(0.036)	(0.052)	(0.071)	(0.073)	(0.074)	(0.075)	(0.075)	(0.073)
Western Europe and North America	0.880***	0.914***	0.781***	0.234***	0.253***	0.163	0.114	-0.057	-0.069
	(0.036)	(0.037)	(0.048)	(0.083)	(0.081)	(0.088)	(0.089)	(0.095)	(0.093)
Africa	0.779***	0.702***	0.658***	0.494***	0.299*	0.205	0.274*	0.039	0.021
	(0.102)	(0.124)	(0.127)	(0.155)	(0.167)	(0.169)	(0.175)	(0.196)	(0.190)
Latin America	0.989***	0.981***	0.955***	-0.126	-0.232**	-0.126	-0.102	-0.114	-0.107
	(0.030)	(0.039)	(0.045)	(0.113)	(0.099)	(0.130)	(0.131)	(0.121)	(0.113)
Asia and Oceania	0.913***	0.806***	0.522***	-0.203*	-0.189*	-0.202*	-0.193*	-0.197*	-0.383***
	(0.052)	(0.069)	(0.110)	(0.126)	(0.129)	(0.130)	(0.123)	(0.132)	(0.138)
Eastern Europe	0.912***	0.863***	0.663***	0.121	0.118	0.214	0.209	0.166	0.044
	(0.040)	(0.056)	(0.108)	(0.150)	(0.149)	(0.146)	(0.159)	(0.156)	(0.174)

Notes: This table reports RD estimates and robust standard errors for $\beta_{\tilde{\tau}}$ as defined in equation (2), with $\tilde{\tau} \in [-3, 5]$. We report party-level estimates of the incumbency advantage in our global sample of elections and in various subsamples, for elections that follow an election classified as free and fair by V-Dem. Our empirical strategy is described in Section 4.1. * $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$.

Table E.7: Individual-level power trajectories coefficients, elections that follow a free and fair election

	-2	-1	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Full sample	0.067	0.043	0.967***	0.936***	0.880***	0.862***	0.472***	0.222***	0.130*	0.082	0.066	0.057	0.023
	(0.066)	(0.062)	(0.029)	(0.033)	(0.044)	(0.047)	(0.088)	(0.093)	(0.087)	(0.088)	(0.069)	(0.065)	(0.065)
Democracies	0.048	0.037	0.964***	0.947***	0.886***	0.863***	0.455***	0.163**	0.077	0.105	0.087	0.075	0.038
	(0.080)	(0.081)	(0.029)	(0.034)	(0.054)	(0.058)	(0.089)	(0.090)	(0.088)	(0.096)	(0.081)	(0.079)	(0.084)
Autocracies	0.255**	0.258*	0.967***	0.873***	0.853***	0.859***	0.338**	0.280*	0.101	-0.069	-0.019	0.035	-0.001
	(0.139)	(0.146)	(0.027)	(0.084)	(0.086)	(0.089)	(0.206)	(0.216)	(0.187)	(0.175)	(0.115)	(0.041)	(0.036)
High GDP p.c.	0.029	0.020	0.958***	0.930***	0.859***	0.866***	0.569***	0.239**	0.158	0.173	0.191**	0.197**	0.105
	(0.083)	(0.082)	(0.034)	(0.049)	(0.071)	(0.055)	(0.105)	(0.117)	(0.117)	(0.123)	(0.108)	(0.106)	(0.091)
Low GDP p.c.	0.105	0.083	0.978***	0.953***	0.938***	0.845***	0.255**	0.153	-0.032	-0.121	-0.053	-0.056	-0.037
	(0.099)	(0.096)	(0.039)	(0.056)	(0.065)	(0.076)	(0.138)	(0.141)	(0.115)	(0.111)	(0.106)	(0.098)	(0.108)
High corruption	0.024	0.002	1.000***	0.984***	0.861***	0.882***	0.359***	0.047	-0.116	-0.024	-0.036	-0.045	-0.083
	(0.096)	(0.092)	(0.003)	(0.037)	(0.070)	(0.062)	(0.132)	(0.124)	(0.103)	(0.105)	(0.092)	(0.083)	(0.071)
Low corruption	0.085	0.064	0.935***	0.911***	0.894***	0.856***	0.510***	0.323***	0.273**	0.118	0.153*	0.149	0.097
	(0.085)	(0.083)	(0.048)	(0.049)	(0.054)	(0.076)	(0.107)	(0.126)	(0.125)	(0.124)	(0.097)	(0.100)	(0.091)
OECD	0.016	0.015	1.000***	1.000***	0.979***	0.979***	0.942***	0.780***	0.707***	0.422**	0.261*	0.211	0.119
	(0.128)	(0.127)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.041)	(0.048)	(0.077)	(0.150)	(0.190)	(0.212)	(0.164)	(0.173)	(0.163)
Non-OECD	0.069	0.049	0.956***	0.916***	0.848***	0.826***	0.301***	0.038	-0.093	-0.041	0.003	0.012	-0.004
	(0.074)	(0.072)	(0.037)	(0.043)	(0.053)	(0.056)	(0.100)	(0.099)	(0.080)	(0.090)	(0.075)	(0.073)	(0.074)
Western Europe and North America	0.018	0.016	1.000***	1.000***	0.965***	0.965***	1.034***	0.959***	0.949***	0.530**	0.365*	0.285	0.187
	(0.157)	(0.156)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.063)	(0.073)	(0.076)	(0.104)	(0.130)	(0.250)	(0.196)	(0.188)	(0.206)
Africa	0.132	0.134	1.000***	0.825***	0.825***	0.660***	0.372*	0.225	0.102	-0.063	-0.171	-0.083	-0.057
	(0.168)	(0.165)	(0.000)	(0.121)	(0.129)	(0.165)	(0.189)	(0.205)	(0.198)	(0.192)	(0.215)	(0.230)	(0.218)
Latin America	0.019	0.019	0.916***	0.923***	0.806***	0.828***	0.101	-0.029	-0.197*	-0.229**	0.022	0.011	-0.023
	(0.060)	(0.061)	(0.071)	(0.076)	(0.094)	(0.090)	(0.144)	(0.126)	(0.097)	(0.093)	(0.091)	(0.082)	(0.079)
Asia and Oceania	0.049	0.029	1.000***	1.000***	1.013***	1.015***	0.799***	0.219	0.152	0.172	0.038	-0.055	-0.088
	(0.208)	(0.217)	(0.000)	(0.009)	(0.037)	(0.042)	(0.207)	(0.220)	(0.206)	(0.214)	(0.188)	(0.145)	(0.097)
Eastern Europe	0.303	0.217	1.000***	1.000***	1.000***	1.000***	0.833***	0.043	0.056	0.316	0.305	0.423*	0.255
	(0.309)	(0.298)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.020)	(0.030)	(0.199)	(0.219)	(0.229)	(0.271)	(0.276)	(0.278)	(0.258)

Notes: This table reports RD estimates and robust standard errors for β_τ as defined in equation (2), with $\tau \in [-2, 10]$. We report individual-level estimates of the incumbency advantage in our global sample of elections and in various subsamples, for elections that follow an election classified as free and fair by V-Dem. Our empirical strategy is described in Section 4.1. * $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$.

Table E.8: Individual-level post-term coefficients, elections that follow a free and fair election

	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3	4	5
Full sample	0.900***	0.821***	0.781***	0.151*	0.107	0.051	0.036	0.062	0.027
	(0.043)	(0.046)	(0.060)	(0.097)	(0.090)	(0.086)	(0.081)	(0.067)	(0.067)
Democracies	0.902***	0.871***	0.817***	0.089	0.051	0.035	0.029	0.073	0.040
	(0.050)	(0.058)	(0.068)	(0.099)	(0.093)	(0.091)	(0.083)	(0.079)	(0.086)
Autocracies	0.876***	0.640***	0.581***	0.227	0.218	-0.011	-0.164	0.025	0.001
	(0.083)	(0.135)	(0.152)	(0.213)	(0.202)	(0.167)	(0.122)	(0.045)	(0.037)
High GDP p.c.	0.864***	0.862***	0.826***	0.114	0.110	0.110	0.187*	0.195**	0.066
	(0.066)	(0.054)	(0.077)	(0.122)	(0.121)	(0.121)	(0.119)	(0.105)	(0.086)
Low GDP p.c.	0.958***	0.762***	0.720***	0.114	-0.030	-0.094	-0.170*	-0.061	-0.010
	(0.054)	(0.089)	(0.095)	(0.141)	(0.115)	(0.109)	(0.107)	(0.098)	(0.111)
High corruption	0.905***	0.827***	0.740***	-0.018	-0.081	-0.060	-0.099	-0.049	-0.061
	(0.071)	(0.084)	(0.085)	(0.118)	(0.111)	(0.102)	(0.093)	(0.082)	(0.082)
Low corruption	0.892***	0.854***	0.821***	0.212*	0.196*	0.095	0.084	0.149	0.091
	(0.058)	(0.080)	(0.085)	(0.135)	(0.127)	(0.123)	(0.115)	(0.100)	(0.087)
OECD	0.990***	0.990***	0.916***	0.426**	0.455**	0.359*	0.255	0.211	0.100
	(0.042)	(0.043)	(0.075)	(0.213)	(0.222)	(0.210)	(0.188)	(0.173)	(0.166)
Non-OECD	0.882***	0.782***	0.735***	0.029	-0.037	-0.071	-0.080	0.001	0.006
	(0.058)	(0.058)	(0.070)	(0.101)	(0.088)	(0.086)	(0.083)	(0.069)	(0.076)
Western Europe and North America	0.966***	0.972***	0.978***	0.539**	0.541**	0.447*	0.332	0.285	0.152
	(0.069)	(0.066)	(0.065)	(0.250)	(0.252)	(0.249)	(0.237)	(0.188)	(0.204)
Africa	0.821***	0.671***	0.585***	0.237	0.102	-0.065	-0.116	-0.083	-0.038
	(0.135)	(0.162)	(0.164)	(0.205)	(0.198)	(0.198)	(0.206)	(0.228)	(0.217)
Latin America	0.848***	0.754***	0.740***	-0.162	-0.147	-0.042	-0.207**	-0.025	0.018
	(0.092)	(0.106)	(0.114)	(0.105)	(0.106)	(0.091)	(0.094)	(0.073)	(0.089)
Asia and Oceania	1.000***	1.062***	0.891***	0.194	0.154	0.178	0.059	-0.055	-0.097
	(0.009)	(0.053)	(0.107)	(0.217)	(0.206)	(0.217)	(0.197)	(0.145)	(0.095)
Eastern Europe	1.000***	1.000***	0.869***	0.043	0.056	0.236	0.323	0.423*	0.255
	(0.020)	(0.021)	(0.177)	(0.219)	(0.229)	(0.275)	(0.272)	(0.278)	(0.258)

Notes: This table reports RD estimates and robust standard errors for $\beta_{\tilde{\tau}}$ as defined in equation (2), with $\tilde{\tau} \in [-3, 5]$. We report individual-level estimates of the incumbency advantage in our global sample of elections and in various subsamples, for elections that follow an election classified as free and fair by V-Dem. Our empirical strategy is described in Section 4.1. * $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$.

Table E.9: Next-election incumbency advantage, party-level estimates, free and fair elections

	Est.	SE	p-val.
Full sample	-0.000	(0.055)	[0.791]
Presidential elections	-0.091	(0.094)	[0.359]
Parliamentary elections	0.024	(0.066)	[0.942]
Democracies	0.058	(0.055)	[0.366]
Autocracies	-0.400***	(0.151)	[0.002]
High GDP p.c.	0.059	(0.066)	[0.463]
Low GDP p.c.	-0.103	(0.104)	[0.221]
High corruption	-0.104	(0.093)	[0.192]
Low corruption	0.047	(0.064)	[0.644]
OECD	0.128*	(0.074)	[0.098]
Non-OECD	-0.091	(0.073)	[0.135]
Western Europe and North America	0.204**	(0.079)	[0.017]
Africa	0.030	(0.148)	[0.857]
Latin America	0.019	(0.123)	[0.596]
Asia and Oceania	-0.309***	(0.120)	[0.003]
Eastern Europe	0.080	(0.132)	[0.577]

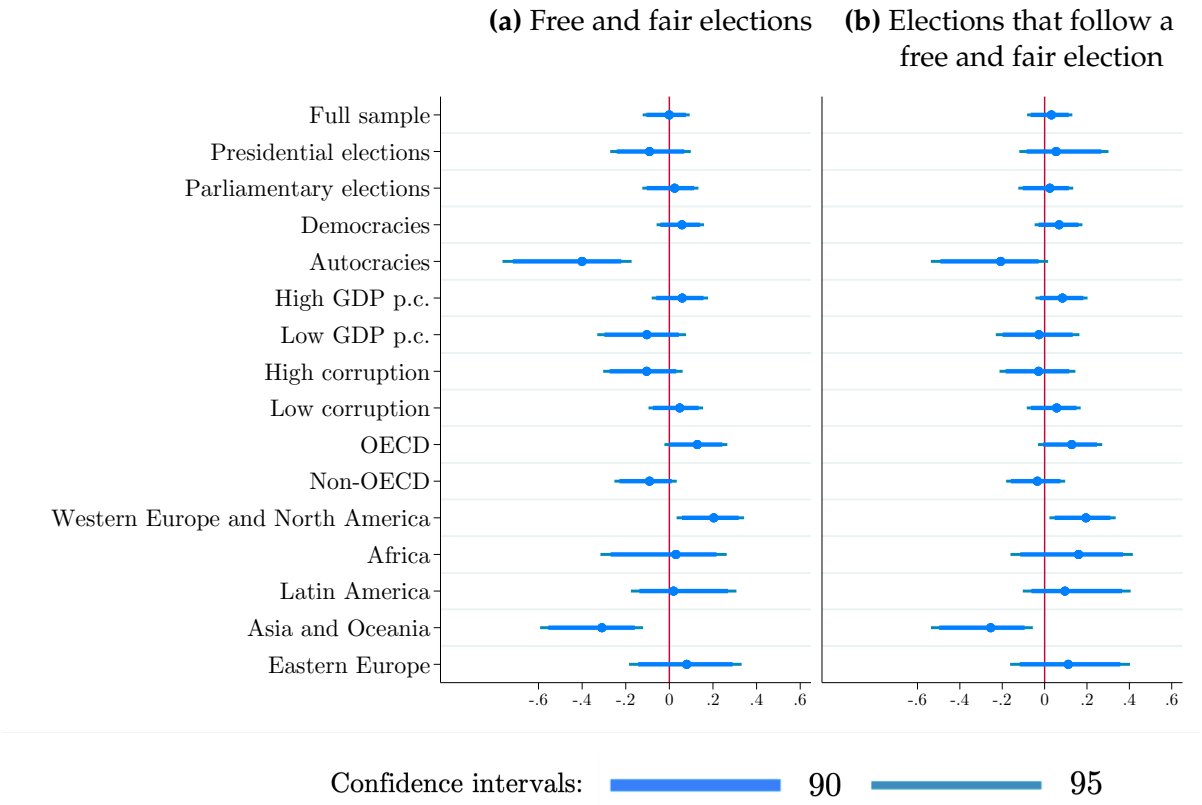
Notes: This table reports RD estimates as well as robust standard errors and robust p-values of the effect of winning an election on a party's joint likelihood of running in an winning the next election, in our global sample of elections and in various subsamples, for elections classified as free and fair by V-Dem. Our empirical strategy is described in Section 4.2. * $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$.

Table E.10: Next-election incumbency advantage, party-level estimates, free and fair elections

	Est.	SE	p-val.
Full sample	0.032	(0.054)	[0.658]
Presidential elections	0.054	(0.107)	[0.397]
Parliamentary elections	0.025	(0.066)	[0.933]
Democracies	0.069	(0.058)	[0.254]
Autocracies	-0.207*	(0.141)	[0.065]
High GDP p.c.	0.084	(0.063)	[0.203]
Low GDP p.c.	-0.027	(0.101)	[0.743]
High corruption	-0.028	(0.091)	[0.711]
Low corruption	0.057	(0.065)	[0.508]
OECD	0.128	(0.077)	[0.120]
Non-OECD	-0.034	(0.071)	[0.551]
Western Europe and North America	0.195**	(0.080)	[0.025]
Africa	0.161	(0.147)	[0.387]
Latin America	0.096	(0.130)	[0.244]
Asia and Oceania	-0.254**	(0.123)	[0.016]
Eastern Europe	0.112	(0.144)	[0.406]

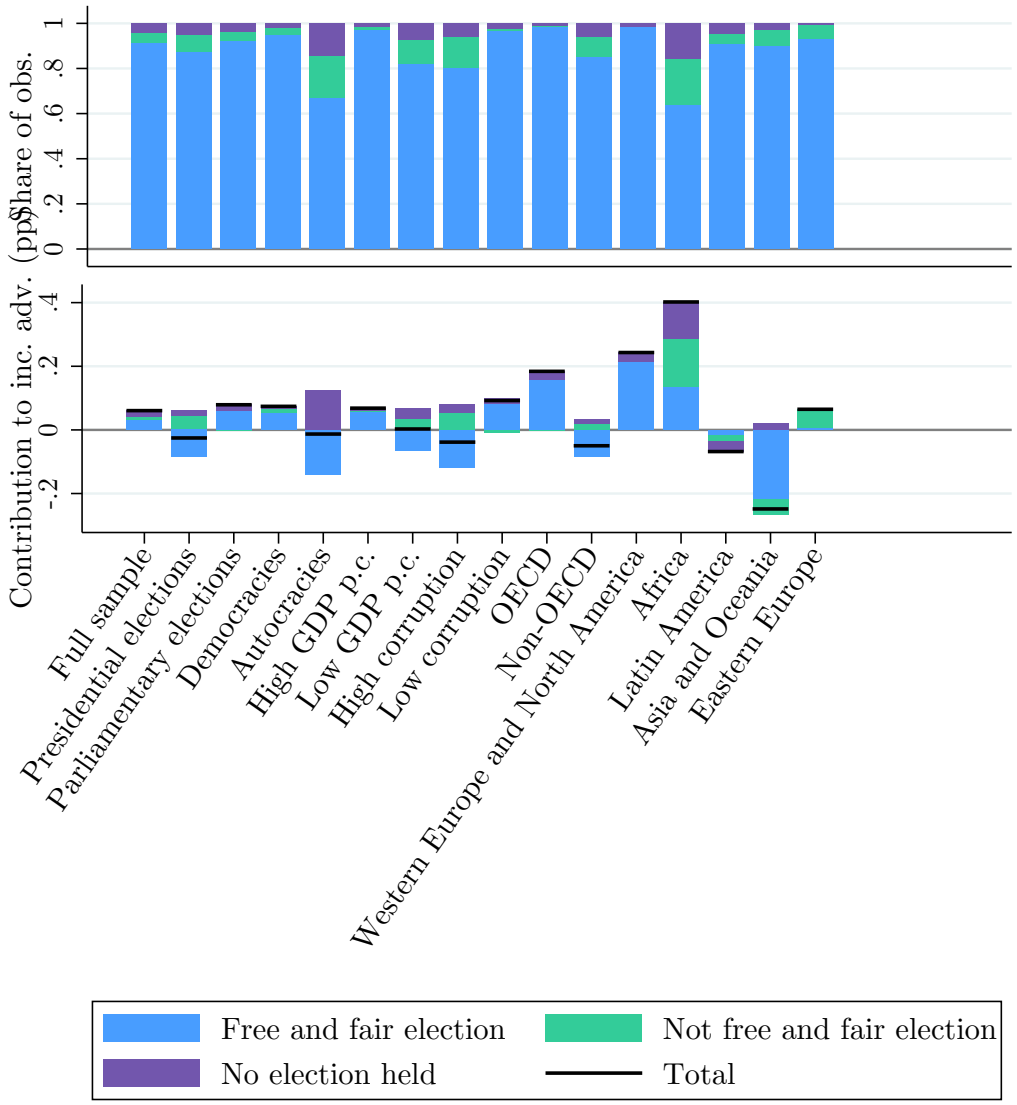
Notes: This table reports RD estimates as well as robust standard errors and robust p-values of the effect of winning an election on a party's joint likelihood of running in an winning the next election, in our global sample of elections and in various subsamples, for elections that follow an election classified as free and fair by V-Dem. Our empirical strategy is described in Section 4.2. * $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$.

Figure E.3: Next-election incumbency advantage, free and fair elections



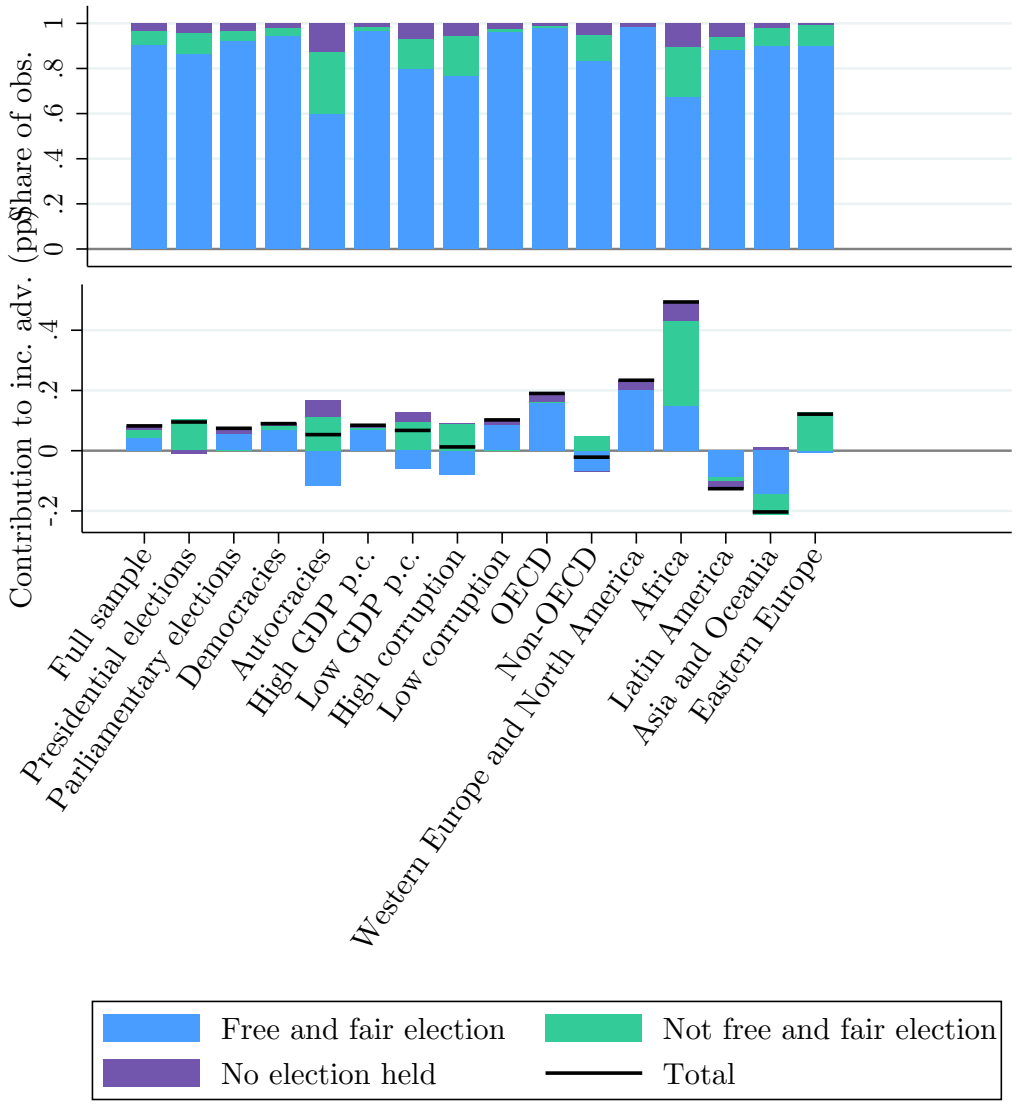
Notes: This figure reports the same exercise as Figure 7, but for elections classified as free and fair by V-Dem.

Figure E.4: Decomposition of the incumbency advantage, free and fair elections



Notes: This figure reports the same exercise as Figure 8, but for elections classified as free and fair by V-Dem.

Figure E.5: Decomposition of the incumbency advantage, elections that follow a free and fair election



Notes: This figure reports the same exercise as Figure 8, but for elections that follow an election classified as free and fair by V-Dem.